

ASSESSING THE NEED

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM



Working with
Disadvantaged Muslim
Immigrant Families
and Communities



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From Conceptualization
... to Utilization

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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Executive Summary

There are an estimated four million immigrant and second generation Muslims in the United States. Of these, at least 500,000 are living lives characterized by poverty or the risk of poverty.¹

The vast majority are recent immigrants (arriving in the past 10 years) and their families. Their greatest challenges are economic – finding jobs that pay living wages, affordable housing and health care – and family stability – keeping families safe, together and strong in the context of poverty, language barriers and cultural differences.

Muslim immigrants come from a wide range of countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and speak many languages. Despite different cultures and languages, they share Islamic values and traditions, especially the fundamental importance of the family, modesty, generosity and faith in God. Islam calls on believers to stand up for justice, confront oppression and serve humanity. Being humble, while acting according to the highest principles of Islam, is the spiritual basis for caring for others, known as *dawah*.

In addition to a spiritual force, Islam is a way of life for deeply religious as well as more secular Muslims. Muslim values often place community members at odds with values and practices of mainstream American culture, like sexual freedom, individualism, and the use of alcohol and drugs. These differences make raising children in the United States a special challenge. Many Muslim women interpret the Islamic requirement for modesty to include covering their hair; and some women also cover their chest and face. These modes of dress are considered oppressive by many in the West, a cultural interpretation that can create barriers and lead to undignified treatment of Muslim women by some members of mainstream American culture.

Understanding Islamic values

To have a positive impact, service providers working with poor and low-income Muslim families need to understand and respect Islamic values. Because these skills are mainly lacking in the majority of American institutions, low-income Muslim families are under-served. A priority for funding, therefore, is enhancing the Islamic cultural capacity of mainstream service providers lacking these skills. Particularly important are agencies that offer economic self-sufficiency, community development and neighborhood development programs; these are programs low-income Muslims need to access.

Language creates another barrier to services. Non-profit and government agencies seeking to work effectively with immigrant Muslim clients need culturally competent, bilingual staff. However, the greatest program impact will emerge from the development of structured relationships and partnerships between these agencies and agencies that already have cultural and linguistic capacities.

Despite these service gaps, immigrant Muslim families do have access to some institutions that are culturally and linguistically competent.

These include:

1. mosques and affiliated Islamic centers; and
2. non-profit organizations serving immigrants and refugees.

The role of mosques

There have been significant increases in the number of mosques and Islamic schools in the US over the past 10 years. They play a greater role in the lives of immigrants than in earlier eras, when secular ethnic organizations were of primary importance. Religious services and religious education are their primary activities. Most mosques also provide some type of family crisis intervention and emergency cash, food and clothing assistance for the poor. Structured programs aimed at the long-range needs of low-income and poor families are in their nascent stages at Islamic institutions, if they exist at all. Where they are needed most, they are least likely to be offered. Faith-based Muslim organizations independent of mosques are practically non-existent.

Donating money to assist the poor – *zaqat* – is a pillar of Islam and therefore mandatory for Muslims. Those who have the capacity are also expected to perform *sadaqah* – acts of virtue that benefit the community. *Sadaqah* has been institutionalized largely as a form of charitable giving. *Zaqat* and *sadaqah* funds are usually donated to mosques, but must be augmented by external support to move mosque programming beyond emergency charity. Since the tragic events of September 11th, U.S. government activities have caused Muslims to fear donating, concerned over eventual arrest or deportation. As a result, *zaqat* and *sadaqah* funds at mosques have decreased substantially. Any surplus funds available to mosques have been used for civil rights education, legal advocacy, community defense and relationship building.

Supporting families at risk

Building the institutional capacity of mosques and Islamic centers to provide services to low-income families is critically important at this time. Funders should support programs that center on family economic self-sufficiency, such as English as a second language courses, computer literacy, and job

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skills training and placement. The necessary support programs, like day care and transportation, should be incorporated into program structures. And support should be provided for faith-based initiatives of mosques and Islamic centers to form co-located partnerships with recognized non-profit agencies having proven cultural, language and service capacities. These initiatives should center on family strengthening, including counseling, crisis intervention, case management, domestic violence prevention, life skills and services for the elderly.

Innovative youth development programs that keep Islamic values at the center, but also provide Muslim youth with a place in American society, should also be supported. These programs are probably most effective as community and neighborhood development programs. As collaborations between mosques and other local partners, the networks of resources already developed by established agencies can be leveraged to bring low-income Muslims into the web of community life. The development of independent Islamic faith-based agencies should also be encouraged for youth and community development work.

Community-based ethnic organizations and refugee resettlement agencies have carried the load of serving immigrant Muslim families for the past 20 years, especially in the context of the scarcity of social services provided by mosques and Islamic centers, the dearth of independent Islamic faith-based organizations and the barriers in mainstream institutions. Over the years, their client base has skyrocketed as immigration from Muslim countries

and the number of Muslim refugees has increased dramatically. None of these agencies serves Muslims exclusively, but all have hired culturally and linguistically appropriate staff to work with Muslim families. In the process, they have developed a skilled and experienced cadre of Muslim social service workers, who are primarily women.

Overall, these agencies have been most effective in family strengthening, domestic violence prevention, emergency shelter, immigration, citizenship and English as a second language programs. They also have some capacity with programs for seniors and youth. These organizations are ideal partners for Islamic faith-based initiatives, since they have the staffing, experience and networks of resources needed for the greatest impact. Taken together, their skilled staff can serve the wide range of language and cultural groups that exist within the Muslim immigrant community. These human resources must be maintained and developed. To do this, these agencies should be supported in their work with low-income Muslims, whether as partners in faith-based initiatives or independent of them. These agencies are also the best resource for developing the cultural capacities of existing agencies that lack them, and as training theaters for the bicultural, bilingual staff they will need to hire. As with mosques and Islamic centers, their capacities to offer the family economic self-sufficiency programs so sorely needed in the Muslim community, should be enhanced.

Leveraging assets

The Muslim community in the United States has many assets that can be leveraged and many special challenges that need to be met. Its Islamic faith and values, especially around family, community and *dawah*, are a source of strength in difficult times. These values should be nourished. The community is multi-ethnic and multi-racial, a foundation that can be harnessed for positive social change. The community has a large number of highly educated, economically well-off members, especially in the medical professions. Communities need strategies that structure the use of these human and capital resources, and foster volunteerism through the spirit of *dawah*.

At the same time, Muslims in the United States face substantial discrimination in the American public sphere. Part of this discrimination comes from a misunderstanding of Islam and requires public education to address it. Another part comes from federal government actions that target Muslims and Muslim institutions, such as house and work visits by the FBI, the closure of Muslim charities and a special registration program that requires male non-citizens from predominantly Muslim countries to submit to interviews, fingerprinting and photographs.

These actions alienate the Muslim population at a time when its integration is most needed. As a result of the special registration program, for example, more than 13,000 men have been placed in removal proceedings for technical visa violations; and some have already been removed. The separation of families from breadwinners that results from this program is bound to have a negative economic and psychological impact on Muslim families.² As the barriers to Muslim access to the institutions of American society increase, greater efforts must be undertaken to address them. These efforts should focus on building the capacities of Islamic faith-based institutions, as well as building the capacities of secular agencies, to work with Muslims.

