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Final Report

CCMW Toronto at the Reviving the Islamic Spirit Convention (RIS)

December 24, 25, 26, 2010

by Safa Zaki



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Introduction

The following report will provide details and an analysis of the CCMW Toronto chapter participating in the Reviving the Islamic Spirit Convention (RIS), which took place on December 24, 25, 26, 2010, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. After an overview of the site, personnel, and financial considerations, the report will continue with an analysis of the undertaking with respect to the objectives and outcomes that were initially given for reason to participate in RIS. The report will conclude with overall inferences and future considerations when/if CCMW Toronto should choose to participate at RIS in 2011.



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Site

CCMW Toronto purchased a 10 x 10 booth at the Grand Souk Bazaar of the 2010 Reviving the Islamic Spirit Convention, which took place at Metro Toronto Convention Centre from Friday December 24, 2010 to Sunday December 26, 2010.

Rehana Begg, Past President and Treasurer, was responsible for the logistics: booking of the booth through online forms in November 2010; securing the electrical outlet; and delivering the books and items to be sold to the site. CCMW's Administrative Assistant, Shirin A., also helped in the coordination of logistics with regards to seeing to the delivery of CCMW publications. The RIS contact person for the booking of the booth at the Grand Souk was Fatma.

The set up for the booth took place on the evening of Thursday, December 24, 2010 from 7:00-10:00pm. Set up was conducted by Rehana Begg, Past President and Treasurer, Safa Zaki, President, Shirin A., CCMW Administrative Assistant, and Sana Rokhsefat, President of the Toronto Youth League.

Set up included signage; an external monitor (donated for use by Dr. Kashif Zaki) and a personal laptop (to reel the MY CANADA video); as well as CCMW publications, throws (Rehana's provision), jewellery, and scarves (Shirin's arrangement) all of which were for sale. On the Friday the table was positioned length-wise (see photograph Appendix A) with the idea that patrons would walk into the booth (see photo in Appendix A). However, the layout was then altered (see photo in Appendix B) because the positioning of the tables was not enticing patrons to enter into booth area as expected.



Personnel

Volunteers at the booth included: Safa Zaki, Rehana Begg, Rizwan Mohammed, Nida Jamal, Sakina Abaas, Basra Banaa, Sana Rokhsefat and Sarah Minhas.

The following schedule is how the staffing of the booth transpired throughout the duration of the weekend. (It underwent changes from the original version, as throughout the weekend there were unintended absences from volunteers which arose.) See Appendix C for a photograph with volunteers Safa Zaki, Rizwan Mohammed, and Basra Banaa.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

FRIDAY DEC 24 1:30pm-11pm (9.5 hours)	SATURDAY DEC 25 9am-12am (15 hours)	SUNDAY DEC 26 9am –9pm (12 hours)
1:30pm-6:00pm (4.5 hours) Rizwan Safa	9:00am-2:00pm (5 hours) Nida Safa	9:00am-1:00pm (4 hours) Safa Nida
6:30pm-11pm (4.5 hours) Sana Safa	2:00pm-7:00pm (5 hours) Rizwan (3 start) Shirin (2 start)	1:00pm-5:00pm (4 hours) Sana Sakina
	7:00pm-12:00am (5 hours) Rizwan (til 9) Shirin (til 10) Basra (til 11) Safa (came back at 9)	5:00pm-9:00pm (4 hours) Safa Sarah Rehana

In the future, there should be at least three volunteers per shift so as to ensure that there is adequate staffing should absences arise, and so that those who are volunteering are able to enjoy the speakers of RIS during the days that they are not staffing the booth. Prior to each shift volunteers should be briefed on selling points, which publications to push, information about affiliated charitable endeavours at the booth, and basic information about CCMW and initiatives to provide visitors.



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Event Analysis

The following section of the report will analyze the undertaking with respect to the objectives and outcome that were initially given for reason to participate in RIS.

Objective 1. Raise awareness among Toronto and GTA Muslims, especially Muslim youth, about:

CCMW's activities, including:

- (a) the MYC project
- (b) the BCMW project

CCMW publications, including:

- (a) Family Law Primer
- (b) Engaging Muslim Women
- (c) Muslim Women at the Crossroads
- (d) Marriage Contract Kit
- (e) Al Rashid Mosque

and CCMW key contacts, including:

- (a) Myself, Safa Zaki, President, Toronto Chapter
- (b) Rehana Begg, Treasurer and Past President, Toronto Chapter
- (c) Rizwan Mohammad, Project Coordinator, My Canada Project
- (d) Sana Rokhesfat, President, Toronto Youth League

Expected Outcomes:

- 1. Strengthen the brand of the CCMW in Toronto.*
- 2. Increase awareness, interest in, and support of CCMW within Toronto.*

Undoubtedly, having a booth at the Grand Souk Bazaar of the RIS Convention strengthened the brand of CCMW in Toronto, and increased awareness, interest in, and support for the organization. This was achieved by the display of CCMW products all weekend long, and the presence of key members of the organization.

In addition, having the MYCANADA video reeling on a sizeable external monitor throughout the weekend became an easy talking piece when patrons visited the booth. Opportunities also arose throughout the weekend to bring up and discuss the BCMW project.

