



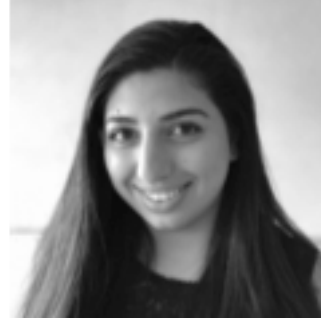
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**For more information about the study, please visit:**

[www.muslimsforamericanprogress.org](http://www.muslimsforamericanprogress.org)

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## Executive Summary

“Educate and inform the whole mass of the people...They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.”

– Thomas Jefferson

Today, issues surrounding American Muslims are central to our political discourse, policy debates, and popular culture. Yet, most Americans say they do not know a Muslim, and according to media content analysis, more than 80 percent of media coverage of Islam and Muslims in the United States is negative. This opens the door for a narrow media image to distort public perceptions of this diverse community. If an educated citizenry is vital to the health of our democracy, then providing accurate information on American Muslims is a civic duty. Muslims for American Progress, a project of the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), aims to do just that.

To fill the widespread gaps in knowledge about American Muslim citizens, including their positive effect on the country, the Muslims for American Progress (MAP) project quantified the contributions of American Muslims in New York City. We did so by analyzing contributions across eight key areas: medicine; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); civics and democracy; philanthropy and nonprofit; education; economics; arts and entertainment; and sports. Our researchers quantified American Muslim contributions by combining hard facts with human faces. We achieved this goal by profiling individuals and organizations of distinction that showcase the community’s diversity and reveal important and oftentimes overlooked contributions by Muslims to the city. New York City’s Muslim community serves as a case study for the rest of the nation, and the findings from this project are in many ways

We found that, indeed, Muslim New Yorkers contribute a tremendous amount across issue areas to the success of the entire city and the health, happiness, and well-being of their fellow Americans. This report explores in detail the myriad contributions of Muslim New Yorkers, who make up 8.96 percent of New Yorkers.

indicative of Muslim contributions across the United States. This study is a continuation of our initial project, the 2017 MAP Michigan Report. In both, we explore the dynamic ways in which Muslims contribute to wider American society.

The Muslims for American Progress project team conducted quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis between April 2017 and March 2018. Qualitative interviews, lasting from 30 to 60 minutes, were conducted with 86 individuals from the eight key areas.<sup>1</sup> We additionally undertook in-depth secondary research on eight prominent sports figures from the tri-state area. A surname analysis was conducted on data sets acquired from the New York State Department of Education, the New York State Office of the Professions, the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Secondary analysis was conducted on economic and population source material from *The Muslim Green: American Muslim Market Study 2014–15* (DinarStandard and AMCC), the Bureau of Labor Statistics Aggregate Expenditures Reports, and the 2017 Pew Research Center report *U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream*.

We found that, indeed, Muslim New Yorkers contribute a tremendous amount across issue areas to the success of the entire city and the health, happiness, and well-being of their fellow Americans. This report explores in detail the myriad contributions of the Muslims who make up 8.96 percent of New Yorkers. These include, for example, the following:

- 📍 Muslim New Yorkers comprise more than **9 percent of the city's medical doctors** and more than **12 percent of the state's pharmacists**. Muslim doctors see over **5 million patients**, and Muslim pharmacists fill close to **9.6 million prescriptions** per year. Muslim doctors focus on serving the city's underprivileged and breaking through stigma surrounding mental health care.
- 📍 Muslim New Yorkers work across STEM fields, with engineers (**Muslims make up 11.3 percent of engineers in New York City**) promoting sustainable technology-based solutions for underserved communities, through involvement in the construction of the George Washington Bridge, coastal storm risk management, and inland flood risk management.
- 📍 They are engaged at every level of civic life, from senior advisor in the New York City government to director for outreach at the New York City Council as well as growing representation in the **New York City Police Department (with approximately 1,000 Muslim officers, today)** and the New York City Fire Department. Contributions to the city include political leadership, interfaith activism, advocacy, and social justice law.
- 📍 They are incredibly charitable. Not only did **Muslim New Yorkers donate \$608 million in 2016** for both domestic and international causes, they also generously donate their time and expertise to other New Yorkers in need. For instance, ICNA Relief was at the forefront of aid during Hurricane Sandy, which devastated parts of Staten Island in 2012.
- 📍 Muslim New Yorkers are devoted to teaching further generations. **Muslim K-12 teachers in New York City total 9,497**, educating close to **250,000 students each year**. They also work as both professors and administrators across New York City's diverse public and private universities and colleges.

- 📍 New York City's Muslim artists are at the forefront of challenging stereotypes through performance, transforming the ways that major networks, such as HBO, portray American Muslims and breaking social boundaries through writing, storytelling, and comedy tours across the country.
- 📍 Muslim New Yorkers are large contributors to the city's economy. In 2016, there were **95,816 Muslim-owned businesses in New York City, employing at least 251,864 people**. Furthermore, New York City's Muslim households contributed close to **\$17 billion in consumer spending** in 2016.
- 📍 Muslims comprise close to **40 percent of New York City's taxi drivers** and more than **57 percent of street food vendors**, two professions epitomizing New York City culture.

Taken together, the Muslims for American Progress data demonstrate that Muslims make substantial contributions to New York City's well-being across all eight key areas. These findings contrast starkly with many depictions of Muslims in America in mainstream media. With this report, we offer recommendations to mainstream media providers and consumers, policy makers, activists and allies, and nonprofit organizations, all of which are centered around a change in the common narrative on Muslims in America. As Thomas Jefferson said, informing the public safeguards democracy. We therefore implore the media to help reframe the narratives on American Muslims by accurately portraying the American Muslim community.

Taken together, the Muslims for American Progress data demonstrate that Muslims make substantial contributions to New York City's well-being across all eight key areas. These findings contrast starkly with many depictions of Muslims in America in mainstream media.

# Project Background

## Context

Today, issues surrounding American Muslims shape political discourse, policy debates, and popular culture. An estimated 3.45 million Muslims live in the United States and are on average younger than the general population (with 2.05 million adults). This extremely diverse populace includes Muslims living in the United States geographical area before its founding, as well as immigrants from 75+ nations and Muslim individuals who identify as Sunni, Shia, “just Muslim,” African American/Black, white, Asian, and Latino.<sup>2</sup>

Half of Muslims perceive being Muslim in the United States as increasingly difficult on account of the current socio-political atmosphere.<sup>3</sup> According to ISPU’s 2017 and 2018 American Muslim Polls, Muslims are the most likely faith community to report religious-based discrimination (61%) in the past year. This compares with 48% of Jews, 29% of white Evangelicals, and less than 21% among all other groups studied.<sup>4</sup> In 2017, 42% of Muslims with children in K–12 schools reported that their children were bullied because of their faith, compared with 23% of Jews, 20% of Protestants, and 6% of Catholics. A teacher or other school official is reported to have been involved in one in four bullying incidents involving Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Muslims are the least trusted faith group in the country, according to the 2017 Pew report on Muslim Americans.<sup>6</sup> As most Americans do not know a Muslim, mainstream perceptions of Islam and Muslims are largely shaped by media coverage, which both simplifies and distorts reality. According to media content analysis, 80% of media coverage of Islam and Muslims in the United States today is negative.<sup>7</sup> Muslims therefore become tasked with countering negative perceptions, rather than highlighting their myriad contributions to American society.

An educated citizenry is vital to the health of our democracy. Muslims for American Progress (MAP), a project of the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), addresses misconceptions about American Muslims, their religious practices, and their place in both American history and contemporary American society by highlighting their integral contributions to the nation. In this case study, we focus on the contributions of Muslims to the country’s largest city, New York City.

Nicole Najmah Abraham



## Media Coverage of Muslims

In recent years, Western media coverage of Islam has been almost exclusively negative. Media Tenor, an international research institute, conducted a media content analysis study examining 2.6 million Western news stories from 10 American, British, and German outlets between 2007 and 2013; they found that the media’s coverage of Islam has rarely been positive.<sup>8</sup> According to the study, the average tone of coverage continued to worsen in the decade after 9/11. Most coverage depicted Islam, Muslims, and Muslim organizations as a source of violence and a security risk, but the media seldom examined the lives of ordinary Muslims. According to Media Tenor, the tone of media coverage of Muslims, Muslim religious leaders, and Muslim organizations deteriorated in the five years they

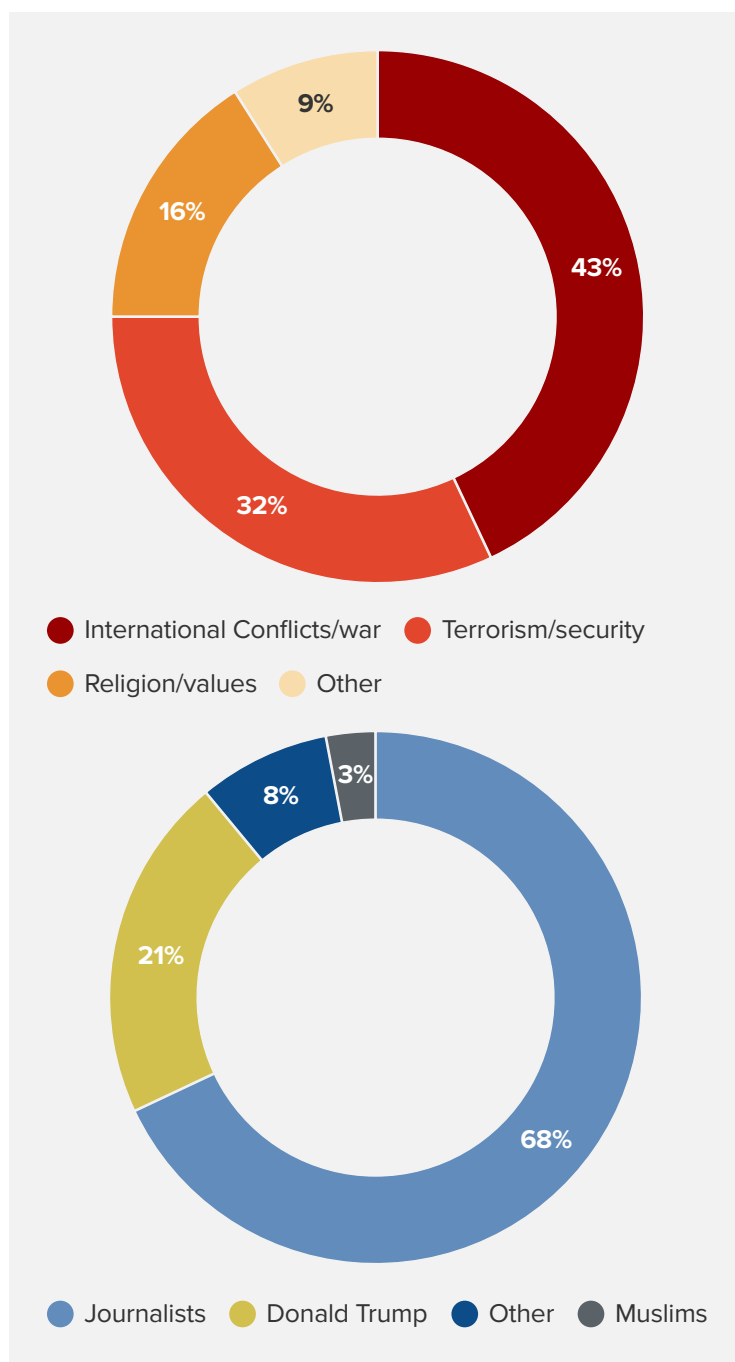
analyzed, hitting its lowest point in 2013, with three in four news stories providing negative media coverage of Islam. In a 2015 follow-up report, Media Tenor found Muslims and Islam increasingly associated with terror in media coverage across both Europe and the United States.<sup>9</sup> Harvard Fellow Meghan Stone found that, from 2015 to 2017, 75% of TV coverage of Muslims focused on terrorism and/or conflict. According to Pew, “Most Muslims (60%) also perceive media coverage of Muslims and Islam as unfair.”<sup>10</sup> And over half of the U.S. public perceives media coverage of Muslims and Islam as generally unfair.<sup>11</sup> This research together suggests that coverage of Muslim life in both the United States and abroad has been determined by security issues at the expense of stories about religious and social life. These findings contrast with other religious groups: Muslims have the most negative media coverage of all religious groups in the U.S. Moreover, from 2015 to 2017 Muslims represented only 3% of the voices discussing Muslim life and Islam on CBS Evening News, Fox Special Report, and NBC Nightly News, whereas President Trump represented 21%.<sup>12</sup>

## Aims of the Study

To fill the widespread gaps in knowledge about American Muslims and their positive effects on the country, this project quantified the contributions of American Muslims in New York City. We did so by analyzing contributions to the health, happiness, and well-being of fellow New Yorkers across eight key areas: medicine; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); civics and democracy; philanthropy and nonprofit; education; economics; arts and entertainment; and sports. Our researchers quantified American Muslim contributions by combining hard facts with human faces. We achieved this goal by profiling individuals and organizations of distinction. These profiles showcase the community’s diversity and reveal important and oftentimes overlooked impacts of Muslims on the city. New York City’s Muslim community serves as a case study for the rest of the nation, and the findings from this project are in many ways indicative of Muslim contributions across the United States. To our knowledge, this is the second analysis of its kind that explores the dynamic ways in which Muslims contribute to wider American society. The first analysis of this kind, *Muslims for American Progress: An Impact Report of Muslim Contributions to Michigan* (“MAP Michigan”), is part of the same larger project conducted by ISPU. Focusing on the city of New York, we build out from, and onto, our findings from the MAP Michigan Study. Both reports show the breadth and depth of contributions made by regular people to their local communities and beyond.

It is important to emphasize that these research reports are not meant to feed the “model minority” myth where a minority group’s achievements are held up to pit one minority group against another or to deny structural racism in America. Moreover, it is also important to state that equality in one’s own country should not be contingent on high achievement. Instead, these reports are meant to educate the American public on the reality of American Muslims, a group often discussed but seldom heard.

**Figure 1. Topics of Muslim news coverage 2015–17 (top) and voices heard when Muslims were in the news 2015–17 (bottom)**<sup>13</sup>





## Muslim New Yorkers

New York City (NYC) is one of the most diverse cities in the world, with residents from every existent nationality, ethnicity, and religious group represented. The city's Muslim population reflects this diversity. Muslims live and work in all five boroughs, with migrant and non-migrant backgrounds, and represent all racial groups. According to our calculations, 768,767 Muslims resided in NYC in 2016, making up 8.96% of New Yorkers (NYC's total population in 2016 was 8,583,000).<sup>14</sup> Approximately 22.3% of America's Muslims live in New York City, and the Muslim community is rapidly growing on account of immigration and reproduction.<sup>15</sup>

The state of New York also has more mosques than any other, largely concentrated in New York City. In 2015, there were 285 mosques across the five boroughs (98 in Brooklyn, 93 in Queens, 47 in the Bronx, 39 in Manhattan, and 8 in Staten Island).<sup>16</sup>



The influence of Muslims on New York City is not only far-reaching in the present moment but also deeply historical. Muslims have been part of NYC since the seventeenth century, with the first mosque established at 1122 Broadway in 1893.

Official recognition of the growing Muslim populace in NYC has risen on the political level, with Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha recognized as public school holidays in 2015.<sup>17</sup> Mayor Bill de Blasio created the position of senior advisor for both reaching and servicing NYC's Muslim communities, filled by Dr. Sarah Sayeed, in 2015.<sup>18</sup> Foremost cultural institutions in NYC are increasingly showcasing the vibrancy of the Muslim populace. In 2016, the Museum of the City of New York installed a photography exhibition entitled, *Muslims in New York*;<sup>19</sup> the Children's Museum of Manhattan featured an interactive exhibition, *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*; and the Brooklyn Historical Institute commenced a public history project, *Muslims in Brooklyn*, to trace, contextualize, and archive the diverse stories of Muslims in the borough. All aim to portray the lives of the "everyday Muslims of New York."<sup>20</sup> In 2009, a group of journalists founded *A Journey Through NYC Religions*, a site dedicated to exploring the post-secular city through in-depth journalism and research, including "Mosque City New York" as an educational resource on local Muslim life.<sup>21</sup>

The influence of Muslims on New York City is not only far-reaching in the present moment but also deeply historical. Muslims have been part of NYC since the seventeenth century, with the first mosque established at 1122 Broadway in 1893.<sup>22</sup> It is important to note that NYC has played a central role in the development and flourishing of African American Islam, including the Nation of Islam, as well as Sunni, Shia, and sectarian movements that originated across the globe.