Recommended approaches

Priorities that promise the greatest potential for positive impact on the well being of immigrant Muslim children, adults, families and communities include:

1. Support the development and implementation of family economic self-sufficiency programs that concentrate on skill building (such as, English as a second language, job training, computer literacy) and the creation of businesses and jobs at mosques, Islamic centers or independent Muslim agencies. Ensure that the necessary support programs will be in place (like day care and transportation, business incubators).
2. Support the development and implementation of Islamic faith-based initiatives for family strengthening programs and community and neighborhood development that create partnerships between mosques, Islamic centers or independent Muslim agencies, and appropriate external agencies with the program experience and cultural and linguistic capacities.
3. Support the implementation and expansion of family economic self-sufficiency and family strengthening programs offered by secular, non-profit agencies that have proven linguistic and cultural competence for working in immigrant Muslim communities.
4. Support the development and implementation of programs whose objective is to enhance the cultural and language capacities of mainstream agencies working in family economic self-sufficiency, family strengthening and community and neighborhood development, but who lack the capacity to serve immigrant Muslim clients.
5. Support efforts that build relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim agencies working for community and neighborhood development. Special attention should be directed toward activities that are intergenerational, multiracial and multicultural, and that meet the special

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needs of youth and the elderly. Civil Rights, anti-discrimination advocacy and health programs offer a great opportunity to cross these various lines.

6. Support efforts that build formal structures for community and neighborhood volunteerism and leverage strengths existing in the immigrant Muslim community. These strengths include the multi-ethnic, multiracial character of the Muslim community, large numbers of highly educated and economically well-off Muslims, a large number of Muslims in the medical profession, and the faith-based spirit of *dawah*.
7. Support work that studies the best way to raise, increase and channel *zakaat* and *sadaqah* in the United States context. Use new knowledge to develop an action plan to build indigenous funding sources.
8. Support the development of advocacy and leadership skills among Muslim youth.

Preface

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the United States. The growth of Islam is driven by several factors, particularly migration. However, there is little known about the role of Muslim and non-Muslim organizations in aiding Muslims incorporate into the United States. Even less is known about strategies that support Muslim families who are poor or economically at-risk. In a post-September 11th context, research is needed to increase our understanding of the assets and needs of the Muslim community. The Annie E. Casey Foundation has commissioned this report in an effort to increase awareness of the family strengthening and community work within the Muslim community.

To that end, this report addresses the following:

- an assessment of needs and assets within immigrant communities;
- an assessment of the current strengths and weaknesses of institutions in meeting these needs and leveraging these assets; and
- promising strategies and priorities for supporting programs in Muslim communities.

It is our hope that the work conducted by Dr. Louise Cainkar will offer new insights for religious leaders, practitioners, funders and policy-makers that seek to serve Muslim immigrants, their children, family and communities.

Background

MUSLIMS AND MOSQUES IN AMERICA

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States, fueled by migration, birth and religious conversion. The Muslim population in the United States grows at a rate of six percent per year, compared to .9 percent for the U.S. population overall. Recent studies estimate there are six to seven million Muslims in the United States, and the majority tend to settle in mid-sized to large American cities.³

Some 60 to 70 percent of Muslims are immigrants and the children and grandchildren of immigrants – mainly Arabs, Asians, Africans and Eastern Europeans.⁴ The remaining 30 to 40 percent are African Americans, who comprise the largest single group of Muslims in America by ethnicity, and converts from a range of ethnic backgrounds. This study concerns immigrant Muslims and their families.

Immigrant Muslims who are low-income may be conservatively estimated at 15 percent of the immigrant-origins Muslim population in the United States, or between 500,000 and one million people. In all likelihood, the proportion of immigrant-origin Muslim families who are poor will increase over time, since their migration is changing from being driven largely by the educated and skilled, towards being dominated by refugees and less well-off relatives of earlier immigrants.

The main countries of origin of immigrant Muslims in the United States include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Chechnya, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey and former Yugoslavia (especially Bosnia). Muslims who are poor and at-risk come from all of these countries, although migration from some countries includes more economically at-risk families than others.

MOSQUES IN AMERICA

There were an estimated 1,200 mosques in the United States in 2000, according to the Council on American Islamic Relations report, *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait*.⁵ This figure includes large, medium-sized and small institutions, as well as a few Islamic associations that hold prayer sessions and other activities, but don't have permanent facilities. Between 1994 and 2000, there was a 24 percent increase in the number of American mosques, with many of the newer mosques more visibly Islamic in architecture than earlier structures.⁶ The vast majority of American mosques are multi-ethnic, which helps bring about a pan-Islamic identity. Nonetheless, it is common for mosques to have one or two dominant ethnic groups reflecting local demographics.

Mosques are organized differently than the majority of Christian institutions. Islam is a non-hierarchical religion, so there are no lateral positions similar to pastor or bishop, and each mosque is an independent institution. Religious and administrative roles are separate and distinct in most mosques. It is common for a mosque to have an imam who conducts prayers, counsels members of the congregation, and is responsible for spiritual matters, together with a staff member who manages mosque administrative matters. Larger mosques have an executive director, who may also be in charge of an affiliated Islamic center and its programs, reporting to a board of directors.

The Council of American Islamic Relations' study found that 55 percent of mosques have no full-time staff and only 10 percent have more than two paid staff. About 20 percent of mosques have affiliated full-time schools, with one in four elementary schools. While the study reports that mosque attendance increased by 75 percent since 1995, the majority of U.S. Muslims – more than 65 percent according to the report – are not affiliated with a mosque.

Muslims may fulfill their religious duty to prayer in any environment that meets standards of cleanliness, but mosques provide congregation members with a sense of community, infused with spirituality and faith in God. They offer immigrants a feeling of continuity, stability and strength. Immigrant Muslims affiliated with mosques are more likely to assert their civil rights than immigrant Muslims who do not belong to a mosque, according to a study of Arab Muslims in greater Detroit by researcher Amaney Jamal.⁷

In the social service arena, mosques are in their infancy and largely unable to meet local demands. According to the Council for American Islamic Relations and the American Muslim Council, fewer than one-third of mosques offer community service programs. When they do, the programs tend to be counseling, day care, tutoring, food pantries or substance abuse programs.⁸ As Islam grows in America, demands increase for the development of mosque programs that meet the needs of women, youth and families.

LOW-INCOME AND AT-RISK MUSLIMS

According to interviews with representatives of mosques, Islamic centers and non-profit organizations working with Muslims, people who are poor within immigrant Muslim communities are predominantly recent immigrants and their families. Most came to the United States within the last 10 years from a range of countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and from former Yugoslavia. Some came as refugees and family reunification migrants. Some are undocumented immigrants, although Muslims are undocumented at much lower rates than Christians migrants. They speak a wide range of languages and cross a cultural spectrum. Within this group of disadvantaged Muslims, the elderly are particularly vulnerable as they lack language skills, independent resources and are isolated from services.

About 20 percent of Muslims who are disadvantaged are the families of US-born children of Muslim immigrants.⁹ People who are poor and at-risk live in urban and suburban areas and, depending on the mosque, may be a minority or a majority of people who attend.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Data for this study were collected from 70 structured, open-ended interviews conducted in metropolitan Chicago and Detroit between January and May 2003. These included interviews with

- 10 mosque leaders (imams or executive directors),
- 26 representatives of non-profit organizations working with low-income Muslim families, and
- 34 low-income Muslim individuals.

Most interviews were conducted in metropolitan Chicago, which has a large and diverse Muslim community estimated at 400,000 and made up of many ethnic groups. Interviews included all of the ethnic groups, as well as urban, suburban and outlying geographic areas. Because of the size and diversity of its Muslim population, metropolitan Chicago should be representative of large American cities with sizable immigrant populations.

Interviews were also conducted in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn, which has the largest concentration of Arab Muslims in the United States. This area was selected as a comparison site, to see if findings could be generalized to other urban settings, as well as to examine the impact of local context. Study findings from Dearborn were quite similar to Chicago and are mentioned in the remainder of the paper only when they differ.

