

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE YOUNG MUSLIM ASSOCIATION

The Young Muslim Association was established as a religious organization in 1964.

The founding members who were youngsters formed the Association whose main objective was Islam and committing to the cause of Islam for spiritual motivation and religious matters like Salah, Quran, and other Islamic-related issues. This promoted a positive impact on the Muslim community in Islamic matters like Salah punctuality and others.

Some of the founding members are;

- The Late Brother Muneer Diwan
- The late Brother Kassim Mahatay
- Brother Shabir Diwan
- Brother AbdulKhaliq and others.

Later, other officials were introduced to YMA. They included;

- Brother Abdul Wahid Sheikh
- Brother Akram Bhati
- Brother Farooq Slatch
- Abdulhamid Slatch and others.

From the onset, YMA worked closely with like-minded Islamic organizations such as the Islamic Circle which later became the Islamic Foundation.

In 1968, Brother Saber Gul Aga arrived in Kenya from the UK. Brother Saber Gul was a family friend to the late Brother Muneer Diwan. Brother Saber Gul was invited to Pangani Mosque which by then was the unofficial headquarter for all Islamic Organisations in Kenya. This is because the majority of Muslims in Nairobi lived around Pangani, thus it was easy for Muslim leaders to convene.

The Late Brother Muneer Diwan later introduced Dr. Kassim Ali to YMA officials to assist them in their cause. Dr. Kassim Ali had arrived in Kenya in 1967 and was a Physics Lecturer at the University of Nairobi. Dr Kassim was very passionate about matters concerning Islam to the youth in Kenya, therefore, was mostly involved with Youth Oriented Organisations. He really motivated the youth around and brought them together spiritually, socially, and educationally. Dr. Kassim's contribution to the cause had a great impact on the activities of YMA.

In 1968, there was election of a new committee member where Dr. Kassim Ali was appointed as the Chairman and Brother Saber Gul as the Treasure among other Executive committee members.

In 1968, Young Muslim Association received news of the post-colonial regional Shifta war in the northern region of Kenya which was known as the Northern Frontier District (NFD), an area that was totally marginalized. The War caused many deaths and devastating impact. The most vulnerable were the children, women, and the elderly who were adversely affected, besides other losses of unaccounted family possessions. These resulted in a high

number of orphaned children, and mushrooming of street families on the major roads in Garissa. The children who were on site were mainly malnourished, lack shelter, clothing and medical care.

On receiving this report, Brother Munawwar Aga, chose Sheikh Marhoom Ahmed Musalam who was seconded by Machakos Muslim Institute to lead a team to investigate the matter. They travelled as far as Marsabit and Moyale, towards the border of Somalia. The team confirmed the situation and the Association took a quick response to tackle the issue. This started their efforts in setting up an orphanage and outreach programs to support and steadily improve the lives of thousands of children.

It was during this period that YMA and the late Maalim Juma Abdi Mumbo were introduced to each other by the late Sheikh Mohammed Ibrahim, who was then working with Machakos Muslim Institute under the Islamic Foundation to address the situation in Garissa.

The late Maalim Juma Abdi Mumbo was a local government worker in Machakos and occasionally undertook outreach Da'awa programs in the community. His main mentor in Da'awa activities was the late Sheikh Mohammed Ibrahim.

The late Maalim Juma joined YMA in early 1969 and together with other YMA officials, embarked on setting up an orphanage in Garissa.

In August 1969, the orphanage centre started with 22 children under a small shelter adjacent to Garissa Jamia Mosque with 3 key staff posted by the Young Muslim Association i.e. a nursery school teacher Br. Ibrahim Ndirangu, Sheikh Abdi Satar a Quran teacher (Marhoom), and Br. Abdille who was a cook. Since the children were not going to any formal school around this time, Mr. Ibrahim Ndirangu was tasked with teaching the basics in secular, while Sheikh Abdi Satar was teaching Qur'an in the mosque. The late Maalim Juma was tasked with the administrative duties of GMCH to ensure smooth operations during this time.

At this time the Association was financially limited. It mainly depended on handouts from individual well-wishers, and occasionally organise an impromptu appeal in the mosque after the regular prayers to provide basics for the children. With the assistance of Asian Families in Garissa, most of them traders and influential persons, and other well-wishers, the orphan center was able to address some of its challenges. Some of the people who greatly supported GMCH at that time were;

- Brother Taar Mohammed Abdulghani (Babujee)
- Brother Walii Mohammed Abdulghani
- Brother Abdulghafur Pasta
- Brother Ibrahim Pasta

In 1971, YMA was allocated a piece of land outside the township boundaries by the local administration after witnessing the seriousness the Association was showing toward alleviating the plight of orphans in the region.

The Garissa Muslim Children Home relocated to this piece of land and by the grace of Allah (SWA), received tremendous initial contribution, and support from individuals in addressing some of the key challenges and enabled the work to start on the site. Some of the key individuals were;

- Marhoom Yussuf Haji
- Marhoom Mzahim Gunan
- Marhoom Abdullatif Abdulgani
- Marhoom Mohammad Jubat
- General Mohammad Mohammed

In 1972, Sh. Moti-ur-Rasool accepted the invitation to come to Kenya and he was welcomed by Brother Saber Gul and Brother Abdulhamid.

Prior to his arrival, Brother Akhtar Rao of the Islamic Foundation had notified Brother Saber Gul about a young, energetic, and vibrant man who was seconded by Darul Ifta of Saudi Arabia to come to Young Muslim Association and Garissa Muslims Children Home (GMCH) to support their cause.

The coming of Sh. Moti-Ur-Rasool was a major boost to both the Young Muslim Association, and in particular to the late Maalim Juma in his endeavors to establish the Garissa Muslim Children's Home. Thus, this new development was received with excitement and sigh of relief. It is after the coming of Sheikh that the whole dynamics of the Garissa Muslim Children's Home changed. The two philanthropists worked very hard and determinedly faced the task of building the center on the newly acquired site.

It has been almost 50 years since shaykh moved to Kenya and despite old age, Shaykh is still striving to serve the orphanage and the Ummah as best he can.

To continue the great work done by those before us YMA is dedicated to continuing to serve the growing needs of the ummah. It was with these thoughts that YMA's focus is not only on helping people but laying down the infrastructure to ensure that help continues to be there for them for years to come.