# Findings

## Impact in Medicine

### Quantitative Overview

Table 1. Top Five Medical Fields with Highest Muslim Representation (2016)

License Type	Muslim Representation
Pharmacy	12.5%
Clinical Laboratory Technology	12.3%
Physical Therapy	10.7%
Medicine	9.7%
Dentistry	8.6%

#### In New York City alone:

- ◆ Muslim physicians see 5.2 million patients per year.<sup>23</sup>
- ◆ Muslim dentists provide 1.2 million patient visits per year.<sup>24</sup>
- ◆ 36,001 jobs are supported by Muslim physicians.<sup>25</sup>
- ◆ Muslim physicians also have economic impacts on the city, contributing close to \$384 million in state and local taxes and paying over \$4 billion in local wages and benefits in a single year.<sup>26</sup>
- ◆ Muslim pharmacists fill over 9.6 million prescriptions per year.<sup>27</sup>



### Qualitative Overview

#### Serving the city's underprivileged

We found a striking trend among Muslim medical personnel to focus on equal access to healthcare for all. Many of our interviewees center their efforts on serving the underprivileged in a city with great economic disparities.

**Dr. Faiz Bhora** is chief of thoracic surgery at Mount Sinai Roosevelt and Mount Sinai St. Luke's Hospitals, as well as president of the New York General Thoracic Surgical Club. Dr. Bhora's work centers on thoracic oncology surgery and regenerative medicine, fields with few Muslim faces. He also aims to provide care to those in need, no matter their economic status: "I have an interest in treating the underprivileged and anyone regardless of their ability to pay." Dr. Bhora has undertaken cutting-edge work, using 3-D printing to replace trachea and stem cells. He has been featured on all peer-referenced best doctor lists, including America's Top Doctors, *New York Magazine* Top Doctors, and New York Super Docs.

**Dr. Aqsa Durrani, MD, MPH**, is a pediatric resident at New York University Langone Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital. While she is currently completing her training, she wants to practice pediatric medicine in the context of global health. Dr. Durrani was a Fulbright scholar from 2014 to 2015, working with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to provide healthcare access to Syrian refugees in Jordan, particularly to those with special needs and/or disabilities. In her current position, she treats children of all economic backgrounds, focusing on child advocacy and children in need of protection, such as victims of human trafficking. Dr. Durrani not only attends to the health needs of patients but also works toward connecting them with external social and financial resources.

**Dr. Zehra Siddiqui's** work centers on multifaceted community health work, focusing on underserved populations including the homeless population, immigrants, and those without health insurance or documentation. She is currently the medical director at the Ryan Chelsea/Clinton Community Health Center in Manhattan, which has provided comprehensive and affordable healthcare to underserved populations since its founding in 1967. Dr. Siddiqui is devoted to providing quality healthcare to all, regardless of background, financial status, or migration status. She works to advance accessible care and help patients navigate the healthcare system. Dr. Siddiqui lives by the community health center's mantra, "healthcare is a right not a privilege."

### *Breaking through mental health stigma*

Our interviewees included a number of Muslim New Yorkers working in the mental health field and aiming to decrease mental health stigma that remains rife in the broader American Muslim populace.<sup>28</sup> Muslims Thrive, founded in 2016, is part of a larger initiative of New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio designed to address the mental health needs of the city's residents and to "de-stigmatize mental health challenges by creating forums of education, advocacy, and acceptance while being a leading voice for health and wellness in the Muslim community."<sup>29</sup>

**Gareth Bryant** works as a Muslim chaplain in the mental health field at Lenox Hill Hospital, serving individuals from all religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Muslims remain underrepresented in his field of chaplaincy in health. Bryant is a dynamic figure who perceives segregation within the Muslim community as a problem. He explained the challenges of being one of the first Muslims in the field. "There is still such an intense glass ceiling that has to be penetrated—I would argue not even a glass ceiling more like a titanium ceiling that has to be penetrated in the profession itself."

**Tayebe Shaikh, PsyD**, is a practicing clinical psychologist who serves patients of various backgrounds with neuropsychiatric counseling and also conducts research in the mental health field. She has specialized in treating women with trauma and anxiety and has been a strong voice in identifying the need for mental health care in the American Muslim community. Dr. Shaikh is a member of the American Psychiatrist Association and New York State Psychiatrists Association. She is credentialed by the National Registration of Health Psychology and the New York University Islamic Center. Dr. Shaikh previously developed curriculum for mental health courses related to stigma, prejudice, health psychology, and the psychology of women, taught in the University of Cincinnati; she continues to serve as an affiliated faculty in their psychology department.

**Healthcare is a right not a privilege.**

**Abdus Salaam Musa** has multiple positions but primarily works as a pastoral counselor at Humanity Service Inc. in Queens. He screens and provides mental health counseling services to diverse prospective and ongoing patients and connects them to appropriate Humanity Service programs. Musa runs a free mental health service clinic on Fridays. He is also currently working on a doctorate in clinical pastoral/patient counseling. He serves as the staff chaplain at St. Episcopal Hospital, president of the Southeast Queens Muslim Collective, and affiliate of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). As a former addict, he felt called to work as a substance abuse counselor in the 1970s. Musa was instrumental in the establishment of the Muslim Women's Help Network two decades ago, which developed the first Muslim women's shelter opened in Jamaica, NY, with funding by ICNA Relief.

**Maryum Khwaja** is the founder of, and psychotherapist at, Nasiha Counseling LLC, a service that primarily specializes in working with Muslim clients of all ages and backgrounds and provides trainings in issues related to mental health. She was professionally trained at New York University, working as a social worker, counselor, and psychotherapist at various organizations across the city for the past 17 years. Khwaja finds that the number of Muslims going into mental health work has steadily increased, but that there is still some way to go. She believes that the awareness of mental health issues among Muslims is also increasing.

Priya Chandra



**Priya Chandra**, MSW, has been a licensed clinical social worker for the past two years but has worked in the field of crisis counseling for almost 12 years. Following the sexual assault of a friend, she began looking for volunteer opportunities as a sexual assault counselor and domestic violence survivor advocate in NYC hospitals. While her passion and work previously has been with survivors of trauma, Chandra currently sees patients of all backgrounds and ages, and her patients include those facing all types of mental health issues. Chandra works with the community health center at the Institute of Family Health. There, she focuses on integrative practice.

### *Innovations in dentistry*

**Dr. Farah Alam**, DDS, FSD, is director of the Dental Unit of the Rose F. Kennedy Children’s Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center, which is part of Montefiore Medical Center. Dr. Alam provides special care dentistry for medically complex and behaviorally challenging dental patients. She is also the director of the Rose F. Kennedy Fellowship in Special Care Dentistry, which is one of the

few fellowship programs in the country that trains dentists to work with patients with special needs. Dr. Alam trains approximately 50 residents per year. She is the first Muslim director of this center. Until recently, she was the only female and only Muslim member of the national Special Care Dentistry Association.

Dr. Farah Alam



**Dr. Alam trains approximately 50 residents per year. She is the first Muslim director of this center. Until recently, she was the only female and only Muslim member of the national Special Care Dentistry Association.**

**Dr. Asma Muzaffar**, DDS, MPH, is founder/dentist at Truth and Laughter Dentistry and adjunct assistant professor at New York University College of Dentistry. She is also a trained epidemiologist who works in health policy and management. She recently started her own private practice that takes a more holistic approach to dental health. Dr. Muzaffar uses non-traditional methods like hypnosis for those opposed to anesthesia. She previously founded and served as the head of the dental unit of the Columbia-Harlem Homeless Medical Partnership.

## Impact in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

The future of the American economy is in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that employment in STEM occupations will grow to more than 9 million between 2012 and 2022.<sup>30</sup> From 2010 to 2015, employment in STEM in New York City grew 21 percent.<sup>31</sup> We found that Muslims work at the forefront of both traditional STEM fields, such as engineering (making up 11.3 percent of New York City's engineers) and innovative STEM enterprises that focus on civic engagement and education.



### Women engineers

**Noha El-Ghobashy** is vice president of Strategic Initiatives at the Institute for Transformative Technologies (ITT). El-Ghobashy received both her bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from Columbia University and has two U.S. patents related to broadband equipment design. Prior to ITT, she was founding president of Engineering for Change, a community dedicated to promoting sustainable technology-based solutions for underserved communities worldwide. She also held numerous roles at the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), most recently as the executive director of the ASME Foundation, focusing on STEM education and innovation. El-Ghobashy was the 2013 recipient of the American Association of Engineering Societies' Kenneth Andrew Roe Award, which recognizes an engineer who has been effective in promoting unity among the engineering societies, and in 2014 she was selected as one of New York Business Journal's Women of Influence.

**Rumana Haque** has worked as a transport engineer with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey since she finished training as an engineer at the City College of New York around 10 years ago. Haque has been involved with coordinating the construction of the George Washington Bridge (the world's busiest bridge) and managing traffic operations for the NY and NJ ports, traffic signals, and control over NY. She was one of the primary responders for traffic signal management after Hurricane Sandy. Haque believes that the hallmark of a good traffic engineer is that "you never think of them" as their designs make traffic flow in a streamlined and functional manner.

Muslims work at the forefront of both traditional STEM fields, such as engineering (making up 11.3 percent of New York City's engineers) and innovative STEM enterprises that focus on civic engagement and education.

**Sidrah Mirza** is a project engineer at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, serving the New York District (NY, NJ, CT). Mirza is a geologist and a geophysical hazards specialist by training and currently works as a project engineer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She holds a civilian position but works with the army, and her role includes working in cooperation with several government agencies. Mirza leads engineering teams on construction contracts like dam and levee inspection, coastal storm risk management, and inland flood risk management. The broader contribution of her work is to take care of the land and its resources while protecting people from flooding, hurricanes, and other natural hazards.

Mohammad Khan



## Technology and entrepreneurship

At the intersection of civics and technology, **Mohammad Khan** has been the campaign director at MPower Change, a Muslim grassroots social movement, since January 2016. The Occupy Wall Street movement was Khan's "aha" moment, giving him a clear vision of how to reimagine society and political life. Khan previously focused on electoral organizing, supporting political campaigns in Muslim communities throughout New York City. On the STEM front, he has a burgeoning web app currently in beta-testing, which will support communities impacted by profiling in airports by automating safety processes. Khan is interested not only in security issues but also in the local challenges faced by Muslim communities.

**Zeba Iqbal** has a diverse background in for profit, nonprofit, and start-up management, with a focus on project management, market research, marketing and strategic communications, and business development. In New York City and the metropolitan region, she worked for 15 years in the real estate sector to build public-private sector partnerships between governmental agencies (and other public and private sector landowners), and real estate developers. These innovative partnerships promoted the monetization and development of vibrant public spaces using private sector resources. More recently, Iqbal worked for a major start-up accelerator, and currently assists and advises an early stage tech start-up. In the nonprofit sector, Iqbal led and restructured the nonprofit CAMP (Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals) from 2007 to 2011, transforming it from a networking platform to an inclusive and dynamic space for professional dialogue among American Muslim professionals. Iqbal is also a co-founder or founding member of several organizations including Muslims Against Terrorism (2001), South Asian Real Estate Professionals (2005), and the Muslim Democratic Club of New York (2012).

## STEM in education

**Zahra Rehman** is a first-year science teacher at an inner-city high school in Brooklyn. She was hired to develop an anatomy and physiology curriculum through New Visions for Charter Public Schools, aiming to better incorporate STEM education into their curriculum. Education is a new field for her. She holds a master's degree in anatomical and translational sciences. After the 2016 presidential election, she questioned what field she wanted to enter and asked herself how she could be of value to society. Rehman is passionate about not only teaching high school students the importance of the body, but also helping them to develop skills and abilities to build their own narratives when they leave high school. Rehman particularly strives to encourage girls at the high school level to become powerful leaders in the STEM field.

Nur Zeinomar

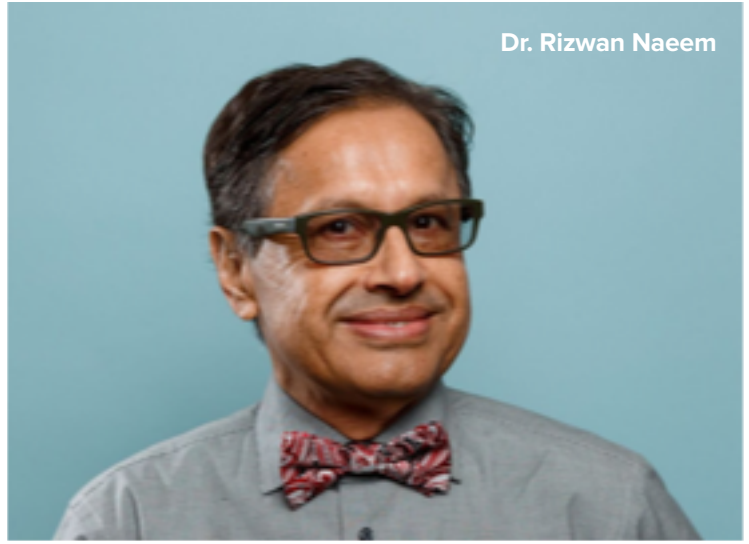


**Bilal Memon** is CEO and founder of Quran Academy and Quran Companion. He grew up in New York City. He has worked as a serial tech entrepreneur in NYC since 2011. Memon founded Quran Academy to help people build and improve their relationship with the Quran through an online course and an app. He grew up in New York City. Since graduating from New York University, Memon ran a content-sharing platform called *mylifeisdesi* before establishing Quran Academy. He received funding from Indiegogo campaigns and other venture capital funds. Memon has mentored hundreds of tech start-up companies in NYC and beyond through programs like the New York University Berkeley Center of Entrepreneurship. He speaks about the tech scene in NYC at Muslim Urban Professionals (MUPPIES) events, the Empowered Muslim Summit, and various other tech spaces.

## STEM research

**Nadia Islam** is an associate professor in the Department of Population Health at New York University and Langone Health and deputy director for research at the New York University Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH). She received her doctorate in socio-medical sciences from Columbia University. Islam leads research funded by both National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) on health disparities in Asian American populations and the development of culturally relevant healthcare. Dr. Islam has led projects focused on the impact of community health worker intervention on chronic disease management and prevention in diverse populations, the prevalence of cardiovascular disease and diabetes in Asian American populaces (particularly the rapidly growing immigrant Bangladeshi community in NYC), and the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) project. She is also the research director at the New York University-City University of New York Prevention Research Center.

Dr. Rizwan Naeem



**Nur Zeinomar**, PhD, MPH, is a cancer epidemiologist at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. As a postdoctoral research scientist, Dr. Zeinomar is part of National Cancer Institute (NCI)-funded research on genomics and population-based studies on breast cancer. Her projects focus on genetic predisposition, lifestyle factors, pedigrees, and gene-environment interactions related to breast cancer across national and international sites. She also focuses on young girls in the Upper Manhattan and South Bronx areas and studies the impact of environmental exposures on their health as part of the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health (CCCEH). Dr. Zeinomar is passionate about translating scientific findings from genomics and population-based studies to a broader public health setting and finds that research unites her three loves of science, math, and public health. She is a member of the American Association for Cancer Research, American Society for Preventive Oncology, and Society of Epidemiologic Research.

**Dr. Rizwan Naeem** has been a professor of pathology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine for the past seven years. He was previously employed by Baylor College of Medicine in Texas. Dr. Naeem concurrently works as a consultant at Sunrise Medical Laboratories where he researches genetic genomics clinical testing. He was also the president of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) from 2012 to 2014. Dr. Naeem has published widely in many journals and started a mentorship program at Albert Einstein to train future physicians who specialize in the field of genetics and genomics research. He is a member of the American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics and is a board-certified doctor in the states of New York and Texas.

## Impact in Civics and Democracy

Rising political and civic organization across American Muslim communities has been documented by numerous scholars, nonprofit organizations, and think tanks. Following the deep and lasting socio-political effects of 9/11 on New York City and its diverse populace, Muslims in the five boroughs increasingly expanded the frontiers of political activism, democratic praxis, and social change. Today, in response to the tense political atmosphere at the national level, Muslims are running for local public office across the country.<sup>32</sup> Muslims hold positions in New York City's government ranging from the New York City Council to the Mayor's Office.

Muslim women in particular have been behind key political movements, civic engagement, activism, and advocacy, influencing both the city and nation, including the above-noted **public recognition of Eid holidays in schools**, the locally organized but nationally-attended **March on Washington**, and the foundation of **the first Shura Council for women in the United States**.



### Women in governance and civic activism

**Faiza Ali** is the co-director for outreach at the New York City Council, working with the community engagement division. This division focuses on connecting disenfranchised communities to the government. Ali directs the Council's Participatory Budgeting (PB) Initiative. PB is a democratic process in which community residents decide how to spend part of the public budget (up to \$2 million per district) in order to directly impact their playgrounds, schools, and other brick-and-mortar issues. Ali explained, "this is a small aspect of a huge budget and gives the money back to the people. They walk the streets, they know how to spend it." She was previously employed by the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) NY chapter and has focused on public safety, anti-gun violence, and working with youth since becoming an activist in the post 9/11-era. Ali also worked extensively on the successful campaign for Eid holidays to be recognized as public holidays by New York City public schools. "It was a lesson in many ways. If you organize, you win," she explained.

