

A Year of Learning:

Educating the Philanthropic Community About Racialized and Stigmatized Nonprofits



IUPUI

MUSLIM PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE
Lilly Family School of Philanthropy



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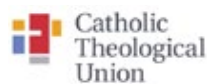


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Introduction

Spanning over 400 years in the Americas, the Muslim American story is long and multifaceted. Muslims are one of the most diverse faith communities in the United States with no majority ethnicity or race. Muslim identity is highly racialized and stigmatized because of an increasing climate of Islamophobia. Islamophobia existed long before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; however, it became more prominent in the public square after 9/11 (Wasif, 2021). The Muslim nonprofit sector is young, with many organizations established in the post-9/11 era. These nonprofits are small and are funded mostly by Muslim American donors. According to the Pew Research Center (2017), the Muslim American community is young and has less income and wealth than average Americans.

The Muslim American community consists heavily of immigrants and their children. According to the Pew Research Center (2017), 20% of Muslim Americans are Black, 28% are Asian, and 8% are Hispanic. While 41% are classified as White, this classification includes Arabs, Persians, and Kurds, whose only option on American forms is White (Besheer, 2018; Cooperman, 2017). The challenges of Muslim Americans are further compounded by the US Department of Treasury's guidelines for best practices for charities established after 9/11, which recommends that Muslim donors assess overhead as a possible indicator of bad actions. Government scrutiny of Muslim charities and donors along with the scrutiny of overhead created a broad misconception about overhead.

Muslim-led nonprofits are heavily impacted by Islamophobia and a lack of legitimacy. Therefore, Muslim-led nonprofits lack funding from mainstream philanthropy, which restricts the Muslim nonprofit sector in several ways. First, philanthropic foundations do not understand how to engage with these organizations. Second, philanthropic foundations are afraid to engage with these organizations because of Islamophobia. Third, when Muslim-led organizations receive funds as part of a broader interfaith network, because of



their relatively smaller budgets, they usually receive a smaller amount than their counterparts — and these funds are largely programmatic, requiring difficult matches from the Muslim-led nonprofits.

Community Collaboration Initiative

The Community Collaboration Initiative (CCI) is a three-year project focused on building and solidifying collaborations between Muslim American nonprofits and helping them build bridges with external organizations. CCI brought together 22 Muslim American nonprofits for a three-year collaboration, in which the participants worked together to solve a common problem. CCI learned that these nonprofits were not engaging with foundations, nor did they have the capacity to engage with the philanthropic community. CCI also discovered that many of the nonprofits were struggling with various challenges, including, but not limited to, limited resources, capacity issues, and lack of knowledge about the philanthropic community. CCI also learned that some of the organizations were hesitant to reach out to new donors because of the organizations' stigmatized and racialized identity.

Year of Learning

With participation and feedback from the above mentioned 22 organizations, the CCI team organized and launched the Year of Learning (YOL), a collaboration between academics, practitioners, community leaders, and the philanthropic community to educate and raise awareness about Muslim American nonprofits, bridge the gap between Muslim-led nonprofits and the philanthropic community, and collaborate with different foundations — including organizations working in civic justice, mental health, arts and culture, public policy and advocacy, among others. Within this framework, CCI, the Field Foundation, Forefront and the Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition evolved into the Learning Launch partnership. The Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement (IPCE) at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) served as a partner for the learning launch of the YOL. YOL learned from and was built upon prior work of indigenous communities in the Chicagoland area. It is difficult to paint a rich picture in a single report of the deep interactions, meaningful engagement and the development of relationships. It is even more difficult to demonstrate the potentially rich impact so soon after this important year long project.



The Muslim-led nonprofits had applied to different foundations for grants, but had not been successful, mainly because Muslims were a marginalized community, and their nonprofits were not on the foundations' radar. The YOL was an opportunity to bridge that gap by addressing the following questions:

1. Who are Muslim Americans?
2. What challenges do Muslim Americans face?
3. What are the meaningful ways through which foundations can help to overcome those challenges?

The YOL was a yearlong effort aiming to provide a sustainable platform for honest and meaningful conversations between leaders from the Muslim-led nonprofit sector and the philanthropic community. Muslim organizations and their allies recognized the need for improving fact-based knowledge, as well as removing systemic barriers that had prevented Muslim American nonprofit organizations from acquiring equitable opportunity to build relationships and receive funding and resources. A crucial component of the YOL was to integrate the knowledge and seek action for change. The nonprofits and the



donors were encouraged to speak with each other regarding the information and process and what it meant for them. Through the YOL, a directory from the inaugural event was made available to help make connections. The YOL included the following events:

- SEP. 2020** The CCI and the IL Muslim Civic Coalition leadership team presented the idea of YOL to the Field Foundation and received limited seed money. Conveners gathered and launched the idea of YOL for Muslims in America and the Philanthropic community.
- NOV. 2020** The planning committee met, developed a plan and established committees to implement YOL.
- FEB. 18, 2021** YOL Learning Launch Event: More than 300 philanthropic leaders, Muslim American leaders, and allies participated.
- APR. 21, 2021** Executive Session Event: More than 30 philanthropic leaders, allies, and conveners discussed Muslim-led nonprofits, barriers to funding, and strategic next steps.
- SEP. 28, 2021** Advancing DEI in the Philanthropic Community Event: More than 250 philanthropic leaders, Muslim American leaders, and allies participated.
- OCT. 7, 2021** Executive Session Event: Leadership roundtable dialogue held on Muslim inclusion in philanthropy. More than 30 philanthropic leaders, allies, conveners, and leaders, gathered to discuss the findings, barriers, and action plans on Muslim inclusion in philanthropy.
- DEC. 8, 2021** YOL Wrap-Up Meeting: Accomplishments, successes, and next steps were discussed



Literature Review

According to the Center for American Progress and PolicyLink (2013), America will become increasingly diverse, with no racial majority in America by 2050. Existing literature on racialized US communities shows that they have faced sustained discrimination and prejudice and exclusion from many opportunities (Cunningham, Avner, & Justilien, 2014) at all levels of society (personal, interpersonal, and institutional (Kessler, Mickelson & Williams, 1999; Pager & Shepherd, 2008). This discrimination affects minorities' achievements and outcomes in diverse areas, from education to employment to issues like policing and safety (Krieger, 2014). Thus, we must deal with the facts: most racial and religious minorities face subtle or explicit religious or racial discrimination.

Identity and Donation Decisions

Minorities also face discrimination in charitable donations. More than 70% of Americans say that African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians face discrimination in the United States (Daniller, 2021), with untold consequences. According to a 2014 Pew Research Center report, 62% of Americans have never met a Muslim, and the Public Religion Research Institute (2015) noted that 83% of Americans say they know little or nothing about the religious beliefs and practices of Muslims. Research on Islamophobia in the United States suggests that Muslims face discrimination at both societal and government levels. Islamophobic images in the media significantly affect public opinion of Muslims (Saeed, 2007; Terman, 2017; Alsultany, 2013).

Research demonstrates that identity plays a critical role in donation decisions, with individuals preferring to donate to their own racial, religious, and other in-groups (Hutcheson & Dominguez, 2016).

