MUSL^MIC. M^KERS/

5 Year Impact Report 2016-21





Muslamic Makers is a community of Muslim changemakers who upskill and pioneer the world of tech.

Muslamic Makers provides a safe space which is fueled by growth mindsets. The aim is to facilitate collaboration by connecting changemakers who will go on to drive innovation, upskilling within the community and provide opportunities by bridging cross-industry expertise.



Muslamic Makers Impact Report

5 Years In The Making



Foreword by
Arfah Farooq
CEO & Co-Founder
of Muslamic Makers

Back in 2016 Murtaza Abidi connected with myself over Twitter, sharing concerns over the lack of representation in the technology scene. Our ideas about the need for a Muslim tech meetup coincided and together we founded Muslamic Makers. Muslamic Makers started life as a monthly meetup which gave Muslims a safe space to share ideas, network and collaborate.

Early on, we realised Muslims were experiencing a lack of inclusion and acceptance in the workplace and understood the need for role models. With poor representation across many sectors, we focused on addressing the shortage of minority groups leading the way across a range of industries. Our mission was to break down barriers such as lack of opportunity, education or resources and empower like-minded Muslims to build their creative confidence together, owning their work spaces and paving the way.

As we have grown, we have realised the importance of allyship and are grateful to have worked with a diverse range of inspiring tech companies. It was important to expose the community to companies they didn't know existed, helping them feel welcome, bridging networks and allowing connections to take place.

Muslamic Makers has been blessed with true organic growth over the last five years, attracting a host of talented volunteers who have played a massive part in our journey. As we enter our next phase, we reflect on what we have achieved so far. This impact report covers how we have diversified the tech scene, built industry-wide partnerships, hosted over 30 events and built a 700+ talented community on Slack, which has attracted global engagement.

This is only the beginning, and we believe the future is what we make it.

A Snap Shot of Our Community

Since joining Muslamic Makers, Our community have...

Data for this impact report has been collected from various sources including feedback forms, slack data and a recent survey with a cross-section of our community.

91%

Gained a supportive community

81%

Gained knowledge by being part of the community

Grown their professional Network

79%

Met people to collaborate with

Feel more confident in their identity as Muslim

Helped others through advice on careers or startups

Introduced to others and/or been provided hiring opportunities

Have took part in formal mentoring or coaching either as mentors or mentees through Muslamic Makers

Have engaged as a speaker, organiser or volunteer

Feel more confident in the workplace

What We've Been Up to







Four month career development programme











Hackathon



Inspiring Career Journey Events

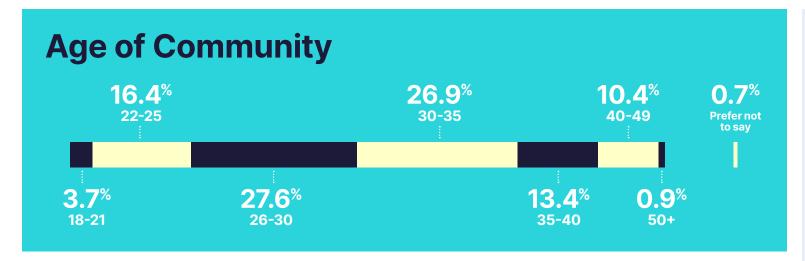


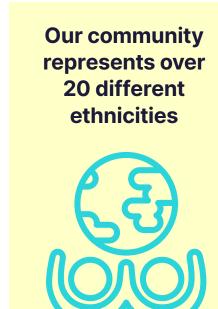
4 Socials

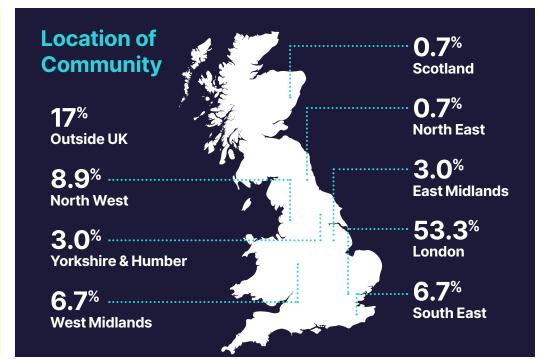


Countless Connections











We've spoken at the events, worked with technology companies and been featured in the media advocating for inclusive spaces for Muslims

Worked with





ThoughtWorks[®]

FUTUREGOV













Google for Startups







DIVERSITY VC

Amaliah

Case Study

Amaliah.com is a female led digital media company dedicated to empowering and amplifying the voices of Muslim women.