It was a lesson in many ways. If you organize, you win.

**Ahsia Badi** works at The New York Academy of Medicine as a senior policy associate, focused on projects associated with creating healthier communities and improving aging policy. She contributes in myriad ways to the civic life of New York City. Badi is vice-chair of Manhattan's Community Board Six, where she serves as a liaison between the community, elected officials, and city agencies, which she finds "empowering." She also serves on the Bellevue Hospital Community Advisory Board. She was recently elected president of The Samuel J. Tilden Democratic Club, the first Muslim woman president of a Democratic club in NYC. Badi chose to be so civically active as she believes Muslims need to look for new avenues of engagement at the city level. Badi previously worked as an occupational therapist, and her background lies in public health.



**Dr. Sarah Sayeed**, a prominent example of a Muslim woman in democratic practice, is a senior advisor in the Community Affairs Unit of the New York City government. She was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in June 2015 to expand outreach to Muslim communities across the five boroughs. Prior to attaining this position, Sayeed was a trailblazer in interfaith work and activism. Her interfaith work included running the Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Retreats for Social Justice at the Interfaith Center of New York and being a board member of Women in Islam Inc. Sayeed has been instrumental in uniting religious leaders from diverse backgrounds in NYC, helping them to cooperate on solving prescient social problems. She also previously worked as a professor in public affairs at Baruch College in New York City.



Dr. Sarah Sayeed



Dr. Debbie Almontaser

**Dr. Debbie Almontaser** is a community activist, advocate, entrepreneur, and educator who works across sectors. Dr. Almontaser is the former and founding principal of the Khalil Gibran International Academy, the first Arabic dual-language public school in the U.S. She was a featured speaker at the 2016 National Democratic Convention and at the New York State Assembly Chambers' Legislative Conference on women's empowerment. Dr. Almontaser also long pursued interfaith coalition-building between various faith communities and is the CEO of the Building Cultures Group Inc. She is a founding board member of The Dialogue Project, a member of Brooklyn Borough President's New Diversity Task Force, and board advisor for the Same Difference Interfaith Alliance.

Dr. Almontaser sits on Public Advocate Tish James' Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh Task Force to Combat Hate. Throughout her career, she has built numerous coalitions in order to accomplish police reform regarding the NYPD's Muslim Surveillance Program and the recognition of Muslim holidays in NYC schools. She is also a "go-to person" on cultural and religious diversity issues for Borough President Eric Adams, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the NYC Commission for Human Rights, and New York City Council members. Dr. Almontaser was a member of the steering committee for *A Community of Many Worlds: Arab-Americans* at the Museum of the City of New York and on the Advisory Board for the Children's Museum of Manhattan exhibit, *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*. In 2005, she spearheaded the inauguration of Arab Heritage Week in New York City. She is a co-founder of Brooklyn Bridges, the September 11th Curriculum Project, We Are All Brooklyn, and Women Against Islamophobia and Racism (WAIR). Dr. Almontaser currently sits on the boards of Emerge National, Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee National, American Muslim Women PAC, and the Therapy and Learning Center Preschool in Brooklyn. Recently, she was a key figure behind the Yemeni Bodega Strike, a response to the "Muslim ban" by Yemeni merchants in New York City, as well as the "I am a Muslim too" rally, organized with Russell Simmons. Dr. Almontaser helped to create, and now serves as the Secretary of, the newly established Yemeni American Merchants Association, which was birthed out of the bodega strike.

Sahar Alsahlani



## Interfaith innovators

From city government to local and national nonprofits, Muslim New Yorkers are at the forefront of interfaith work centered on fostering diversity, understanding, and equality across the five boroughs.

**Sahar Alsahlani** has been on the interfaith scene in NYC for six years, in myriad roles that promote interfaith social justice. She is a member of the Community of Living Traditions, an intentional multi-faith community, and co-chair of The Fellowship of Reconciliation, the country's oldest interfaith organization geared toward peace and non-violence. Alsahlani is also on the board of Religions for Peace, USA, a United Nations-affiliated NGO; a fellow at Greenfaith, an interfaith environmental network; and a board member of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). Alsahlani perceives her work as a way to encourage civic engagement with people from different backgrounds in the five boroughs. She has been involved in justice activism as a representative of CAIR and the broader Muslim community, including environmental justice causes, such as Standing Rock, and racial justice causes, such as Ferguson and Charlottesville.

**Daisy Khan** has had a long and fruitful career advocating for American Muslims, specifically in efforts to highlight the expertise of Muslim women. Khan and her husband Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf are known for their attempt to build an Islamic Center in Lower Manhattan (Park 51, colloquially referenced as the "Ground Zero Mosque"). She sees her most ambitious project as working across the Muslim community to de-link terrorism from Islam, an initiative for which she united 60 Muslim leaders in New York City from diverse backgrounds. "There are pockets of people doing amazing things, but there is no synergy...we broke down racial and ideological barriers over a three-day retreat." Women's rights also remain at the core of Khan's efforts. Through her work as the executive director of the Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE), Khan founded the first Shura Council for women in the United States.

**Linda Sarsour** is a well-known political activist in New York City, previously the executive director of the Arab American Association of New York. She has worked on numerous memorable projects, culminating in her co-organization of the Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017, following the presidential election of Donald Trump. Organized in New York City by Sarsour, Vanessa Wruble, Tamika D. Mallory, and Carmen Perez, the 2017 March on Washington drew an estimated half a million participants from across the country and inspired "sister" marches across not only the United States but the globe.

Saffet Catovic



**Saffet Catovic** has a very long and distinguished history of service and activism in the New York City and New Jersey Muslim communities. In recent years, his specific focus has been interfaith environmental justice. He began his faith-based activism in 2009 with Green Faith, the leading interfaith organization on environmental activism and education. He also worked on the Green Ramadan Initiative, a mosque-based project across New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania aimed at modifying environmentally related behaviors during Ramadan, i.e., local procurement of food, community-supported agriculture, reducing water in ritual washing and consumption, and "leftars" (distributing *iftar*, Ramadan fastbreak, leftovers to soup kitchens).



## Law and social justice

Many Muslim lawyers in New York City are dedicated to utilizing law as a way to accomplish social justice, from immigration and national security issues to the pro-bono representation of veterans.

**Omar Mohammedi** is a civil rights lawyer and community activist in New York City. He has litigated numerous civil rights cases across minority communities, working alongside “civil rights giants” like Al Sharpton and Jessie Jackson. Mohammedi is a major figure in defending the civil rights of minorities targeted by the NYPD and other institutions, including significant pro-bono work. Mohammedi is currently president of Association of Muslim American Lawyers, on the advisory board of the Tanenbaum Center, a board member of Public Safety and Civil Rights Committee, Citizen Union, and an advisory board member on hate crimes for the New York Public Advocate Office. He is also a lecturer on Islamic finance law at Fordham Law School. Mohammedi served on the New York City Commission of Human Rights for 14 years and is the former president of the New York City chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. His law firm, Omar T. Mohammedi, LLC, has been recognized as one of the top 100 minority-owned law firms in New York State in 2015 and 2016, having represented major civil rights cases such as the Six Imams Case and the Amadou Diallo Case. Mohammedi was a central figure in the campaign for the recognition of Eid holidays. The impetus for this campaign arose when state exams were held on the Eid holiday, meaning that Muslim students had to participate in testing instead of celebrations. “In 2005, families reached out to me and said, ‘something has to be done about this.’” Mohammedi helped to gain the support of unions and the city council, facilitating a major coalition within and beyond New York City’s Muslim community.

Linking local and national concerns, director of the National Security Project at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), **Hina Shamsi**, previously worked at the Brennan Center for Justice in New York City and continues to teach as a professor at Columbia Law School. She is a vital asset to the legal community both in the tri-state area and at the national level. At the ACLU, Shamsi’s goal is to ensure U.S. national security practices and policies are consistent with both the constitution and international law. She assumed this role after a number of years working on national security and rights issues, including a focus on American accountability in discrimination and unlawful detention.

Focusing on the local level, **Omar Khan** is a partner at WilmerHale and specializes in technology law. His clients include the biggest names in the business. While successful in his corporate law work, Khan also contributes a great deal of pro-bono work with the Bronx Defenders and veterans in NYC to combat the risk that indigent defendants often face of losing their rights to liberty, due process, and evidentiary hearings as a result of systemic issues impacting people of limited economic circumstances. Khan helps Bronx residents to navigate family court issues and does not perceive his work as “grand scale justice,” but rather locally “high impact” for the individuals that he serves.

**Shahbuddeen Ally** practices family law in cases of child abuse and neglect through his private practice and teaches at Long Island University. He is also the chairperson of Manhattan Community Board 12, an advisory board for local community welfare matters. Ally is planning to run for the position of civic judge in Manhattan. He is a member of myriad legal associations, including the Muslim Bar Association, Asian American Bar Association, South Asian Bar Association, Metropolitan Black Bar Association, Puerto Rican Bar Association, and the New York City Bar Association.

Founder of the Malik Law Firm (Boutique Immigration and Criminal Defense Law Firm), **Merium Malik** is both a female attorney and a business owner. She has worked pro-bono for the Immigration Defense Project and The City University of New York immigration clinic, and she conducts complimentary immigration workshops throughout New York City. Growing up in Pakistan and living in Iran as a child during a time of war, Malik fully understands the plight of immigrants, which is how she deeply connects with her clientele.

**Mustapha Ndanusa** is a partner at Davis Ndanusa Ikhlas & Saleem (DNIS), which he founded with three other partners. He focuses on litigating landlord/tenant and family law cases, and takes on pro-bono projects. The firm specifically works on civil rights cases where the individual faces false arrest or imprisonment. Ndanusa is known for his community work, conducting “know your rights” trainings at local mosques.

Merium Malik





## FEATURE: NYPD

The New York Police Department (NYPD) is the largest police department in the United States and is becoming increasingly diverse.<sup>33</sup> Muslims are active in the NYPD, which has approximately **1,000** Muslim police officers out of **36,000** officers in total.<sup>34</sup> The NYPD Muslim Officers Society is the first fraternal organization in the United States to represent American Muslim law enforcement members.

We interviewed the NYPD's Muslim chaplain, **Imam Khalid Latif**, a multidimensional city figure who additionally leads the Islamic Center at New York University (NYU), the first established Muslim student center at an institute of higher education in the United States, and co-owns Honest Chops, an organic halal butcher shop. Imam Latif is the second Muslim chaplain in the history of the NYPD, and his main duties include providing counseling and religious services to officers, as well as being on-call one day per week to assist families in the case of a shooting.

Responding to the needs of its diverse officers, the NYPD has recently changed its policy on official appearance, allowing for beards and headcoverings for religious purposes.<sup>35</sup>

**“They have numerous chaplains on staff. There’s probably 9 or 10. I’m the only Muslim who is a chaplain. There’s Protestant ministers and Catholic priests and our primary responsibilities are just to serve as a resource for pastoral care for people in the department. There’s 53,000 people in the NYPD. It’s the largest department in the world.”**

## Impact in Philanthropy and Nonprofits

### Quantitative Overview

Muslim New Yorkers donated:



In addition, close to 600 individuals volunteered in just four Muslim-led organizations, serving 74,097 people and providing over 1,115 counseling and training sessions. Islamic Relief further provided \$311,765 in grants to local organizations such as New York Disaster Interfaith Services and the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island.

### Qualitative Overview

Muslim New Yorkers devote their resources to supporting those in need, embodying one of the five pillars of Islam, *zakat*, meaning charity or almsgiving. This comes in many forms, from nonprofits founded by and for women to New York City-based organizations that confront society-wide issues, including incarceration and economic deprivation.

#### Nonprofits founded by and for women

**MALIKAH** — formerly The International Muslim Women’s Initiative for Self-Empowerment, IM(WISE) — is a self-defense, social entrepreneurship, and leadership development movement for young Muslim women. **Rana Abdelhamid** founded this organization in 2010. MALIKAH currently undertakes four types of work: 1) self-defense training and entrepreneurship training and financial literacy; 3) political and community organizing training; and 4) psychosocial support groups facilitating healing circles. MALIKAH recently conducted a study on the city’s responses to gender-based violence, while identifying how the city can be culturally sensitive to communities that are stereotyped and over-policed. MALIKAH has also worked with and provided self-defense trainings to other communities, including Jewish community groups and Black Lives Matter. Abdelhamid explained,

“The reason why this [organization] started was because I experienced a hate crime when I was 15 or 16 years old, when I was assaulted by a man who was trying to take off my hijab. And that sparked for me, ‘What can I do for my community?’ And also a desire to heal. And so, at the time, I had a black belt in Shotokan Karate, so I could start teaching self-defense.”

**Robina Niaz** is the founder of **Turning Point New York (TPNY)**, which works with Muslim women and children in New York City. TPNY was the first organization to address domestic violence and bullying of Muslim women and girls. TPNY’s work consists of direct services to domestic violence victims, youth programs, and preventing elder abuse in the community. Niaz noted her motivation for founding TPNY: “During September 2001 and 2004, in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, I was seeing a lot of stuff on the ground, the attack on Muslims, the registrations. 80,000 Muslims were asked to go to 26 Federal Plaza to register, and all of them were from Muslim countries. Many of them never came back. They were detained and deported. Being at all those rallies and vigils, meeting women whose husbands were detained or deported reminded me of the absence of resources in our community. The women were probably facing issues at home and didn’t know where to go or

who to talk to. And so, I volunteered and started a support group that would meet in Brooklyn over weekends to find out what the Muslim women's needs were and how we could help them. We did not know what to expect—every day a new challenge arose and I responded as best I could.”

I definitely think MWIRD is unique. Only partially because of the fact that it was started and run by Muslim women. And that was a driving force, because often you'll see in leadership positions, you'll see men, and the contributions of women are often underplayed. And I think women's leadership positions are very important, because women lead in this very different kind of way.

**Sultana Ocasio** is a second-generation Puerto Rican, born to a family that converted to Islam in 1973, and grew up in a Muslim community in Brooklyn. Sultana's father, Imam Ramon Ocasio, founded *Alianza Islamica*, the first Latino Muslim organization in the United States. Since 2008, she has worked at **The Muslim Women's Institute for Research and Development (MWIRD)**, a community organization which organizes around addressing hunger, health education, and immigrant support services. MWIRD was founded in 1987, when it began operating a food pantry at the Mount Hope Mosque in the Bronx, distributing halal food to the mostly West African immigrant community. That experience led them to expand their services to sustain other needs for diverse populations in the borough. MWIRD organizes a year-round food pantry and offers free tax preparation, as well as housing and immigration assistance services. Ocasio explained, “I definitely think MWIRD is unique. Only partially because of the fact that it was started and run by Muslim women. And that was a driving force, because often in leadership positions, you'll see men, and the contributions of women are often underplayed. And I think women's leadership positions are very important, because women lead in this very different kind of way.”



## *New York City organizations influencing society on a large scale*

**Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) Relief** is a national organization based in Queens, which provides community support services to the broader New York City populace. **Hala Adam** previously worked as a case manager for ICNA Relief's women's shelter, the only Muslim-run women's shelter in the city (since September 2017, she has worked for Western Queens Care Management as a care coordinator). **Omar Ranginwala** is the chief technology officer at ICNA Relief. Operated since 1999, ICNA Relief provides shelter to women facing evictions and the affordable housing shortage. It additionally organizes free health clinic days, food pantries, refugee support services, and back-to-school giveaways for children whose families cannot afford to purchase school supplies. ICNA relief also distributes winter gear, including jackets, hats, gloves, socks, and scarves to those in need. And it collaborates with community centers, mosques, chapters of the Muslim Students Association, doctors, the housing authority, schools, and police precincts in their far-reaching work in the five boroughs. For its efforts with Hurricane Sandy relief, ICNA Relief volunteers were recognized as “New Yorkers of the Week” by Channel 1 in 2013. In 2017, ICNA Relief donated more than \$576,454 through its food pantry, hunger prevention/meat drive, women's transitional housing, and zakat financial assistance.

**Citizens Against Recidivism** was founded in 1992 by **Mika'il DeVeaux** who is also the current executive director. He has over three decades of experience working on issues affecting the incarcerated. Citizens Against Recidivism serves both Muslims and non-Muslims, filling a gap by providing services not usually available to ex-prisoners. Its re-entry program provides clothing, emergency cash, MetroCards, art intervention programs, counseling services, and anger management training. Citizens Against Recidivism has been able to forge a pathway for ex-prisoners of all backgrounds to successfully contribute to their communities. DeVeaux received a Soros fellowship to undertake outreach in the Muslim community, and Citizens Against Recidivism has been recognized by Scott Stringer, the Manhattan Borough President. In the words of DeVeaux, "You serve Allah by serving the community, by helping your fellow human being."

