

## ***Conference Report***

### **2nd International conference on creativity and innovation for sustainable development**

The International Conference on Creativity and Innovation is a biannual conference organised by the Department of Fundamental & Inter-Disciplinary Studies, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) with the aim to enhance teaching and learning of “Creative Thinking and Problem Solving” and to show the vital link between creativity and sustainability. The first conference was held in 2011 bearing the theme of “Infusing Education with Creativity and Innovation.”

Held on 20-21 October 2014 at the Kulliyah of Information Communication Technology (KICT), IIUM, the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Creativity and Innovation for Sustainable Development featured 62 presenters from Malaysia and abroad, including Algeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan, and Iran. Organised under the theme of “Leading through Creativity, Innovation, and Sustainability,” the conference aimed, among others, to bring together experts and professionals to share their perspectives on creativity and innovation and to exhibit their various contributions to creativity and models of creativity and innovation.

The conference commenced with a welcoming speech by the Chair of the Organising Committee, Dr. Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman, who outlined the conference aims and objectives and expressed his gratitude to all presenters and participants. He hoped that all participants would help enact the recommendations of the conference by endeavouring to translate its message into practice within their respective fields of responsibility. In his welcoming remarks, Prof. Dr. Ibrahim M. Zein,

Dean of the Kulliyah of IRKHS, commended the department of Fundamental and Inter-Disciplinary Studies for organising the event. He highlighted the need for creativity saying that creativity is inherent in human nature; some endeavour to realise it while others fail to do so. This was followed by an opening address by Dato' Sri Dr. Zaleha Kamaruddin, Rector, IIUM, in which she highlighted the need for creativity to solve the problems facing the Muslim *ummah* from within and from without. She also highlighted that teaching creativity should begin at a very young age because everyone is creative by nature; that "Creative Thinking and Problem Solving" should be made a compulsory subject as a response to the call of the Ministry of Education Malaysia to infuse creativity in teaching and learning; and that the department should start organising workshops on creativity and innovation to train lecturers from all Kulliyahs within IIUM.

There were four keynote speeches. Two were delivered on the first day. In the first keynote address, Prof. Dr. Abdelaziz Berghout, Deputy Rector (Internationalisation & Industry and Community Relations), IIUM, discussed the relationship between the "Islamic Worldview and Creativity". He explained that thinking is an act of *'ibādah* (worship) in Islam and that Islam encourages *ijtihad* – creative thinking and problem solving, particularly of issues related to religious matters; thus the founders of the four *Madhāhib al-Fiqhiyyah* (Schools of Jurisprudence) were the most creative people in Islamic history whose creativity helped solve many socio-economic problems faced by the Muslim communities. The second keynote speech was delivered by Prof. Dr. Malik Badri, holder of the prestigious Chair of Ibn Khaldun in the Kulliyah of IRKHS, on "Intelligence and Creativity in the Lives of Early Muslims." He began by highlighting the differences between creativity and intelligence, saying that in intelligence there is a question of right and wrong but not so in creativity. He noted that all prophets were creative and problem solvers and the creativity of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is traced back to the pre-Islamic days when he settled the dispute regarding who should place the Black Stone in its place. He also acknowledged that unlike the secular systems where creativity is without limits, creativity in Islam must be done within permissible limits.

The second day featured the last two keynote speeches. In his speech on "Leading vs Managing Creativity and Innovation for

Sustainable Development,” Dr. Zainal Abidin Sanusi, a senior lecturer and coordinator, Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development, Universiti Sains Malaysia, drew special attention to the need for sustaining human values. He reiterated that social sciences need to be humanised and that it must play a leading role in creativity for sustainable development. The last keynote speech was delivered on “IIUM’s Experience in Teaching Creativity Thinking Skills” by Prof. Dr. Jamal Ahmed Badi, a lecturer of Creative Thinking and Problem Solving course at IIUM and the co-author of *Creative Thinking: An Islamic Perspective*. To nurture a culture of creative thinking among IIUM students, he suggested adding a topic on creativity to every subject taught in the University.

The two-day conference was closed by the Dean of the Kulliyah of IRKHS. He commended the department for organising a successful conference and hoped that it will play an essential role in organising creative thinking workshops for the university’s academic staff. With 62 papers presented in 8 sessions in both English and Arabic, the conference succeeded in bringing together distinguished academics and entrepreneurs to deliberate the interplay between creativity and sustainability and explore ways in which creativity and innovation could contribute to the shaping of a sustainable future.

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