

FOREWORD BY CONVENTION CHAIRMAN



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The preparation work for this convention took two years, from forming the steering committee and panels to commissioning primary data collection amid the pandemic.

To fully appreciate the rationale for this convention's problem statements, this foreword would be an essential start. It would also be a light summary for anyone looking for an overview of the convention's findings.

The steering committee was conscious of the pandemic's impact on Singaporeans' lives. The

community's well-being was at the forefront of this convention's approach in view of the circumstances. Empathy for affected segments of our Muslim community had to be central in analysing and interpreting data. Empathy was emphasised throughout the panel sessions as participants collectively brainstormed solutions to issues. This helped everyone stay focused on the human element of recommending any solutions instead of quickly jumping into problem-solving mode based on hard data.

A sense or snapshot of the Singapore Muslim community today can be achieved by referring to recent data from the Census of Population 2020. The Census of Population done decennially has been the cornerstone in providing the context and snapshot of the Muslim community at each convention. Such data has been pivotal in shaping recommendations in all AMP conventions. For this convention, the 2020 Census provided interesting insights and posed new questions on emerging trends.

Staying true to the theme of empathy for this convention, another data source is in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted by the panels. They provide insights into thoughts and feelings behind quantitative data. Here, the steering committee specifically targeted segments of the Muslim community identified as underserved or important to the community's future.

The insights from the 2020 Census are organised along three areas: Islam (as a cultural identifier), achievements (education and academic) and socio-economic.

Islam continues to play a significant role in shaping the outlook and values of the Singapore Muslim community.

Population Size of Muslims in Singapore as of 2020

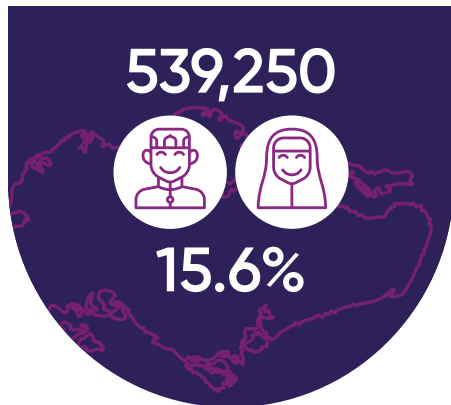


Fig. 1: Population size of Muslim resident population in Singapore as of 2020¹

The Singapore Muslim population today makes up 15.6% of Singapore's total residential population – slightly more than half a million. This is a slight increase in proportion from 10 years ago when the Singapore Muslim population stood at 14.7%.

Racial Breakdown of Muslims in Singapore Population in 2020 (Above 15 Years Old)

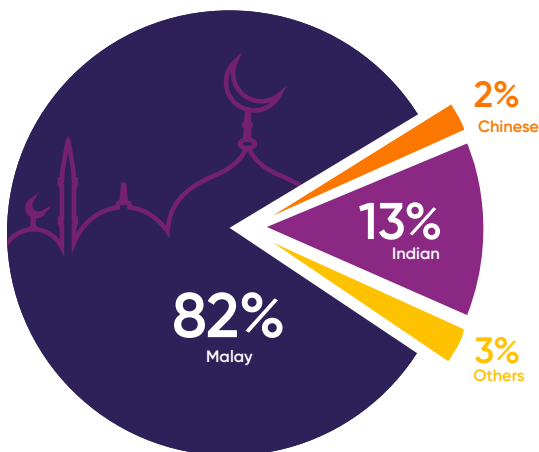


Fig. 2: Racial breakdown of Singapore Muslim resident population in 2020 (above 15 years old)²

82% of the Muslims are ethnic Malay, followed by ethnic Indian, largely unchanged over the last 10 years. This majority representation sets the context with which many Muslim organisations influence or determine existing policies and likely those in the near future as well.

Percentage of Muslims across the Races in Singapore in 2020 (Above 15 Years Old)

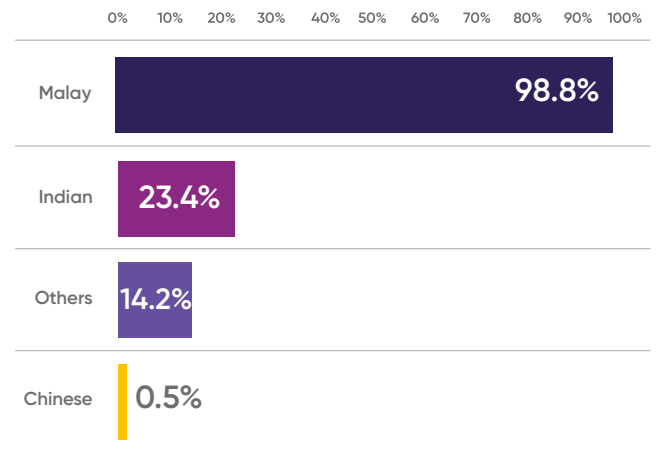


Fig. 3: Percentage of Muslim resident population across the races in Singapore in 2020 (above 15 years old)³

Interestingly, observations of religious affiliation within each ethnic group from the 2020 Census data showed a noticeable change from 2010. Muslims in the ethnic "Others" group increased from 9% to 14%, and amongst the Chinese from 0.4% to 0.5%. Even though the compositions appear stable, the observed micro-shifts could change how the Muslim community conducts its affairs in the next 10 years.

Religious Composition in Singapore in 2010 and 2020

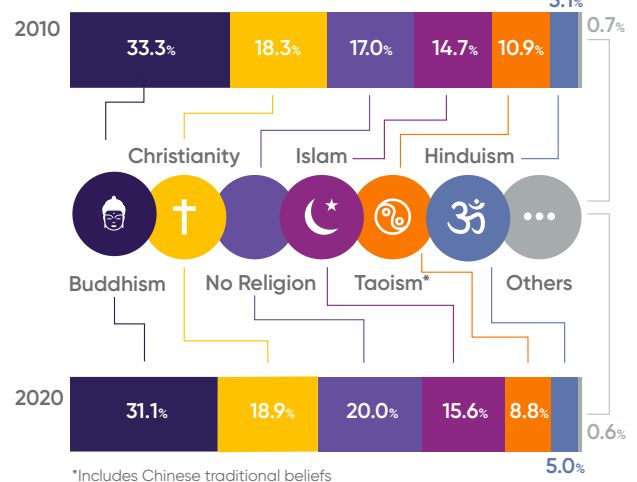


Fig. 4: Religious composition of resident population in Singapore in 2010 and 2020⁴

Today, 1 in every 5 of the Singapore resident population identify themselves as among those not subscribing to any religion. With the exception of Christianity and Islam, there is generally a decrease

¹ Singapore Department of Statistics. (2021) Singapore Census of Population 2020, Statistical Release 1.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

in proportion of adherents from other religions. The data infers a downward trend in religious affiliation in general and a harbinger to changing social norms and values.

