American Muslim Youth Convening Report Series

Meeting the Needs of Generation 9/11

Getting Race Right

Institute *for* Social Policy *and* Understanding

Host and Conveners

Institute *for* Social Policy *and* Understanding (ISPU):

Meira Neggaz, Executive Director

Dalia Mogahed, Director of Research

Iffa Kazi, Senior Development and Research Dissemination Officer

Sarrah Buageila, Project Manager

Butheina Hamdah, Development Associate

Patrick Cates, Senior Communications Officer

Faiqa Mahmood, ISPU Fellow

Report Author

Zeba Iqbal, Editor and Author, ISPU

Report Editor

Stephen McGrath, Senior Communications Manager, ISPU

Report Copy Editor

Alyssa Jeffries

Moderators

Jennifer Hollett

Zeba Iqbal, Editor and Author, ISPU

Participants *(Alphabetical)*

Abubakr Abdul Latif
Amal Killawi
Amin Gharad
Chris Blauvelt
Dalia Mogahed
Edina Lekovic
Farhan Latif
Fatima Mirza
Fatima Salman
Habeeb Quadri
Tannaz Haddadi
Hadia Mubarak
Hamada Hamid
Ilhan Dahir
Iyad Alnachef
Joshua Salaam
Kameelah Rashad
Khalid Latif
Laila Alawa
Leena Hadied
Madiha Tahseen
Meira Neggaz
Mika'il Stewart Saadiq
Namira Islam
Saleem Khalid
Sameera Ahmed
Sawssan Ahmed
Sayeed Siddiqui
Shabana Mir
Suhaib Webb
Sulaimaan Hamed

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Letter from the Research Director

Any American born between 1990 and 2000 probably doesn't remember a world without smartphones, Facebook and Game of Thrones. They also likely don't recall a time when people kept their shoes on at airport security, could go all the way to the gate to see their friends off, or thought "Patriot Act" was just a good deed. Today's 15 to 25 year olds don't know an America before the horrific events of September 2001. They are "Generation 9/11."

For American Muslims, membership in this generation presents additional challenges. Their religious community, according to polls, is among the least warmly regarded of any in the country and their country's news media portrays their faith and community negatively 80% of the time. They face bullying, racial profiling and job discrimination.

Moreover, they face the same challenges of growing up as any other American, from drug and alcohol abuse to online safety to risky sexual experiences. And like other Americans, their community also struggles with racism and a crisis of religious literacy. At the same time, American mosques leaders, like their counterparts in other faiths, are finding it difficult to meet the unique needs of young people.

ISPU's "Meeting the Needs of Generation 9/11" brief series addresses some of these challenges and offers actionable recommendations for parents, community leaders and national organizations. Each brief can stand on its own or be used as part of the series for a comprehensive approach to tackling the hurdles faced by today's youth and young adults. We brought together practitioners and academics, imams and parents, local leaders and national figures, grandparents and college students to craft practical recommendations that could be applied in a variety of contexts.

Though we set out to address a number of pressing topics, we make no claim that our series is exhaustive. There are important topics that we have not covered but hope to tackle in the future. These include offline bullying and the unique needs of refugee Muslim youth as examples.

We hope these briefs help you meet the needs of this unique generation of American Muslims. We welcome your thoughts and questions.

Sincerely,

Dalia Mogahed
Research Director
Institute *for* Social Policy *and* Understanding

Introduction

On Saturday and Sunday, June 6 and 7, 2015, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) hosted a two-day solution seeking convening on American Muslim Youth. The convening held at the El-Hibri Foundation in Washington, DC brought together 31 American Muslim experts and stakeholders ranging in age from 18 to 68.

The group came together to discuss some of the significant challenges and opportunities faced by young American Muslims today, namely young people between the ages of 15 and 25. The group included MBAs, entrepreneurs, mental health professionals, social workers, marketers, religious leaders, activists and even a Fulbright scholar. In the words of Meira Neggaz, ISPU's Executive Director, what the diverse group all had in common was, "that we care about young people and we want young American Muslims to thrive in America."

ISPU developed a list of potential invitees through outreach and referrals from practitioners who work with young people including American Muslims. The final list was based on a potential invitee's experience working with American Muslim youth, in general, and their ability to contribute to the themes and topics of the convening in particular. The final list included end user stakeholders: imams, parents, board members, youth directors, chaplains and national youth organization representatives. Consideration was also given to their geographic, religious and ethnic diversity. The 31 participants selected were individuals who met these criteria and were willing to participate in the two-day set of discussions.

While there is a great deal of useful research on American Muslims, very little of it is ever acted on. ISPU brought this group together to operationalize some of the research by posing the questions, "So What? Now What?"

ISPU as host and convener provided funding and staffing for the workshop. ISPU also created a facilitated and supportive environment for open and honest conversation. Discussions and recommendations from the convening were both a research tool and source for this report on American Muslim Youth.

To encourage open and free conversation and discussion, the convening honored Chatham House Rule. Comments have not been attributed to participants. No live tweeting or social media was allowed during the sessions and no individual audio- or video-recording in the room was permitted.

Why this Convening on American Muslim Youth?

ISPU's focus on research making an impact guides the organization to address and answer questions critical and relevant to American Muslim communities. "How can we meet the needs of Muslim youth?" is one of the top questions that ISPU gets asked by its stakeholders and supporters.

The convening focused on young American Muslims between the ages of 15 and 25, or younger Millennials. According to Pew Research Center, the Millennial generation is "forging a distinctive path into adulthood."[1] Coming of age during a time of technological change, globalization and economic disruption, their behaviors and experiences are unique. Millennials are the first digital natives and the most racially diverse generation in history. Behaviorally—in comparison to their parents—they have low levels of social trust, are less linked to organized politics and religion, more linked by social media, more likely to defer marriage, and more optimistic about the future.[2]

Understanding this generation's broad characteristics is critical when looking at young American Muslims. Young American Muslims are unique in that they are the first true post-9/11 generation. As a generation that was born or came of age around 9/11, they have grown up at a time when the negative perception and coverage of Muslims in the media is pervasive.[3]

According to Roland Schlatz, Founder and CEO of Media Tenor International, "80 percent of all reports on Muslims and Islam are negative."[4] By comparison, "70 percent of the coverage on North Korea—a designated terrorist state—is negative."[5] Additionally, the media overwhelmingly ties Islam and Muslims to terrorism,[6] placing a great deal of pressure on the personhood and identity of young American Muslims.

The almost constant external attacks have a compounding effect when added on to the challenges youth already face as older adolescents (15 to 17) and emergent adults (18 to 25). Adolescence and emergent adulthood are periods of great transformation accompanied by complex changes in the brain and the body. Cognitive processes such as reasoning, planning, judgment, and self-regulation evolve and grow at this time and are not complete until at least the age of 25.[7]

As a result, adolescent and emergent adult behaviors shift dramatically during this period. The most common behavioral changes seen across cultures are: 1. increased novelty seeking; 2. increased risk-taking; and 3. a social affiliation shift toward peer-based interactions.[8]

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, young people in this age range are at their, "lifelong peak of physical health, strength, and mental capacity."[9] They are also at their most hazardous age. Mortality rates due to injury increase significantly in late adolescence (15 to 19 years old), as do rates of death due to injury, crime rates among young males, and rates of alcohol abuse.[10]

ISPU's joint research with the Family and Youth Institute (FYI) has shown that young American Muslims are not that different from their peers.[11] Socialized and acculturated with their non-Muslim peers, their behaviors mimic those of the broader population. For example, according to *State of American Muslim Youth: Research and Recommendations*, an alarming number of young American Muslims engage in risky behaviors including substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors and gambling.

Although most young people do transition through this age successfully, genes, childhood experiences, and environment can positively or negatively impact development. Support, guidance, family bonds, and a strong foundational development at this stage are critical to life-long mental health.[12]

At the family and community levels, parental and adult involvement, and a young person's sense of belonging, are harbingers of their future success and well-being. At the community level, quality youth programming—online, offline, youth-led, and adult-led—seem to be key to integrated identity development.