Muslamic Maker's journey with Amaliah began in 2016, not long after co-founder Nafisa Bakkar quit her job to work full time on her venture. We hosted an event and a live panel focused on Muslim Women in Tech. Nafisa was one of the two panellists we invited to share their startup journey.

Amaliah is a perfect example for how the Muslamic Makers network is able to bring people together and develop relationships. Through the MM network Amaliah was able to hire their first full time developer who was pivotal in re launching the website to become the media platform it is today.

Their journey over the past 5 years has been truly impressive. They started with a couple of founders and an idea. This is grown to a community of over 300 contributors currently reaching 4.2 million people per month. Monthly they create articles, videos, award winning podcasts, social media content, events and brand partnerships.

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Muslamic Makers was a great gateway into a network that was able to offer support and relatability. Hiring talent that is not only technically brilliant but is also passionate about the mission of our company can be difficult and MM helped to make this a reality through its diverse network of creators."



Nafisa Bakkar

60

I was introduced to the founder of Amaliah during a Muslamic Makers event.
I later joined Amaliah full time as a developer and did some of the most impactful work of my career so far. "



Faheem Patel



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Speakers Safe Space

Case Study

Muslamic Makers creates a safe space for Muslims exploring their curiosity about the world of tech. In this space we provide our members with the resources and platforms to:

- Run workshops
- Test out their ideas
- Practice public speaking

My 1st ever speaking engagement was at a Muslamic Makers event about tech and government. It was such a good event, and the community leaders were super supportive throughout the evening, and they even helped me calm my nerves before the panel started.

The Muslamic Makers community is super unique.
I didn't know anyone personally at the event, but
everyone made me feel welcome and safe enough to
share my tech experiences as a Black Muslim woman.

Since this event I've gone on to speak at numerous panels and events but this unique safe space played a pivotal part in my public speaking confidence"



Abi Mohamed



Hosting the Muslamic Makers podcast event was a first for me.

I was really nervous beforehand but the team was so supportive throughout the preparation process. I had so much fun that evening and it was a great confidence booster.

My first time hosting also happened to be my first time at a Muslamic Makers event. I can't describe how amazing it is to be in the kind of space they create."





Speaking at an MM event was a great opportunity to not only share my work in a safe space with likeminded people, but also learn about other Muslim-led initiatives.

It was a place where I felt welcome to discuss my work in Muslim-majority community with listeners who had the knowledge, experience and background to understand the nuances and unique challenges.

Speaking at an MM event has been one of the most comfortable speaking opportunities I've ever had."



Zahra Shah



Muslamic Makers is a great safe place to practice your public speaking and increase your confidence.

Environments like this really help you grow and give you an invaluable sense of self belief.

I gained the confidence to apply and speak at Figma's Global design conference, speaking to over 15,000 people which has been such an amazing experience!"



Furquan Ahmed

Idean - Employer Engagement

Case Study

Idean, part of Capgemini Invent, are a global design leader on a mission to create products, services and businesses that are good for people and the planet.

Idean initially opened its doors to Muslamic Makers in the form of event space. This allowed the community to connect face-to-face with a global design studio, broadening their horizons and introducing them to people they would otherwise not interact with. Since then the allyship has grown and together Muslamic Makers and Idean have hosted multiple events including a community workshop. The engagement increased when Idean employees became part of the Digital Kickstarter programme, providing engaging mentoring sessions and an insightful product management workshop to the 2020 cohort.



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We loved partnering with Muslamic Makers on multiple occasions, hosting two events and then partnering this year virtually through their mentorship program. They've given us access to amazing speakers, important topics and a space for our team to help nurture one of their community members' careers. The community has a wicked vibe and they truly care and support each-other, being part of their journey is something I'm proud of."



