Muslim Family Foundation:

Formation of the Advisory Council

A Capstone Action Project

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Abstract

The American Muslim family is diverse in many different ways: ethnically, linguistically, ideologically, socially and economically. The richness of this diversity has contributed to the making of our community. American Muslim families face the same social issues as non-Muslim families, but they also face additional challenges of adapting to and being accepted into parts of the modern American society.

Since many of the Muslim families are fairly new arrivals to this country as immigrants or refugees, they have suffered hardships in having to leave their native homelands and may have some psychological and social difficulties while trying to integrate into a new society. Many times these people face discrimination in trying to find work, and the children are victims of bullying in school because they are perceived as “different”. These instances only add to the person’s anxiety and depression, which in turn can lead to psychological problems, acting out, substance abuse, or even criminal behavior. In addition, families already established here for many years can face mental health or social challenges as well and sometimes need help.

The establishment of organizations like the Muslim Family Foundation to help and support these members of society is in immense demand. Forming an Advisory Council will increase credibility and bring unique knowledge, skills, networking, and experience to the organization, all of which can be a great asset to the beneficiaries.

Keywords: American, Muslim, family, community, mental health, Advisory Council, immigrants
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CHAPTER 1 - Introduction to Project

Purpose and Scope

Muslim Family Foundation aims to provide help to the Muslim families and others living in Southern California, especially immigrants, who are dealing with mental health and/or social challenges. This change initiative is designed to engage stakeholders in using their knowledge and expertise to accomplish this goal. Families and individuals will be able to tap into professional resources to receive education and professional help to find solutions to the challenges they are facing.

Across all Western countries, “approximately 30 million Muslims, with different languages and cultural backgrounds, live beyond their countries of origin. They migrated to western nations for either better educational or occupational opportunities, or took refuge in fleeing from atrocities in their war-torn countries.”\(^1\) In the United States alone there are approximately 3.35 million Muslims with 58% of those being immigrants. About 500,000 of those live in Southern California.\(^2\)


In working with immigrant populations, service providers must understand both the culture of the individual's country of origin and the immigration experience. Within this context, practitioners need to identify the circumstances under which the individuals left their homelands and what resources they brought with them. Second, they must recognize that almost all who come to the United States, willingly or not, leave behind much that is familiar; culture, language, environment, climate, family, friends, social system, and norms of behavior. Among immigrants, husbands tend to be the householders who are mostly responsible for providing a sustainable living for the whole family, even though the wife may have held a decent job prior to leaving the home country. “Statistics show that women are more likely to give up their careers to follow husbands. Thus, women tend to show more dissatisfaction than men when residing in the new countries.”

“Other issues that social service providers face when helping immigrants are those of resistance, communication barriers, personal and family background, and ethnic community identity.” Those issues are worsened by the experiences of many immigrants and refugees, who are more likely to not share much information because of fear of discrimination or mistreatment by other community members. Racism and isolation also affect newcomers; racism impacting more on younger generations, and isolation having more effect on older people. Children grow up in a community with a view of segregation and separation which stays with them the rest of their life, even while they engage with the same community who segregated them. Isolation

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4 Ibid

5 Ibid
seems to affect adults more than children. Perhaps they lived in a community with extended family and friends nearby. Small, routine issues that may pop up seem much bigger when there is no support structure to turn to for help. “Reports suggest that those who are coming from communities that have very traditional support structure and have very strong family ties tend to be affected more by the issue of isolation than those who are coming from more diverse community that does not have the strong community ties and relationship.”

As a Muslim leader, I felt obligated to form an organization to help provide solutions to these social and mental health issues. In 2012 I founded the Muslim Family Foundation (MFF) in order to try and meet some of the needs. Through educational programs and referrals to professional practitioners, we are hoping to help families better understand the challenges facing them. In turn, by supporting the solutions suggested by the professionals, we hope to achieve positive outcomes in the family’s behavior and have them understanding and living life better adjusted to a new society. In order for us to be effective, and for the long term change to occur, we need to have access to continual human and financial resources.

For the Claremont Lincoln University Capstone Action Project, I will be working on forming an advisory council for the Muslim Family Foundation. In the next ten weeks I will identify the purpose, create scope and expectations, and solicit and recruit candidates to serve on the council. I will also draft a letter of invitation to send to the candidates, and hold a meeting of those who agree to sit as members. In weeks nine and ten I will be preparing to report the results.

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Guiding Values and Project Significance

After almost thirty years of being involved with youth and families, I realized the social and mental health challenges that families are faced with, and the need for resources that understand the Islamic faith as well as the cultural diversity among the Muslim communities. There is a desperate need to provide quality service that incorporates both the scientific and spiritual approaches. The lack of providing the scientific/medical approach to mental health service was of concern to me, and made it difficult for help seekers to reach out to a provider to handle this matter in a safe and healthy environment.

Most members of our community are very concerned about the social stigma of mental health issues, therefore, we believe that these individuals and their families deserve a place to receive the kind of care they need with confidentiality and respect.

Limitations

In attempting to effect the change we hope to make, MFF may encounter several limitations. Human and financial resources are currently an issue we are trying to deal with. Presently, everyone who is a part of our team is on a volunteer basis. We do not have the financial resources yet to hire even a part-time employee. Because of this, it is sometimes difficult to motivate team members to commit to their tasks.

Another potential roadblock is finding the right people to sit as members on the Advisory Council. Although the planned roles and responsibilities of members will be limited, and will not take much effort, it is possible that some of the people we ask to join will not be able to make the commitment to serve for various reasons. This may make forming the Advisory Council, and having them help us in setting objective and achievable goals, difficult to complete within the ten-week timeframe. Despite these potential barriers, I am confident that the project will be
completed in a timely manner.

Definitions of Terms

Advisory Council: A team of community leaders who will advise the Board of Directors on related subject matters, and who will bring credibility to the organization.

CAIR: Council on American Islamic Relations - America’s largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization.


Imam: Qualified Muslim individual who can lead prayer and be a community leader.

Inland Empire: A metropolitan area and region in Southern California usually referring to the cities of northwestern Riverside County and southwestern San Bernardino County.

Muslim: A follower of the religion of Islam.

MPAC: Muslim Public Affairs Council - a national public affairs nonprofit organization working to improve policies that impact American Muslims.