Qualitative research by ISPU suggests that American Muslim parents are struggling to provide young American Muslims the supportive environment they need. Many young American Muslims feel unsupported and misunderstood by their parents. Children of immigrants feel misunderstood because their parents do not understand American social contexts and youth culture.[13] Children of American Muslim converts say their parents cannot understand their challenges because they were not raised as Muslims.[14]

American Muslim communities' efforts to date are not hitting the mark for young American Muslims either. Many young American Muslims, "feel disconnected, judged, excluded and unsafe in *mosques*.[a]"[15] Convert youth and African American Muslim youth in particular feel isolated and unwelcome as many American Muslim communities do not recognize or empathize with their challenges—namely post-conversion crises for convert youth and racism for African American Muslim youth.

Although some mosques and community centers have youth programming, and some national Muslim organizations focus on youth development, these programs are frequently underfunded and under-resourced.[16] Not finding solace or support in American Muslim institutions and feeling increasingly alientated in their Muslim spaces, many young American Muslims feel like they don't fit in anywhere.

Thus, there is an urgent need in American Muslim communities to recognize and understand American Muslim youth's vulnerabilities, as well as the risks associated with certain behaviors and the serious consequences of those risks.[17] Even more critically, American Muslim communities need to develop strategic solutions for both proactive prevention and effective intervention.

Findings from Past Research

Relevant research on American Muslim youth includes the joint ISPU and FYI report, *State of American Muslim Youth: Research and Recommendations* by Dr. Sameera Ahmed, Executive Director, Family and Youth Institute (FYI),[18] and a literature review *Young Adult participation in American Congregations* by Faiqa Mahmood, ISPU Fellow.

Key Findings from State of American Muslim Youth: Research and Recommendations

American Muslim Youth Are Similar to their Non-Muslim Peers

- American Muslim youth are socialized in non-Muslim settings—whether it be the schools they attend, the camps they go to, etc.
- American Muslim youth are exposed to the same media messaging as non-Muslims (e.g. values, standards of beauty, perception of Muslims).

American Muslim Youth are Unique

- Despite all these similar exposures and attitudes, the experiences of American Muslim youth are unique from their non-Muslim peers. For example, most American Muslim youth will experience some form of Islamophobia. However, their individual experiences are also unique based on their location, socioeconomic and racial backgrounds.

[a] *Mosque:* A Muslim place of worship.

Several underserved and at-risk American Muslim Youth populations exist:

- Convert youth
- African American youth
- Youth engaging in risky behaviors

Convert Youth

- Young converts are making a major life change at a time when they are still dependent on their parents physically, financially and emotionally. If their parents are not supportive of their conversion, it is important for them to have an alternative support system in the American Muslim community.
- Young converts often find that their experience as new Muslims is dependent on their race, both the race from which they convert and the predominant race of their adopted Muslim community. For example, converts from the African American community assimilating into an immigrant Muslim community may face racism.
- Young converts also find that their experience as new Muslims is dependent on gender. The FYI's research found that gender impacts integration. It's easier for women converts to integrate particularly if they're identifiably Muslim.
- Converts' integration into the American Muslim community is also dependent on the profile of their mosque and community (size, diversity, location, etc.) they are joining. Typically, urban mosques are larger, more diverse, and offer more programming, and thus are easier to integrate into.

African American Youth

- In their everyday lives, African American Muslims are viewed as black first. The reality of institutionalized racism and their sociocultural context has a deep impact on African American Muslims. American Muslim mosques and communities must understand the impact of this reality on their lives.
- Young African American males may be more inclined to see Islam as an alternative, given numerous positive images of African American Muslim males within popular culture, as well as the African American community. They relate to prominent African American Muslims including Malcolm X, Mohammed Ali, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Yasiin Bey (formerly Mos Def), Lupe Fiasco, Q-Tip, Freeway, Keith Ellison, Andre Carson and many others—as Muslims, as Americans and as African Americans.
- Many immigrant Muslim communities are not aware of—or choose not to acknowledge—the historical and current contributions of African American Muslims to the building of America. In addition, African American Muslims' experiences and perspectives are often not included within the American Muslim narrative.
- Elder African American Muslims in the community often converted as adults and sometimes struggle to relate to African American Muslim youth.
- As a result, African American Muslim youth have difficulty in identifying living role models that can empathize with their youth experiences and struggles.

American Muslim Youth engaging in potentially risky behaviors

- Studies indicate patterns of increasing risky behavior including drug and excessive alcohol use among youth.
- According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMSHA) 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 63% of full-time college students in the United States consumed alcohol in the month prior to the survey. The FYI has explored alcohol use in various sample populations, and their data analysis indicates that one in two Muslim college students reported alcohol consumption in the year prior.
- The FYI's preliminary research on American Muslim illicit drug use indicates usage by one in four Muslim youth. This rate is similar to SAMSHA's rate of usage by non-Muslim college students.
- FYI research identified a study of American college students in which lifetime prevalence of non-marital sexual intercourse was 76 percent.
- In a national sample of college students, the lifetime prevalence of sexual intercourse among never married Muslim college students was 54 percent.

- Engaging in one form of risky behavior increases the likelihood of engaging in other risk behaviors.
- There was no significant difference in alcohol and marijuana usage, and sexual activity between genders.
- More men than women use tobacco, particularly prior to college.

The American Muslim Youth convening focused primarily on intervention and prevention. Key findings from *State of American Muslim Youth: Research and Recommendations* on prevention and intervention include:

Prevention

The first step is effective youth programming. Components of an effective youth program include:

- Collaboration and partnership between groups serving youth
- Youth empowering programs in environments that are strength-based, youth-generated, and address their identified needs
- A positive relational experience with peers, mentors and adults
- Clear programmatic objectives and goals that inform and direct youth activities
- A multi-method, multimodal approach to achieve programmatic goals
- Opportunities for varying levels of participation and multiple points of entry to allow for greater participation
- Integration of social media and technology
- Financial sustainability

Intervention

With regard to intervention, there are several areas of focus:

- Strengthening families and their ability to deal with challenges – teaching parents to more effectively communicate and engage with their children so that the parent-child relationship can serve as a protective factor.
- Engaging in school – creating programs where American Muslims can engage and feel respected.
- Making mosques welcoming – creating an atmosphere in the mosque where youth feel welcome and not judged or ostracized.
- Promoting exploration – developing spaces where youth can explore their identities, and gain exposure to art, culture, performance, etc.
- Developing a better understanding – between American Muslim communities and the wider American landscape.

The FYI report also makes recommendations around three developmental contexts (family, school, and the Muslim community) that must play a role in enhancing American Muslim youth development. Finally, it is believed that a more nuanced understanding of American Muslim youth developmental contexts—along with research findings and programmatic recommendations—will enhance current youth development efforts.

Literature review of *Young Adult participation in American Congregations*

As part of ISPU's research for their study *Reimagining Muslim Spaces*, the piece *Young Adult Participation in American Congregations* by LiErin Probasco serves as a set of case studies that can be reviewed to identify best practices from other faith traditions that can be replicated in the American Muslim context.

In this study:

- Young adults are adults between 18 and 34. And the data was collected from two (2) major studies:
  - FACT National Survey, 2010 – very few mosques were included in this survey
  - Mosque survey by Dr. Ihsan Bagby
- Congregations with 21% or more young adults qualified as congregations with "significant" young adult participation (Only 16% of congregations had "significant" young adult participation).

From Dr. Ihsan Bagby's 2011 mosque survey, the number of mosques and the number of congregations are increasing. Between 2000 and 2011 there was a 74% increase in the number of mosques.[19] However, the primary concern of many mosques is their inability to engage and keep youth in mosques.

This seems to be a challenge across faith traditions. According to the Pew survey, approximately one in three young adults (ages 18-33) surveyed are religiously unaffiliated.[20] However, lack of religious affiliation does not necessarily mean lack of interest in religion. According to College Students' Belief and Values (CSVB) survey, 80% of college freshmen expressed interest in spirituality.[21]

Thus, there isn't a clear way to engage young American Muslims—as the mosque for many is not somewhere they regularly attend. However, there are opportunities there to meet young people where they are. Many young American Muslims are not becoming irreligious per se; they are just becoming unaffiliated.

Engaging with young people and meeting them where they are needs to be a stated and deliberate priority of any congregation seeking to engage youth. Having said that, congregations and their leaders need to set realistic expectations and invest in the next generation without expecting immediate returns.

