UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVITY PRACTICES AT “THIRD SPACES”

In recent years, the American Muslim community has witnessed the growth of a budding new religious and social institution: the Third Space.

CASE STUDY: MakeSpace
Washington, D.C. area

ATTENDEES AT A GLANCE:
- **Children of immigrants:** 81%
- **American-born:** 51%
- **Converts:** 11%

What is a “Third Space”?
A religious institution that seeks to strengthen bonds within a community while also imparting relevant religious understanding.

**HOME**

**MOSQUE**

**“THIRD SPACE”**

What attracts people to MakeSpace?
- More welcoming atmosphere: 83%
- Diversity of attendees: 72%
- Relevant programming: 67%
- Transparency: 47%

ISPU researchers asked: “How do Third Spaces establish inclusivity practices?”

1. Culture of Inclusion
   **HOW?**
   - Consistently communicating MakeSpace values at all levels of the organization
   - Bringing together diverse individuals who prioritize inclusion
   - Soliciting feedback from all individuals involved

2. Welcoming Atmosphere
   MakeSpace achieves this by:
   - A Content Committee ensures khutbahs, halqas, and lectures reflect the vision of an inclusive and diverse community.
   - Volunteer greeters and ushers wearing MakeSpace t-shirts welcome and assist attendees.
   - Not criticizing attendees’ dress or requiring women to wear hijab.

3. Facilitating Friendships
   **WHY?** Youth and convert engagement and assimilation depends on opportunities for making social bonds.
   **HOW?** Through opportunities for attendees to:
   - Volunteer
   - Interact with the wider community
   - Bond with others

4. Women’s Inclusion
   Women’s inclusion should not be compartmentalized but achieved at all levels of the organization:
   - On the board
   - In decision-making
   - In the organizational culture

5. Relevant Content
   A majority (72%) of survey participants said they are attracted to MakeSpace because of its relevant programming.
   MakeSpace defines “relevant content” as material that resonates with the needs, struggles, and values of American Muslims.

6. Effective Marketing
   Social media and technology can be used to increase participation.
   MakeSpace’s Juma’ah Rides app helps provide transportation to events.

Interested in reimagining your Muslim space? Visit: www.ispu.org/RMS