



2017 Annual Report

ISPU's 15th year was our most impactful yet, and this is in large part thanks to you. So many of you supported our work in 2017 by donating. As a result, together we were able to implement research and education projects that tackled an array of challenges: the widespread bullying of Muslim children; the often one-dimensional media portrayal of American Muslims; the disengagement of women and young people in mosques across the country; and more.

You utilized our work, generating positive impact in your communities. In fact, 100% of those surveyed who attended our education sessions said they would use what they learned in their daily lives. And you spread the word. By telling others about ISPU, you helped us reach new communities, connecting them with critical research and recommendations that aren't available anywhere else.

As a result, together we made a difference in the lives of nearly 1000 changemakers, who gained access to tools, training, data, and recommendations that strengthened their work. We made a difference in the lives of the more than 25,000 people we connect with regularly online and the millions more who benefit from widespread media coverage of ISPU's data.

While these numbers can seem abstract, the benefits to each individual are clear. As Rana Elmir, the Deputy Director of the ACLU in Michigan put it, "ISPU's work is extraordinary. I use it often in my own advocacy around Muslim rights and find the research to be vital to our advancement. I can't overstate its importance to our communities." We couldn't agree more.

And throughout 2017, our smart and committed team of staff, board, scholars, and advisors continued to show their wholehearted commitment to our overarching goal: to conduct and widely share objective, solution-seeking research that empowers American Muslims and those working alongside them to build understanding, safeguard American pluralism, and develop their communities.

“ISPU's work is extraordinary. I use it often in my own advocacy around Muslim rights and find the research to be vital to our advancement.

RANA ELMIR, Deputy Director, ACLU of Michigan



We Discovered

ISPU's mission is to conduct research that is rigorous, relevant, and impactful. Because of your support, we were able to implement 11 research and education projects in 2017 that met these high standards.

In March, we released our second annual American Muslim Poll. The survey immediately made a splash after a deeply divisive presidential election cycle, one in which American Muslims were often a central topic of conversation but seldom among the participants. The poll made their voices heard. Highlights of our data show that:

- The number of American Muslims registered to vote has increased from 60% in 2016 to 68% in 2017.
- 60% of American Muslims have faced religious discrimination in the past year.
- 42% of Muslim families report that their children have been bullied because of their religion—and one in four bullying incidents targeting Muslim children involved a teacher.

That final data point was an important wake-up call for many. We shared it with over 3,000 educators at the National Association of Independent School People of Color Conference (NAISpocc), and it was highlighted by

NPR, *New York Magazine*, Vox, and other media outlets. The data was even a factor in helping to encourage American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) to organize their National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit.

Our Muslims for American Progress (MAP) project made its debut in January. MAP not only quantified the contributions of American Muslims but also featured the images and stories of real American Muslims. In a world where 80% of media coverage of Muslims in the United States is negative, our MAP data provided a powerful counternarrative. We continue to discover Muslim contributions as we expand the MAP project to New York City.

ISPU's Reimagining Muslim Spaces (RMS) project continued to provide actionable recommendations to mosque leaders in 2017. We published two pivotal RMS case studies: one on mosque crisis management and another on conducting a community-centered imam search. Not only have Muslim communities used them, but a number of allies—including Faith in Public Life's network of more than 40,000 interfaith leaders—have used the case study on crisis management to learn how to be supportive of their Muslim neighbors during a time of crisis.

What We Learned from MAP



MORE THAN **15%**
OF MICHIGAN'S
DOCTORS ARE
MUSLIM.

MUSLIM-OWNED
BUSINESSES
EMPLOY OVER
100,000
MICHIGANDERS.



MICHIGAN MUSLIMS
DONATED OVER
\$177 MILLION
TO CHARITY IN 2015.



The Bullying Problem

In 2017, our American Muslim Poll found that 42% of Muslim families have children who are bullied because of their religion. This is the type of data that Dr. Rukhsana Chaudhry, a clinical psychologist and AMHP's Director of Mental Health Programming, needed to make others realize anti-Muslim bullying was a serious problem.

The data "informed us that there was an objective need—that it wasn't just case by case and anecdotal but it was research-based," Rukhsana explains. "And when you have research, you can really draw upon that to . . . be able to call this a public health issue."