Seeking Solutions Together

Over the course of two days, groups engaged in dynamic conversation using the World Café model on the following six (6) questions presented by ISPU.

1. How can we provide better support to convert youth?
2. What can we do to prevent drug use among youth? How can the American Muslim community better address the needs of youth struggling with addiction?
3. Growing up online, youth face numerous challenges and opportunities. How do we keep American Muslim youth safe online line from radicalization, pornography, child predators, and bullying?
4. Simultaneously, how do we nurture positive online engagement through social media, peer networks, apps, and online content?
5. How can predominantly South Asian and Arab American mosques promote a greater understanding of race, civil rights, and create inclusive environments for African American Muslim youth?
6. What basic knowledge and literacy gaps about Islam are important to fill for American Muslim youth and what resources already exist?

As questions 3 and 4 both addressed youth online engagement, these two questions were combined for the purposes of the report.

These particular questions were chosen because they addressed some of the most pressing issues facing Muslim young people according to both qualitative and quantitative research. The selected questions are not meant to be exhaustive of all challenges. We recognize for example that we did not address offline bullying, or the unique needs of refugee youth. These important topics may be the focus of future research.

A large number of ideas, opinions, and solutions were presented as participants engaged in timed blocks of discussion on each question on the first day. On the second day, groups worked to refine and detail some of their discoveries into actionable recommendations.

The recommendations presented by the groups are varied and diverse. However, they had several common threads and themes. Most of the recommendations included:

- A needs assessment
- A focus on promoting education, awareness or training on their focus issues
- An emphasis on engaging supporting, celebrating, and advocating for youth,
- Development or repackaging of content or programming (khutbas, videos, talking points)
- A youth-led component (educating parents, content creation and production, online promotion)
- Investing in youth and youth-targeted content and resources
- Developing and implementing policies to force change
- Capacity building efforts

Getting Race Right:

How can predominantly South Asian and Arab American mosques promote a greater understanding of race and civil rights, and create inclusive environments for African American Muslim youth?

Introduction and Key Themes

The United States' several million Muslims are the most racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse group in the country.[2] According to Gallup, more than one-third of American Muslims are African American.[3] Unfortunately, African American Muslims face intra-Muslim racism[a] from other immigrant Muslim communities, namely South Asians and Arabs.

Existing research on intra-Muslim racism is limited. MuslimARC released their preliminary study of race relations in June 2015.[4] Based on this research and anecdotally, many African American Muslims—including youth—constantly face ethnic and racial discrimination from within the American Muslim community.

Addressing intra-Muslim racism is critical for African American youth from a positive development standpoint, namely forming a healthy and well-integrated identity, as well as improving overall youth resiliency.[5]

This set of discussions focused on creating inclusive environments for African American Muslim youth at South Asian and Arab American mosques. Some themes and recommendations from the discussions are listed below:

"Without deliberate action taken on these issues, Muslims of all ages will continue to face discrimination, and as a result, our communities will continue to fragment."

—2015 Study of Intra-Muslim Ethnic Relations - Muslim American Views on Race Relations, Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative[1]

a Racism: The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics.

Racism in America

"Racism. We are not cured of it. And it's not just a matter of it not being polite to say 'nigger' in public. That's not the measure of whether racism still exists or not. It's not just a matter of overt discrimination. Societies don't overnight completely erase everything that happened 200–300 years prior."

—Barack Obama[6]

The effects of racism are traumatic, alienating and painful.[7] The effects are also deeply, deeply tragic, as illustrated by the past year's racial flash points in Ferguson, Baltimore, Staten Island, Charleston, and Cleveland.[8]

Though each of these events released "a torrent of anguish and soul-searching about race in America,"[9] Americans continue to struggle with conversations on race and racism, and conversations that do occur are often deeply dividing and contentious.[10]

Racism is easily defined but less easily understood. Racism, often conceptualized as "individual acts of cruelty" carried out by horrible people,[11] has evolved. Overt conscious racism is not acceptable in today's society.

Today's more nuanced contemporary racism and racial bias impacts "political, economic and sociocultural structures of America" and reinforces existing racial stratifications[12]—even while making room for new racial and ethnic groups.

In today's world, racism is essentially structural racism and can be conceptualized as a "system of structured relations into which we are all socialized,"[13] and a system of unequal institutional power.

Racism is not about intention or hate. It's not personal. Doreen E. Loury, Director of the Pan African Studies program at Arcadia University, near Philadelphia, says, "The first thing we must stop doing is making racism a personal thing and understand that it is a system of advantage based on race."[14]

Everyone has personal biases. And with the ubiquitous nature of negative messaging about people of color, racial bias can be unconscious. Racism exists where racial biases are not recognized or accepted either as a bias, or a human failing. Breaking the cycle of racism is about recognizing, accepting and challenging racial biases.

Privilege

"Privilege blinds, because it's in its nature to blind. Don't let it blind you too often. Sometimes you will need to push it aside in order to see clearly."

—Award-winning novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie addressing the members of the Wellesley College Class of 2015[15]

When speaking about privilege Peggy McIntosh, author of *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* and founder of the National SEED Project on Inclusive Curriculum says, "I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage."[16] This concept views privilege as the other side of racism, and implies that only by addressing privilege can one fully address the issue of race.

Conversations about privilege are extremely fragile because the term is emotionally charged, and often misunderstood. As mentioned earlier, biases exist, as do inequalities in existing societal structures. Gaining the benefits of those structures by virtue of possessing characteristics that society rewards (gender, skin color, physical abilities or sexual orientation) is a privilege. Recognizing and accepting privilege is not always easy because of the shame and negativity now associated with it. Deconstructing racism and privilege requires patience, courage and

humility, along with being able to have honest conversations on race and privilege. Efforts to talk about privilege and racism among stakeholders should be efforts to work together to establish a stronger baseline of understanding to address the "culture of inequality."[17]

Racism in the American Muslim Community

Racism is a sin in Islam, and also a major social ill in Muslim communities throughout time.[19] The Prophet (PBUH) said, "the issue of racism[c] will plague my *ummah*[d] to the end."

In the United States, intra-Muslim racism exists in American Muslim communities. An extension of "white privilege," "Arab privilege" is thought to be part of the problem.[20] One way that racism shows up in Islam is with regard to marriage. Many South Asian and Arab American families do not want their children marrying African Americans.

Additionally, it has become popular to say Islam is "colorblind." The truth is, Islam is not colorblind, and neither are Muslims. Islam values diversity and pluralism as illustrated in the Quran:

> *"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge."*
>
> *—The Quran 30:22 translated by Sahih International*

Colorblindness on the other hand sounds like a utopic ideal that in actuality robs individuals of their unique identities. Colorblindness ignores racism, and is in fact a form of racism. As an illustration, some colorblind racist comments include:

- It's not about race, it's about culture.
- I have a lot of Black friends.
- I don't see you as Black.[21]

In the American Muslim community, it sounds something like, "I don't see color, we are all Muslims, *Alhamdulillah.*[e]"[22]

Racism exists in American Muslim communities, and in the past year, several campaigns like #droptheaword[f] have challenged Muslims to address racism.

"Racism is when a non-Black Muslim asks an African American Muslim imam whether he knows what his Arabic name means and if he knows how to do wudu.[b] It is when Black Muslims are assumed to be converts, but not in a flattering way. It is when Blackness is seen as a deficiency."

—Imam Dawud Walid & Dr. Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, MuslimARC[18]

b Wudu: Ritual washing performed in preparation for prayer and worship.
c The actual Arabic word is *asabiya*, which does not translate to racism, but 'groupism' or 'tribalism.'
d Ummah: Arabic for community of Muslims bound by religious ties.
e Alhamdulillah: Arabic for "praise be to God."
f #droptheaword: Twitter campaign started by Dawud Walid to get fellow Muslims to stop using the Arabic word *"abeed,"* which means "slaves," to describe African Americans.

"When a person's sense of human dignity is violated, there are physiological consequences."

—David Williams, developer of "The Everyday Discrimination Scale"[23]

Impact of Racism on Youth

Racism is a toxic stressor for youth and can have long-term health impacts, physical and mental. A survey in the journal *Child Development* found that frequent and ongoing racial discrimination (slurs, insults, disrespectful treatment) without emotional support can affect a teen's health, and put them at risk for chronic diseases like diabetes, heart conditions and high blood pressure. With emotional support, however, health risks resulting from racial discrimination are significantly lower.

