



# Muslim Organizations in Canada Policy Paper

Recommendations for Canadian Muslim Organizations  
Based on a Composite Picture Study

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**ABOUT THE FUNDING ORGANIZATION:**

This research would not have been possible without the funding and support of the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), for which it was commissioned, in order to inform their strategic planning and national operations. The Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) is a Canadian, independent, national, faith-based, charitable organization, that provides spaces, services and programs for holistic education and personal development for Canadian Muslims.

MAC focuses on building communities and strengthening neighbourhoods nation-wide, through services and collaborations with groups from different religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Over the past two decades MAC has grown to be the largest grass-roots Muslim organization with a national reach rooted in strong local chapters in 14 cities across Canada. With 15 community centers, 7 full-time schools, 20 weekend schools, 4 child care centers, MAC serves around 40,000 community members weekly.

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## **Introduction**

Muslim organizations function within a multitude of spheres in Canadian society. This includes but is not limited to social services, education, religious practice, politics, and health. As new organizations have formed, their purposes reflect new needs of the Muslim community, and pre-existing organizations continue to shift to meet the needs of a growing community as well. Current existing literature looks at Muslim organizations through fragmented frameworks, each article analyzing and discussing a particular subsection or phenomena regarding the functioning of Muslim organizations. The intent for this research project is thus to create a composite general picture of Muslim organizations in Canada to serve as an overarching resource that includes information on the types of Muslim organizations, their goals, scope and processes. This endeavor is meant to paint a preliminary portrait of the services provided by the various Muslim/Islamic organizations in Canada, and what can be inferred from the establishment of these organizations in regard to Muslims in Canada and general Canadian society. Additional data regarding obstacles, developments and changes experienced by the organizations is also included in order to piece together a larger narrative on Muslim organizations. The comprehensive findings of this study are published elsewhere and what follows represents a schematic representation of those findings followed by policy recommendations for Muslim organizations in Canada based on this research.

A central finding of this study shows that in the past decades, Muslim organizations began understanding Muslim needs more holistically, and started

catering to every component of human experience, directly religious or not.<sup>1</sup> An increase in understanding that one's mental health, physical health, social relations and socio-economic status impacted their personal religious practice and faith became salient conversations within Muslim organizations as well as through community discourse. If a mosque or religious space was outside of their capacity or unwilling to cater to a particular need, another Muslim organization formed to fill the gap. As such, Muslim organizations are increasingly engaging in what can be deemed by external observers as "non-religious" initiatives, but from an Islamic worldview, is actually more inline with the all-encompassing way of life that Islam constitutes. This approach became a mantra for most of the Muslim organizations that functioned as mosques or community centers, as well as triggering the creation of new types of groups entirely.

### **Methodology and Relevance**

A multi -method approach was used for collecting data on such a complex subject. This allowed for engagement with Muslim organizations and the general Muslim community at various levels, permitting access to data that would not have been accessible with only a single-method approach. A multi-method approach was

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim organizations are increasingly engaging in what secular society often deems "non-religious" activities by means of understanding religious experience holistically. Understanding that mental health, physical health, social relations, and socio-economic status impact personal religious practice and faith became salient to conversations within Muslim organizations and in broader community discourse. With the understanding that Islam is a comprehensive way of life, Muslim organizations began recognizing that there was benefit in having youth Quran classes, a community basketball team, movie nights, tutoring classes, and other supportive endeavours as long as they are in line with Islamic practices and principles. This approach has become a mantra for most of the Muslim organizations that function as mosques or community centers — a negation of the compartmentalization of an allegedly "secular" public sphere from a private religious practice.

rationalized in its use due to the complexity of the topic. Moreover, there was a significant added value that would be provided by the use of an additional method (McKim 2015, 203). The methods used were secondary data, content analyses, surveys and qualitative, semi-structured interviews. Each method contributed to the process of documenting and understanding the diversity between and within Muslim organizations.

The first method used was a content-analysis of data from a selection of diverse Muslim organizations and their online presence. This selection was made from the careful cultivation of a mass database of every Muslim organization in Canada that could be found via government registry records, consultation with the comprehensive Muslim Link organization directory by region, internet searches, social media posts, pre-existing lists, and through snowballing of information from warm networks. This became a unique resource that was used throughout the project and became a central location for all information on said organizations. The purpose in compiling such a large document was to begin painting a picture of what Muslim organizations in Canada looked like at the surface-level. This method also allowed the opportunity to evaluate the ways in which Canadian Muslim organizations have been categorized and to create a taxonomic system that would serve the purposes of this particular research project and others in the future.