Shaikh: A scholar of the religion of Islam.
CHAPTER 2 - Literature Review and Initial Stakeholder Dialogue

Introduction to Literature Review

There is an endless supply of literature on mental health, psychology, and social ills in general. However, when it comes to narrowing down the subject to interaction specifically with Muslims the field of research becomes quite small in comparison. In striving to find as much information as possible regarding past, current, and future trends in providing mental health services for the Muslim community, my literature review was primarily completed by conducting internet searches using Google Scholar. The texts used for my curriculum in the Social Impact program at Claremont Lincoln University were also a helpful resource in certain aspects of inquiry.

Beginning with my first course in late 2016, I began searches for relevant informational resources in academic essays and professional journals. I searched for information on immigration trends, challenges faced by immigrants, psychological impact of migrating, Muslim mental health services, social ills and how to combat them, and how to measure success. Oftentimes, a resource’s bibliography would yield valuable information on additional sources to be used.

Past Perspectives on Muslim Family Social and Mental Health Issues

As in some of the other faith groups, in the past mental health issues among Muslims were looked at shamefully and were sometimes dealt with from a faith perspective only. The stigma not only stems from a religious perspective, but also from cultural beliefs and practices. With the American Muslim community being very diverse ethnically, some communities may have different beliefs and practices of how to deal with mental health issues. Some people believe that when someone suffers from a mental health challenge or social ill that it is “a
reflection of lack of faith or punishment from God for a previous sin, or the belief that this challenge requires just patience, perseverance and prayer, and that should alleviate what the person is going through. It leads to a lot of religious shaming.\textsuperscript{7}

Often times when Muslims have psychological challenges, they will seek help from Islamic spiritual leaders (Imam, Shaikh) who look at the issue at hand from a religious perspective only, and who may advise simply to pray more or read certain passages from the Holy Qur’an. Furthermore, most of these leaders have no medical training or experience in dealing with mental health issues. The outcome of this practice can lead to many cases going without receiving the proper clinical assessment, diagnosis, or treatments.

Various cultures have influence in how to handle individuals appearing to have mental health issues which can complicate matters. In a 2010 edition of the \textit{Journal of the Islamic Medical Association of North America}, Abdul Basit, PhD and Mohammad Hamid, PhD outlined six points that they call the “Elements of Cultural Syndrome.” They are:

1. Tightness: In some cultures, minor deviations from accepted norms are criticized, and those who deviate may be punished, while in other cultures only major deviations from norms are criticized.
2. Cultural Complexity: Certain cultures are more complex due to a multiplicity of religious, economic, political, educational, and social standards.
3. Active-Passive: Certain cultures are characterized by fierce competition, and many people are eager to take the lead. In other cultures cooperation and allowing others to lead are acceptable.

\textsuperscript{7} Antonia Blumberg, “7 Questions With Muslim Mental Health Professional Kameelah Rashad”, \textit{Huffpost}, 4/9/15, \url{http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/09/muslim-mental-health_n_7018428.html}, accessed 7/19/17
4. Honor: In certain cultures, defending one’s honor becomes an overriding factor. Moreover, community members favor the use of aggression to defend one’s honor.

5. Collectivism: In some cultures personal goals are very often subordinated to those of the family or tribe. Other communities prioritize personal goals over those of the family and community.

6. Vertical and Horizontal Relationship: In some cultures hierarchy is very important, while in other cultures social behavior is more egalitarian.

“One must emphasize the need for recognition of cross-cultural implications in treating non-Western clients, for it would be counter-productive and nontherapeutic to treat non-Western patients as individuals outside of their family and community contexts. It is therefore imperative to have a clear understanding of these religio-cultural differences and social customs and values when conducting an assessment or psychotherapy within minority communities.”

**Current Perspectives on Muslim Family Social and Mental Health Issues**

Over the past several decades, North American society has undergone a rapid social, religious, and political transformation, resulting in changes which are reflected in the society's functioning on the psychological and emotional planes. “The rate of depression has been doubling in some industrial countries roughly every ten years. Suicide is the third most common cause of death among young adults in North America, after car wrecks and homicides. Fifteen percent of Americans have had a clinical anxiety disorder. And, pathological, even murderous alienation is a hallmark of our time,' reported Time magazine on August 28, 1995.”

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Muslims in America are experiencing social and personal problems like the rest of North American society. Families currently face social situations which were more or less absent from the Muslim community in the past. There are high divorce rates, separation, single parent families, and common-law relationships. There are same sex couples, childless couples, and increasing numbers of women choosing to work outside the house. “Addressing the challenges and moral dilemmas facing Muslim families requires an understanding of the shifts in ideological, social, religious, and political forces that are shaping the structure and function of families in North America.”

Add to this the recent increase in refugee admissions and the resulting rise in Islamophobia, and one can see from where anxiety, depression, and other challenges arise.

After September 11, 2001 Muslim individuals and families became vulnerable and had to deal with new attitudes towards them. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) “reported a 1,700 percent increase of hate crimes against Muslim Americans from 2000 to 2001. During the process of adjusting to the aftermath of September 11, Muslim Americans faced an upsurge in negative stereotypes expressed by the larger society, and Muslim immigrants, more than any other immigrant group, were met with negative attitudes.” Not only did the adults experience the mistreatment and discrimination, the children had to deal with it too. They were, and still are, intimidated and called all kinds of names in the schools and the parks. “Images presented by


the media, such as popular movies that depict Muslims as terrorists, may also foster negative images of Islam, with deleterious consequences for Muslim youth, who often face increased harassment or worse after such incidents."\textsuperscript{12} With the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and terrorist attacks by fundamentalist Islamist groups, the Muslim-American community is continually under public surveillance, fueling an atmosphere of hate and fear. Consequently, “Muslim Americans may feel anxiety and concern over their own safety and may also question their allegiance to an Islamic faith that is linked publicly to actions that at the very least are highly controversial.”\textsuperscript{13}

The Muslim communities have learned how to respond and deal with the Islamophobic discrimination by forming civil right organizations like Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) to defend the Muslim American’s freedom and liberty which are protected under the First Amendment of United States Constitution. In 2015, the California chapter of CAIR published the findings of their statewide survey of over 600 Muslim students, ages 11-18. The report \textit{Mislabeled: Impact of Bullying and Discrimination on California Muslim Students} states that “55% of Muslim students have been subject to at least one form of religion-based bullying. This is twice as high as the national average of students reporting being bullied at school.”\textsuperscript{14} The students were asked questions about their experiences with bullying, teacher discrimination, and how comfortable they felt portraying their Muslim

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\textsuperscript{12} Maliha F. Sheikh, “An Exploratory Study of the Challenges of Living In America As A Muslim Adolescent Attending Public School”, (PhD Diss., Rutgers University, 2009)
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\textsuperscript{13} Ibid
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identity at their schools. The findings showed that although more male students reported experiencing bullying overall, a larger percentage of females reported experiencing discrimination by a teacher or administrator. “Additionally, of the female respondents who wear a hijab, the Islamic headscarf, 29% reported being offensively touched by another student, and 27% reported being discriminated against by their teacher.”¹⁵ Furthermore, American Muslim youth identified student-teacher relations as needing improvement, and notably, “the percentage of students who felt comfortable discussing Islam or Muslims in the classroom dropped from 80% in 2012 to 76% in 2014.”¹⁶

The anti-Muslim rhetoric has become a problem to both parents and children, has caused a lot of anxiety and depression, and can increase the risk of mental health problems. Not all the mental health issues are borne out of the attitude of others toward Muslims though. Those of the Islamic faith develop mental health problems just like other members of the society which can be related to health, socio-economic and other challenges.

