

From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to volume 9, number 1, of the *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society (JMPSC)*. In addition to presenting new and insightful research articles, and reflective book reviews, I introduce myself as the incoming Editor in Chief. Following in the footsteps of the founder of the journal, Professor Shariq Siddiqui is an intimidating prospect and a hard act to follow. Prof. Siddique has built this journal and the surrounding community, paving a path previously untraveled. I thank Prof. Siddique for his tireless efforts to bring together academics and practitioners from every corner in the world, at every career stage, in collegial and uplifting solidarity.

Taking the editorship at this current moment is bittersweet. On one hand, I am excited to be part of the journey of the *Journal for Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society* and eager to share in the celebration of diversity in giving and plurality of practices that the Muslim-led sector offers. On the other hand, humanitarianism broadly is in critical condition. Humanitarian international norms established nearly a century ago are being violated while insecurities for humanitarian aid workers have drastically increased. As state-delivered aid has become progressively more politicized, I anticipate a reformulation of the international humanitarian rules and regulations in the near future. With challenges, however, come opportunities. The actions, generosity, and creative problem-solving of Muslim philanthropy and prosocial behavior can be a vital part of conversations about “what’s next” in humanitarian work. Experience of working in challenging times, and with the accompanying resilience and adaptability to change, showcasing the work of Muslim philanthropy is as vital as ever—not only for the Muslim-led sector, but for all regardless of faith or none.

Coming from a background in social science, I have consistently found the field of Muslim philanthropy (broadly defined) a rich area for academic and practitioner exploration. By sharing good practice, scholarship, and creative problem-solving, we are more likely to find solutions to current challenges together than in isolation. Turning back to the inaugural edition of the *JMPSC* in 2017, Alexander and Siddiqui noted that the concept of the “Muslim World” had “little basis in either critical scholarship or Qur’anic discourse” (p. 1). As our current contemporary moment testifies, there is no separate “Muslim world” but one world, beautiful and glorious in its diversity and plurality, which is consistently in conversation with all the various elements. This issue brings together excellent new research that speaks to the various ways, in distinct contexts and times, where different legitimacies, economic systems, and legal criteria speak and negotiate with one another in conversation rather than isolation.

Danielle Ross provides historical evidence for the Islamic charitable basis of corporate philanthropy in pre-revolutionary Russia. “When Charity Met Capitalism” calls for further historical exploration of Islamic charitable practices in diverse Muslim-minority contexts beyond that of Western Europe and the North Americas. The historical approach is continued in Riham

Ahmed Khafagy's "Western Civil Society Organizations and Islamic Endowments," noting how institutions evolve (whether "Western" or Islamic) and are shaped by cultural and social contexts. Importantly, Khafagy notes, while there are similarities between "Western" and Islamic institutions, the foundational legal sources and legitimizing mechanisms are notably distinguishable. Differing legal structures and logics are raised in "Fiscal Activism" in which Lyla Latif explores the intersection of international sustainable development goals (SDGs), Muslim personal law, and state law in Kenya. Latif explores the question of whether *zakat* can be used to finance the SDG of health in a non-Islamic, Muslim-minority state seeking ways to overcome potential challenges. Moving away from Kenya to the world's largest Muslim-majority state, Indonesia, Ade Nur Rohim investigates "Good Amil Governance," noting the strategic role of mosques in community empowerment. Seeking to test mosque actions with good governance criteria, Rohim provides arguments for professionalism, transparency, and accountability to optimize *zakat* collection and distribution for societal welfare.

In all times and places there is both light and dark, which one is our primary focus is entirely our own choice. I choose to focus on the light provided by all the scholars, practitioners, individuals, and groups who strive in ways big and small for social justice and the alleviation of suffering. Extensive gratitude to the Editorial Board, section editor Mohannad Mofawaz, and the indefatigable Shariq Siddiqui. Heartfelt thanks to all authors, contributors, practitioners, and readers for providing the consistent beacon of hope to guide us when the darkness threatens. For knowledge is light and ignorance is darkness.

Samantha May

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