Finally, executing the interviews included a selective process of identifying a sample that would most authentically represent this full picture of the organizations, while paying close attention to the complexities within Muslim communities, ensuring there was fair representation of the diversity therein. In this process, 13 interviews

were conducted across 10 different cities and 5 provinces. The organizations ranged in age with some being as new as having been initiated within the past two years, while others could be dated back to the early 1900s. The organizations themselves ranged in self-identifying as community centers, mosques, social services and youth groups. Each interview was held with a member of the organization's leadership team to ensure the interviewee could speak to the goals, initiatives, challenges and impact of the organization. A general survey was also created and distributed across various Muslim networks and organizations to understand the impact Muslim organizations have on those who patron them, and to determine the rationale for those who do not. The survey was also circulated on social media pages that were not associated with particular organizations in order to achieve a more organically-derived and representative sample of a general Muslim response.

## **Findings**

### *Goals/Types of Organizations*

The goals and purposes of the different Muslim organizations interviewed and analyzed in this study share similarities based on their categorization, size, and specific audience served. Organizations that were classified as religious spaces or community centers often kept their goals and purposes general and flexible, as part of an effort to expand on the potential deliverable programming and events for their audiences. Organizations that were classified as "student/youth centered" or "sister-centered" also typically had general goals, with the only difference being a targeted audience specified in the purpose. While falling more into the social service

category, organizations that cater to seniors are increasingly common and share goals that specify the needs of seniors. In the categorization of education, social services, charity-based and national, the purposes and goals of the organizations become less general, and more strongly tied to a particular cause. As the organizations grow, the premise of their goals and purposes remain applicable as they shift into organizations that cater to more elements of community needs.

Organizations that were not categorized as community centers or religious spaces still listed goals that were broad enough to cover a wide range of issues, while being tailored to specific purposes. Examples of this were grassroots organizations that looked at combating particular issues that Muslim communities could be facing. These typically related to social services and looked at providing resources and support in the face of poverty, abuse, refugee crises, and mental health issues. While many of these organizations specifically listed providing services to counter these types of issues, many also included goals that spoke to creating preventative measures as well.

Finally, there were organizations that looked to cover a specific niche or target an audience that may have been overlooked by more common or popular organizations. While these can exist as off-shoots of larger mosques or community centers, they are just as often free-standing and not affiliated with a particular umbrella organization. Sister-centered and youth-centered organizations commonly mention their target audience, as well as the way in which they hope to serve them. The more specific a subgroup of Muslims is noted within organizational goals typically relates to how overlooked that group is thought to be within mainstream Muslim circles and often have notes of wanting to create, in their terms, “safe spaces”.



*Development Over Time*

As Muslim organizations developed over time, many underwent similar processes of establishment, and as such many new Muslim organizations are following similar developmental trajectories as the older organizations. Many organizations, particularly those that were established by new Muslim immigrants settling in Canada, started in much the same way: as a group of people with an idea to establish an organization, meeting and praying in borrowed spaces, or even people's homes. The subsequent stages of development include renting and eventually purchasing physical space, while expanding membership and reach of the organization. In these initial stages, many organizations undergo a type of formalization. This may include applying for non-profit and/or charity-status, developing an online presence, and officially incorporating.

Outside of physical space, one of the ways Muslim organizations demonstrated development over time was an increase in scope and reach. As the capacity of the organizations increases, they begin to develop curated initiatives for specific audiences as they assess their particular needs. Examples of this are organizations who create sub-groups or sub-committees to focus on creating programming for specific audiences like youth, women, seniors and children. Some Muslim organizations were created specifically to cater to these groups and are not associated with a larger religious organization.

Another marker of growth of Muslim organizations, specifically the mosques/community centers, is the engagement in elements of people's lives perceived to be "outside" of religious and spiritual practice. This comes in the form of hosting

events and programs for socializing, physical and mental wellness, professional and academic advancement, and childcare/education. This increased the appeal of Muslim organizations to groups that less frequently patroned such organizations, such as Muslims who may not necessarily practice all elements of religious obligation, yet still looked for the sense of community. Growing into programming and services that are not directly religious practices also spoke to an increase in understanding regarding the limitations of the services provided to Muslims by the broader society.