**Future Perspectives on Muslim Family Social and Mental Health Issues**

“The future of Muslims in America will be formatted based on how the American Muslims themselves learn to deal with the social, mental health and other societal issues and challenges. The Holy Qur'an addresses the personal responsibility of change or reform. It states ‘God does not change the condition of a people until they change that which is in their souls.’ (13:11). If Muslim families are going to deal with the current social and structural changes in North America, they must actively initiate social changes in the society in which they live.”¹⁷

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¹⁵ Council on American Islamic Relations

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Valiante
In order to adequately address these needs, mental health care workers should be aware of the cultural and religious characteristics specific to Muslims, and consider using both the influence of Muslim religious leaders and psychology to better help this population. Islam can provide a holistic view for how Muslims should lead their lives, combining spiritual health with the health of the physical body and mind, ‘heart and soul.’ “For Muslims, spirituality and religion cannot be detached. Both are deeply intertwined with each other, and present in daily spiritual rituals as well as everyday life and common experiences.”

Based on the kinds of symptoms people present, Muslim Family Foundation will collaborate with mental health professionals and spiritual leaders to handle the mental health services needed to establish general wellbeing for the Muslim population in the Inland Empire.

**Formation of an Advisory Council for Muslim Family Foundation**

All nonprofit organizations are required by law to have a governing body; usually they have a Board of Directors which is responsible for the overall welfare of the organization. The board establishes the vision, mission, values, and goals, sets strategic direction and monitors progress, ensures resource availability and takes on specific tasks on behalf of the organization. As an additional source of guidance, ideas, and outreach, many organizations are beginning to form an Advisory Council. “When it comes to growing your business, one great idea is to form an advisory board. The benefits of an advisory board are that you get the expertise and vested mentoring you need without giving up any ownership control of your company.”

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such a council do not have voting privileges on issues concerning the organization, but bring
credibility by acting as ambassadors of the organization to the general public. The MFF Board of
Directors is in agreement on forming an Advisory Council to assist in moving MFF in the right
direction.

Before attempting to build an advisory council, it is important to understand the purpose
and the objective goal of forming such a board/council. Establishing a step-by-step process for
creating an advisory council will be helpful in keeping on the right track in achieving this goal.
In my opinion, it is a good idea to meet with other nonprofit organizations that have advisory
boards to understand the purpose of such a group, how it works, and what kinds of help the
advisory board can provide.

Some of the best practices for forming an advisory group are to begin by developing the
scope and expectations, establishing the structure, and deciding on the terms of service. Once
those are decided, it is important to select the right candidates to serve on the council. “The
skillset needed from the advisors should be identified, and you should be as selective with
advisors as you would be with employees. Often, startups make the mistake of thinking that any
remotely relevant c-level executive will make a good advisor.”20 Be clear on the amount of time
an advisor is expected to devote to your business. Typically, the board of advisors convenes for
a quarterly meeting of 1-2 hours. It is important that advisors are provided with essential
information about the organization, and that an agreement is signed. “Every business is different
and even the most experienced advisor will not know the details of your business history. Just
like a doctor cannot help a patient without knowing the symptoms, it’s important to provide your

advisors with a clear picture of the unique situation of your startup. Be organized and concise. It is never a good idea to overwhelm advisors with too much information, so lay out your priorities, and disseminate the information accordingly.”

Stakeholder Perspectives on Muslim Family Social and Mental Health Issues

In establishing the Muslim Family Foundation, several assumptions were made: that newly arrived families will be facing social challenges that may require the help of a professional to cope with; that MFF will be able to build a network of professional resources who know how to deal with the challenges; that community buy-in will support MFF and its services; that services provided will help the individuals and families to have a happier home life and to integrate into the society at large.

As an organization, MFF has categorized the stakeholders as beneficiaries (those seeking help), professionals (practitioners who will provide counseling), donors/funders, community partners, Board of Directors, and Advisory Council. Depending on the category of the stakeholder, they will see benefits and/or rate success in different manners. Their participation in the programs, and utilizing the resources and knowledge they gain during the workshops and seminars will help clients to overcome their social challenges. Donors will be able to evaluate the annual financial report to see how funds are utilized. The professional team will see the betterment of the clients’ mental/emotional health. Partners will be able to see how their resources and partnership were used in marketing, and dealing with the issues. Since all have the same interest of helping families overcome social challenges, then success of one of them will be the success of the others.

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21 Lee
In 2016 we developed a questionnaire for each category of our stakeholders (See Appendix J). Some responded on the paper surveys distributed at the Family Symposium and other events, while others actually gave their responses orally in face-to-face meetings. The intent of the interviews was to establish a process of how to identify and tackle the most pressing social issues, to seek the professional help, and to approach local donors to support the projects. We also hoped to obtain feedback on several areas such as needed services, educational programs, funding, and accountability.

What we found out is that we need to increase visibility and better promote the organization’s services to the community. One important suggestion was that we need to collaborate with other organizations with a similar mission. Another major suggestion has led to my capstone project. It was to form an advisory council made up of community leaders, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The advice was that the advisory council be made up of a wide variety of professionals such as educators, bankers, attorneys, religious leaders, mental health workers, city and county officials, and other policy makers.

To learn more about establishing an advisory council, I had the pleasure of meeting with a friend who is a member of another nonprofit organization, and who currently sits on the advisory boards of three other non-profit organizations. She has been very supportive of the MFF from the beginning. I asking her the following questions;

1. What is the purpose of the advisory council?
2. How does the advisory council work?
3. What help can an advisory council provide to an organization?
4. What will it bring to MFF?
5. How do I create a list of candidates?
6. What should be included in the letter of invitation?