Addressing Black Suffering

Conversations on black suffering in American Muslim communities are often met with the reaction, "Oh, this again?" American Muslim communities often tend to universalize suffering. Black suffering is subsumed as Muslim suffering or pitted against another community's suffering.

The value of black lives must be acknowledged. Pitting black struggles against the struggles of Muslims, refugees or immigrants diminishes and dilutes the challenges faced by each group. No group feels heard when lopped in with others whose struggles are unique from its own.

Some participants asked why African American Muslims should even have to ask for the personalized attention of their fellow Muslims. Black suffering and black history in America is the history of how Islam evolved in America. Islam in America did not start with Malcolm X or Muhammad Ali. Islam in America descended from slaves.

Another participant spoke emotionally about the marginalizing effect of universalizing suffering, as well as non-Black Muslims' "discomfort around talking about black suffering." She said, "People want to have their pain acknowledged." She continued by asking, "Can't we find safe spaces to discuss black suffering without turning it into a universal conversation? Can't we have a word of *subhanallah*[g] for all that this community has endured? If we can't sit with the discomfort as adults, then we won't be able to create safe spaces where youth can openly talk about it." Youth do not have the maturity or social and emotional capacities to rationalize microaggressions[h] and behaviors they don't understand.

Another workshop participant admitted that "in the immigrant community there's a severe lack of knowledge," and went on to say, "We will add it to our curriculum. Black history and suffering has to be a part of Islamic school curriculums."

g *Subhanallah*: Arabic for "glory be to God."

h Microagression: Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.

Replace Structural Racism with Structural Inclusion

It may be that South Asian and Arab American Muslim centers are on a learning curve that all communities go through. In essence, these communities have to internalize the critical importance of moving beyond themselves.

Some participants felt that South Asian and Arab American Muslim centers are not aware that racism is an issue, and do not have race empathy and consciousness. Participants were not convinced that there is a real desire to tackle structural racism by attempting to change their customs, to explore discussions of customs versus tradition or to invest in bridge building initiatives.

Participants made it very clear that accessibility is not enough. Inclusion is a mindset and in making African American Muslims—and youth in particular—feel included, it is important that leaders of South Asian and Arab American Muslim centers, not African Americans, be proactive in their outreach. Leaders of South Asian and Arab American Muslim centers have to take the step forward and be willing to have honest and difficult conversations on race relations within South Asian and Arab Muslim communities.

Affirmative Action

If needed, South Asian and Arab American Muslim leaders should be willing to incorporate affirmative action to build inclusivity into decision making. Ideas discussed at the convening include:

- Zero tolerance policy on racism in Muslim centers' bylaws and culture, with penalties for non-observance in place.
- Codify inclusion. For example, make board bylaws at Muslim centers explicit with regard to the maximum number of people from any community that can be on the board.

Curricula and Programming

The majority of programming in South Asian and Arab American Muslim centers deals only with South Asian and Arab American issues and challenges. Programming needs to be diversified to address African American issues too. Additionally, Sunday School curricula, khutbah, and speaker programming needs to include:

- Discussions on the history of discrimination, with focus given to contextualizing the post-9/11 experience with the African American experience.
- A focus on the following: US History and Civics, Colonialism, African American History and Islam in America.
- Current affairs and their impact on different communities.
- A closer look at the interconnectedness of African American history, modern Islamophobia and recent movements such as Black Lives Matter.

"We speak often of structural struggles and violence. We are not immune to that, even in a circle like this. We need to own the fact that we in this room may be guilty of that. Structural racism gets passed down through generations. One may not think they're racist, but we may be. It's not just people 'out there' who are racist, it may be us."

—Workshop participant

"Also, when we first started the hashtag #BeingBlackAndMuslim …It felt like, "This is our time to make an impact and bridge divides." We found threads within our faith tradition that were being overlooked. This [anti-racism conversation] is soul work."

—Margari Hill, Founder, Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC)

"I walk around every day, black, you know. So how the world interacts with me on a day-to-day basis first actually is black—unless they see my name first, then it's Muslim, or… no, most of the time then it's still black, just with a funny name."

—Quote from participant in State of American Muslim Youth: Research & Recommendations[24]

Leaders and congregants at South Asian and Arab American Muslim centers need to normalize conversations and move beyond tokenism. African American issues are everyone's issues. Programming also needs to:

- Acknowledge and celebrate African American history month
- Provide services in English
- Include events that are ethnically relevant to African Americans. For example, *henna*[i] night before *Eid*[j] is representative of South Asian and Arab cultures, not African American.

Build Bridges through Experiential Learning

Bridge building initiatives like experiential learning and sports activities create crucial opportunities for African American youth to build trusting relationships and opportunities for dialog at South Asian and Arab American Muslim centers.

Experiential learning activities include community service activities, guest speaker series, cultural awareness programming, partnerships promoting cross-pollination between urban and suburban Muslim centers, and sport activities that promote social change through sport based youth development.

When planning and conducting these activities, organizers must be intentional in creating opportunities for South Asian, Arab and African American Muslims to build bridges through positive engagement, meaningful dialog and working side-by-side. If organizers are not intentional, these exchanges could increase divisions. For example, not mixing up the sports teams and allowing all South Asian or all Arab teams competing against all African American teams could increase misunderstanding, creating an us versus them mentality.

Conduct a Needs Assessment, Don't Assume

To date, in South Asian and Arab American Muslim spaces, the programming focus is on their cultures and issues, not those of African American Muslims. There is little existing research on African American Muslim youth, but that which does exist indicates that African American Muslim youth have stronger shared histories, and societal and socioeconomic bonds with non-Muslim African Americans than with their Muslim peers.[25]

Due to the lack of research, most information gathered on African American Muslim youth and their needs is anecdotal. Thus, speaking with African American Muslim youth is crucial to providing relevant programming and services in South Asian and Arab American Muslim spaces.

Surveying African American Muslim youth—who attend South Asian and Arab American mosques—and related stakeholders (parents, African American community and thought leaders on African American Muslim youth) will serve to identify major needs and programming opportunities.

i *Henna:* The powdered leaves of a tropical shrub, used as a natural and temporary dye to decorate the hands before a special occasion.
j *Eid:* A Muslim holiday.

Invest in Anti-Racist Education

Deconstructing racism requires a multi-pronged approach of "education, outreach and advocacy"[26] to change the ways that internalized racism impacts progressive organizations and movements. One of those prongs, unconscious bias training or anti-racist education training in Muslim spaces, would promote "deeper understandings and practices of anti-racism"[27] in American Muslim communities. MuslimARC trainings seek to increase "awareness of anti-racism theories and practice, and prepare local leaders for developing sustained projects that will address racism."[28]

The goal is to address structural racism and to incorporate deliberate anti-racist education and practice at all levels in khutbahs, in classrooms, on the basketball court, etc. This education can include Seerah and Quran (avoiding tokenism of certain stories), definitions of racism, current affairs, US History, African American History, Islam in America and self-awareness focus/ethno-cultural history.

Key Recommendations

1. Build Anti-Racist Awareness and Capacity

Target audience: Imams, Board members, Parents, Sunday School teachers of South Asian/Arab mosques

Recommendation: At least once a quarter, conduct simple youth-led exercises at community dinners and at your Muslim space to subtly illustrate privilege. A sample exercise is step forward, step back or the diversity shuffle (https://movetoamend.org/sites/default/files/step_forward_step_back_list.pdf)

Target audience: Imams, Board members, Parents, Sunday School teachers of South Asian/Arab mosques

Recommendation: Within the next year, build a deliberate top-down anti-racist education curriculum promoting awareness and knowledge among parents and Sunday School teachers. At minimum, start on the path by reading resources at MuslimARC. To further develop this curricula reach out to African American scholars, parents, and educators.