Mika'il DeVeaux



I always wanted to kind of do projects that stay in our community that are very, very public. To number one, of course, fulfill an obligation in Islam, to feed the poor. Number two, to inspire our Muslim community that they feel they are doing something. We are part of the community. We are part of this country and citizens.

**Mohamed Bahi** is one of the founders and director of **Muslims Giving Back**, a volunteer effort in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, located at the Muslim Community Center. Bahi began organizing around his Muslim heritage and identity after 9/11. Today, Muslims Giving Back has three student chapters on the CUNY college campuses. They hand out food bags to 75 non-Muslim registered families in the community after every Friday prayer and serve 150 hot meals per week. Muslims Giving Back has also collaborated with Love Trumps Hate and Action Corps of NYC, as well as State Assemblyman Felix Ortiz. It further organizes an annual health clinic day at the Muslim Community Center to serve the diverse local community with fourth-year medical students. Bahi noted, "I always wanted to kind of do projects that stay in our community that are very, very public. To number one, of course, fulfill an obligation in Islam, to feed the poor. Number two, to inspire our Muslim community that they feel they are doing something. We are part of the community. We are part of this country and citizens."





## FEATURE: HURRICANE SANDY: OVERCOMING ISLAMOPHOBIA IN MIDLAND BEACH

The following story was narrated by an ICNA volunteer:

“In 2010, Midland Beach refused a proposed mosque, planned to be built in a vacant Catholic convent. Islamophobes, including Robert Spencer, organized against the mosque project, calling for denunciation of ‘our D-Day,’ invoking a false connection to 9/11. The reverend who had initially supported the mosque project withdrew his support, and the project was halted.

“On November 4, 2012, over **200** volunteers from the tri-state Muslim community met on Sunday in the community of Midland Beach to help residents affected by Hurricane Sandy. The event was a part of a city-wide volunteer effort organized by Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) Relief, Muslim American Society (MAS), Muslim Ummah of North America (MUNA), and the Islamic Center at New York University (ICNYU).

“In many areas of Staten Island and other parts of New York, it took several days for agencies to begin relief efforts due to inaccessibility of the area. On November 4, the groups dispatched several teams of five to homes across the neighborhood to deliver food, conduct needs assessments, and help with cleanup. Over **1,000** plates of hot food donated from Sumac, a restaurant located in Elm Park on Staten Island, were delivered to residents throughout the neighborhood. While many residents had received non-perishable food items from local charities, for several it was the first hot meal since the storm began.

“The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) carries out diverse philanthropic work in the New York City area. This includes a Muslim-run women’s shelter, refugee support services, and providing school supplies to public school students. ICNA was at the forefront of Hurricane Sandy relief efforts in Staten Island after the storm hit in November 2012. Some of their work took place in Midland Beach, the majority white, middle-class neighborhood hit worse than any other point in the city. According to *The New York Times*, ‘More than half of the 43 people killed in New York City were on Staten Island, and of those 24 victims, many died in or near the same neighborhood, Midland Beach, a quiet grid of bungalows swallowed by what survivors described as a tidal wave.’<sup>37</sup>

**Sandy tore down walls. Let’s build them back up together with unity.**

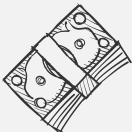
“Volunteers also went to numerous homes throughout the neighborhood to conduct needs assessments and assist residents with removal of items destroyed in the flood. Most residents were happy to have a presence in the neighborhood but had already gone through item removal.

However, there were several residents that had only just begun to clean their homes and were elated at the outpouring of support from the broader New York City community. One team came across a man who survived the flood. As waters rushed through the streets and past his home, he told us he began to throw items out of the window of his elevated one-story home. When waters reached the top of his front steps, situated five feet above the ground, he jumped out of the house into the waters in hope it would save his life. He was swept into an adjoining fence where he withstood the rest of the flood. Objects from the surrounding area, including those from his home, swept past him as they hit his legs while he grasped onto the fence. He watched in disbelief as cars sailed past his home with each wave of seawater.

“In the aftermath, his home and family ultimately survived, but the items within the home were destroyed. Clothes, appliances, furniture, family photographs, and a yearbook lay strewn across the yard. A team of five volunteers helped to move items from the yard onto the curb. Two high school students from another part of Staten Island found our volunteers moving the belongings and wanted to help. An hour later, another team of volunteers joined in the effort, and soon twenty volunteers from different faiths and backgrounds worked together to help their fellow New Yorkers. The owner was overcome with relief and kept repeating the words, ‘You guys are going to make me cry.’

“One of the stories that came from the experience was that a neighbor asked one of the volunteers where he was from. He responded that he was a part of the Muslim American Society of Staten Island, which was located a short distance from the cleanup site. She quickly admitted that she had been against the mosque being built in the neighborhood but admired the work that was being done to rebuild and apologized for what the group was put through two years ago. During the relief effort, organizers said individuals apologized. They explained that they had been part of the town hall meetings, participating in shutting down the opening of the mosque. In the words of Queens-born DJ Jay Dabhi, ‘Unfortunate circumstances bring people together and break down the wall people put up that prevent them from knowing one another. Sandy tore down walls. Let’s build them back up together with unity.’”

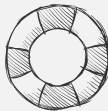
**In addition, another organization, Islamic Relief, also contributed greatly to Hurricane Sandy relief efforts, including:**



**\$325,611.53**  
Spent on relief



**700**  
Volunteers supporting relief efforts

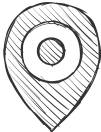




**GRANT AWARD**  
Awarded a grant to address the unmet needs of 200 Hurricane Sandy survivors

# Impact in Economics

## Quantitative Overview

### Entrepreneurship and job creation

 <p><b>95,816</b> Muslims owned an estimated 95,816 small businesses in New York City in 2016.</p>	 <p><b>176,744</b> In 2016, Muslim New Yorkers created 176,744 jobs.</p>	 <p><b>251,864</b> Workers were employed by Muslim-owned small businesses in 2016.<sup>38</sup></p>
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### Professional licenses

Using 2017 state licensing data, Table 2 shows the top ten licensed professions in terms of Muslim representation in New York City.

**Table 2. Top Ten Licensed Professions among Muslim New Yorkers**

Profession	Percent
1. Food Cart Vendors	57.5
2. Taxi Drivers	39.2
3. Pharmacists	12.5
4. Clinical Laboratory Technologists	12.3
5. Engineers	11.3
6. Physical Therapists	10.7
7. Medical Professionals	9.7
8. Physical Therapy Assistants	9.7
9. Dentists	8.6
10. Respiratory Therapists	8.1

### Consumer spending

Muslim New Yorkers also make significant contributions to the state’s economy through consumer spending. In 2016, Muslim households in New York spent close to **\$17 billion** (approximately **\$77,000** per household annually). Table 3 indicates how this money was spent per household:

**Table 3. Muslim Household Spending (2016)**<sup>39</sup>

Expenditure	Amount
Food and food services	\$2,088,803,925
Housing and home services	\$5,465,696,955
Insurance and pensions	\$1,987,376,391
Entertainment	\$844,751,981
Education	\$1,234,426,284
Charity	\$608,268,024
Healthcare	\$1,284,022,654
Personal care	\$213,541,661
Motor vehicle and service	\$1,939,821,647
Apparel and service	\$889,765,835
Other	\$421,283,854
Aggregate spent in all households	\$16,977,755,211

Compared with the nation generally, in 2016 Muslim New Yorker households spent **36 percent** more than the average American household in total consumer spending, over four times more on education than the average American household, and **33 percent** more on charity than the average American household.

## Qualitative Overview

In 2017, New York City displaced London as number one on the Global Cities Index, which measures cities across multiple dimensions (business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement) as “ecosystems for businesses and innovation.”<sup>40</sup> This includes thriving small businesses and global financial activity alike, both of which Muslims contribute to in myriad ways.

## SMALL BUSINESSES

While New York City is lauded as a global financial center, small business remains at the heart of the city’s economy and history. In New York State as a whole, 99% of all businesses are classified as small businesses, with Muslims owning just under **100,000** of small businesses, employing over **250,000** people. Three specific small business industries where Muslims are thriving as entrepreneurs are the restaurant industry, the fashion industry, and bodegas, approximately **5,000** of which are owned by Yemeni Americans.<sup>41</sup>

### *Multi-generational restaurants*

The restaurant industry is the city’s single largest employer, employing 225,000 people across approximately 24,600 restaurants in New York City. New York City is also known for rapid turnover in food-based businesses, with 70% of all restaurants closing or changing hands within five years of opening.<sup>42</sup> Muslims contribute not only to the culinary diversity of New York City but also to lasting establishments handed down across generations.

**Abu’s Bakery** was opened by Idris Conry in 2001 and is now run by his son, **Idris Braithwaite**. Located on the corner of Bedford Avenue and Fulton Street in Brooklyn, Abu’s Bakery was featured in *The New York Times* in July 2017 for its celebrated bean pies. The bean pie is intimately connected to African American Islam and the Nation of Islam, in particular, as founder Elijah Muhammad advised his followers to consume navy beans. The Abu’s Bakery bean pie is now sold in supermarkets across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. When asked about his greatest professional contribution, Braithwaite discussed teaching his children, nieces, and nephews to be business owners. “They have a sense of ownership. They have run the store alone. This store has a life of itself. You can use the store as an instrument...to talk to them about other things and the opportunity to have those discussions about planning for their future and projecting their own reality.”

**The Yemen Café**, also featured in *The New York Times* food section, is co-owned by Nasser Alsubai’s father and his partner. Nasser runs the establishment along with his brothers. Their father founded the Yemen Café with his partner in 1986 on Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, with a second location opened in Bayridge, Brooklyn, New York in 2012. Alsubai attributes the success of the business to the hospitality that customers experience dining there. “When you are walking into the restaurant, it feels like you’re walking into someone’s home in Yemen.” He talked extensively about the changing demographics of Atlantic Avenue, once a predominantly Arab area and now site of new high rises and parks. He also discussed the community outreach undertaken by the restaurant—donating time, money, and food to events organized by the Arab Family Support Network, Yemeni American Merchants Association, and the Borough President’s Office. During the bodega strike in response to the “Muslim ban,” The Yemen Café closed both restaurants. Customers left notes on the doors that said, “We are with you.” “Our neighbors are with you.” “We love this place, and we’re here to support you all.”

Shazia Choudri



## Fashion forward

Another booming creative industry in New York City is fashion. New York City and Los Angeles are the largest fashion hubs in the country, employing two-thirds of all American designers. NYC is home to the headquarters of approximately 900 fashion businesses, employing over 180,000 people, paying \$11 billion in wages, and resulting in close to \$2 billion in annual tax revenues. As the largest retail market in the country, NYC produces over \$15 billion in sales each year. Three of the country's top design schools, Parsons, Pratt Institute, and the Fashion Institute of Technology are located in New York City.<sup>43</sup>

**Haute Hijab**, the leading hijab brand in the United States is run by CEO **Melanie Elturk** in New York City. She founded the company with her husband in 2010 and they both now work at the company full-time. Previously, Elturk had a law career where she specialized in civil rights. She chose to enter the field of fashion because she felt that there was no hijab brand out there geared specifically toward American Muslim women. She sees her biggest contribution through Haute Hijab as providing a product that allows women to feel beautiful—not having to compromise on style while adhering to their faith. In 2017, every Gap store in the world featured a hijabi<sup>44</sup> model wearing one of Haute Hijab's products.

**Inshallah Clothing** emerged through the creative vision of founder and CEO **Lawrence (XL) Abdullah**. After over a decade in the footwear business as a designer and his conversion to Islam, Abdullah decided to go into clothing design. When he started this apparel business, Abdullah simply wanted to create a t-shirt that

sent a positive social message. His original t-shirt had “I Love New York” printed on the front, with New York written in Arabic, a small caption in English underneath. He started to sell his shirt at his local masjid in Brooklyn followed by other boroughs. DJ Khaled has worn outfits from Inshallah Clothing in his music videos. Abdullah also participates in a program called Building Young Minds (BYM), which works in inner-city schools to introduce students to music, fashion, and media.

## Groundbreaking entrepreneurship

Muslim New Yorkers are also implementing groundbreaking new business ideas beyond the restaurant and fashion industries.

**Azra Khalfan** is the CEO of **Plaques by Azra**. The company was started by her father 43 years ago after her family immigrated to New York from Tanzania. The company specializes in engraving, digital printing, and laser cutting. Her clients range from government offices to schools, nonprofit organizations to corporations. Her products have been sent internationally to prime ministers and Nobel Prize winners. Khalfan also discussed the difficulties that the company faced during the recessions and Hurricane Sandy. She spoke extensively about the importance of mentorship for women in business, citing how mentorship programs through the Tory Burch Foundation helped her to become a more effective saleswoman. “They [the Tory Burch Foundation] also provide financial support, mentoring, education, peer-to-peer support. It’s an interesting [thing] when you’re around other women business owners who face [the] same challenges as you do. To know that you’re not alone, and if they can do it, you can do it.”

**Shazia Choudri** is the founder of Beetbox, a turn-key STEM and nutrition education solution for schools. A monthly box contains lesson plans, fresh ingredients, and materials for teachers; they remove the barriers to teaching by sending everything a teacher needs to deliver the lesson. Each month's box revolves around a different seed-to-table food theme. The first box focuses on apples, including scientific questions related to food (e.g., what happens to water when we put an apple in it?). Students also get to grow apples from seeds and monitor what happens to the seeds over time as they put them in soil. Cooking, growing, food anatomy, recycling, art, and science are themes covered in every box. Choudri came up with the idea for the company after learning about food deserts in the U.S. and committed to a mission of connecting young children to healthy food. Beetbox is currently in many Head Start, New York State's Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK), and early education schools in NYC and across the U.S.

**Abdul Mubarez** is the chairman of **ATM Worldwide**, the first enterprise to provide ATMs to local businesses across all five NYC boroughs. He founded the company in 1999. Mubarez first introduced an ATM into one of his own convenience stores in midtown Manhattan and was then able to grow the business through his connections with small business owners citywide. According to Mubarez, there are four to five major ATM providers in New York, and all are owned by American Muslims. ATM Worldwide now has over 6,000 ATMs in various locations around NYC. Most are located in communities where banks do not tend to put ATMs. Mubarez is also heavily involved in the Yemeni American Association and is one of the co-founders of the Yemeni American Merchants Association, which helped to organize the bodega strike in response to the “Muslim ban.”

## LINKING THE LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL

While the majority of businesses in New York City are classified as small businesses, the city—home to the New York Stock Exchange and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York—remains a booming global financial hub, ranked in 2016 as the second most important financial center in the world by the Global Financial Centers Index (at only one point lower than London on a 1,000-point scale).<sup>45</sup> Muslim New Yorkers are working not only in local entrepreneurial businesses but also in finance with an international reach, such as global investment and venture capital.

**Tiger Global** is a hedge fund that primarily invests in technology companies and oversees about \$23 billion in assets. **Naïel Iqbal** works at Tiger Global analyzing alternative data sets and conducting quantitative research in order to assess how much a company is potentially worth, guiding portfolio managers on their subsequent investments. Tiger Global’s clients range from pension funds to charitable institutions and unions representing different professional groups. Iqbal is currently the president of MUPPIES (Muslim Urban Professionals), which aims to create a global community of diverse individuals by providing a platform for networking, mentorship, and career development. Iqbal also recently joined the board of directors for Muslim Advocates, a national legal advocacy and educational organization that works on the frontlines of civil rights to guarantee freedom and justice for Americans of all faiths.

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**Moat** began as a start-up focused on improving online advertising. **Aniq Rahman** is currently president of Moat. Moat was founded in 2010 and now employs about 400 people. It was acquired by Oracle for \$850 million in 2017. Rahman previously was CEO of Instinctiv, a mobile music app that was acquired by SoundCloud in 2012. Rahman was also part of the early team at Behance, a platform for users to showcase and discover creative work that was acquired by Adobe. Rahman is a General Partner in a venture capital fund, Vast Ventures, through which he is invested in about 100 other companies (over 20 in New York City alone) that employ tens of thousands of people not only in the U.S. but also across the globe. Rahman is additionally an adjunct professor at Cornell University in New York, where he teaches entrepreneurship to graduate students in technology. He contributes to multiple charities focused on education, poverty alleviation, and healthcare.



## FEATURE: TAXI DRIVERS

The New York City yellow cab is “as synonymous with New York City as Broadway and Times Square.”<sup>46</sup> New York City’s metered taxis took to the streets in 1907 and have been a mainstay of the city ever since. A large percentage of the taxi force has historically been made up of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, specifically recent immigrants. It is no different today, with many taxi drivers hailing from Bangladesh and Pakistan. According to our data analysis, **39.2%** of all licensed taxi drivers in New York City are Muslim. Tellingly, the most common name of taxi drivers is Muhammad, according to recent analysis by data scientist Seth Kadish.<sup>47</sup>

When I go somewhere else, I think about the city. I spend every day in the city. I know every corner like my house, even without thinking.

