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Islamic Universities as Agents of Development and Social Transformation: The Way Forward.

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Abstract

Islamic Universities in the East Africa region possess a lengthy and illustrious chronicle of actively participating in Muslim communities' advancement and societal metamorphosis programs.

In today's society, Islamic institutions encounter several problems and possibilities that need a reassessment of their purpose and objectives. This study investigates the dynamic function of Islamic universities in promoting sustainable social progress, preserving Islamic cultural principles, and effectively managing the interaction between traditional and contemporary elements within the Muslim minority of East Africa region through an explanatory research approach. This article posits that Islamic Universities should embrace a comprehensive strategy that amalgamates the Islamic worldview as catalysts for developmental growth and transformation of contemporary knowledge of sciences, technology, education, religious values, demanding skills, engineering, art, and mathematics.

With a curriculum deeply anchored in Islamic worldview and historical Islamic knowledge, it has the potential to cultivate a cohort of future leaders who are dedicated to the advancement of their religion and the betterment of society via a focus on multidisciplinary studies, and leadership development. This article presents a prospective strategic plan for Islamic Universities in the East Africa region with the significance of adopting a well-balanced strategy towards modernization, cultural contextualization, and addressing global complexities. The overarching goal is the integration of Islamic worldviews and principles with modern educational practices, as a guiding light for societal change within Muslim- minority regions in East Africa.

Keywords: *Islamic Universities, Social transformation, Islamic worldview, Community engagement, and Interdisciplinary approach*

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, Islamic universities (IUs) have played a crucial role in influencing Muslim cultures, intellectual capacities, social and moral structure. They have generated academia, philosophers, and professionals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of their communities and societies in the retention of the Islamic worldview. These universities have been actively contributing to the development and societal change of Muslim communities. These higher education institutions have played a crucial role in defining the intellectual, social, and moral aspects of Muslim communities at the peak of Islamic civilization. They have generated academics, philosophers, and professionals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of their communities and societies through sciences generated in the period of the Islamic Golden Age. This time occurred between 786 and 1258 and saw significant scientific developments under various Islamic dynasties such as the Umayyads of Córdoba, the Abbadids of Seville, the Samanids, the Ziyarids, the Buyids in Persia, and the Abbasid Caliphate.

The Islamic civilization made significant advancements in several fields of modern-day scientific discoveries, particularly in astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. Additional areas of scientific investigation included alchemy and chemistry, botany and agronomy, geography and cartography, ophthalmology, pharmacology, physics, and zoology. The civilization has imparted education and training to people of various backgrounds in an integrated approach curriculum with a crucial role in fostering research and

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innovation across many domains, such as science, technology, religious education, engineering, art, mathematics, and humanities. Islamic universities have played a crucial role in advancing interfaith discussion and fostering mutual understanding, which is vital for the development of a peaceful and harmonious society as a vital method of building connections among diverse groups.

Amidst a global landscape characterized by interconnectivity and a multitude of cultures and beliefs, Islamic Universities (IUs) could take values from the four primary purposes of universities, as proposed by Manuel Castells (2001), which are relevant to varying degrees in all cultures. First, Castells observes that Universities have always served as significant ideological apparatuses, reflecting the ideological conflicts inherent in all communities. Second, they have consistently served as a means of choosing and socialisation influential ruling classes. Third, the generation of knowledge, which is commonly regarded as their primary role, is actually of lesser significance. This is because scientific research tasks are often carried out by specialized national institutes in Europe and many developing countries, or by in-house laboratories of private companies, such as those in Japan. Fourth, one of the primary and often emphasized roles of universities is to provide education and training to develop a highly competent skilled workforce as referred to by Castells to as the "professional university".

Nevertheless, Islamic Universities (IUs) serve as distinct hubs of knowledge. They not only safeguard and propagate Islamic traditions but also play a crucial role in promoting progress and societal change. In addition to their traditional function in education, these institutions possess the capacity to transform into active catalysts of transformation and advancement, not alone for nations with a Muslim majority, but also for the international community as a whole. To this progress, Islamic academia should persist in actively contributing to the advancement and societal change of Muslim communities with a primary emphasis on delivering high-quality education that is directly applicable to the specific requirements of their communities as an imperative to encourage research and innovation that specifically tackles the pressing issues confronting Muslim cultures, including but not limited to poverty, unemployment, and social inequity.

