



AZIZ FOUNDATION
BUILDING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

2019 - 2023



“ I have worked hard to accumulate wealth not simply for myself, but for the communities that I am a part of. It is of such importance to me that it is written into the governing documents of my family trust, which ultimately owns all that I’ve built. My charitable focus has always been on improving the life chances of people who, purely because of the circumstances of their birth, have been disadvantaged.”

Asif Aziz, Chair of the Aziz Foundation

KEY FIGURES

SCHOLARSHIPS

UNIVERSITY
PARTNERS
ACROSS
THE UK

45
in total

550+
Scholarships

£7.5m
in Awards

94%
in
employment

340
Graduated,
220 Studying

13%
in senior
positions,
above 10% nat.
avg.

65%
Female
Scholars

35%
Male
Scholars

3
SCOTLAND

2
NORTH
EAST

4
NORTH
WEST

3
YORKSHIRE

2
EAST
MIDLANDS

1
WALES

6
WEST
MIDLANDS

3
EAST

15
LONDON

3
SOUTH
EAST

3
SOUTH
WEST

INTERNSHIPS

32
Completed

£330k
Value

20+
Host
Organisations

ABOUT US

Our Values

The Aziz Foundation was established in 2015 by the Aziz family, and is inspired by the values and teachings of Islam to support communities in Britain. The Foundation does this through its scholarships and internship programmes, which support individuals and communities to advance social justice for all and promote the common good. The vision is to see a society that is inclusive and fair, where individuals and communities feel a sense of belonging and thrive.

Principles and Objectives

Our work is guided by principles of social justice, compassion and cooperation. We recognise that Muslims make an invaluable contribution to the fabric of this country. We wish to live in a Britain where Muslims are valued and empowered to fulfil their true potential and to continue making positive contributions to their communities and beyond.

Education creates opportunities for social mobility and we recognise that despite the hard work and efforts of many, there continue to be significant equality gaps that hamper the social mobility of talented, inspiring and ambitious British Muslims. As an organisation, we are driven to reduce these equality gaps through our scholarships programme and other initiatives, which aim to advance social mobility and professional growth.



“As we enter our fifth year with a more informed perspective, I am excited to see the continued evolution of our Masters Scholarships programme. These scholarships are reflective of our belief in the immense potential of British Muslims, and our desire to help support these communities to create a better future.”

- Rahima Aziz BEM, Trustee of the Aziz Foundation

Our Story so far

The Aziz Foundation commenced its operations in 2015 delivering a dynamic programme of philanthropic work that included scholarships, research grants, grants for individuals and projects, and organisational development for charities.

The Foundation's grant-making until 2018 focused on supporting innovative projects and building sustainable partnerships with charitable organisations. The projects the Foundation supported reflected its three work streams: Community Empowerment, Leadership Development, and Public Engagement. The Foundation believes that increased investment in underserved communities' skills and capacity, and their presence in public life which gives them opportunities to connect with others, are crucial to uplift communities in the UK. By gaining confidence in their abilities, understanding their power and influence, and communicating effectively, people from underserved communities are better able to correct misinformation, stereotypes and prejudice as well as challenge discrimination and marginalisation.

Following a strategic review of the Aziz Foundation and its work, in 2019 the Foundation began streamlining its grants programme while simultaneously growing its scholarships provision to establish a one-of-a-kind programme focussed on supporting Muslim individuals by awarding them Masters scholarships. It is exciting for us to support each scholarship recipient to progress in their career and make meaningful contributions to their industry, community and society as a whole.

In 2020 the Foundation developed an internships programme to complement its provision of scholarships. This programme works closely with employers in industries ranging from journalism to race equality policy to provide British Muslims with a foothold in their chosen profession.

The Aziz Foundation's flagship Masters Scholarships Programme has now been operating for five years. This is a cause for celebration, but also an important inflection point. Both trustees and Foundation staff agreed that it was an opportune moment to assess the programme's social impact to date. The result is this evaluation report, which provides an analysis of the change we hope to catalyse through our beneficiaries. The remit of this report also includes the Foundation's internships programme as this is a growing and important area of our work.

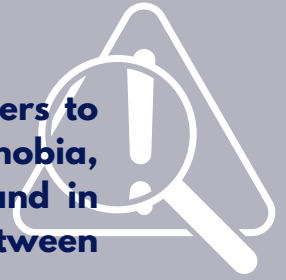
The current report offers a snapshot of social impact that the Foundation has been generating in advancing its mission.



THEORY OF CHANGE

THE CHALLENGE

We live in a society where British Muslims still face systemic barriers to fulfilling their potential and realising their aspirations. Islamophobia, financial difficulties, and lack of talent recognition in education and in professional life helps to sustain equality gaps along the pipeline between higher education and employment.