Such analysis demonstrates existing knowledge gaps. Thus, deeper probing of Census data is required to better understand trends and what's happening on the ground. There is a demographic dividend of having more Muslims in the youth population, particularly those aged 34 and younger.

Distribution of Muslims in Singapore by Age Group and Gender

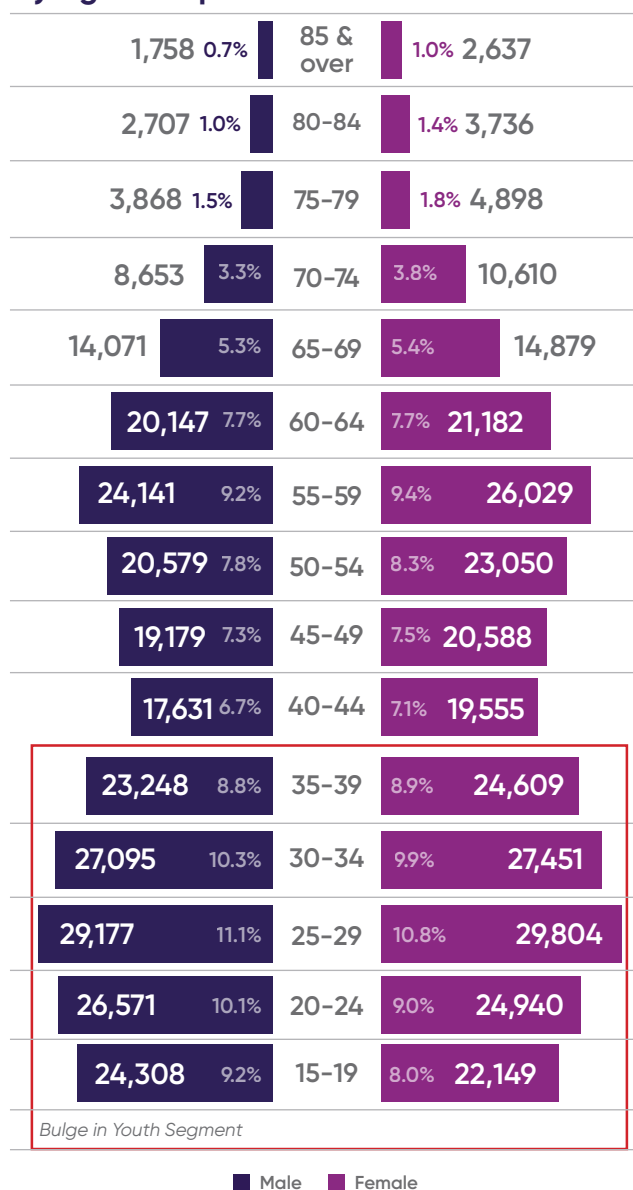


Fig. 5: Distribution of Muslim resident population by age group and gender in 2020⁵

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Although Muslims make up 15% of the population on average, among resident youth, Muslims make up a significant 20%, around 211,000. Hence, Muslim community leaders have this golden opportunity to sow and build on this latent talent pool so they can be leaders of their cohort. These data points were beacons that guided the steering committee to explore areas of concern for youth at the convention.

Religious Composition of Youth Aged 15 to 34 in Singapore

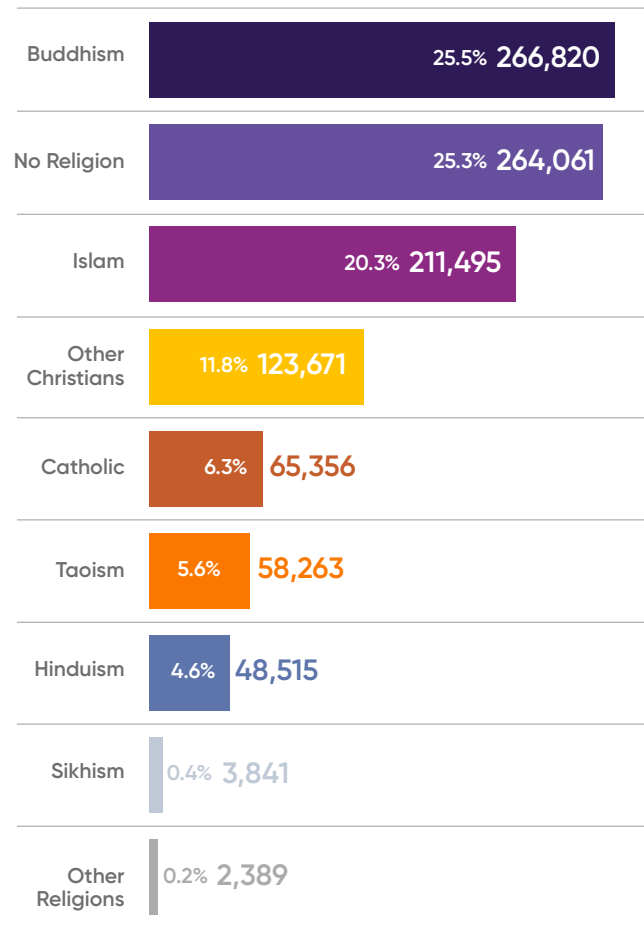


Fig. 6: Religious composition of resident population youth aged 15 to 34 in Singapore in 2020⁶

This also influenced the steering committee's format and approach to the convention. It was designed to attract youth participation in navigating the future they want for the community.

Youths who have completed tertiary education or are working are emerging professionals. Muslim organisations would be eager to reach out to them in programmes or recruit them as volunteers.