This paper will examine the role of Islamic Universities (IUs) as catalysts for growth and societal change in Muslim communities. It will explore how these higher education institutions have been fostering research and innovation across many disciplines, including science, technology, and humanities, and the efforts made by them to foster interfaith conversation and comprehension, a crucial factor in the establishment of peaceful and harmonious communities. Ultimately, it will explore the future path for Islamic Universities (IUs) to sustain their active involvement in Muslim communities' progress and societal change.

2. Background to Islamic Universities (IUs)

Islamic Universities (IUs) have a rich and diverse history that spans over a thousand years, with the first Islamic university being established in the 9th century in Baghdad, Iraq. These universities were initially known as “madrasas” and were primarily focused on teaching Islamic law, theology, and Arabic language and literature. Over time, however, these institutions began to expand their curriculum to include other subjects such as mathematics, science, and philosophy. During the Golden Age of Islamic Civilization (8th-13th centuries CE), Islamic universities flourished and became centres of intellectual and scientific excellence, attracting scholars and students from all over the Islamic world. These universities were known for their emphasis on critical thinking, reasoned argumentation, and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, rather than solely for religious or practical purposes. Some of the most notable Islamic universities during this period include:

- Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, which was founded in 970 CE and is still in operation today as one of the most prestigious Islamic universities in the world.
- The University of Al-Karaouine in Fez, Morocco, which was founded in 859 CE and is considered to be the oldest university in the world.
- The University of Baghdad, which was founded in 775 CE and was once one of the largest and most renowned universities in the Islamic world.

Islamic Universities (IUs) play a crucial role in shaping the growth and societal metamorphosis of communities and nations. These institutions are not only centres of learning but also serve as catalysts for intellectual, cultural, and socio-economic development within Islamic societies and beyond. Through their educational programs, research initiatives, and community engagement, Islamic universities contribute to the advancement of knowledge, the preservation of Islamic heritage, and the promotion of ethical values that are essential for societal progress. Today, Islamic universities can be found in many countries around the world, and they continue to play an important role in preserving and promoting Islamic scholarship and values. These universities offer a wide range of academic programs, including undergraduate and graduate degrees in fields such as Islamic law, theology, Arabic language and literature, and science and engineering.

These institutions have the potential to significantly influence the trajectory of Muslim societies by offering education that is deeply grounded in Islamic worldview both values and principles. The integration of knowledge (IOK) of Islamic teachings with contemporary knowledge has the potential to foster the emergence of a novel cohort of leaders who possess the aptitude and erudition required to effectively tackle the predicaments confronting their societies.

According to Rabie (2013), social transformation refers to the process of reorganizing all facets of life, including culture, social interactions, politics, the economy, and how we think

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about and conduct our lives. By imparting an education that is founded on an Islamic worldview (values and principles), Islamic universities (IUs) have the potential to make a significant contribution to this transition as students will gain a profound understanding of their religion and plays a crucial role in the society with the support of this kind of education, which can also provide them with the skills and knowledge required to meet the need and provide solutions to the problems confronting the modern world.

In addition, while universities may assist in the dissemination of new information and the acquisition of new skills that are necessary to face the difficulties of sustainable development in a community. Universities can also play a role in the promotion of public awareness and the provision of preconditions for informed decision-making, responsible conduct, and consumer choice. The Islamic Universities (IUs) may contribute to the formation of societies that are more egalitarian and just if they take steps to advance sustainable development (Sharma, 2015). The IUs must also take precedence of the following;

i. Historical Significance

The historical root of Islamic University started at *Al-Qarawiyyin* University in Morocco, which was established in 859 CE, and *Al-Azhar University* in Egypt, which was established in 970 CE, are examples of Islamic universities that have historical origins that date back to the early stages of Islamic culture. Not just in the realm of religious studies, but also in subjects such as mathematics, medicine, and philosophy, these organizations played essential parts in the process of conserving and expanding knowledge. Their efforts established a foundation for subsequent generations of academics and paved the way for the establishment of modern Islamic universities (Tiliouine & Estes, 2016).

ii. Contemporary Roles

In recent years, Islamic Universities (IUs) have expanded their range of academic offerings, including a diverse array of subjects. In addition to theological education, these Universities provide instruction in contemporary sciences, social sciences, humanities, and technology. The process of diversification has provided graduates with the requisite skills to actively participate in many sectors, hence fostering economic growth and social advancement. Islamic Universities (IUs) may contribute to the formation of a society that is more egalitarian and just if they advocate for sustainable development. Furthermore, have a role to play in fostering conversation and understanding amongst people of different faiths. Islamic universities (IUs) may assist in the construction of bridges between various groups, as well as the promotion of peace and harmony, provided they create an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding for one another.

iii. Islamic Values and Ethics

Islamic universities (IUs) are characterized by their strong focus on promoting Islamic principles and ethics. These establishments often include lessons on justice, compassion, and social responsibility in their educational programs. Graduates from this institutions are not only well-prepared intellectually, but they also possess a strong moral compass, enabling them to act as catalysts for constructive social transformation (Lee, 2022).

