



PHILANTHROPY  
for  
SOCIAL JUSTICE  
and  
PEACE

## INTERVIEW WITH AMELIA FAUZIA, SOCIAL TRUST FUND, INDONESIA

The Social Trust Fund was established in 2012 as a nonstructural institution under Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta Indonesia.

### What was the vision behind the establishment of the Social Trust Fund?

About a hundred million Indonesians are currently living below the poverty level. They suffer from malnutrition and health problems, high rate of school dropouts, poor educational facilities, joblessness and other social problems. Additionally, poverty has made Indonesian society very vulnerable to social conflicts, terrorism, and disasters.

As a leading and the biggest Islamic university in the country, the State Islamic University (UIN), Jakarta has great resources and potential not only to transform Indonesian society through education and knowledge, but also through its practice and advocacy for effective use of philanthropic resources for



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social justice and peace work. The motivation behind the establishment of the Social Trust Fund was to fulfill this potential.

### What are the principles you seek to promote in philanthropy in Indonesia?

Islamic philanthropy has been part and parcel of life in Indonesia. The fact that Muslims form the majority population in Indonesia only strengthens the assumption that Islamic philanthropy will influence --if not determine-- philanthropic trends in the country at large. To mention some potentialities, a 2004 survey on Islamic philanthropy for social justice in Muslim societies, carried out in six countries (Indonesia, India, Egypt, Tanzania, Turkey and the UK) revealed that the total charitable funds contributed by Muslims in 2004 was approximately Rp. 19.3 trillion (\$2,2 billion). Furthermore, Indonesia also has a deeply rooted culture of voluntarism, community philanthropy, and a strong Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sector that could contribute to addressing social problems.



However, these funds remain ineffectively organised and untapped, with most of them being channeled through activities that have been significantly influenced by traditional practices of direct giving in cash or kind to meet a recipient's immediate needs. In order to tackle huge and complex social problems and injustices faced by the Indonesian society, philanthropy needs to be progressive and more strategic.



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“making philanthropy work for a better world for humanity” reflects this commitment. Besides the principles of social justice, we seek to promote practices of gender equity, diversity, transparency and accountability in philanthropy. In the Social Trust Fund, we do this by: 1) mobilizing and managing social funds transparently and accountably, 2) providing more opportunities for the poor and disadvantage people, 3) advocacy and sharing our learning with philanthropy organisations, 4) enhancing humanitarian initiatives and promoting peace, equality and diversity.

### **Can you tell us about the strategies that drive this vision?**

First and foremost, our major focus has been empowering disadvantaged groups through four interconnected pillars: Charity, Advocacy, Research, and Endowment (CARE).

In order to stay relevant and responsive we believe in observing the impact of our programs. At the moment our programmes are too new so we don't have sufficient data on the impact, but we will definitely continue to research and understand the impact of our programmes on social justice and peace.

Secondly, based on our impact observations we aim to keep evolving the programmes to meet the growing demands and needs on the ground, create sustainable structures and practices to maximize our impact. For example, we created and implemented a community health saving program. The objective of the programme was to educate on the importance of saving and provide affordable health insurance for the poor and informal workers through micro finance institutions. This group is generally vulnerable to serious health problems but has not developed the capacity to finance their health due to their lower and unfixed income. The program involved micro financing institutions as the main partner. Therefore, while the major objective was to educate poor and informal workers to have health savings, it also helped to enhance the role of micro financing institutions. So far the program has enjoyed considerably wide acceptance and has about 2000 members mainly in urban poor areas in the eastern part of Indonesia.

Thirdly, we aim to build synergies with diverse philanthropy and stakeholder networks and forums where we both influence and learn about the various dynamics of the social justice and peace situation in the country. Now we are members of the Islamic Philanthropy Foundations Association in Indonesia, we have also partnered with [Maria Monique](#)



[Lastwish Foundation in Indonesia](#), with some Indonesian CSR initiatives and corporations, with the [Ford Foundation](#) and with the [Global Fund for Community Foundation](#). We are also participants in the global [Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network](#).

Although very new, the Social Trust Fund has received wide support from the Indonesian progressive Muslim scholars and experts who have long been concerned with philanthropy and many of them sit on our board.

**Have you made any grants yet? If so can you tell us a little about the initiatives you are supporting.**

Most of our work is providing scholarships, trainings and capacity building. However, we are proud that now we are processing a small grant to [AMAN Indonesia \(Asia Muslim Action Network\)](#) an NGO that works for gender equity, conflict and peace in Asia. Our grant to AMAN focuses on supporting peacebuilding in an armed conflict area of Ambon (Moluccas).

**What are the challenges you are facing and how are you dealing with them?**

As a relatively new philanthropic organization established in 2012, the Social Trust Fund must work to gain more public trust, gain national recognition and also establish an international network of supporters. One big challenge for the fund is to create sustainable finance resources. We believe that a strategic financing model should be developed along with cash donation from the CSR sector, the government and the society to ensure the stability and sustainability of the fund.

Another big challenge we face is that the social justice issues are not supported and understood by majority of the donors and they continue to want to support popular charitable activities. In order to deal with this challenge

we need to have effective strategies that are attractive to donors and yet do not diminish our social justice and peace focus.

**What are the plans for the Fund in the coming future?**

Internally, for the development of the Fund, we want to launch a serious fundraising campaign and also develop both the number and capacities of our professional staff.

We also want to develop strategies to tap the traditional Islamic endowment (*waqf*) and do more advocacy work to create an understanding of social justice philanthropy among donors.

As a newly philanthropic organization, we are also open to any kind of cooperation that will help develop our capacity to effectively address social justice issues.

Amelia is the Vice Director of the Social Trust Fund. For more information visit <http://www.socialtrustfund-uinjkt.org/> or contact Amelia at [amelia\\_fauzia@yahoo.com](mailto:amelia_fauzia@yahoo.com)