Breakdown of Muslim Youths in Singapore by Age and Gender

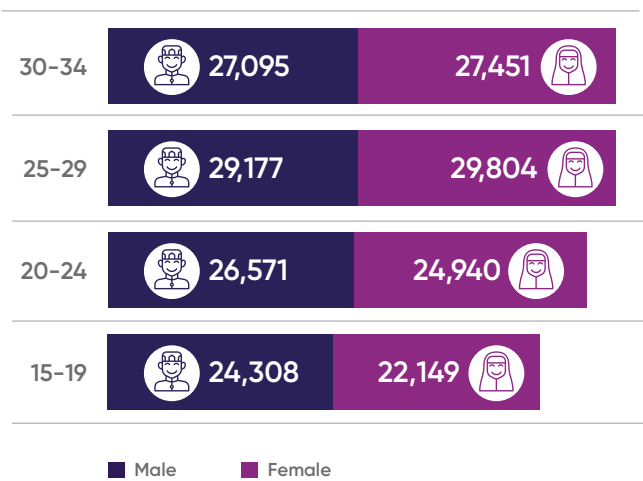


Fig. 7: Breakdown of Muslim resident population youth by age group and gender in Singapore in 2020⁷

If we delve deeper into the youth category of 15 to 34, we will find the age bracket of 25 to 29 forming the biggest segment. However, the steering committee realised a gap in understanding their motivations, such as their life stage priorities. Statistics from the Registry of Muslim Marriages (ROMM) show that the average ages of Muslim grooms and brides are 29 and 27, respectively.

This implies that, other than a career, building their young family is a priority. Thus, there is a need to probe deeper to understand their busy schedules, how they can become more involved in community affairs and the kind of programmes they would find value in from Muslim organisations. Putting

themselves in the community's shoes enabled a more empathetic approach. Hence, more time was spent understanding the circumstances of community segments.

Highest Qualification of Muslims in Singapore in 2015 and 2020

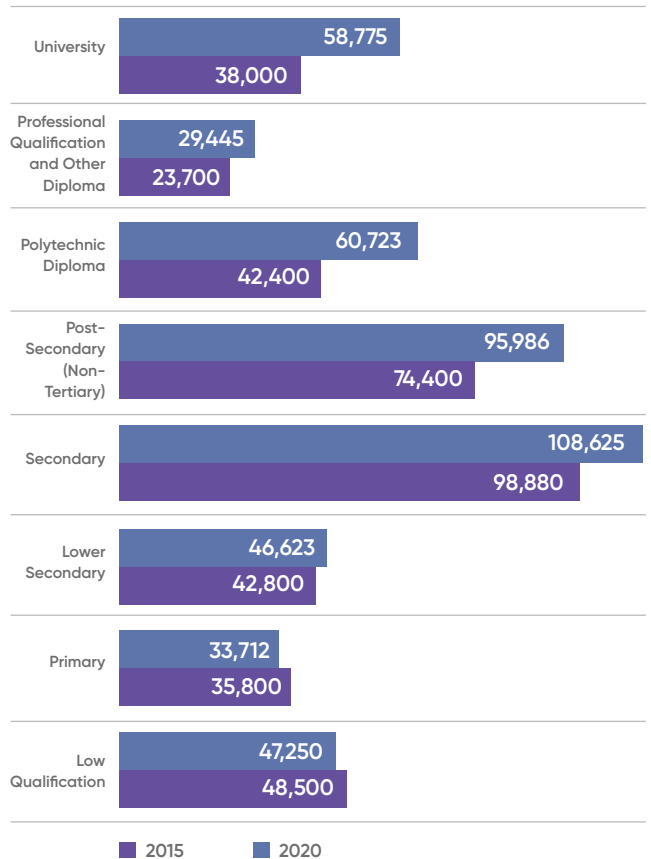


Fig. 8: Highest qualification of Muslim resident population in Singapore in 2015 and 2020⁸

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

On the academic front, Census data reveals there are almost 59,000 Muslim graduates in 2020 as compared to only 38,000 back in 2015. This 20% increase is worth celebrating, considering the laudable effort put in by Muslim organisations and families over the years. However, Muslims with a diploma and above represent approximately 31%, which is still lower than the national average of 45%. There are also questions whether Muslim graduates face challenges in getting employment.

Highest Qualification Attained by Gender among Muslims in Singapore

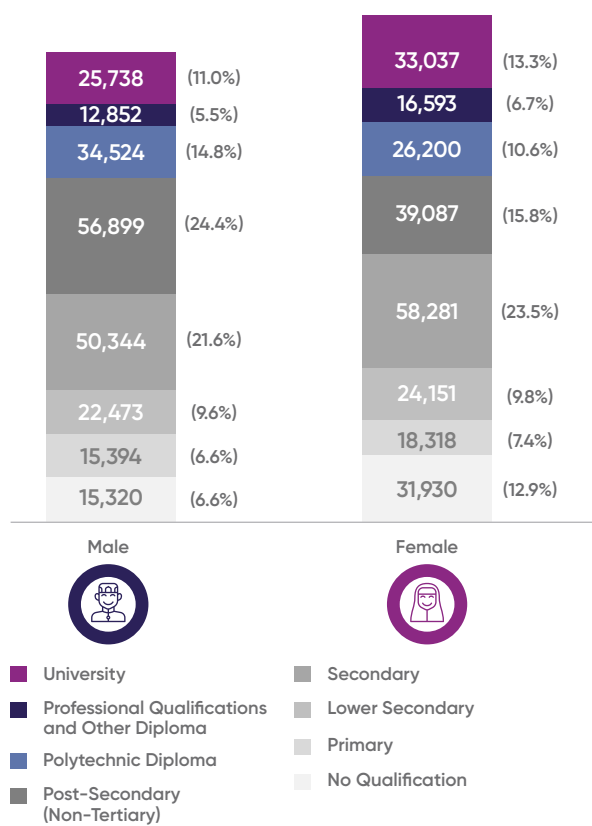


Fig. 9: Highest Qualification attained by gender among Muslims in Singapore in 2020⁹

The other data point worth noting is academic achievement by gender. There are 7,299 more Muslim women than men with a university degree. Therefore, empirically, more Muslim women should be in positions of influence and leadership in the community. The steering committee, however, could not determine if this gender breakdown corresponds to their leadership roles in the workforce and in community organisations.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Singapore Department of Statistics. (2021) Singapore Census of Population 2020, Statistical Release 2.

