



Institute *for* Social Policy
and Understanding

Facts Are Fuel

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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Dr. Zain Abdullah, Associate Professor of Religion at Temple University
and a participant in our MAP NYC study / Photo by Syed Yaqeen

Our vision

OUR VISION is a vibrant and truly pluralistic America, where Muslims are strong and equal participants.

Our mission

ISPU CONDUCTS OBJECTIVE, solution-seeking research that empowers American Muslims to develop their community and fully contribute to democracy and pluralism in the United States.

Our values

COLLABORATIVE · ACTIONABLE · RIGOROUS
RESPONSIVE · VISIONARY · EXCELLENT

Letter from the Director

OVER THE PAST nearly five years, I have had the privilege of leading ISPU and our team through a period of change, opportunity, growth, and vast expansion of our impact. It is your support that has made that possible. In a period of tumultuous change in America, you have provided *facts that fuel* positive change through your support of ISPU.

In 2018, we pilot tested our first formal journalist training to help media professionals cover Muslim communities and the issues that impact them fairly, accurately, and creatively. We brought our research to Hollywood, inspiring script writers to go beyond one-dimensional portrayals of Muslims in television and film. We expanded our work within the school system, providing workshops for teachers and

school administrators wishing to create safer and more inclusive classrooms. We helped policymakers and government officials understand the impact of policies on Muslim communities.

We spearheaded the first Islamophobia Index, empowering advocates and interfaith bridge builders. We worked with funders to drive resources to important initiatives and with mosque leaders to create more inclusive spaces. We did all this and so much more. In short, we put our rigorous research into the right hands.

As I sit writing this letter to you, my head is filled with the stories of the people whose lives we changed through our work. The imam who works to help his masjid evolve to become more welcoming to all. The congressperson who listens

and shares our research so our legal system can become more just. The parent who advocates for their child to have a safe, inclusive environment at school.

And who, ultimately, makes this work possible? You. You empower us to work toward an America where our friends and neighbors who happen to be Muslim don't just survive—they thrive. And every day we make progress toward achieving that goal. You are strengthening America, one research project at a time. Thank you!

Warmly,



Meira Neggaz
ISPU Executive Director

Eight wins of 2018



1

OUR RESEARCH NEVER LET UP.

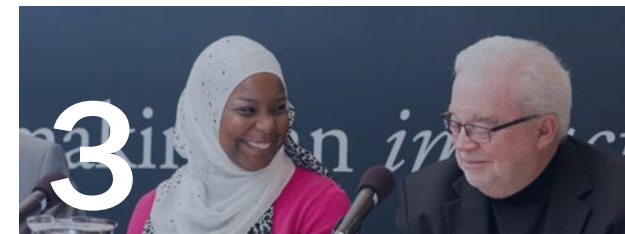
ISPU conducted 7 research projects addressing 28 challenges and engaging 206 partners.



2

OUR WORK WAS AWARD-WINNING.

The Religion Communicators Council presented ISPU with a Wilbur Award for our video “An America Without Muslims?.”



3

WE ENABLED CHANGE MAKERS.

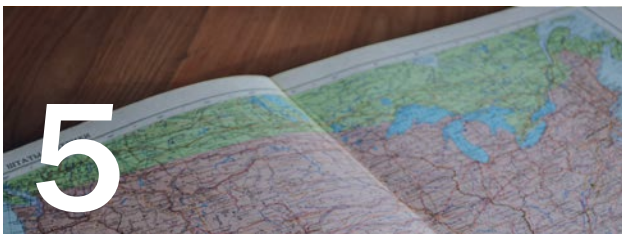
We provided 1,906 national, state, and local policymakers and community leaders with vital resources, data, toolkits, and recommendations.



4

WE CONTRIBUTED TO THE SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION.

Last year, scholars cited ISPU’s work 71 times in their own published research.



5

WE WERE EVERYWHERE.

We directly reached 27,614 people with ISPU research and recommendations through 47 learning opportunities—plus, we regularly communicated digitally with 25,293 people.



6

WE WERE A GO-TO RESOURCE FOR MEDIA.

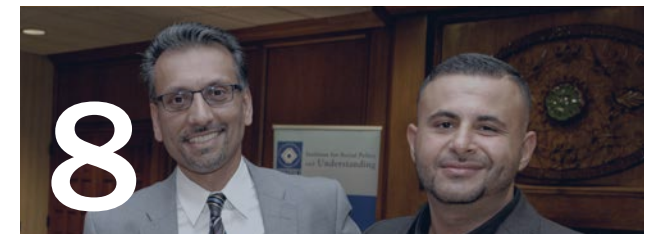
Our research was cited in media articles 1,166 times last year by news outlets nationwide and worldwide—that averages about three per day!