OUR AIMS

Reduce equality gaps in the education to employment pipeline, increasing the visibility and presence of British Muslims in industries and fields where they are traditionally underrepresented

Raise aspirations, creating entry points into professions that Muslims in Britain may not have considered are for them

Generate upwards social mobility, creating virtuous circles that increase skills, potential and resources within British Muslim communities



ASSUMPTIONS

- We live in a meritocracy
- That willpower/desire are strong enough to carry individuals

- Islamophobia
- Prevalence of stereotypes
- Economic constraints
- Lack of willingness of organisations and universities to work with the Foundation or address challenges



BARRIERS

THEORY OF CHANGE

WHAT WE DO (INPUTS)

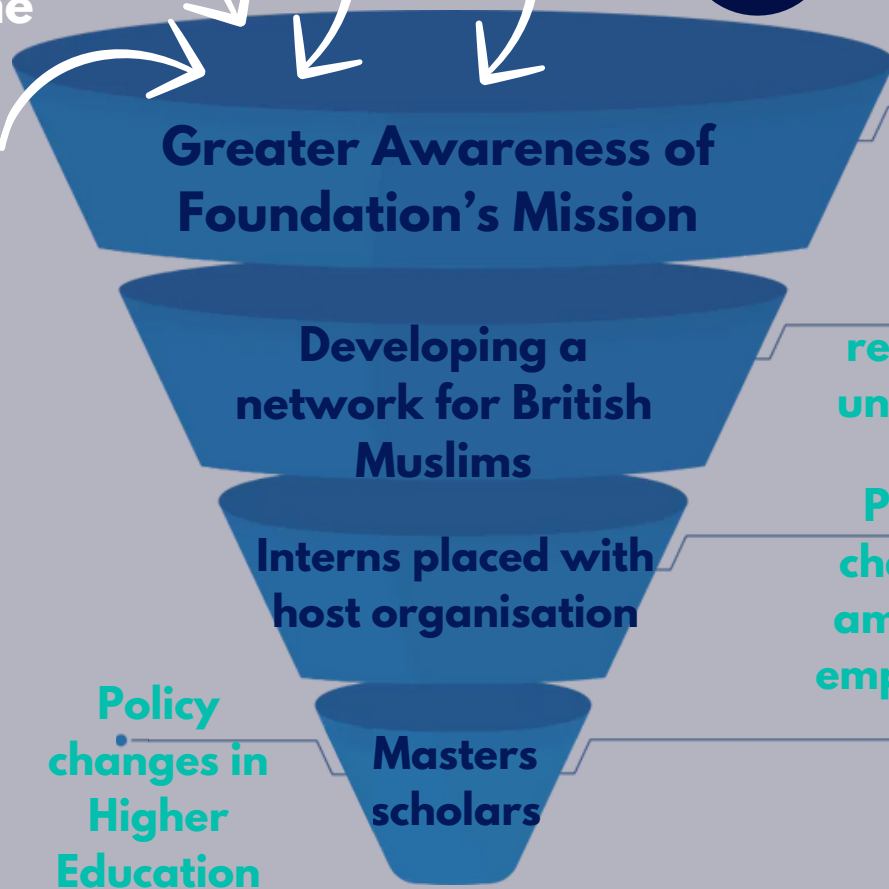


Internships Programme
Scholarships Programme
Mentoring Scheme
Research and Policy



OUTCOMES

Scholarships Programme



Confidence and Advocacy Skills

Increased representation in underrepresented fields

Policy changes amongst employers

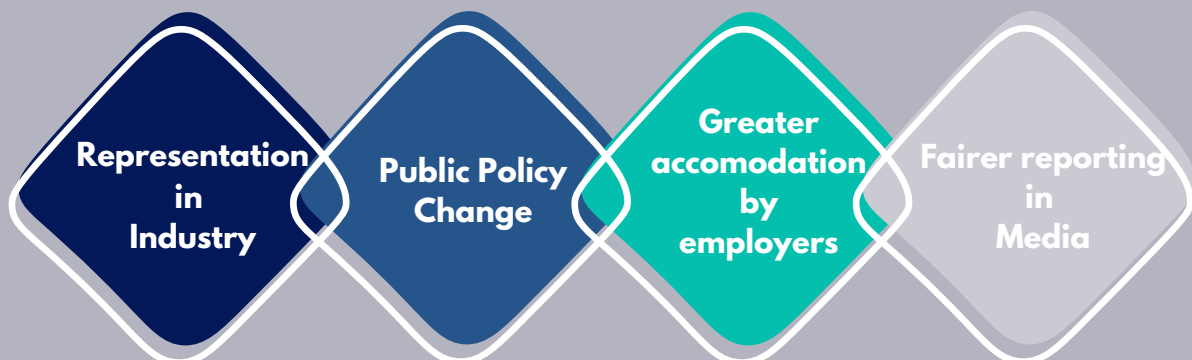
Masters Graduates

Policy changes in Higher Education

WHAT WE ACHIEVE (OUTPUTS)



SOCIAL IMPACT



DELVING INTO OUR PROGRAMMES

Masters Scholarships

The Aziz Foundation’s scholarships are awarded to Muslims lacking the financial means to complete postgraduate degrees at British universities. These scholarships aim to empower British Muslims to bring positive change to their communities and beyond.