Even with the advent of Uber and other smartphone ride apps, the collective economic and social influences of Muslim taxi drivers remain remarkable. In 2016 alone, **40,797,964** taxi trips were given by Muslim drivers.<sup>48</sup> Muslim drivers provided **228** wheelchair-accessible vehicles and **18,421** wheelchair-accessible trips through the Accessible Dispatch Program.<sup>49</sup>

In January 2017, when the “Muslim ban” first became instituted by President Trump, taxi drivers boycotted John F. Kennedy Airport. This taxi strike, officially organized by the unionized New York City Taxi Alliance, was utilized as a means to collectively protest the ban. The alliance tweeted, “We cannot be silent. We go to work to welcome people to a land that once welcomed us. We will not be divided.”<sup>50</sup>

**Abdulai Kabba** has been a taxi driver for many years. He moved to the United States from Gambia 25 years ago and soon after began driving a taxi. Kabba spoke about knowing other taxi drivers from all different backgrounds from a taxi garage in the Bronx, noting that they are now largely Muslims. Since migrating to the U.S., he has lived in the Bronx with his wife (and now six children). Kabba noted his pride in the city of New York. “Whatever religion you have, you can do your religion over here in New York. So, me, I’m not going anywhere.” Kabba also explained that the Muslim population is growing and that he lives in a neighborhood with a mostly Bangladeshi populace. He thinks his work, and the work of taxi drivers in general, is important for the sustenance of the city as a whole. “I help people to get around. Today, my first passenger in Harlem was late going to work in Rockaway, Queens. He was almost crying because the train didn’t come. We reached there in 35 minutes, and he was so happy.”

Another taxi driver, **Tarek Shaaban**, described the deep knowledge of and attachment to the city that he has forged through driving. “When I go somewhere else, I think about the city. I spend every day in the city. I know every corner like my house, even without thinking.”



## FEATURE: FOOD CARTS

Food carts are a historical mainstay in the culture of New York City, dotting street corners and parkscapes alike. These historically included pickles sold by European Jews and souvlaki sold by Greek immigrants. A Queens College study found significant growth from 1990 to 2005 among Egyptian, Bangladeshi, and Afghan food vendors (increasing sevenfold from **69** to **563**).<sup>51</sup> Today, over **57 percent** of street food vendors are Muslim, many with halal operations. In coverage of the rise of halal food carts over the past decade, *The New York Times* cited Mohamed Abouelenein, a man who previously sold hot dogs and today sells halal options such as gyro and chicken. “We figured out that most of the cab drivers are Egyptian, Pakistani...they suffered too much from no halal.” The Halal Guys, with restaurants throughout and beyond New York City, today, echoed this sentiment in explaining their success, revealing a deep linkage between two industries that have become synonymous with New York City—the yellow taxi and the halal food cart.<sup>52</sup> Tarek Saaban, a taxi driver in New York City since 2002, described this relationship, citing the rise of The Halal Guys from “just chicken and rice on the corner” to a national chain.

It isn't just taxi drivers, however, but New Yorkers and visitors to the city of all economic backgrounds and creeds who flock to street food vendors, today. Mr. Hassam is a halal food cart owner, originally from Egypt, who works on bustling 54th Street and 5th Avenue and can easily be spotted in his New York Yankees jacket and New York City baseball cap. He is very proud of the city and his food. “This is both my work and my kitchen,” he explained, noting that he only serves high-quality meals that he, himself, also eats. His father previously owned the stand and he has run it for the past 11 years. The work can be hard, especially at times when there are no tourists, but he enjoys meeting people and serving his food to tourists and New Yorkers alike.

Over 57 percent of street food vendors are Muslim.



## Impact in Education

The New York City public school system is the largest in the United States; more than 1.1 million students are taught in over 1,800 public schools with a budget of nearly \$25 billion.<sup>53</sup> The public school system is managed by the New York City Department of Education. New York City is also home to over 50 colleges and universities,<sup>54</sup> including Columbia University, New York University (NYU), and the expansive The City University of New York (CUNY) system, which ranks among the top public universities in the country.<sup>55</sup> Muslim educators in New York City contribute to early childhood, primary, secondary, and higher education, as well as initiatives outside of the school system that foster learning. They showcase the dynamic and multidimensional nature of educators who connect schooling to practice and extend the classroom into the broader community of New York City as a whole.

### Quantitative Overview

According to our 2017 data, in New York City 9,497 licensed K-12 teachers are Muslim (1.8 percent of total licensed teachers in NYC). Muslim K-12 teachers educate approximately 248,821 K-12 students each year.<sup>56</sup>

### Qualitative Overview

#### Secondary education educators and administrators

**Takia Hussein** works as a history teacher at New Utrecht High School in Brooklyn, which is a Title 1 school (meaning most of the students come from low-income households). She has been employed as a public school teacher in NYC for the past decade. Hussein utilizes New York City as a ground for learning, taking her students to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and further afield, because it is “important for students to see a world outside of Brooklyn.” Hussein is involved with the media office of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the teacher’s union at the NYC Department of Education. Hussein estimates that she teaches approximately 150 students each year, with a rough total of 1,500 over the course of her career. “We [educators] are not only teaching them facts, we are teaching them how to be good citizens of New York.”

**Abeda Khanam** has been a biology teacher at Robert F. Wagner High School for 20 years. “Kids see me as someone who looks at science as a universal language,” she explains. She also serves as the faculty advisor for the school’s chapter of the National Honors Society. She further founded and serves as the faculty advisor of both the diversity and garden club. Two years ago, Khanam created a program that matches high-achieving students with students that need academic support based on emotional intelligence and personality traits (as opposed to traditional

programs that pair high and low scorers). Khanam is also a teacher leader with the American Federation of Teachers, a chaplain with the New York State Chaplain Task Force, a Mental Health First Aid trainer collaborating with the ThriveNYC initiative, and a board member of the LIC Roots Community Garden. “In 2015, when the *Daily News* named me a Hometown Hero in Education, it emboldened me to work directly with the community in capacities such as teacher leader, mental health advocate, and parental engagement columnist. Even though I was born in a village, my village is now Jamaica Queens, and I must serve my village if I am to serve God. The lessons I have learned with my family—including the joys as well as the heartbreaks—I offer to my community. For a collection of resilient families in resilient communities make a great nation. After all, isn’t the welfare of the country the true concern of the patriot?”

We [educators] are not only teaching them facts, we are teaching them how to be good citizens of New York.

**Hebh Jamal** is an 18-year-old youth policy advocate at New York Appleseed, where she has been working for a year addressing segregation in NYC public schools. During her junior year of high school, Jamal became involved with an organization called Integrate NYC, a student-led group focusing specifically on educational inequality. Since joining Integrate NYC and through her work at NY Appleseed, Jamal has helped develop programs for NYC's first diversity council, which talks to students across the five boroughs about school segregation and drafts policy proposals based on those conversations. These proposals have been presented to the New York State Legislature and the Department of Education in Washington, DC. Jamal is also on the steering committee of the Alliance on School Integration and Desegregation.

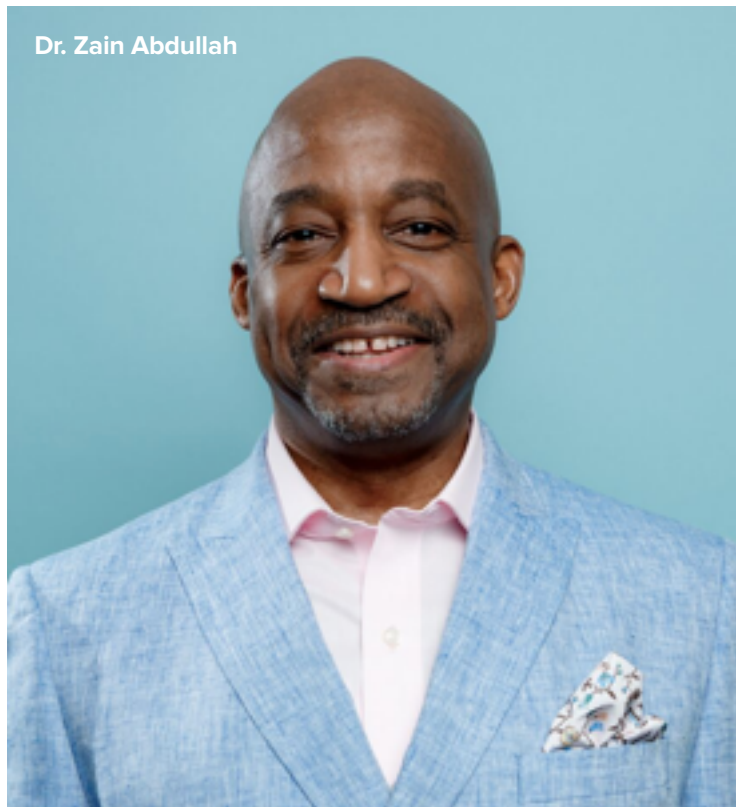
### Higher education educators and administrators

**Dr. Hussein Rashid** has worked in various capacities in order to foster “religious literacy and [explain] how religion functions in society.” He teaches at Columbia University/Barnard College currently and previously taught at Hofstra University. He has consulted with various local and federal government agencies, published in numerous news outlets, and writes his own blogs (including one of the first blogs about Islam and religious literacy after 9/11). Most recently, Dr. Rashid served as a chief consultant as well as community consultant/liaison on the Children’s Museum exhibit on Islam, *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*. He sees himself more as an educator than an academic, highlighting that education moves beyond the classroom. Therefore, he looks for places and spaces where he can engage with education more broadly—both as a teacher and a learner.

**Dr. Amra Sabic-El-Rayess** is an associate professor of practice at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research focuses on corruption in education, how ultra-conservative groups use education to change social norms, and the financial inclusion of women. Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess came to the U.S. to attend Brown University as an undergraduate student after the war in Bosnia, where she lived under siege for four years. Dr. Sabic-El-Rayess is also on the board of the Center for Development and Social Research and the board director of both the International Center for Transitional Justice, an organization that focuses on human rights abuses in conflict or crisis regions, and the Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation, which supports Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center by providing advanced medical care to the community it serves.

The lessons I have learned with my family—including the joys as well as the heartbreaks—I offer to my community. For a collection of resilient families in resilient communities make a great nation.

Dr. Zain Abdullah



**Dr. Zain Abdullah** is an associate professor of religion & society and Islamic studies at Temple University. He converted to Islam in 1978 while attending Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) following a self-study of world religions, a reading of *Towards Understanding Islam* by Abul A'la Maududi, and conversations with Abdul-Malik Ismail, a Black Panamanian convert selling his wares on campus. When his sophomore year ended, he left FDU for his hometown of East Orange, NJ to learn from Muslims in nearby Newark and began studying Arabic with books, tapes and spending countless hours practicing in Brooklyn, New York. He soon won a college scholarship to attend King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1983. Later, Zain became a Muslim chaplain (imam) for six years, providing pastoral care and religious instruction to prison inmates in New York City, upstate New York,

and New Jersey. In 1990, he resigned from the NJ Department of Corrections out of protest for how prisoners were being treated and co-founded The African American Institute for Islamic Research. One of its main accomplishments was increased awareness of minorities in the prison system through media appearances, community programming, and two national conferences on Black men and crime. After graduating from Rutgers University in 1988, he entered the graduate program five years later at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan, where he earned a master's degree in sociology and history in 1995 and a doctorate in anthropology in 2004. His first book, published in 2010 by Oxford University Press, is *Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem*, which he wrote to understand how Islam mattered in the daily lives of both Muslims and non-Muslims, especially in relation to their racial and ethnic identities. As he wraps up his second book on the Nation of Islam and Black freedom struggles in mid-twentieth-century America, Dr. Abdullah was awarded the 2018 Ford Foundation Senior Fellowship to write an intellectual history on Islam and the American character over the past century. As a curator of media, culture, and the arts, he is writing a memoir and working with film crews for a three-part PBS special on Muslim Americans and a six-part series on Malcolm X for Netflix.

Alexandra Owens



Students often regard the world as black and white. It is my job to show them the shades of grey, the messiness of the world, and the infinite opportunities they have to both make their mark and participate in imagining and cultivating a better future.

**Alexandra Owens** works in the external affairs department at LaGuardia Community College (LAGCC), City College of New York (CUNY). External affairs centers on community, government, and public relations. Owens works on community relations, specifically focusing on outreach to Muslim, South Asian, and Arab communities. Her main end goal is educating the community in Queens about available educational opportunities, including recruitment for programs at LAGCC such as English as a new language and workforce development programs. After the publishing industry in which Owens worked faced major cutbacks, a friend convinced her to take the civil service test for CUNY as an administrative assistant, where she eventually moved into her current position. She also serves on her local community board. Previously, Owens participated in community organizing and logistical planning around Park51 and helped to produce the New York Arab-American Comedy Festival.

**Dr. Dalia Fahmy** is associate professor of political science at Long Island University, where she teaches courses on U.S. foreign policy, world politics, international relations, military and defense policy, and causes of war. Her research focuses on democratization and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, as well as the effects of Islamophobia on U.S. foreign policy. Dr. Fahmy has three published books and has given several briefings on the future of democracy in the Middle East. She has been interviewed by and written editorials in various media outlets and has won several academic awards and fellowships for her research. However, Dr. Fahmy regards teaching the thousands of undergraduate and graduate students she has had in her classroom as a privilege. “Students often regard the world as black and white. It is my job to show them the shades of grey, the messiness of the world, and the infinite opportunities they have to both make their mark and participate in imagining and cultivating a better future.”



## FEATURE: CHILDREN'S MUSEUM EXHIBIT, *AMERICA TO ZANZIBAR: MUSLIM CULTURES NEAR AND FAR*

In February 2016, The Children's Museum of Manhattan introduced its exhibit *America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far*. Andrew S. Ackerman, the museum director, explained in *The New York Times* that the exhibit had the explicit aim of educating both children and adults: "We want young children to be exposed to as much diversity as possible to better understand other people and themselves, and there's no question that reduces prejudice, violence and misunderstandings."<sup>57</sup>

A "surprise blockbuster," the exhibit attracted over **350,000** visitors during its two-year run at the museum. It is now touring the United States. In order to design this exhibit, curator Lizzy Martin consulted with hundreds of Muslim residents and community leaders in New York and New Jersey. We interviewed the chief consultant and community liaison, Dr. Hussein Rashid, and exhibit advisory board member Dr. Debbie Almontaser. Dr. Rashid described his role as an educator beyond the classroom. "My philosophy with my work is that I cannot represent the totality of the American Muslim experience, but I can help frame that discussion and find people to tell their own story. What was great with working with the Children's Museum exhibit was showing what's possible when you work with the right people in terms of having an impact on the general population."

My philosophy with my work is that I cannot represent the totality of the American Muslim experience, but I can help frame that discussion and find people to tell their own story.

The exhibit included virtual tours of **25** mosques; spices and fruits; instrumental sounds from the Oud, the Rabana, and the Ney; and artisan objects such as rugs, tiles, and fabrics, as well as the stories of local Muslim families, including artifacts such as clothing and prayer beads (*tasbeih*). Through hands-on learning, children experienced both new and familiar sights, sounds, smells, and tactile feelings associated with Muslim cultures on a global scale, while remaining in New York City. This far-reaching experiential learning opportunity was meant to counter negative stereotypes by building knowledge about Muslim culture and Islam among the young and old, celebrating diversity "near and far."