7

WE STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONS.

In 2018, we trained leaders from 732 institutions—including schools, mosques, Hollywood script writers, and more—on our research findings and recommendations.



8

WE HAD YOUR SUPPORT!

We do what we do because of you. Thank you for championing and supporting our work each and every day.

What we discovered

ANOTHER YEAR of rigorous, relevant, impactful research is in the books. From ideologically motivated violence to the health and welfare of children, our 2018 research topics were both wide-ranging and highly relevant to the complicated country we all share.

Our year began with fielding survey questions for our third annual American Muslim Poll, which continues to set the standard in tracking policy preferences and attitudes on topics impacting American Muslims. This year's poll, *Pride and Prejudice*, introduced the first-ever national Islamophobia Index, which measures the amount

of anti-Muslim animus among various groups. The creation of this tool, alongside Georgetown's Bridge Initiative, spurred important dialogue about the impacts of internalized Islamophobia, as well as the public hazard of politicized Islamophobia.

Our first research project published in 2018 was a groundbreaking two-pronged analysis of ideologically

motivated violence. Entitled *Equal Treatment: Measuring the Legal and Media Responses to Ideologically Motivated Violence in the United States*, this report put hard numbers to questions of fairness in the justice system and journalism world. Our research revealed that perpetrators of violence perceived to be Muslim are subject to more severe legal charges, up to **three times** the prison

“Without ISPU, our understanding of ourselves—as Muslim Americans—would be severely diminished. We need ISPU to compile the research, tell the stories, and have the knowledge of self to drive our work.”

KHALED BEYDOUN, ISPU scholar and law professor at University of Arkansas School of Law

Mehdi Hasan moderates the panel at the launch of our American Muslim Poll 2018 (May 2018)

sentence, and more than **seven times** the media coverage compared to non-Muslim perpetrators. Perpetrators perceived as Muslim are also much more likely to be targeted for undercover law enforcement operations providing them with weapons of fake explosives.

ISPU celebrated Independence Day with a new installment of our Muslims for American Progress (MAP) project on July 4, this time highlighting the Muslims of New York City. We paired hard facts with human faces to show the impact of Muslims on New York City across different areas, including economics, nonprofit institutions, STEM, arts and entertainment, sports, and more.

Also in 2018, we partnered with the American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) to publish the results from the first National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit. This included concise

recommendations for teachers, parents, administrators, and community members to address religious-based bullying in schools.

School-aged children continued to be an area of focus for ISPU in 2018, as we finalized a report featuring recommendations gleaned from our 2017 Islamic Schools Convening. In partnership with the John Templeton Foundation, we gathered evidence from experts about best practices for fostering character development in weekend Islamic schools.

WEEKEND ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

*Published
August 2018*



DID YOU KNOW?

Around 768,767 Muslims live in New York City as of 2016, making up about

9%

of the city's total population.

95,816

small businesses in NYC are owned by Muslims.

[MUSLIMS FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS, 2018]



Mohamed Bahi, one of the founders and director of Muslims Giving Back and a participant in our MAP NYC study / Photo by Syed Yaqeen

ABED'S STORY

Solutions to real problems

ABED AYOUB, National Legal & Policy Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, needed proof. Proof that Muslim-perceived perpetrators accused of ideologically motivated violence were receiving harsher treatment from the legal system.

“We would have cases like the one in the ISPU report come in and often couldn’t work on them. We would refer them out because our defense team and board didn’t think it was a priority and told us to work on Muslim ban or immigration issues.

“We had no documented proof

“The [ISPU] report gave us the numbers to show the board and the attorneys that this was a systemic problem.”

that these cases getting much harsher sentencing was a systematic problem and couldn’t convince the community we needed to target resources to it.”

Enter ISPU’s 2018 report *Equal Treatment?*

“The report covered a topic we assumed to be true, that Muslims were being treated harsher. We do a lot of work on the defense side [but] we were never able to quantify or put down on paper that this was an issue.”

And now? “The report gave us the numbers to show the board and the attorneys that this was a systemic

problem. The concern was the disparities are not documented. Now we are reorganizing so that when we become aware of these cases, we want to be proactive.”

Ayoub plans to use *Equal Treatment?* in meetings with lawyers, judges, and the Department of Justice to help ensure that equal conduct receives equal treatment.