Islamic Universities (IUs) have always played the role of guardians of Islamic legacy, preserving Islamic law, holy texts, and other forms of Islamic literatures. They have been crucial in the maintenance and transmission of Islamic knowledge, ensuring that it is available to the next generations of Islamic scholars and students. They continue to see their identity as fundamentally based on the role they play in preserving the intellectual and spiritual heritage of Islam.

iv. Global Outreach and Collaboration

As a result of the current trend toward globalization, Islamic universities now have the option to participate in worldwide cooperative projects and partnerships. This makes it possible to share information, to get an understanding of other cultures, and to work together to find solutions to problems on a global scale. Islamic universities have the potential to create an effect on a worldwide scale via activities like as joint academic research initiatives, academic conferences, and student exchange programs (Gray-Rosendale & Stammen, 2020). Islamic Universities (IUs) are able to provide instruction of a high calibre in the scientific and technological fields. This is very necessary for the development of the skills and knowledge required to generate new employment opportunities, enhance existing infrastructure, and construct a robust economy (Etzkowitz et al., 2000).

Furthermore, Islamic Universities (IUs) have the ability to play a role as actors in the process of social change and growth. These institutions have the potential to contribute to the creation of a society that is more equal, just, and peaceful because they provide education that is founded on the values and principles of Islam, promote sustainable development, and encourage interfaith communication.

3. Methodology

This study used an interpretative and qualitative research methodology. The Qualitative research methodology adopted in this paper refers to study techniques that mainly concentrate on investigating, comprehending, and interpreting individuals' significances, circumstances, and encounters in authentic environments. It focuses on subjective human experiences rather than measurable and statistical facts. Mohajan (2018) emphasizes that qualitative research involves an interpretative and naturalistic approach, where phenomena are studied in their natural environment. The goal is to understand and interpret these phenomena based on the meanings attributed to them by individuals. It aims to understand the underlying reasons, motivations, opinions, and feelings. It is more about depth and complexity rather than breadth or generalizability (Willison et al., 2020). The research used the interpretative paradigm to examine the viewpoints of participants about the specific efforts

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undertaken by Islamic Universities to transform the society or their society. This was augmented by a comprehensive examination of specific papers, such as university reports posted on their websites and outreach initiatives undertaken by them.

3.1 Research Model

This article adopted narrative data analysis which is a qualitative research technique that involves examining the stories or narratives individuals share as a means of comprehending their experiences, gaining insight into their surroundings, and interpreting various occurrences. Robert and Shenhav (2014) reveal that narrative analysis plays a crucial role in human communication and has profound origins in shaping individuals' comprehension and the significance of their existence. A narrative isn't just any story; it's a representation of connected events and characters that has an identifiable structure, holds significance, and provides insight into human experiences.

3.2 Purpose of Narrative Analysis

As revealed by Curry et al. (2009) narratives can be collected through interviews, autobiographies, diaries, letters, or any form where stories are recounted just like in this article to accomplish the following tasks;

- **a.** To understand how Islamic Universities (IUs) are making a positive and significant impact in their societies according to the Islamic worldview.
- **b.** To contribute to the universal and cohesive social order based on Islamic principles and values.
- **c.** To enhance and uplift a comprehensive integration of knowledge (IOK) and intellectual growth
- **d.** Serves as an advocate for the integration of Islamic teachings with modern academic disciplines such as social sciences, management sciences, humanities, sciences, engineering, and technology.

3.3 Data Collection

The framework of the research allowed the collection of data via narrative technique conducted on the opinion of students, academic and non-academic staff, and on the University portals of selected Universities in West and East African countries as the predominant Islamic Universities within the African continent. The selected Islamic Universities (IUs) are listed below;

Table 1.