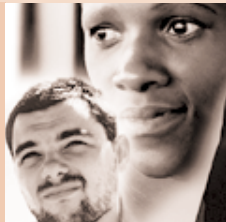
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PART ONE: THE CURRENT SITUATION

Current Programs

Critical Needs of Low-Income, Poor and At-Risk Muslim Immigrant Families





The Current Situation

Current Programs

Muslim families that are poor and economically at risk are an under-served population in the United States. This is partly because they face substantial cultural and language barriers when trying to access services from many American institutions. Since the attacks of September 11th, these barriers have increased according to Muslims and agencies working with them. Both groups describe service institutions lacking knowledge and understanding of Muslim language and culture, as well as persistent discrimination. A recent report by the Council on American Islamic Relations shows an increase in anti-Muslim violence, discrimination and harassment in 2002.¹⁰

Fear and paranoia have increased among Muslims in the United States, and many Muslims report reluctance to visit government agencies or use government services. These fears result from physical attacks some Muslims experienced across the United States, and from actions of the federal government, including arresting thousands of Muslims without charge; requiring more than 100,000 Muslims to undergo special registration; and issuing removal orders for more than 13,000 men from predominantly Muslim countries.¹¹

Social service workers and mosque leaders report increased psychological trauma and mental health issues among Bosnian and Iraqi refugees in the

post 9/11 environment. Job discrimination and joblessness are also reported to have increased since 9/11. In concentrated Dearborn, Michigan, where these types of shifts are easier to monitor, social service workers report that once valued and in-demand employees, many Arab Muslims now have difficulty finding work.

RESETTLEMENT ORGANIZATIONS, MOSQUE AND ISLAMIC CENTER COMMUNITY SERVICES

While many mainstream institutions are inhospitable to Muslims, Muslims do have access to institutions that are culturally sensitive and where language is not a barrier. These institutions are of two types:

1. community-based ethnic and refugee resettlement organizations, and
2. mosques and their affiliated Islamic community centers and schools.

Muslim faith-based institutions independent of mosques are rare in immigrant Muslim communities. In Chicago and Dearborn, only one agency exists that isn't associated with a mosque. This is due to an interaction of historical and socio-political factors; including:

- the more recent arrival of large numbers of immigrant Muslims,

- increasing religiosity within established Muslim communities,
- the difficulties facing some funding agencies when considering supporting Islamic organizations,
- cultural barriers to providing grants to faith-based agencies, and
- discrimination against Islam and Muslims.

Two refugee resettlement agencies that identified themselves as faith-based Christian organizations also had Muslim or Middle Eastern staff. These are *Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries* and *World Relief*. Because of this staffing, these community-based ethnic organizations and refugee resettlement organizations provide culturally appropriate services free of language barriers. Except for the refugee resettlement agencies, these agencies also serve clients regardless of their immigration status, unlike many mainstream agencies. But their overall program capacity is below a level required to meet the needs that exist in the Muslim community.

Mosques and affiliated Islamic community centers play a greater role in the life of Muslim immigrants than in earlier times, when secular, ethnic institutions were of primary importance. This change is due to global shifts towards increasing devoutness among Muslims, and increasing migration of Muslims to the United States. The primary role of mosques is religious and spiritual. The delivery of social services by Islamic faith-based institutions is still in its infancy.

SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED MUSLIMS

The greatest growth among Muslim organizations is in the area of civil rights, anti-discrimination and professional associations. Mosques and their affiliated centers provide some services to families that are poor and at risk, but these are limited and often informal and ad hoc, dependent on personal requests of the imam for assistance. The main focus

of these services is charity – cash assistance, and food and clothing donations. This charitable aid reflects the Islamic principles of *zakaat* – offering a share (normally 2.5 percent) of a person’s profit or savings, for care of people who are poor, or are widows and orphans – and *sadaqah*. *Zakaat* is a pillar of Islam and is therefore mandatory for Muslims. Most Muslims offer *zakaat* during Ramadan. *Sadaqah* is acts of virtue that benefit the community, but has been institutionalized in large part to mean charitable donations.

Mosques and their affiliated centers provide some services to families that are poor and at risk, but these are limited and often informal and ad hoc, dependent on personal requests of the Imam for assistance. The main focus of these services is charity – cash assistance, and food and clothing donations.

Mosques in this study typically have mixed income congregations. Low-income members range from 20 percent of worshippers (mostly suburban mosques) to 55 to 75 percent of worshippers (some Chicago mosques). Most of the poor are immigrant families from Africa, Asia, Bosnia and the Middle East. All but two of the mosques included in this study offer daily prayer services and extended Friday (*Jumma*) prayer services; the others offer prayer services only once or twice a week. These latter mosques are also those with the highest proportion of low-income worshippers. At the time of the interviews, the mosque serving Iraqi Shia refugees in metro Chicago was facing cancellation of its lease and the part-time imam, who lives in Section 8 housing 90 miles away, was searching for new premises. Storefront mosques such as these, using leased space, are not uncommon in low-income neighborhoods. At the opposite end of the spectrum are large, elegant mosques with attached multi-use community centers.

Eighty percent of mosque officials (imams and executive directors) interviewed for this study define the mosque’s role as community-oriented in addition to spiritual. The other 20 percent say they would like to have a community-oriented role but lack the funds to implement one. Nonetheless, all of the mosques offer some kind of community service (see Table 1). In the most limited case, these are community Iftar dinners (fast breaking during Ramadan) and funeral services. Some mosques and Islamic centers offer a range of programs, although most of them concern religious education. In fact, religious education and weekend religious programs for children, in addition to weddings and funerals, are the most common form of community service performed by mosques and Islamic centers. These findings match those of the Council of American

Islamic Relations’ *The Mosque in America* report, as well as the American Muslim Council’s *Faith-Based Initiative Study*.¹²

Beyond religious education, about half of the mosques studied offer marital counseling, crisis intervention and/or domestic dispute mediation, usually conducted by the mosque’s religious leader. These services are offered in the spirit of Islamic belief in the sanctity of the family.

The programs mentioned above are not specifically geared to low-income congregation members; participants in these programs come from a cross section of socio-economic statuses and ethnic backgrounds within the congregation. Each mosque official interviewed wants to offer more programs and services for the community, but

TABLE 1: Community services offered by Chicago area mosques, in order of frequency

(Number of mosques = 10. Types of service = 19.)

Wedding and Funeral Services	10
Cash Support Program for Needy Families	9
Weekend Religion Schools	9
Eid festivals (Islamic feasts)	7
Adult Religious Education Classes	5
Marital and Family Counseling, Crisis Intervention, and Domestic Dispute Mediation	5
Full-Time Elementary School	3
Full-Time High School	3
Adult Education: Computer Literacy (1), ESL and ACT/SAT Preparation (1)	2
Summer School	2
Interfaith Outreach and Events	2
After School Program for Children; Women’s Weekly Islamic Classes; Health Screenings; Food Pantry; Social Gatherings; Radio Program about Social Services; Cemetery; Bazaar; Newsletter; Library	1 each

acknowledges that doing this requires funding and capacity building. All mosques report diminished funds, including *zakaat*, because of federal government actions against some Islamic charities following September 11th. Mosques and Islamic centers also have diverted funds that could go for community development towards community self defense since 9/11, largely in response to actions of federal government agencies.

MOSQUE AND ISLAMIC CENTER PROGRAMS FOR POOR AND AT-RISK MUSLIMS

Mosque and Islamic center programs for poor and at-risk members of Muslim immigrant communities are quite limited, but not for lack of interest in offering such programs. Particularly striking is the fact that where programs are most needed, they are least likely to be available. All but one mosque have an emergency cash assistance program, but accessing it requires a personal appeal to the imam or sheikh by the person in need or a mediating party. The religious leader then draws from funds kept for this purpose, or calls on community members for assistance.

Only 20 percent of the mosques studied offer a range of programs tailored to sectors of their religious community that are poor and at risk.

