



Tayyibah Taylor
United States



Sherin Khankan
Denmark



Nevin Reda
Canada



Famile Arslan
Netherlands



Ndeye Andujar
Spain

WISE WOMEN WISH FOR..

AMPLIFIED VOICES IN PUBLIC AND SPIRITUAL SPACES, DIGNIFIED CHOICES, EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY, HEALTHIER FAMILIES, COOPERATION WITH MEN AND NON-MUSLIMS, EMPOWERMENT OF GIRLS AND WOMEN TO THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL, SOLIDARITY AMONGST MUSLIM WOMEN, RESPECT, UNITY AND A REJECTION OF SECTARIANISM, BROADENED UNDERSTANDING OF FREEDOM, FULL PARTICIPATION IN OUR SOCIETIES, THE END OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM, THE ABILITY TO INTERPRET OUR FAITH, HEALTH EDUCATION FOR ALL WOMEN, A RENEWED UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM THAT PROMOTES WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AN END TO HONOR KILLINGS, IMPROVED AND MORE SOPHISTICATED REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE MEDIA, A REJECTION OF DISTORTED INTERPRETATIONS OF ISLAM AND SHARIAH, ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE, A PROMINENT PLACE IN OUR MOSQUES, EQUALITY AS AN ABSOLUTE UNDER THE LAW, MORE FEMALE VOICES IN THE MEDIA, MARRIAGE RIGHTS, TO ACT IN LEADERSHIP ROLES.



Wajeeha Sadek Al Baharna
Bahrain



Marina Mahathir
Malaysia



Bilkisu Mustpha Bintube
Nigeria



Fatina Yousef Bandugji
Saudi Arabia



Dawood Sharifa Khanam
India

WISE COMPACT

We, the women of WISE (Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality), declare gender equality to be an intrinsic part of the Islamic faith. As Muslims, we affirm our conviction that the Muslim woman is worthy of respect and dignity, that as a legal individual, spiritual being, social person, responsible agent, free citizen, and servant of God, she holds fundamentally equal rights to exercise her abilities and talents in all areas of human activity. Furthermore, we insist that these rights are embedded within the Qur'an and six objectives of Shari'a—the protection and promotion of religion (al-din), life (al-nafs), mind (al-'aql), family (al-nasl), wealth (al-mal), and dignity (al-'ird).

As WISE women, we embrace our collective and individual responsibility to work towards building a unified change movement of Muslim women – driven by compassion and justice – that will enable Muslim women to realize their full potential as individuals and in relationship to family, community, nation, and globe. We assert our active commitment to the following principles:

We are dedicated to protecting and promoting religion.
By fostering Muslim women's spiritual growth.
By advancing Muslim women's positions as religious and spiritual authorities.

We are dedicated to protecting and promoting life.
By promoting the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health of Muslim women.
By eliminating violence against Muslim women.

We are dedicated to protecting and promoting the mind.
By advancing Muslim women's intellect at all levels of education and society.
By defending Muslim women's freedom to interpret, think, and express, especially concerning Islam's primary texts.
By promoting Muslim women's rights to pursue their talents.

We are dedicated to protecting and promoting the family.
By empowering Muslim women to choose their marriage partners.
By ensuring that a basic quality of life and education is the right of all children.

We are dedicated to protecting and promoting the right to wealth.
By supporting Muslim women's financial independence and access to material assets.

We are dedicated to protecting and promoting dignity.
By empowering Muslim women to make dignified personal, familial, and career choices.
By promoting Muslim women's human rights from an Islamic perspective.



WISE

Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality

MOBILIZING A MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

www.wisemuslimwomen.org

WISE IS AN ORGANIZATION OF



www.asmasociety.org

ADMINISTERED BY



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ADDITIONAL SUPPORTERS

The Sister Fund
The Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Henry Luce Foundation

FOR INFORMATION ON WISE:
American Society for Muslim Advancement
(212) 870-2552
475 Riverside Dr., Suite 248
New York, NY, 10115
www.WISEmuslimwomen.org
email: info@asmasociety.org



WHO ARE WISE WOMEN?

1. Women exhibiting leadership in their communities;
2. Women creating positive social change and uplifting their community through health and social services, education and media, philanthropy and spiritual growth;
3. Women committed to empowering Muslim women to realize their full potential as individuals and in relationship to family, community, nation and globe;
4. Women using their Islamic faith as a justification and inspiration for Muslim women's empowerment;
5. Women dedicated to building a global change movement through the open exchange of diverse perspectives.

WHY WISE?

Gender-based inequality is a global phenomenon that transcends culture, religion and socio-economic status. While the such problems as domestic violence, inadequate access to technology and poor education are widespread, Muslim women in particular have confronted the limitations of discrimination and inequality. These women's lives are influenced by a complex interaction of factors, though Islam wields enormous influence, and it is drawn upon to both empower and suppress women. Thus, reframing women's rights within an Islamic framework and approaching the numerous factors that disempower women must be addressed directly and collectively.