“We are now able to convince our board and donors that we should work on this issue and get in front of it before these people become a statistic. We are now creating a strategy of how to help their defense to address the disparities.”



Elisabeth Becker, the principal investigator of MAP NYC, presents at Rutgers University (November 2018)

How we educated

2 7,614 PEOPLE. That's how many individuals we directly educated with ISPU research in 2018. And we reached millions more through social media and our work with journalists. To reach that many people, our staff kept the streets hot all year long, criss-crossing the country in an effort to showcase our research in rooms large and small.

Bullying remained a hot topic in 2018, and we were perfectly positioned to address it during Bullying Prevention Month by sharing our report on religious-based bullying in a new toolkit for educators. We then highlighted our

new report with a panel of experts at NYU-DC.

Our Muslims for American Progress (MAP) portrait and narrative series was a reminder that data displays can be beautiful and powerful. The New York City data release included a collection of new portraits we showcased at events like MAS-ICNA and will continue to show for years to come. Meanwhile, our Michigan portraits continue to impress and inform viewers about the contributions of Muslim Michiganders.

In-person events are just one element of our work. We increased our digital education opportunities



DID YOU KNOW?

ISPU visited

27

cities in 13 states in 2018, informing communities by sharing our research findings and evidence-based recommendations through public forums and virtual webinars.

IMPACT REPORT OF MUSLIM CONTRIBUTIONS TO NYC

*Published
July 2018*



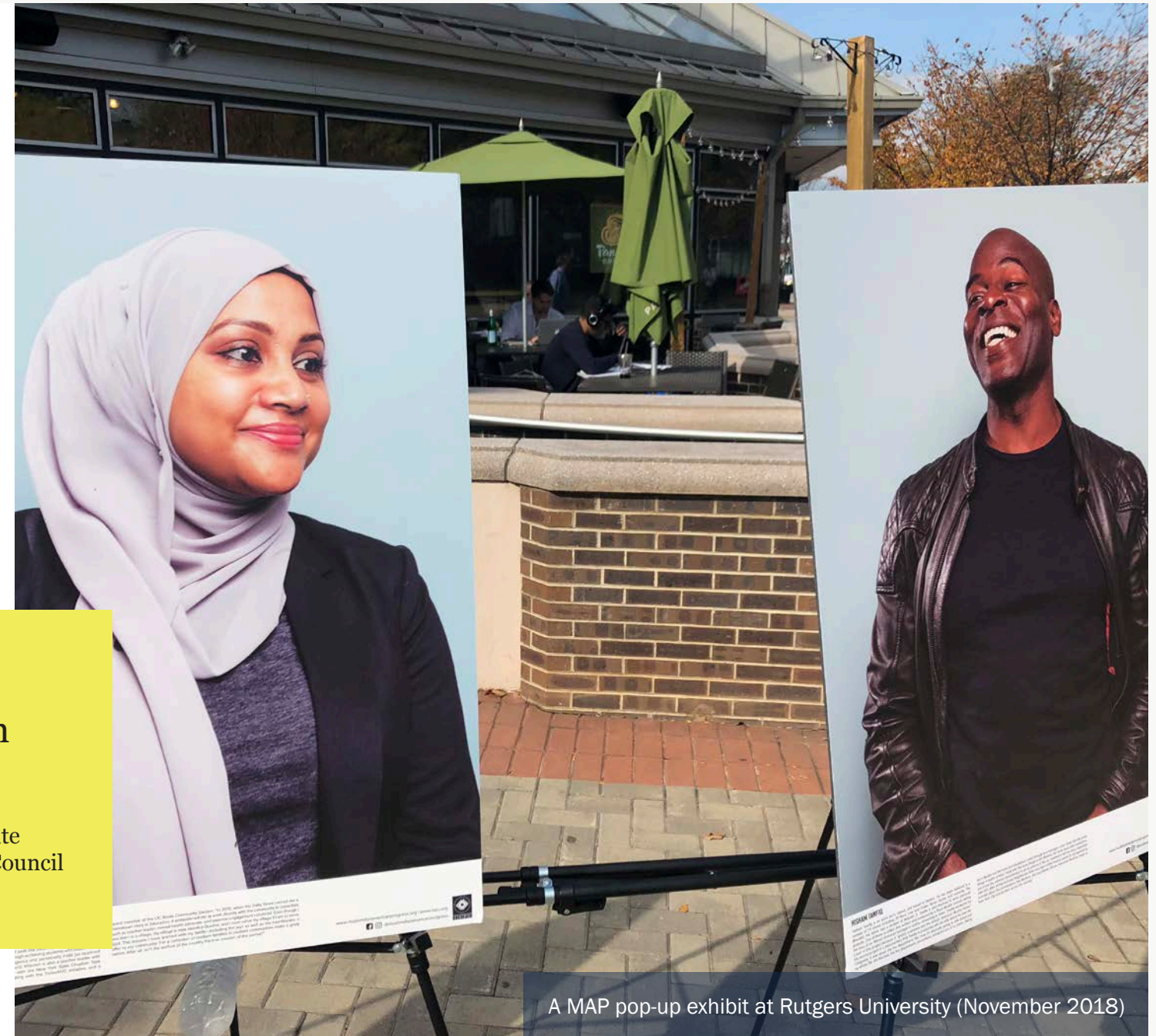
in 2018, hosting and taking part in webinars with partners like the Islamic Networks Group (ING). We shared research regularly with our **30,000+ followers** across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and email lists, and built new connections with journalists who shared our work with their readers, listeners, and viewers. Last year, we garnered nearly **1200 media mentions**. That's three mentions a day, resulting in over **1 billion eyes** on ISPU data. We're proud to continue