## Impact in Arts and Entertainment

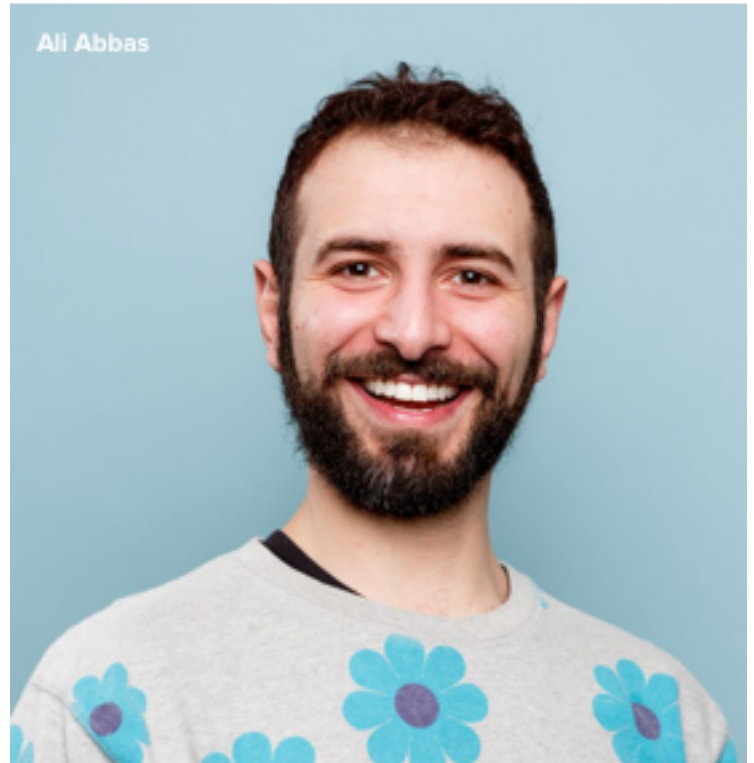
Artists and entertainers engage in a variety of creative expressions in the vibrant cultural center of New York City, from poetry to hip-hop, playwriting to stage performance. Today, the number of artists in New York City is higher than ever, increasing **17.4 percent** from 2000 to 2015, with **56,268** professional artists residing in the five boroughs.<sup>58</sup> Muslims utilize art as a platform for empowerment, social critique, and building community cohesion. The deep intersection of art and social justice came through in our research, as did the far-reaching dynamism of Muslim artists who are forging new frontiers through their crafts.

Today, the number of artists in New York City is higher than ever, increasing 17.4 percent from 2000 to 2015, with 56,268 professional artists residing in the five boroughs.

### Challenging stereotypes through performance

**Ali Abbas** is an American Muslim writer and filmmaker, and New Yorker of Lebanese descent. He is the creator and producer of *The Ridge*, a series about a group of Brooklyn Muslim youth with superpowers, and the current diversity fellow at the Upright Citizens Brigade. Abbas commutes between New York and Chicago where he recently released *The Girl Deep Down Below*, a web series produced by the Chicago Digital Media Production Fund about a group of young Muslim girls who unite to stop the abductions of young women in their community. In science fiction, he finds opportunities to reclaim narratives that reject the good Muslim/bad Muslim binary that exists in Hollywood. “I can’t even imagine what it’s like for hijabi screenwriters or brown, bearded men. You deal with a lot of open racism, even if it’s not directed towards you. Open prejudice that you would think was this weird, backward prejudice, 1950s mentality. The example I always give is Ridley Scott. He’s been a hero of mine since I was a kid, and you know, the father of modern science fiction. And when he was making *Exodus*, he got a lot of criticism because the only brown people he cast were slaves. At a press briefing he told a room full of reporters he ‘can’t hire Muhammed so-and-so’ because his movies wouldn’t get funding. He’s had several movies and an AMC television series produced since then.”

**Nicole Najmah Abraham** is a Brooklyn native, mother, spoken word artist, and fashion photographer. She is also project manager for Green Earth Poets Café; workshop facilitator for New York State



Senator Jesse Hamilton’s The Campus, which is a technology and wellness hub in Brownsville and Crown Heights, Brooklyn; project contractor for the Center for Community Alternatives, which promotes community-based alternatives to incarceration; and visual marketer, producer, and social media manager for Halal Hollywood Entertainment, an international halal production company (“A Muslim Netflix”). She has been a professional spoken word artist since 2012 and has performed nationwide. She is also a resident speaker and guest lecturer at the Fresno Kremen School of Education and Human Development, where she teaches master’s students. Abraham additionally teaches hip-hop, poetry, and fashion design to around 1,000 youth within the juvenile detention system, as well as prisons in and around New York. Abraham has worked in the NYC fashion industry for almost 15 years, including as a senior graphic designer at the Gap and Guess Jeans, and has designed for Walmart, Ecko, Rocawear, U.S. Polo Association, Jordache Jeans, Children’s Apparel Network, and

On stage, I'll do a set of three or four of my poems; there's a lot more that can be done effectively with a five-minute poem, because I'm now changing your perceptions or debunking a stereotype in a creative way using art.

House of Deréon (Beyoncé's fashion line). She also has a digital media business, Najm Designs. Abraham founded a forum and storytelling project known as "I Am More Than a Scarf," featuring Muslim women. "People believe Muslims don't connect to everyday issues. But as a human being living every day in America, these are our issues too. So, don't call me to be your token and give a statement about about terrorism. If my son walks out the door, is he going to come back home, because he may get shot and killed, being a Black teenager walking around in a hoodie? Or gentrification that's changing my neighborhood that I've lived in for over ten years in Brooklyn. These issues directly affect me. I've realized the power of the arts and using my platform and spotlight. On stage, I'll do a set of three or four of my poems; there's a lot more that can be done effectively with a five-minute poem, because I'm now changing your perceptions or debunking a stereotype in a creative way using art."

**Aizzah Fatima** is a writer, playwright, and actress based in New York City, who works in TV, film, commercials, and theater. She is a graduate of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Fatima wrote and produced a one-woman play, *Dirty Paki Lingerie*, touching on themes of Muslim identity, sexuality, bullying, and racial profiling, performed at over 30 college campuses nationwide and reaching over 6,000 people. She also had a role on *The Good Wife* and other HBO shows. "I remember when I first auditioned for this HBO show, *High Maintenance*. They had some scenes that just didn't portray Muslims in a good light. The writers, after I got cast, came to me, 'You know we'd like to hear about your life, and where you come from, and what that's like for you, so we can tell a better nuanced story.' I feel like that was a true collaboration, and it was the first time on HBO that I heard people speaking in another language, and it was not 'terrorist-y.' We spoke Urdu; a lot of our scenes were in heavy Urdu mixed with English, which is how people would usually talk. And, so, we got to say things like 'Assalaam alaikum' and 'Khuda Hafiz,' and it was a regular family living in New York." In addition to acting, Fatima was also commissioned to collaborate on four original children's musicals and write the book for one of them through a grant from

the Doris Duke Foundation for the Brooklyn Children's Theater. The musicals feature Muslim protagonists. One of the commissioned works, *The Ten-Year Test*, traces how Eid became a public holiday in New York City public schools after a decade of campaigning by the Muslim community.

**Hisham Tawfiq** is an actor born, raised, and based in Harlem. He has been featured in a number of TV shows including *30 Rock*, *Law and Order*, *Nurse Jackie*, and currently, *The Blacklist*. His father was a student of Malcolm X. Tawfiq is also involved in other personal projects. One of these is called *Jinn*, written and produced by a Black Muslim woman, telling the story of an African American teenager's mother converting to Islam. Tawfiq wanted to be a part of this project because it "giv[es] a window into the African American Muslim home." His second project is a documentary that Tawfiq is producing with his wife about his own life. "Originally, it was about the fire department. But now, it's basically going to talk about just my whole life, the Marines, the fire department, corrections, being the son of an Imam...being born Muslim and the trials and tribulations I went through as a teenager—and I dealt with the same things in public school, I dealt with the same things in the Marines, the same issue with corrections, you know the common denominator in all my phases of life, so I wanted to tell the story, especially after 9/11. After all that stuff was heightened, there was more of the need to speak on my experience and talk about the contributions that Muslims, and specifically African American Muslims, made to New York City and all cities across the country."

Hisham Tawfiq



**Christie Z-Pabon** is a 49-year-old New Yorker in the hip-hop scene. She moved to New York from Pittsburgh in 1996. By late 1997, she was hired by the major DJ battle company DMC. 1998 was her first year organizing DJ battles for DMC USA, which has also organized DJ battles internationally since 1985. She organized all of the company's DJ battles from 1998 to 2000. After 2000, Z-Pabon left DMC and organized other DJ battles. In 2008, she returned to DMC as a franchise owner, where she runs the largest DJ battles in the United States. She has been featured in a documentary on the birth of hip-hop and turntablism (known as "scratch"), as well as in *The New York Times*, regarding the Cartona Park Jam series she organizes in the Morrisania neighborhood in the Bronx. Z-Pabon is the only Muslim of any race or gender organizing national DJ battles in the United States. She is also affiliated with "Muslims in Hip-Hop," a loose collective that came together after protesting *One World Magazine* for featuring rapper L'il Kim on its front cover wearing a niqab. "There are different elements to hip-hop. There's the dance element. There's the aerosol art element. The DJ element. And the MC element, the rap. So, the DJ element most attracts me. And the scene, with the DJs, especially the battle DJs, they're very open-minded and cool. I think they're pretty much down for whoever does their job and does it right. And they don't really stay focused on whether I'm white, or I'm Muslim, or I'm a woman. Even though at any given time, there's these three strikes against me with other people...It's understood that Muslims are a part of things in hip-hop. Whereas there's a separate Christian rap section, there is no separate Muslim hip-hop section. We're just in the mainstream of it. Whether it's A Tribe Called Quest or Lupe Fiasco or One Be Lo, or anyone like that, that's just mainstream...So, it's interesting. Hip-hop did introduce me to Islam."

### *Breaking boundaries through comedy*

**Aman Ali** is a performer who tells stories that challenge dominant narratives about Muslims through stand-up and film. Ali is currently producing a film on Muslim morticians in Newark, New Jersey, who responded to street violence by encouraging youth to volunteer in funeral preparations and visit grieving families. He also toured the U.S. after the 2016 presidential elections for his *Ask Me Anything—I'm Muslim* show, responding to the divisive political climate by visiting and speaking in 70 cities and towns. "When Trump got elected, I sat down with my agent, and we looked at the election map and I said, 'I want to perform in all the states and counties where Trump won by at least 15 percent.' So, we booked a show; it's called, *Ask Me Anything—I'm Muslim*. Basically, it's like, I do 20 minutes of stand-up. And then, I want to create a safe space, where literally anyone can ask anything. I'm not here to debate.



Aman Ali

I'm not here to argue. I'm not a scholar. I'm not an expert. Where a lot of people can feel comfortable just to talk. I'm not trying to change people's opinions. I just want to hear what they have to say." Ali has a production company, Homegrown Homies, and was part of the 30 Mosques in 30 Days photojournalism project. Ali is also a board member of SMILE, the largest Syrian refugee resettlement agency in New Jersey and the largest zakat distributor in the state. He additionally raised \$40,000 in Hurricane Harvey relief funds.

**Dean Obeidallah** is an American Muslim comedian and activist, who hosts *The Dean Obeidallah Show* on Sirius, XM Progress, the only daily national radio show hosted by an American Muslim. He has appeared on Comedy Central's *The Axis of Evil* and co-produced *The Watch List*. Obeidallah is also co-founder of the New York Arab-American Comedy Festival, which is in its 14th year; Obeidallah estimates that 16,000–18,000 people have attended this festival over the years. He is further co-creator of Stand Up for Peace and Muslim Funny Fest, producer of *Big Brown Comedy Hour*, and co-director of the documentary *The Muslims Are Coming!* "The change is dramatic. You know, in the beginning, there were not that many Muslims [in comedy]. There were a handful. And it's grown now. I think there are more Arab American comedians than Muslims still. The Axis of Evil Comedy Tour had a big impact. It played a role in showing people that the door isn't closed, the doors are open, comedians who look like you, sound like you, or share your faith. And I think that's true for minorities across America...I think stand-up comedy has been proven to be a great way to break through and tell your story in the way you want it told. And you're on stage alone. It's really important; I think stand-up comedy is a great vehicle to use, as opposed to auditioning to say someone else's words."

## Writing and storytelling beyond borders

**Amani Al-Khatahtbeh** is the editor in chief of MuslimGirl.com, the largest platform in the country for Muslim women to “talk back.” She is also the author of *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age*, an editors’ pick on *The New York Times* Bestsellers’ List, host of the MTV’s Uncovered, and an ambassador for the YouTube Creators for Change anti-hate program. Additionally, she has been named on Forbes’ 30 Under 30 in media and technology. Amani and her team at MuslimGirl launched the first Muslim Women’s Day during Women’s History Month 2017. They have also started the MuslimGirl Foundation, which has for its first initiative an effort to forge a scholarship fund to support Muslim women in media. Al-Khatahtbeh’s story is inspiring. “Since I couldn’t relate with my classmates, I turned to the internet for that sense of belonging and expression. I got really into coding and constantly journaling my experiences. Then, one day I realized that there had to be other girls like me out there, with similar experiences that felt the same way I did. I started MuslimGirl as an online community because I wanted us to have a space where we could find each other and have the conversations that mattered to our lives.”

Rashidah Ismaili-AbuBakr



**Hamdan Azhar** is a journalist, data scientist, and co-founder of the Muslim Writers Collective, “a grassroots initiative dedicated to promoting storytelling in the Muslim American community.” The Muslim Writers Collective was founded in New York City but now also has active chapters in eight additional U.S. cities. Azhar explained, “We are not trying to teach people what Islam is, or claim to create Muslim or Islamic art, but just having people who are

Muslim do creative work...We respect the range of diversity of different MWCs in different cities. Some people are there to share stories, some are [there] to build community. What we’ve done, the greatest thing we’ve done, is to bring people together.”

**Moustafa Bayoumi** is a writer in New York City known for his creative nonfiction, such as *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?* *Being Young and Arab in America* and *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror*, both winners of the Arab American Book Award for Nonfiction. An avid contributor to public life through his writing, Bayoumi regularly writes for *The Guardian* as well as other mainstream presses. Influenced by his former advisor and mentor Edward Said, Bayoumi sees himself primarily as a literary journalist, but also breaks disciplinary boundaries by writing across fields. He has responded to the need to address local and domestic issues in the Muslim community in NYC since 9/11 in particular, before which many local organizations focused on international issues. “The continuing challenge I face in my work is how to balance writing about local issues that are specific to what Muslims in New York City face with writing about the international issues that we all must confront.”

**Rashidah Ismaili-AbuBakr** was born and raised in Benin. Ismaili-AbuBakr came to the United States in 1958 to study at the New York College of Music and musical theatre at the Mannes School of Music. Having arrived in the United States at an important time of political change, she was exposed to the impact of the civil rights movement on culture. Today, Ismaili-AbuBakr is a New York-based poet, playwright, essayist, and short story writer. She has been in the creative arts for the past 60 years and lived among the artist communities in the Lower East Side, Battery Park, and Harlem. She was part of the Black Arts Movement, as a contemporary of poet Amiri Baraka and a friend of Stokely Carmichael, a leading civil rights activist from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Ismaili-AbuBakr was awarded the Sojourner Truth Meritorious Award and the Puffin Trade Award, and she has been recognized by PEN America. Her published books include *Autobiography of the Lower East Side: A Novel in Stories*, based on her experiences living in the artist collective, Umbra, during the 1960s, and poetry collections, including *Missing in Action and Presumed Dead*, *Rice Keepers*, and *Cantata for Jimmy*. Ismaili-AbuBakr has also taught at Wilkes University and the University of Ghana and worked in higher education at Rutgers University and Pratt College. She additionally served as an executive board member of the Organization of Women Writers of Africa, Inc. Ismaili-AbuBakr continues to host a Salon d’Afrique, an informal space for the exchange of ideas uniting Africans and African Americans, in her Harlem home.



## Impact in Sports

Muslims in and from the New York tri-state area participate in a diverse array of sports at the professional level, including football, basketball, and Olympic athletics. They hail from various backgrounds and participate in the social life of the city in and beyond sports through their works in philanthropy, advocacy, and community service. Many of them have returned to their home communities to help local efforts and service projects, showing passion for civic participation and dedication to service at all levels.<sup>59</sup>



**Oday Aboushi** is a Brooklyn-born free agent football offensive guard. He has played for the New York Jets, the Houston Texans, and the Seattle Seahawks.<sup>60</sup> He was born to Palestinian parents who migrated to New York City from the West Bank. Among the first Arab Americans drafted into the NFL, his success is seen as an inspiration across New York, the United States, and the globe. Aboushi explains, “You don’t see many of us in the sport...So for me to kind of break that mold and sort of open the door for other people, and show them that it is possible, it’s a great feeling. It’s a pleasure for me, an honor, and I’m happy to be able to be that sort of person for people.”<sup>61</sup>

**Sadam Ali** is an American boxer of Yemeni descent from Brooklyn, NY. He is currently the reigning World Boxing Organization light middleweight boxing champion. Ali cites the Muslim British boxer Naseem Hamed, also born to Yemeni parents, as his inspiration for wanting to become a professional boxer.<sup>62</sup> Ali began his boxing career as a teenager, when he was twice awarded New York City Golden Gloves Champion. He was the national champion representing the United States in the Junior Olympics and also won the U-19 national championship. His professional boxing record boasts of 26 victories out of 27 matches, including the defeat of famed Puerto Rican boxer Miguel Cotto by knock-out in his most recent match in December 2017.<sup>63</sup>

I want to keep making history, because you have to give up a lot to get to this level of boxing. Wearing the U.S. uniform and representing this country does mean something to me.