No.	Islamic Universities in Central and East Africa	Islamic Universities in West Africa
1.	Islamic Universities In Uganda – Uganda	Islamic University of Niger- Niger
2.	Islamic Call University- Uganda	Al-Qalami University - Nigeria
3.	Ummah University- Kenya	Summit University - Nigeria
4.	Islamic University of Kenya	AlHikmah University - Nigeria
5.	Omdurman Islamic University- Sudan	Fountain University - Nigeria
6.	International University of Africa-Sudan	Crescent University – Nigeria
7.	University of Qur'an Kareem – Sudan	Al-Istiqamah University – Nigeria
8.	Muslim University of Morogoro - Tanzania	Islamic University College - Ghana
9.	Abdulrahman Al-Sumait Memorial University- Tanzania	Al'Fourqane Islamic University of Côte D'iviore
10.	King Malik Faisal University- Chad	Ibn Batuta University College- Benin

3.4 Findings

The findings indicated that Islamic Universities (IUs) can serve as catalysts for development and social transformation by advocating for moderate religious principles and actively participating in sustainable community development within the perspective of the Islamic worldview. This was acquired through narrative analysis revealed by the simple random sampling that involves the random selection of a small subset of persons or members of the IUs from Table 1. This ensures that every person or member of a population has an equitable and unbiased chance of being selected (Bergman et al., 2019). The simple random sampling method is a very handy and straightforward strategy for selecting samples. The finding reveals the following results;

1. **Historical Significance:** Islamic universities (IUs), historically, have been centres of knowledge and innovation, playing crucial roles in the development of arts, sciences, and culture. Universities like Al-Qarawiyyin and Al-Azhar have centuries-long legacies of promoting learning and contributing to global knowledge and promoting Islamic heritage.
2. **Integrated Curriculum:** Islamic universities often integrate religious and secular subjects, which can foster holistic personal development, grounding scientific and technological pursuits in ethical and moral values derived from Islamic teachings.
3. **Community Engagement:** Many Islamic universities emphasize community service and engagement. This aligns with Islamic teachings of social responsibility (e.g., zakat, sadaqah), making universities potent agents for community development. Promotion of Social Values: Islamic universities can play a role in promoting values of justice, equality, and social welfare, directly impacting social transformation.
4. **Global Collaborations:** Partnerships with international educational institutions can enhance the quality of education, and research capabilities, and broaden the worldview of students in Islamic

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universities by provision of students with an all-encompassing education that is rooted in Islamic worldview of values and principles.

5. **Empowerment of Women:** In many regions, Islamic universities have been instrumental in empowering women by providing them access to higher education, challenging traditional norms, and enabling them to take on leadership roles in society.
6. **Research and Innovation:** In many countries, Universities play the core actor within the public research system and Islamic universities (IUs) can take greater advantage of being at the forefront of research in various fields, driving development and innovation grounded in Islamic ethics. By engaging in basic and applied research, IUs can conduct many scientific innovations that catalyse the development of novel technologies and other ground-breaking advancements embraced by both the industrial and public sectors. This is achieved by advancing scientific methodologies and tools, cultivating a proficient research workforce, and establishing collaborations between academia and industry. Hence, the transfer of knowledge by several forms of interaction or cooperation with industries, as well as the commercialization of research findings, either by universities themselves or through academic spin-outs will IUs a new hub for high-tech or science-based industries.
7. **Graduating skilled and competent students for the regional labour market:** All respondents concord that IUs should re-strategies to the level of regional hub for development and capacity building for the needed human capital encourages continual transformation in a regional economy by raising levels of labour productivity through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

4. The Way Forward:

When considering Islamic Universities (IUs) as agents of development and social transformation, the approach put forward encompasses a multifaceted strategy that aligns with Islamic values while engaging with modern challenges and opportunities. The way forward for Islamic universities as agents of development and social transformation lies in their ability to marry tradition with modernity, values with innovation, and faith with action. Through these comprehensive strategies, Islamic universities can become beacons of knowledge that not only educate individuals but also empower communities and contribute to global progress. Here's an outline for an appropriate approach from the narrations of the respondents from Table 1:

I) **Integration of Islamic Principles with Contemporary Knowledge;**

- Curriculum Development: Design academic programs that integrate Islamic principles with contemporary knowledge in sciences, humanities, and social sciences. This can help produce graduates who are not only well-versed in their faith but also equipped to contribute to modern society.
- Ethical Framework: Establish an ethical framework for research and learning based on Islamic teachings that can guide development and social transformation efforts.

II) **Community Engagement and Service Learning;**

- Outreach Programs: Expand community service and outreach programs that are rooted in the Islamic tradition of social responsibility.
- Service Learning: Incorporate service learning into the curriculum, where students participate in community development projects as part of their academic experience.

