

MUSLIM YOUTH TALENT RECOGNITION

A PROJECT BY WQT

Current Situation & Major Differences from Earlier Generations:

Many young Muslims were either born in Canada or immigrated here at a very young age. They've grown up with the discussions of diversity and the promise of inclusion within the Canadian Society. They expect to be given from their parents the same freedoms and rights as their fellow Canadians friends and class mates, while at the same time they are also expected to participate and contribute to the wellbeing of the society and economy at par with their fellow Canadians friends and class mates.

Their parents are mostly from the Muslim Majority countries which are perfect followers who learned from their forefathers and have been trying to teach religion and culture (often mixing the two) to their children based on whatever they have learned and followed themselves. Unlike parents, Canadian Muslim teenagers and youth are Perfect Thinkers, they need logic and reasoning - if we try to make them followers like us, we risk making them rebellious against Deen as well as us as parents and teachers. Additionally, there is another risk involved if these young Muslims would simply follow their parents on the bases of surface-level information only with no internalization of Deen, we would risk losing our next generations to other religions and/or distancing them from Deen altogether.

Challenges Faced by Muslim Youth and Teens:

Our Muslim Teenagers and Youth are growing up in an era of Social media with its own set of learning, demands, addictions and challenges. Especially growing up in a non-Muslim Country such as Canada, and with growing momentum of Islamophobia with rising discrimination against them, they are facing challenges that we as parents and teachers are not even aware of, let alone be in a situation to help them cope with these challenges.

Surrounded by non-Muslims in their practical lives, at times the only option is either to hide the fact that they are Muslims or deny the Deen altogether in order to blend among Non-Muslims and in their environment of rising negativity against Muslims. These challenges are made worse by the fact that there is a dire shortage of Muslim Youth Role-Models i.e. those Children, Teens and Youth that they could look up to and get inspiration from.

On one hand, Muslim youth strive to be respectful of the religion and culture they were raised with. On the other hand, as Canadians, they face pressure to fit into Canadian society, which often has very different set of values and expectations. The tensions between these two identities can create real issues and a feeling of disconnection for many Muslim youth in Canada. As a result, at one point of time during their lifetime, they have to make a choice of choosing one or the other, most often resulting in them being completely disconnected from the Canadian Society in order to uphold their Muslim values and Identity. In addition, those children who are skilled and talented in fields such as painting, drawing, science, research,

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poetry or literature, because of undue restrictions being placed on the limitations of their exposure and development by the so-called unnecessary prohibitions in the name of the religion, they not only lose connection with their own true self, their talents and skills get severely restricted limiting their ability to embed into and contribute to the Canadian society.

Muslim Youth Talent Recognition - A project by WQT:

Keeping in view the challenges faced by Muslim Youth, Teens and Children, and aligned with Quranic Guidance, WQT has launched the 'Muslim Youth Talent Recognition'. In order to select, highlight, encourage and groom children, teens and youth who are skilled and talented, WQT would launch campaign for each of the following

Four Fields

- 1) Information Technology
- 2) Fine Arts & Painting
- 3) Poetry & Literature
- 4) Science and Research

For each of the above field a campaign by WQT would be run for three months whereby entries based on selected guidelines (within the defined framework of Deen) would be requested for each of the following

Age Categories.

- For Children under 10 years
- For Children and Teens under 18 years
- For Teens and Youth under 25 years.

Each Campaign will run for three months and **The Winners** will be projected on WQT's website under "**Talented Muslim Youth**" for each year. The Winners for each age category would not only qualify for youth "**Monetary Youth Scholarships**" but their profile, achievements and work would also be displayed and projected as an inspiration for other Canadian Muslim children, teens and youth. Selected Children, Teens and Youth would also be included in the "**Muslim Youth Mentors**", so that the other Muslim Children, Teens and Youth could have the opportunity to get mentored by their peers within the Muslim Community.

The basic idea of this project is to help Canadian Muslim Youth to get inspired by and get mentored by selected winners for each category for each of the above fields while ***proudly upholding their Muslim values***. This program will empower the youth, teens and children to give them the confidence and tools they need to navigate and become successful Muslims. It is the time we need to stop preaching with words only, and start implementing the true gist of Deen practically in our lives which is to connect with Allah and strengthen our Emaan through utilization of all our God-given faculties, talent and abilities to their maximum. These children, Teens and youth are our future - let's push them to take us all as Muslims towards the path of success, progress, growth and development and to show the world ***what beautiful and practical Deen e Islam truly is***.

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