ISPU's data combined with statistics about discrimination facing youth in the Sikh and Jewish communities led Rukhsana and the AMPH team to realize that different faith communities need to unite to address something they all face. In December 2017, AMPH's National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit brought together people across faiths from a variety of disciplines—researchers, educators, counselors, psychologists, and others—to discuss how all could most effectively address bullying.

ISPU further partnered with AMPH on the summit, providing the hard data needed to guide summit attendees in their conversations. "In order to start that process, bring all of these groups together from all of these communities and different professions, we needed to understand what does the research say," Rukhsana says. Through a pre-summit primer and a plenary presentation, ISPU brought together all of the research on bullying across communities and how it impacts mental health.

Ultimately, the summit produced a coalition of changemakers who were empowered with the facts and connections they needed to make a difference.

"For a long time, the American Muslim community has been asking for proper research about the issues that we face: health disparities, mental health issues, social issues," Rukhsana says. "ISPU began that work for our community, [and its value] . . . is, I think, immeasurable."



We Educated

Education was a vital part of our mission in 2017, whether through a Facebook post, a newspaper article, or a community event.

Our Muslims for American Progress project and its corresponding photo narrative exhibit made appearances across the country, providing accurate portraits of American Muslims for those who may have never met a Muslim. We set up shop in four different Busboys and Poets restaurants in the DC area and the Michigan Science Center in Detroit. We spoke to communities in New York and rural Alpena, Michigan. The *Detroit Metro Times* called our MAP study a “bright spot” in a year full of Islamophobia and declared that “everyone in Michigan should read this new report on the state’s Muslims.”

Our work on Islamophobia continued to educate audiences nationwide. In September we went into the Heartland to present at Montana State University. ISPU Director of Research Dalia Mogahed spoke about the dangers of Islamophobia to a packed auditorium of engaged students.

“Everyone in Michigan should read this new report on the state’s Muslims.”

MICHAEL JACKMAN, *Detroit Metro Times*

We directly reached more than **5,900** people through **47** events.

Then, she conducted a “master class” with a small group of honors students, who were required to read reports and articles including our American Muslim Poll. The students impressed us with their intelligent and thoughtful questions, and ISPU’s engagement paved the way for a future free of bigotry.



The Only Solid Resource

Sarah Harvard is a New York City-based journalist whose work has been featured in the *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The Guardian*, and *Mic*, among others. Her reporting work often covers religion, and she repeatedly finds herself frustrated by the sources available for her articles.

“Finding eloquent, credentialed sources from diverse backgrounds that accurately represent the American Muslim community” was a challenge, she explains. “It is hard enough to find data, numbers, and research on the American Muslim community beyond the occasional Pew Research Center study—and, oftentimes, they are skewed in a certain direction.”

But that’s what makes ISPU unique.

“ISPU research does a remarkable job in covering areas that are often overlooked in dialogue about the community. . . . **ISPU is single-handedly the only solid resource for journalists covering Islam and the American Muslim community.**”

With the help of the 2017 American Muslim Poll, Sarah wrote several stories recapping our research findings and, more notably, spearheaded a *Mic* video project on Muslim kids discussing their experience with bullying, amplifying this issue for an audience of millions.