### *Programming/Events*

Although Muslim organizations are quite diverse in a multitude of ways, there are some programs, events and initiatives that are commonplace amongst many different organizations. The most common programs and events found in large Muslim organizations that identified as mosques were regular prayers, Ramadan iftars, providing a form of Islamic education, celebrating Islamic events, and creating social opportunities for the community. These types of programs and events were determined as community needs, and in some cases were even cited as reasons for establishing the organization itself. As the community's capacity increases, additional programs and events also become commonplace in religious spaces and other Muslim organizations. With a second categorization of programs and events, the organizations navigate a space of creative freedom for planning, within the goals of their organization. Some of the common organizational offerings that emerge with this stage of community planning are as such;

- Services for life events

- Encouraging physical activity
- Promoting professional/academic development
- Facilitating charity opportunities
- Inter-faith events

While this listing of types of programs were in reference to the category of organizations that function as mosques, religious spaces or community centers, many of these ideas are also undertaken exclusively by particular organizations as their sole purpose. The coordinating of programs and events to cater to the growing needs and developments of the Muslim population in Canada is a complex process that requires dedicated volunteers and some level of financial consistency. As an organization, there is also the process of measuring the needs of the community, evaluating the success of each event and program, and assessing the overall impact the organization is having on the people it intends to serve.

### **Recommendations**

The success of Muslim organizations in Canada appears to be on the rise, with many organizations citing the accomplishing milestones they had previously set for themselves as they grow and expand in breadth and scope. Due to the diverse types and different stages of each Muslim organization, various issues were flagged in relation to barriers and hindrances being faced. These recommendations are based on shared experiences between similar organizations, insights from patrons, and social media engagement.

The organizational policy recommendations are categorized as they relate to the barriers identified by the research findings. These barriers were financial obstacles, volunteer shortages, organizational politics, Islamophobia, a lack of physical space, maintaining audience interest, and deterring of audiences. Many of these recommendations would take place at an organization's systemic level, implementing structural changes in order to increase the overall impact an organization is having in its community and audience.

There were also specific recommendations based on the type of organization in question. Most of these recommendations are due to a region lacking particular types of organizations, as some provinces had ample diversity in organizational types, while other provinces (mainly the Maritimes and the Northern Provinces and Territories) typically only had the "general" mosque-style organization.

### *Financial Obstacles*

- Look beyond grant limitations; many Muslim organizations cited a lack of funding in regard to establishing particular programs/events. Issues of not adequately fitting into the scope of government grants were cited by various types of organizations. Some organizations reported finding success in receiving grants for particular projects that fit within scopes of particular grants. Organizations should apply for grants even in the event that they feel they may not be a "perfect" recipient. Generally, many grants have not yet been adjusted in terms of language and scope to accommodate minority populations and their unique goals. Some grants have been offered that cater to specific

minority groups, yet many Muslim organizations are left looking for grants they feel they could qualify for. By applying to even loosely fitting grants, there does increase the chance of obtaining funding.

- Seek support/advice in applying for charity status; organizations that have yet to achieve charity status feel it is an obstacle to receiving donations from their communities. As the charity status process is lengthy, it would be beneficial for organizations seeking e it to reach out for support and advice from other organizations who have already acquired it.
- Allocate funding to take care of finances; by allocating funding to take care of finances by means of hiring an accountant or another form of financial expertise, it would allow for easier navigation of finances and less room for costly errors.
- Acquiring additional funding; methods that work for some of the organizations in acquiring needed funding comes in the forms of membership fees, commercial activities to support programming and operations, and diversifying fundraising so that it goes towards operational costs. Another important point would be to involve key stakeholders in specific forms of programming to promote transparency of budget spending.