Ali was the first Arab American and the first New Yorker since 1984 to represent the U.S. in the Olympics when he boxed in Beijing in 2008. He is very proud of representing the U.S. and has said, “I want to keep making history, because you have to give up a lot to get to this level of boxing. Wearing the U.S. uniform and representing this country does mean something to me.”<sup>64</sup> His Olympic debut was particularly momentous because he was also the first person named Ali on the boxing team, as Muhammad Ali competed under the name he was given at birth, Cassius Clay, when he won gold in 1960. Ali says, “It’s a name that people don’t forget. ... I wouldn’t change my name for the world. You shouldn’t be judged on your name. No matter what race you are, you can be successful when you work hard for something.”<sup>65</sup>

**Kenneth Faried** is an active player for the Denver Nuggets in the NBA. He grew up in Newark, New Jersey, and played basketball at Morehouse College.<sup>66</sup> Faried was a member of the United States national team that won the 2014 FIBA Basketball World Cup and was strongly considered for the U.S. Olympic national team for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.<sup>67</sup> Faried was raised by a Christian father and Muslim mother, who allowed him to decide which faith he wanted to follow. According to him, he decided to become Muslim when he was eight years old and called the decision “a no brainer” because of what he found in the Quran about how to live right, healthy, smart, and to give praise to God.<sup>68</sup>

Zainab Ismail



**Zainab Ismail** was born and raised in New York City. She worked as a celebrity trainer for years before converting to Islam and beginning her work, Fit for Allah, which takes on prophetic traditions regarding health, medicine, and food, and melds them with fitness practices. Ismail has traveled the globe teaching others how to be personal trainers, as well as post-rehabilitative techniques in universities and Olympic centers through which she became a world-renowned teacher of trainers. Ismail currently works as a personal trainer at a gym in Manhattan. She also spends time doing charity work with small pockets of Muslim communities in Chiapas, Mexico, and rural provinces outside of Havana, Cuba. In her work with diverse communities, she explains, “I don’t need to tell people about Islam. Our manners and behaviors show people, wow, you do all that: that’s what your faith teaches you.”

**Enes Kanter** is a Turkish professional basketball player for the New York Knicks in the NBA. When Kanter was 17, he played in the 2010 Nike Hoop Summit, setting an event record of 34 total points scored.<sup>69</sup> In 2011, Kanter was drafted to the Utah Jazz as a third overall draft pick. He set a record his first NBA game with the most rebounds recorded for a Utah Jazz rookie’s debut game. After four seasons with the Utah Jazz, Kanter played for two years on the Oklahoma City Thunder, before being traded to the New York Knicks in 2017. Kanter has had a stellar season so far with the Knicks, recording the longest consecutive double-double streak in Knicks history in the last eight years of franchise history.<sup>70</sup> Kanter is an observant Muslim; he was given a special room in Madison Square Garden by the New York Knicks to use for prayer and is often provided with halal food during team events. He praises the Knicks for being accommodating of his religious beliefs and attributes their hospitality toward him to American values.<sup>71</sup> Kanter also participates in interfaith religious activities with other players, including attending chapel, reading the Bible, and praying with his fellow basketball players. Enes has spoken often about the importance of dialogue and communication with people of all backgrounds. Enes is currently living in New York City, where he enjoys the city to its fullest and says that, “This place is so cool, I want to retire here...This is the place I want to be.”<sup>72</sup>

**Dalilah Muhammad** is an American track and field athlete from New York City. She specializes in running the 400 meter hurdles and won gold at the 2007 World Youth Championship in Athletics competition before going on to represent Team USA in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil.<sup>73</sup> Muhammad is the daughter of an imam and has recently begun using her newfound celebrity to vocalize her concerns for Muslims and other groups Donald Trump has criticized since his election. She says that she sometimes worries about the attention being a world-class athlete brings. Despite this struggle, her father loves to see Muhammad thrive in the public eye and “wants the world to see Muslims in a different light.”<sup>74</sup>

**Ibtihaj Muhammad** is a U.S. Olympic athlete in fencing. Muhammad is from Maplewood, New Jersey, and has become a national celebrity as the first Muslim woman to represent Team USA at the Olympics wearing the hijab. She helped her team earn bronze in the team sabre in the 2016 Rio Olympics.<sup>75</sup> Muhammad cites her parents, who converted to Islam in their youth, as her source of inspiration and faith. Her father is a retired Newark police officer and her mother is a retired special education teacher. Growing up, Muhammad loved sports but often needed to have her mother, Denise, alter her sports uniforms to ensure that they allowed her to maintain her religious commitment to dressing modestly. She first discovered fencing at age 13 as she drove by a high school fencing team’s practice. The long-sleeved, modest fencing outfit caught her attention, and she describes this moment as the beginning of her illustrious fencing career. Fencing was the ideal way for Muhammad to participate in sports without feeling out of place around the other competitors.<sup>76</sup> Despite her fame for her athletic skills, she also has significant academic, philanthropic, and business achievements. Muhammad attended Duke University on scholarship and graduated in 2007 with a double-major bachelor’s degree in international relations and African American studies and a minor in Arabic.<sup>77</sup> She was selected by Hillary Clinton to serve as a sports ambassador on the council of the U.S. Department of State’s Empowering Girls Through Sports Initiative, which uses sports as a means of empowerment for women and girls throughout the world.<sup>78</sup> To further encourage young girls to participate in sports, she began her own modest fashion company, Louella, in 2014.<sup>79</sup> She was honored by Mattel in its “Shero” collection, with the first Barbie wearing hijab modeled after her. “I’m proud to know that little girls everywhere can now play with a Barbie who chooses to wear hijab! This is a childhood dream come true,” she said.<sup>80</sup>

**Mohamed Sanu** is an active wide receiver for the Atlanta Falcons. He was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and spent a few years of his childhood growing up in his native country of Sierra Leone before returning to the United States. He attended South Brunswick High School and Rutgers University, where he began his football career.<sup>81</sup> In the 2016 football season, Sanu helped lead the Atlanta Falcons to the Super Bowl.<sup>82</sup> His opinions became the source of media interest after Trump’s travel ban was announced, as he was the only practicing Muslim player that would be participating in the Super Bowl. Sanu admitted to reporters that he feared for his mother, who was traveling from abroad to see him play, and that he hoped that football could help unite the country during a divisive time. He said that the “Muslim ban” was “a very tough situation. I just pray us as a country and a world can be united. It’s very hard for me to talk about this right now. It would take a lot of time. I just want to focus on the game and talk about football.”<sup>83</sup>

**Muhammad Wilkerson** is a professional football player for the National Football League from Linden, New Jersey. Wilkerson describes discovering his love of football playing on his high school team in 2007. He was recruited to play at Temple University, where he enjoyed a high-performing college football career and was named the team defensive most valuable player in his junior year.<sup>84</sup> Wilkerson was selected as a round-one draft pick by the New York Jets.<sup>85</sup> He played for the Jets as an active defensive end until 2017 and was selected to play in the 2015 Pro Bowl game. He is currently a free agent after being released out of his \$86 million five-year contract with the Jets in 2017.<sup>86</sup> Wilkerson grew up in a devoutly Muslim household with his mother, Janice, who wears hijab and worked at a homeless shelter.<sup>87</sup> Following 9/11, he has said that “people look at my mom funny and make faces. They don’t act normally when they see her.”<sup>88</sup> Wilkerson is also an active philanthropist, founding Together Education Achievement Motivation (T.E.A.M.). As part of his charity, he often returns to his hometown of Linden to lead community service activities, including distributing food on Thanksgiving.<sup>89</sup>

# Conclusion

## Implications

The findings presented in this Muslims for American Progress data demonstrate the myriad ways in which Muslims contribute to New York City's flourishing across all eight areas of study: medicine, STEM, civics and democracy, philanthropy and nonprofit, education, economics, arts and entertainment, and sports.

These findings directly contrast with common mainstream media depictions of Muslims as dangerous, violent, anti-American, and/or apathetic citizens. While 9/11 is perceived as a turning point in American perceptions as well as Muslim communities, media coverage of Muslims has continued to deteriorate over the past 16 years. Our study in New York City, as the earlier 2016 study in Michigan, provides a nuanced and more realistic portrait of regular people.

In 2015, nine out of ten news stories on Muslims and Islamic organizations were related to violence. News coverage on Muslims is highly skewed.<sup>90</sup> As perceptions of Muslims are translated into overarching socio-cultural stereotypes and policy, it is imperative to push back against unfounded claims with rigorous research, detailing the actions, contributions, and engagement strategies of American Muslims. We provide an initial intervention into this scarce field of research, highlighting at once the breadth and depth of Muslims' contributions to New York City.

It is also imperative to note that 9/11 was a formative moment in the lives of Muslim New Yorkers. Across our interviews, Muslim New Yorkers pointed to 9/11 as a dually defining moment in their lives—both of ensuing cultural marginalization and securitization, but also fostering concurrent motivation to engage more deeply with the city through socio-political and cultural organization, advocacy, and artistic expression.<sup>91</sup>

## Recommendations

What do these vast and varied findings of Muslim contributions in New York City tell us, and how can these data be used to facilitate broad social, policy, and organizational changes?

Media makers have a duty to reflect the fullness of American Muslim life, as they do with other communities, to the American public, because their work offers consumers a particular outlook of the world and representation of reality.

## Recommendations for Media Members and Consumers

These findings demonstrate how, and the extent to which, Muslim New Yorkers contribute to the betterment of wider society every day as professionals, humanitarians, and thought leaders. Their full membership in American society benefits the wider public, and therefore, these findings should encourage a cultural shift away from perceptions of fear, mistrust, and hate toward a greater level of respect, understanding, and appreciation of American Muslim communities.

Media makers have a duty to reflect the fullness of American Muslim life, as they do with other communities, to the American public, because their work offers consumers a particular outlook of the world and representation of reality. For example, Muslim leaders and organizations, if they are ever mentioned, remain nameless in most news coverage. This limited coverage is related to an overall lack of knowledge about Muslims and Islam more generally among the American public. Media consumers compare media representations with their own experiences and make judgments about how realistic such representations are. Without coverage of the everyday, commonplace ways that Muslims make positive contributions to society, media consumers are unable to critically engage with the majority-negative coverage of Muslims and Islam. Furthermore, Muslims—not only journalists and critics—should have the opportunity to represent Muslim life in the media.

Negative media portrayal of Islam and Muslims must be balanced by coverage of everyday American Muslims who contribute tremendously to the fabric of New York City and America, writ large. Improving the image of Muslims in the United States requires a strong and persistent collaborative effort between Muslims themselves and media makers. This report provides the basis for such an effort, as well as numerous stories of exceptional American Muslims who can contribute to the wider public—thereby increasing overall media literacy of American Muslims and Islam more generally.

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## Recommendations for Policy Makers

This research should be read as evidence in support of policies that actively encourage Muslim migration, both nationally and to New York City. It is important that policy makers recognize the inclusion of Muslims in decision-making processes at all levels. Muslim New Yorkers work across sectors to better the city of New York, from educating inside and outside of the classroom, nurturing local and global economic enterprises, supporting the most marginalized, and stepping in during moments of disaster, such as Hurricane Sandy, as citizens of, and stakeholders in, the city.

While we have traced and recorded the remarkable contributions made by contemporary Muslim New Yorkers, it is imperative to underscore that no minority group should have to prove its value in this way. Policy makers should take the lead in changing the socio-cultural atmosphere by explicitly recognizing the full human potential of each resident, Muslims included, and not only avoiding but actively resisting legislation seeking to limit or impugn Muslim migration, as has proliferated over the past year. Our research is rigorous evidence against policies that “ban” or limit Muslims from entering the country and city—showing how such limitations could negatively affect medical care, education, artistic expression, social justice, and innumerable other aspects of social life.

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## Recommendations for Advocates and Allies

To our knowledge, this is the second analysis of the dynamic ways in which Muslims contribute to wider American society (following our 2017 MAP Michigan Report). The quantitative figures should be empowering to American Muslim advocates and allies who are working toward equality and justice, because they provide an alternative to anecdotal evidence where little empirical data exists. This report allows organizers and community leaders to help replace fear with facts. An educated citizenry is vital to the health of American democracy, and this report provides the basis to social justice advocates and community leaders to respond to negative media coverage and widespread misperceptions of Muslims in American society. Armed with these findings, we recommend that advocates and allies elevate political discourse by writing letters to the editors of media outlets that portray Muslims in unfair ways, attending town halls and responding to elected officials who propose anti-Muslim policies, and challenging the spread of anti-Muslim fear wherever it persists.

## Recommendations for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Organizations

The goal of capturing and reporting on contributions made by Muslim New Yorkers and their organizations posed significant challenges. This is because many Muslim-run organizations and projects do not adequately or regularly record their good deeds. As such, we recommend that Muslim philanthropic, nonprofit, professional, and other organizations and projects should begin to record day-to-day output, maintain detailed records, and update such files on a regular basis to create annual impact reports. Not only will these reports provide these organizations a simple basis for showing how and the extent to which they contribute to their wider communities, but they also will enable them to apply for grant money to grow their organization and thus their contributions. A sample contribution recording form intended for use by nonprofit organizations appears in Appendix 2.<sup>92</sup>

The types of organizations that could benefit from instituting policies to collect contribution metrics include the following:

- 📍 Student organizations (e.g., Muslim student associations)
- 📍 Community-based organizations (e.g., women’s rights and leadership organizations)
- 📍 Civic engagement events and mobilization campaigns (e.g., Get Out the Vote)
- 📍 Professional organizations (such as medical or engineering societies)
- 📍 Other nonprofit and philanthropic organizations

Mohamed Bahi



A strong and persistent collaborative effort between Muslims themselves and media makers can lead to a change in media coverage of American Muslims and Muslim organizations, thereby increasing overall media literacy of Muslim communities. By dedicating time and effort to recording the everyday contributions that Muslim nonprofit and philanthropic organizations make, these records will provide the long-term basis for such an effort. To implement these changes in recordkeeping, we recommend that organizations designate at least one individual to maintain and update records before each project or event takes place.

## Next Steps

### Future Research

In the future, scholars should replicate this study in other locales in the United States so that we may gain a fuller picture of Muslim contributions across the entire country. Although New York City is known for having the largest Muslim population in the nation, other cities and states are home to significant numbers of American Muslims as well. Additionally, this research has demonstrated that a limited number of American Muslims can have an inordinately large and positive effect on their larger communities. As such, future research should consider the relative influence of Muslims in rural areas compared with urban environments. Another possible area of future inquiry could consider gender parity in licensed professions by comparing male and female representation within a randomly selected sample of the Muslim professionals from the licensing data to make comparisons with the general American public. This research could also be used as a template for measuring the contributions of other religious minorities in the United States whose religious identity is not accurately captured by the U.S. Census. Finally, research, policy, and advocacy on American Muslims should also be aware of and sensitive to intersectional identities and inequalities. We found, for instance, that women in medicine and STEM reported more negative experiences on account of their gender than their religious identities. Furthermore, African American Muslim New Yorkers, in particular, noted the “dual stigma” of their religious and racial identities.<sup>93</sup> Finally, it is imperative for philanthropic organizations and other grant-making institutions to fund this type of research in the future.

# Appendix 1: Methodology

The Muslims for American Progress (MAP) project team conducted quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis between March 2017 and May 2018. Qualitative interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, were conducted with 86 individuals from all eight focus areas: medicine; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; civics and democracy; philanthropy and nonprofit; education; economics; arts and entertainment; and sports. A surname analysis was conducted on data sets acquired from the New York State Department of Education, the New York State Office of the Professions, the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Secondary analysis was conducted on economic and population source material from *The Muslim Green: American Muslim Market Study 2014–15* (DinarStandard and AMCC), the Bureau of Labor Statistics Aggregate Expenditures reports, the Pew Research Center 2011 report *Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism*, the Pew Research Center 2017 report *U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream* and *A Journey through NYC’s Religion Project*. A detailed explanation of the methods used in this study is outlined below.

## Measuring Muslim Contributions

The primary goal of this study was to count, capture, and explore Muslim “contributions” to New York City across eight key fields: medicine; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; civics and democracy; philanthropy and nonprofits; economics; education; arts and entertainment; and sports. But what does it mean to contribute? For this study, we understood contribution to mean any individual or organization giving or adding to a common societal supply, fund, or goal, thereby influencing the city of New York in a positive way. Contributions to each of the eight areas are measured differently; how and why our research team did so is explored in greater depth below. In general, we recorded contributions made in the last five years.

Any organization that claimed to be Muslim-affiliated and any person who self-identified as Muslim was considered to be “Muslim” for the purposes of this study.

## Studying American Muslim Communities

Studies of impact on local communities by ethno-racial groups typically rely on the U.S. Census, which captures demographic data such as household size, household income, occupation, educational attainment, and other socioeconomic variables, all of which may be used to measure the contributions that these communities make. However, using Census data to measure the impacts of religious groups such as Muslims is not possible because there are basic laws prohibiting national census takers from asking mandatory questions concerning a person’s religious beliefs or regarding one’s membership in a religious body.