7. What are the options for date, time, and location for the first meeting?

8. What should be included in the agenda for the first meeting?

9. What information should we share with the council about the organization?

10. Will she be available to sit on the MFF council?

What I learned is that the purpose of an advisory council is to bring unique knowledge, skills, networking, and experience to counsel and advise the board of directors on matters within the board's jurisdiction. Benefits of having an advisory council are that members can spur innovation, provide valuable contacts, and provide support and resources. For Muslim Family Foundation, the objective goal of forming the advisory council is to help us improve performance and functionality, to have well-known community leader’s act as ambassadors, and to provide guidance as we work toward accomplishing our mission and goals. We are looking for people who have the expertise, knowledge, commitment, and connections to guide us through the steps and to take part in building the council.

**Conclusion**

Social ills are like ripples in water; when one person is bullied, has a substance abuse problem, or some other mental or social challenge it not only affects that individual, but also spreads out to affect others. By providing educational programs and referring help seekers to the appropriate professional for their particular concern, I believe the entire society will benefit. Although the family is the basic or smallest unit in every society, it has social significance and impact on a greater scale. The cohesiveness of the family has great effect in a number of ways including how people socialize, beliefs, communication, and how to handle their affairs. Programs addressing family matters related to marriage, parenting, healthy living, and
interpersonal relationships can be of great benefit to those who need them. Immigrants and refugees arriving to a new area may not know where to turn for help with challenges they may be facing. They need to know that help is available and that others are concerned with their well-being, for their benefit as well as the benefit of the greater society.

With the societal changes over the past several decades, it seems that more Muslims, as well as others, are willing to admit to having problems they need help to cope with. As an organization, Muslim Family Foundation is hoping that the addition of the Advisory Council will aid in getting the word out that we are here to help.
CHAPTER 3 - Methods Determined with Stakeholders

Introduction

When an individual or family needs help coping with particular problems, they need to know where to turn for help. They need to know that others are concerned about them and want to see them successfully living a happy, healthy family life.

Southern California has always been a very diverse area of the United States, and in the past few years we have seen an even greater influx of people arriving from different parts of the world as refugees. They need as much help as possible to adjust to their new homes. As a leader, and as a Muslim, I wanted to create effective and resourceful programs to help these families integrate into the larger society, to live a healthy family life, and to make positive changes in the Inland Empire area of Southern California. In addition, families already established here for many years sometimes face social challenges and need help as well.

In order to fully understand and develop solutions to the social and mental health challenges facing families, we need the help of the people in the field, community leaders, the professionals, and the stakeholders. My goal in creating an Advisory Council for Muslim Family Foundation is to have a larger pool of minds available to assist in creating effective programs and to help in finding solutions for those seeking help with their challenges. I’m also hoping that they will help by increasing awareness of educational programs offered by MFF, evaluating existing programs and resources, and piloting new programs and/or materials and evaluating effectiveness.

Collaborating with Stakeholders to Form the Advisory Council

Since our founding, we have identified six categories of key stakeholders and their roles in shaping our programs and activities. The first group is the beneficiaries, the individuals and
families seeking quality services and professional help to deal with social challenges. They will work closely with the second group, the team of professional practitioners made up of psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, social workers, etc. to whom we will refer clients for actual counseling. Third is the group of community partners: other nonprofit organizations and city and county health departments with whom we will collaborate for educational seminars and resources. Fourth are the donors/funders who provide financial support to help to keep the organization in operation. Fifth and sixth are the administration of the organization; the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council. The Board of Directors establish the vision, mission, values, and goals, sets strategic direction and monitors progress, and ensure resource availability and takes on specific tasks on behalf of the organization. The Advisory Council, currently under formation, will hopefully bring unique knowledge, skills, networking, resources, and experience to counsel and advise the board of directors.

**Stakeholder Interviews**

We provided questionnaires to each stakeholder group seeking valuable information to help us establish a process of how to identify and tackle the most pressing social issues, to seek the professional help, and to local donors to support the projects. The questions posed to each group of stakeholders were different and tailored to their specific role in the organization. Samples of some of the questions asked to the various groups were:

- Which issue(s) would you like to see MFF address in the short term? In the long term?
- What benefit would you hope to receive from MFF programs?
- What are the three most important social issues we need to address immediately?
- What is your specialty? How much pro bono time can you contribute to each program?
- Which programs are you willing to support financially?
• How can you contribute to the economic stability of MFF?
• How can you help MFF to build the team of professionals needed to carry out our goals?
• How can you help in promoting MFF programs?

Meeting with some of the stakeholders to get feedback on these questions, and comments from previous surveys distributed at various events is what led to my project of forming the advisory council. The general feedback we received helped me to see that it would be advantageous to form the advisory council in order to obtain more knowledge, expertise, and resources by making them ambassadors for the organization.

**Method of collaboration between stakeholders In Creating the Advisory Council**

Below is the step-by-step process I developed to form the MFF Advisory Council.

1. **Gather Information**
   - Seek help
   - Find a model you like

2. **Develop Tasks**
   - Scope and Expectations
   - Candidates list

3. **Corresponding**
   - Invitation to candidates
   - Agreement

4. **First Meeting**
   - Agenda
   - Presentation
   - Goals

5. **Follow Up**
   - Next Meetings
   - Action Items
   - Evaluation process

The methods I am using to carry out this project are to collaborate with our board of directors, other nonprofit organizations who have an advisory council, reach out to people who are on other advisory councils, city officials, county mental health, local colleges and universities, and community leaders (Muslim and non-Muslim). It would be advantageous to form the advisory council in order to obtain more knowledge, expertise, and resources by making them ambassadors for the organization.

Forming an advisory council can be challenging due to the nature of finding and securing commitment from the right people to sit as members, and being sure they understand the organization’s mission, vision, and goals. Once I understood the concept, identifying proper
candidates to serve as members required collaborating with MFF board members, the community leaders, spiritual leaders, and other nonprofit organizations. Our advisory council is in the process of being formed.

**Advisory Council Goals**

We believe that the advisory council will give Muslim Family Foundation credibility and legitimacy, bring unique knowledge, skills, networking, and experience to counsel and advise the board of directors on matters within the board's jurisdiction. Benefits of having an advisory council are that members can spur innovation, provide valuable contacts, and provide support and resources. For Muslim Family Foundation, the objective goal of forming the advisory council is to help us improve performance and functionality and to provide guidance as we work toward accomplishing our mission and goals. Measuring the effectiveness of the Advisory Council will be a long term process of evaluating the expansion of the human and financial resources, and seeing the social impact made on the community.

