Two Year Impact Report
2016-2018

A classroom presentation on Islam by INGYouth participants.
ING Vision

Islamic Networks Group (ING) envisions a world in which people of diverse backgrounds are understood and respected and their contributions valued, and in which American Muslim communities play a vital role in promoting values of inclusion and coexistence.

ING Mission

In pursuit of this vision, Islamic Networks Group (ING) is a non-profit organization with affiliates around the country that are pursuing peace and countering all forms of bigotry through education and interfaith engagement while working within the framework of the First Amendment’s protection of religious freedom and pluralism.

Founded in 1993, ING achieves its mission through education and community engagement. We work through regional volunteers and affiliated organizations across the country who provide thousands of presentations, training seminars and workshops, and panel discussions annually in schools, colleges, and universities, law enforcement agencies, corporations, healthcare facilities, and community organizations as part of cultural diversity curricula and programs. Reaching hundreds of groups and tens of thousands of individuals a year at the grassroots level, ING is building bridges among people of all backgrounds.

ING Principles

ING programs are based on the following principles:

- We believe in adhering to the highest standard of professionalism in the operation of our organization, striving for full accountability and transparency, as reflected in our Better Business Bureau (BBB) accreditation.

- We believe that a deeper understanding of different religions and cultures contributes to peace and harmony in the world.

- We believe that diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and ideologies contributes to personal enrichment and social strength.

- We interact with people based on the belief that they are good, decent, and honest human beings, and we respect their diverse beliefs and practices.

- We emphasize face-to-face interaction with our audiences as an effective way to overcome stereotypes and prejudice and build bridges of understanding and friendship.

- We strive to build long-term, honest, and intimate relationships with individuals and institutions by meeting their needs and expectations, valuing their feedback, and delivering top quality products and services, based on scholarship.

- We hold ourselves to the highest standards of behavior and character, including good manners, kindness, sincerity, integrity, authenticity, generosity, and a dedication to continuous learning and growth.

- We subscribe to the principles expressed in the religion clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; our products and services are therefore academic, informative, objective, neutral, but never devotional in nature.
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Introduction

As ING celebrates its 25th anniversary, our work has become more relevant and crucial than ever, more needed even than during the Gulf War in 1992-1994 and in the aftermath of 9/11/2001.

Since the beginning of the 2016 election cycle, our county has suffered increasing polarization along racial, religious, cultural, and political lines, creating a climate in which hate crimes and other manifestations of bigotry have soared. Americans of all backgrounds and political views now see promoting civil conversation and peace in our increasingly diverse nation as an urgent priority.

ING, founded by Muslim Americans in 1993 to address Islamophobia, has evolved into a peacemaking organization that works through education and interfaith and intercultural engagement to promote mutual understanding and respect among Americans of all religious, racial, and cultural backgrounds. The present situation makes this work more crucial than ever before.

Speakers Bureaus

Since 2008, ING has maintained two bureaus: the Islamic Speakers Bureau (ISB), providing individual speakers on topics related to Muslims and Islamic perspectives; and the Interfaith Speakers Bureau (IFSB), providing panels of up to five participants from five major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism) who introduce their faiths and discuss one of a dozen topics relating to religion in the contemporary world.

OUTPUT: Numbers of Presentations and Training Seminars

Overall: Increased demand for ING presentations

ING’s two Speakers Bureaus have shown significant growth over the past two years, as growing numbers of people seek education that builds understanding among people of diverse backgrounds. Overall, the number of classes and other audience groups receiving ING presentations in AY 2016-2018 increased 5% over the number in the preceding two years, while the audience reached increased by 24%, not counting the number—530,000—reached at the two Women’s Marches, in San Francisco and San Jose, where ING staff were among the keynote speakers.

IFSB panels: Dramatic growth

The demand and audience for ING’s interfaith panels grew even more than the growth of ING’s presentations overall. The number of classes and other audience groups reached by IFSB panels grew by 72% between 2014-2016 and 2016-2018, from 115 to 180; the total audience for IFSB panels grew 344% over the same period, from 1,654 to 7,357.

Audience diversity

Worthy of note, and also almost certainly related to the political climate, is the increasing diversity of the audiences of ING presentations. While in 2012-2014 over half—52%—of ING’s presentation venues were K-12 schools, in 2016-2018 that figure had dropped to 34%, while the share of presentations to adult audiences in community, faith-based, and other venues grew from 58% to 66%.