Average Household Income by Ethnic Group in 2020

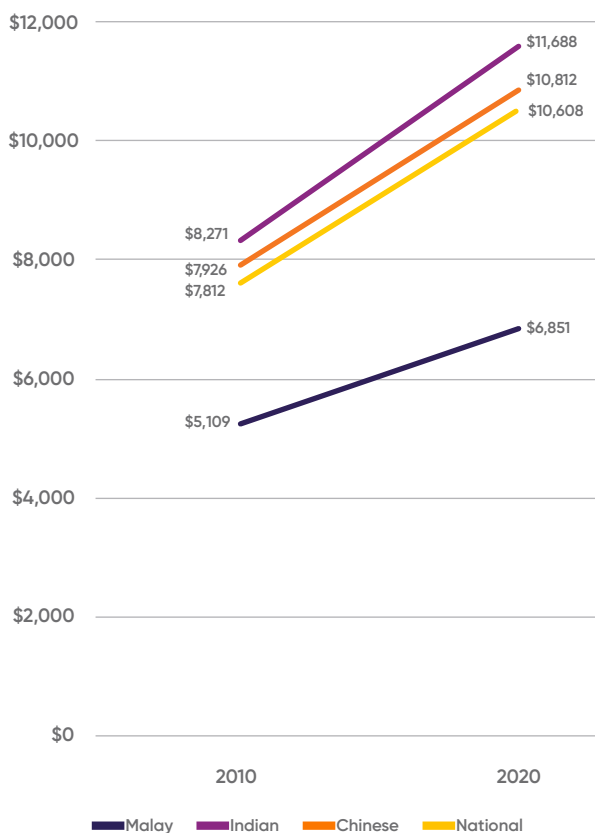


Fig. 10: Average household income by ethnic group in 2020¹⁰

The impact of the increased number of Muslim graduates could be evaluated by average income data. The Department of Statistics collects income data based on race rather than religion. Where 82% of Singaporean Muslims are ethnically Malay, it can be inferred that the majority of Muslims here earn significantly below the national average, at \$6,851 compared to the national average of \$10,608.

Despite progress on the education front, it has not translated to economic gains in uplifting household income. Median household income growth is the lowest amongst Malays compared to the other ethnic groups. Hence, while education is one of the solutions to uplift socio-economic conditions, community leaders are challenged with the question of what other aspects matter in realising social mobility.

Median Household Income by Ethnic Group in 2020

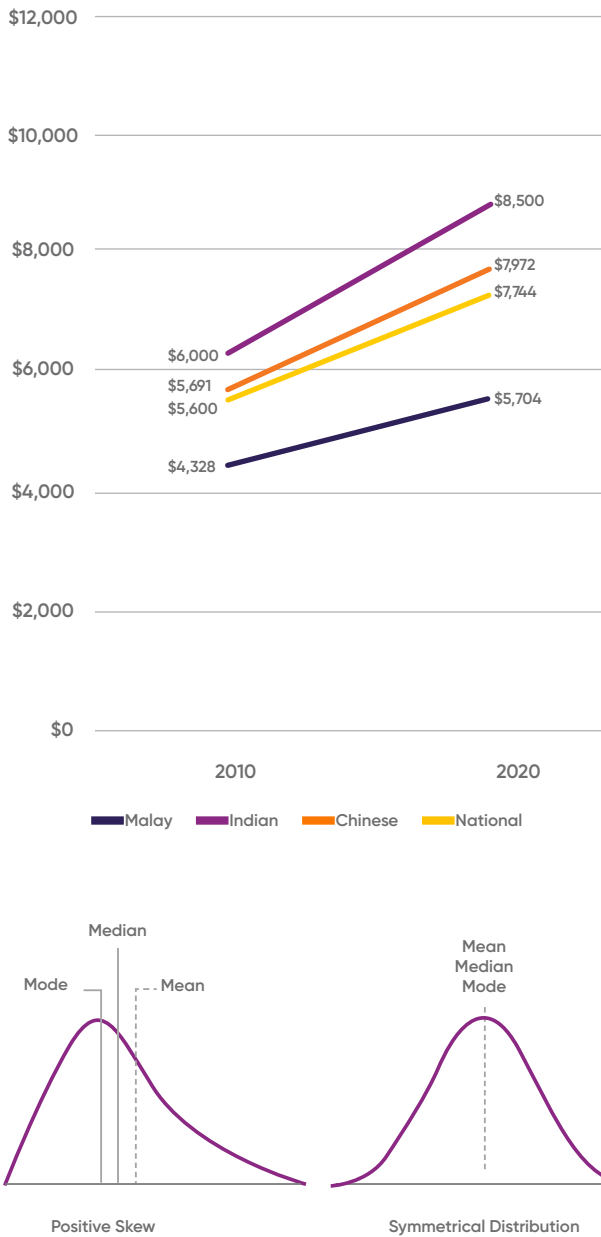


Fig. 11: Median household income by ethnic group by household reference person in 2020 ¹¹

A statistic of note is that the median income of Malays (\$5,704) is lower than the average or mean income (\$6,851). This means more are earning around the lower median income. Income inequality becomes apparent when the top earners make significantly more than the majority lower-wage

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Economic Survey of Singapore 2021, Ministry of Trade and Industry.

earners in the Muslim community. This topic on income inequality warrants a thorough study on its own since education upliftment alone seems insufficient to improve the situation. One possible starting point to unravel this problem is exploring industries where salaries differ.

Malay Representation by Industry



Fig. 12: Malay representation by industry ¹²

The top four industries with the most Malay workers are transportation and storage, administration and support services, public administration and education, and health and social services.

Main Drivers of GDP Growth in 2021

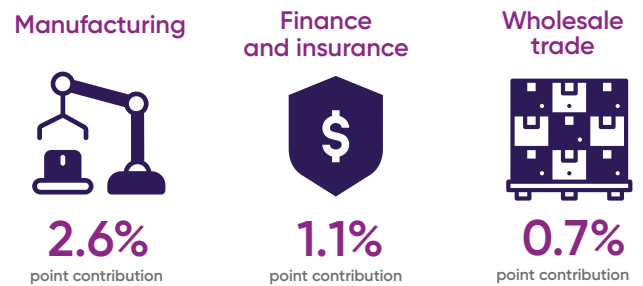


Fig. 13: Main drivers of gross domestic product growth in 2021 ¹³

Based on data from the Ministry of Trade & Industry, in 2021, the main drivers of the Singapore economy were manufacturing, finance and insurance, and wholesale trade.

As a community leader, the first thing to mind may be to aggressively drive more diploma and university graduates in the Muslim community and ensure they jump into the growing industries. While pursuing the straightforward problem-solving mode may be tempting, the steering committee hypothesises that Muslim community members

have other priorities defined by cultural and religious values beyond material pursuit. This exemplifies a knowledge gap and a need to understand the Muslim community better. This way, solutions would cater to what is important to their values.