Utilizing the networks of people known by the Board of Directors and some of the stakeholders, a list was created of candidates who could possibly be recruited to sit as members on the advisory council. (See Appendix F) The objective of the advisory council is to have a larger pool of minds available to assist in creating effective programs and to help in finding solutions for those seeking help with their challenges. I’m also hoping that the council will help by increasing awareness of the educational programs offered by MFF, evaluating existing programs and resources, and piloting new programs and/or materials and evaluating effectiveness.

When setting the expectations of the advisory council members, we will ask some to have a special task. We do not want to make this as a second job for them, but we will try to make it
something they enjoy doing. We have divided the Advisory Council member scope and expectations to two parts:

1. Obligations of an Advisory Council Member:
   • Attend one special meeting per year
   • Allow the use of his/her name and professional title on MFF literature
   • Act as a liaison to the community for the MFF.
   • Engage and communicate as ambassadors for the MFF mission
   • Advocate for public policy
   • Advise the organization on creative ways to raise funds
   • Advise on programs / help with organizational planning

2. Optional Activities of an Advisory Council Member:
   • Attend board retreats, in-service workshops, or other board development activities
   • Attend and participate in special events
   • Serve on committees
   • Contribute expertise, knowledge, and skills when appropriate
   • Contribute or obtain financial or in-kind donations
   • Speaking gigs (both getting engagements & doing the actual speaking)
   • Providing pro bono work to assist with other staff-driven needs
   • Recruit new council members if needed

As of now, we have taken the steps of identifying some candidates and sent them letters of invitation to sit on the council. (See Appendix G) I am pleased to say that several have agreed, and we are tentatively planning to hold our first meeting with them on Saturday, November 18, 2017. (See Appendix H) This introductory, informational meeting will be to
acquaint the council members with each other and with the MFF organization. We hope to create joint goals, and to get their input on both on-going and future projects, finding resources for the programs, and establishing an office for MFF. We may find that we need to add additional council members. The results of forming the advisory council and the goal setting will be reported in the final weeks (9 and 10).

Advisory Council Outcome Measurements

To measure the outcome of the capstone project, I will first check our progress against a specific outline of step-by-step and week-by-week process determined at the beginning of this term, Dialogue Week 1. (See Appendix C) The second goal is to design expectations, structure, and by-laws for advisory council members. Identifying the Advisory Council members will accomplish the capstone goal project. A third goal will take a bit longer to measure. It will come after the Advisory Council has been formed and in place for some time to determine if it actually benefits Muslim Family Foundation with acquiring needed resources, promoting the MFF programs and activities, and promoting the organization to the general public as a source of help.

We currently we have ten members agreed to serve on the MFF Advisory Council; community leaders from all walks of life and various professions, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The Board of Directors will develop structure, and scope and expectations. (See Appendix E) These will be presented for adoption at a joint meeting of Board of Directors and the Advisory Council scheduled for mid-late November. The Advisory Council and Board of Directors will define direction specified activities, and agree on how we can measure our success for the upcoming projects and activities.
For performing the impact assessment, MFF will follow the procedure of “goal setting, continuous feedback and coaching, and annual review”\textsuperscript{22} MFF will continually seek feedback from the beneficiaries, professionals, leaders, and donors. The feedback will be collected and analyzed to make improvement to the programs, training, and to the financial resources. MFF wants to produce and integrate knowledge and resources to lead to positive behavior change and create an impact that benefits all of society. We will plan all our future activities accordingly, and we expect to have great outcomes.

**Collaboration Plan**

We as humans collaborate on a daily basis! As stated by the author of *Collaboration: What makes it work?* Collaboration “is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. When we work together, we can “enhance our ability to address social, economic, and environmental problems”\textsuperscript{23} Working together as organizations and following a process, we will exhibit collective intelligence and “accumulate and use understandings and solutions which become part of the organization itself -- knowledge that outlasts the tenure of individual employees and executives”.\textsuperscript{24} Bringing several organizations with different objectives and cultures to join together in collaboration needs a clear understanding of the task ahead. “Collaboration across professional, organizational, and cultural boundaries is an inherently appealing idea. When it

\textsuperscript{22} The Bridgespan Group, “Performance Assessment: Setting the Stage for an Effective Process”, https://www.bridgespan.org/getdoc/e6ab1880-63fb-4178-910f-d9de13836050/performance-assessment


works well, it creates buy-in, enhances problem solving, and leads to new partnerships and ideas. With those rewards, who wouldn’t want to collaborate?”

“The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; jointly developed structure and shared responsibility: mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.”

On May 20, 2017, a Board of Directors meeting was held where we agreed that MFF will collaborate with other local organizations, professionals, and donors to provide assistance in the form of referrals, and educational seminars for the families of the inland empire. We drafted a plan of how we will accomplish the process and how to engage the entire group of stakeholders in the steps forward. After receiving all the feedback from the stakeholders’ questionnaires, MFF held a meeting to discuss and categorize the findings. We want to hold a series of individual meetings with each stakeholder group, with exception of the clients, and eventually a joint meeting in order to address some of the tasks at hand. The team will participate in the planning meetings to:

1. Define the roles of each organization as partner on this project.
2. Define the goals to be accomplished.
3. Commitment to act as one team.
4. Coordinate all activities to accomplish a common and mutual benefit.
5. Sharing resources.

For building resources, we will need more of a collaboration effort between MFF, practitioners, and other nonprofit organizations to create awareness and provide intervention

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25 Atlee

programs and other resources for the families. MFF plans to start with the Board of Directors to evaluate the current programs and to plan for the future. The joint stakeholder meeting in planning will be to create common goals for all the stakeholders, and to participate in and make a collaborative plan to deal with families’ social issues. The purpose is to engage and empower a wide spectrum of stakeholders to be part of MFF’s mission and goal. With the help of the above mentioned stakeholders, we will identify current and critical social issues, match it with professionals, and find the funders/donors to support the programs. We also want to identify long-term and short-term social issues and how to deal with them accordingly.

Conclusion

Family social issues are among the most important challenges that the society has to deal with. When a family’s members are healthy physically and emotionally, they can carry their healthy attitudes outside their home into greater society. The mission of MFF is to provide resources for the Muslim families and others in the Inland Empire to live their best life. We have identified all the stakeholders and are working with them on a collaborative agreement to achieve our goal as one team to help alleviate some of the social problems facing families. We believe that the addition of the Advisory Council will create a more collaboration, and bring more knowledge and experience to MFF as another step toward achieving its goal.