For example, one mosque offers:

- resettlement assistance, counseling and mediation,
- Project Hope – a financial assistance program for widows, divorcees and domestic violence survivors,
- parenting classes,
- translation and interpretation services for people in hospital, and
- fund raisers for people needing assistance with medical expenses.

Another mosque offers:

- a food pantry,
- health screening,
- English as a second language,
- computer literacy classes, and
- fundraisers for people needing assistance with medical expenses.

Using only internal human resources, a third mosque offers:

- family counseling with the imam, and
- free medical care provided by the institution's executive director, who is a licensed medical doctor.

One mosque considers its computer literacy program a program for low-income members, since most of its members are poor.

According to mosque officials, these programs and services are not used by all community members who need them. Some say they need to conduct more outreach and home visits to encourage people to use these services, while others say they are already at capacity and could not meet the level of need that currently exists in their community. People less likely to access services are non English-speaking, homebound, elderly and those with transportation issues. In fact, transportation comes up numerous times as a barrier to accessing services. Mosque congregations are often quite geographically spread out the opposite of the neighborhood church.

COMMUNITY-BASED ETHNIC AND REFUGEE AGENCY PROGRAMS FOR POOR AND AT-RISK MUSLIMS

Given the shortage of faith-based programs, Muslims seeking services, resources and support turn to secular social service and community-based agencies to meet these needs – or the needs go unmet. By word-of-mouth, they learn which agencies have the cultural and language capacities to offer services. Many of them are ethnic, community-based agencies.

Although none of the agencies interviewed for this study serve Muslims exclusively, Muslims constitute between 40 and 95 percent of their client base. Of these, immigrants and refugees make up 85 to 100 percent of their clientele, with the remainder being children of immigrants. Immigrants arriving in the last 10 years form the bulk of low-income clients.

Two faith-based Christian agencies serving refugees have client bases comprised of more than 50 percent Muslim. All of these agencies have trained staff who are culturally competent and meet the language needs of their clients.

Muslims may speak any of a large range of languages since they come from a wide range of countries. Mainstream institutions would face staffing difficulties with this breadth of languages, pointing to the importance of building relationships and partnerships between secular institutions with cultural and language capacities, mosques and mainstream institutions with successful programs, but limited capacity to serve Muslim clients. Because of their experience and knowledge, these secular non-profit agencies are also ideal training theatres for future professional staff at both faith-based and mainstream agencies.

TABLE 2: Programs offered by community-based ethnic and refugee agencies in Chicago, in order of frequency

(Number of agencies = 12. Types of service = 34.)

Counseling and Case Management	8	Parenting	3
English as a Second Language	8	Family Adjustment Programs	2
Public Benefits Counseling	8	Mental Health Group Therapy	2
Immigration and Citizenship Services	7	Children and Family Outreach	2
Seniors/Elderly Programs	6	Mental Health Screening	2
Youth Programs	6	Foster Parent Program	2
Translation Services	5	Batterers Program	2
Domestic Violence and Shelter	5	24 Hour Crisis Line	2
Transitional Housing (linked to Domestic Violence services)	4	Legal Advocacy	2
Computer Literacy Classes	4	Medical Case Management, Health and Nutrition Counseling, Driving Classes, Primary Health Care, Child Care, Rent Assistance, Transportation Assistance, Summer School, Legal Clinic, Art Therapy, Child Support Assistance	1
Tutoring	4		
Resettlement Assistance	4		
Job Counseling and Job Readiness	3		
Job Skills Training	3		

The secular non-profit agencies serving Muslims offer a wide range of programs, but by far the most common are case management and counseling, English as a second language classes, public benefits access, and immigration and citizenship services (see Table 2). Although these programs are essential, their objectives are not about making lasting changes in the condition of families that are low-income, and at-risk. Public benefits access is limited by law in duration (public aid is capped at five years) and eligibility – most programs are for U.S. citizens and permanent residents only, who face a five-year or 40-work-quarters bar on receiving benefits. Many immigrants are ineligible for benefits when they need them most – during their initial years of adjustment. Immigration and citizenship services, like counseling and case management, are essential, but do not lead automatically to improved economic outcomes.

English as a second language classes are the sole program among those widely offered that develops human capital, potentially leading to economic self-sufficiency. However, language skills are only fully leveraged when accompanied by the development of job and social skills. While some agencies offer job skills training and job readiness, the primary goal of these programs is to help new refugees get off public aid. Once a refugee has passed the public aid time limit, she or he is not eligible for these programs.

CRITICAL NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME, AND AT-RISK MUSLIM IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

Interviewees largely agree on the most critical needs of immigrant Muslim families that are low-income and at risk (see Table 3). While affordable housing ranks first and secure jobs second in the view of organization representatives, mosque leaders rank secure jobs first (as did individuals) and affordable housing third. Both groups agree that English as a second language courses, job skills training and job counseling are the second greatest need, followed by access to affordable health care and to educational institutions.

Mosque leaders rank cash assistance, in-kind assistance and access to small business loans as next in importance, while community and social service organization representatives see the need for child care, mental health counseling, and training in practical skills and social adjustment. More than anything, these latter responses reflect differences in the service orientations of mosques and social service agencies.

Finally, mosque leaders (and some agency representatives) see the need for services for the elderly, such as home care and transportation. Low-income individuals interviewed for this study overwhelmingly agree that job skills providing

Programs that develop economic self-sufficiency through English language and job skills are the types of programs that offer the most promise for impact because they provide immigrants with the skills needed to improve their positions in the job market. These are also the programs that every mosque official says they would like to offer if they had funding to do so.

access to secure jobs with benefits and that pay living wages are their most critical need. Following job skills are affordable housing, English language skills, access to affordable health care and access to educational institutions with financial aid. Despite different orientations, perspectives and institutional locations, remarkable agreement exists between these sectors on the needs of families that are poor and at risk.

Some attempt has been made to match mosque programs with needs – computer and English as a second language classes, health clinics – but mainly large voids exist in programming. Mosque-based programs are geared mainly toward religiosity, and the religious upbringing of children and marital stability, largely because funds don't exist for more extensive programming. Similarly,

some community organizations have programs that meet the stated priorities, but aren't comprehensive: that is, they don't offer the full range of services needed to effect real change. Some of the identified needs are particularly troubling – access to affordable housing and health care. In addition to local efforts, access to these services will require advocacy and policy change on the national level.

Programs that develop economic self-sufficiency through English language and job skills are the types of programs that offer the most promise for impact because they provide immigrants with the skills needed to improve their positions in the job market. These are also the programs that every mosque official says they would like to offer if they had funding to do so.

TABLE 3: Ranking of Critical Needs of Poor and At-Risk Immigrant Muslim Families, by Type of Respondent

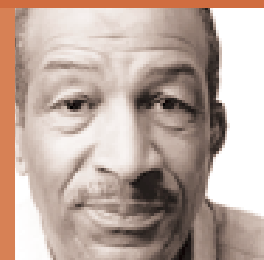
Rank	Mosques	Organizations	Individuals
1	Secure jobs that pay a living wage	Affordable housing	Job training and placement in secure jobs that pay a living wage
2	Job training and job counseling; English as a second language	Job training and job counseling; English as a second language	Affordable housing
3	Affordable housing	Secure jobs that pay a living wage	English as a second language
4	Access to affordable health care	Access to affordable health care	Access to affordable health care
5	Child care	Access to high school, GED, and college education, including loans	Educational loans
6	Access to community resources	Services for the elderly	Computer training
7	Cash and in-kind assistance and small business loans	Mental health counseling social adjustment skills	Legal and immigration assistance

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two
two

PART TWO: BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE

**Programs with Impact to Combat Poverty
and Assist At-Risk Families**

Building Institutional Capacity





Bringing About Change

PROGRAMS WITH IMPACT TO COMBAT POVERTY AND ASSIST AT-RISK FAMILIES

Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 at the end of this section show how representatives of Islamic institutions and secular community organizations in metro Chicago and Detroit rank seven strategies for their potential to positively impact Muslim families who are poor and at risk.