This did not happen at the expense of school presentations, which grew significantly over this period.

Executive Summary
Affiliate support

Since 2000, ING has built a nationwide network with 19 affiliate Islamic Speakers Bureaus in 16 states and one Canadian province. This past year, ING helped to organize new affiliates in Florida and West Virginia while continuing to support its existing affiliates through online training and classes.

IMPACT: Improving Perceptions

ING’s effectiveness cannot, of course, be measured by audience numbers alone. What matters above all is the impact of our presentations in dispelling prejudice against Muslims and other diverse groups.

To gauge this impact, ING conducts surveys of attitudes toward Muslims and Islam before and after school presentations of Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith, ING’s introductory presentation on Muslims and Islam. The results clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of our work in promoting positive views of Muslims and dispelling prejudice. For instance, surveys conducted over the past two years show that, after an ISB presentation, the percentage of students believing that Islam promotes terrorism falls by 62.5%, while the percentage of those believing that the religion promotes violence drops by 75%. The percentage of those seeing American Muslims as “foreigners who don’t speak English” falls by almost 50%, while the percentage of those understanding that Muslims “have long been a part of the history of this country” increases by almost 30%. The percentage of those seeing American Muslims as “high level professionals” increases by 100% after an ING presentation, while the percentage of those seeing American Muslims as “taxi cab drivers” falls by 33%. The audience views of Muslim attitudes toward women—one of the most widely stereotyped aspects of Islam—likewise show marked change. The percentage of those believing that Islam “promotes the oppression of women” and the percentage of those believing that Muslims “view women as inferior” both drop by almost 65%.

ING gauges the impact of its Interfaith Speakers Bureau (IFSB) presentations through questions on an evaluation form that invite open-ended answers on the impact of an interfaith panel on attitudes toward religions and religious people. Among the most frequent responses are comments to the effect that the experience of the panel has changed attitudes toward particular religions and toward religion and religious people in general for the better.

New IFSB Panel Topics

ING has also revised the format of IFSB panels to make them more lively and interactive and has added several new panel topics, including Religion and Women and Religion and Peacemaking.

Online Curriculum and Lesson Plans

ING has continued to offer free of charge to educators online curriculum packages based on the content of ING presentations supplemented by content and discussion questions, suggested classroom activities, links to appropriate videos, and resource lists. Interest in these materials has soared since 2016; the number of educators downloading ING’s online curriculum grew 360%, from 55 in AY 2014-2016 to 253 in AY 2016-2018. This is doubtless related to the current political climate discussed above.
INGYouth

Over the past two years, ING has looked to several avenues, apart from its continuing expansion of ISB and IFSB presentations and panels, to build its reach and impact.

INGYouth holds workshops that equip young American Muslims with the Islamic literacy, speaking skills, and self-confidence to speak effectively with their peers about their faith, answer challenging questions, and push back against bullying and harassment. In the past biennium, INGYouth held ten workshops in different regions of the country and certified 89 youth as INGYouth speakers in eight states who have delivered at least 40 presentations to a total audience of around 6,000.

Traditional Media

In the biennium just past, ING worked to expand its reach in traditional print and broadcast media, garnering 457 media hits, including coverage in National Public Radio, the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and NBC News, reaching an audience of tens of millions.

Social Media

ING has continued to expand its social media outreach. Over the past two years, our Facebook “likes” more than doubled, from 16,967 to 42,213. We have 7,170 followers on Twitter, which we use to share the most inspiring stories of the day alongside our own content. Our YouTube channel, which hosts event footage, interviews, curriculum highlights, and video reports, has had around 42,000 views in the six years of its existence and garnered just under 12,000 views in the past two years. In addition, ING recently opened an Instagram account to make use of what is now the most popular social media site among young people.

In the past two years, over 469,000 users viewed our website content or interacted with our online educational materials. This represents a remarkable 40% increase in traffic from the previous two-year period. The FAQs alone had over 232,000 page views over the two years, a 55% increase from 150,000 in the preceding biennium. Our Calendar of Important Islamic Dates received over 46,000 page views. We have also used over $190,000 of Google Grant money to distribute our content through targeted ads.