Target audience: Imams, Board members, Youth directors

Recommendation: In the next 6 months, build capacity of at least one youth director/worker working with youth between 15–25 to deliver anti-racist education that includes:

- Seerah/Quran – avoiding tokenism of certain stories
- Racism definitions (microaggression, triggers, privilege, white supremacy)
- Current affairs, especially those that predominantly affect African American communities and the interplay of those communities within the wider society
- US History/Colonialism/African American History/Islam in America
- Self-awareness focus/ethno-cultural history
    - Training/certifying (MuslimARC 3-month course, http://www.muslimarc.org/)
    - Build awareness/start on path of education (reading and resources MuslimARC)
    - Deliberate and safe spaces for dialogue at youth camps/youth groups

2. Conduct In-Depth Needs Assessments

Target audience: Leadership, Imams, Youth directors, Mosque leaders

Recommendation: Within the next 6 months—and on an ongoing basis annually—conduct a needs assessment of African American Muslim youth attending your Muslim center to adequately identify needs of African American youth within the community.

Target audience: Leadership, Imams, Youth directors, Mosque leaders

Recommendation: Within the next six months, conduct an assessment of your South Asian/Arab American Muslim center's capacity to serve identified needs of African American Muslim youth.

3. Build Responsible Opportunities for Promoting Awareness and Bridge Building

Target audience: MuslimARC along with Muslim scholars

Recommendation: In the next year, partner with Muslim scholars to create 2–4 "stock/sample khutbah" on African Americans in this country—with a particular emphasis on youth. Talking points can include discussion of African American history, including history of American Islam, the Islamic position on racism and more nuanced understanding of racism, current affairs impacting African Americans, US History/Colonialism/Islam in America and the challenges of young African American Muslims.

Make it available online for free download. Market the khutbas to imams and chaplains and informally across social media platforms.

4. Establish Zero Tolerance Policy on Racism

Target audience: Board members, Youth directors and Youth organizations

Recommendation: Within the next 6 months establish and enforce zero tolerance policy on racism in your mosque/community center/third space/organization American Muslim communities within your organization's bylaws, culture and norms.

- Develop policy around zero tolerance to racism
- Add zero tolerance policy to bylaws
- Make it part of the organization's culture and norms
- Reiterate the policy frequently and establish penalties for non-observance of policy

5. Create Brave Spaces

Target audience: Board members

Recommendation: Create and implement brave spaces at your mosque/community center/third space to have difficult conversations about race.

- Chaplains are trained in intercultural competence. Speaking to and working with local area chaplains and the association of Muslim chaplains is a good first step on how to create these spaces at your Muslim center
- Talk to chaplains about how to create these spaces at your Muslim center
- Work with chaplains to develop steps to implement safe space opportunities
- Implement brave space concept at your Muslim center

Getting Race Right Endnotes

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APPENDIX 1: Scope Of Convening

At this convening, ISPU brought forward some of this valuable research on American Muslim youth to establish context, and asked for the group's input in developing strong recommendations. The convening was structured in three distinct parts:

1. *Take in research* - On Saturday morning, to establish the research context for the convening, Dalia Mogahed and others from ISPU reviewed relevant research on American Muslim youth and young adult participation in congregations; and presented guidelines for actionable and effective recommendations.
2. *Think creatively* - Once the research context had been set, the larger group broke out into smaller groups for discussion using the world café method. Using this method, Saturday afternoon, the group engaged in six (6) constructive and dynamic groups discussions: four (4) 30-minute and two (2) 10-minute sessions. These sessions were facilitated, but free flowing to allow participants to ideate in small groups.
3. *Think pragmatically about actionable recommendations* - After ideating for several hours, participants regrouped late Saturday afternoon and again on Sunday morning to develop and detail pragmatic actionable recommendations for each of the questions.

Norm Creation

At the start of the convening, the group established agreed upon norms for the weekend. These norms included:

- *Step back, step forward* – to hear from as many voices as possible
- *Be present* – mute cell phones
- *One mic* – when someone is speaking, they are the only one speaking
- *Avoid jargon* – use accessible language, clarify what you are saying, don't assume everyone understands acronyms and terminologies
- *Express appreciation*
- *Brave space* – be brave enough to dream and to say the things that don't often get said
- *Safe space* – this is a place for respect and confidentiality
- *Be open to others thoughts/ideas* – "don't yuck my yum"
- *Be respectful of others religiosity* – avoid using labels like moderate, conservative, etc.
- *Respect time* – be timely
- *Coaching* – ask questions to understand what people are saying
- *Agree to a social contract of professional ethics*
- *Make 'I' versus 'We' statements* – understand that participants are presenting their reality and that it may not be shared by everyone in the room

World Café Model

The World Café is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue.[22] The methodology is based on seven (7) integrated design principles:

1. Setting the Context
2. Creating Hospitable Space
3. Exploring Questions that Matter
4. Encouraging Everyone's Contribution
5. Connecting Diverse Perspectives
6. Listening together for Patterns and Insights
7. Sharing Collective Discoveries[23]

The World Café model includes the following five (5) modifiable components:

1. *Setting:* A café environment: round tables covered with paper, pens and a "talking stick."

2. *Welcome and Introduction:* A warm welcome and an introduction to the World Café process, context and etiquette.
3. *Small Group Rounds:* Three or more 20-minute rounds of conversation per small group. At the end of the 20-minutes, each member of the group moves to a different new table. Conversations may or may not be hosted or facilitated.
4. *Questions:* Each round is prefaced with a question designed for the specific context and desired purpose of the session. The same questions can be used for more than one round.
5. *Harvest:* After the small groups and/or in between rounds individuals are invited to share insights or other results from their conversations with the rest of the large group.

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Participant Biographies

Facilitators

Jennifer Hollett

Jennifer Hollett is an award-winning broadcast journalist (CBC, CTV, MuchMusic) and a leader in Canada's rising generation of community organizers and activists redefining politics. A leading digital expert, Jenn uses social media to increase participation and mobilization in politics and social issues. She studied public policy at Harvard University, obtaining her MPA, and was the digital director on Olivia Chow's Toronto mayoral campaign. Jennifer is running for Member of Parliament in Canada, as the NDP candidate in the new Toronto district of University-Rosedale.

Zeba Iqbal

Zeba Iqbal is a freelance editor and author at ISPU. She has a diverse background in for-profit, non-profit and startup management, research, communications and business development. She led CAMP (Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals) from 2007-11 transforming it from a networking platform to an inclusive space for professional dialogue among American Muslim professionals. She founded and developed the CAMP Leadership Summit and was its Conference Manager in 2008, 2009 and 2011. A 2009-10 Fellow of USC CRCC's AMCLI (American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute), she has been a board member and advisor to the Muslim Democratic Club of New York; Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas' Festival; and The Domestic Crusaders, among others.

Participants

Abubakr Abdul-Latif

I am Abubakr Abdul-Latif born and raised Muslimin the heart of Brooklyn, NY. I have studied Islam in Syria, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. I'm presently a Coordinating Senior Chaplain for New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, wherein I've worked for 13 years. I am also a Mentor and Family Support Worker for Mental Health Association in Orange County New York. I'm a holder of a Youth Mental Health First Aid certification, and I am completing my bachelor's degree of Psychology at SUNY Empire State College. For many years, I have worked-in and around NYC--with Muslim and non-Muslim youth on several at-risk behaviors such as violence and drug abuse, etc.

Sameera Ahmed

Sameera Ahmed is the Director of The Family & Youth Institute. She also serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor at Wayne State University, a Fellow at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, an Associate Editor for the Journal of Muslim Mental Health (JMMH), and a Board Licensed Psychologist in Ohio and Michigan. Her research includes risk behaviors and protective factors of Muslim adolescents and emerging adults; promoting culturally and religiously meaningful psychotherapy; and skills-based parenting and marital interventions to strengthen families. Dr. Ahmed is the Co-editor of Counseling Muslims: Handbook of Mental Health Issues and Interventions (Routledge, 2012). Dr. Ahmed holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, a M.S. in Biology, as well as a certificate in Family Life Education and has been involved in American Muslim youth development for over 25 years.

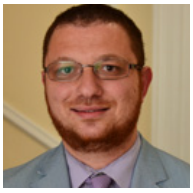
Sawssan Ahmed

Dr. Sawssan R. Ahmed is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at California State University, Fullerton and a Volunteer Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health, Division of Global Health at University of California, San Diego. She completed her graduate work in clinical psychology at Wayne State University and postdoctoral training in developmental issues and health disparities at the University of California, Los Angeles and San Diego State University. Her research focuses on the role of socio-cultural risk and protective factors in physical and mental health, with a special interest in Arab Americans, adolescents and refugees. Her teaching and clinical interests include child and adolescent psychotherapy and cultural competence in working with people of color.