Global surveys have come to the same conclusion. For instance, both Canadian (Rajan et al., 2009) and United Kingdom donors are more likely to donate to their in-groups (domestic causes) than to outgroups (international charity) (Micklewright & Schnepf, 2009). Likewise, minorities such as Asian Americans, Jewish Americans, and African Americans are more likely to donate to causes that benefit their ethnicity or religion (Kosmin, 1995; Brinkerhoff, 2014; Hamilton et al., 1995; Shao, 1995). These racial biases also affect donations to Muslim causes. For instance, implicit color biases affect donation decisions (Bhati, 2020). Discriminatory attitudes toward minorities such as Latinos and Muslims also affect donations (Tremblay-Boire & Prakash, 2019; Wasif & Prakash, 2017).



Islamophobia and Donating to Muslim-Led Nonprofits

According to Casey (2018), Muslim identity is highly stigmatized because of the increasing climate of Islamophobia. Muslim status has become laden with negative connotations, leading many Muslims to encounter stigma and discrimination. The Patriot Act, which denotes that individuals supporting organizations that support terrorism can be indicted, has negatively affected donations to Muslim nonprofits. As a result, donors to Muslim nonprofits are afraid they may get into trouble if they donate to Muslim charities (Jamal, 2011; Siddiqui, 2013).

Nonprofits Led by People of Color

Rendon (2020) noted a new report indicating that “people of color win less grant money and are trusted less to make decisions about how to spend those funds than groups with white leaders” and that the differences “are sometimes stark” (p. 1). However, philanthropy is increasingly acting on the belief that a less diverse sector in terms of people, organizations, and ideas endangers the impact of the entire sector. While only 25% of family foundations use formal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals or strategies to guide their giving, DEI considerations are significantly more common in family foundations formed over the past 10 years. Nonprofit executives tend to worry they might lose funding if they speak candidly



about donor behavior, but in interviews with leaders of color, it becomes evident that the fear is amplified. Dorsey, Kim, Daniels, Sakaue, and Savage (2020) reported that at least one leader paused the interview to check whether their call was recorded or not, and others reminded them afterward that their experiences could not be published. This fear shows how fragile leaders of color feel about their funding relationships. They also found that leaders of color are consistently hitting four barriers with their fundraising: getting connected, building rapport, securing support, and sustaining relationships (Dorsey, Kim, Daniels, Sakaue, & Savage, 2020). These barriers allow philanthropic professionals to unconsciously internalize bias in an organized way.

Research finds that racial discrimination affects leaders' perception that the government will discriminate against Muslims. Muslims believe they are stereotyped as racialized rather than as a religious minority. This goes beyond merely Muslim Americans' trust in government and other institutions, particularly among nonprofits belonging to racialized minorities (Noor, Wasif, Siddiqui, & Khan, 2021).

A significant body of literature addresses evidence of racial discrimination (Butler & Broockman, 2011; Gong, Xu, & Takeuchi, 2017) and evidence of religious discrimination in American society (Dana et al., 2018; Lajevardi, 2020; Pfaff et al., 2020), but no research connects the two. Our current research breaks ground as it illustrates how religious discrimination may combine or be subsumed by racial discrimination to the detriment of mutual understanding, acceptance, and appreciation between the Muslim-led nonprofit sector and the philanthropic community.



Year of Learning Findings

The YOL, which was fundamental to the philanthropic community's understanding of Muslim nonprofits, helped to raise awareness, create understanding, and generate an action for change with long-term effects. It was a time for everyone to connect personally as Muslim leaders, allies, and philanthropists. The YOL served as a platform for both Muslim-led nonprofits and the philanthropic community to build relationships and understand each other's stories for purposes beyond direct funding. It was a yearlong initiative and served as an opportunity to begin and sustain relationships.

The following represents the overall findings from different events that took place during the YOL:

1. [Muslim-Led Nonprofits Engaging with the Philanthropic Community](#)
2. [Philanthropic Community Engaging with the Muslim-Led Nonprofits](#)
3. [Impact of the YOL](#)
4. [Successes from the YOL](#)
5. [Challenges of the YOL](#)
6. [Learning Outcomes](#)



Muslim-Led Nonprofits Engaging with the Philanthropic Community

The YOL was an opportunity for the Muslim American community to showcase the impact of the work it was doing. Activists, community leaders, and nonprofit leaders who had been working for years were excited to meet other leaders and build pathways to funding incredible initiatives in Muslim communities. Representatives from the Muslim-led nonprofits engaged with members of the philanthropic community by telling their Muslim stories, who they were, where their stories intersected, how they saw themselves in the context of the American story, and the major challenges and struggles they faced in the context of the American experience. The Muslim-led nonprofit leaders also engaged with the philanthropic community by mentioning how stereotypes held them back from doing the real work when they must explain their background. The impact of stereotypes on their daily lives and experiences as Americans was one of the main concerns shared by the Muslim leaders. It is important to note that the YOL leadership decided that the first set of programming should focus on getting to know Muslims through arts & culture. This conception of the programming is what made the first event so successful.

It's important to remember the history of why Arabs are considered white. Unfortunately, there is a long history of anti-Black racism in our community that led Arab-Americans to fight to be categorized as 'white' many years ago.

It was good to focus intently on a couple of projects in film, to give people a more detailed look at the moving parts of a production and the challenges filmmakers face.

Without naming names, I remember a prominent Chicago foundation explicitly stating they wouldn't fund a 'Muslim' organization... point blank.

Our area of focus is Islamic Design Thinking, which is the underlying framework for this convened meeting. We have case studies from both the Muslim community, and mainstream. We led design and technology in Silicon Valley, and helped bring notable brands to market, with very high level of success. We would love to work with everyone in this meeting to help you achieve success.



Challenges Muslim nonprofits face

Bias is experienced by nonprofits in small and emerging communities such as the Asian community, where organizations are not as developed as in larger communities. Even if the small size of the nonprofit is a barrier to funding, relationships with funders should be encouraged so that collaborations can ensue. A small number of foundations dedicated to supporting Muslim communities typically fund projects aimed at improving perceptions about Muslims work such as combating Islamophobia and other work that addresses stereotypes and civil rights issues. It is easier to find funding for these types of issues than for community development challenges. There are some general misunderstandings around Muslim communities. Stereotypes about Muslims are rampant, even among progressives. There are misperceptions that the Muslim community is a monolith, that Muslim nonprofits are faith-based only, and that the work of the Muslim nonprofits only serves a niche community.

Philanthropic Community Engaging with Muslim-Led Nonprofits

Leaders from the philanthropic community engaged with representatives from the Muslim nonprofit sector. They were inspired by the diversity of the people in the breakout rooms. Different stories. Most philanthropic leaders said that they know very little about Islam and the work most Muslim-led nonprofits are doing. Furthermore, the planners sought to push philanthropic foundations beyond gatekeepers that have been chosen to represent Muslim Americans so these foundations could deepen connections with one of the most diverse faith community in the United States.

I know so little about Islam and want to learn.

We will share resources on best practices, webinars and fundraising with the Muslim-led nonprofits.

Thank you for inviting me to this meaningful gathering, seeing so many amazing organizations on this call, I wanted to mention that my organization is happy to list your organization in our Nonprofit Directory.



