

# BRITISH EMBASSY SYRIA - PROJECTS 2008/09

## CHARITY BAZAAR

In Syria the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom (FCO) funds several projects with the aim of promoting the Syrian model of religious co-existence and tolerance, empowering young people and reinforcing rule of law.

Projects are identified in the first instance and implemented in Syria through government and non-government organisations and multilateral bodies, but are locally led by the Embassy, which clears the projects to ensure they fit with the overall country strategy.

The Embassy Projects Team currently manages a portfolio of over twenty projects, many of them multi-year.

One project in the pipeline is a new cartoon series, for worldwide distribution, that promotes messages of peace in Islam and the Syrian model of tolerance and peaceful co-existence between people of different faiths. An Islamic institution in Damascus is implementing the project, written and directed by a French film director.

We are in consultation with the Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Endowments) to host an international conference as the culmination to a project funded by the FCO. The project aims to counter the extremist ideologue by examining and publicising the theological basis of Islam's rejection of violence.

On youth empowerment, we have begun work on a 'Youth Parliament Syria' project with a local NGO to provide a platform for the young to learn democratic practices and discuss issues of concern to young people in Syria. And, following on from recommendations that came out of the First International Law Conference in Syria in July, the FCO is funding the British Council to run a follow-up project providing training for Syrian judges and senior lawyers.

As well as having access to FCO Funding Programmes, the Embassy holds a small bilateral programme budget which we use for smaller, quick-impact projects that support our objectives and build on work already done. For instance, following on from the success of an Embassy run workshop 'Introduction to Think Tanks' in Damascus in July we are now funding a capacity building project for Syrian think tank the Orient Studies Centre. Efforts are also currently underway to link them with foreign policy think tank Chatham House in London.

If you have any project proposals that you think will support our agenda please contact our Project Manager at the British Embassy in Damascus on [roula.malas@fco.gov.uk](mailto:roula.malas@fco.gov.uk). We review all proposals before forwarding them to the Programme Team in London for assessment.

The British Embassy took a stall at the annual Diplomatic Charity Bazaar held at the Meridien Hotel in Damascus in December.

Diplomatic staff from over 40 countries joined hands to raise cash for the needy at the event which was inaugurated by Syrian First Lady Asma Al Assad.

Funds raised at the event reached over one million Syrian Pounds and have been donated to Syrian Charity organisations.

As the photographs show, the stall was manned by a large number of volunteers and attracted many visitors.