Zakat Collections from 2016 to 2020

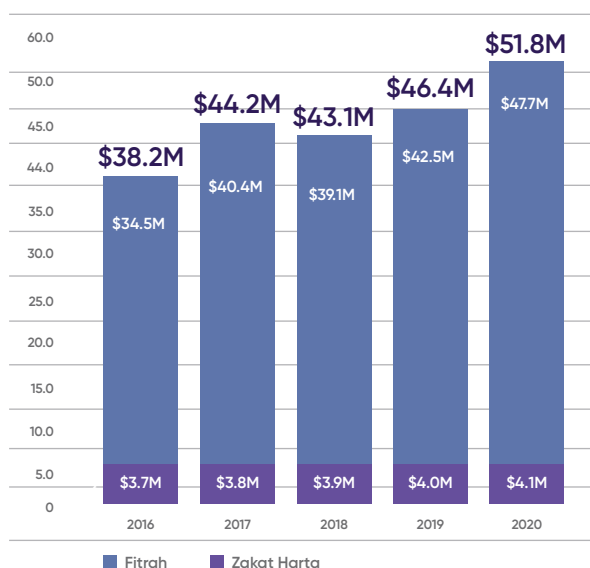


Fig. 14: Zakat collections from 2016 to 2020¹⁴

An example of values-driven behaviour in the Muslim community is the increase in Zakat contribution by 36% from \$38 million to \$51 million over the last five years.

Median Household Income Growth

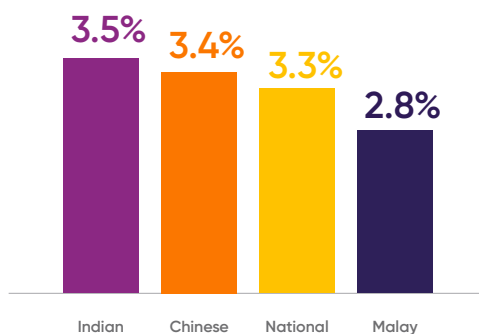


Fig. 15: Median household income growth by ethnic group by household reference person in 2020¹⁵

Only about 30% of the population earn slightly higher than the median income due to tertiary

qualifications. Further, the median income of Malay households only grew by 2.8% over the decade, the lowest across the ethnic groups. While Indian Muslims may earn slightly more, they only account for around 20% of the Muslim population. Despite the lack of education and income, the continued growth of Zakat contribution may be explained by the high regard placed on religion and charity as a means of giving back to the community.

Census data points provide a still snapshot of the community. Community leaders can make inferences about the needs and devise interventions based on the data. However, the Census only gives clues about the values and belief systems. For example, if decisions on resource allocations for social programmes were purely based on hard data, the bulk would go to youth development since youths form the biggest percentage of the Muslim population.

Seniors, categorised as those aged 65 and above only make up 12% of the Muslim population compared to the national average of 15.2%. Therefore, it would be rational for community leaders to defer ageing issues in the Muslim community until it is at par with the national level. Hence, there was an internal discussion between AMP's Board of Directors and the steering committee on whether to begin the conversation on seniors in this convention or defer it to the next convention.

Our Asian and Islamic values guided the decision to include conversations on seniors at this convention. The steering committee hypothesised that Muslim households are less likely to place their seniors in care facilities. The community tends to hold strongly to the value of filial piety and self-care for the elderly. The steering committee deliberated on the challenges seniors will face within the next 10 years.

Stepping ahead of the anticipated challenges, the convention could be used to get community leaders and concerned individuals to come together and co-create solutions to current and upcoming challenges.

¹⁴ Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, (2020). Resolved: Steering Forward as A Community in the Face of Challenges. MUIS Annual Report 2020. p. 56.

¹⁵ Singapore Department of Statistics. (2021) Singapore Census of Population 2020, Statistical Release 2.

To do this, the steering committee concurred on the need for more varied data from the community to uncover the underlying concerns and hopes of families, youth, seniors and community advocates, who will be the conscience and voice of the community.

To begin the data collection process, AMP commissioned research works from BlackBox and MyFinB. BlackBox conducted a perception survey on the Muslim community and AMP in 2020. They spoke with close to 1,000 Muslim respondents from July to August 2020. It was a similar approach to the one done for the 3rd convention but adapted due to the pandemic. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face, while some others were done virtually with the assumption that responses between both approaches would be similar.

Generally, the community's views and perspectives were sought on issues categorised into six pillars – from education to economic well-being and employment.

Top Priorities and Concerns Discovered

Muslim Community



Community Leaders



Fig. 16: Top priorities and concerns of the Muslim community and community leaders

The findings were also categorised based on two groups within the community: 1) general members of the Muslim community and 2) community leaders. From there, comparisons between the views would signal the gap between the concerns of community leaders and the general populace.

Family was a top concern for the public and was a top priority for both community leaders and the public. The study also found that 88% of the respondents agree on the importance of family ties. These were the clear indicators that the steering committee needed to focus on the family during this convention.

Areas of Concern Shared during the Study



88%

agree that Muslim families value family ties



7 in 10

agree that Muslim women usually shoulder the family's health and wellbeing



74%

of respondents feel more attention or help is needed for the Muslim community to ensure that Muslims achieve career success



Less than 4 in 10

feel there are sufficient Muslims in leadership positions

Fig. 17: Areas of concern shared in the Blackbox study

Additionally, 7 out of 10 felt Muslim women are responsible for caregiving. This suggested the need to discuss gender roles and reconcile with educated women in leadership positions in the workplace or community organisations.

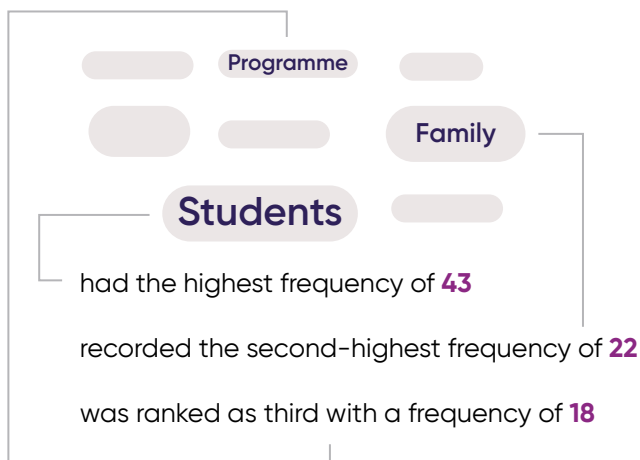
Finally, the study suggested the community's desire to see more successful Muslims in well-earning careers and leadership positions, with 4 out of 10 feeling there are insufficient numbers presently. This expectation would have a bearing on Muslim youth to do well in life and become leaders as a positive inspiration to their families and the community. At this point, the youth segment becomes a consequential area of concern to the steering committee in exploring their challenges to achieve success and take up leadership positions.