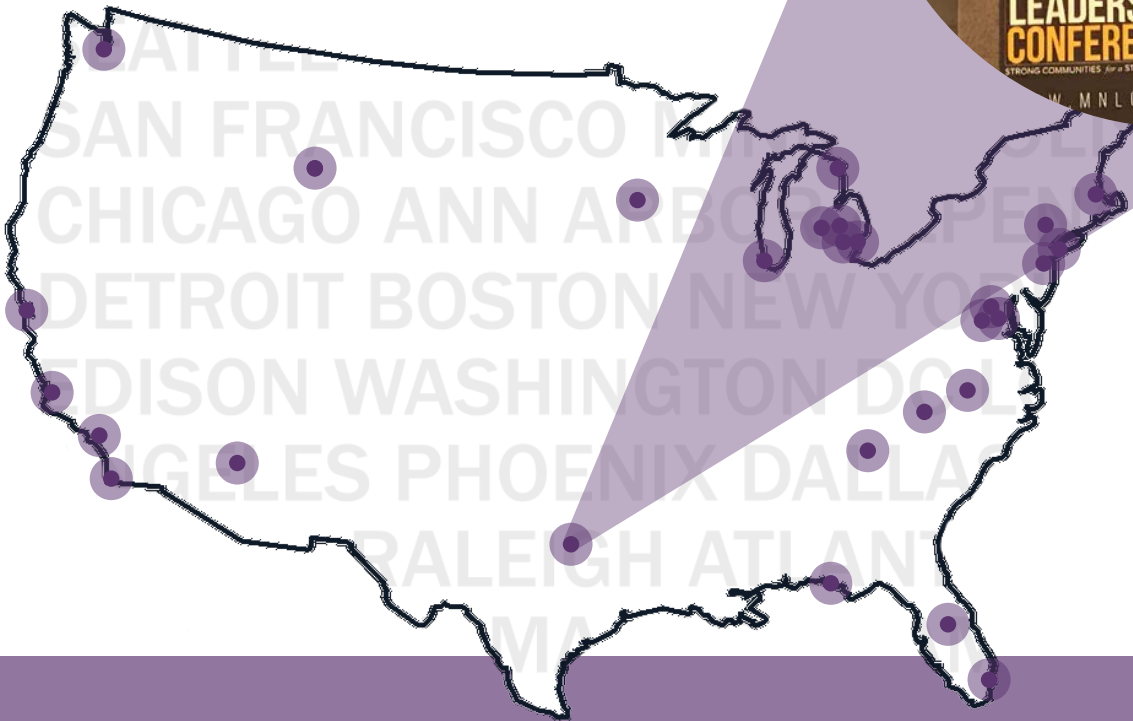
“I cannot think of any other research group that is comparable to ISPU’s work and impact,” she says.

2017 was a year of countering misinformation. Due to pressure from some public officials to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a “Foreign Terrorist Organization,” we created an online resource page offering an extensive collection of articles on the topic. In May, we brought together experts to hold a panel on the political, legal, and civic implications of designating the Muslim Brotherhood as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. And in June, when marches took place across the country to oppose Shariah Law, ISPU countered fear with facts. We worked with ISPU Scholar Dr. Asifa Quraishi-Landes to set up a radio interview and place an op-ed in the Religion News Service to offer a look at the origins of Shariah and whether or not America should be so fixated on it.

Our research appeared in
the media on more than
450 occasions.



We visited **36**
communities this year.



We Enabled

At ISPU, we want our research to move beyond the pages of a report and into the hands of those that make change. That is why in 2017, made possible with your support, we worked to empower community leaders, activists, and policy makers with facts.

Last year, our Reimagining Muslim Spaces (RMS) project went on a cross-country roadshow with the help of the Muslim Legal Fund of America. Our interactive workshop enabled mosque leaders to make their Muslim spaces more welcoming and inclusive for all, especially women, converts, and young adults. After visiting 12 cities across the country, we reached 556 Muslim leaders representing 300 institutions with our recommendations in person. We also provided an online toolkit, which has received

requests from across America and the world, from Iran and the UK to South Africa and Canada.

In April, Director of Research Dalia Mogahed led a workshop on implicit bias at the TED conference in Vancouver, which exposed 40 participants to the impact of anti-Muslim bias and asked them to brainstorm ways to reduce it. In October, we organized a private professional development workshop with Judy Carter that helped Muslim thought leaders learn to better tap into and share their own story with media. And, in 2017, the Department of Justice (DOJ) incorporated our data into their educational materials about Muslims, which they use to train law enforcement, schools, interfaith and community groups, and DOJ employees.

“ISPU is there to help us out.”

MOHIB ULLAH, Co-chair, ADAMS Center Engagement (ACE) committee



A candidate forum hosted by the ADAMS Civic Engagement (ACE) committee

On the Frontlines of Civic Engagement

In 2016, our American Muslim Poll discovered that only 60% of American Muslims were registered to vote—that’s significantly less than any other American faith community. Syed Ashraf and Mohib Ullah have been on the frontlines of the grassroots effort to change this statistic for years. Both are co-chairs of the ADAMS Civic Engagement (ACE) committee at the ADAMS Center mosque in Sterling, Virginia.

The ACE team found out early on that presenting their ideas for increased civic engagement to their community was difficult without documented evidence. In Mohib’s words, the data from ISPU’s *American Muslims and the 2016 Elections* report “gave us a voice that validated our statements,” providing “charts and actual data points that we could . . . present to our community.” The data made people listen.

“Engaging the community is one of the most important aspects” of their civic engagement effort, Syed explains. “The data provided by ISPU helped educate the community.

Because it’s coming from a credible source that is well recognized.”