III) **Fostering Intellectual Discourse;**

- Interfaith Dialogue: Encourage interfaith and intercultural dialogue to promote understanding and peace, drawing from Islamic principles of respect and tolerance.
- Academic Conferences: Organize conferences and seminars on topics relevant to both Islam and modern society, providing platforms for intellectual exchange.

IV) **Research with Social Impact;**

- Problem-Oriented Research: Focus research initiatives on areas that directly contribute to societal needs, such as poverty alleviation, health, and sustainable development.
- Innovation and Technology: Encourage research and innovation in technology that aligns with Islamic ethics, contributing to ethical advancements in fields like medicine, engineering, and information technology.

V) **Empowering Underrepresented Groups;**

- Women's Education: Promote the education of women, which is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, to empower them as equal agents of development and social change.
- Inclusive Policies: Develop inclusive policies that ensure the university space is accommodating to all students, regardless of their background.

VI) **Economic Development and Entrepreneurship;**

- Islamic Finance and Economics: Offer programs and incubators in Islamic finance and economics to encourage entrepreneurship that complies with Islamic principles.
- Business Partnerships: In view of Altintas and Kutlu (2021), building partnerships with the business community to create opportunities for students and to foster economic development.

VII) **Global Partnerships and Collaboration;**

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- International Exchange Programs: Establish exchange programs with universities worldwide to promote cross-cultural understanding and academic collaboration.
- Global Networks: Join global networks of universities to collaborate on research, share best practices, and advocate for the role of Islamic universities in worldwide development.

VIII) **Sustainable Practices and Environmental Stewardship;**

- Green Campus Initiatives: Implement sustainable practices on campus, promoting environmental stewardship as a part of Islamic teachings on the guardianship of the earth.
- Sustainability Education: Incorporate sustainability into the curriculum to prepare students to tackle environmental challenges.

IX) Leadership Development;

- Mentorship Programs: Establish mentorship programs that connect students with leaders and professionals to nurture the next generation of leaders.
- Leadership Training: Offer leadership training programs that integrate Islamic leadership principles with modern leadership theories and practices.

X) **Measuring Impact and Continuous Improvement;**

- Impact Assessment: Regularly assess the impact of the university's initiatives on development and social transformation, using both qualitative and quantitative measures.
- Feedback Loops: Create feedback mechanisms involving students, faculty, alumni, and the community to improve programs and initiatives continuously.

5. Discussions and Conclusion

The narrative report on 'Islamic Universities as Agents of Development and Social Transformation:' clearly demonstrates that these institutions have a distinct role in promoting development and accelerating social transformation., it is evident that these institutions hold a unique position in fostering development and catalysing social change. IU has the potential to bridge the gap between traditional Islamic education and contemporary needs of development by integrating religious values with modern scientific knowledge. They can serve as platforms for critical thinking, innovation, and moral uprightness, contributing to the socio-economic upliftment of the Muslim community and society at large. The role of IUs in development is multifaceted, involving the creation of knowledgeable individuals who are well-versed in Islamic jurisprudence and equipped to tackle modern challenges. These universities can produce graduates who are agents of change, carrying forward the torch of Islamic awareness and enlightenment through various sectors such as economics, education, science, and technology (Fathoni, 2022). Moreover, these institutions can act as mediators in promoting peace and understanding, challenging extremism, and fostering inclusivity by engaging with diverse communities. The development of curricula that emphasize ethical practices, community service, and environmental stewardship aligns with the Islamic principles of public welfare and can significantly contribute to sustainable development.

The discussions throughout the study as narrated by the selected respondents highlighted several strategic pathways for IUs to enhance their role in the development and social transformation. Key among these is the adoption of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches that merge Islamic teachings with contemporary studies, encouraging a holistic understanding of global issues. There is a consensus on the need for enhanced academic standards, research capabilities, and international collaborations to amplify their impact. The challenges faced by these universities, such as the need for financial stability, academic freedom, and modern pedagogical methods, were also examined. Addressing these challenges requires robust governance structures, continuous faculty development, and the embrace of technological advancements in education. Furthermore, the study discussed the imperative for Islamic universities to extend their reach beyond academic circles, engaging with policymakers, civil society, and the private sector. This engagement can drive evidence-based policies and create partnerships that leverage the strengths of the Islamic worldview and its principles in addressing contemporary developmental challenges. Finally, the way forward for Islamic universities lies in their ability to be adaptive, innovative, and globally connected while remaining true to their core Islamic values and principles. By doing so, they can contribute significantly to the knowledge economy and be pivotal in shaping a future that is not only prosperous but also equitable and ethically grounded. In essence, Islamic universities are not mere repositories of knowledge but dynamic entities that can spearhead development and societal transformation in ways that align with the rich heritage and forward-looking aspirations of the Muslim world.

