OVERVIEW

As an outreach and advocacy organization, MAPS-AMEN seeks to fulfill the justice mandate in Islam and empower the community by focusing on four areas: education, engagement, encouragement (of media change), and empowerment. Led by Executive Director Aneelah Afzali and Community Organizer Theresa Creccelius — and of course, with divine mercy and blessing — MAPS-AMEN has established itself as an active and effective frontline grassroots organization for Muslims and other marginalized communities, with impact locally, regionally and even nationally.

As you will see from this report, it has been an extremely busy — yet tremendously exciting and successful — year for MAPS-AMEN. In three short years (and countless long days and nights!), MAPS-AMEN has amplified the voice of the local Muslim community and demonstrated, through social action, the egalitarian spirit and justice teachings of Islam. Today, we are the premier go-to organization for many groups, the local press, faith and non-faith entities, public bureaus and private corporations, who need a Muslim voice at their table. Our collective effort is bearing fruit. We have informed audiences far and wide about our faith and our values (education); we have been very visible, have added value and created positive change in society (engagement); we have taken charge of our own narrative in regular media appearances (encouragement); and we are charting a path where Muslims, young and old, can lean on their faith to create public good without fear and with pride (empowerment).

These achievements would not have been possible without the mercy of Allah (God) and the gracious support, through prayers, volunteer hours and financial assistance, of the local Muslim community and friends of the community. For that, we at MAPS-AMEN are ever grateful to all of you. As you read through this report, hopefully you will agree that we have much potential and opportunities ahead of us. With your continued support, you can be part of the MAPS-AMEN mission of creating everlasting positive change in society.
EDUCATION

FACTS OVER FEAR CAMPAIGN

In partnership with Neighbors in Faith, MAPS-AMEN launched a national “Facts Over Fear” Video Campaign in February 2020 to counter myths and misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. These are animated videos exposing the Islamophobia industry and addressing the themes of Islam and Peace, Islam and Women’s Rights, Islam and Other Faith Traditions, and What is Sharia?. The videos were supported by a grant from Islamic Relief USA, and even won the national “End Extreme Hate” $5,000 contest by America Indivisible, ISPU, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Western States Center! People across the country have viewed and benefited from the videos. Many local and national leaders also posted about the campaign. Learn more here: www.facts-overfear.org.

SEE WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

“In working collaboratively to bring together faith leaders of all backgrounds to combat anti-Muslim sentiment and bigotry in their communities, MAPS-AMEN has helped to build a network of change makers who understand and ally with Muslim communities nationwide.”
— Meira Neggaz, Executive Director, Institute for Social Policy & Understanding (ISPU)
Faith Action Network gives thanks for the presence of MAPS-AMEN in our work together for justice! During these challenging years, MAPS-AMEN has continued to bring important Muslim perspectives and leadership to advocacy and community-building.

— Elise DeGooyer, Co-Director, Faith Action Network

MAPS-AMEN Report (cont.)

“We are proud of our collaborative work advancing civil liberties in the areas of technology, surveillance, and immigrant rights, among other topics, in partnership with MAPS-AMEN. We are excited about what the future will bring as we continue to work together.”

— Michele Storms, Executive Director, ACLU-WA

In October, working with Baraka House and Evangelical leaders, MAPS-AMEN provided a special opportunity for local Evangelical Christians to visit a mosque for the first time. The event featured talks by Anelah and Dr. Jeff Burns, an Evangelical pastor who used to hate Muslims but had his life transformed by a Muslim child. Attendees left the event with noticeable change in their views, with some even planning coffee follow ups with their new Muslim friends! As Dr. Burns said, “I don’t know how anyone could walk away from an event like this one without having to rethink and reflect upon their lives.”

In February 2020, Anelah participated in a lunch gathering with local Imams, Rabbis, and Evangelical Pastors, with special guest Evangelical Pastor Bob Roberts from Dallas, Texas.

In March 2020, by invitation, Anelah joined a national Aspen Institute day-long meeting with Muslim and Evangelical leaders addressing ways to use religious freedom as a bridging tool, as inspired by Arma Uddin’s book “When Islam is Not a Religion.”

MAPS-AMEN has also continued to participate in a “Three Practices Circle” that includes Evangelical Christians.

ISLAMOPHOBIA WORKSHOPS AND ISLAM PRESENTATIONS

Like prior years, MAPS-AMEN provided presentations on combating Islamophobia, Islam, women’s rights, and more at faith institutions, community organizations, college campuses, non-profit groups, and more. One notable venue was the Port of Seattle, where Anelah provided two days of training to Port staff/employees at both SeaTac Airport and the Port of Seattle offices.
MAPS-AMEN Report (cont.)