The Pew Forum’s landmark surveys of American Muslims in 2007, 2011, and 2017, on the other hand, provide many of the aforementioned socioeconomic data and opinion data, but these data are available only at the national and regional levels. Hence, the Pew Forum’s surveys could potentially be used to shed light on Muslim contributions at the national and regional levels, but not at the state or local levels. We found *A Journey through NYC’s Religion*, a journalistic research project headed by Tony Carnes, particularly helpful in providing rich ethnographic context as well as our base numerical count of Muslim New Yorkers.

To overcome limitations on available data at the city level, the MAP project used a variety of innovative techniques to gather in-depth, empirical information about Muslim contributions to the city of New York. Taken together, this mixed-method data collection approach allowed us to discover Muslim contributions in a range of fields that was not otherwise possible given existing data sources. A review of the quantitative and qualitative methods and sources that we drew upon appears below.

## Quantitative Methods

### Muslim Name Approach

To derive estimates for Muslim presence in various professional fields, the MAP project used a Muslim name approach. To begin, our team created a list of more than 43,000 common Muslim names.<sup>96</sup> We then compared the Muslim names with those found on publicly available state-issued professional licenses and listings. The results allowed us to offer an estimate of Muslim presence across these fields in terms of both the total number of individuals and as a percentage of the overall New York City workforce in these fields.

The Muslim names list contained all the nonstandard variations for names transliterated from Arabic and other foreign languages. For example, we included all the variants of the name Mohammad, Muhummad, Mahamad, etc. It also captured common Muslim names across many global Islamic communities, from the Arab world to Eastern Europe and West Africa.

This list, to be sure, does not provide an accurate total of the Muslim population in each professional field. For instance, it captures names of individuals who may not be Muslim yet hold a common Muslim name (most frequently, Arab Christians and Zoroastrians). This approach also misses any individual who identifies as Muslim and does not have a name recorded on our list (for example, converts to Islam or anyone without a traditionally Muslim name). Given these issues, this list likely undercounts the number of Muslims on each list. We believe, however, that it provides a reasonable estimate of the number of Muslims in each licensed profession.

### Cross-Referencing

To get a sense of Muslim contributions across professional fields, our team compared all professional licensure listings in the city against a list of common Muslim names. The Muslim name list was specifically cross-referenced with 81 public listings and active licensing registries for the city of New York.

- Medical professionals (including 67 subtypes)
- Legal professionals
- Engineers
- Teachers
- Accountants
- Architects
- Taxi drivers
- Other professional licenses types

These listings were obtained in 2017 from publicly available sources such as the New York State Education Department, the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, the New York State Office of Court Administration, the New York State Office of the Professions, and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.



## New York City's Muslim Population Estimates

According to our calculations, 768,767 Muslims resided in NYC in 2016. We derived these estimates from the Journey 2015 population estimates (drawing from the Journey Mosque Census, the 2011 Mosque Study, and the 2011 Pew Survey of Muslim Americans).<sup>97</sup> We adjusted for population growth between 2015 and 2016 using United States Census American Community Survey results. Based on these calculations, New York City's Muslims account for 22.3 percent of the nation's total Muslim population.<sup>98</sup>

## Consumer Impact Figures

To derive the consumer impact of Muslim households in NYC, this report relies on data provided by DinarStandard's American Muslim Consumer Consortium 2014 study.<sup>99</sup> We estimate that NYC Muslim households account for 12.7 percent of these national figures of consumer spending. Growth between 2014 and 2016 was accounted for by using national figures provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in each spending category.

## Key Quantitative Findings

MUSLIMS MAKE UP 8.96 PERCENT OF NEW YORKERS.<sup>100</sup> A NEW YORK CITY WITHOUT MUSLIMS WOULD LOSE:

### The creation or sustenance of 251,864 jobs

Number of New York State Muslim-owned businesses: In 2016, Muslims owned an estimated 95,816 small businesses in New York City.<sup>101</sup> According to the 2011 Pew research study *Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism*, 20 percent of American Muslims are self-employed or own a small business. To calculate the estimated number of Muslim-owned businesses in New York City, we looked at the total estimated number of Muslim New Yorkers (768,767),<sup>102</sup> multiplied by the percentage of American Muslims that are over 18 years of age (62.318),<sup>103</sup> to arrive at the number of adults in New York City (479,080), which we then multiplied by the Pew percentage of Muslim self-employed or small business owners (20%), resulting in 95,816 Muslim-owned small businesses.

Number of jobs created: According to the 2016 Small Business Profile of New York State compiled by the U.S. Small Business Administration, 21.6 percent<sup>104</sup> of small businesses in New York State have employees, which means that 20,696 or 21.6 percent of the 95,816 Muslim-owned businesses in the city have employees.

To calculate the estimate of the number of people these 20,696 businesses employ, we multiplied this number (20,696) by the average number of employees a New York State small business employs (8.54), which resulted in 176,744, and then added the remaining self-employed Muslims (75,120), equaling a total of 251,864 jobs created or sustained in 2016.

### The education of 248,821 K-12 students

According to the New York City Department of Education in 2017, the average class size of NYC classrooms is 26.2.<sup>105</sup> We multiplied this average class size (26.2) by 9,497<sup>106</sup> (the total number of Muslim teachers in NYC in 2017), resulting in 248,821 K-12 students taught by Muslim teachers in NYC. This is a conservative estimate and does not take into account middle and high school teachers that teach multiple classes per day.

### Medical care for 5,204,384 patients

As of 2017, there are 3,158 Muslim licensed medical doctors, making up 9.7 percent<sup>107</sup> of all licensed doctors in NYC. According to a 2016 survey conducted by the Physicians Foundation, physicians see an average of 20.6 patients per day; according to a 2012 survey conducted by the Physicians Foundation, doctors see patients on average three times per year.

We thus multiplied the average number of patients per day (20.6) by the number of Muslim doctors in NYC (3,158), then multiplied this total by the number of working days (240) and divided it by the average number of visits per patient (3), resulting in 5,204,384 patients seen by Muslim doctors in NYC in 2016.

**1,228,944 dental visits**

We retrieved data on patient visits by dentists’ gender and age groups.<sup>108</sup> Since we did not have the breakdown in each group, we took the average number of visits across all, which is 47.5 per week.

We then calculated the total number of visits by Muslim dentists by multiplying average number of visits (47.5) by the number of Muslim dentists (539),<sup>109</sup> resulting in 25,603 visits per week. Finally, we multiplied visits per week (25,603) by working weeks per year (48), equaling 1,228,944 dental visits by Muslim doctors in a year.

**9,599,443 prescriptions**

As of 2017, there are 878 Muslim pharmacists in New York City.<sup>110</sup> This figure was calculated by dividing the total number of prescriptions in New York State (285,676,376) by the total number of pharmacists in New York State (26,129)<sup>111</sup> and then multiplying the resulting average number of prescriptions by the total number of Muslim pharmacists in New York City (878).

**\$608 million in charitable giving**

In 2016, 3.6 percent<sup>112</sup> of Muslim consumer spending went to charity.

**Close to \$17 billion in spending**

In 2016 alone, Muslim consumer spending totaled \$16,977,755,21.<sup>113</sup>

**Over 40.7 million taxi trips**

According to the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, registered taxis provide an average of 400,294 trips per day.<sup>114</sup> We multiplied average daily trips by working days (260, as taxi drivers do not have paid time off). We then multiplied this figure by the percentage of Muslim taxi drivers (39.2 percent),<sup>115</sup> for a total of 40,797,964 taxi trips provided by Muslim drivers in 2016.

**Qualitative Methods**

MAP Project researchers were individually assigned to investigate each of the eight topic areas: medicine; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; politics; philanthropy and nonprofits; economics; education; arts and entertainment; and sports. Because each professional field contains a unique set of actors and social circumstances, data collection methods were adapted to meet the needs of each area, and our team employed non-random, snowball sampling techniques.

Research in each topic area began with in-depth interviews with community leaders who acted as key informants, connecting us with other relevant professionals and providing insight about what positive contributions look like in their field. In sum, our team conducted 86 formal interviews as well as countless email exchanges and phone calls.

**Table 4. Interviews**

Profession	Number of Interviewees
Medicine	12
STEM	10
Civics and democracy	18
Philanthropy and nonprofit	9
Economic development	16
Education	9
Arts and entertainment	11
Sports	1

The snowball sampling technique allowed our team to investigate contributions in each field with a grounded, bottom-up approach. For example, we worked with interview subjects in order to estimate the philanthropy metrics of Muslim nonprofit organizations.

As with most qualitative studies, the findings yielded here are neither exhaustive nor representative; instead, these findings offer a window into some of the most important and unique forms of contributions being made by New York City’s Muslims to their larger communities. Fieldwork was completed in just under one year. As such, our research merely scratches the surface in terms of the depth of contribution; it is likely that this report did not cover the works of other major contributors. A future study may consider alternative sampling methodologies to reach a wider set of participants. Furthermore, because this study focused primarily on contributions made within the last five years, it does not capture historical patterns of contribution. Because of the greater density of Muslims in urban areas, the contributions of Muslims in rural areas were not a primary focus of this report and should be considered in the future. Finally, we focused on overall contributions of Muslims to New York City. Additional research could delve into subsets of the Muslim populations, thinking through the intersections of religion and gender identity, race, ethnicity, and/or economic status.

# Appendix 2: Sample Contribution Recording Form

This template is recommended for use among nonprofit and philanthropic organizations in every event or project they host. It can and should be amended to match the type of effort being recorded. Remember to save any pictures or videos of the event.

<b>Organization Name:</b>
<b>Project:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Time:</b>
<b>Place:</b>
<b>Description of event/program:</b>
<b>Description of goals:</b>
<b>Contributions (select those that apply)</b>
<b>Number of volunteers:</b>
<b>Number of items donated (specify units and estimated in-kind monetary value):</b>
<b>Number of items collected/picked up:</b>
<b>Number of items created/built/packaged:</b>
<b>Number of dollars raised:</b>
<b>Number of people/families served:</b>
<b>Description of memorable moments or quotes:</b>

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- [91] This has been seen not only in New York City but across the United States. Anny Bakalin Anny and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Lori Peek, "Reactions and Response: Muslim Students' Experiences on New York City Campuses post 9/11," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2003).
- [92] Draft form available here: [www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Appendix-3\\_-\\_Sample-Recording-Form.pdf](http://www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Appendix-3_-_Sample-Recording-Form.pdf).
- [93] Youssef Chouhoud, "American Muslim Poll 2017: Discrimination Against Intersections," Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, 2017.
- [94] It is worth acknowledging feedback from Muslim stakeholders in our previous MAP Michigan Project, who critiqued the framing of this study around "contributions" because it necessarily focuses on people and organizations who have resources to give, thus overlooking many disadvantaged Muslim New Yorkers who are proud American citizens and neighbors, yet have little to measurably contribute. Taking this valuable critique into account, our team purposively sought interviewees across socioeconomic strata.
- [95] For a brief history of the religion question and the U.S. Census, refer to: <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/01/26/a-brief-history-of-religion-and-the-u-s-census/>.
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- [97] Tony Carnes, "How Many Muslims in NYC?," *A Journey Through NYC Religion*, July 13, 2015, <http://www.nycreligion.info/muslims-nyc-area/>.
- [98] According to Pew 2017 (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/03/new-estimates-show-u-s-muslim-population-continues-to-grow/>), the total Muslim population in the U.S. is 3.45 million. 768,767 is 22.3 percent of 3.45 million.
- [99] DinarStandard served as advisors to the economics section of the MAP Michigan project, upon which we modeled the economic section of this MAP NYC project; members of our team worked with their staff to create the estimates of Michigan household spending provided in the 2017 MAP Michigan Report. For executive summary of DinarStandard's 2014 AMCC report, visit <http://americanmuslimconsumer.com>.
- [100] We derived these estimates from the Journey 2015 population estimates (drawing from the Journey mosque census, the 2011 Mosque Study, and the 2011 Pew Survey of Muslim Americans). We adjusted for population growth between 2015 and 2016 using United States Census American Community Survey results. Based on these calculations, New York City's Muslims account for 22.3 percent of the nation's total Muslim population and 8.96 percent of New York City's population in 2016.
- [101] This calculation is based on secondary analysis from Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2011), <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/Muslim%20American%20Report%2010-02-12%20fix.pdf>, and the Small Business Association Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Profile: New York* (Washington, DC: Small Business Administration, 2015), <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/NY.pdf>.
- [102] We derived these estimates from the Journey 2015 population estimates (Tony Carnes, "How Many Muslims in NYC?"). This Journey population estimate draws from the Journey mosque census, the 2011 Mosque Study and the 2011 Pew Survey of Muslim Americans. We adjusted for population growth between 2015 and 2016 using United States Census American Community Survey results. Based on these calculations, New York City's Muslims account for 22.3 percent of the nation's total Muslim population and 8.96 percent of New York City's population in 2016.
- [103] This percentage was derived from the Pew Research Center, *U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream* (2017), <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/07/25171611/U.S.-MUSLIMS-FULL-REPORT.pdf>.
- [104] Small Business Association Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Profile: New York*.
- [105] New York City Department of Education, "New York City Class Size 2017-Preliminary."

[106] This number was derived from a surname analysis of a registry of all currently licensed teachers in New York City provided by the New York State Department of Education.

[107] These percentages were derived from a surname analysis of a registry of all currently licensed medical professionals in New York City provided by the New York State Office of the Professions; average doctor-patient data provided from the Physicians Foundation, *2016 Survey of America's Physicians: Practice, Patterns and Perspectives* (2016) and Physicians Foundation, *A Survey of America's Physicians: Practice Patterns and Perspectives* (2012), <https://physiciansfoundation.org/research-insights/a-survey-of-americas-physicians-practice-patterns-and-perspectives/>.

[108] These figures come from the American Dental Association, *State-Level Dentist Workforce Projections Data and Methods* (2017), <http://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Science%20and%20Research/HPI/Files/HPIstateprojections.pdf>.

[109] This number was derived from a surname analysis of a registry of all currently licensed dentists in New York City provided by the New York State Office of the Professions.

[110] This number was calculated using a surname analysis of a registry of all currently licensed pharmacists in New York City provided by the New York State Office of the Professions.

[111] These figures come from the Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation, "Total Number of Retail Prescription Drugs Filled at Pharmacies," 2018, <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/state-indicator/total-retail-rx-drugs/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colld%22:%22Location%22:%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>.

[112] These figures come from consumer impact data among New York Muslim households and from interviews with six Muslim philanthropic organizations. We calculated consumer impact with data from multiple sources, including DinarStandard, *The Muslim Green: American Muslim Market Study 2014-15* (New York: Dinar Standard, 2015), <http://www.dinarstandard.com/american-market-2014/>; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditures - 2016* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016), <https://www.bls.gov/cex/2016/aggregate/age.pdf>; and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditures 2016-Northeast* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016), <https://www.bls.gov/cex/2016/msas/northeast.pdf>. According to Dinar Standard (2015), in 2014 there were 5.7 million Muslims and 1.7 million Muslim households in the U.S., with an average of 3.5 Muslims per household. We assumed Muslim growth rate to be the same as the national growth rate. And we adjusted for a 17 percent higher spending rate on average in NYC than national average, using data from *Consumer Expenditures 2016-Northeast*.

[113] These figures come from consumer impact data among New York Muslim households and from interviews with six Muslim philanthropic organizations. We calculated consumer impact with data from multiple sources, including DinarStandard, *The Muslim Green*; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditures - 2016*; and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditures 2016-Northeast*.

[114] New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, "2016 TLC Factbook."

[115] This percentage was calculated using a surname analysis of registered taxi drivers, from data provided by the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission.

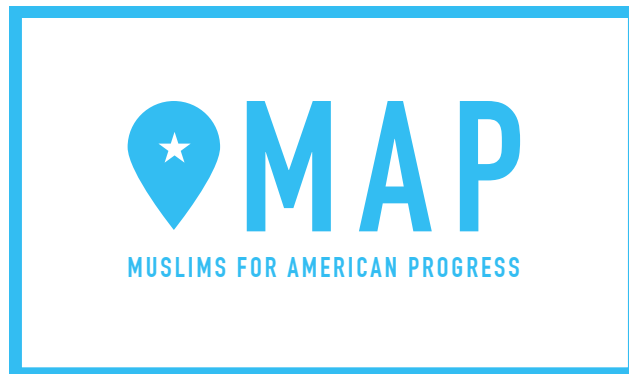
[116] Snowball sampling refers to a qualitative research technique wherein researchers create a study sample through "referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Patrick Biernacki and Dan Waldorf, "Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling," *Sociological Methods & Research* 10, no. 2 [1981]:141-63). This method is useful when random sampling techniques are not possible or research subjects are hard to locate.





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