In response, WISE is building a global social justice movement led by Muslim women. The WISE program fosters collaboration and supports the diverse work of Muslim women leaders worldwide, building capacity for collective action. Holistic and comprehensive, WISE is transforming the position of Muslim women in innumerable contexts from within the Islamic faith and traditions.

WISE LAUNCH

New York 2006

The 2006 launch of WISE represented an important turning point in the history of Muslim women's activism and movement-building, and it helped to inaugurate the WISE program as a leader in the movement to improve the status of Muslim women. At this inaugural WISE conference, 175 Muslim women scholars, activists, artists, and civil society and spiritual leaders from 25 countries developed a comprehensive and holistic strategy for improving the position of Muslim women around the world.

These leaders joined together to assess the needs of their specific constituencies, identify ways to expand their work, and offer recommendations for creating an effective global change movement. The forum facilitated seminal discussions on the unique challenges facing Muslim women globally and the development of concrete tools for realizing the vision of an Islamic expression of gender equality and justice. The WISE movement was born.



THE WISE MISSION

WISE is building a cohesive, global movement of Muslim women that will reclaim women's rights in Islam, enabling them to make dignified choices and fully participate in creating just and flourishing societies. By creating the infrastructure and space for a diverse group of Muslim women to join together, WISE leads collective efforts to challenge distorted interpretations of Islam, increase women's social and economic self-determination, and amplify women's voices at all levels of political, religious and social discourse. The program's change strategy of collaboration for collective action complements the diverse efforts of women and organizations working to advance the position of Muslim women around the globe.

As an initiative with both scale and deep roots in Muslim communities throughout the world, WISE is generating critical momentum for change.

"MUSLIM WOMEN: BUILDING INSTITUTIONS, CREATING CHANGE."

Kuala Lumpur 2009

Building upon the excitement generated by the 2006 WISE launch, from July 16-20, 2009, WISE is holding its second global conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, convening 200 WISE women from around the world.

The KL Conference is structured around a series of modules for creating vital, holistic change: change through interpretation (scripture), communications (media), philanthropy (resources) and collaboration (partnerships). It is offering peer learning opportunities for participants to directly engage with high-level Muslim women, as well as skill-building sessions in media engagement, running for political office, spiritual development and social movement-building. In addition, the conference is showcasing a number of groundbreaking WISE initiatives, including the "Jihad Against Violence," a powerful statement from the WISE Shura Council denouncing domestic violence and violent extremism from within the Islamic faith and from the unique perspective of women.



CHANGE THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS

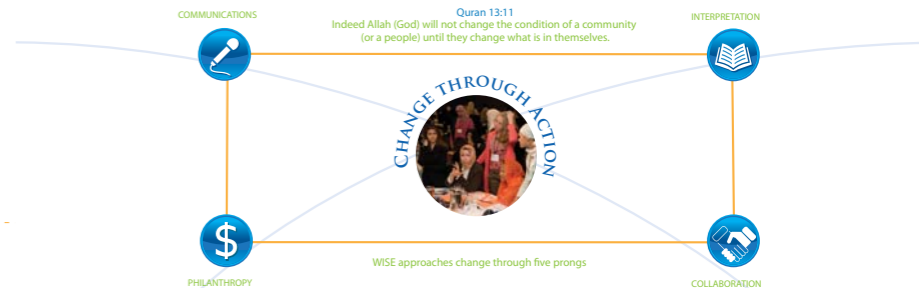
Muslim Women's Portal

Change must be created through effective communications, both within the global network and without, to the media and larger public. In response, WISE has developed a state-of-the-art Muslim women's portal. This first web portal to connect Muslim women globally will serve as an authoritative source for Muslim women's issues and activism and host all relevant information for WISE.

CHANGE THROUGH INTERPRETATION

Muslim Women's Shura Council

Change must be created through the interpretation (and reinterpretation) of key Islamic texts. In response, WISE has created a global Muslim women's Shura Council of Muslim women scholars and activists. Authentic to Islamic traditions and as an agent of the 21st century, this Council promotes women's rights within an Islamic framework through education and advocacy activities.



CHANGE THROUGH PHILANTHROPY

Muslim Women's Fund

Change must be created through enhanced access to resources for Muslim women activists. In response, WISE has initiated the first Muslim Women's Fund. By making grants to sustainable and context-specific grassroots projects within the WISE network, the Fund will enable Muslim women's organizations to create projects responsive to community needs and local contexts.

CHANGE THROUGH COLLABORATION

Partnerships

Change must be created through strategic partnerships, including with men and non-Muslims. In response, WISE has fostered a number of key collaborative relationships. These partnerships with individuals, institutions and organizations throughout the globe and in diverse sectors are enabling WISE to more effectively conduct its work, including offering a range of trainings, capacity-building activities and consultative services work in targeted countries.