Theresa also spoke at adult education programs and church study groups, while Aneelah continued to deliver sermons at Sunday church services. Both Aneelah and Theresa spoke at interfaith iftar events (at MAPS and Islamic Center of Bothell).

RACISM AND PARALLELS IN PREJUDICE

Aneelah was a key speaker at several conferences and events where she spoke against racism, xenophobia, and other forms of hate and bigotry, including King County’s largest MLK Day Rally; the 8th Annual North Puget Sound Conference on Race; the 56th Commemoration of the 1963 March on Washington; OneAmerica’s Annual Banquet; the Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Day Rally; and more. She also received the Aki Kurose Award for Education from the Seattle Japanese-American Citizens League (JACL) at their 97th Annual Banquet.

In addition, MAPS-AMEN organized, with numerous co-sponsors (including ACLU, NAACP, Poor People’s Campaign, OneAmerica, and more), a sold-out event that featured Aneelah along with Rabbi David Baskin and Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown speaking about the real threat of antisemitism but how charges of antisemitism are also at times weaponized against people of color who stand in solidarity with Palestinians. The reaction by some to this event (including attacks on the women of color speakers) reinforced the point of the event in the first place!

SECRET LIFE OF MUSLIMS

In July, MAPS-AMEN co-hosted another screening of Secret Life of Muslims with World Without Hate to a packed audience at Women’s University Club. Aneelah moderated the discussion, and the event highlighted the transformative power of love over hate with Rais Bhuiyan, Richard McKinney, and series filmmaker Joshua Seftel.

“Through education and advocacy, MAPS-AMEN not only broadens understanding of Islam in Washington, but also builds a better America where everyone can thrive.”

TECHNOLOGY AND FAITH

In November, the International Association for Moral Education conference was held in Seattle, with guests from around the world. Aneelah spoke at a panel on Faith Values & Artificial Intelligence. She also moderated a panel at a King County Bar Association seminar on Artificial Intelligence, which included business leaders (Microsoft, Amazon), governmental officials and community activists. And in April 2020, MAPS-AMEN hosted a “Protect Your Digital Security” workshop with Equality Labs. This workshop received a 100% “Excellent” rating (highest possible) by all those who completed the survey, with strong interest in having MAPS-AMEN host additional workshops like it.

STATE LABOR COUNCIL INVOCATION

Aneelah delivered the opening invocation at the Washington State Labor Council Convention – the first for a Muslim woman (and likely the first for any Muslim) at this large annual labor gathering!

OTHER TALKS

MAPS-AMEN spoke at several other educational events, including a Washington State Bar Association CLE on hate crimes; a community discussion on hate and violence following the documentary “Emanuel”, Multi-Faith Summit on the Platinum Rule; a memorial service for the late Rep. Elijah Cummings; a Washington Women Lawyers panel on tokenism, diversity and inclusion; a Save the Uyghurs event; and the “Uplifting Sisterhood” Conference at MAPS.
ENGAGEMENT

COALITION-BUILDING AND ADVOCACY

In the past year, MAPS-AMEN has continued building coalitions, expanding relationships, and mobilizing faith leaders, community activists, advocacy groups, elected officials, and more toward action. These efforts include:

1. Actively working with WAISN (WA Immigrant Solidarity Network; Aneelah is on the Steering Committee) and other immigrant rights’ advocacy groups to protect the rights of immigrants and refugees;

2. Taking a leadership role with the Faith Action Network (Aneelah is a Governing Board member, and MAPS is a participating faith community) and working with faith leaders/organizations to advocate for justice;

3. Serving on the Interfaith Leaders’ Council to promote collaboration between different faith communities;

4. Collaborating with community/advocacy groups including Neighbors in Faith/Paths to Understanding, CAIR, Seattle Indivisible, Seattle Womxn Marching Forward, OneAmerica, and many others to raise awareness and co-organize events;

5. Participating as part of the Technology Fairness Coalition with the ACLU and other partners to challenge surveillance tools that disproportionately target and hurt Muslim and other minority communities; and

6. Serving as part of the Countering Islamophobia Roundtable with leading national organizations and American Muslim leaders across the country.

MUSLIM BAN

MAPS-AMEN has continued its efforts to challenge the religiously discriminatory Muslim travel ban, including through working with local leaders, elected officials, and national coalitions to promote the NO BAN Act and raise awareness of the continued harms of this discriminatory ban.