Economic self-sufficiency programs

Economic self-sufficiency programs are the clear priority, in agreement with study data collected on community needs and reflecting the concrete realities in Muslim immigrant communities. The primary problems of poor and at-risk immigrant Muslim families are economic – access to living wage jobs, affordable housing and health care. As immigrants with limited English language and job skills, or job skills that need to be re-tooled for the local economy, they are funneled into low wage, insecure jobs without benefits. Frequently, these jobs emerge from social relations within the ethnic group. There is no way to climb out of the low-wage niche without skill development. While in these jobs, housing and health care pose major financial burdens. Housing consumes much of the family income and health care is accessed only

when available at low cost or during dire emergencies. These problems are compounded when the household includes elderly, traumatized or mentally ill persons.

Neighborhood and community development programs

Neighborhood and community development programs rank second overall, although the tables reveal widely divergent individual views on this strategy. Those who advocate for this strategy believe that some of the needs described earlier can be addressed through broader means – local economic development, community health clinics and seniors programs, community-based affordable housing projects, local job recruitment, and strong linkages between organizations sharing the same geographic space.

The multi-ethnic, multiracial character of Islam and the openness of Muslims to working with non-Muslim institutions are a community strength that can be harnessed for community development. Efforts that weave Muslims into the fabric of neighborhood life, rather than exclude them as different, offer the potential to impact positively the entire community. This is especially the case if members of the immigrant Muslim community with more resources, like doctors and lawyers, are added into the picture.

A number of advocates of the community development strategy have a particular concern for Muslim youth. Low-income Muslim youth attend local public schools, where they face misunderstanding, if not prejudice and hostility, from classmates, teachers and administrators. Their family and Muslim upbringing steers them away from gangs, drugs and promiscuity, but their neighborhood places them in daily contact with these elements.

Muslim youth need more than skills to reject at-risk behaviors: they need a positive youth culture that includes music, creativity and activities they can share with others in their community. Local institutions, like schools, need enhanced capacity to work with members of the Muslim community. Neighborhood development is also important for immigrant seniors, who tend to become housebound and are sometimes abused when denied access to the world outside the home.

Family strengthening strategies

Family strengthening strategies rank third overall, despite the importance of the family in Muslim society. Again, there are widely divergent views on the priority of this strategy. Some see the strength of the Muslim family as a primary community asset that needs less attention than other aspects of community life. They see families with strong Islamic values that encourage family stability, discourage individualism, divorce, single-parenthood and promiscuity, and forbid the use of alcohol, drugs and other intoxicants. The immigrant Muslim family is perceived as better able to fend off much of what Muslims perceive to be the worst problems in American society. Others, acknowledging the importance of the family in Muslim society, believe efforts should be undertaken to keep it strong, minimize intergenerational strains, reduce domestic violence, develop non-violent means of disciplining children, and counteract the pressures that bear on the family as a result of poverty.

Family strengthening strategies are ranked first overall by mosque and Islamic center representatives in metro Chicago. Differences in view on this strategy are also related to exposure. Some who work in the Muslim community are more in touch with the strains on family life than others. Mosque officials frequently counsel families in crisis, but lack ongoing support programs. Some ethnic communities have more human and capital resources and may evidence less family strain than others.

Building networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations requires there be Muslim organizations active in the service field in the first place.

Enhancing social networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations

Enhancing social networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations ranks fourth overall. This lower ranking occurs despite the fact that many interviewees stress the importance of building relations with and enhancing the cultural and language capacities of institutions and agencies that are not currently competent to work with Muslim clients. It also runs counter to the willingness of low-income Muslims to use the services of non-Muslim agencies. This apparent discrepancy is easily explained through the words of one Muslim individual interviewed. “What Muslim social service agency?”

Building networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations requires there be Muslim organizations active in the service field in the first place. While mosques and Islamic centers are taking efforts to reduce their social isolation and forge ties with other communities, these are largely in the form of interfaith outreach and relationship building with public servants and elected officials.

As noted earlier in this report, mosques and Islamic centers conduct little social service programming at this time, so their external ties in this area are weak. In addition, the post September 11th challenges facing Muslims in the United States has required mosques and Islamic centers to focus their resources and efforts on legal and civil rights issues, and building external relations in these areas. Growth in the social service area has been precluded by the emergency situation. Faith-based initiatives that partner mosques and non-Muslim organizations with the language, cultural and service capacity to work with Muslims offer the promise for greatest impact of family strengthening strategies.

Strategies that rank low by study respondents include technical support for organizations, leadership development and capacity building for clergy and congregation members, and enhancing social networks between Muslim organizations, although the latter strategy was ranked third overall by mosque officials in metro Chicago. Because the needs of low-income Muslims are so great, and the barriers they face so extensive, respondents prioritize direct action and service strategies. But this doesn't mean they don't see the need for these lower-ranking strategies. Rather, they do not see them as having the same potential for immediate impact as the higher-ranked strategies.

As institutions whose functions are currently limited to religious activities and building civic relations, enhancing the technical and leadership capacities of mosques and building strong networks between mosques are viewed as long-term strategies for poverty alleviation. However, these strategies may be immediately useful in other capacities, such as in interfaith dialogues, building relations with non-Muslim organizations and civic participation. While not necessarily related to poverty, leadership development and advocacy training among Muslim American youth would greatly benefit the American Muslim community, which experiences high levels of social and political discrimination, including job discrimination.

BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Mosque and Islamic center officials, community and social service agency representatives, and low-income Muslims were asked their views on the types of organizations best suited to offer programs Muslim families need. Their responses reflect a range of views. Forty percent of respondents feel Islamic faith-based institutions are the most appropriate. Of these, 20 percent point to mosques and Islamic centers, while another 20 percent identify any Islamic institution. Their reasons include religious duty, knowledge of community needs, and the importance of understanding Islamic values and beliefs for a faith-based approach to problems and solutions. Another 30 percent of mosque respondents think partnerships between mosques and Islamic centers, and secular organizations with the experience and language, culture, and service capacity, were the best approach. Twenty percent say any organization with the service capacity to offer programs is appropriate. Ten percent feel that local and national government agencies should provide these services because they have the capacity and financial resources.

In Dearborn, Michigan, with its high concentration of Arabs and Muslims, and significant institutional development, mosque officials feel partnerships with experienced agencies are most appropriate. This range of responses reflects an awareness of the current lack of program capacity at mosques and Islamic centers, and the dearth of independent Islamic faith-based organizations. It also shows the openness of Muslims to working with and using the services of non-Muslim agencies. Furthermore, it reveals the newness of Muslim religious leaders to thinking about social service and community work – some are simply not aware of the barriers Muslims face when accessing agencies without cultural competence. These findings are reflected in the recommended program strategies.

Among secular non-profit agencies, 55 percent of the respondents say mainstream or other agencies with expertise in needed areas should step up to the plate by developing their cultural and language competencies to work with immigrant Muslim families. Forty-five percent feel their own and other existing ethnic and immigrant/refugee agencies are best able to offer programs to Muslim families who are poor and at-risk. None mention mosques or Islamic faith-based organizations, although this is largely due to the current lack of program capacity of these institutions, rather than an opposition to the concept.

CHANNELING RESOURCES

Respondents from both secular and religious arenas note there are a large number of highly educated and wealthy Muslims in the United States, especially in the medical field. They call for the development of strategies to channel these human and capital resources toward service and community development, and for the creation of a framework for community volunteerism. That is, they seek to marshal the faith-based spirit of *dawah* for effective community work in the American context. Also suggested was a study on how to structure *zaqat* and *sadaqah* in the American context.