Thus, they are aimed at those who:

- aspire to make a positive contribution to society – people who want to help others
- view themselves as future leaders and changemakers



The current thematic criteria consist of the following:

- **Effective Advocacy and Enhancing Public Perception – facilitating better representation and contribution of Muslims to civil society to combat Islamophobia and positively transform perceptions of Muslims and Islam in Britain**
- **Community Service and Social Development – raising the aspirations and standards within British Muslim communities**

Rationale and background

In 2019, the Foundation made the operational decision to concentrate its giving on Masters scholarships as it identified a major gap in the funding landscape at this level. While there tends to be a robust system of student finance in place for undergraduate courses, and research council funding options available to doctoral studies, funding opportunities for postgraduate taught provision is few and far between.

Moreover, the postgraduate student loan of around £12,000 does not cover the entire cost of a Masters programme much of the time, let alone fees and living costs. There is also a discernible progression challenge confronting British Muslims in the transition from the undergraduate to postgraduate taught studies, with a notable drop off in participation between these levels, documented in recent national datasets.

Year(s)	Scholars	Subject Areas	Universities	£m (cum)
2023/24	60	7	45	7.5
2022/23	73	6	36	7
2021/22	50	3	21	6.5
2020/21	188	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	5.6
2019/20	146	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	2.4
2016-18	40	Unrestricted	4	0.8

Development and Expansion

Phase 1

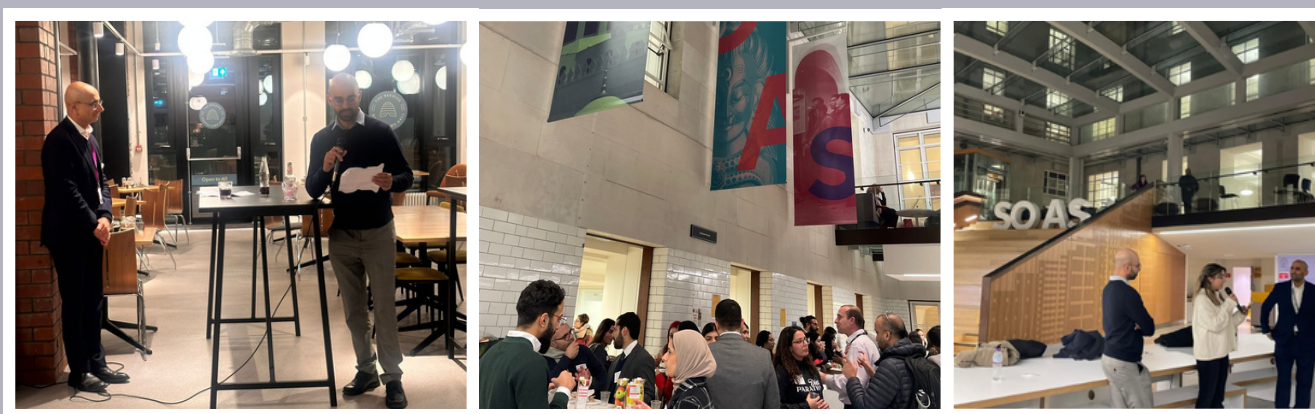
Between 2016-18 the Foundation concurrently developed multiple programmes, of which the scholarships scheme was one. At this early stage, scholarships were only a small part of the Foundation's giving, and represented a small, defined and scalable scheme. Other programmes included a widescale grants programme, which gave the Foundation an understanding of the grantmaking landscape in the UK.

Phase 2

In 2019 the Foundation made the strategic decision to centre the scholarships line of work, limiting the remit to Masters courses. This was the inception of the 'Masters Scholarships Programme' in its current guise. It resulted in the massification of the programme, with numbers of awards increasing sharply and few restrictions in terms of subject areas and universities between 2019-21.

Phase 3

The period 2021-23 saw the further, strategic evolution of the scholarships programme: two principal changes included the introduction of the preferred partner scheme and the restriction of scholarships to subject areas within the social sciences and humanities. The influence of the programme now stretches beyond scholarships, and incorporates working with universities more directly on EDI and access.



The Aziz Foundation aspires to make a transformative difference beyond its scholarships programme. It works very closely with its university partners to co-develop inclusive learning environments for British Muslim cohorts. It therefore utilises its specialist knowledge of and access to British Muslim communities and the data it generates through its scheme, to inform university perspectives on EDI and widening participation.

Support from University Partners

Of all the scholarships awarded since 2021, which are valued at £2m, approximately another £0.5 million, or 20% of the cost of fees, has been invested by university partners through contributions/concessions. Universities have also covered the costs of scholarship receptions, conferences, and scholars' induction days.