With collaboration, “two or more organizations come together to join for one purpose in making a difference, such as holding an event where the two share common missions and purposes.”

Muslim Family Foundation will collaborate with other local organizations, professionals, and donors to establish programs and referrals for beneficiary families and others.

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to tap to with confidentiality and respect. Our stakeholders will receive quality service that can help them to deal with their challenges and see the social impact changes in their community.

We will establish a process to handle each stage of the collaboration to keep the continuity and maintain a good relationship with all the stakeholders. By assessing the process using surveys, and interviews, we will ensure that we are performing the tasks we aimed to see successful at the end of each year. Individuals or groups can learn from their failure as long as they have a mechanism to collect feedback, and discuss lessons learned along the way. We can also look at failure as an opportunity to improve the situation to achieve success. “The important thing to do is to take that feedback as a learning opportunity so you can move yourself closer to success every day.”28

We will use quantitative and qualitative methods to measure the impact of our programs and services. Quantitative methods will allow us to report how many people attended an event or how many people we have referred for counseling services. Qualitative tools will allow us to “measure intangible things like awareness, attitude, and appreciation”29 of programs and services we offer over a period of time. We will use surveys after each event to collect feedback and to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. We may develop focused programs targeted to benefit a specific group, such as the youth, spousal relationship, or sibling relationship.

Since counseling for certain issues, and overcoming challenges takes place over time, it will be difficult to see positive results immediately. Although we will be monitoring ongoing


feedback, and making changes if necessary, we realize that the change we hope to achieve is a long term goal. The addition of the Advisory Council, and the name recognition of some of the members, should bring more attention to the Muslim Family Foundation, and will hopefully attract a larger number of professional practitioners who will agree to accept referrals. MFF will consider its programs successful when we see families that have come to us for help overcome their challenges and living their best life.
CHAPTER 4 - Results: Evidence of Change through Project Implementation

Actions Taken by Researcher and Stakeholders

During the course of the Capstone Action Project, the researcher and stakeholders worked together to explore the potential of the project, its purpose, and the benefits of the formation of an advisory council for the Muslim Family Foundation currently located in Southern California. Some of the stakeholders and representatives from the Board of Directors were invited to participate in the process of establishing the Advisory Council. The timeframe to complete the Capstone Action Project was ten weeks.

Based on the recommendations of our stakeholders and the Board of Directors, I developed a week-by-week time schedule for completing the project. (See appendix C) A process was established to maintain the project and to keep it on track to reach our goal. We developed the scope and exceptions for the group, and also established a list of fifteen qualified candidates, each of whom was sent a letter of invitation to sit as a member of the Advisory Council.

Measurements of Results

During the dialogue with stakeholders and members of the Board of Directors, questions were asked about the purpose and the benefits of having an advisory council, and what role they would play in the organization. Most were able to see that such a council will be beneficial in helping to promote MFF’s services and educational programs, expanding our human and financial resources, and in helping to plan major events such as the banquet and the annual family symposium.

Of the fifteen candidates invited to become members of the council, ten accepted. The remaining five declined due to either personal or conflict of interest reasons. The initial meeting
was held on November 18, 2017 to introduce members to each other and to the Board of Directors, answer their questions and concerns, share upcoming events, and discuss our future needs. Only four of the ten were able to attend the initial meeting.

**Communication of Results to Stakeholders**

In an open dialogue, stakeholders were informed that the formation of the Advisory Council for the Muslim Family Foundation was completed. The scope and expectations of the council were discussed. The members of the Advisory Council were given the opportunity to ask questions about the MFF’s programs and services, which members of the Board of Directors and I tried to answer openly and honestly. They asked how we plan to provide counseling services; if we plan to hire therapists/counselors. We told them we plan to build a bank of professional practitioners with expertise in various areas to whom we will refer clients. They also asked what our most crucial need is at the moment, and we told them we are in need of office space in the Riverside area. The Advisory Council members in attendance asked for another follow-up meeting to be held in early 2018. A report of the minutes and discussions is being prepared to share with the members, and hopefully more of them will be in attendance at the next meeting.

**Assessment of Goal Achievement**

The Advisory Council agreed with the researcher that there is a need for an organization like Muslim Family Foundation to provide service and educational programs to aid families and individuals in finding solutions for their social and mental health challenges. Based on the input from the stakeholders and the establishment of the Advisory Council, the researcher is pleased to report that the Capstone Action Project was accomplished. Please see table 1 below showing planned completion dates and actual completion dates. I hope this will create positive change and
A noticeable impact that will improve the quality of life for Muslims and others in the society at large.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned Completion Dates</th>
<th>Actual Completion Dates.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong> - 10/9/17: Meet with other nonprofit organizations that have an advisory board.</td>
<td>10/16/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seven days behind schedule to confirm the date and time of the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong> - 10/16/17: Create scope and expectations</td>
<td>10/19/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three days behind schedule, working on the details to fit MFF needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong> - 10/23/17: Create a list to solicit candidates as potential advisors.</td>
<td>10/23/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within the timeframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong> - 10/30/17: Prepare information about the organization, and draft a letter of invitation.</td>
<td>10/30/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within the timeframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong> - 11/6/17 and <strong>Week 6</strong> - 11/13/17: Send invitation and correspond with candidates.</td>
<td>11/12/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within the timeframe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7</strong> - 11/20/17 and <strong>Week 8</strong> - 11/27/17: Hold a meeting with the advisory council members.</td>
<td>11/18/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two days earlier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9</strong> - 12/4/17 and <strong>Week 10</strong> - 12/11/17: Reporting results: The formation of the advisory council was completed.</td>
<td>12/8/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within the allowable timeframe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5 - Final Reflections and Recommendations

Overall Project Summary

Based on the survey results I received during our annual family symposium and educational seminars, it became clear to me that we need to expand both our human and financial resources, and reach out to more local organizations that are currently providing services to the community. Also it was recommended to collaborate with other organizations, local agencies and the counties (Riverside and San Bernardino) to seek a clear understanding of the social and mental health issues. We need to build a coalition and networking to be able to promote MFF programs, obtain more resources and create credibility and legitimacy.

We believe that forming the Advisory Council will give Muslim Family Foundation the opportunities to bring unique knowledge, skills, networking, and experience to the organization and will help the Board of Directors to expand our resources. With the help and support of my stakeholders, I developed a step-by-step process to form an Advisory Council comprised of members of other organizations’ advisory boards, local social service providers, policy makers, city officials, educators, medical doctors, spiritual leaders, civic/community advocates, bankers, attorneys, and mental health practitioners.