USING SECULAR RESOURCES

Low-income individuals interviewed for this study show a great willingness to use the services of secular agencies that have the cultural and language capacity to work with them. Currently, these are largely ethnic associations and refugee relief organizations. They show little interest in using services offered by mosques and Islamic centers, and independent Muslim faith-based agencies, largely because the services don't exist. Some respondents have concerns with obtaining services at mosques. First, they are sensitive to privacy issues in the mosque and Islamic center context. They do not want internal family matters to become public and congregational.

Because this is a time of growth, new ideas, bridge-building and reaching out for mosques and Islamic centers, and because women are in the forefront of these activities, now is the most appropriate time to invest in Islamic faith-based initiatives.

Second, some women feel mosques and Islamic centers do not prioritize women's concerns. Issues about gender, religious institutions, power, influence and responsiveness to women's concerns are common across religious lines. In addition, the roles mosques are expected to play in American society have been modeled on the roles of the church, which differ from the role of the mosque in the Islamic world. Mosques are in a new stage of development in the United States, as discussed below in the section on post 9/11 impacts. Adjusting to a new social context and to the demands emerging from post 9/11 events has brought about changes in mosques, including an increased civic role in their communities. Another likely outcome of these changes is an increase in the decision-making roles of women within mosques and Islamic centers. Muslim women are key activists in American civil society. They are the overwhelming majority of social service providers working with Muslim clients. Because this is a time of growth, new ideas, bridge-building and reaching out for mosques and Islamic centers, and because women are in the forefront of these activities, now is the most appropriate time to invest in Islamic faith-based initiatives.

BUILDING FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

We asked study respondents whether it was most important at this time to build capacity at the family, community or institutional level to reduce the strains experienced by Muslims who are poor and at risk. Building institutional capacity is seen as most important for 60 percent of the mosque and Islamic center respondents. This response was correlated with mosques having a higher proportion of low-income congregation members and a lower level of institutional capacity. Thirty percent feel that building individual capacity is most important, while 10 percent feel building family capacity is most important (despite the overwhelming importance of the family in Islam).

When asked what types of programs they would offer to meet the needs of low-income Muslims, if they had the resources, the overwhelming majority of mosque and Islamic center representatives say they would offer educational and job training programs, such as English as a second language, vocational skills and computer literacy. One respondent suggests a job-mentoring program. Other ideas include: meals on wheels, a soup kitchen, day care, teen programs, scholarships, a seniors center, a nursing home, a funeral home, a cemetery, family counseling, a domestic violence shelter, and housing assistance.

Some respondents point out that participation in these programs would require transportation assistance for people who are disabled, elderly and those unable to drive. The congregations of most mosques come from a wide geographic area, making the transportation issue particularly salient. This also means that community development strategies for mosques would be either in the local, largely non-Muslim community, or in targeted neighborhoods with large numbers of poor Muslims. In either case, collaborations and multi-faith efforts would be most effective.

Among organization representatives, about 40 percent say building institutional capacity is most important to meet the needs of Muslim families who are poor and at risk. Another 45 percent say development at all levels – individual, family and institutional – is needed. The remaining 15 percent stress building family capacity. When asked which programs they would offer if given the resources, each agency proposes a different list, contingent on its current programs and identified gaps. Among the most commonly mentioned programs are: English as a Second Language, educational and vocational, youth, mental health and counseling, housing and transportation or satellite offices. Some of the ethnic associations stress the need for general support funding not tied to specific programs.

TABLES: PROGRAMS TO COMBAT POVERTY AND ASSIST AT-RISK FAMILIES

Interviewees were asked the following question: How would you rank seven strategies in terms of their potential for positive impact on poor and at-risk families? They ranked their responses by giving a “one” to the strategies they thought would be most effective and a “seven” to least effective strategies.

TABLE 4: Chicago Mosques and Islamic Centers Ranking of Seven Program Strategies

Program Strategy	Mosque (N=9 mosque/Islamic center leaders.)											
	A	B	C	D	E1	E2	F	G	H	Total	Average Score	Rank
Family strengthening programs	1	1	5	5	2	3	4	2	5	28	3.1	1
Economic self-sufficiency programs	2	5	7	1	1	4	2	1	6	29	3.2	2
Neighborhood development & community development programs	3	4	2	2	4	5	5	5	3	33	3.6	4
Enhancing social networks between Muslim organizations	4	7	4	3	3	2	3	4	1	31	3.4	3
Enhancing social networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations	5	3	1	4	7	1	6	6	4	37	4.1	5
Leadership development and capacity building for clergy and members	6	2	3	7	5	6	7	3	2	41	4.5	6
Technical support programs for organizations	7	6	6	6	6	7	1	7	7	53	5.8	7

TABLE 5: Chicago Faith-based, Community-based and Social Service Organizations Ranking of Seven Program Strategies

Program Strategy	Organization (N=12 social service agencies.)														
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total	Average Score	Rank
Family strengthening programs	6	1	2	2	7	3	5	2	2	6	3	4	43	3.6	3
Economic self-sufficiency programs	5	2	3	1	6	2	4	1	3	4	2	2	35	2.9	1
Neighborhood development & community development programs	7	5	1	3	4	1	7	4	4	2	4	1	43	3.6	3
Enhancing social networks between Muslim organizations	3	7	5	6	1	6	6	5	0	7	5	3	54	4.5	5
Enhancing social networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations	2	4	6	5	2	5	3	3	0	1	1	5	37	3	2
Leadership development and capacity building for clergy and members	4	6	7	7	3	7	2	7	1	3	6	7	60	5	6
Technical support programs for organizations	1	3	4	4	5	4	1	6	5	5	7	6	51	4.2	4

TABLE 6: Detroit Mosques and Social Service Providers Ranking of Seven Program Strategies

Program Strategy	Mosque		Institution (N=15; 2 mosques and 13 social service providers.)															Total	Average Score	Rank
	A	B*	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O					
Family strengthening programs	7	–	3	3	2	7	1	7	2	3	1	7	4	1	3	51	3.6	2		
Economic self-sufficiency programs	1	–	1	4	1	1	2	1	1	1	6	2	1	1	1	24	1.7	1		
Neighborhood development & community development programs	5	–	2	1	3	6	3	4	5	2	7	1	2	3	2	46	3.3	2		
Enhancing social networks between Muslim organizations	6	–	4	7	4	5	7	5	7	6	5	3	5	7	7	78	5.6	4		
Enhancing social networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations	4	–	5	2	5	2	6	2	3	5	3	6	6	2	5	56	4	3		
Leadership development and capacity building for clergy and members	3	–	6	5	7	3	5	3	6	7	2	4	7	3	6	67	4.8	6		
Technical support programs for organizations	2	–	7	6	6	4	4	6	4	4	4	5	3	2	4	61	4.35	5		

*Islam does not rank needs.

TABLE 7: Summary Rankings of Seven Program Strategies by Mosques and Social Service Providers, Chicago and Detroit

Program Strategy	OVERALL RANK	Detroit Rank	Chicago Organizations	Chicago Mosques
Family strengthening programs	2	3	3	1
Economic self-sufficiency programs	1	1	1	2
Neighborhood development & community development programs	2	2	3	4
Enhancing social networks between Muslim organizations	4	7	5	3
Enhancing social networks between Muslim and non-Muslim organizations	3	4	2	5
Leadership development and capacity building for clergy and members	6	6	6	6
Technical support programs for organizations	5	5	4	7

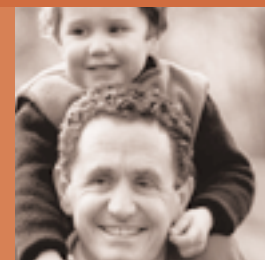
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PART THREE: MOVING FORWARD

Strengths within the Muslim Community

Challenges Facing Muslim Communities in the U.S.