STATEWIDE ADVOCACY

In September 2019, hundreds of advocates came together at Central Washington University for the WAISN Statewide Gathering to strengthen partnerships and set priorities for 2020. Aneelah was the keynote speaker at this two-day event. MAPS-AMEN further co-sponsored WAISN’s Annual Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Day in February 2020, where over 250 people showed up in Olympia to advocate for immigrant and refugee rights. Aneelah was a presenter at this event, as well as a speaker at the Advocacy Day rally. MAPS-AMEN also participated in FAN’s Interfaith Advocacy Day.

“LOVE BEYOND BORDERS” TRIP

In December, Aneelah joined an interfaith delegation of Women of Color on a trip to personally witness the injustices on our Southern Border, and bring back resources, information and insight on how to help. The group raised about $20,000 to support families on the border and the organizations serving them. At a moving “Love Beyond Borders: Report Back and Call to Action” event in March 2020, the group shared their experience, lessons and action calls.

IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE ACTIVISM

With its leadership role on the statewide WAISN Steering Committee and commitment to the rights and dignity of all, MAPS-AMEN has remained active in standing for justice for immigrants and refugees through co-organizing and participating in rallies, meetings, press conferences, and more to raise awareness and challenge policies and proposals that hurt immigrant communities. Some of those actions, whether either Aneelah, Theresa, or both actively participated/spoke, include:

- “Lights for Liberty” vigils across the nation to counter cruel family separation policies, inhumane detention conditions, and planned raids;
- “Home is Here” action to support the DACA/Dreamers program;
- Support for a local immigrant who sought sanctuary inside a church;
- “Never Again Is Now” rally at the Seattle ICE office organized by the Jewish community and allies after the nation’s largest single-day mass immigration raid;
- Seattle CityClub rally to counter Department of Homeland Security speaker responsible for deportation of millions of immigrants;
- “Migration – An Act of Courage” event to hear personal insight on conditions on our Southern border because of U.S. immigration policies;
- Work with partners to address ICE raids and CBP showing up at a Redmond church, as well as the detention of Iranian-Americans at our Northern border; and
- Advocating for immigrants/refugees, including those who are undocumented, to be included in state and federal COVID-19 relief funds.
“America will be a greater nation because AMEN saw a problem and became the solution. Thank you MAPS-AMEN for your devotion and commitment.”

– Imam Abdul Malik

MAPS-AMEN Report (cont.)

HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION
Working with other groups, MAPS-AMEN provided input on and advocated for passage of a Washington Hate Crimes Bill last year. MAPS-AMEN also helped stop the Seattle City Council from passing a harmful hate crimes bill. Instead, MAPS-AMEN provided input to the City of Seattle, and Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan issued an executive order in February 2020 to combat the rise of hate crimes and bias incidents in Seattle.

BLACK LIVES MATTER
MAPS-AMEN continued to speak out against racism, and specifically, anti-Black racism. For MLK Day, MAPS-AMEN organized a group of American Muslims to march together, while Aneelah also was the keynote speaker at that rally. When police killed another Black woman, MAPS-AMEN participated in the National Day of Outrage. And throughout other events – whether rallies or Black History Month or the Uplifting Sisterhood conference at MAPS – MAPS-AMEN has emphasized the message of Black Lives Matter.

DISPLACEMENT OF SEATAC BUSINESSES
In August, MAPS-AMEN joined a press conference with community, labor and faith leaders to raise awareness of the arbitrary and cruel eviction of SeaTac immigrant business owners (mostly Muslim) by the City of SeaTac. Aneelah spoke there, and also coordinated volunteers to help the displaced businesses move on short notice.

WOMEN’S MARCH
This past year, Aneelah – who has been a speaker in prior Seattle Women’s March events – took on a lead organizing role with other women of color. Because of COVID-19, the program (“Seattle Women’s March: The Next Revolutionaries”) was livestreamed nationally and featured powerful youth of color voices, including several young Muslim women. People across the nation heard the powerful voices of Seattle youth talking about the issues that impact them, including racism, Islamophobia, indigenous rights, environmental justice, and more. It was a beautiful sight to see.