The leaders of philanthropic community discussed important questions, including, but not limited to:

- What are some ways to address the fear and suspicion around Muslim-led institutions?
- How can Muslim leaders be differentiated by the specialized sectors that they work in, rather than being seen as a diverse voice?
- What does it mean to look beyond institutions that have already been identified as relationship-worthy?
- How do you view collaborations among same-faith institutions from the perspective of empowerment?
- How can shifts from funding programs to funding organizations be met?

These conversations were just the beginning. The YOL showed how we can partner to create a deeper understanding of Muslim communities, nuances of funding, and specific issues these communities face.

Anti-Muslim biased experiences shared by funders

Some donors shared their experiences and fears associated with Muslim-led nonprofits. One participant recalled a time when “a board member suggested checking out an organization that had a Muslim sounding name to be sure they were not on a terror list.” By sharing such experiences, staff members and foundation board members experienced learning moments in which they saw how Islamophobia affects funding and that they need resources to help them understand and overcome their biases.

Although in recent years, foundations of all sorts and sizes have made commitments to advance racial equity and justice, good intentions can be undermined by strategic and administrative structures and processes that shape foundation decisions. It is important to recognize the ways in which institutional operating procedures reinforce racism and other forms of injustice in police departments, courts, and health and welfare agencies. So, too, foundations’



practices warrant serious review (Beer, Patrizi, & Coffman, 2021). According to Beer and colleagues, without considerable changes in decision-making power and how they act in relation to others, foundations may make equity and justice promises they cannot keep. A powerful negative perception exists in America about Muslim Americans, and if foundations do not fund religious groups, they still must address the challenges different stigmatized groups face on a daily basis. Islamophobia exists not only in perception but also in Google searches, as different algorithms are designed to focus on Islamophobia.

These factors require a closer look at funders' portfolios. Funding leaders of color are a significant piece of this puzzle because these leaders often bring strategies that intimately relate to the racialized experiences of communities of color and the issues these communities face. Unfortunately, that is not happening today.

We found an averseness among many funders to fund religious communities, including the marginalized and racialized ones. This reluctance resulted from avoiding funding religious conversion initiatives, and that bias still exists. Focusing on societal problems is a key way to overcome this bias, a way to show that Muslim organizations fit within existing parameters of a portfolio. Both religious and secular organizations can coexist. One funder said that they



had historically funded organizations that arose from a faith-based community but that were no longer faith-based. They screened for organizations that did not require people to engage in religious activities to receive services. Another funder looked for organizations with expertise and cultural competency in serving specific communities, such as a Muslim-led health clinic that worked closely with the Muslim community. They saw the value of training staff to be sensitive to issues in the Muslim community and viewed that as a strength rather than a barrier. Dilnaz Waraich, president of Waraich Family Fund, in an interview with the CCI research team, stated that:

“I, as a peer funder, had about 120 conversations and heard the phrase “religion blind” and “we do not fund proselytization organization” but had many other religious funding in their 990s and annual reports on the website. And I wondered – how is this not religious discrimination?”

How foundations can empower Muslim organizations

According to one funder:

“Recognizing the challenges many small organizations may have in structuring a proposal, providing resources to help with proposal writing is key.”

According to another funder:

“Muslims are a racialized minority while also being a religious community with shared beliefs. Funders can help steer the conversation about race and diversity to be more inclusive of Muslims. Priorities in strategic planning could be to have more Muslim and indigenous organizations in [the] portfolio. Recognize that Muslim leaders bring deep expertise in various sectors and include and recognize them for that expertise rather than viewing them as a diversity token.”

Members from the foundation community recommended using data from the Institute of Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) as a resource for research and education focused on Muslim American communities. The data helped provide transparency of where philanthropic dollars are going and how they will be used.



Impact of the YOL

The YOL focused on raising awareness around the struggles of Muslim Americans. Relationships between philanthropic institutions and Muslim American social, civic, and cultural service organizations were strengthened. Consequently, Muslim organizations and their allies recognized the need for improving fact-based knowledge, and removing systemic barriers that historically prevented Muslim American nonprofit organizations from acquiring equitable opportunity to build relationships and receive funding and resources. During the fall of 2020, a committee of leaders convened to start planning the first of a series of yearlong events to foster a deeper understanding of Muslim Americans, Muslim NGO communities, nuances of funding, and specific issues these communities face. The YOL focused on three main points:

- Education and awareness
- Action toward change
- Long-term impacts

The YOL resulted in the engagement of the philanthropic grantors and connecting them to Muslim-led nonprofits. The YOL enabled close connections between the philanthropic community and the nonprofits. This was the time for honest and difficult conversations. A total of 453 organizations participated in various programs during the YOL. Angelique Power, President of Skillman Foundation, in an interview with Melissa Weiss stated the importance of YOL:

“I was actually a part of conversations earlier this year brought together by Muslim leaders who were really strongly against that practice, and were trying to push against it, because they felt left out of a tremendous amount of funding that was happening when they are working on issues”.

The philanthropic community recognized the YOL as an innovative model that could influence organized philanthropy. One of the YOL's meaningful outcomes was the Muslim Collaboration Prizes (MCP) initiative. A major milestone occurred when the Chicago Community Trust (CCT) awarded a \$500,000 grant to help raise one million dollars for MCP.



The YOL further inspired and motivated the CCI organizations to take pride in their three-year journey with CCI. As a direct result of the YOL, the nonprofit organizations that participated in the CCI initiative started working towards participating in the MCP project. The five cohorts of CCI organizations focused their third-year collaboration to apply for funding from the MCP. Their goal was to develop the ability to work together to seek external funding collectively.

The MCP in partnership with the Waraich Family Fund and the Community Collaboration Initiative Leadership at the Lilly School of Philanthropy created a platform for all CCI-participating nonprofit organizations, where these organizations are mentored by the program officers at various foundations, including, but not limited to, the Chicago Community Trust, Marguerite Casey Foundation, Butler Family Fund, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, and Lever For Change (An affiliate of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation). Muhsin Hassan from Lever for Change served as the Awards Director for the MCP.

The MCP selection committee represents different foundations and is on a journey to understand Muslim-led institutions, including, but not limited to, the Waraich Family Fund. The YOL brought participants closer to the multiplicity of the Muslim American experience, while having honest conversations about the necessity of financial support and sustainable collaborations.

Successes from the YOL

Our evidence suggests that all events organized during the YOL were well attended and highly engaging. Accordingly, the CCI leaders saw new activity and engagement between the foundation community and the Muslim-led nonprofits within different CCI cohorts. However, this is an initial engagement and only time will show its impact and sustainability.

The YOL also resulted in many social media wins. The Summary of the Twitter account (@muslimsYOL) showed that, during the YOL Learning Launch event, in 13 days, the YOL earned 724 impressions per day, which is approximately 9,000 impressions (the number of times users see a tweet on Twitter). Engagement also increased on Facebook and other social media platforms.



The public relations success of the YOL's Learning Launch resulted in a directory of Muslim-led institutions and foundations and other stakeholders. The foundational outreach gained access to more than 600 media outlets. The Learning Launch received coverage on Chicago Public Radio, and the post-event reports were released in the station's nonprofit Times.