Laila Alawa

Laila Alawa is the CEO of Coming of Faith, a digital media startup amplifying stories of minority women. Alawa works as the Secondary Investigator at ISPU's American Muslims Elections 2016. Laila also works on government communications, and serves as the Lead Marketing Strategist for PushBrand Marketing. She writes regularly for Salon.com, The Guardian, The Huffington Post, and Mic.com, among others. Alawa is also an associate editor at The Islamic Monthly. She previously worked at Princeton University, conducting a study on Muslim American perceptions of belonging.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES, *continued*



Iyad Alnachef

Iyad Alnachef is the Director of Muslim Youth of Grand Blanc. He's also Founder of MYX, a consultancy institution that aims to help communities establish youth programs that are impactful, sustainable and institutionalized. He has more than fourteen years of experience in organizing community and youth development programs in the United States. His work experience took him from working as a local volunteer youth director in a community center in Michigan to working with the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America to working with MYNA, the first national organization focused on serving Muslim American youth. He has been invited to speak at several national and international conferences on issues of youth and community development. Iyad earned his Masters in Youth Development from Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Chris Abdur-Rahman Blauvelt

Chris Abdur-Rahman Blauvelt is a passionate Muslim American entrepreneur committed to building up the global Muslim community to reach its full potential. He was born in Malaysia, raised in the United States and at the age of 16 became a Muslim through the influence of a friend and the Autobiography of Malcolm X. He received a masters in educational leadership and prior to starting LaunchGood was a teacher at one of the top boarding schools in the world, founded an Arabic non-profit, and was a producer for Bilal's Stand, an award-winning Sundance film about an American Muslim. He started working on LaunchGood in 2011 and launched the site in 2013. In just over a year LaunchGood has already helped raise over $2 million for more than 250 projects across 23 countries, and has received the 2014 Islamic Economy Award in Dubai for best startup in the Muslim world.

Ilhan Dahir

Ilhan Dahir has a Bachelors Degree in Political Science and English from the Ohio State University. In her time at Ohio State, she has served as a mentor with the Program for Advising in Scholarship & Service (PASS) and founded Integrated Student Services, a community group dedicated to providing services for new citizens. She served as the Executive Secretary for the Collegiate Council on World Affairs while also working as an organizer with the youth powered grassroots organization, the Ohio Student Association. She is passionate about politics, service learning, educational justice and preserving civil liberties. Ilhan is especially interested in international security issues and has worked to combat worldwide radicalization concerns at the local level by organizing community engagement programs with the Department of Homeland Security Civil Rights and Civil Liberties division. In the coming year she will be travelling to Turkey on a Fulbright scholarship and plans on attending law school upon return to the United States.

Amin Gharad

From 2010 to 2012, Amin Gharad served two terms as president of the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA). A rising senior at Georgetown University, pursuing a double major in Arabic and Philosophy and minoring in Government, Amin is currently president of his campus' branch of Amnesty International.

Tannaz Haddadi

Tannaz Haddadi is a founder and president of the Board of Trustees of the Next Wave Muslim Initiative (NWMI), Inc., which works to engage the Muslim community in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area. NWMI is an organization that provides an open platform supporting a variety of programs including community engagement, intellectual discourse, spiritual practice, and social consciousness. She is currently a Privacy Analyst at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Tannaz's passion is to facilitate intra-community dialogue to build bridges of understanding between Shi'as and Sunnis. She is an alternative dispute resolution practitioner with experience in collaborative consensus building within groups and organizations, and the application of such techniques to problem-solving models in various settings. She holds an MS in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. During her undergraduate studies at GMU she majored in Philosophy & Religion.

Leena Hadied

Dr.Leena Hadied is a clinical psychologist at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Detroit Mercy. Her dissertation focused on examining the relationship between mental illness and juvenile delinquency as related to recidivism in adulthood, along with identification of risk and protective factors. Throughout her career, her research has focused on understanding the dialectics of ethnic identity in transitional Muslim families, with particular interest in the youth experience. In her private practice, she works closely with Muslim and non-Muslim youth to address identity issues, as well as general mental health concerns including: addiction, depression, anxiety, self-harm, and family conflict.

Hamada Hamid

Hamada Hamid is a Senior Research Fellow and Former Director of the Center for Global Health at ISPU. He is also a Clinical Instructor in the Departments of Neurology and Psychiatry at Yale University. Dr. Hamid completed a dual residency in neurology and psychiatry and a Masters in Global Public Health at New York University, followed by a clinical research fellowship in epilepsy at Yale University. Dr. Hamid has published several articles and book chapters on neuropsychiatric illness, mental health policy in the Middle East, and the role of culture in mental illness across a diverse spectrum of Muslim populations. He is also the founding and current managing editor of the Journal of Muslim Mental Health. Dr. Hamid has served on the boards of Tamkeen, an Arab American social service agency, Muslim Mental Health, Inc., Muslim Family Services, and he is an affiliated faculty member for the Council of Middle East Studies at Yale University.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES, *continued*

Sulaimaan Hamed

Imam Sulaimaan Hamed serves as the resident Imam of the Atlanta Masjid of Al Islam, one of the largest Islamic centers in the southeast affiliated with the community of his late teacher, Imam W.D. Muhammad. A student of Religious Studies, he has taught Arabic and Islamic sciences at the Mohammed Schools and Islamic Theology and Islamic Law for the Faith Institute in Atlanta. He represents the new generation of teachers of Islamic Studies in America. Educated primarily in private Islamic Schools in the US, Hamed received his specialized training under the tutelage of the Grand Mufti Sheik Ahmed Kuftaro of Damascus, Syria at the Prestigious Abu Nour University. Completing courses in Jurisprudence , Arabic, Prophetic traditions, and Theology. He served as Imam of Masjid Fresno in California and assistant to Masjidul Waritheen of Oakland. Sulaimaan is passionate about the improvement of Islamic institutions of education. His publications include "Ramadan: The month of purification and self restraint." Sulaimaan currently resides in Atlanta, GA with his wife and children.

Namira Islam

Namira Islam is a lawyer and graphic designer, and Co-Founder/Executive Director of MuslimARC, the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative. She practiced in poverty law providing legal services to low-income individuals in Flint, MI, and has worked in prisoners' rights litigation and interned at the trial and appellate levels in international criminal law and war crimes for the United Nations. She has served on the boards of multiple Muslim student organizations and has fundraised on behalf of Islamic Relief and charity: water, as well as for other causes. Namira has been tutoring and mentoring low-income students for nearly a decade, and has freelanced as a graphic designer for diverse clients in the United States and abroad since 2007. Born in Detroit to Bangladeshi parents, Namira is an alumna of the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor and the Michigan State University College of Law.

Saleem Khalid

Imam Saleem Khalid was born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He moved to Detroit and attended Wayne State University. He began his professional career with Standard Federal Savings, now known as Bank of America. Mr. Khalid was Standard Federal's first Muslim and African American Vice President. During this period of time he took his shahada, began his involvement with the Muslim community, and completed an Imams training program sponsored by the Muslim World League. His also has served as a consultant in both Saudi Arabia and Doha, Qatar. Immediately prior to returning to the Detroit area in July 2011, he represented Islamic Relief USA, nationally, as their Community Affairs Representative. He is actively involved in classes, talks, and lectures to Muslims and people of other faith traditions and has spoken at numerous events held at colleges, universities and Islamic Centers. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the Muslim Enrichment Project, a project providing educational and social support to new Muslims.

Amal Killawi

Amal Killawi is a clinical social worker, researcher, and community educator. She serves as a scholar with the Institute for Social Policy & Understanding, and sits on the board of the Family & Youth Institute. She holds a Bachelors in Psychology, Masters in Social Work, and a Certificate in Sexual Health from the University of Michigan. She has a special interest in community-based participatory research and the provision of culturally competent care. Amal's previous experience includes working as a counselor with college students and domestic violence survivors, conducting research on family and health challenges in the American Muslim community, and serving as an online counselor and writer.