One of the most rewarding parts of the programme was running the Product Management workshop, after which several of the course participants got in touch wanting to learn more and seeking advice on applying for Product roles. It was great to be able to help them and share my knowledge."



Olly Harvey - Lead Product Manager - Idean UK



Sophie Aspden - Talent Manager - Idean UK



Hackathon DEENDEVELOPERS



Hackathons are an incredible experience. You pack a workspace with people who didn't know each other and get them to work together in teams. The goal is to develop ideas, using technologies such as apps to solve a problem. In January 2020 we teamed up with Deen Developers and host our own Hackathon, with the goal of using technology to bring Islamic education into the 21st century.

Deen Developers are a fast growing network of coders who are focused on empowering other Muslims through developing their technology skills and helping them use those skills for the greater social good.

This partnership allowed us and Deen Developers to focus on our core strengths.

We used our experience with events to secure a spacious venue, sponsors and find people to deliver workshops. Deen Developers used their expertise in technology and

experience in hackathons and coding to create teams and help build the products.

Over the course of an intense weekend we took a packed venue of how to create technology solutions and got them to build a prototype that solved a real world problem.

By the end of an intense 48 hours they had developed new relationships, developed a new idea and presented this solution to their peers.

Our first event was a success, with attendees learning a wealth of new skills around coding, design, prototyping and startup business strategy. We want to build on this success by making this Hackathon an annual event.



Taking part in the Muslamic Makers and Deen Developers Hackathon opened my eyes to a lot of problems faced by Muslims across the globe for many years but have never been tackled.

However, there's a growing base of young, tech savvy Muslims with an appetite to solve those problems. Islam has a history of being at the forefront of research and technology. Networks such as Muslamic Makers can help connect talented young people who want to make an impact with their tech skills."



Dilwoar Hussain - Senior Developer at GDS



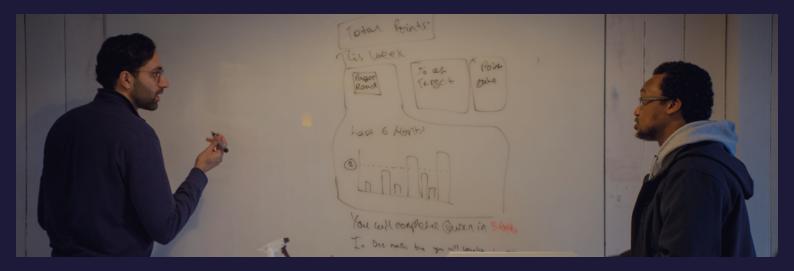
Partnering up with Muslamic Makers on Hackathons and events gave us access to a large talent pool and scale our impact.

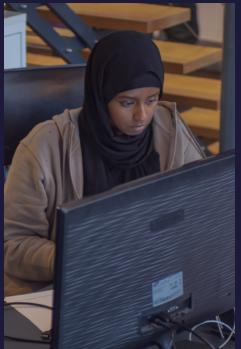
Outside of collaboration, I've personally benefited greatly from the advice and support that the thriving Muslamic Makers community provides on a daily basis and I've had the pleasure of getting to know some really talented people.

Members from within the Muslamic Makers community have gone on to work with Deen Developers on platforms that solve real world problems and have an impact."



Ibrahim Javed - Founder of Deen Developers









The founders in our community have startups and businesses that span across multiple industries including Media, Advertising, EdTech, Islamic Economy, Fintech, Proptech, Nocode, B2B Saas, Artificial intelligence, Data Protection, Health and Fitness and Recruitment.

40% of our community are working on some form of a side hustle.

