



## THE BUILDING BRIDGES 2017-18 GRANTS PROGRAM AWARDS MORE THAN \$2.3 MILLION TO ADVANCE INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

### Fifteen U.S.-based Organizations Receive Grants to Strengthen Relationships Among Muslim and Non-Muslim Neighbors Through Arts and Cultural Projects

**May 3, 2018, New York, N.Y.** – With more than \$2.3 million in new funding through the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Arts' [Building Bridges 2017-18 Grants Program](#), 15 U.S.-based grantees will soon launch projects to cultivate stronger relationships among Muslims and their non-Muslim neighbors through revelatory experiences. Harnessing a wide range of media, including theater, spoken word, literature, documentary film and radio, the grantees will develop pop-up and long-term cultural programming in their communities across the U.S. The grantees, which range from arts and media institutions to higher education and social service organizations, span many approaches and locations across the country but are all united in the goal of increasing harmony and connections for mutual well-being.



Children and families stand captivated by Surabhi Ensemble, a global fusion collaborative featuring soloist Carlo Basile, Senegalese Tama drummer Massamba Diop and Indian Veena artist Sara Ranganathan, at Inner-City Muslim Action Network's CommUNITY Café. Photo credit: IMAN.

“When our trust and connections to one another break down, we are all the poorer for it,” said Zeyba Rahman, senior program officer for the Building Bridges Program. “One of the most tested and reliable ways in which we can ignite cross-community understanding and dissipate fear is through storytelling. It can serve as the glue that binds us together by providing direct entry into one another’s inner worlds and become the basis for lasting relationships. We are honored to support these 15 new projects, which creatively reimagine ways to promote social cohesion in our communities while celebrating the cultural contributions of Muslims to our American identity.”

These organizations were selected from a pool of more than 200 initial applicants requesting more than \$26 million in funding for their projects—more than a 100 percent rise from the previous year, which saw 98 applicants requesting approximately \$10 million. This increase indicates a clear spike in awareness not only of the Building Bridges Program but of the need for this important work in the current political and social context.

The new grantees of the Building Bridges Program’s fifth annual open competition for funding are receiving project support ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000. They are:

- [Brooklyn Historical Society](#), awarded \$300,000 to develop “Muslims in Brooklyn,” a public arts and oral history project that will introduce audiences to the borough’s diverse Muslim communities and history through a comprehensive multimedia series, including public performances, educational curricula and visual arts in NYC transit;
- [Children’s Museum of Manhattan](#), awarded \$100,000 to continue to meet national demand for “America to Zanzibar,” an interactive and highly acclaimed exhibition about the diversity of global Muslim culture, with new tours through Illinois, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Tennessee;

- [Cleveland Public Theatre](#), awarded \$50,000 to partner with Cleveland-based Muslim community organizations to create a permanent ensemble dedicated to Arabic language productions and to learn from a successful, similar past initiative focused on local Latino communities;
- [Free Arts](#), awarded \$99,000 to partner with Muslim community-based organizations to develop creativity, leadership, spoken word and performance workshops designed to engage Muslim and African-American youth in South Los Angeles and encourage perseverance through challenging circumstances;
- [Inner-City Muslim Action Network \(IMAN\)](#), awarded \$225,000 to develop CommUNITY Café, a live performance art series for communities in both Chicago and Atlanta, in addition to an annual artist retreat and holistic artist residencies, all in close concert with IMAN's Community Organizing, Health Center and Green ReEntry programs for Muslim and broader populations;
- [The International Writing Program at the University of Iowa](#), awarded \$215,137 to build upon a previous successful residency with Armenian and Turkish writers for "Between the Lines: Identity & Belonging," a creative writing and cultural exchange between American Muslim and non-Muslim youth from vulnerable communities;
- [Kartemquin Films](#), awarded \$65,000 for the post-production and distribution of "Loyalty: Stories," a series of short-format documentaries about American Muslim veterans that explore themes of service, identity and faith in the post-9/11 era;
- [The Moth](#), awarded \$150,000 for the expansion of "Muslim Voices," a storytelling project developing the stories of 150-200 New York-based Muslims and introducing and presenting them at live events to new and familiar Moth audiences across the city and on The Moth Radio Hour and Podcast;
- [Ping Chong + Company](#), awarded \$150,000 to develop an initiative deepening community engagement across the country with the award-winning "Beyond Sacred," a documentary theater and multimedia project featuring the real-life stories of young American Muslims;
- [Round Earth Media](#), awarded \$150,000 to develop and launch a cultural news desk producing 20



Members of Masjidullah, a largely African-American Sunni Islam masjid in Philadelphia, share the challenges of building a religious community and creating an institution for the documentary, "Masjidullah: Struggle for Human Excellence" (2014), through Scribe Video Center's "Muslim Voices of Philadelphia" project. Photo credit: Lori Waselchuk for Scribe Video Center.



Ronnie Malley in "Ziryab, the Songbird of Andalusia" at Silk Road Rising (2016). Photo credit: Airan Wright.

journalistic stories, a public radio documentary and related media to illuminate in compelling ways the experiences and lives of U.S.- and internationally based Muslim artists;

- [The Scribe Video Center](#), awarded \$80,000 to expand from the Philadelphia region to the rest of the country "Muslim Voices," a project enabling local Muslim community members to learn digital storytelling skills and share surprising stories and hidden histories with new audiences;
- [Silk Road Rising](#), awarded \$162,500 to partner with American-Muslim playwrights and new audiences for the development of three new theater works collectively called "Crescent and Star";
- [Springboard for the Arts](#), awarded \$300,000 to partner with the People's Center

Clinics and Services in Minneapolis to launch a Creative Community Hub that builds relationships between Somali and other East African immigrants and their non-Muslim neighbors through local artist pop-up and long-term creative projects encouraging interaction and understanding;

- [University of Michigan-Dearborn's Center for Arab American Studies](#), awarded \$216,677 for the expansion of "Halal Metropolis," a three-year project inviting the community into a multidisciplinary, architectural and place-based exploration of how Muslim culture has enriched key public spaces in Detroit and Southeast Michigan;
- [Young Audiences of New Jersey](#), awarded \$75,000 for the research, design and pilot phases of "United We Create," a multidisciplinary arts project offering local students, teachers and caregivers immersive arts experiences that decrease tendency to bias and prejudice and encourages critical, creative and culturally aware understanding.

Learn more about the important ways these organizations are building bridges in communities around the country at their respective websites.

### **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 and increase understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. For more information, please visit [www.ddcf.org/what-we-fund/building-bridges](http://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](http://www.ddcf.org).

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