Having a presence at RIS throughout the weekend was also an opportunity for key contacts in the Toronto chapter (above) to mingle with the greater Toronto community,



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demonstrating active community engagement. Given that RIS drew 20,000 Muslims to Toronto, a booth at the grand souk bazaar allowed hundreds of people from the Toronto Muslim community (and elsewhere) to interact directly with CCMW Toronto in a capacity that was never available before. Most visitors to the booth had never heard of CCMW before, and were curious to learn what the organization was about. Additionally, most were surprised that CCMW had been in existence since the 1980s and some were curious to know about the relationship with CCMW and the government. There was a lot of positive interaction between CCMW and other members of the Muslim community, for example, the booth was positioned across from the Oshawa Masjid, and the male members of that group happily made acquaintance. The overall environment of RIS was very welcoming, and friendly, and all visitors to the booth were extremely interested and positive about CCMW. We were also strategically located across from the University of Toronto MSA, which also set the tone for the age range of the visitors to our booth. This essentially was positive and a great way for the volunteers to connect with as many young people as possible.

Objective 2: Recruit new members and volunteers for the Toronto chapter.

How? Sign-up sheets, sharing CCMW bookmarks, and other organizational paraphernalia.

Expected Outcomes:

- 1. Five (5) new volunteers for the Toronto chapter to re-build and activate it.*
- 2. 100 new additions for the CCMW Toronto and National mailing list.*

CCMW Toronto now has four new volunteers who are integral members of the executive: Nida Jamal, Sarah Minhas, Basra Banaa, and Sakina Abaas. New volunteers had the opportunity to get to know Rehana Begg, Rizwan Mohammed, Safa Zaki, and Sana Roksefat over the course the weekend. This time was incredibly valuable for bonding, information sharing, brainstorming.

In addition, we exceeded our goal of 100 new additions for the CCMW Toronto and National Mailing list, with 103 new additions.

Objective 3: Fundraise for the CCMW National and CCMW Toronto chapter.

With the sale of the following books (estimated necessary quantities for 3 days):

100 Al Rashid Mosque – Canada's First Mosque @ \$15

50 Family Law Primer – English @ \$20



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25 Engaging Muslim Women @ \$15

25 Muslim Women at the Cross Roads @ \$15

25 Marriage Contract Kit @ \$25

Expected Outcomes:

1. If above estimated quantities were to sell, the CCMW National would make \$2475 and the CCMW Toronto chapter would make \$1325.

It was ambitious; to say the least, that 250 publications would sell throughout the course of the weekend. In total, only 12 were sold. That said, while significant funds for CCMW were not raised from being at RIS, we did break even, with even a profit of \$28.26. Moreover, while the CCMW publications weren't a hot seller throughout the weekend, they did garner interest amongst visitors of the booth. Most visitors did know that the CCMW commissioned such research publications, and were very impressed with the work. The most popular publication sale, with nine sales, was the Muslim Marriage Contract Kit. Young women were enthusiastically appreciative that such a resource existed. Testimonials include: "I wish I had this before I got married!" while another woman expressed her gratitude for the information in the kit as she was in the midst of a divorce.

In addition, the scarves that were made by women with disabilities in India were hugely popular. The fact that we were donating 50% back to those women made the scarves an easy sell, not to mention they were beautiful, and of a high quality. Using these scarves for future fundraising events for CCMW would be very worthwhile.



Conclusions and Future Considerations

Overall, CCMW Toronto at RIS was a very positive initiative, and one worth repeating in the future.

The first objective of raising awareness among Toronto and GTA Muslims, especially Muslim youth, about CCMW activities, publications, and individuals were met. The outcome was the strengthened brand of CCMW and increased awareness, interest in, and support of CCMW within Toronto.

The second objective of recruiting new members and volunteers for the Toronto chapter was met by having sign-up sheets and disseminating CCMW bookmarks and business cards. The outcome was four new volunteers who are integral members of the Toronto chapter executive, and over 100 new additions for the CCMW mailing list.

The third objective of fundraising for CCMW was met, but only slightly. More importantly, CCMW was able to raise a significant amount of money to be donated to a worthwhile charitable organization, keeping in line with the organization's guiding and Islamic principles which espouse charity.

On January 28, 2011, a volunteer appreciation lunch and RIS post-mortem meeting was held at Rehana Begg's home in Scarborough. At this meeting we discussed what worked and did not work at RIS, and what to improve in the future. There was unanimous agreement that being at RIS is a good way to demonstrate engagement with the wider community.

Should CCMW participate at RIS in the future, there should be at least three volunteers per shift so as to ensure that there is adequate staffing should absences arise, and so that those who are volunteering are able to enjoy the speakers of RIS during the days that they are not staffing the booth. Prior to each shift volunteers should be briefed on selling points, which publications to push, information about affiliated charitable endeavours at the booth, and basic information about CCMW and initiatives to provide visitors.

The following are suggestions made by volunteers with regards to what to improve at RIS in the future:

- Plan 6 months ahead: determine whether to be promotional/outreach or charity/fundraiser motive
- Finding our own items to sell, to increase revenue.
- Possibly having a recyclable CCMW bag, without charge



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- Collaboration with RIS and other organizations
 - E.g. For the IMAP program to have our marriage packages before hand.
 - Partnership with other CCMW groups
 - This year it was My Canada, next year?
- T-shirts for recognition

Finally, when asked if we should do RIS again, there was a unanimous vote of YES amongst volunteers.



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Appendix A

Friday, December 24 booth layout.





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Appendix B

Saturday December 25 and December 26 booth layout.





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Appendix C

From right: Basra Banaa, Safa Zaki, Rizwan Mohammed.