A fascinating YOL success was the response from the philanthropic community. The YOL included several events and post-events; the follow-up response and interest were invigorating. The work of CCI and the YOL initiative, the result of CCI's intervention, was discussed at different events and platforms hosted by organizations, including, but not limited to, the Johnson Center for Philanthropy, the Chronicle of Philanthropy, the Center for Effective Philanthropy, the National Center for Family Philanthropy, Habits of the Heart, the Rainbow Push Coalition, and the Wisconsin Public Radio.

Challenges of the YOL

The planning committee faced two major challenges. First was how to ensure a representative sample of Muslim American leaders who were engaged, empowered, and YOL participants. Muslim Americans are highly diverse, and while the planning committee did its best to seek representation, this issue needs to be a key priority for strategic planning of similar events.



Second, while many foundations participated, their number was small compared with the overall philanthropic sector. Successful efforts rest on whether foundations embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion of Muslim Americans and other marginalized groups. The foundation world continues to hesitate in becoming fully inclusive.

Learning Outcomes

Many learning outcomes illustrate the existing disconnect between the philanthropic community and Muslim-led nonprofits. We find that, among the reasons why foundations do not fund Muslim-led nonprofits, the major obstacles are lack of education and awareness and the history of Islamophobia.

Other learning outcomes related to this disconnect occur because some Muslim organizations are new and small and require mentorship and nurturing to build relationships with the broader philanthropic community. For example, one participating member from the Muslim-led nonprofit said: “We don’t know, who are the people who are making grants?”

Another important learning outcome is that the CCI-participating organizations started connecting with the foundations and the broader philanthropic community. For example, the CCI organizations began reaching out to the foundations and learned that to get funding, they needed to have a greater understanding of the grantmaking process and needed to continue building a multiracial effort. The organizations learned how to write grants and build capacity within their organizations. Throughout the YOL, CCI provided support for the organizations and arranged several workshops on grantmaking processes.

Moreover, foundations had anxiety about funding Muslim communities because of the growing Islamophobia and post-9/11 fear surrounding Muslims and the community in general. Most organizations also learned about changes in the way foundations approached the Native American community. Thus, by bringing the YOL to different platforms and discussing the experiences, opportunities abound in which organizations can understand and effect change.



Discussion and Conclusion

Based on our research, we propose a solution for bridging the gap between racialized nonprofits and the philanthropic community. By emphasizing the Community Collaboration Initiative model and the Year of Learning approach, we respond to the challenges of racialized nonprofits by creating awareness, education, and action toward change.

We suggest that philanthropic foundations need to invest beyond a small group of “model” nonprofits. Philanthropic foundations should consider building the Muslim-led nonprofit sector in the same way they did with previous civil rights movements. Building organizations should be a focus rather than only programmatic funding. Funding internal collaborations among Muslim-led nonprofits will create efficiency, develop a greater specialization, reduce waste, and create greater cohesion in a sector facing overwhelming challenges. Our research also suggests that by engaging with racialized communities, we can acknowledge and support marginalized communities that want to collaborate. Investing in Muslim nonprofits willing to collaborate with both other Muslim-led nonprofits and interfaith partnerships will strengthen this small but important sector. That said, growing pressure exists for foundations to be more effective in their service to diverse communities and more responsive to their needs, and questions have been raised about the fairness of philanthropy as it relates to giving to minority communities.

Donor attraction is a key element and requires good marketing skills, an area of expertise often lacking in small nonprofits. To ensure long-term success, Muslim-led nonprofits need to develop diverse financial sources. This can be achieved by understanding Muslim American donors’ preference and motivation to give. The absence of a mature donor base can make it difficult for foundations



to give to these nonprofit organizations. Too little outreach focuses on the cultivation of Muslim Americans as potential donors, volunteers, and board members. The Muslim nonprofit sector is highly racialized and marginalized. The Muslim nonprofit sector is also young, with many organizations being established in the post-9/11 era. In engaging with marginalized communities, we need to acknowledge and support those that want to collaborate with each other and outside their community, as well as seek fact-based information about Muslim-led institutions and the communities they serve, so they can build their collective power.

The philanthropic community's discomfort with faith-based nonprofits is often grounded in intense personal experiences and a complicated historical relationship between faith traditions and many areas of social justice due to problematic connections to white supremacy. Throughout history, major faith traditions have also been the source of harm, trauma, and hardship in the areas of gender equity, reproductive health, and LGBTQ rights, among others. At the same time, faith-inspired impacts have been central to social movements that transformed the United States, including, but not limited to, interfaith organizing that formed the core of the civil rights era. This complex history – with its various tensions of conservatism, charitable humanitarianism, and progressive social justice liberation – can make it hard for funders to discern which faith communities are aligned with the funders' equity values, let alone their impact objectives.

The YOL shows how marginalized groups can engage with and educate the foundation community to help achieve long-term philanthropic impacts. The YOL was successful in the number of participants, meaningful and vulnerable conversations, launching the million-dollar Muslim Collaboration Prizes in partnership with key foundations, empowering and emboldening Muslim American nonprofit leaders to engage with philanthropic foundations beyond the YOL, and media reports and social media engagement. Understanding how Muslim Americans respond to crises holds important lessons for the philanthropic community as well as for other American nonprofit leaders. Understanding how a highly diverse but racialized minority works with foundations offers important lessons for how policymakers can bridge gaps between racialized nonprofits and the philanthropic community.



However, the YOL's real impact remains to be seen. Over the coming years, scholars need to track the YOL's participants and Muslim American nonprofits to see whether philanthropic foundations are increasing funding. Similarly, more research is needed to determine whether philanthropic foundations are becoming more inclusive by including marginalized groups such as Muslim Americans. Ultimately, YOL's long-term success depends on philanthropic foundations truly embracing principles of inclusion and Muslim American nonprofit leaders continuing to strive for the support of foundation communities.

The philanthropic community can use various ways to advance racial equity and prosperity. Foundations can put in place practices that address the inherent inequities in the sector to contribute to systemic change. Commitment to advancing DEI efforts have recently been at the forefront of all types of foundations. It is important to recognize those good intentions can be undermined by the strategic and administrative structures and processes that shape foundation decisions. Institutional procedures in many welfare organizations and foundations reinforce racism and other forms of injustice (Beer, Patrizi, & Coffman, 2021).

Another area for research involves the comparison of Muslim nonprofits and nonprofits of other racialized minority groups. It would also be informative to see whether perceptions change due to the recent passage of the Biden administration's \$1.9 trillion bailout. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is declining, the lessons learned during this crisis can improve nonprofit and other group relationships in future emergencies. To develop a robust and trusting relationship with minority groups, the government needs to engage with them more regularly. Our findings suggest that earlier work with the government positively builds trust between the government and nonprofits.

As we have stated, It is difficult to paint a rich picture in a report of the deep interactions, meaningful engagement and the development of relationships. It is even more difficult to demonstrate the potentially rich impact so soon after this important year long project.



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Appendix

Data and Additional Information on Muslims in America: A Year of Learning for the Philanthropic Community

The Appendix consists of select source documents from the planning committee of Year of Learning. We have shared these to provide a deeper understanding of this initiative. These are presented in their original form.