to be a resource for news media members in need of a clarifying interview, a compelling quote, or a contextualizing explanation.

Along with data used by journalists in their own reporting, ISPU scholars published op-eds in outlets like the *New York Daily News* and *USA Today*, contextualizing our research on ideologically motivated violence and American Muslim Poll data with audiences of millions.

“ISPU has always been, and continues to be, [a] beacon of knowledge and understanding through facts.”

JUMAN DOLEH ALOMARY, Information Technology Audit Director at Wayne State University and executive board member of Arab American Women's Business Council





MATTHEW'S STORY

Showcasing American Muslim contributions

WHEN MATTHEW PIERCE, Assistant Professor of Religion at Kentucky's Centre College, wants to inform his students about the American Muslim experience, he turns to ISPU.

"Students often think about Muslims in America as victims of discrimination or profiling, but they don't often have images and examples of Muslim Americans leading the way in social research and policy formation."

He's used multiple ISPU reports as a valuable resource for his students seeking to learn about Muslim communities in America.

"Through the work of ISPU, my students have gained a more nuanced understanding of the issues facing Muslims in America," he says. "The work of ISPU helps to unsettle basic stereotypes that people sometimes have of Muslims. After encountering the work of ISPU, my students often find themselves inspired."

Pierce says his students have made use of a variety of reports and tools provided by ISPU.

"ISPU's work has helped broaden my students' understanding of their own society and the dynamic roles that Muslim Americans play in contributing to our communities."

"After encountering the work of ISPU, my students often find themselves inspired."

Who we enabled

IT'S SIMPLE: Without those ISPU enables and educates, we'd be publishing research in a vacuum. That's why we spend so much time figuring out creative ways to reach community leaders, policymakers, educators, advocates, religious leaders, and more—to empower them with our research. ISPU both seeks out change makers and is sought out by those looking for relevant, rigorous research capable of making change. In 2018, we're proud to say we enabled **1,906 change makers** with new resources and information.

Journalists regularly seek out research and scholarly insight from ISPU—so we brought them together

in an all-day training event. In April, we hosted more than two dozen journalists from a number of high-profile outlets to learn from our scholars during sessions packed with interactive modules. They left armed with the research, strategies, and contacts needed to create work of high caliber.

Religious leaders also turn to us for insight. Alongside Yaqeen Institute, we published a wide-ranging series of Talk Toolkits designed

to assist imams, youth directors, MSA leaders, and Islamic schools in addressing topics relevant to the concerns of American Muslims today. Talk Toolkits published in 2018 covered topics like women's inclusivity, civic engagement, and reclaiming the narrative about Islam.

As part of our Reimagining Muslim Spaces (RMS) project, we worked to test the effectiveness of our evidence-based recommendations to

“I left the [ISPU] workshop more informed and more conscientious of my actions, thoughts and work about and with Muslims.”

STACEY WESCOTT, Chicago Tribune



ISPU Director of Research Dalia Mogahed speaking at an Association of Middle East and North African Heritage (AMENAH) event for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (October 2018)

mosque leadership on how to make Islamic centers more welcoming and inclusive. Working with two centers, one in Michigan and another in Chicago, we provided tailored recommendations for the challenges they faced and support for a full year as they implemented them. We found that mosque experiences and impressions improved for all, including women, young people, and all racial/ethnic groups and socioeconomic levels.