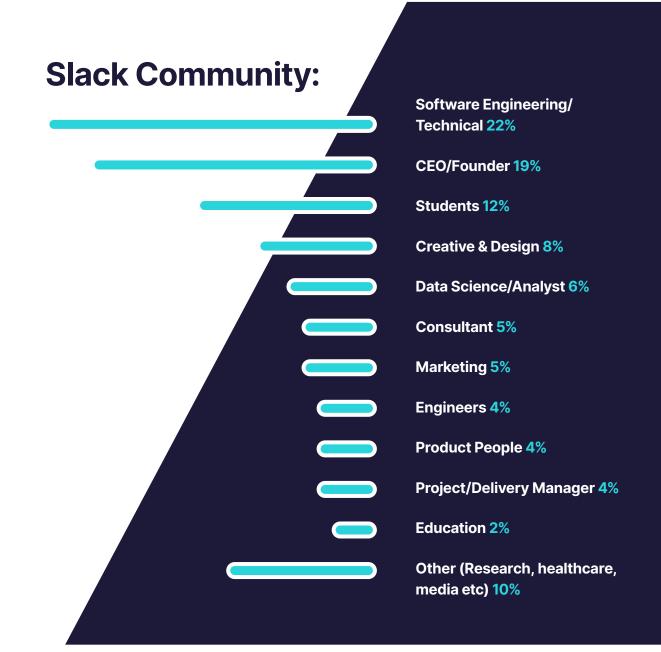
75% of founders in the community have created new jobs

64% of part time/full time founders have joined an incubator or an accelerator

29% have been introduced to investors through Muslamic Makers

£9,502,000

The total amount raised across just a handful of startups in our community who filled in our survey







From this we can see that the sentiment over all the years is positive with the mood reaching its overall highest in 2020. In general, people are happy judging from the terminology in the messages they use.





Messages sent in public channels







Islamic Finance Guru

Case Study

Islamic Finance Guru (IFG) is a hub that helps Muslims with their investment, personal finance and entrepreneurial journeys. With a goal to make muslims amongst the wisest when it comes to managing money, IFG aims to utilise this to tackle problems such as discrimination, underrepresentation and poverty within the community.

In early 2020 IFG had big goals in terms of expanding its services and were seeking for a developer to get on board. At the same time Zubair, a developer from Birmingham had a desire to start his own business but was without a clear cut vision of what it was going to look like.

He was introduced to Muslamic Makers through a friend and after attending a hackathon in London, he immediately connected with likeminded people and was inspired to be a part of the community.

Zubair and Ibrahim, from IFG, met through the Muslamic Makers slack community. IFG had a concept of a halal investment platform to include on their website and Zubair took this on board as his own project. He began working on a comparison tool that fulfilled the needs of IFG and after a successful proposal he had won the IFG team over, effectively becoming his first client.



We were lucky to have found Zubair at a pivotal moment for us and were completely won over by his outstanding proposal. It was a no brainer to get him on board and his tools have proven very useful, providing us with exactly what we need. I'm glad but not surprised with the success he has had since then."



Ibrahim Khan, co-founder at IFG

In just twelve months, Zubair has gone from strength to strength, growing his agency, AZKY Tech Labs to a team of seven who are based in Pakistan and servicing clients from around the world.

His clients include startup founders and tech entrepreneurs as well as small businesses who are looking to expand or improve their business services. Now a full stack development and business consultancy that utilises no-code platforms, the sky's the limit for Zubair as he aims to not just develop apps but use his experience to provide business advise too.



I am so grateful to have connected with IFG through Muslamic Makers and would never have imagined that a year down the line I would have a team of seven working on multiple projects around the world. I don't think we have that many avenues outside of mosques that brings muslims from all walks of life together across borders, organizations and skill sets.



Zubair Lutfullah Kakakhel, AZKY Tech Labs

COVID-19 Action

Case Study

No one could have predicted a global pandemic or envisioned the kind of impact it would have. We noticed the following trends almost overnight as COVID-19 caused a nationwide lockdown:

- People losing their jobs
- Internships getting cancelled
- Graduate schemes getting cancelled
- Extra time needed to work on side hustles
- Working professionals feeling lonely and isolated
- People wanting to transition into tech after being made redundant from their jobs

Our solution?

Throughout the pandemic we created and ran events and initiatives to address the challenges our community was facing and to help everyone feel connected in a time of anxiety, challenges and isolation.



CV Workshops



1 to 1 CV Surgeries with Industry Experts



Muslim Women in Tech Event -Over 300 attendees



Virtual lunches online socialising during the pandemic



Networking events leading to jobs and new venture creation



Digital Kickstarter -A program designed to teach digital skills



Low Code, No Code -Teaching founders enough code to build their first product



Lightning Talks -Short, impactful talks on business and careers

Virtual Lunches

As part of our community we host a Slack channel that allows our members to network and support each other in their careers and ventures.