RESPONDING TO HATE
MAPS-AMEN has responded to acts of hate and violence with love and solidarity, and shown support for impacted communities. This included the Vigil at St. James Cathedral after the Sri Lanka Easter attack, the service at Eastside Torah Center – Chabad of Bellevue after the Poway synagogue attack, the vigil at United Christian Church in Renton after their sign was vandalized, and more. Aneelah further participated in the Yom HaShoah/Day of Remembrance Service at Temple B’nai Torah.
TECHNOLOGY FAIRNESS

Technology Fairness: As part of the Technology Fairness Coalition led by the ACLU, MAPS-AMEN has helped challenge facial recognition and other technologies, and the Coalition successfully prevented passage of a problematic Data Privacy bill in Washington state. MAPS-AMEN also spoke at a #DropAnyVision rally at the Microsoft campus to raise awareness about, and encourage Microsoft to divest from, an Israeli facial recognition company (AnyVision) that violates Palestinians’ human rights, privacy and basic dignity. Thanks to this event and other advocacy with partners like Jewish Voice for Peace, MPower Change, and SumOfUs, Microsoft announced in March 2020 that it was dropping its $74 million from AnyVision.

CITY ADVOCACY

In February 2020, Seattle made history by being the first city in the nation to pass a resolution against India’s bigoted CAA/NRC laws, and standing up as a welcoming city for ALL. Aneelah worked with the coalition of Indian Americans and other activists to support passage of this resolution. In April 2020, Aneelah joined other faith leaders for a press conference on COVID-19 and the “Tax Amazon” legislation before the Seattle City Council. Meanwhile in Burien, Theresa co-led the Burien Community Advisory Council with the Burien Police Chief, and engaged in a Burien Community Conversation about rental housing policy. And in Redmond, Aneelah provided public comment on issues affecting Muslims while celebrating the first American Muslim Councilmember in Redmond.

OTHER JUSTICE ISSUES

Recognizing the interconnectedness of our various struggles locally and nationally, MAPS-AMEN has also been active local and federal representatives as well as different advocacy organizations on numerous issues affecting the Muslim community, including Kashmir, Palestine, Sudan, Uyghurs, Yemen, and more.

SHOWING OF SOLIDARITY AT MAPS

Because MAPS-AMEN has been engaged in strong coalition-building in the community, we have the support of allies to call on when we need them to show solidarity. This was exemplified last year when 150 people showed up at MAPS on short notice -- and only by personal calls/emails -- to counter “Patriots of Washington” protesters against Sr. Linda Sarsour.
POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

MAPS-AMEN seeks to engage the American Muslim community in advocacy through the political process, and Aneelah held meetings, press conferences and/or events with many elected officials and their staff. This included organizing and leading a Muscoommunity meeting with U.S. Rep. Dr. Kim Schrier at MAPS; a Faith Leaders’ meeting with Sen. Patty Murray; and a meeting with WA Senatorial staff to save the Uyghur Muslims. Aneelah also participated in other meetings with elected officials including Governor Jay Inslee, Attorney General Bob Ferguson, the WA Members of Color Caucus, WA Rep. Vandana Slatter, and more.

SEATAC PRAYER ROOM

In addition, MAPS-AMEN was part of the team advocating for – and providing input to – the Port of Seattle Commission about a new prayer room at SeaTac Airport.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

In response to COVID-19, MAPS-AMEN has taken on the additional task of working with county and state officials to ensure understanding of and proper implementation of public health directives; funders (seeking and applying for grants for MAPS’ relief work), and media (helping communicate MAPS services to the wider community). Aneelah also drafted guidelines for faith communities used by King County, and continues to collaborate with public health officials and Muslim leaders to manage/coordinate the implementation of public health guidance in response to the pandemic.

“This extraordinary program and movement spearheaded by the deeply courageous, passionate, and impeccably articulate Aneelah Afzali is a vital gift to our region.” -- Jessica Bhuiyan, Executive Director, World Without Hate
“This year was the first time that the Port of Seattle had any direct training on Islamophobia... [and] I’m so glad we were able to get this caliber of training. We received very positive responses from Port of Seattle employees … and many department supervisors asked for this training to be offered again. I highly recommend that other organizations also invest in these beneficial workshops.”

-- Bookda Gheisar, Senior Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Port of Seattle
“Dedication. Tenacity. Compassion. These are just a few of the strengths that MAPS-AMEN brings to their work.”

-- Michele Storms, Executive Director, ACLU-WA

“Together with your help, we can build upon our foundation of success, fulfill the divine commands of standing firmly for justice (Quran 4:135) and enjoining what is good/forbidding what is wrong (Quran 3:104), and make a positive lasting impact on society.”

MAPS-AMEN Report (cont.)