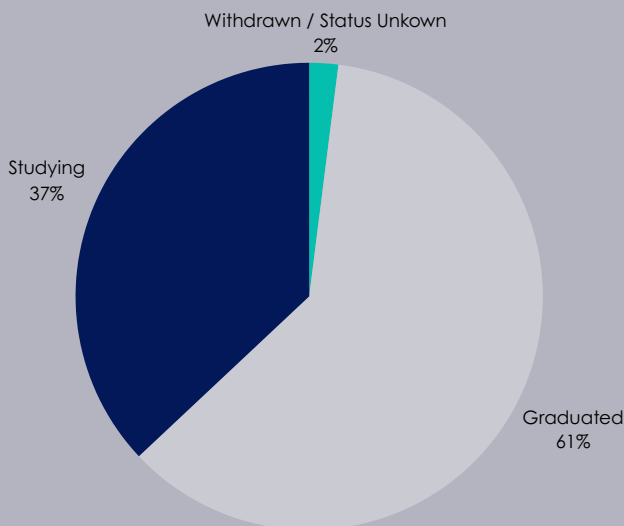
Policies Adopted by University Partners

With the Foundation's encouragement and engagement, 11 universities have adopted the APPG definition of Islamophobia, and an extra seven universities have become supporters of Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM) (see table below).

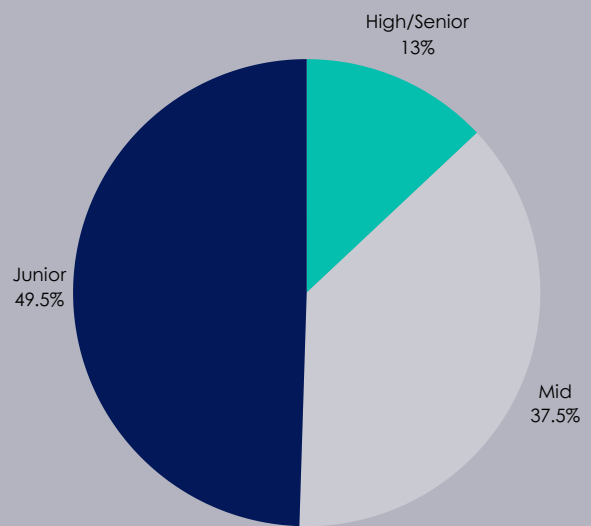
Adopted definition of Islamophobia	Supporting IAM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London Metropolitan University • University College London - The Bartlett • University of Birmingham • University of London • University of Sheffield • University of Sunderland • University of Westminster • Wolfson College, University of Cambridge • Goldsmiths, University of London • University of Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aston University • Greenwich University • Goldsmiths, University of London • Imperial College London • London Metropolitan University • Sussex University • University of Birmingham • University of Law

Graduation and Employment

Of the Foundation's 557 scholarship recipients, currently 340 have graduated, with the remaining still studying. The Aziz Scholar graduate employment rate (94%) is higher than the national average for postgraduates (90%) (source: ONS). 50% of graduates in employment are in middle-level positions and 13% are in higher/senior positions, above the national average of 10% (source: ONS).



Pie Chart 1: Aziz Scholars' Status Breakdown



Pie Chart 2: Aziz Graduates' Destination Breakdown

Highlighting Scholar Success Stories - A Summary Sample

Name	Year	Course	Area	Impact of Scholarship
Sabah Choudhry	2018/ 19	MA Journalism (City)	Journalism	Sabah has, after the Masters, become a broadcast journalist working for Sky News. She has covered a range of topical and high profile news stories.
Fatima Iftikhar	2019/ 20	Social Policy and Research (UCL)	Policy	Fatima has worked in several important policy roles and has now been promoted to Programme Director at the think tank, People's Economy.
Mohammed Hannan	2019/ 20	MBA (University of Manchester)	Business	The MBA helped Mohammed secure regular promotions at AstraZeneca and he is now the company's International Digital & Innovation Director.
Sarah Arya Fatih	2021/ 22	MA Broadcast Journalism (City University)	Journalism	The Masters gave Arya the confidence to secure industry experience as a freelancer, enhancing her skillset through field producing, pre-recorded and live shows, as well as working on two documentaries. She is now a Producer at Al-Jazeera English and Sky News.
Maaha Elahi	2020/ 21	MSc Criminology (University of Cambridge)	Law	Upon graduation Maaha secured a pupillage and has become a tenant barrister at Garden Court Chambers, specialising in public law, community care and housing.
Sibia Akhtar	2019/ 20	MA History (University of Manchester)	Arts & Culture	Since completing her Masters, Sabia has been able to undertake a variety of jobs in the heritage sector and give speeches at career talks. She is now an Associate Curator at the Science and Industry Museum, Manchester.

Reports and Acknowledgements

The Foundation has published a set of three reports, exploring the intersectional disadvantage experienced by British Muslim students, based on surveys and focus groups of scholarship candidates and recipients. This represents a form of community based research, with the lived experiences and insights of beneficiaries fully incorporated.