Muslims in America: A Year of Learning for the Philanthropic Community hoped to accelerate the evolution and deepening of mainstream philanthropic support for America’s 3.5 million Muslims. It was designed to create an understanding of who Muslims are today, the issues that drive them – such as discrimination, anti-Muslim sentiment, the public misconception about Islam; as well as the challenges they face that require philanthropic investment for long-term impact. According to an Institute for Social Policy & Understanding 2019 American Muslim poll, it was shown that when someone knows a Muslim, Islamophobia goes down rapidly.

The target audiences for the *Muslims in America: A Year of Learning for the Philanthropic Community* were philanthropic foundations with the goal to provide education and understanding of the Muslim community, as well as social and civic organizations serving those populations in an effort to introduce and develop deeper relationships with these funders. Those same audiences are also involved with the Year of Learning program by serving on planning committees and helping formulate and provide context to the objectives of the convenings.

Inspired by a Day of Learning initiative led by Illinois’ indigenous community leaders which served as a turning point in philanthropic understanding and investment, The Waraich Family Fund, Indiana University’s Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, IL Muslim Civic Coalition and Field Foundation came together as conveners to plan a year-long program series *Muslims in America: A Year of Learning*. Forefront joined as an important partner after the first quarter.





The Year of Learning evolved from current relationships with the philanthropic community and Muslim American social, civic, and cultural organizations. In this engagement, Muslim organizations and their allies have recognized the need for improving fact-based knowledge, as well as removing systemic barriers that historically prevent Muslim American nonprofit organizations from acquiring equitable opportunities to build relationships and receive funding and resources.

The Goal is to continue the focus on changing the paradigm of how philanthropic foundations and marginalized communities engage, partner and deepen relationships within Muslim communities. The paradigm we hoped to shift includes lack of information; fear and suspicion due to Islamophobia; the uplifting of “model” organizations which does not give full value to other, lesser known organizations that are doing the work; to see leaders for the specialized role we play and not just a diverse voice; the role of foundations creating competitiveness in marginalized communities; funding organizations/ infrastructure and not just programs; and the need to support collaborative work from same-faith institutions.



Timeline

Oct. 2020. Conveners gather virtually around the kitchen table and launch idea for Muslims in America: A Year of Learning for the Philanthropic Community

Nov. 2020. First meeting to galvanize support and receive buy-in from Muslim Philanthropic Leaders and Allies from across the country.

– Planning committee is established from this meeting.

Feb. 18, 2021. Muslims in America: A Learning Launch for the Philanthropic Community.

– Over 400 Philanthropic Leaders, Muslim American Leaders, and Allies register to participate. Recording is available [here](#)

Apr. 21, 2021. Executive Session.

– A gathering of 30 attendees: Philanthropic Leaders, Allies, and Conveners come together to discuss concrete action plans in an intimate, unrecorded segment.

Sep. 28, 2021. Advancing DEI in Philanthropy: The Intersection of Race, Religion and Social Justice.

– Over 250 Philanthropic Leaders, Muslim American Leaders, and Allies register to participate. Recording is available [here](#).

Oct. 7, 2021. Executive Session: Leadership Roundtable Dialogue on Muslim Inclusion in Philanthropy.

– A gathering of over 30 attendees - philanthropic leaders, allies, and conveners come together to discuss concrete action plans.

Dec. 8, 2021. Planning Committee Wrap-Up Meeting Accomplishments, Successes, Next Steps.



Planning Structure

Five conveners drove the planning work throughout the year with the support of a project manager. Conveners met on a weekly basis. Conveners also received strategic guidance from 1:1s with various planning committee members that were then discussed and moved upon during convening meetings. The conveners drove the planning forward, ensuring a balance of funders in public and private meetings and stayed aligned with the goals of Year of Learning.

Planning Committee Members: 43 members met regularly to strategize and take action to move the initiative forward. The Planning Committee attended 6 meetings during the year while subcommittees met more frequently, sometimes weekly or semiweekly.

Data across all programs

772 Individuals from **453**
Organizations participated in the
Year of Learning in some way.

75+
Funders Networked and Connected
with During A Year of Learning

250+
Muslim Nonprofits
connected with

200
Hours Networking & relationship
building to connect with
philanthropic organizations

122
Funders connected

122
CEOs and Presidents of
philanthropic or ganizations



Event Attendance

EVENT NAME	INVITED	REGISTERED	ATTENDED
Learning Launch 2/18/2021	500+	396	175+
Executive Session 4/21/2021	33	31	26
Advancing DEI 9/28/2021	316+	316	178
Executive Session 10/7/2021	70	44	35
Wrap-up 12/8/2021	45	18	17*
Total:	964+	909	556

*estimated

Number of Organizations Represented per Event

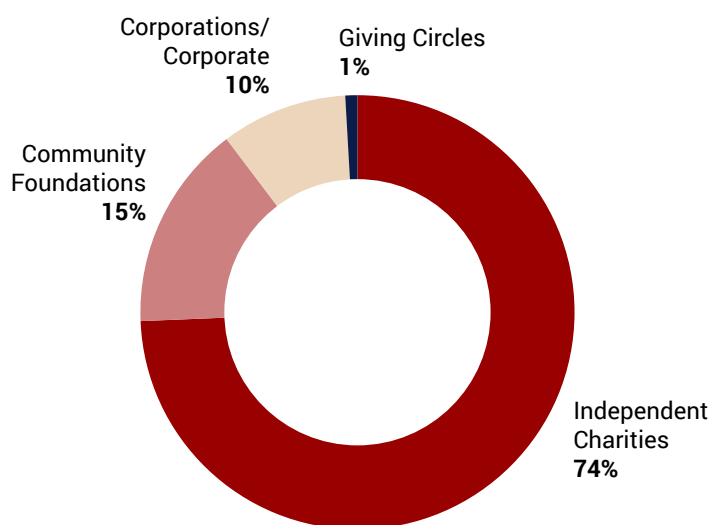
EVENT NAME	INVITED	REGISTERED	ATTENDED
Learning Launch 2/18/2021	245+	245	207
Executive Session 4/21/2021	25	25	24
Advancing DEI 9/28/2021	214+	214*	214
Executive Session 10/7/2021	60	32	33
Wrap-up 12/8/2021	39	36	38
Total:	583+	552+	516

*estimated

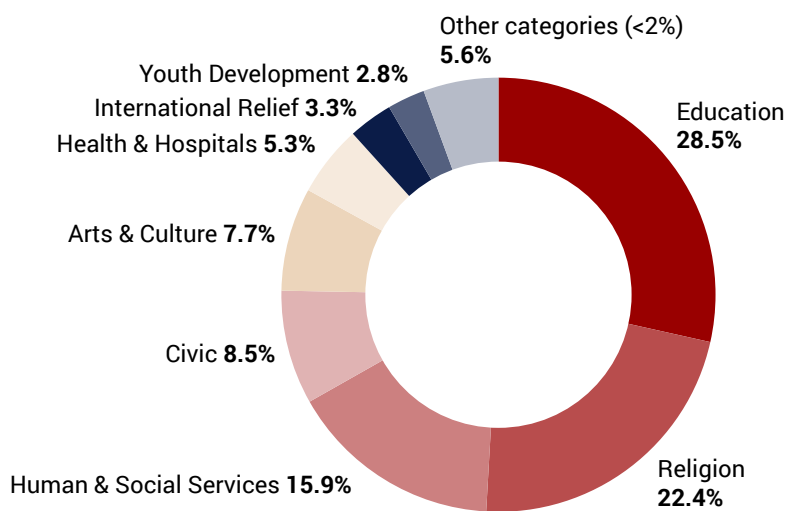


In December 2021, 16 philanthropic organizations who participated in a survey received a customized, curated list of Muslim Nonprofits that aligned with their funding interests.