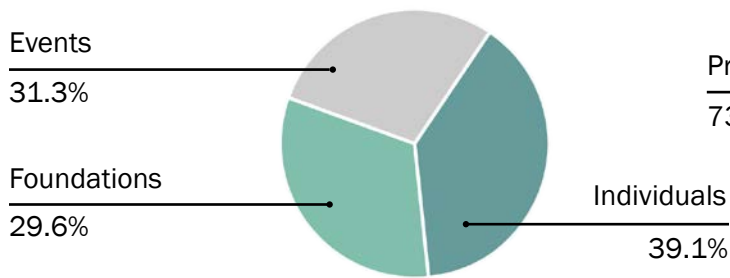
Bolstered by ISPU’s recommendations, the ADAMS Center committee enhanced voter registration efforts; encouraged voter turnout using phone banks; created coalitions with local civic and interfaith groups; and set up candidate forums at their mosque. And their efforts ultimately paid off. Not only did voter registration and participation increase in their community in 2017, but the community and their elected officials are more engaged with each other. And other mosques in their area are following suit, establishing their own civic engagement teams.

“Our purpose,” Syed explains, is to “make sure that we as a community, we are there at the table whenever the conversations are happening. And not only be at the table but part of the solution.”

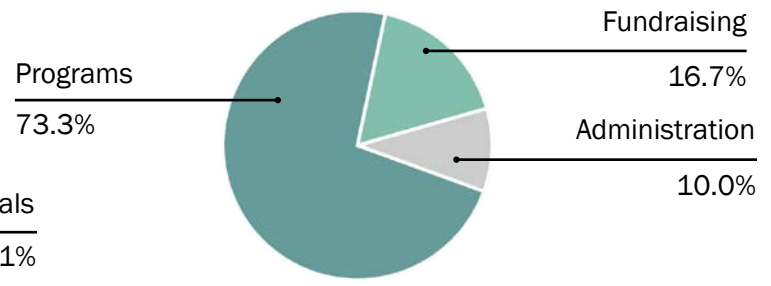
Mohib adds: “And ISPU is there to help us out.”

Our Finances

REVENUE



EXPENSES



2017

Audited

2016

Audited

REVENUE

Institutional Grants*	\$256,000	\$284,001
Individual Contributions	338,470	228,509
Event Revenue (net of expenses)	270,753	222,214
In-Kind Donations	1,818	6,298
Other	1,308	259
Total Revenue	868,349	741,281

EXPENSES

Programs / Research	877,825	740,988
Fundraising	199,694	187,620
Administration	120,436	115,650
Total Expenses	1,197,955	1,044,258

ASSETS

Net Assets (beginning of year)	1,259,176	1,562,153
Net Assets (end of year)	929,570	1,259,176
Change in Net Assets*	-\$329,606*	-\$302,977*

*In 2015, ISPU was awarded several multi-year grants to be expended in subsequent years. Following generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), the entire amount of the granted funds were recorded as income in 2015 while the expense were recorded throughout the life of the multi-year grants.

Our Contributors

Thank you to the **570** contributors who made our work possible in 2017, including the following individuals.

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Thank You

On behalf of all of us at ISPU, thank you! As we reflect on the successes we celebrated in 2017 and the impact we made, we are overcome with gratitude to you for making it happen. Whether you are a pioneer donor who has championed ISPU's work for years, or you have just joined our family of supporters, we thank you. Your generosity makes our work possible.

With your support, we have come a long way. Through research and education, we addressed timely and often

daunting challenges that American Muslims face. But there is still so much more to be done, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting understanding, inclusivity, and pluralism. We are confident that together we can continue to challenge narratives of fear and develop stronger communities.

Thank you for the confidence you placed in our work and in our mission throughout last year. We look forward to your continued support in 2018 and beyond.



Amal Beydoun
Senior Development Manager
Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

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► MAKE OUR WORK HAPPEN

Donate or become a sustainer.

► CREATE IMPACT WITH US

Utilize our data, our work, our tools.

► BE AN EDUCATOR

Introduce ISPU to your network.

“ISPU reports aid in amplifying the work and voice of Muslims, especially when we're visiting elected officials and mak[ing] calls to representatives.

HASSAN SHEIKH, Executive Director,
Engage Michigan

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6 Parklane Blvd Suite 510
Dearborn, MI 48126
Phone: (313) 436-0523

WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE

1110 Vermont Ave NW Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 768-8749

Email: info@ispu.org

www.ispu.org



/TheISPU



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