MyFinB's research aimed to decode the community's sentiments regarding socio-economic issues. This is done by scanning and analysing reactions over 10 years (2010-2020) from mainstream sources and social media sources like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp groups using their artificial intelligence (AI)-powered tools. This new approach is used to understand the

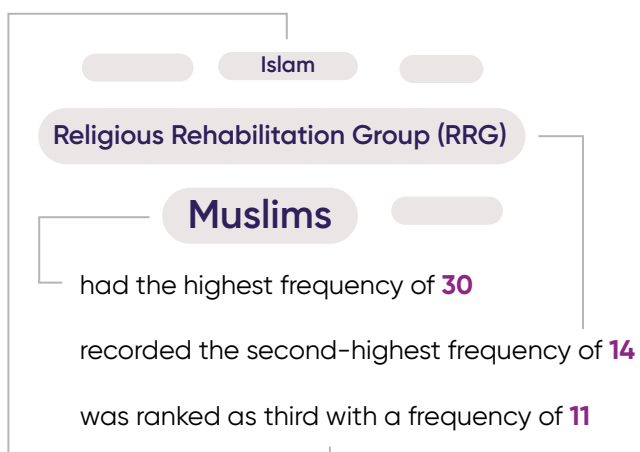
thoughts and feelings of the community, as many people communicate their views and opinions online. Spanning more than 60,000 articles, 6,000 social media posts and 15,000 online discussions, the research revealed insights on the key topics or issues "talked" about online relating to the Muslim community.

AI Key Findings: Top 3 Recurring Topics

EDUCATION



ISLAMOPHOBIA



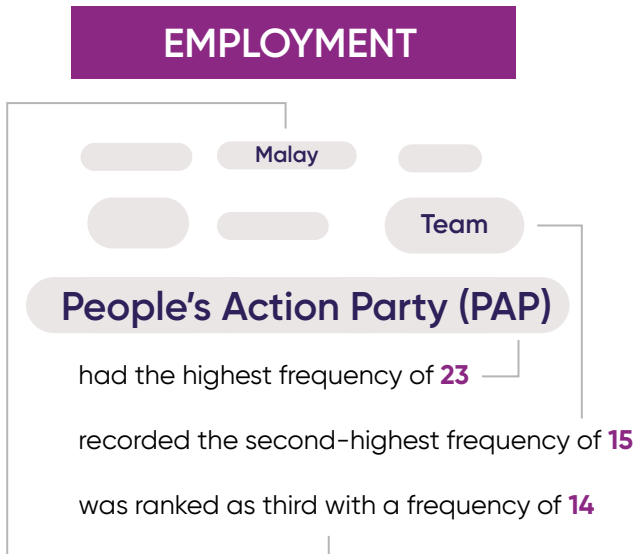


Fig. 18: AI key findings: Top three recurring topics

Their analysis identified three recurring themes: education, Islamophobia and employment.

Education and employment concerns surfaced consistently in the past decade, in sync with concerns about the cost of living in the BlackBox study and the income inequality observed in the Census. The linking of students and families with education by their AI engine further corroborated the steering committee's hypothesis of selecting youth and family as segments to focus on in the convention.

Over the last 10 years, Islamophobia has been heightened. This is likely due to the news reports on terrorist-related events over these years. Recurrent discrimination based on race or religion, locally and abroad, could only hint at how attuned Singaporean Muslims are to their identity and sensitivity to social justice and equity in areas of employment and their place in Singapore society.

2 New Findings from the AI Study



The state of affordability for eldercare services is the most requested for improvement (87%).



Majority (85%) are concerned about mental health issues experienced by members of the Muslim community

Fig. 19: Two new findings from the AI study

Two new findings from the research by MyFinB were the concern about the affordability of eldercare facilities and mental health issues. Though these topics are not widely discussed in public forums or focus areas of most Muslim community organisations, they appear to be discussed online. Mental health in the community is not typically considered of high importance and may even be taboo. Thus, without this approach, the steering committee would not have been able to determine the gravity of the community's concern on the topic.

Areas of Concern Identified



Fig. 20: Areas of concern identified

The steering committee found many pain points in the community from these two research initiatives. They realised that some of these issues overlap and some are complex and intertwined. There was debate about how to address some of these issues and solutions for them.

The Census and the two research projects AMP commissioned provided valuable data and insights into the Muslim community. It was apparent that issues like cost of living overlap with issues of employment and academic achievement. An intertwining of community segments, from families to students to workers, made defining an approach for the convention challenging. Past conventions had always approached the challenges in the community through separate socio-economic pillars like economics, religion and culture. In this convention, with so much complexity of intertwining issues, we adopted a human-centred design thinking approach that focuses on understanding the community's pain points before devising solutions.

Design thinking challenged the steering committee to view these issues through empathy. Effective solutioning comes from drilling down at specific community segments and how community leaders and organisations can help them rather than developing a generic programme for all.

This Convention: From Issues-Focused to Users-Focused

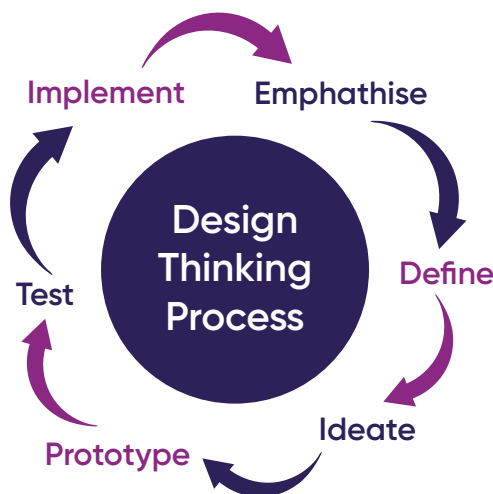


Fig. 21: Design thinking process

This paradigm shift looked at the community as service users of community organisations. Just as we like some mobile apps more than others, some services are more successful because they meet our needs on top of other factors like ease of use, accessibility, etc.

To design a solution for the social issues we intend to address, we needed to understand our users' needs. Aside from fulfilling extrinsic needs such as financial support for a low-income family, we needed to consider their thoughts and feelings, their aspirations and fears. This was done with an empathy map for each of the segments. Only with a holistic understanding of each segment's emotional, social and functional needs would defining problem statements be meaningful. These two steps were undertaken by the steering committee and the panel members whose works expanded on analysis and initial hypothesis from the data collected.

This convention was intended to be the ideation stage of the process, where we engage participants in coming up with ideas based on their understanding of the respective segment and perspectives on the problem statements.

Thereafter, the prototyping stage looked at consolidating these ideas and co-creating viable solutions through programmes or services that will be tested on small sample groups. This approach accepts that the first attempt may not be the right solution. The process is circular, giving space for tweaks before testing these solutions again and gradually rolling them out to a larger part of the community.