Year of Learning Philanthropic Organizations



Year of Learning Grant Seeking Organizations





Feb. 18, 2021

Muslims in America: A Learning Launch for the Philanthropic Community

Synopsis

The *Learning Launch* was designed to create an understanding of who Muslims are today, the issues that drive them, and the challenges they face, which require philanthropic investment for long-term impact. The inaugural virtual event was unique because it was interactive despite the large audience. Participants got a unique opportunity to gain an “insider look” at Muslim Americans via:

- An introduction to 2021 Muslim America and its profound diversity plus their perspectives on racial, political, and social issues from recent surveys
- Success stories from philanthropists, Muslim activists, and Muslims in philanthropy
- Breakout sessions which kick-started relationships between Muslim leaders and the philanthropic community
- A really moving and fun opportunity to select from six cultural learning opportunities in the arts, music, comedy, film, healing, Chicago Muslim history, and Black Muslim history



Program for the Inaugural Event

■ Muslims in America: A Learning Launch for the Philanthropic Community

Thursday, February 18, 2021

12:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. CST

Relationships with philanthropic and sponsoring institutions and American Muslim social, civic, and cultural service organizations are strengthening. In this engagement, Muslim organizations and their allies have recognized the need for improving fact-based knowledge, as well as removing systemic barriers that historically prevent Muslim American nonprofit organizations from acquiring equitable opportunity to build relationships and receive funding and resources. Welcome to the 2021 Year of Learning. During the Fall of 2020, a committee of leaders convened to start planning the first of a series of yearlong events that will foster a deeper understanding of American Muslims, Muslim NGO communities, nuances of funding, and specific issues these communities face.

February 18th is the Year of Learning's - Learning Launch. Please join us as we strengthen our collective power to open pathways to impactful giving for Muslim American non-profit organizations serving in the United States. Leaders from across the Philanthropic Community, Government, and Corporations have committed to joining us.

■ Prework

We are excited to have you join us at the Learning Launch. To prepare for that afternoon together, we have four items we'd like you to review as prework.

■ Program Agenda

Welcome & Overview

12:00 p.m. – 12:20 p.m. Central Time

Vocalist Tammy McCann Simpkins and Vocalist and Pianist Kenny Davis

Land Acknowledgement

Anne-Marie St Germaine, Woods Fund

Unity Prayer

Imam Makram El-Amin

Executive Director, Al Maa'uun



Conveners Welcome:

Dilnaz Waraich, Waraich Family Fund

Hilesh Patel, Leadership Investment Program Officer, Field Foundation

Dr. Dilara Sayeed, President, IL Muslim Civic Coalition

■ Part I: Who Are We? Where Do Our Stories Intersect?

12:20 p.m. – 12:55 p.m. Central Time

We will share how Muslim Americans see themselves in the context of the American story. What are the challenges and the struggles Muslims face in the context of the American Experience? What are the assets they bring to this work?

Featured Presenter:

Petra Alsoofy, Outreach & Partnerships Manager, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) - "Who are Muslim Americans?"

Breakout Lead Introduction: Roohi Younus, Program Manager & Facilitator, Community Collaboration Initiative, Indiana University Lilly School of Philanthropy

■ Part II: What Does Success Look Like?

12:55 p.m. – 1:40 p.m. Central Time

A panel will lay the foundation of what success looks like when a funder or a government agency partners with the American Muslim Community? What impact is made? What challenges can we overcome together?

Moderator: Arshia Ali-Khan, Chief Executive Officer, Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA)

Featured Panelists:

Monique Jones, President and Chief Executive Officer, Forefront

Daniel Ash, Associate Vice President of Community Impact, The Chicago Community Trust

Itedal Shalabi, Co-Founder Arab American Family Services (AAFS)

Jawaad Abdul Rahman, Director of Development and Executive Producer, Unity Productions Foundation (UPF)

Mohamed Gula, National Organizing Director and Executive Director of Emgage's Virginia chapter, Emgage USA



■ Intermission: 1:40 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. Central Time

■ Part III: Cultural Experience and Exploration

1:50 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Central Time

This segment of the Learning Launch will provide participants with an opportunity to explore a Muslim American cultural experience with artists, storytellers, and musicians.

Featured Speaker

Hussein Rashid, Educator

Breakout Lead Introduction: Jenan Mohajir, Senior Director of Leadership, Interfaith Youth Core

Featured Breakout Sessions and Presenters:

Breakout 1: Listening While Muslim: Sonic Soul Journey through Music

Asad Ali Jafri, Executive Director, South Asia Institute

Abdul-Rehman Malik, Associate Research Scholar and Lecturer in Islamic Studies at Yale

From Brooklyn to Bamako, this listening party takes us on a sonic soul journey that crosses continents, languages and genres. Join Abdul-Rehman Malik and Asad Ali Jafri for an intimate aural exploration of music at the intersection of faith, culture and politics.

Breakout 2: The Power of Narrative through Film

Assia Boundaoui, Filmmaker (The Feeling of Being Watched) and Founder of the Inverse Surveillance Project

Zeshawn Ali and Aman Ali, Creators Two Gods (documentary film)

Who gets to decide which stories are told and who gets to tell them? This discussion is about how film can capture the everyday lives of Muslims and why it's important to be present on screen – and behind the scenes.



Breakout 3: Arts as Activism and Healing

Sadia Nawab, Inner-city Muslim Action Network (IMAN)

Rami Nashashibi, Inner-city Muslim Action Network (IMAN)

Drea D’Nur, Producer and Vocal Artist (tentative)

Exploration of how community-based organizations like IMAN have used arts as a way to organize and heal communities.

Breakout 4: American Medina: Stories of Muslim Chicago

Dr. Peter Alter, Chief Historian, Chicago History Museum and Director, the Studs Terkel Center for Oral History

Chicago History Museum’s exhibit featuring stories of 100 Muslim Chicagoans discussing their faith, identities, and personal journeys. Virtual tour by Dr. Peter Alter and the curating team.

Breakout 5: Muslims are Too Funny

Fawzia Mirza, Comedian, Actress and Producer

Sarah Harvard, Comedian

How are artists using comedy to reclaim narrative? Join Fawzia Mirza in an honest conversation about how comedy can bring out inner truths and realities while connecting people through laughter.

Breakout 6: African American Legacy

Margari Hill, Muslim ARC

Every aspect of the Muslim American story is impacted and a result of the African American community. This segment shares the cultural impact of this pivotal Muslim American community.

Breakout 7: The Untold Story of Muslim Humanitarian Philanthropy

Abbas Barzegar, Ph.D. Director, Horizon Forum, a fiscally sponsored project of the Proteus Fund

Who knew that the oldest university in the world was endowed by a Muslim woman? Or that Muslims around the world contribute billions of dollars annually to aid and relief programs. During this session, Dr. Abbas Barzegar, affiliate faculty of the Lilly School of Philanthropy, discusses the historical legacy of Muslim humanitarian and philanthropic cultures and practices.