#### *Volunteer Shortages*

- Volunteer Maintenance/Compensation; As most organizations operated solely with volunteers, many spoke of recurring volunteer burnout. Many of the organization programs were executed by the same core group of volunteers, leading to shortages when those volunteers were unavailable or had been

exhausted. Recruiting a large enough base of volunteers, to give volunteers time off and allow them to enjoy programming and events rather than only organizing them may also aid in remedying burn-out. Maintaining volunteers by allocating particular groups to specialized tasks and providing some form of compensation (including volunteer hours and references, as well as monetary compensation in the form of gift cards, raffles or honoraria) is an ideal way to ensure volunteers are not overwhelmed. Generally, regular volunteer outreach, along with some form of compensation is a way in which to minimize volunteer burnout.

- Include Volunteers in Leadership Roles; by putting volunteers in leadership roles, they become more invested in program development rather than just execution of events. This will also allow for the development of legacy-building where more experienced volunteers mentor new generations of incoming volunteers.
- Utilize other Muslim organizations for outreach; Particularly for non-mosque/community center types of Muslim organizations, using the larger community type of organization for outreach will allow for more exposure of new organizations that are undertaking new endeavours.
- Allocate funding for specialized jobs that need to be done within the organization; work that is typically paid outside of the context of Muslim organizations should be fairly compensated even when operating within the realm of Islamic programming.
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*Organizational Structure and Governance*

- Formalizing Organizational Structure; Survey results showed that patrons of organizations felt the organizations had a structure that operated around the ideas and opinions of a select few. By formalizing organizational processes such as formally selecting leadership teams, training volunteers, creating a form of transparent governance within organizational politics would provide a starting point in removing biases. Formalizing processes of this sort would also allow new members to feel more inclined to volunteer their time as they would feel that their voices are more likely to be heard and have an impact.
- Addressing Issues Directly; As many non-patrons cited various reasons for avoiding Muslim organizations, many cited a desire to attend if organizations addressed the issues that pushed them away. Directly addressing issues such as discrimination, racism, sexism and classism within the organizations would function as a stepping stone to addressing these issues within the organizational structure as well as by those patroning the organization. Creating explicit processes in dealing with the concerns of the community shows promise to non-patrons who are interested in rejoining Muslim community organizations.
- Publicizing findings of measuring impact/needs/success; By publishing the findings of how organizations measure impact/needs/success, there then allows a process of reciprocity from patrons to contribute or provide feedback on the organization's findings. Rather than only reaching out to patrons as an initial step of measuring needs and success, sharing findings and asking for feedback ensures accuracy of findings. This process will help mend a potential

disconnect between organizers and patrons and allow for organizations to more meticulously cater to the needs of their patrons and have a realistic understanding of the organization's impact and success.

- Promoting Muslim unity; with many organizations expressing an intent to engage with all Muslims, many patrons cited a desire for further networking between Muslim organizations. Organizations structured around language and ethnicity especially could contribute to increasing an essence of Muslim unity by organizing alongside different Muslim communities. This was a desire cited by many patrons that were looking for opportunities to engage and socialize with Muslims that did not attend their particular organization and could generally widen their audience.
- Networking with other Muslim organizations to fulfill community needs; With the increase of Muslim organizations with various specializations across Canada, rather than more general organizations attempting to specialize in all aspects of Muslim community needs, outsourcing particular needs is beneficial to the quality of the services received by the community. Many Muslim organizations now exist in fields such as social services, professionalization, academics, and physical and mental wellness services. As organizations continue to grow, reaching out to already existing organizations in collaboration will ease the strain on individual organizations and their volunteers.
- Embrace wholistic understandings of Islam; by embedding non-religious activity with religious understandings and vice versa, organizations have the



potential to develop a wholistic understanding of Islam that would incline different generations to attend. An example of this would be promoting physical and mental wellness as fitting within the scope of religious practice and as such incentivizing older generations to engage with wellness practices while encouraging younger generations to engage with the religious community

### *Islamophobia*

- Validate Community Member fears; Acknowledging that Islamophobia is a valid concern and speaking with patrons regarding potential anxieties will also allow for Muslim organizations to become a place Muslims turn to in times of fear and uncertainty. Regardless of the culture surrounding the organization in relation to Islamophobia (high-tension versus low-tension surroundings) reiterate that Islamophobia is a valid concern and that the organization will endeavour to combat it with transparency.
- Vocalize safety precautions organizations take in the face of Islamophobia; as Islamophobia has been on the rise and Muslim organizations tend to be an explicit target for hate, patrons may have concerns about their safety in attending Muslim organizations or being visibly associated with them. Creating and sharing safety precautions undertaken by the organizations may provide patrons some confidence in frequenting Muslim organizations. Organizations without clear safety plans should work with relevant consultants and law enforcement to develop them.