Consistency of Guiding Values

Social and mental health issues are not of the subject matter that Muslim immigrants feel they can openly talk about. Those suffering from such challenges often times would be looking for the resources within their faith community. I am mindful of the concern of social stigma that many members of the Muslim community hold; however, there remains a desperate need to provide quality service that incorporates both the scientific and spiritual approaches. These individuals and their families deserve a place to receive the kind of care they need with
confidentiality and respect, and I feel that by collaborating with other non-profits, community
groups, and health departments that MFF will be able to provide them the help they need to
enjoy a better life. If and when I face a challenge I’m uncertain how to deal with, I know there
are places I can turn to for guidance and help. I want others to have that same assurance.

**Project Impact on the Researcher**

The Claremont Lincoln Core curriculum (Mindfulness, Dialogue, Collaboration and
Change) was very important in shaping how I approached my project and developed my plan for
the Advisory Council. It also affected how I managed to interact with stakeholders and
beneficiaries. In dealing with some of the youth issues, and some family problems, it helped me
understand the need for solutions to the social and the mental health problems within our
community. With mindfulness of the challenges facing families, MFF is able to dialogue and
collaborate with other organizations to create the change we want to see in society.

The initial concept of my project was a very wide range of ideas pertaining to the family
social and mental health issues within the Muslim community. In collaborating with the local
organizations, having open dialogue with some of our stakeholders, and listening to the
recommendations of our supporters, I became more aware of the need to narrow my project to an
area where help is needed most. Formation of the Advisory Council helped me to realize the
resources needed in assisting with solutions to the social challenges of the community. One of
the insights realized was how to handle the legal aspects of client privacy, consent, and
protecting the organization during the referral process. Another was if the practitioners would be
working strictly on a pro bono basis, or if they would be paid, and how financial resources will
be managed.
Project Impact on the Stakeholders

I discussed the capstone project with the MFF Board of Directors and was given the green light to pursue this project that will help us to grow in all organizational aspects. In reaching out to advisory board members of other organizations, I learned about what the mission of the advisory council will be, who should be invited to be a member, the need to develop scope and expectations, and set an agenda for the first meeting. After meeting with the new council of advisors, some board members are already thinking of ways to tweak certain internal issues to better stay on the path to our goals. We are currently developing a process of handling fundraising and a budget for 2018 to obtain office space and possible a part-time employee. We are also in the process of establishing a triage procedure for the client referrals for services.

Overall Project Assessment

As strengths, I was able to complete two milestones within the project’s allowable time: establishing guidelines for forming an advisory council and actually forming such a council for the Muslim Family Foundation. However, I believe a weakness is that the Advisory Council needs more members to be people who work in the mental health and social work fields. I feel they would bring greater insight of the work we are trying to do and the impact we hope to make as an organization. Since some of the people we invited declined to be members of our council, and since there is no set number of members to be on an advisory council, I plan to extend invitations to more practitioners in the field. Because this is a specific need, we will take the time to identify individuals who may have the expertise, knowledge and commitment to devote to our cause. I believe that will bring even more strength and resources to the organization to accomplish our goals.
Recommendations for Future Projects

The future of this project will depend on the human and financial resources we are able to acquire to provide the help needed to the families and individuals. We may develop more specialized educational seminars targeting certain audiences, such as youth, spousal relationships, sibling relationships, etc. For other organizations looking to form an advisory council, I recommend that they learn about what the mission and roles of the advisory council should be, and develop scope and expectations. Create a list of candidates, including well-known members of the community, such as politicians, educators, business owners, bankers, religious leaders, etc. who will help to increase credibility, bring unique knowledge, skills, networking, and experience to the organization. This will be a great asset to the beneficiaries. Also, an advisory council can be an additional source of guidance, ideas, outreach, and mentoring to the board of directors.
REFERENCES


Kabat-Zinn, Jon, Mindfulness for Beginners, Reclaiming the Present Moment and Your Life, (Colorado: Sounds True, Inc., 2012)


Sheikh, Maliha F., “An Exploratory Study of the Challenges of Living In America As A Muslim Adolescent Attending Public School”, (PhD Diss., Rutgers University, 2009)


APPENDIX A: Ethical Guidelines

During the process of gathering information or conducting interviews with some of the prospective candidates, the researcher assured them they will be treated with respect and that their contact information will be kept confidential. Any discussions or decisions made pertaining to individuals or families referred for services will be dealt with according to any and all client privacy laws, such as HIPAA (Health Information Portability and Accountability Act).
## Appendix B: Stakeholder Collaboration Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Actions and Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1 2017</td>
<td>Support, buy-in, and feedback.</td>
<td>Board of directors and Advisory Council</td>
<td>I emailed the following questions to 7 board members, and two Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. How can you help MFF-IE to build the team of professionals needed to carry out our goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. How should we go about reaching out/educating community leaders and residents of our organization and the services we will provide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. How can you help in promoting MFF-IE programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 4, 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>As of now, I have received response from:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. One board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. One Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I received another response from a board member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 2017</td>
<td>Seeking information about important current social issues, specialty and availability to help.</td>
<td>Practitioners/Professionals</td>
<td>I emailed the following questions to eight professionals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. What are the three most important social issues we need to address immediately?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. What area can you help with? Which program(s) would you like to undertake?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What is your specialty? How much pro bono time can you contribute to each program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>As of now, I have received four responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 2017</td>
<td>Seeking information about current social issues, and developing programs to help the families.</td>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>I emailed the following questions 7 members of our community:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. How can MFF-IE help in creating positive social impact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Which issue would you like to see MFF-IE address in the short term (in the next</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June 3, 2017

**Future**  Seeking financial support the program.  **Funders and Donors**

As of now, I have received one response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October 16, 2017</th>
<th>Forming Advisory Council (AC)</th>
<th>Prospective Advisory Council members and Board member.</th>
<th>After receiving responses from all the above stakeholders, I will email the following questions to some prospective funders and donors:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Which programs are you willing to support financially?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How can you contribute to the economic stability of MFF-IE?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Would you like to join of the Advisory Council?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| November 18, 2017 | First AC Meeting: Introduction and setting short term and long term goals. | Members of the AC and members of the board of Directors. | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | 1. Advisory Council  a. What is the purpose and benefit of the AC?  b. How the advisory board works?  c. How to form the AC?  d. Who should be on the AC? | |
Appendix C: Week-By-Week Schedule

For creating and completing the MFF advisory council as a capstone project:

Week 1- 10/9/17: Meet with other nonprofit organizations that have an advisory board to understand;
   a. The purpose of the advisory board
   b. How the advisory board works
   c. The help that the advisory board can provide

Week 2- 10/16/17: Create scope and expectations. Appendix E (Scope and Expectations letter)
   a. Roles and responsibilities
   b. Terms and other requirements

Week 3- 10/23/17: Create a list to solicit candidates as potential advisors. Appendix F (List of Candidates)
   a. Using my network and others to create a list to fit our mission, vision, and goals
      (selecting Muslims and non-Muslims, banker, attorney, spiritual leaders, community advocates, educators, city officials, etc.)

