



ELEVEN ORGANIZATIONS BEGIN WORK TO REDUCE BIAS AGAINST MUSLIMS WITH NEW GRANTS FROM DDFIA'S BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM

The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art's Building Bridges Program Awards More Than \$1.7 Million in Support of Transformative Arts and Culture Projects That Foster Understanding and Strengthen Communities Across the U.S.

New York, N.Y., March 30, 2017 — With the aim of fostering understanding of and reducing bias against Muslims across the U.S., 11 organizations will soon launch projects funded through the [Building Bridges 2016-17 Grants Program](#) of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Arts (DDFIA). The grantees, which were announced today, will each receive up to \$300,000 for initiatives that use the arts to build empathy and lasting connections between American Muslim and non-Muslim communities. It is readily apparent that the need for such work is more urgent than ever before: A February 2017 report from the Southern Poverty Law Center cites a 197 percent surge in anti-Muslim hate groups in 2016.



Students at Jefferson Community School perform "MALALA: A Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Changed the World" as part of Neighborhood Bridges' Crossing Bridges Festival at Children's Theatre Company in 2016. Photo credit: Bruce Silcox.

"Prejudice and division had a banner year in 2016, but this has only furthered the resolve and ambition of these organizations to advance this critical undertaking to heal our communities," said Zeyba Rahman, senior program officer of DDFIA's Building Bridges Program. "This year's Building Bridges grantees have proposed inventive arts-based solutions to strengthen the social fabric between American Muslims and non-Muslims for the benefit of our nation. Art and culture are among the most powerful forces to remind us that we are more alike than different."

The Building Bridges Program is pleased to award the following 11 organizations support for their projects:

- [Bang on a Can](#) in **Brooklyn, N.Y.**, will receive \$300,000 for its social engagement wing [Found Sound Nation](#) to plan and implement Mosaic Interactive, an immersive, multidisciplinary cultural exchange and artists residency project for socially engaged artists from Muslim-majority countries and the U.S., culminating in a music festival touring select cities of the Appalachian Southeast in the states of Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia;
- [Boston Center for the Arts](#) in **Boston, Mass.**, will receive \$150,000 to commission [ANIKAYA Dance Theater](#) to plan and implement a collaborative, movement-based dramatic work inspired by Farid Uddin Attar's epic poem "The Conference of the Birds," and partner with the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center to hold community-based workshops with Muslim communities, including immigrants and refugees, to gather stories that will be woven into the work's narrative arc;
- [Center for Asian American Media](#) (CAAM) in **San Francisco, Calif.**, will receive \$92,500 to expand public engagement with 20 short documentary films created by American Muslim youth through screenings and discussions, at CAAMFest 2018 and on the

platforms of partnering organizations in public media, cable and digital television, about the notion of being “othered”;

- [Children’s Theatre Company](#) (CTC) in **Minneapolis, Minn.**, will receive \$180,000 to expand the curriculum-based classroom program, Neighborhood Bridges, to reflect stories of young Muslims living in the Twin Cities, with the aim of providing greater cultural understanding of Muslim immigrants to third through sixth graders in 24 public schools through critical study and discussion of 18 stories about Muslim high school students;
- [Duke Performances](#) at Duke University in **Durham, N.C.**, will receive \$125,000 to plan and implement Southern Hospitality: Muslim Arts & Music as Cultural Bridge Making in the American South, a residency program including performances by American Muslim performing artists, with the aim to engage residents, particularly high school students, in rural communities surrounding Durham and Duke University to expand their experience with Muslim cultures;
- [Fells Point Creative Alliance](#) in **Baltimore, Md.**, will receive \$144,900 to plan and implement How to Be a Good Muslim Girl, a project that will feature female Muslim and local artists in joint performances and discussions held in high schools, colleges and universities to explore topics such as structural racism and the historic roots of inequality in Baltimore—encouraging audiences to examine their own personal biases against Muslims;
- [Lincoln Center Theater](#) (LCT) in **New York, N.Y.**, will receive \$150,000 to increase the number of stage directors from Muslim-majority regions participating in LCT’s Directors Lab, a leadership development program that nurtures emerging, global and U.S.-based stage directors through intensive study of various approaches to the craft and provides opportunities for relationships and collaborations;
- [MDC Live Arts](#) at Miami Dade College in **Miami, Fla.**, will receive \$160,000 for Ojalá: Wishes from the Muslim World, a season that will celebrate Miami’s vibrant cultural history—especially that of Moorish (Spanish Muslim) influence on the city’s Spanish-speaking and Hispanic population—through performances, residencies, campus-based conversations and community workshops with Muslim artists;
- [Museum of Durham History](#) in **Durham, N.C.**, will receive \$25,000 to develop an exhibition of African-American Muslim oral histories and complementary programs centered on one of the oldest Muslim communities in North Carolina, and on the wealth of new cultural, gastronomical and business enterprise that emerged from it and continues to enrich the city;
- [Proteus Fund](#) in **Amherst, Mass.**, will receive \$300,000 to continue its partnership with [ReThink Media](#) to expand their highly successful media training for Muslim community leaders and allies across the country who have recently entered the public arena;
- [Young Writers Project](#) in **Burlington, Vt.**, will receive \$90,000 to support Youth Voices for Change, a project led by youth, including Muslim Girls Making Change, to engage Muslim and non-Muslim youth in Vermont with storytelling, performances and publication of work that expand their understanding of Muslim cultures and related social justice issues.



Participants learn to tell their stories through film in the Center for Asian American Media’s Muslim Youth Voices program. Photo credit: CAAM.

The [Building Bridges 2016-2017 Grants Program](#) sought organizations whose arts- and culture-based projects align with Program goals to advance relationships, increase understanding and reduce bias between Muslim and non-Muslim communities nationwide. A panel of five subject expert reviewers recommended these projects for support over a period of one to three years.



ReThink Media, in partnership with Proteus Fund, delivers on-camera trainings to Islamic Networks Group's staff and local affiliates as they prepare for new local and national broadcast opportunities in 2017. Photo credit: Tim Brauhn, ING.

Since 2007, the Building Bridges Program has supported endeavors that engage U.S.-based Muslims and non-Muslims in arts and culture experiences to increase understanding and advance relationships between communities. The need for this work is clear. Muslims number approximately 1.6 billion people around the world, including 3.3 million in the United States. Despite this large, dispersed and diverse worldwide population, studies have shown that U.S. perceptions of them remain narrow. A February 2017 report from Pew Research Center showed that, out of nine listed religious groups, Muslims are viewed the least warmly by Americans. A January 2016 survey from Pew also noted that approximately half of Americans think at least “some” U.S. Muslims are anti-American, greater than the share who say “just a few” or “none.” In the face of this reality, Building Bridges grantees have provided compelling arts- and/or media-based programs rooted in diverse Muslim cultures to catalyze a social transformation

in attitudes of strategically selected audiences across the country.

About the Building Bridges Program

The Building Bridges Program is the grant-making arm of the [Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art](#) (DDFIA), which is an extension of the [Doris Duke Charitable Foundation](#) (DDCF). Based in New York, the program supports national efforts to advance relationships, increase understanding, and reduce bias between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. For more information, please visit www.ddcf.org/what-we-fund/building-bridges.

About the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and child well-being, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties. For more information, please visit www.ddcf.org.

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