- Provide educational resources on Islamophobia to community members; provide educational resources by means of literature and workshops to community members regarding the impacts of Islamophobia. These resources should identify how Islamophobia operates on a systematic level and the way in which it impacts community members in various ways.
- Recognize that the organization itself can be a place of refuge from Islamophobia; emphasize that Muslim organizations do not only have to focus on impending threats of Islamophobia, but also that organizations can be a place to create resilience and spaces of joy as well. Particularly in the aftermath of Islamophobic incidents and events, Islamophobia-fatigued Muslims look for places of refuge where there are less pressures of emotional labour and advocacy and Muslim organizations can help mitigate the impacts of these issues by providing those spaces.
- Reach out to non-Muslim organizations looking to combat Islamophobia; in the wake of Islamophobic occurrences, some Muslims and organizations may look for proactive efforts in which to channel their energy. This may take the form of neighbourhood relationship building and other interfaith work to help shoulder the labour and efforts of combatting Islamophobia together.

### **By Scope/Category**

#### *Mosques/Community Centers*

- Utilizing expertise from other organizations; utilizing the support, services and resources from other Muslim organizations that have specific specializations would allow mosques and community centers to provide higher quality

programming and services. Particularly beneficial would be outreach to social service organizations, educational organizations and organizations that provide specific services to youth, women and seniors

- Consult with representatives of other Muslim organizations; As some Muslim organizations specialize in services for particular subsections of the Muslim community, more general organizations (like mosques and community centers) should consult with representatives from said specialized organizations to ensure the needs of those subsections of their organization are being met. A further step would be to extend consultation to the actual patrons of the alternative organizations in order to understand their decision-making processes with regards to frequenting specific organizations.
- Formalizing Organizational Governance; formalizing organizational governance would allow for transparency between governance and general community members. This allows for building trust and community members believing in the potential for change and contribution.
- Create mandatory training for organizers in relation to dealing with social justice issues; survey respondents that cited avoiding Muslim organizations stated that they do so due to the presence of racism, sexism, classism and various forms of prejudice within the structure of the organization but also amongst other patrons. Enforcing mandatory training for organizers and explicitly vocalizing no tolerance for prejudice would restore people's confidence within particular organizations.

*Social Services*

- Outreach to Mosques/Community Centers; reaching out to other established Muslim organizations for collaborations. This will also allow larger Muslim communities to be more aware of the services offered so that individuals in need may reach out for support. This could look like creating networks of care and support based on organizational cooperation.
- Outreach in non-Muslim spaces; reaching out to non-Muslim spaces and organizations will allow access to Muslims who do not frequent Muslim organizations but may frequent non-Muslim spaces. This may take the form of making services known to public schools, universities, and other organizations or institutions that have access to a more general public.
- Maritime Provinces and the Northern Provinces/Territories have shortages/no access to social service organizations; while some of the social service organizations do operate at a national level, the smaller Muslim communities in the Maritime provinces and the Northern provinces and territories have difficulty with consistent access. Outreach to these areas is necessary as many local Muslims may not know about the services available to them. Another option would be to provide social service training or funding to some of these smaller communities, so that they can have access to the benefits of social service organizations within their own scale and scope.
- Recognizing different needs across provinces/territories; due to having difficulty accessing social services in areas with lower Muslim populations, the needs of Muslims in these provinces would be more immediate such as having

access to halal food, prayer space, language services, and introductory social interactions. This is vastly different than more populated spaces such as the GTA where Muslim organizations have begun to target more specific needs regarding Muslim populations.

- Highlight social services that function at a national level; a misconception regarding social service organizations is that they predominantly function regionally and are largely inaccessible to Muslims living in less urban/more remote locations.