Week 4 - 10/30/17: Prepare information about the organization, and draft a letter of invitation. Appendix G (Invitation letter)

Week 5- 11/6/17 and Week 6- 11/13/17: Send invitation and correspond with candidates.

Appendix H (First Meeting Invitation)
   a. Via phone call, meeting F2F, email, and or mail
   b. Secure agreement to be a member of MFF advisory Council
   c. Send a letter to inform the members about the first meeting
Week 7- 11/20/17 and Week 8 - 11/27/17: Hold a meeting with the advisory council members; Appendix I (First Meeting Agenda)

a. Prepare agenda

b. Bring facilitator

c. Set some goals by the advisory council members for the organization

d. Enhance some of the on-going projects

e. Results will be reported in the final weeks

Week 9- 12/4/17 and Week 10- 12/11/17: Reporting results;

a. Suggestions and recommendations made by the advisory council.

b. Share with MFF Board to decide what to do with information obtained from advisory council.

c. Maybe to be used as guidance for next activities or projects.
Appendix D: Gantt Chart
Appendix E: Scope and Expectations

Advisory Council Member
Scope and Expectations

An Advisory Council is a collection of individuals who bring unique knowledge, skills, or status which complement the knowledge, skills, or status of the formal Board members in order to more effectively advise an organization.

Title: Advisory Council Member
       Muslim Family Foundation (MFF)
Reports to: Board President/Executive Director
Purpose: To serve the board as a non-voting member
Term: Two years, it can be renewable upon agreement of the parties.

Obligations of an Advisory Council Member:

- Attend one special meeting per year
- Allow the use of name and professional title on MFF literature
- Act as a liaison to the community for the MFF
- Engagement and communication ambassadors for the MFF mission
- Advocacy for public policy
- Advising the board on creative ways to raise funds to the foundation
- Advising on programs / helping with organizational planning

Optional Activities of an Advisory Council Member:

- Attend board retreats, in-service workshops, or other board development activities
- Attend and participate in special events
- Serve on committees
- Contribute expertise, knowledge, and skills when appropriate
- Contribute or obtain financial or in-kind donations
- Speaking gigs (both getting engagements & doing the actual speaking)
- Providing pro bono work to assist with other staff-driven needs
- Recruit new board members if needed

By signing below, I accept the invitation and duties above to become a member of the MFF Advisory Council.

Name: ____________________________ Date: __________________

Signature: __________________________

Company/Organization: __________________________ Title: __________________

Phone: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Address: __________________________

Please return in the enclosed envelope or scan and email to info@mffie.org. Thank you!

P.O. Box 52468 Riverside, CA. 92517 | 951-801-5424 | www.mffie.org
Appendix F: Candidates List

Advisory Council Candidate List:

- Advisory Board Members of other organizations
- Local Social Service providers
- Policy Makers
- City Officials
- Educators
- Medical Doctors
- Spiritual Leaders
- Civic/Community Advocates
- Bankers
- Attorneys
- Mental health Practitioners
Appendix G: Invitation Letter

Date:

Dear,

Your status as a community leader can dramatically help us to continue serving almost 24,000 Muslims living in the Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties). Please accept our invitation to become a member of the Muslim Family Foundation “MFF” Advisory Council. We recognize how valuable your time is so we have kept the duties of Advisory Council members at a minimum. We mainly ask to use your name on our literature and ask you to be an ambassador in the community for the MFF.

MFF will provide educational programs, training and professional referrals for the Muslim families, and others, to cope with their unique social needs. Our primary focus is to provide education and professional resources and referrals for those in need of food or other essential resources. By providing all of these services, the MFF can help Muslim and other families to integrate into the society and become productive factors in shaping our communities.

Please feel free to contact one of the names below if you have any questions. Please see the attached brochure for more about our organization.

An Advisory Council scope and expectations is attached. Please review it, and we hope you will accept this invitation by signing it and returning it to us. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

P.O. Box 52468 Riverside, CA. 92517 | 951-801-54241 www.mffic.org
Appendix H: Invitation to First Meeting

Date;

Dear,

Thank you for your gracious acceptance to be a member of the Advisory Council for the Muslim Family Foundation. We are honored by your acceptance.

Please accept our invitation to attend a get acquainted informational breakfast meeting on November 18, 2017, 8:30 AM at Coco’s Restaurant on Iowa and University Blvd, in Riverside. The purpose of the meeting will be for members to meet each other, provide information on the Muslim Family Foundation, and to answer any questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you. Please RSVP by November 13, 2017 at (951) 522-2326 or AMENG03@MSN.COM

Sincerely,
Appendix I: First Meeting Agenda

Saturday, November 18, 2017
8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Coco's Bakery Restaurant
1303 University Ave.
Riverside, CA 92507

**MFF Advisory Council 1st Meeting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 - 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Welcome, Introductions, and Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 - 9:40 a.m.</td>
<td>MFF Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40 - 9:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Why an Advisory Council?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:50 - 10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Open Discussion/Proposals/Resolutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Adjournment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of Next Meeting __________
Appendix J: Survey 2016

We hope you enjoyed our event. Please provide us feedback using this quick survey so that we may continue to improve our offerings in the future.

1. How did you hear about this event?
   - Friends
   - Social Media
   - Flyer
   - Islamic Center
   - Other

2. How helpful was the content presented at the event?
   - Extremely helpful
   - Very helpful
   - Somewhat helpful
   - Not so helpful
   - Not at all helpful

3. How would you rate the presenter(s) at the professional event?
   - Excellent
   - Very good
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor

4. Overall, how would you rate the event?
   - Excellent
   - Very good
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor

5. What social issues would you like to see addressed in the future?
   ____________________________________________________________

6. What kinds of professional resources does the Muslim Community need?
   ____________________________________________________________

7. Is there anything else you’d like to share with us?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________