MOVING FORWARD

In three years, by the grace of God Almighty, MAPS-AMEN has helped ensure that American Muslims have a proverbial “seat at the table,” a voice of our own that’s heard, and that Muslims are present, active and even lead in the justice and advocacy issues of our day. The work has not been easy, but it has been a labor of love. Alhamdulillah (all thanks and praise be to God Almighty).

We have a lot more work to do, and with COVID-19, our efforts are moving online and finding different ways to educate, engage, encourage media change, and empower the American Muslim community. Even if we may be in the middle of a pandemic, we know that hate, bigotry, oppression, and injustice continue – and the pandemic has highlighted and reinforced certain systemic inequities. Plus, it is an election year and Islamophobia increases during such times. For these reasons, our work is especially critical in the coming months. We need to ensure Muslim leadership is part of the conversation of how we come out of the pandemic, while addressing structural injustices to ensure a better new “normal” after shelter-in-place ends.

Again, we are grateful to all the supporters and volunteers who have helped out throughout the year, along with those who have attended, promoted, collaborated with and/or contributed to MAPS-AMEN’s programs. We also thank the Seattle Foundation for supporting the educational and anti-hate work of MAPS-AMEN through another Resilience Fund grant for this coming election year.

We hope all of you will continue to support MAPS-AMEN, knowing that even with limited staff and resources, we consistently punch above our weight. Together with your help, we can build upon our foundation of success, fulfill the divine commands of standing firmly for justice (Quran 4:135) and enjoining what is good/forbidding what is wrong (Quran 3:104), and make a positive lasting impact on society. InshaAllah (God-willing).
Co-Host of ReThink Media’s Spokesperson Media Training 6/28/19
Speaker/Table Lead at Community Discussion on Documentary “6/23/19
Advocate at Meeting with Washington Senatorial Staff re Uyghurs 6/11/19
Interview with University of Washington-Tacoma Student 6/6/19
Speaker at GSBP Farm 2 Table Fundraiser & Interfaith Ramadan Iftar 6/13/19
Speaker at St. Mark’s Cathedral Study Group 5/13/19
Panel of Muslim Women Telling Their Stories at Seattle Pacific University 5/5/19
Interview on KUOW/NPR’s “Prime(d)” re Surveillance 4/27/19
National Countering Islamophobia Roundtable Virtual Gathering 4/24/19
St. James Cathedral Vigil for Sri Lanka Easter Victims 4/22/19
Meeting with WA State Attorney General Bob Ferguson 4/10/19
Speaker at Build Legal Power for American Muslims Event w/ Linda Sarsour 3/11/19
Meeting with U.S. Sen. Patty Murray 3/8/19
Panelist at WA Women Lawyers Event on Diversity Without Inclusion 3/5/19
Speaker at #DropAnyVision Rally at Microsoft 1/29/20
Faith Over Fear Roadshow at Gonzaga University in Spokane 10/24/19
Facts Over Fear Video Interviews/Recordings 10/22/20
Facts Over Fear Campaign Launch Party at MAPS 10/5/20
Meeting with WA State Rep. Vandana Slatter 2/14/19
Panelist at WA Women Lawyers Event on Diversity Without Inclusion 3/1/19
Interview re American Muslims with Muslim PhD Candidate 9/19/19
Speaker at 56th Anniv. of 1963 March on Washington Event at Mt. Zion 8/31/19
Faith Over Fear Roundtable w/ U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris During 3/10/20
Meeting with U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal re Immigration Issues 11/19/19
Meeting with U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal in Detention of Iran-Americans 9/19/21
The Detention Lottery: An Immersive Courtroom Drama at FCC Bellevue 11/3/21
Digital Security Training by RzLl 3/10/20
Keynote Speaker at Annual M.I.R. R. Day Rally at Garfield High School 2/25/20
Facilitator of Muslim Community Meeting with U.S. Rep. Dr. Kim Schrier at MAPS 1/21/20
Speaker at Three Practices Group Recording 12/17/19
Facts Over Fear Roundtable at Gonzaga University in Spokane 10/5/19
Meeting with Evangelical Pastor Bob Roberts and Faith Leaders at MAPS 2/16/19
Meeting with WA State Members of Color Caucus 3/25/20
Interview with Crocstar 4/29/20
Challenge 2.0 Recording of “Daughters of Abraham” on Lessons from the Lockdown 12/6/19
4KLXN/KPNP Program “Fee We Going To Be OK: #4thEdition with Annehla Atlas” 11/20/19