**Conclusion: Priority Program Areas
and Institutional Settings**



three
three
three



Moving Forward

STRENGTHS WITHIN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Wide agreement exists among study respondents that the strength of the Muslim community emerges from its Islamic faith and values, especially values around family and community, and the sense of belonging (to the *umma*) and spirit of caring for others (*sadaqah*) that the faith nourishes. Organization representatives speak of family values, collective ties, support networks and the non-individualistic approach to life. They stress that the strength of these values is profound. Mosque leaders feel the greatest assets of Muslims for tackling poverty and its attendant problems are bonds of brotherhood and the fundamental belief in the equality of all human beings. Both groups see the multiracial, multi-ethnic character of the Muslim *umma* (community), and the significant number of highly educated Muslims, as strengths that should be harnessed for community development. A few Muslim leaders comment that the Muslim community is not strong and suffers from a lack of vision. In light of the difficult times Muslims are facing in the United States, these weaknesses have become particularly apparent to some, who feel the community must have a greater capacity to weather the current storm. Other community strengths cited are openness, sincerity, humility and reliability.

When asked if there is an Islamic approach to poverty, mosque leaders reply in the affirmative saying it revolves around *zaqat*, modesty, and the religious ban on alcohol, drugs and intoxicants. The examples of the Prophet Mohammed and the teachings of the Quran and Hadith provide all the guidance necessary for a God-centered life and a community that is free of social ills. *Zaqat* – offering 2.5 percent of one's savings for care of the poor, widows and orphans – is a pillar of Islam (mandatory) and is intended to provide cash support to the needy. The overwhelming majority of organizational representatives also feel there is an Islamic approach to poverty revolving around *zaqat*, family, community and the primacy of the collective values. While important differences exist between a faith-based approach to service delivery and a culturally competent approach, these core values lie at the foundation of both. Program models that lack understanding of, or challenge these values, erect barriers to success. Models that harness and leverage these values and community strengths hold the promise for greater impact.

CHALLENGES FACING MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE US

The post September 11th environment has brought significant challenges to Muslim communities and organizations in the United States. While anti-Muslim sentiments and stereotypes existed in American society prior to the attacks of 9/11, they have increased substantially since these events. Eighty percent of mosque leaders specifically cite post 9/11 anti-Muslim, anti-Arab sentiments as the major challenge their communities face in American society. Ten percent feel the greatest challenge is in breaking the isolation Muslims live in, counteracting the stereotypes, and building relationships with other groups and religious communities. One leader says: “We are in a desperate situation. We were isolated from others and we need to build bridges.” Another 10 percent feel the greatest challenge facing Muslim communities is American culture, which they see as promoting or permitting promiscuity and alcohol consumption, and being absent of any clear moral standards. This challenge, which exists irrespective of the events of 9/11, is particularly about raising children with Islamic values in American society.

CHANGING ROLE OF MOSQUES AND ISLAMIC CENTERS

The majority of mosques and Islamic center leaders say the role of mosques and Islamic centers has changed in American society since 9/11. The sole exception to this view is held by an Imam who feels his mosque is well integrated within the middle class community in which it is housed, deterring attacks on the building or its congregation. Of those who say it has changed, about half feel the changes are for the better, while half feel the changes are negative. Positive changes include more outreach to non-Muslim communities and organizations, and more interfaith dialogues and activities – providing non-Muslims with a better understanding of Islam, greater levels of Muslim civic participation, more critical thinking and

The Muslim community as a whole has developed more relationships with other faith communities – especially Christian and Jewish – realizing it cannot be isolated during these difficult times, and has found a good deal of support from these communities.

greater cohesion among the congregation of Muslims. Negative changes include a redirection of institutional resources towards providing legal counsel and civil rights education, cancellation of programs for women and girls for fear of attacks on them due to their religious dress, and shrinking financial resources as community members are afraid to contribute to mosques in light of new government programs, policies and activities.

IMPACT OF SEPTEMBER 11TH

Muslims in the United States have also changed as a result of the events of 9/11 and their aftermath. Religious leaders report widespread community fears of the federal government, lack of trust of persons unknown, feelings of being watched and followed, reductions in charitable giving, experiences with threats and verbal assaults, greater levels of stress, absences from community prayer services, and departures from the United States. The Bush Administration’s special registration program for visitors to the United States from predominantly Muslim countries is specifically cited.¹³ All religious leaders agree that the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims changed since 9/11 and these are largely positive changes.

The Muslim community as a whole has developed more relationships with other faith communities – especially Christian and Jewish – realizing it cannot be isolated during these difficult times, and has found a good deal of support from these communities. The Muslim community has become more civic-

mindful and active, and has been invited to join a broad range of committees, task forces and boards of directors. It is solicited for participation in local public political activities. Nonetheless, the feelings of being stereotyped as terrorists by large sectors of the public persist.

When asked if these changes affect the capacity of Muslim institutions to assist families that are poor and at risk, 90 percent of leaders answer affirmatively; with most reporting a negative effect. The negative effect is the reduction in institutional funds as a result of community reluctance to donate to anything Islamic, for fear the federal government will arrest, imprison or deport them. The positive effect is the greater level of outreach to non-Muslim organizations, opening the potential for better networking, referrals and collaborative programs and projects.

The views of organizational representatives are largely in agreement with these statements. The vast majority say prejudice, discrimination, misunderstanding of Islam, fear and government threats are special challenges facing the Muslim community since 9/11. Other challenges mentioned, which pre-date the events of 9/11, are fragmentation of leadership, lack of a service infrastructure in religious institutions and American culture's effect on the Muslim family. Most organizational representatives say their organizations have experienced change since 9/11, either by engaging in more civil rights, education and legal advocacy work, or by responding to greater demands for trauma counseling. All but one organization reports changes in their Muslim clientele since 9/11. Fear and trauma are mentioned by a three-to-one margin, especially among women who wear *hijab* (head covering), followed by higher levels of discrimination at public agencies, in hospitals and in the job market.

Agencies working with Pakistanis note the large number of families that left for Canada or Pakistan due to special registration. Respondents believe it will be harder now to remove the barriers that Muslims face at mainstream institutions and agencies.

CONCLUSION: PRIORITY PROGRAM AREAS AND INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

This study assesses the needs of immigrant Muslim families in the United States that are poor and at risk, based on data collected in two cities with some of the largest immigrant Muslim populations in the country. It also assesses current institutional capacities to meet these needs in the three sectors Muslims turn to for services: mosques, Islamic centers and independent Muslim faith-based institutions; non-profit agencies with cultural and language capacities to work with Muslim clients; and “mainstream” agencies. Where available, national-level data have been consulted and show support for the findings of this study. Based on these assessments, the following priorities for programming and institutional support emerge as those promising the greatest positive impact. That is, they show the most promise for creating positive changes in the condition of well being for immigrant Muslim children, adults, families and communities. The report also identifies community strengths that can be leveraged to improve the outcomes of program strategies.

1. Support the development and implementation of family economic self-sufficiency programs that concentrate on skill building (such as English as a second language, job training, computer literacy) and the creation of businesses and jobs at mosques, Islamic centers, or independent Muslim agencies. Ensure the necessary support programs will be in place (such as day care and transportation, business incubators).