#### *National*

- Run national organizations in regions outside Ontario/establish chapters in other provinces; currently, all the national organizations operate out of Ontario, this may be a result of the larger Muslim population density in the GTA or even due to the capital, Ottawa, being in province. However, establishing visible sections of national organizations would allow for Muslims across Canada to feel represented by them and to contribute their unique needs and viewpoints to their policy decisions.
- Increase visibility of outreach and services that take place outside of Ontario; Muslims and their organizations that live outside of Ontario may feel less represented by national organizations and as such forget or neglect the role national organizations are playing in the Canadian landscape

#### *Education*

- Maritime Provinces and the Northern Provinces/Territories have shortages in access to Islamic Schooling

- Counteracting negative perceptions of Islamic schooling; private/religious-based learning institutions have been attributed some negative perceptions such as being less formalized or less legitimate forms of schooling. Similar to the recommendation of formalizing mosque structures, Islamic schools should also formalize all their processes or make already formalized processes known to the public.
- Many Islamic schools that function under the branch of a larger mosque/community center do not turn up as their own organization in online searches; by creating separate online platforms, Muslims not familiar with the larger organization will still be able to find the Islamic schools in their area.

#### *Sister-led*

- Maritime Provinces and the Northern Provinces/Territories have shortages in access to sister-led organizations
- Interfaith events with other women-centered groups/organizations can benefit Muslim women who want to interact with women outside of their communities; it also creates neighbourly relationships and social ties.
- Outreach to Muslim organizations that do not have women-specific subcategories; some larger Mosques/Community centers may have some occasional women-centered programming but may lack additional resources or insight to coordinate the necessary programs that women need. Focus should be placed on this with women being given the necessary resources, space, and leadership roles to advocate and organize around their unique needs.

- Vocalize support on culturally taboo topics so that larger Muslim organizations become more comfortable addressing the issues within their scope; this can include issues relating to women's health and social issues.

#### *Youth-based*

- Maritime Provinces and the Northern Provinces/Territories have shortages in access to Youth-based organizations
- Youth groups that are not attached to general organizations can apply for funding through grants that focus on benefiting particular groups of youth
- Collaborations between various youth groups would allow for the building of networks of care while also remedying the exhaustion of resources by sharing access
- Bridging between youth groups that function out of religious centers and youth groups that function in “secular spaces” such as universities, schools and the workforce to fill gaps in services provided to Muslim youth. This will also provide Muslim youth with resources and support they may not have access to when only being part of one type of organization
- Account for overlooked age-groups of youth; younger youth ages (around 10-13) are typically allocated to children's programs at mosques/community centers that may not be as relevant to their interest or age-group. Similarly, young adults that were once part of youth-groups, outgrow the focus age of the organizations and still feel as though larger mosques/community centers do not cater to their needs. Both age groups would benefit from being catered to by

youth-groups but would require different forms of organizations and programming.

*Measuring the Impact/Success of an Organization*

A recommendation that is applicable to all Muslim organizations is the formalization and publicization of the processes and methods they use to measure the organization's success and impact. Organizations must also make the way in which they measure the needs of their community transparent to and validated by the community. The organizations who did cite having systems in place to measure these factors stated they used methods such as surveys, town halls, and consultations. Methods like town halls and consultations were typically stated to occur once a year, if not less. Surveys occurred more often, particularly as follow-up to events or new ideas. However, few organizations stated having formally defined what it meant for their programs to be considered a "success", what they considered an official community "need", or a documented vision for how they aspired to "impact" their community. When these measurements are taken into consideration, they are focused on people already engaged with their organizations by means of their existing audiences. This would also mainly demonstrate the impressions of the organization from the audience members at the core, potentially missing attendees in the periphery, rather than only negating those that chose not to attend.

The first step to this recommendation is simply dissecting what constitutes "success", "impact" or "needs" in a particular organization. To what extent does the organization's goals and purposes impact the way these measures are defined? How have these measures been adapted over the course of time to keep up with changing



Muslim communities? How can the scope of the organization influence the way impact and success are manifested? Answering these questions would allow for deeper understanding of what it means to define success, impact, and needs within an organization and its community. Documenting and sharing how these concepts are defined would also support organizations in a technical manner by means of applying for grants and funding. This process also allows for general members to contribute their ideas, expertise and experience to the considerations at the core of program and event planning within the organization they frequent.