■ Part IV: Relationship Building – Digging Deep with New Colleagues and Friends

2:35 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Central Time

Breakout Lead Introduction: Kalia Abiade, Vice President of Programs, Pillars Fund

This critical segment brings it all together. Participants will join break out groups formed based on the registration info they provided. Conversations will build and strengthen relationships so that there is impact far beyond the day.

■ Closing | Beyond the Learning Launch – A Year of Learning

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Central Time

The Learning Launch Conveners will share what it looks like beyond the learning launch.

Featured Speaker: Reema Kamran, Co-Founder, IL Muslim Civic Coalition
Quaker Style, authentic reflections by participants.

Data Analysis & Reflections

Each attendee opted-in to receive a contact list of those in attendance. Only those who opted in received the contact list. This is one way in which access to leaders was achieved.

Attendance varied from 143–264 attendees throughout the day. The peak was at 12:30 PM.

REVISED TYPE	ATTENDED	GRAND TOTAL
Allies, Leaders & Learners	56	164
Funding Institution	30	58
Muslim American Leader	89	174
Grand Total	175	396

Each attendee information was reviewed and their categorization was revised line by line. We expected 50% attendance for the virtual program, thus attendance was as expected.



We can account for 175 attendees and more than that number attended. A lesson learned was ensuring a way to account for all attendees for future events.

Media

Seven media outlets expressed interest in follow-up articles after the launch event. Realized Media Mentions and Articles:

- Foundational Outreach occurred to 600+ Media outlets
- Pre-Event Coverage: Chicago Public Radio – Reset (Feb 2021), Podcast interview AMCF (Feb 2021)
- Post-Event Coverage: Post- event Press Release published in the *Non-Profit Times*.

Blog Articles

- July 27th, 2021 [Native and Muslim Americans: Two Marginalized Communities Find Similar Hurdles in Engaging Philanthropy](#) By Roohi Younus and Cynthia Soto
- Jan 26 2022, The 100 Most Innovative Global Muslim Startups to Watch in 2022 & the 200+ Global Investment Firms Funding Them By Dustin Craun [Article](#)

Social Media ran from Feb. 14th – four days leading up to the event – to Feb. 25th. Results are as follows:

Summary of Twitter (@muslimsYOL)

- 724 impressions/day
- 9.3K total impressions over this 13-day period. Impressions are the number of people who saw the tweet on Twitter.
- 1.3% Engagement rate. Engagement rate is the percentage of impressions that resulted in an engagement (e.g., clicks, retweets, replies, follows and likes, etc), and is a measurement of the impressions' impact.

Summary of Facebook (www.facebook.com/MuslimsYOL)

- 90 Followers
- 115 Page Views
- 68 Post Views



The analytics above are in the top 25% of a 7-day period of work.

Learning Launch Reflections

“Long term success is about building the infrastructure to help community and civic life,” said panelist Daniel Ash of the Chicago Community Trust. “Building collective power means supporting vital civic infrastructure -- including the organizers, conveners and service providers -- so they are strong and we’re not moving from project to project to project. Long term success is about redistributing power from grantmaker to grant recipient so that you balance that out so you can create the *conditions* for long term relationship.”

“There were so many points of entrance for organizations and philanthropy during The Learning Launch,” says Hilesh Patel of the Field Foundation, and one of the conveners. “This event brought participants closer to the multiplicity of the Muslim American experience while having honest, pointed conversations about the necessity of financial support and authentic, sustainable relationships and collaborations.”

“To benefit mutual well-being, we need to build cross-pollinating partnerships which allow us to leapfrog ahead with creative solutions to mitigate urgent issues. Artists are powerful partners for this purpose to highlight core issues and galvanize us to act,” says Zeyba Rahman of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.

In the words of participant Joohi Tahir, the Executive Director of MUHSEN: Muslims Understanding and Helping Special Education Needs: “I was honored to be a part of this unique opportunity to have the first-ever gathering of its kind, where our Muslim-led initiatives were amplified. We all address such important and innovative work in our sectors, tackling issues that our diverse community faces every day, and it’s an honor to have that work showcased for the philanthropic community. We all strive to learn and grow from this point on and forge ahead and nurture the relationships we started to form today.”



Apr. 21, 2021

Executive Session

Synopsis and Program

The purpose of this executive session is to create authentic dialogue around how relationships between philanthropists and Muslim communities can be strengthened. It is an intimate virtual gathering where what is said stays in the room, but the lessons learned are shared. Our hope is to glean awareness of some of the major challenges and pain points for funders, and to use this information to inform future initiatives.

12:00pm	Welcome: Introduction by Dilara Sayeed , President, IL Muslim Civic Coalition
12:03pm	Sizzle Reel: How do executive leaders envision relationships and partnerships growing and strengthening with Muslim communities?
12:05pm	Convener Address: Monique B. Jones , CEO, Forefront
12:10pm	Virtual Meet & Greet: Breakout rooms for intimate conversation of 2-3 people/room
12:18pm	Diversity of Muslim Communities: Kashif Shaikh , President, Pillars Fund Presentation of Challenges
12:27pm	Open Discussion and Dialogue Dialogue: How do executive leaders envision relationships and partnerships growing and strengthening with Muslim communities?
12:47pm	Action Towards Change Discuss: What are tangible next steps that can be taken?
12:57pm	Closing: Dilnaz Waraich , Waraich Family Fund



The dialogue included live note-taking via [Jamboard](#). A non-attributable summary of this session was sent to all participants along with a reiteration of themes discussed in the program:

- What are some ways fear and suspicion around Muslim-led institutions can be addressed?
- How can Muslim leaders be differentiated by the specialized sectors that they work in rather than being seen as a “diverse voice”?
- What does it mean to look beyond institutions that have already been identified as relationship worthy?
- How do you view collaborations among same-faith institutions from the perspective of empowerment?
- How can shifts from funding programs to funding organizations be met?



Sep. 28, 2021

Advancing DEI in Philanthropy: The Intersection of Race, Religion and Social Justice

Synopsis

On September 28th, 2021, nearly 200 participants from around the country joined YOL for [Advancing DEI in Philanthropy: The Intersection of Race, Religion and Social Justice](#) to discuss the future of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (“DEI”) as it relates to Muslim and other faith communities. The event content included an educative component focused on key messages and resources; an inspirational video highlighting the great work and success stories of Muslim nonprofits; and a call to action for change and long-term impact component to build actionable steps towards the overall goals of this Year of Learning effort.

The community round table and fireside chat was presented as a 2-hour learning and dialogue workshop designed for funders in the philanthropic community. Together with leaders such as Dr. Carmen Rojas, President and CEO of the Marguerite Casey Foundation, and Tamela Spicer of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy, the discussion included an exploration of how race and religion intersect in philanthropy, the ways funders have navigated this intersection in their DEI initiatives, and the leaders and nonprofits in Muslim communities they have partnered with on key social justice issues.