In March 2020, in response to Covid-19, two of our community members began Virtual Lunches on our Slack channel as a way to connect and socialise digitally.

Sulaiman, a Slack member puts it best saying:



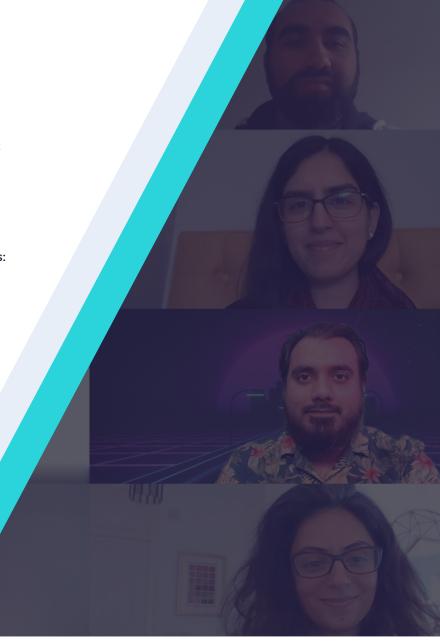
As soon as Lockdown started in March 2020 Mustafa and I teamed up to launch the Weekly Virtual Lunches (and kept it going!). The lockdown meant people were stuck at home isolated from their friends and family. We created Virtual Lunches to combat this and create new bonds and friendships.

It was a safe space to talk for all about anything and everything from pop culture, to furlough, life, relationships and career advice." The lunches were a weekly 1 hour drop-in session: informal chats about anything, including the all-consuming pandemic, becoming an outstanding feature of the Muslamic Makers community.

They provided a space for collaboration for community projects as Nazma's testimony outlines:



There were two members I met via the virtual lunches who became close friends during lockdown. I've enjoyed supporting their endeavours and they've supported me too."





Digital Careers Kickstarter

Case Study

The Digital Kickstarter is our digital-careers discovery programme, introducing Muslims to the world of tech. There's a wealth of talent in the Muslim community that remains untapped by the tech industry. We connect these two worlds with the aim of improving the career prospects and the lives of Muslims while giving the tech world access to a fresh pool of talent.

We took 38 people on a four month journey designed to help them discover their digital interests, build experience and gain confidence. We did this using the following tools:

- Work experience
- Action learning sets
- Training with industry experts
- · Personal coaching and mentoring
- Welcoming them into our professional community
- Introductions to relevant professionals in our network

Our program provides a comprehensive introduction to the skills required to succeed in the tech industry, as well as networking opportunities. The programme successfully ran multiple 4-week work experiences with companies such as Muzmatch and IFG, to name a few.

To measure our impact in our first pilot we surveyed our participants' skills and knowledge at the start and end of the programme and asked them to rate their current understanding and confidence.

100% of our attendees said they'd recommend the programme, a programme that we delivered 100% online due to the pandemic.

130 **Applications**

Participants

Coaches

Workshops







London Rest of UK

SITUATION	
Recently made redundant	26%
Stuck in a job	26%
Students and recent graduates	34%
Long term unemployed	8%
Looking to go back into work after a career break	5%

DEMOGRAPHICS

18 - 21 19%

22 - 25 41%

26 - 30 22%

31 - 35 8%

36 - 40 5%

> 5% 40+

The graphs show how many participants across the cohort were very confident about a specific area before the programme compared to after the programme.

We asked them questions regarding existing knowledge, tools and understanding certain concepts.

Participants had workshops, activities, access to reading and coaches for each area.

As seen in the results, confidence and understanding grew across all areas.