In addition to this, the Foundation provided the inspiration for a major report, produced by London Metropolitan University, on Islamophobia in higher education (Institutionalised: The Rise of Islamophobia in Higher Education, 2020). Furthermore, the Chair of Trustees' contribution to philanthropy, and the work of the Foundation was recognised through a fellowship awarded by Goldsmiths, University of London.

Scholar: Zain Dada

Scholarship Awarded: 2017

Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Course: MA Creative Writing

Current Role: Culture and Community Spaces at Risk Officer, Greater London Authority



Zain's Story

Growing up in London, Zain has always been involved in arts and culture initiatives to amplify the voices of marginalised groups.

In recognition of his extensive community and advocacy work and potential as an artist, Zain was awarded a scholarship to embark on a MA Creative Writing and Education programme. The Masters gave Zain the space and opportunity to experiment with his creative practice and make the transition in his work from poetry towards playwriting - something he had never previously envisaged himself getting into.

His debut play, *Blue Mist*, is a story about South Asian Muslim men navigating a system that isn't built for them. It sold out over many nights at the Royal Court Theatre.

In future, Zain would like to get into writing for film and television. He has secured a much-coveted place on the BBC Writersroom Drama Room after being selected as one of 12 participants from 4,000 applicants. This will give him the opportunity to refine his skills in writing for television.



Pictures from Zain's debut play, *Blue Mist*.
Photo credit to Royal Court Theater and The Art Desk

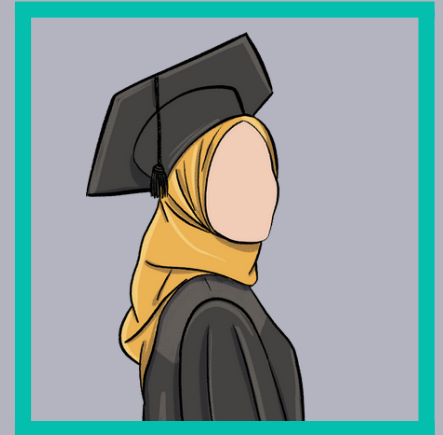
Scholar: Humairaa Dudhwala

Scholarship Awarded: 2022

Institution: SOAS, University of London

Course: MA Muslim Minorities in a Global Context

Current Role: Editorial Assistant, Manchester University Press



Humairaa's Story

Humairaa comes from Blackburn, and upon graduating, she was hired by Manchester University Press as an Assistant Editorial Controller in the Production department. A position and industry she enjoyed working in, but she was keen to move into a more senior role that would grant her more influence over editorial decisions. For this, she needed a higher level of qualification, but she didn't have the savings to be able to study for a postgraduate degree.

This is where the Aziz Foundation scholarship proved invaluable. Three months into her Masters degree Humairaa managed to secure a promotion to an editorial role. After three years as an Assistant Editorial Controller, this promotion is a real upward move in Humairaa's career.

She hopes to bring more diversity to the world of publishing by commissioning content that reflects all communities in society. In particular she wants to influence the discourse around Islam through publishing content that transforms perceptions of British Muslims. Her message to others is to value your own stories, background and heritage, and through that we can enrich society for all.



Scholar: Tasneem Abdur-Rashid
Scholarship Awarded: 2019
Institution: Birkbeck, University of London
Course: MA Creative Writing
Current Role: Author



Tasneem's Story

Tasneem had long dreamt of becoming a published author in the UK and knew that studying for a Masters in Creative Writing would help her hone her writing skills and build a network of industry contacts. She remarks that receiving the scholarship “showed me that someone believed in me and my dreams. This kept me motivated throughout my MA.”

Despite the challenges of returning to study, and working alongside raising a family, during her course Tasneem secured an agent and publisher for her debut UK novel, *Finding Mr Perfectly Fine*. The novel's narrative centres on the experiences of a young Muslim British Bangladeshi woman and has received rave reviews.

Tasneem considers it a privilege to be writing the kinds of novels she wishes existed while she was growing up. She is moved by those that see her as an inspiration and works hard to ensure her writing is an authentic and positive example of diverse and inclusive literature. Currently working on a new novel, Tasneem is determined to challenge misrepresentations and enrich the literature landscape as a British Muslim woman.



Scholar: Hafsa Khalil

Scholarship Awarded: 2020

Institution: City, University of London

Course: MA Newspaper Journalism

Current Role: Freelance Digital News

Producer, CNN



Hafsa's Story

Hafsa always had a passion for writing and storytelling but didn't initially pursue a career in this field because she didn't think it was possible for someone from her background. Not only were there virtually no role models, she also didn't have access to information and advice on where to start.

Fortunately, her career trajectory took a significant turn for the better when she was awarded the Aziz Foundation scholarship, which enabled her to pursue a Master's degree in Newspaper Journalism at City University, renowned as one of the country's most distinguished journalism departments. This was transformative and provided her with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the field. With newfound confidence, she managed to secure internships at the Evening Standard and CNN, a significant milestone in her career.