Two of our 2018 reports directly concerned educators, and we met teachers and administrators in schools across the country to enable them to address bullying, increase inclusivity, and foster character development. In schools from Massachusetts to California, it was evident how powerful ISPU's research is for educators looking to create safe classrooms for their students.

Getting resources in the hands of change makers was a huge area of focus for us in 2018. We reorganized ispu.org to feature resources in an easy-to-use series of toolkits for educators, journalists, imams, political engagement organizers, and mental health professionals. After more than 15 years of producing quality research, it's more important than ever that anyone should be able to use ISPU research. Our new toolkit initiatives make our vast resources easier to find, utilize, and implement.

RELIGIOUS-BASED BULLYING

*Published
September 2018*



DID YOU KNOW?

Congregant surveys conducted at the Muslim Community Association of Ann Arbor one year after implementing our RMS recommendations showed an overwhelming increase in satisfaction, with positive change on

90%

of the measures.



An ISPU panel of experts speaks on the topic of religious-based bullying in DC (December 2018)



CATHERINE'S STORY

Equipping faith leaders

“IT IS NOT that people [who attend our events] don’t know about Islam and Muslims,” says Catherine Orsborn, Executive Director of the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign. “It’s that they think they know a lot, and we need to work through all these myths that they’ve been entrenched in.”

The Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign is a national coalition of denominations that equips American faith leaders with tools to address anti-Muslim discrimination and violence. In doing their work, they come into contact with many people who don’t know a

“This is a piece of data that turns to action.”

single Muslim person, yet have internalized a lifetime of anti-Muslim rhetoric.

“Always, we feel that we are starting in the negative when working to dispel these myths,” Orsborn says.

ISPU research is key in banishing those dangerous stereotypes.

After encountering ISPU research at an event in the summer of 2015, Orsborn began utilizing ISPU’s work in her own organization’s trainings and events. She calls out ISPU’s ongoing restrictive legislation project as particularly moving to their audiences of progressive faith leaders. That project, which

shows how the same legislators target marginalized groups with legislation that restricts rights, helps communicate the intersections of oppression.

Orsborn says attendees at events “might have already put Islamophobia in the category of interfaith work. But sharing that study helps them see how anti-Muslim legislation is related to the other causes they are working on. So instead of siloing the issue of anti-Muslim legislation, they see it as interconnected to their work.

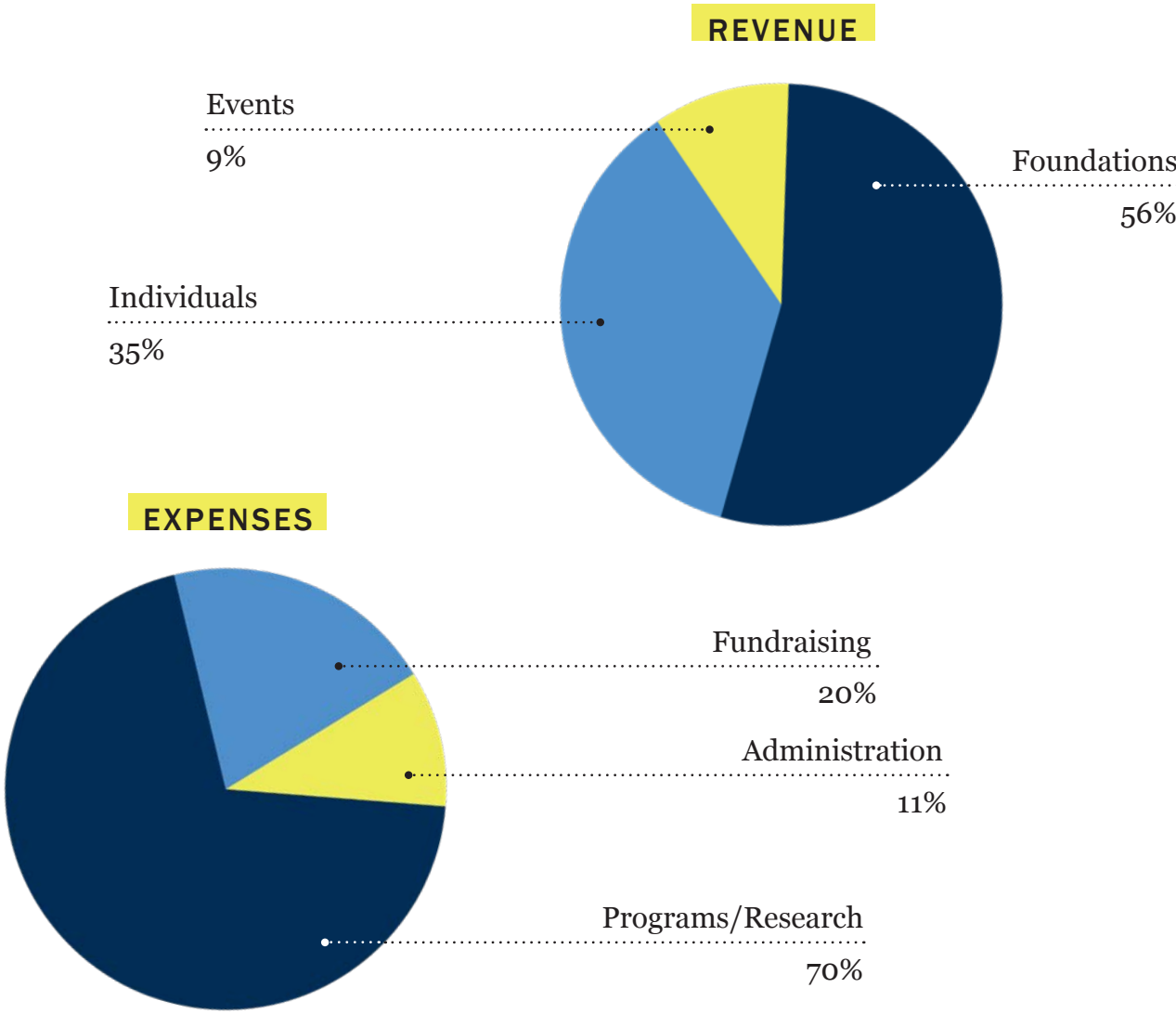
“This is a piece of data that turns to action.”