While some organizations do have formal processes in which these factors can be measured, additional effort can be taken in order to ensure that there is reciprocity in the process. The formalization on its own is not sufficient, the ability to contribute is also necessary for maximum benefit. Measuring these factors should also be done in more broadstroke capacities, inquiring opinions and perspectives from community members and audiences that less frequently patron the organization. While some of these community members may be harder to access, the effort in outreach not only demonstrates care, but is also able to keep more distant members updated with the organization's happenings. Particularly when considering a community's needs, by reaching out to members at large, an organization will be better able to identify and navigate the gaps within their own programming, and potentially entice members of the community that had been previously considered lost.

Some of the aforementioned recommendations would directly and indirectly support solidifying these processes within the organizations so that both the organization's leaders and their audiences would maximize benefit. The findings of

this study suggest that these are some of the most important factors for an organization to measure, as they pave the way for future endeavors and allow for thoughtful, yet critical, reflection on past occurrences.

### **Future Directions of Research**

As this research project is only a preliminary study, it reveals numerous directions for future study in order to provide deeper understanding of the dynamics, impacts and challenges of Muslim organizations. Further studies are needed that are both qualitative and quantitative in nature in order to have greater understanding of trends and patterns regarding Muslim organizations in Canada. The following are examples and directions of research that would allow for further in-depth understanding of the complex trends of the development of Muslim organizations in Canada. These research directions would also allow for deeper understandings of the dynamics of the Muslim community and thereby diversifying the existing literature.

- Further collection of demographic information regarding Muslim patronage of organizations
- Executing future studies on individual categories would allow the different types of organizations to provide insight on topics and specificities unique to their categorizations
- A comparative analysis for independent youth and women-specific organizations in relation to the sub-groups within larger organizations that cater to the same demographics.
- Research regarding local, national, and transnational social justice and charitable causes that Muslim organizations are involved in; understanding how Muslim organizations select which areas and which causes to champion, and understanding why and how do people select the organizations they frequent.
- Interfaith initiatives taken between mosques and other religious institutions; being contextualized by specific location within Canada.

- Inter-religious comparative studies; how do other religious groups compare in regard to their organizations?

## **Conclusion**

Muslim organizations have had an increasingly visible presence in Canada since the early 1900s, especially since immigration policy changes in the 1960s. Since the initial immigration of large groups of Muslims, Canadian Muslim populations have been steadily growing and the organizations catering to their needs have had to grow and develop alongside them. The development of the organizations over time also reflect the changing needs of a growing population. This is observable in the changes of intents and purposes of the organizations and their expansion in scope and reach. Of the six mosques interviewed for this study, they all mentioned a form of expansion in their goals. One of the organizations in itself functioned under the umbrella of a larger organization and created the branch to focus on catering to a specific audience within their community. This is also indicated by the various types of unique organizations being formed outside of the scope of religious spaces and mosques. The ability to categorize Muslim organizations beyond “mosques” is also indicative of the changing trends and adaptations Muslim organizations have made. The different categories indicate an awareness by Muslim population of not only the community needs, but also the surrounding society’s needs as well.

The recommendations in this report look to provide Muslim organizations with resources to navigate internal and external obstacles in achieving their goals. The recommendations are made by analyzing the make up of Muslim organizations in Canada and viewing them as a composite picture within the fabric of Canadian society.

While this study made recommendations regarding the process of evaluating of the needs of an organization's audience, the recommendations themselves do not encompass all the needs of the Muslim community or Muslim organizations. The recommendations are based on analyzed data from the content analysis, surveys, and interviews. As such, while the recommendations are not a one-size-fits-all, they are meant to be adaptable for various types of Muslim organizations across Canada as the organizers find applicable. The recommendations can also be used to aid the creation of blueprints for up and coming Muslim organizations, as many can be established alongside the creation of an organization. This would allow newer organizations to learn from and avoid challenges that older Muslim organizations have dealt with.

As one of the first schematic studies of its kind, aimed at developing a composite picture of Muslim organizations in Canada, this research regarding the impact and dynamics of Muslim organizations in Canada was long overdue. Studies of this caliber are able to provide insight into complex community structures and benefit the communities in which the research is focused. By providing this type of information, Muslim organizations can also benefit from seeing the issues being dealt with by the other organizations and in turn can find solutions or navigate avoidable issues. By cultivating further research on Muslim organizations in Canada, one can hope that Muslims can benefit from understanding the dynamics and challenges at play and utilize the information to further progress the goals and purposes of Muslim organizations in Canada.

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