The initial step into the industry is often the most challenging, especially for individuals without established connections. But now Hafsa is a freelance digital writer for CNN International, an experience she relishes every day. She is excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and is committed to making a positive impact in the world of journalism.



Scholar: Nahim Ahmed MBE
Scholarship Awarded: 2019
Institution: University College London (UCL)
Course: MSc Strategic Management of Projects
Current Role: Strategic Engagement Manager, Poplar HARCA Housing Association



Nahim's Story

Nahim graduated in youth and social work from the University of East London and became a mediation officer at his old school, which helped in developing his leadership skills. He then, with the help of an Aziz scholarship, undertook a Masters programme, which enabled him to broaden his horizons and redefine his vision and ambition.

Equipped with a new skillset, Nahim crafted a new job role for himself as Head of Strategic Engagement at Poplar HARCA. Through this role Nahim has been intent on addressing the gaps he sees in Poplar HARCA's provision for local communities. His hard work has been recognised by two promotions and he is now in charge of half a million pounds worth of project funding, managing 28 members of staff.

The past couple of years have seen his lifelong commitment to disadvantaged young people in Tower Hamlets acknowledged in the Queen's Birthday Honours list with an MBE, and by the University of East London through a lifetime achievement award.

Nahim is now keen to progress into a director level position, and has been accepted on to a prestigious leadership training programme run by the Impetus Leadership Academy and supported by Bank of America.



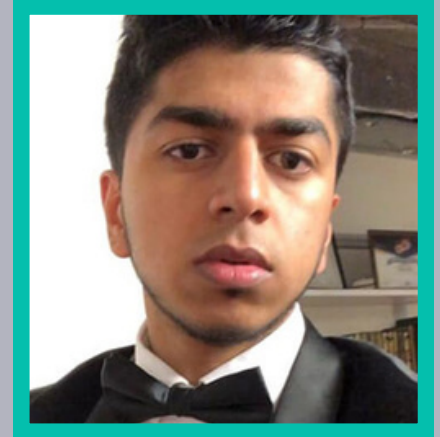
Scholar: Irfan Suleman

Scholarship Awarded: 2020

Institution: London School of Economics (LSE)

Course: MSc Health & International Development

Current Role: Senior Policy Advisor, Dept for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities



Irfan's Story

Irfan Suleman grew up on a council estate, in an overcrowded household, first in Leytonstone and then in Walthamstow. His father was a postman and his mother worked as a caterer.

Having found it tough to get into the civil service, and remembering knocks to his self-esteem from experiences in assessment centres, he applied to the Aziz Foundation to undertake a Masters at LSE in Health and International Development. The programme put him in contact with a network of global health leaders, and gave him the opportunity to contribute to a UN report on gender equality which was later presented to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

This exposure was instrumental in his career development; he initially worked as a strategic commissioner for Redbridge Council where he led vital work on adult social care, developing a carer's charter, and has recently secured a senior policy role at the Department for Levelling Up, working on regeneration, housing and planning initiatives in the Priorities Unit.

He has also used his skills and convening power to establish a major network for British Muslim policy practitioners, Muslims in Public Policy (MIPP).



Scholar: Rakaya Fetuga
Scholarship Awarded: 2017
Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London
Course: MA Creative Writing
Current Role: Workshop Facilitator, The Poetry Society



Rakaya's Story

Rakaya has always loved different types of creative expression and was encouraged by her parents to experiment with a variety of art forms.

Through school poetry competitions she got her first opportunity to produce and share poetry with others, an experience which fed her desire to create stories and narratives. She explores complex concepts and profound issues – such as heritage, identity, and faith – through her work.

The Aziz Foundation scholarship supported Rakaya to study MA Creative Writing (Fiction Pathway) at Royal Holloway University and this has helped to elevate her artistic talents.

Since then she has won multiple prizes, such as the Spread the Word Poetry Competition 2017 and the Roundtable Poetry Slam 2018. Her poetry has been reviewed in a range of publications, including the Guardian, and she has been commissioned by the likes of the BBC, Apple, English Touring Theatre, and LinkedIn.

As well as being a full-time poet, Rakaya works as a Workshop Facilitator at the Poetry Society.



Christienna Fryar, George the Poet (Edited by)
Part of a Story That Started Before Me
Poems about Black British History



Systems Change and EDI work

The Aziz Foundation aspires to catalyse systems change in the higher education sector, in the spheres of widening participation and EDI. It works alongside its university partners to ensure innovative policies and inclusive practices that better accommodate British Muslims are developed and implemented. With an extensive portfolio of partner institutions, the Foundation is strategically well placed to facilitate important interventions in relation to the fair access agenda.