Consequently, Islamic universities (IUs) must cultivate a Knowledge-Based Society by enhancing their ability to generate, distribute, and use information with greater efficiency. Constructing a Knowledge-Based Society is a challenging task, but it may be achieved via policy advancements, including the elimination of scientific divisions, enhancing the academic environment, fortifying research institutions, training of knowledgeable professionals, and fostering collaboration. These regulations are anticipated to promote IUs to establish standards in the global world. Hence, there is no other term that accurately captures the concept of the progress and development of Islamic universities other than "rise."

6 Recommendations for Policy Markers

IUs can reconcile the disparity between conventional Islamic education and the current requirements of progress by integrating religious principles with contemporary scientific

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knowledge. They can also serve as a platform to facilitate critical thinking, creativity, and moral research, therefore promoting the socio-economic advancement of both the Muslim community and society as a whole.

Furthermore, these establishments may serve as intermediaries in advancing peace and interfaith coexistence, confronting radicalism, and cultivating inclusiveness via interaction with other populations. Designing educational programs that prioritize ethical conduct, community engagement, and environmental conservation is by the Islamic values of promoting public well-being and has the potential to have a substantial impact on achieving sustainable development. The recommendations aim to ensure that Islamic universities can effectively serve as agents of development and social transformation, contributing positively to their societies and the wider world are put forward;

1) **Curricular Innovation for Socio-economic Relevance**: Encourage Islamic colleges to continually update and reinvent their academic programs to guarantee that their offerings are in line with the most recent socioeconomic trends and the requirements of the labor market. This might entail combining more contemporary fields of study such as sciences, technology, religious moral value (IOK), engineering, art, mathematics, and commerce (STREAMCO), with more traditional forms of Islamic research.
2) **Research Funding and Prioritization:** Allocate targeted research grants for Islamic universities to undertake research in areas that can drive development and social transformation, such as sustainable technologies, social policy, and ethical governance. Alongside Infrastructure and technology, IUs invest in state-of-the-art facilities and technology platforms that will enhance their educational delivery, broaden their research capabilities, and enable them to participate in the global academic community more effectively.
3) **Faculty Development Programs:** Establish and fund professional development programs for faculty members at IUs to improve teaching quality, encourage the adoption of innovative educational practices, and keep pace with global academic standards for enhancing international collaboration and exchange that facilitate international partnerships, student exchanges, and academic collaborations with other universities to enrich the educational experience and broaden the perspectives of students and faculty.
4) **Community Engagement and Outreach Service Learning:** Support programs that connect IUs with their local communities through service-learning projects and community service initiatives will assist in fostering a sense of social responsibility and real-world impact among students. Following the view of Sarif, S. M., & Ismail, Y. (2023), this can be in the form of entrepreneurship and innovation incubation that is set up as incubation centers to nurture business acumen and innovation, translating academic knowledge into practical solutions and business ventures as a fundamental tool for the abolition of poverty and financial sustainability within the Muslim world.
5) **Scholarships and Financial Support for Students:** Provide scholarships and financial aid for students from underprivileged backgrounds to ensure that education at Islamic universities is accessible to all segments of society, promoting inclusivity and diversity. Through scholarship provisions, the needy Muslim student be inclusive and embrace the strength of educational emancipation and the diversity of the Muslim world and beyond in their student and faculty programme therefore promoting cross-cultural understanding and cooperation for a sustainable world.
6) **Leverage Islamic Finance for Development:** IUs should use Islamic financial instruments, such as *zakat* (almsgiving), *waqf* (endowment), and Islamic banking, to fund development projects through university channels, thus integrating financial models with ethical and developmental objectives. By adopting the approach, IUs will develop regulatory frameworks that ensure IUs have the financial autonomy to govern themselves while adhering to high standards of educational excellence and accountability.
7) **Align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Encourage Islamic universities to align their educational and research objectives with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to contribute to global efforts in addressing poverty, inequality, climate change, and peacebuilding (Vanner et al., 2016). This will contribute to value-based education in IUs, ensuring that the future leaders they produce are not just skilled professionals but also ethical and socially conscious individuals with the national development agenda and the global world.

Policymakers can assist Islamic universities in becoming significant drivers of development and social transformation within their respective places as advocates of social change in both the Islamic world and the global community if they accept these policy proposals and put them into practice.

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