It also means that, at any point in time, whether at the empathising, defining, or even ideating stages, there is always an opportunity to take a step back and revisit earlier assumptions, especially if something is not right from the prototyping and testing stages. Being a fluid process, the solutions are constantly improving and evolving so long as they continue to be relevant in addressing pain points.

Applying this concept to the convention started by revisiting the six pillars (healthcare, education, employment, families, culture and religion, and leadership) used in the past conventions and reframing the issues with the segments of the Muslim community. At this stage, the analysis of the Census and research by Blackbox and MyFinB provided directions on how the issues from each pillar were to be matched to the specific community segments.

As a start, the steering committee defined seniors as an overlooked segment of the community – resources, healthcare, and the impact of caregiving by families would be addressed. As for youth, academic achievement and employment are issues of concern. With the proliferation of digital spaces and social media, the steering committee explored how community issues discussed in the past will become decentralised and how more ground-up initiatives will develop in both the physical and digital worlds. Thus, community advocates were identified as a new segment that would champion the community's concerns and be their voice. This is an extrapolation of community leadership issues discussed in past conventions. Finally, the rapid adoption of digital technology in a hyperconnected world impacts families, challenging cultural norms of parenting and Islamic values.

Hence, it can be concluded that whilst data collected and analysed were the key determinants of the segments to focus on for this convention, the individual experiences and anecdotes from AMP's community also played a part in ensuring that relevant nuances are considered.

The commissioned research works regularly hint at the centrality of Islam and its values to the Muslim community. Hence, the steering committee decided that the cultural and religious issues previously discussed in silo in past conventions needed to be relooked. Instead, Islamic values and practices would be evoked in each of the four segments. The steering committee rallied volunteers to form panels for further qualitative research and analysis.

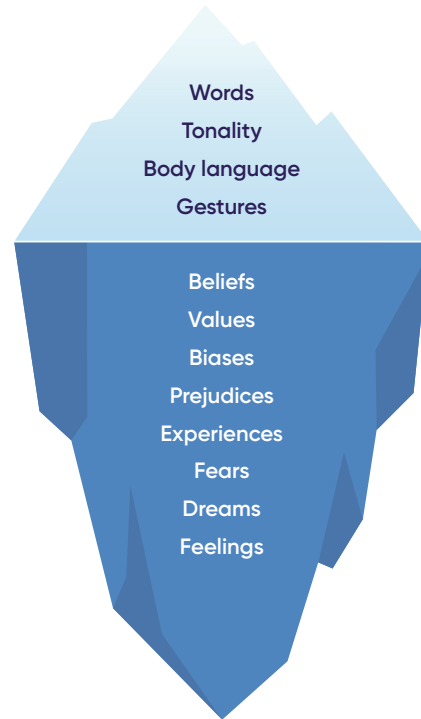
This Convention: A More Human-Centered Approach



With the assistance of a secretariat formed by full-time AMP staff, the panels surveyed 500 people and conducted discussions and interviews with 21. This allowed the panels to uncover experiences,

values and feelings that are otherwise “under the iceberg” (refer to Hemingway’s iceberg theory).

Hemingway’s Iceberg Theory



The findings from the research they conducted added more depth to some of the community issues usually discussed. For some panel members, it challenged their initial assumptions on the issues of the community. For others, it was a discovery of new perspectives that earlier data did not reveal. Unsurprisingly, some surveys and discussions with the Muslim community corroborate earlier assumptions and hypotheses.

A lot of emphasis on empathy was placed in ensuring the panels, in their engagements, always put themselves in the shoes of their target segment. Each opportunity to engage with the participants allowed us to observe and record their current actions in overcoming challenges and hints of unattended cries for help. Each panel was given time to reflect on their findings to arrive at the problem statements and a preamble for participants at the convention to deliberate collectively on ideations.

This Convention: More Empathy-Driven



Observe



Listen



Ask



Do



Reflect

The following sections of this foreword will provide an overview of each panel's key findings and themes. These provided a brief overview of the context during ideation discussions. The bespoke and detailed process of the study done by each panel and the results of the ideations are elaborated in the respective sections of each panel in this convention report.

Youth Panel Findings

- 1 Intergenerational poverty
- 2 Rigidity and lack of understanding from social assistance providers
- 3 Decline in mental health due to lack of stability
- 4 Lack of leadership opportunities for younger Muslims and women

When the Panel spoke to youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds, they felt that their challenges to succeed were not due to the lack of access to quality education but rather social capital and support from the community. They felt the community lacked empathy for their life circumstances. Support from social service agencies was transactional, functional (such as financial assistance), or received only through a government agency referral.

A connected issue is the social stigma attached to their socio-economic status, non-tertiary education or low-skilled/blue-collar line of work. The findings suggest these societal expectations have an

impact on their mental well-being. From the study, it seems youth mental health, just like physical health, is often related to choices dictated by one's socio-economic status and social pressures, and can only be uncovered through an empathetic approach.

On the other end of the spectrum, with a larger pool of tertiary graduates now compared to decades earlier, the Panel uncovered opportunities and obstacles for young Muslims to take leadership positions in community and Muslim organisations. From these findings, two problem statements relating to youth leadership and two relating to mental health were deliberated for discussion in the convention.

Youth Panel Problem Statements

Youth Leadership

- 1 How may we reduce resistance of older board members to provide opportunities for the younger generation?
- 2 How may we capture the interests of youths from different educational backgrounds to be in leadership positions?

Mental Health

- 1 How may we overcome structural issues that impede youths to achieve social mobility?
- 2 How do we help youths facing difficulties with mental health?

The Community Advocates Panel explored the transforming advocacy landscape for the Muslim community and found four key findings. Firstly, the lack of participation of Muslim professionals was due to their perceptions of Muslim organisations. Some respondents viewed incumbent Muslim organisations as invite-only clubs. This perceived barrier of entry means organisations would struggle to attract professionals with skills and expertise that can help them grow and thrive in an increasingly complex world.

Women continue to be stretched with expectations and roles in the family as well as their abilities to contribute to the community. This tension is discussed extensively in the report as the Panel sought a resolution for organisations to harness the potential of talented Muslim women within the cultural context.

The fear of reprisal of being a community advocate was one of the issues that arose in the discussions. Thus, the Panel identified the need for an open and safe space where Muslim community advocates can be heard and not have their views judged injudiciously. One worldview that Muslim community advocates challenge could be meritocracy in its current form. While the system of meritocracy has enabled social mobility since independence, the "lazy native" narrative is still prevalent and intergenerational circumstances may hinder success despite hard work. Advocating for social justice rooted deeply in Islam in Singapore's secular setting would also require wisdom and balance in discussing how to create this open environment.

