

REDESIGNING MUSLIM PHILANTHROPY IN AMERICA

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THE CHALLENGE

- Diverse Muslim communities in America
- Charitable giving is a core pillar of Islam
- Data shows that Muslim communities across America have wealth
- Vast majority of Muslims share core American values and support organizations that are working towards a stronger country
- Most Muslim giving seem to be going to schools, mosques, international humanitarian crises
 - Not going to building sustainable Muslim and non-Muslim organizations that are serving American public
- How can we create institutions/campaigns/efforts that are inspired by people's faith to contribute to improving American culture –similar to YMCA, United Way, Jewish Funds for Justice etc

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

- **What is holding Muslim communities back from meeting their giving potential to Muslim and non-Muslim organizations?**
- **How do we create a stronger culture of philanthropy within Muslim communities?**
- **How do we redesign Muslim philanthropy in the US so that it reflects people's values?**
- **How do we overcome the core challenges to Muslim Americans ability to give?**

MUSLIMS IN AMERICA

- ~5 million
- Most ethnically/racially diverse religious community in America
 - Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian, African, Hispanic etc (from over 80 countries) (most came to US in last 40 years)
 - 35% of Muslims in America are African American
- Young – 36% are 18-29 years old [General population- 18%]
- Largest communities in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Houston; (Somalis in MN, Arabs in MI etc)
- High percentage have college degrees or higher (40%)
- Broad spectrum of practice
- Broad range of income
 - 25% < \$2,000 a month; 28% > \$5,000

FIVE PILLARS

- Recognition of oneness of God (shahadah)
- Daily prayers (salat)
- **Zakat (almsgiving)**
- Fast during Ramadan (sawm)
- Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)

PHILANTHROPY IN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

- Giving is a religious obligation
 - Zakat (obligatory) – 2.5% of wealth after meeting household needs.
 - Sadaqa (voluntary)
- Tradition of giving
 - Individual giving to needy
 - Endowments – waqf – intended for broader public benefit
- Most giving is to mosques, schools, international humanitarian crises and disasters.
- In US – limited tradition of Muslim giving sustainable resources to Muslim and non-Muslim nonprofit organizations

FAITH-BASED NONPROFITS IN THE US

- Faith-based nonprofit organizations
 - United Way – 1887
 - YMCA - 1844
 - Jewish Funds for Justice – 1980s
- Muslim nonprofit organizations
 - Defending rights of citizens
 - Muslim Advocates – SF – 2000
 - Providing public services
 - Umma Clinic – LA inner city free healthy clinic (1980s)
 - Interfaith work – MPAC (LA – 1980)



CORE CHALLENGES TO MUSLIM GIVING

- Tension about what to give to – international versus domestic causes
- Lack of knowledge about nonprofit sector (especially for immigrant communities)
- Lack of knowledge about philanthropic tools/mechanisms – how to give beyond individual donations
- Fear of giving – expanded Terrorism Financing Laws

TERRORISM FINANCING LAWS

- Revision of US Treasury Laws to include money, weapons, and “material support”
- Closed 6 US-based American Muslim charities
- Examples of individual cases
 - 2 Somali US-citizens in MN (\$8600)
 - Michael Fertig – support to Kurds in Turkey
- Some resources available for Muslims on how to give safely
 - Muslim Advocates list
- Possible chilling effect

AMCLI

- Founded American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute in 2008
- Housed at University of Southern California and works in partnership Georgetown University
- Supporting ecosystem of Muslims working in public service
- Healthy philanthropic sector is part of a healthy nonprofit sector

WHO MIGHT THIS HELP?

- Muslim donors – young professionals to established families.
Small and big donors
- Organizations looking to raise resources from Muslim donors
- Community foundations – several are looking to reach out and work with Muslim donors
 - California Community Foundation
 - Silicon Valley Community Foundation
 - Chicago Community Trust
 - New York Community Foundation
 - Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy
- International initiatives looking at Muslim Philanthropy
 - AUC Gerhart Center for Civic Engagement and Philanthropy
 - Arab Fund for Arts and Culture

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