To measure our impact we surveyed our participants' skills and knowledge at the start and end of the programme in the four main subject areas we introduced them to. Knowledge and understanding in the areas increased across all 49 questions but an average of each area shows:

Design

Before 21%

After 77%

Product and Delivery

Before 19%

After 71%

Data Science

Before 13%

After 76%

Marketing

Before 27%

After 77%

We also asked them 19 questions around soft skills and found:

After the programme 100% of participants who put themselves down as long term unemployed:



Felt optimistic about the future

Now know how to find relevant resources to help with their goals

Feel like they now have a good professional network

After the programme 100% of participants on a career break:



Feel like they now have access to more opportunities

Feel a sense of purpose

Feel like they have a good professional network

After the programme the participants who are students or recent graduates:



Feel confident in applications and CV writing

Feel like they have a good professional network

100%

Feel like they have access to more opportunities

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The Muslamic Makers Kickstarter programme had a huge impact on me and helped me to change my career from feeling frustrated in my previous roles to getting a job as a user researcher for the government.

I wanted to align my work more to my values and natural strengths and thought user research would be a good fit with my positive psychology degree but it felt like an unattainable goal.

The Kickstarter programme helped me to learn what exactly is involved in user research and its context within other areas of digital. I was able to bring this into my interview and also use the example of the user research task to demonstrate my experience and knowledge of the area.

One of the biggest impacts was my digital coach on the programme who was very generous in sharing her knowledge and encouraging me to apply to user research roles, instilling confidence in my abilities. Had it not been for this experience, I would not have applied, got to interview and secured the role.

I'm extremely grateful for this experience - all the people I have met and who encouraged me, the workshops and the learning I was able to apply, all of which has helped me to change career and achieve my goal during the pandemic when things have been economically tough.'





The programme has definitely helped me improve and broaden my career options. It prepared me for job applications that I previously wouldn't have had the confidence to go for. As a result of the Kickstarter programme, I secured a place on an analytics graduate program.'



Eeman Shafat - Kickstarter participant



I've really enjoyed the program, I enjoy the fact that we're able to get an insight into so many different aspects of the tech industry.

As someone who is more geared towards the technical side of tech I have enjoyed getting an experience of something different.'



Samatar Xasan



A Match Well Made



Connected Talent

Muzmatch is the world's biggest community for single Muslims to find their perfect partner, keeping the marriage search halal, free and fun. With 4,000,000 members active in 190 countries and 100,000 marriages, its success as a tech startup speaks for itself.

2017 was a big year for Muzmatch. The founders had just come back from the US, becoming the first ever Muslim centric tech startup to succeed at Y Combinator. After acquiring the investment from Silicon Valley, the founders flew back to the UK and immediately got to work in scaling up and growing the team.



We had just come back from the US with the success at Y
Combinator and were looking to grow. Muslamic Makers invited me
to speak at one of their events in London and it was there I came
across Zain. We instantly connected and I hired him within a week.
Thanks to Muslamic Makers, Zain came in at a crucial time for us
when we were looking to grow the team and needed a marketing
whizz on board to help launch our campaigns that year."

Muzmatch Kickstarter

In 2020 Muzmatch took part in the Muslamic Makers Digital Career Kickstarter Program, providing mentorship, coaching and task-led challenges, focusing on user research and UX design of the matchmaking app.

The assigned Muslamic Makers cohort conducted a series of interviews and surveys as part of their research and mapped out the experience of the first 14 days of a new user's journey. Drilling in to the demographic, features, personas, user motivations and frustrations they consolidated their insights into a report. The cohort then had a chance to present their findings and recommendations on how to improve the overall app experience to the Muzmatch CEO, UX team and Head of Mobile.



We found the presentation very insightful. The team had thoroughly interrogated the user experience and brought up how members (women in particular) felt overwhelmed by receiving Instant Chats.

We immediately held an internal meeting with our UX designers and made plans to release an update to change to how Instant Chats work. Now members are not able to keep messaging after an Instant Chat unless they receive member accepts. Additionally we also refocused the interactions to prompt people to look at profiles rather than the message only."



Mentropreneur Platform

What's great about technology these days is that you can build a basic product and just test out little ideas. Some ideas don't pan out, but it's ok, it's an inexpensive experiment. But sometimes, a little experiment takes on a life of its own.

That's what happened with the Mentropreneur Platform. We wanted to connect different members of our community together. There's a wealth of experience across different sectors and different skills and functions.

That knowledge can be shared to help benefit younger professionals in our community who can benefit from a chat, whether it's advice on how to break into tech or investment banking to advice on how to raise VC funding for their latest idea.