2. Support the development and implementation of Islamic faith-based initiatives for family strengthening programs and community and neighborhood development that create partnerships between mosques, Islamic centers, or independent Muslim agencies and appropriate external agencies with the program experience, and cultural and linguistic capacities.
3. Support the implementation and expansion of family economic self-sufficiency and family strengthening programs offered by secular, non-profit agencies that have proven linguistic and cultural competence for working in immigrant Muslim communities.
4. Support the development and implementation of programs whose objective is enhancing the cultural and language capacities of mainstream agencies working in family economic self-sufficiency, family strengthening, and community and neighborhood development but who lack the capacity to serve immigrant Muslim clients.
5. Support efforts that build relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim agencies working for community and neighborhood development. Special attention should be directed toward activities that are intergenerational, multiracial and multicultural, and that meet the special needs of youth and the elderly. Civil rights, anti-discrimination advocacy and health programs offer a great opportunity to cross these various lines.
6. Support efforts that build formal structures for community and neighborhood volunteerism and leverage strengths existing in the immigrant Muslim community. These strengths include the multi-ethnic, multiracial character of the Muslim community, large numbers of highly educated and economically well off Muslims, a large number of Muslims in the medical profession, and the faith-based spirit of *dawah*.
7. Support work that studies the best way to raise, increase and channel *zakat* and *sadaqah* in the United States context. Use new knowledge to develop an action plan to build indigenous funding sources.
8. Support the development of advocacy and leadership skills among Muslim youth.

End Notes

- 1 This number is derived from the author's conservative estimate that 15 percent of immigrant Muslim families nationwide are low-income or poor. In some cities, such as Chicago or Detroit, the proportion of Muslims who are low-income would be expected to be larger because of the character of the specific migrations to these cities, e.g., large numbers of Iraqi and Bosnian refugees, stateless Palestinians, and/or unskilled Pakistanis and Lebanese Shia.
- 2 See Cainkar, Louise 2003 "A Fervor for Muslims: Special Registration" *Journal of Islamic Law and Society*. Fall, in press.
- 3 See: Bagby, Ihsan, Perl, Paul and Bryan Froehle. 2001 *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait* (Washington DC: Council on American Islamic Relations). Also see the 2003 study conducted by the Johnson School of Business at Cornell University for Bridges TV; www.bridges.tv. Other studies report lower numbers, leaving the actual number of Muslims in the US in question.
- 4 Karen Leonard 2003 *Muslim in the US: The State of the Research* (New York: Russell Sage).
- 5 See: Bagby, Ihsan, Perl, Paul and Bryan Froehle. 2001 *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait* (Washington DC: Council on American Islamic Relations). Also see the 2003 study conducted by the Johnson School of Business at Cornell University for Bridges TV; www.bridges.tv. Other studies report lower numbers, leaving the actual number of Muslims in the US in question.
- 6 Author's national estimate based on prior research and on the responses of Chicago and Detroit service providers. In these cities, the proportion of Muslims who are low-income or poor would be expected to be larger than 15 percent because of the nature of their migrations, e.g., large numbers of Iraqi refugees, stateless Palestinians, and/or unskilled Pakistanis and Lebanese Shia.
- 7 Amaney Jamal "Associative and Communitarian Models of Political Participation: Arab Americans and Mosque Participation" Unpublished paper; 2003
- 8 See CAIR report, footnote 1; American Muslim Council, "Faith-Based Initiative Survey" 2001 www.amconline.org/faithbased.
- 9 Interview data.
- 10 Council on American Islamic Relations 2003 *Guilt by Association: The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States* (Washington DC).
- 11 Louise Cainkar 2003 "A Fervor for Muslims: Special Registration" *Journal of Islamic Law and Society*. Fall, in press.
- 12 American Muslim Council, "Faith-Based Initiative Survey" 2001; www.amconline.org/faithbased.
- 13 See Cainkar, Louise 2003 "Targeting Muslims, at Ashcroft's Discretion" Middle East Report On-Line" (Washington DC: MERIP) March 14. Available <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero031403.html> and Cainkar, Louise 2003 "A Fervor for Muslims: Special Registration" *Journal of Islamic Law and Society*. Forthcoming.

Appendix One: Contact List for Chicago and Detroit Interviews

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS	PERSON, TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE
Chicago			
Metro Asian Family Services	Santosh Kumar, Executive Director	7541 N. Western Ave. Chicago, IL 60645	773-465-3105
Apna Ghar	K. Sujata, Executive Director	4753 North Broadway, Suite 518 Chicago, IL 60640	773-334-0173
Arab American Action Network	Hatem Abudayyeh, Executive Director	3148 West 63rd Street Chicago IL 60629	773-476-3534, Ext. 61
Indo-American Center	Faisal Hadi, Program Director	6328 N. California Chicago, IL 60659	773-973-4444
Hamdard Center	Farzana Hamid, Executive Director	355 WoodDale Rd. Wooddale, IL 60191	630-860-9122
Southwest Woman Working Together	Yasmee El-Keir, Case Manager (collaboration w/Hamdard Center)	4051 W. 63rd St. Chicago, IL 60629	773-582-0550
World Relief, DuPage	Zainab Ali, Case Manager Ryan Smith, Program Director	1825 College Ave., Suite 230 Wheaton, IL 60187	630-462-7566
World Relief, Chicago	Aladdin Elaasar, Mental Health Counselor	3507 W. Lawrence, Suite 208 Chicago, IL 60625	773-583-9191
Interchurch Refugee and Immigration Ministries	Melina Kano, Program Director	4753 North Broadway, Suite 800 Chicago, IL 60640	773-989-5647
Bait Al Iraqi	Rana Al Edanee, Program Coordinator	3334 W. Lawrence Avenue Chicago, IL 60625	773-583-1755
Bosnian and Herzegovinian American Community Center	Zumreta Kunosic, Executive Director	1257 West Devon Ave Chicago, IL 60660	773-274-0044
Inner City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)	Rami Nashashibi, Executive Director	3344 W. 63rd Street Chicago, IL 60629	773-434-4626
Detroit			
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services	Brigitte Fawaz-Anouti, Social Service Unit Supervisor*	2651 Saulino Ct. Dearborn, MI 48120	313-842-7010
Dearborn Public Schools	Ken Ayouby, Community Liaison	—	313-791-3289
	Tahsin Bazzie, Student Services and Community Liaison	—	313-582-7866 Ext. 112

Continued on next page.

*Arranged most Detroit area social service interviews.

Appendix One: Contact List for Chicago and Detroit Interviews cont.

MOSQUES	PERSON, TITLE	ADDRESS	PHONE
Chicago			
Fox Valley Muslim Community Center Islamic Foundation	Abbas & Yasmin Khawaja, Joint Owners	1187 Timberlake Dr. Aurora, IL 60506	630-801-PRAY
Northbrook Mosque	Hameed Dogar, Director	300 W. Highridge Road Villa Park, IL 60181	630-782-6562
Northbrook Mosque	Esmail Koushanpour, Executive Director	1810 Pfingston Rd. Northbrook, IL 60062	847-272-0319
Northbrook Mosque	Imam Senad Agic, Imam	1810 Pfingston Rd. Northbrook, IL 60062	847-272-6319
Muslim Community Center	Mohammad Quaiseruddin, Mosque President	4380 N. Elston Chicago, IL 60641	773-725-9047
Muslim Education Center	–	2N121 Goodridge Ave. Glendale Heights, IL 60139	630-469-5533
Masoom	Urujal Hassan, Board President	6111 W. Addison Rd. Chicago, IL 60634	773-283-9718
Nigerian Islamic Association	–	910 W. Sheridan Rd. Chicago, IL 60640	773-665-2451
South Suburban Islamic Center	–	15200 S. Broadway Harvey, IL 60426	708-331-4165
Iraqi Mosque	Imam	Moving Locations	Through Bayt al-Iraqi 773-583-1755
Detroit			
Islamic Institute of Knowledge	Imam Abdul Latif Berri	–	313-584-2570
Islamic Institute of Knowledge School	Dr. Talal Turfi Mr. Chuch Shami	–	–

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