In 2023 the Foundation launched Muslim Friendly Universities in an attempt to coalesce all strands of its EDI work. This brings together:

- The EDI and Widening Participation Index, which collates and maps out all the interventions, programmes and initiatives designed by University partners to facilitate belonging for British Muslims and minoritised communities
- The Aziz Inclusion Award, which celebrates a university partner that has demonstrated excellence in upholding an exemplary student experience. The inaugural award in 2023 was won by the University of Law. The judging panel remarked that :

"From the range of professional development events being run, the collaboration with organisations such as IAM (Islamophobia Awareness Month), to the marking of the UN Day to Combat Islamophobia, the University has continually striven to be a Muslim Friendly University."

- The audit of British Muslim students and staff. This is a match-funded offer of up to £10k for universities who wish to generate data on the granular experience of British Muslims on campus, creating an evidential underpinning for the design of targeted interventions.



Internships Programme

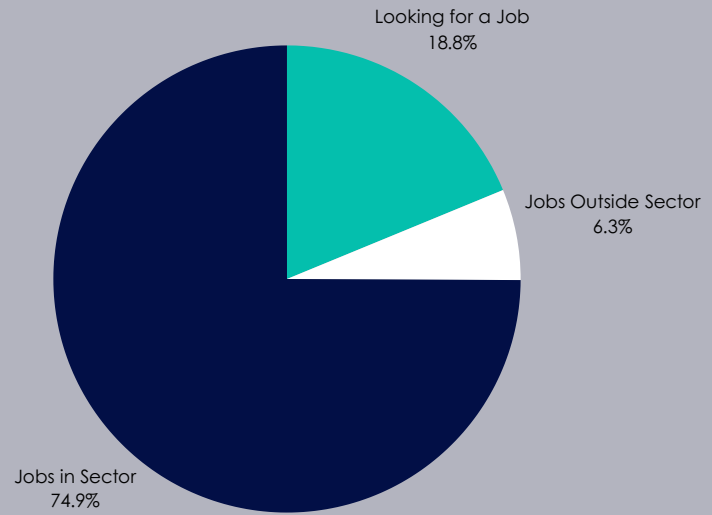
The Internship Programme was conceived after feedback from our alumni that despite their Masters qualifications, they were still finding it difficult to obtain relevant jobs in their chosen field.

While postgraduate courses give people the academic knowledge and grounding to pursue careers, graduates are still struggling to forge a career without relevant practical experience. The intention is therefore to strengthen the pipeline from academic study into professional life for Muslims in Britain.

This is imperative as British Muslims are more likely to experience multiple barriers to entering the labour market (as evidenced in The Missing Muslims, Report by Citizens UK's Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life), face discrimination in the workplace, and are less represented in senior leadership positions (Source: ONS).

The Foundation initially sponsored internships in the fields of Law, Media and Policy. This has recently branched out to other fields, including arts and culture. These internships range from 3-12 months long, and are paid at the London Living Wage. We ensure that the host organisation can:

- Offer meaningful work experience
- Provide developmental training
- Provide appropriate support



Pie Chart 3: Completed Internships Breakdown

Selection of Organisations hosting Aziz interns

- The Independent
- The Evening Standard
- The Financial Times
- The Insider
- The Bureau of Investigative Journalism
- Prospect Magazine
- Hyphen Online
- The Runnymede Trust
- Gate Theatre- Stage One
- Tara Theatre
- Leeds Playhouse- Stage One
- APPG for British Muslims
- Garden Court Chambers
- Each Other
- Muslim Women's Connect
- Community Policy Forum
- Rights & Security International



Highlighting Intern Success Stories - A Summary Sample

Name	Year	Internship (Role and Organisation)	Area	Impact of Internship
Khadija Kothia	2021	Each Other	Journalism	Following on from her internship, Khadija successfully progressed at ITV News. Going from Multimedia Producer, to Assistant News Editor, she now holds a post as Senior Assistant News Editor.
Kazim Ukka	2022	Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND)	Policy	On the conclusion of his internship at MEND, Kazim secured a role at the Community Policy Forum as a Researcher.
Maryam Zakir Hussain	2022	The Independent	Journalism	Maryam interned at The Independent, and upon completion of this she was offered a permanent role there.
Harris Albar	2023	Gate Theatre as a Trainee Theatre Producer	Arts & Culture	After his internship, Harris has become Assistant Producer at Tamasha Theatre. Most recently, Harris worked as a producer on The Empress, which was showing at Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith.
Rafe Uddin	2023	The Financial Times	Journalism	Having successfully undertaken his internship, Rafe secured a place on the Financial Times Graduate Programme. Rafe initially sat on the Money Desk and is now on the Politics Desk.
Nishaat Choudhary	2023	The Runnymede Trust	Policy	Nishaat gained valuable policy and research experience at Runnymede, and has gone on to become a Legal and Policy Officer for Reprieve.