We built the platform back in July 2020 after 45 mentors put themselves forward, sharing their Linkedin details, and their areas of expertise. They invited people to book time with them to chat and discuss any questions they have.

This platform has quickly become very popular and has helped countless young professionals in their quest to develop and progress their careers.

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Both of the mentors I spoke with were very kind and shared what they knew about my field and gave me helpful tips and advice. I was comfortable talking to them and managed to gain inspiration from both."

Mentee



It's refreshing to be able to talk to Muslims within tech related fields whilst working in a non muslim dominated environment. I booked sessions with two mentors, which gave me a clearer idea of next steps in my career. I will definitely be booking more sessions with them as well as exploring sessions with other mentors."

Mentee



A member contacted me for mentorship in their career path and I think not only did I try to help, advise and guide them, but I think it also helped me grow and be more empathetic to the view of the 'other'"

Mentor



What's Next?

We've had an incredible 5 years.

Muslamic Makers have made a huge difference to the technology scene: encouraging inclusiveness and contributing to the growing confidence within the community. It's led to a vast array of cross-industry collaborations, job opportunities and friendships.

This is just the beginning.

We're excited about what comes next!

We've got bold plans for 2021 and beyond.

Post pandemic we'll be operating a hybrid model. Our in-person events will expand beyond London, to around the UK and the rest of the world. Our digital programs and events shall continue and grow too.

We're always looking for sponsors and partners to help support and sustain our work. Together we can scale our impact and contribute to a more inclusive world where talent is used to create great companies that solve real problems.

If you're keen to get involved or support us then please get in touch at:

Team@muslamicmakers.com

Special Thanks to our core volunteers over the years:

Murtaza Abidi	Dilruba Sulthana	Mohammed Ali
Nafisa Bakkar	Zahid Mahmood	Mustafa Rashid
Faheem Patel	Annem Sabah Shah	Hamza Sheikh
Taz Latif	Mohammed Jiva	Danyial Gilani
Abdul Shukur	Zubair Mohammad	Dalia Kebire

Yasmin Sidat Furquan Ahmed

And anyone else that has even just given us an hour of their time!

This report has been written and put together with the support of

Haroon Khan Shane Wilson

Hafeez Saeed River Tamoor Baig

Urussa Malik



Some Thoughts From Our Community:



"My sector doesn't really have Muslims - so for me anyone I meet here, doing anything has an impact on me. It's an amazing community"

"It's been really nice to be around people who understand your religious need but also the need to network in a safe way - without old barriers/stigma attached to it"

"I met someone through the kickstarter programme and we've become good friends and he's also been very helpful as I have taken over data responsibilities at my current startup. Everyone's friendly, open and willing to help." "Well, I always felt the need for a community in tech that I can join and can discuss ideas in a safe-space. Now, whenever I think of techies in a community in a single place, Muslamic Makers comes to my mind. It has been really great so far."

"A mentor I met through Muslamic Makers helped me get out of my own bubble in my head and told me straight up what I had to do."

"Muslamic Makers is a very wholesome place, we get to see other Muslims growing and making moves and it honestly is inspiring."me expand my network and reach for this " "Also seeing a lot of Muslim women doing sooo well makes me happy as my sister is at University and hopefully she will get to benefit from the ground work laid by these inspiring Muslim women."

"I've met some really innovative individuals who have had some very interesting start-ups around the fast food industry. I've found all my interactions with Muslamic Makers always positive and informative"

"When I first joined Muslamic Makers, I was young and insecure about my identity as a Muslim, Asian woman. Over the years, I have met amazing people, learned new things and participated in events. I have also forwarded plenty of relevant opportunities to members of my own network."

"A connection saw my post on funding advice and we followed up with a zoom call. He gave me thorough advice on his fundraising journey and the things to look out for. The Muslamic Makers community is really engaged and supportive of each other. Using Slack, you can get updates regularly but make clear connections with people who can help you in less than a day."

"I love the community, and it was something totally unexpected. I've met some amazing people."

"I often do research in my chosen area and Muslamic Makers has helped me expand my network and reach for this "

"I have been offered freelance work in branding and communications through Muslamic Makers"