Highlights

- The [fireside chat](#), led by [Dr. Carmen Rojas](#) with [Rami Nashashibi](#) and [Ramzi Kassem](#), clarified their work isn't usually framed around DEI but around racial justice, and the importance of creating strong models of racial justice organizations. As Dr. Rojas stated, this is a, "Once in a generation opportunity right now. To create a commitment to racial justice to create a more even terrain." As COVID has furthered both economic and racial divides in the United States.
- Pandemic and Prayer: Reflections from the Front Lines
- A Reflection video was created in collaboration with Jawaad Abdul Rahman, Producer and Director of Development, Unity Productions Foundation. The video highlighted the importance of the work of Muslims and Muslim non profits in the fabric of American society. Muslims have been seen in just one way for the last 20 years, but we are so much more than that. The Covid pandemic has provided a backdrop to see the work of our communities in a new light.
- Actions towards Change – specific outlined action steps that funding organizations can take to be more inclusive of Muslim communities and nonprofits in their work.
- Discussions of barriers to action towards change and how organizations can achieve long term impact in their sectors with greater resources/ access
- An opportunity to enjoy the Cultural production by Asad Ali Jafri which included the soothing musical musings of artists Tazeen & Lafuki.



Oct, 7, 2021

Executive Session: Leadership Roundtable Dialogue on Muslim Inclusion in Philanthropy

Synopsis

The Leadership Roundtable Dialogue on Muslim Philanthropy on October 7th, was a private forum for philanthropy executives. The afternoon was attended by 20 + unique leaders from the Philanthropy community for an intimate dialogue on how philanthropic leaders can allies and expand opportunities to Muslim community organizations and identify the barriers to inclusion of Muslims, Muslim nonprofits, and Muslim communities, as it pertains to roles within foundations, as grantees, and as partners.

The afternoon was facilitated by Monique Jones, President and CEO of Forefront – who shared her role as a YOL convener, and the challenges / opportunities to facilitate these important discussions in the funding community as we focus on DEI, religious diversity and growing in Philanthropy. Brie Loskota, Executive Director, Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion at University of Chicago Divinity School and Dr. Kameelah Mu'Min Rashad, Founder and President of the Muslim Wellness Foundation, Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology and Muslim Studies, Chicago Theological Seminary

Reflected on why religious diversity in America matters and why it is vital in philanthropy in a thought provoking dialogue.




Highlights

- **Faith-based impact in the social sector – Devin Murphy:** Partner and thought leader, Bridegespan Group – shared a [summary](#) of the important report on the role of faith inspired impact in the social sector.
- **A non-Muslim perspective – Allyship with Muslim nonprofits:** a reminder and encouragement to have a personal commitment to this work from the Founder and CEO of LDR Worldwide Denise Reading
- **An opportunity to Ask Anything** with **Dr. Scott Alexander**, Professor of Islamic Studies & Chair, Department of Intercultural Studies and Ministry, Catholic Theological Union and chair of the Theological Education Committee of the American Academy of Religion & **Dr. Dilara Sayeed**: President, Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition, Co-Founder and CEO of vPeer.com, Governor Pritzker’s Commission on Discrimination and Hate
- **Continuing the dialogue after today, What does equity look like?** With **Dilnaz Waraich**, President, Waraich Family Fund – included meaningful key actions that Non for Profit Executives could take including analyzing their organization’s engagement with Muslim communities and Engaging with the Muslim nonprofits doing work in their sector or region



A resource used during YOL





THE AMERICAN MUSLIM STORY

American Muslims have always been a part of the American story. Today, they serve as business owners, executives, construction workers, doctors, engineers, teachers, homemakers, Uber drivers – and neighbors!

American Muslims have diverse racial, ethnic, political, professional, class and religious identities.

Where does your story intersect on the timeline?

1600s

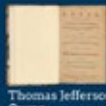

Ayuba Suleiman Diallo
Cleric and Intellectual,
Enslaved Muslim

Omar ibn Sayyid
Writer and Islamic scholar,
Enslaved Muslim

EARLY IMMIGRATION

- First Muslims from Middle East countries arrive. Syrian street vendor that created the first ice cream cone, and other innovations are part of Muslim narratives.
- George Washington speaks of "Mohammedans" in his letters and Thomas Jefferson owns a Quran in his library.
- As slavery is abolished, Muslims from South Asia are brought to the Caribbean and the Americas as indentured servants

1700s

Thomas Jefferson's
Quran



Mohammed Russell
Alexander Webb,
American Muslim Writer
and Publisher

1800s

GROWING MUSLIM COMMUNITY



- Muslims are part of the Great Migration from the South to cities such as Chicago and Detroit and contribute to Jazz and Blues music and a rich African American culture.
- Civil Rights Amendment allows immigrants to come to USA to help support high-need areas. Students and families from South Asia, Middle East and other regions immigrate.
- American Muslims become doctors, engineers, and technology workers in small towns and big cities across America.
- Mosques and community centers are built to meet the needs of growing American Muslim families.
- Growing number of African American and Latino Muslims contribute to the diversity of American Muslims.

1900s

Fazlullah Rahman Khan
Architect of
Sears/Willis Tower-
world's tallest
building 1973 to 1998



Malcolm X
(El Hajj Malik El Shabbaz)
Civil Rights Leader

Muhammad Ali
World Heavyweight
Champion



SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001

- Foreign extremists hijack two planes and crash them into the Pentagon and World Trade Center. 2,996 killed
- American Muslims are key to fighting extremism, but are targeted as "other" and marginalized
- Hate crimes against Muslims are at an all-time high



Hakeem Olajuwon
NBA Champion

Ahmed H. Zewail
Egyptian-American
1997 Nobel Prize
Winner in
Chemistry



Hamdi Ulukaya
Founder of
Chobani

Keith Ellison,
First Muslim U.S.
Congressman



Shepard Fairey/
Ridwan Adhams
image of American
Muslim woman

Ibtihaj Muhammad
American Olympic
Bronze Medalist

Tariq Pariz
Founder of
Edible Arrangements

Ilhan Omar
First Muslim U.S.
Congresswoman,
featured on the
cover of TIME





Thousands of
Muslim non-
profits serve all
communities

2000s

STRENGTHENING SERVICE AND COMMUNITY

- Muslims build social service organizations and work for civil rights, immigration reform, jobs/economic security, criminal justice reform, and education.
- Congressman Keith Ellison uses 200 year old Quran owned by Thomas Jefferson when sworn into office.
- 2020 American Muslims run for elected political office and vote in record numbers all across the country at every level of government.





Convener Reflections: Roohi Younus and Reema Kamran

The Year of Learning provided the Muslim Philanthropic Community an opportunity to address challenges from a place of ownership and power. The content and strategy was driven by Muslim American Leaders as well as Allies beyond the Muslim faith, in civic, nonprofit and corporate sectors, which included funding institutions. This dedication from planning committee members and generous offering of their expertise is what led to accomplishing much in a short period of time. The strengthened relationships and ongoing dialogue among planning committee members is also an outcome of the year. Because the project was launched in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also provided social support throughout the year. We concluded the Year of Learning with a strong understanding of who is committed to creating equity in partnership for the long term.



IUPUI

MUSLIM PHILANTHROPY INITIATIVE
Lilly Family School of Philanthropy