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**Islamic Relief Australia**

**Inspired by Islamic humanitarian values, Islamic relief Worldwide aims to achieve international relief and development agency working to meet the needs of vulnerable people, and to empower them to become self-sufficient so that they can live with dignity and independence. Discrimination and injustice are major causes of poverty worldwide. Around the world, women are at risk of rape, domestic violence, dying in childbirth, being left penniless when their husbands die or leave them, unable to find a job due to lack of skills or education, shunned by society due to illness or being widowed, struggling to provide for orphaned or disabled children and are more likely than their male counterparts to be killed in natural disasters. Yet women are the powerhouses of developing countries: they produce most of the food, make up a third of the official labour force and care for families and homes. As a faith based organisation, we at Islamic Relief are able to encourage the empowerment, equality and respect of women, from the perspective of Islam. We're breaking down the misconceptions that Islam prohibits women from employment and education or that it permits family violence and harassment.**

**Around the world, women are \*survivors\* and International Women's Day is the day to celebrate them. There are women bringing up children on their own, holding families together after grief, learning skills to make a living, setting up businesses, getting an education, building new lives after war, rape and violence, battling cancer, delivering babies in warzones and training others to survive disasters.**

**This International Women's Day was held at Hilton with special guest Claire Mary Moore Shadow Minister for Women, Shadow Minister for Carers, Shadow Minister for Communities and Leader of Opposition Business in the Senate since 18 October 2013. Thank you to all the beautiful ladies who came to our fundraising high-tea and supported our commemoration of International Women's Day.**

**The generous donations of \$21, 000.00 will help empower women and their families in Lombok, Indonesia and lift them out of poverty Inshallah. We would like to give a shout out to our sponsors: IsStyle; JAS: Makeup, Styling, Consultancy; Anya's Hair and Beauty; My Lily's Fashion; Amira Abayas; LeSweets by Sarah, Bombonieres and Chocolates; Ayesha Goder; and Hunnys Closet. Please support them in their own business endeavours! Finally, a huge thank you to our tireless volunteers who have dedicated so many hours to ensuring the success of the event. We couldn't have done this without you. Jazakallahu Khayrun. Dr Nora Amath and myself will be heading to Indonesia in April to meet these amazing women who have survived living in the harshest of circumstances, and through sheer willpower and determination, are building better lives for themselves.**

**We're celebrating just a few of the thousands upon thousands of amazing, resilient women Islamic Relief has met and supported around the world.**

- Let me today take you on a small trip to meet these amazing women.**

#### **THE NURSES OF GAZA – PALESTINE**

**In Gaza, children are born into a warzone. Since the last invasion, this nurse at the neonatal unit in Al-Shifa hospital, supported by Islamic relief Palestine, reports that sadly, the number of premature births and babies born with deformities has risen.**

**The trauma and difficulties of living in a conflict zone are affecting mothers and their babies, but dedicated women like this nurse are working tirelessly to help them survive.**

Watch Gaza's story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uP4eZXb-Ac>



### **The Shea Butter in Mali**

**This group of women are an incredible example of the power of working together. With the help of Islamic Relief, they set up a small business producing shea butter. The nuts they collect and grind to a paste have many benefits, and shea butter is the main ingredient of many skin creams. Islamic Relief has partnered them with a cosmetics company in Paris, who now buy and import their butter!**

**The business started off small but with training and support it has expanded to employ 74 women. These women have survived the difficulties of poverty and have come out the other side stronger and empowered.**

Watch their story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuV3FTCA9mk>



### **MUSHROOM CULTIVATION – INDONESIA**

**In Indonesia, we're giving female breadwinners practical training, support and a way to grow a business through a mushroom cultivation project. The ongoing mushroom project is progressing well with six women groups supported in West Lombok for the production and marketing. Harvest is expected in February and March at an average of 500/kg per month. For raw mushrooms, the women have a guaranteed market due to high demand and limited supply. Islamic relief will aid the women to be linked with the local Market Forum which helps to identify market shortfalls.**

**Islamic relief will be providing the women with further support in marketing the processed mushrooms, market development, packaging and certifications. With your**

**support today Islamic Relief Australia will able to support a larger number of groups of women with limited funds.**