Emergence of the Policy Internship Programme (PIP)

In 2023, the Aziz Foundation established a stand alone programme committed to developing careers in policy and politics. This has become a separate strand of work, and has just completed its pilot year. The programme develops internships at a range of parliamentarians' offices, delivering paid experience. Successful candidates work with parliamentarians in either their constituency or parliamentary team or, perhaps, even both. They are exposed to a variety of work including casework, research, preparing parliamentary documents and more. Interns are paid at the London Living Wage and the internship runs from 3-12 months, either full or part-time.

The programme aims to empower British Muslims to participate actively in public life and ensure community perspectives are heard and valued. Parliamentary interns gain hands-on experience and make invaluable connections enabling them to break into the sector.

Mentoring Scheme

The Foundation provides support to its scholars and alumni through its mentoring scheme. This matches them with experienced professionals in their industry: those who are excelling in their field and who can offer their guidance and wisdom.

Our mentors use their extensive knowledge of industry and community to help the mentee understand their current situation and to plan future aspirations. This is based on the mentee's unique developmental needs.

The mentor also serves as a positive role model and at different points in the relationship the mentor will:

- Share knowledge and life experiences
- Give advice and guidance, share ideas, and provide feedback
- Share information on unwritten rules for success within the sector or organisation
- Act as a sounding board for ideas/concerns about career choices; provide insights into possible opportunities
- Be a source of encouragement/support. Listen. Inspire.
- Identify resources to help mentees enhance personal development and career growth
- Expand the mentee's network of contacts
- Discuss goal setting
- Advise on professional development
- Help to develop leadership skills

9/10

prospective mentees have been matched with a mentor

92

scholars in total have been paired with mentors

66

active mentors participating in scheme

24

alumni have become mentors to a new cohort of scholars

25

industries represented by mentors



Special Projects

The Foundation has supported several special projects to celebrate the contribution of Muslims to society, with a focus on shifting perceptions. This has also assisted in mainstreaming narratives that represent Muslims in Britain in a positive light.

The projects that the Aziz Foundation has run include:

- **Ramadan Lights:** a major intervention in the visual field of the West End to mark the month of Ramadan, in which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. The lights installation, depicting the phases of the moon and overhanging Coventry Street in St James Piccadilly, became a sensation in the media and was photographed thousands of times by members of the public.



- **UN Day to Combat Islamophobia:** The Foundation marked the inaugural UN Day through the launch of its End Islamophobia campaign with a reception at the V&A. Inspirational British Muslims, including the hijab-wearing model Mariah Idrissi and the influencer Chunkz spoke powerfully about their experiences of Islamophobia.



Support for Priority Areas

The Foundation supports organisations working within our priority areas, especially journalism and combatting Islamophobia. These projects promote equal representation and social justice to ensure the continued engagement and contribution of British Muslim communities to society.

Since 2019, the Foundation has financially supported a range of projects to the value of £2m, including the organisations below:

The Centre for Media Monitoring

The Centre for Media Monitoring promotes fair and responsible reporting of Muslims and Islam.

By scrutinising the mainstream media's reporting of Islam and Muslims in Britain, its vision is to highlight negative trends in the media and to promote good practice.

In order to change the narrative surrounding Islam and Muslims, it engages constructively with the media and empowers communities through education and discourse.



The Islamophobia Response Unit

The Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) supports people affected by Islamophobic incidents in England and Wales. It provides legal guidance, helps clients and ensures their voices are heard. Amidst rising levels of Islamophobia, around half of all religiously motivated hate crimes are directed at Muslims, the IRU puts victims at the heart of its organisation.



Learnings and the Future

The Foundation has reflected on its successes over the last five years and the areas in which it can improve. It will continue to fine-tune and refine its programmes and approach, building on the institutional changes it has catalysed and finding niches to avoid the duplication of work. There is a particular eagerness to ensure that the right ‘programmatic mix’ or balance is struck, with scholarships placed on a sustainable footing and internships ramped up to ensure parity of resources across programmes.

New initiatives, such as the Policy Internship Programme, will continue to be developed alongside coordination of the further work required to facilitate systems change in higher education and in industry. Moreover, the Foundation must find new ways to utilise its convening power - through its scholars, alumni, partners and allies - for the overall betterment of Muslims in Britain.

Implementations

- Award scholarships in proportion to the number of opportunities in the field and develop a pipeline for each field through grants, internships and other programmes.
- The Internship programme has been successful so the Foundation should continue to learn from it and grow it.
- Scholars need a strong social network - physical meet-ups ought to be facilitated to strengthen the community of beneficiaries; this should also coincide with the upscaling of the mentoring scheme.
- The Scholarships selection criteria should focus more on demonstrated achievements rather than on aspirations.
- Fund and formalise a University Partners network for knowledge exchange purposes, the pooling of resources, and to add impetus to the push for policies to better accommodate Muslim students.
- Commission an external social impact agency to scrutinise the Foundation’s findings, measure the different orders of social impact of programmes, and make further robust and evidence-based recommendations.



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