Compared to decades earlier, social media makes it easier and faster to rally hundreds or millions behind a cause, making it an essential tool for advocacy. However, it can also be a dangerous tool. It can entrench bigotry and intolerance through echo chambers where people only hear from one perspective and, at times, become hostile to the opinions of others online. Blending the religious and cultural context in their research, the Panel explored how Islamic values like mutual respect and the prophet's (*pbuh*) tradition of positive communication between people of differing opinions can be applied universally in Singapore's multicultural context.

Community Advocates Panel Findings

- 1** Need for more participation in community advocacy from the Singapore Muslim community
- 2** Need for greater women representation in community advocacy
- 3** Enabling a more open environment for advocacy

4 Constraints and dangers of community advocacy through social media

Through extensive work, the Panel summarised the key themes into three problem statements. The statements look at addressing obstacles for professionals to give back, facilitating a conducive environment for women advocates and using social media for advocacy based on Islamic ethics.

Community Advocates Panel Problem Statements

- 1** How may we overcome barriers to encourage greater participation among Muslim professionals in the community?
- 2** How may we navigate cultural expectations for Muslim women to be community advocates?
- 3** How may we build on the strengths of community advocates using social media grounded in Islamic values of respect and constructive engagement?

The family is an important institution in the Muslim community, as identified from preliminary research by Blackbox. Research conducted by the panel members further found digital technology and its impact as well as sexuality as key concerns.

The concern about the impact of digital technology on parent-child relationships was one of the main findings from their research. With mobile devices now readily available to children at an early age, there was a concern about the lack of awareness this has on the type of information children can access. Implications on a child's mental and physical development were found where parents are not present or incapable of supervising the child's usage of such devices.

The findings on sexuality are a sensitive and important issue. They show how Muslim parents struggle to find suitable mediums and methods to discuss sexuality with their children. This becomes problematic in this age, especially when information is so readily available. Children may seek such information online from undesirable sources or those not in line with their family values.

Because the modern sexuality discourse has become complex and highly contentious, families seem to be seeking help navigating issues faced. From the Panel's research, there is a call from Muslim parents to see Muslim organisations provide guidance, support and resources based on Islamic teaching.

Family Panel Findings

- 1 **Impact of technological disruption**
- 2 **Facilitating technological awareness**
- 3 **Role of parents in supervising technological usage**
- 4 **Sexuality as a fear-inducing topic**
- 5 **Role of parents in sexuality education**
- 6 **Sexuality education as firmly rooted in religious doctrine**
- 7 **Sexuality as a discourse is complex and highly contested**

They have narrowed down two problem statements regarding the challenges of digital technology usage and supervision. Problem statements related to sexuality centre on communication issues and community support or resources.

Family Panel Problem Statements

Technology

- 1 **How may we help parents maximise the gains and reduce the dangers of technological use?**
- 2 **How can parents help children be less reliant on digital devices for entertainment and education?**

Sexuality

- 1 **How may we help parents to be open to talk about sexuality based on Islamic teachings?**
- 2 **How may we mobilise community resources to build a holistic framework on issues of sexuality?**

The Seniors Panel was formed as a forward-looking study on specific issues related to Muslims ageing in Singapore. With no precedent from past conventions, the panel relied on the expertise amongst themselves and developed the hypothesis through surveys and engagements with other organisations already in senior care.

Amongst the findings were the financial, social and emotional challenges faced by caregivers of the seniors. Generally, Muslims are not aware of caregiving services and support available. This is unsurprising as there are very few conversations in the Muslim community on ageing issues in public discourse, with youth and other social issues frequently taking the limelight.

Affordability and proximity to the home are important factors for caregivers to explore engaging senior services centres. The religious and cultural dimension of the research was evident when findings corroborate a desire for cultural sensitivities in these senior service towards the needs of Muslim seniors, from activities and diet to language used.

Finally, ageing, end-of-life topics, filial piety and caregiving are seen as private and internal family affairs that the community shies away from seeking help for or having open discussions about. There is a need to encourage more Muslim professionals today to advocate for specific concerns and issues their Muslim seniors face. This would not only be an act of respect and gratitude to the earlier generation but also set in motion thought leadership on specific ageing issues Muslims face. With improved lifestyles and better healthcare, the community's demographic dividend will become a silver tsunami. Thus, the Panel feels it is better for

the community to discuss and act now rather than later.

Seniors Panel Findings

- 1 Knowledge of caregiving challenges but not how to overcome them**
- 2 Operations of senior services: more cultural sensitivity, closer proximity to caregivers, and affordability**
- 3 More Muslim activities and reduced language barriers**
- 4 Advocacy role within Muslim community**

The Panel's three problem statements intend to address different stakeholders for senior care, namely the caregiver, existing senior care operators and Muslim organisations.

Seniors Panel Problem Statements

- 1 How may we ensure that caregivers are aware of the resources they can tap on to reduce some of the burdens of caregiving?**
- 2 How may we prepare current eldercare facilities to meet the needs of the growing Muslim elderly population in the near future?**
- 3 How may we facilitate Muslim organisations to discuss openly on eldercare challenges?**

This convention took place at the nexus of a global pandemic amidst major shifts in socio-cultural and geo-political landscapes. The Muslim community has progressed academically, with more having a tertiary education compared to decades earlier. However, it continues to lag in the economic front, in terms of income. Nevertheless, the community's commitments to their faith and family are clear in the studies AMP conducted preceding the convention.

A human-centred design thinking approach in this convention is a progression from the past conventions. Embedding the socio-economic topics in the four target segments – youth, family,

community advocates and seniors – allowed a holistic and empathetic look at their challenges and aspirations.

The panels' findings may be expected in some areas but uncomfortably candid in others. Being empathetic and open during the research provided rich material. The steering committee hopes they will help participants of the convention ideate solutions to some of the challenges in the problem statements.

This convention was not intended to provide the answers the community will set forth to pursue. Rather, it was a bold attempt to engage community members in our identified segments from the very start in defining pain points and engage the professionals, community leaders and advocates for a dynamic Muslim community to come together and co-create innovative solutions. Nothing describes this strength of solidarity in the Muslim community here better than this sacred verse from the Quran:

"(O you who believe) . . . help one another in piety and goodness and do not help one another in sin and aggression"

- Surah Mai'dah, Verse 2

May the Convention and its subsequent efforts pave the way for all of us to be among those who help the community and one another in goodness, *insya Allah*.