Our financials

	2018 <i>audited</i>	2017 <i>audited</i>
REVENUE		
Institutional grants*	\$602,250	\$256,000
Individual contributions	380,785	338,470
Event revenue (net of expenses)	102,309	270,753
In-kind donations	1,752	1,818
Other	318	1,308
Total revenue	1,087,414	868,349

EXPENSES		
Programs/research	\$716,566	\$877,825
Fundraising	201,662	199,694
Administration	111,379	120,436
Total expenses	1,029,607	1,197,955

ASSETS		
Net assets (beggining of year)	\$929,570	\$1,259,176
Net assets (end of year)	987,377	929,570
Change in net assets*	57,807	-329,606*



* 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 expenses were recorded throughout the life of the multi-year grants.

Your support

IN 2018, the impact of your support grew and so did our gratitude for you.

To those of you who have supported our work since our founding in 2002: thank you.

To those of you who made your first donation in 2018: thank you.

To those of you who joined us at any time in between: thank you.

To those of you who haven't donated—yet—but have shared our work with others who support our mission: thank you.

To those of you who championed our work, and welcomed us into your homes and communities:

thank you.

Together, you make our work possible.

In 2018, we continued our mission of discovering, educating, and enabling the public with timely, relevant facts about Americans who are Muslim. Through our research projects and education programs, we continue to promote understanding, develop communities, and safeguard our American pluralism.

We literally could not do what we do without you. And we can't wait to see what 2019 brings.



BUILD A BETTER TOMORROW

ISPU is powered in large part by individual donors. Donate or become a monthly sustainer.



CREATE IMPACT WITH US

Help share what we discovered by utilizing our data, work, resources, and toolkits.



BE AN EDUCATOR

Introduce ISPU to people in your network and spread the word.

NEW THIS YEAR

PLANNED GIVING

What would you like your legacy to be? Through a planned gift, you have the opportunity to make a lasting difference for years to come. Your legacy gift to ISPU can ensure that you continue to combat fear with facts and build solid community foundations long into the future. And did you know that a planned gift can be made during your lifetime or through an estate plan? With thoughtful planning, you can create win-win solutions for you and for ISPU. Check with your financial adviser to find out the many options you have for making a planned gift. Or connect with us—we would love to work with you.



Our team

STAFF

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 Dalia Mogahed, Director of Research
 Nadia Ahmed, Director of Finance
 Amal Beydoun, Senior Development Manager
 Katherine Coplen, Senior Communications Manager
 Erum Ikramullah, Research Project Manager
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ISPU remembers Dr. Sulayman Nyang and his profound contributions to ISPU and to scholarship on Islam and Muslims (1944-2018).

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