Farhan Latif

As El-Hibri Foundation's President, Farhan Latif provides strategic leadership by working with the Board of Trustees and the staff to define and implement the Foundation's long-range vision, goals, strategies and policies. He previously served as the Chief Operating Officer & Director of Policy Impact at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. During his time at ISPU, Mr. Latif worked with White House, Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security officials on a range of domestic and foreign policy issues. Prior to ISPU, he spent over a decade in higher education working at the intersection of building a culture of philanthropy and enabling access for underrepresented, low income, and first generation students. As a social entrepreneur, he founded Strategic Inspirations, a social impact consulting firm focused on strengthening the ability of nonprofit organizations to build capacity, create a culture of learning, catalyze innovation through philanthropy, and maximize impact. He holds an M.A. from Harvard University and a degree in Business Management and Marketing with graduate work in nonprofit management at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Khalid Latif

Imam Khalid Latif is a University Chaplain for New York University, Executive Director of the Islamic Center at NYU, and a Chaplain for the NYPD. He was appointed the first Muslim chaplain at NYU in 2005. He was also appointed the first Muslim chaplain at Princeton University in 2006. Spending a year commuting between these two excellent institutions, he finally decided to commit full-time to New York University's Islamic Center where his position was officially institutionalized in the spring of 2007. Under his leadership, the Islamic Center at NYU became the first ever Muslim student center at an institution of higher education in the United States. In 2007, Mayor Michael Bloomberg nominated Imam Latif to become the youngest chaplain in history of the New York City Police Department at the age of 24. Most recently, Imam Latif was selected as one of 60 NYC leaders to serve on May Bill Deblasio's Transition Team, helping to recommend and select individuals for key roles in the current NYC administration and also appointed to a "Task Force to Combat Hate" by NYC Public Advocate Tisch James to deal with the rise in Islamophobic, anti-semitic and anti-sikh sentiment in NYC.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES, *continued*

Edina Lekovic

Edina Lekovic is the Muslim Public Affairs Council's Director of Policy and Programming, where she oversees strategic initiatives in government and policy, media and communications, and leadership development. Edina has spoken in hundreds of national and international conferences, community events and interfaith dialogues on a variety of issues related to American Muslims. She has also had the opportunity to participate in a United Nations program on "Confronting Islamophobia" and the International Conference of Muslim Young Leaders, which served as a precursor to the annual conference of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). She is co-founder and graduate of the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute and also co-founded Elev8, an arts-based youth leadership development program. From 2004-2010, Edina served as MPAC's Communications Director, and has appeared regularly in major media outlets, including CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, CBS Television, the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Associated Press, Chicago Tribune, and Los Angeles Times.

Shabana Mir

Shabana Mir is the author of Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity, published by the University of North Carolina Press. Shabana has taught Anthropology at Millikin University, IL, and graduate and undergraduate courses in Qualitative Research Methods, Social Foundations of Education, Anthropology, Diversity in Education, History of American Education, and Literature at Oklahoma State University, Indiana University, and Eastern Illinois University. Shabana Mir earned her Ph.D. in Education Policy Studies and Anthropology, with a concentration in Comparative Education, from Indiana University, Bloomington. She received the Outstanding Dissertation Award for her doctoral dissertation from the American Anthropological Association's Council on Anthropology and Education. She conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Washington, DC area, as Visiting Researcher at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University. She also has an M.A. in English literature from Punjab University, Pakistan and an M.Phil. in Education from Cambridge University (UK).

Fatima Mirza

Fatima Mirza, PhD, MSW, grew up in Northern Virginia and has been active in the Muslim community throughout her life. Her experiences and schooling have sensitized her to the complex interactions between individuals, families, and communities, especially for individuals who are members of minority racial and religious communities. She completed her Master's in Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University which helped her gain more experience working with young people and individuals who had experienced traumatic events. Fatima recently completed her Ph.D. in Social Work at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, gaining advanced training in research. Her dissertation research focused on improving our understanding of Muslim American youth identity and the factors related to Muslim American youth engagement in risk behaviors. More information about her research is available at: www.id-mosaics.com. She is currently a Supervisee in Social Work gaining postgraduate hours required for state licensure.

Hadia Mubarak

Starting this fall, Hadia Mubarak will be teaching on Islam, gender, and the Quran at UNCC's and Davidson College's respective Religious Studies departments. She received her PhD in Islamic Studies from Georgetown University, where she specialized in gender in Islam, modern and classical Quranic Exegesis, Islamic law and modern Islamic movements. Mubarak previously worked as a Senior Researcher at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, a researcher at the Gallup Organization's Center for Muslim Studies and a researcher with American University's Islam in the Age of Globalization project. Mubarak received her Master's degree in Contemporary Arab Studies with a concentration in Women and Gender from Georgetown University. In 2004, Mubarak was the first female to be elected as president of the Muslim Students Association National (MSA) since its establishment in 1963. She is regularly invited to speak on Islam, Muslim women and American Muslims at symposiums, conferences, and diverse religious institutions across the country.

Habeeb Quadri

Habeeb Quadri is an Educator, Author, and Youth Activist. He has a Bachelor in Teaching of History and a Masters in School Administration. He currently is taking a few courses a year at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education – Principal Center, where he works as part-time staff in their professional development programs. In addition to his teaching and administrative experience in public and private schools, Habeeb has delivered hundreds of lectures throughout the United States, Canada and abroad on Islam, society, and social problems confronting Muslim youth and the community at large for the last 15 years. Habeeb is currently on the National Advisory Board for MYNA (Muslim Youth of North America) , CISNA (Council of Islamic School of North America), Cook County Sheriff Muslim Advisory Board, Illinois Coalition of Non-Public School, IQRA Foundation and in the past for the Dean of Depaul School of Education.

Kameelah Rashad

Kameelah is the Founder of Muslim Wellness Foundation (MWF), an organization dedicated to reducing stigma associated with mental illness, addiction and trauma in the American Muslim community through dialogue, education and training. Kameelah also serves as the Interfaith Fellow & Muslim Chaplain at the University of Pennsylvania. As Chaplain, Kameelah acts as a counselor and advisor to the Muslim students on campus and facilitates discussions on religious identity development and challenges faced by American Muslim youth. Kameelah is a 2014 Ariane deRothschild Fellow, recipient of the 2014 Student Multiculturalism and Education Awards from the Pennsylvania Psychological Association. National Council for Behavioral Health has selected Kameelah for the prestigious 2015 Mental Health First Aid Community Impact Award. In February 2015, she was one of 14 American Muslim Leaders invited to attend a roundtable discussion with President Obama (and other Senior officials) at the White House. Kameelah

graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a BA in Psychology and M.Ed in Psychological Services. She earned a second Masters in Restorative Practices & Youth Counseling (MRP) from the International Institute for Restorative Practices and a post-Masters certificate in Family Therapy. Kameelah is a certified instructor in Adult, Youth and Higher Education Mental Health First Aid. She is also pursuing her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Mika'il Stewart Saadiq

Imam Mika'il Stewart Saadiq is a fifteen-year teacher of Social Studies at Detroit's Al-Ikhlas Training Academy. Imam Mika'il is a married father of five who resides in Detroit. Born and raised on the west side of Detroit, he went on to study sociology and political science at Prairie View A&M University. After accepting Islam at 21 years of age, he immersed himself in Islamic activism and began studying under local and internationally renowned Imams and scholars. He is the President of Al-Aqabah Islamic Community Center in Detroit, a Police Chaplain, a member of the Michigan Muslim Community Council Imam's Committee, and is involved in several community service projects and activities. Imam Mika'il is known for his real, but sophisticated, lectures and writings on minority and youth social issues. In 2013, he became the first Muslim to offer the invocation for a Michigan State Senate session. In late 2014, he received international notoriety when he organized over 65,000 people in a 24 hour social media blackout called the National Black Day of Silence.

Joshua Salaam

Joshua Salaam was born in Camden, New Jersey in 1973. He was raised by a single mother who kept him very involved in every community they lived in. His mother was responsible for his involvement in MYNA (Muslim Youth of North America) from its inception in 1985. Joshua has continued to work with MYNA for over 20 years as a participant and a counselor. He helped start MYNA Raps in 1992, which later lead to the creation of the international music group Native Deen. Joshua entered the military in 1995 and served as a Police officer at an Air Force Base in North Carolina. In the military he was able to serve as a D.A.R.E. Officer (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) for local elementary schools. Joshua's ability to be creative with youth earned him the "Most Outstanding Member" in the 36th North Carolina D.A.R.E. Seminar. After the military he worked for Wayne County in North Carolina to provide drug resistance education to youth from low-income families. Joshua has returned his focus to youth work and is working at ADAMS Center in Northern Virginia as the Youth Director since 2007.

Fatima Salman

Fatima Salman has been closely involved in Muslim American activism since her early youth. She was president of MYNA in 1994 and became head of the MSA's Tarbiyya committee in 1995. Her visit to Damascus in 1997 was a transformative experience for her and led to her regularly traveling back and forth in the following years in which she studied Islamic theology, history, Shafi'i jurisprudence, the prophetic biography, and spirituality. She also received a certification in Quranic recitation in 1997 through Shaykh Abul Hasan al-Kurdi. Fatima Salman has since then been teaching her own classes while continuing her involvement with various Muslim American organizations, such as the Majlis Youth Committee for the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) of which she is currently a member. She also serves as the Central Zone representative for ISNA, sits on the West Bloomfield Diversity Committee and on the board of the Michigan Muslim Community Council. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Arabic from the University of Michigan and is currently starting a Master's degree in social work with a focus on community organization and management from the same institution.

Sayeed Siddiqui

Sayeed Siddiqui is a freshman studying math and computer science at Ohio State University. He has been involved with MYNA (Muslim Youth of North America) since he was in 14 in various capacities. He is currently serves as the programs chair, overseeing camps, conferences, and other MYNA programs, and is the incoming president.

Madiha Tahseen

Dr. Madiha Tahseen received her doctorate in Applied Developmental Psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Tahseen received her M.A. in Developmental Psychology in May 2009 from UMBC, and her B.A. in Psychology in May 2005 from University of Maryland, College Park. She is currently an adjunct professor at UMBC and a member of the The Family & Youth Institute and IAMY. She is also an executive Board member of a non-profit organization, Stones To Bridges (stonestobridges.org), which aims to provide an anonymous online platform for Muslim youth to address their emotional, social and behavioral needs. Tahseen's dissertation was on the identity experiences of Muslim-American adolescents living in a heated sociopolitical context. Her research interests include: individual and group identity development, parenting, acculturation, and risk and protective factors of Muslim adolescents' healthy development.

Suhaib Webb

Imam Suhaib Webb is an American Muslim Imam, serving as a Resident Scholar for Make Space in Washington DC, and is the founder of the Ella Collins Institute of Islamic and Cultural studies. He is a Graduate of University of Central Oklahoma with a background in Education & Al-Azhar University from the College of Shariah (Islamic Jurisprudence). Imam Suhaib strongly advocates for an authentic articulation of the American Muslim identity & a proponent of understanding the various challenges facing the American Muslim community by finding solutions based on an Authentic American Muslim experience.

Hosts and Conveners

Sarrah Buageila

Sarrah Buageila has recently joined ISPU as the Research Project Manager. Sarrah has spent the previous eleven years at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan where she has worked as an Interviewer, Research Assistant, and Project Manager within the Project Design and Management Group. She primarily worked on the National Survey of Family growth, a study of the National Center for Health Statistics. Sarrah has co-authored papers for the International Field Directors and Technologies Conference and the American Association for Public Opinion Research Conference. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and has completed Graduate work towards a Masters of Liberal Arts in American Studies. She is also a trained Life Coach and uses her training to teach young women empowerment through self-development.

Patrick Cates

Patrick Cates is Senior Communications Officer at ISPU. Over the past decade, Patrick has served the organization as an event management, technology, communications and philanthropy consultant. Patrick transitioned to the non-profit sector after spending more than ten years in business development, helping startups and small businesses scale to regional enterprises. Patrick's experiences focused on expanding business capacity, crafting corporate branding and developing new business models. Patrick has been instrumental in fostering foundation partnerships and technical grant writing for ISPU. He was the recipient of the Henry Ford II endowed scholarship award and University of Michigan Dearborn distinguished leadership award.

Butheina Hamdah

Butheina Hamdah is Development Associate at ISPU where she helps manage ISPU's individual donor related development strategy and donor engagement and assists in all aspects of both fundraising and research dissemination events. She also provides executive assistance to the Chairman of the Board of Directors on strategic initiatives. She comes from a wide background of community organizing, fundraising and youth mentorship in Northwest Ohio and Southeastern Michigan. Hamdah holds a B.A. in Political Science and an M.A. in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations at the University of Toledo.

Iffa Kazi

Iffa Kazi is the Senior Development and Research Dissemination Officer at ISPU. Prior to joining our team, Ms. Kazi worked in the fields of strategic planning, performance analysis, and non-profit development and project management. She is a proven community organizer and was at the top of her class at the Michigan Development Institute, a program to cultivate development officers. Ms. Kazi brings years of experience in the areas of community and non-profit event organizing to ISPU. She also spends time volunteering in her local community as a youth mentor and program organizer. Ms. Kazi holds a BA in Economics from UM-Dearborn where she was the recipient of numerous academic and leadership awards. She is currently pursuing graduate work in Business Administration at Wayne State University.

Faiqa Mahmood

Faiqa Mahmood is a visiting fellow with the South Asia program at the Stimson Center, and a consultant at the Institute of Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU). Ms. Mahmood has also conducted research for think tanks in Egypt and Lebanon. Her writings have appeared in Foreign Policy's South Asia Channel, Georgetown Security Studies Review, The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, and Pakistan Review of International Law and Human Rights, among others. Ms. Mahmood graduated from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy with a focus on International Security Studies and Southwest Asia and Islamic Civilization. Ms. Mahmood earned her Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of London's International Program in Pakistan at The Institute of Legal Studies, Islamabad. She completed the Bar Practitioner Training Course (BPTC) at City Law School, City University, London. Previously, Ms. Mahmood taught second-year law students as part of the University of London's International Program in Pakistan. She is a licensed attorney at the Islamabad High Court, Pakistan and has been called to the Bar of England and Wales.

Dalia Mogahed

Dalia Mogahed is the Director of Research at ISPU where she develops, leads and executes ISPU's community-focused research strategy. Mogahed is former Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, where she led the analysis of surveys of Muslim communities worldwide. With John L. Esposito, she coauthored the book Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think. President Barack Obama appointed Mogahed to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships in 2009. She is a frequent expert commentator in global media outlets and international forums. She is also the CEO of Mogahed Consulting. Mogahed earned her BS in chemical engineering at the University of Wisconsin and was a Dean Scholar earning her MBA at the Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh.

Meira Neggaz

Meira Neggaz is the Executive Director at ISPU, where she is responsible for the institution's overall leadership, strategy, and growth. Meira works to build and strengthen ISPU's relationships with community leaders, policy makers, scholars, partner institutions and stakeholders to broaden the reach of ISPU's research and to increase the impact of the organization's mission. Before joining ISPU, Meira was the Senior Program Officer for Marie Stopes International (MSI), a leading, UK-based organization working in 42 countries. There, she led and managed programs in multiple countries, developed partnerships with key stakeholders and partner institutions, and managed key grants and donor relationships. Formerly, Meira was the first Executive Director of WINGS in Guatemala, where she grew the organization from its infancy to become a national leader in the health sector, and the Guatemala Country Representative for Curamericas, establishing country presence and leading a USAID funded child survival project. She holds a BA from Huron University in London and a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

About ISPU

ISPU conducts objective, solution-seeking research that empowers American Muslims to further community development and fully contribute to democracy and pluralism in the United States. Since 2002, ISPU has been at the forefront of discovering trends and opportunities that impact the American Muslim community. Our research aims to educate the general public and enable community change agents, the media, and policymakers to make evidence-based decisions. In addition to building in-house capacity, ISPU has assembled leading experts across multiple disciplines, building a solid reputation as a trusted source for information for and about American Muslims.

For more information, please visit: www.ispu.org

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding
6 Parklane Blvd., Suite 510
Dearborn, Michigan 48126

Tel: 1-800-920-ISPU or 1-800-920-4778
Email: info@ispu.org

Washington, DC
1110 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005

Tel: 202-768-8751