Know Your Neighbor

We have also dramatically built up our Know Your Neighbor Mutlifaith Encounters program. The network of participating national, regional, and local faith-based, interfaith, and civil rights organizations has grown to over 100, and six social media campaigns, focused on sharing resources and experiences for bringing diverse Americans together for mutual learning and encounter, have been held starting in June, 2017, with a combined reach of over five million, with 10 million impressions.

Looking to the Future

To meet coming challenges, ING has an ambitious agenda for the next 25 years, including greatly expanding the reach and audience of all our programs, certifying youth speakers throughout the country, creating an Intercultural Speakers Bureau that includes African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and others educating about and acting on the concerns they share in an increasingly diverse nation, and building the ING endowment to 100 million dollars.
“Many things were put into context by the speaker, and this is important for our understanding.”

- Congregational leader, San Jose
Introduction: The Current Climate
Calls for a Strong Response

Events of the past two years make ING’s work more crucial than ever

Over the past two years, the political climate for Muslims and other Americans of minority races, religions, and ethnicities, already negative at the time of our last report in 2016, has notably worsened. Nationally, anti-Muslim hate crimes increased 15% in 2017 over 2016, after increasing 44% in 2016 over 2015. In California, despite its liberal reputation, the picture is even worse: according to the 2017 California Department of Justice annual report, hate crimes overall in the state increased 17.4% in 2017, while hate crimes against Muslims went up 24.3%, against Jews 26.8%, and against Latinos an appalling 51%.

Polls on public attitudes reveal the attitudes underlying these statistics. In a 2018 poll asking people to rate how “evolved” various human groups are, Muslims rated lowest at 77.6, with Arabs (often assumed to be Muslims) next at 80.6. A poll the previous year found that, on average, Americans believe that no more than 56% of American Muslims want to fit in and be part of the U.S. and that only 51% of Muslim Americans respect American ideals and laws; the poll also showed that Americans believe, on average, that 41% of American Muslims sympathize with terrorism.

Such findings are not entirely surprising in view, on one hand, of the unbalanced media coverage of Muslims and Islam, which often focuses on violence and terrorism, and, on the other hand, of the fact that most Americans do not know any Muslims; a 2014 survey found that only 38% of Americans know a Muslim even casually.

These realities call for a strong response from Muslims and other Americans who care about the unity and harmony of our country. That is the task that ING sets itself every day, and that is the work whose impact we report on here.

ING’s strategy for combating Islamophobia and other forms of bigotry can be summed up in three words: education, encounter, and engagement.
Over the past two years, ING’s audience has grown in size and diversity

Speakers Bureaus

Since 2008, ING has maintained two bureaus: the Islamic Speakers Bureau (ISB), providing individual speakers on topics related to Muslims and Islamic perspectives; and the Interfaith Speakers Bureau (IFSB), providing panels of up to five participants from five major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism) who introduce their faiths and discuss one of a dozen topics relating to religion in the contemporary world.

OUTPUT: Numbers of Presentations and Training Seminars

Overall: Increased demand for ING presentations

ING’s two Speakers Bureaus have shown significant growth over the past two years, as growing numbers of people seek education that builds understanding among people of diverse backgrounds. Overall, the number of classes and other audience groups receiving ING presentations in AY 2016-2018 increased 5% over the number in the preceding two years, while the audience reached increased by 24%, not counting the number—530,000—reached at the two Women’s Marches, in San Francisco and San Jose, where ING staff were among the keynote speakers.

Noteworthy in particular is the growth in the size of the ISB’s audience, from 26,541 in AY 2014-2016 to 34,280 in AY 2016-2018, a growth of 30% undoubtedly fueled by the increase in Islamophobia that began with the 2016 election campaign. Significant too is the growth of interest in the IFSB; the audience numbers for IFSB panels increased by a remarkable 344%, from 1,654 in 2014-2016 to 7,357 these past two years, while the number of classes and other audience groups reached by the IFSB increased by 57%, from 115 to 180, indicating a considerable growth of interest in interfaith dialogue and understanding that likely also is related to the increased visibility of various forms of racism and bigotry over the past two years.
Schools, colleges and universities

In the academic years 2016-2018, the Islamic Speakers Bureau delivered school presentations to 450 classes, with a total audience of 12,920; the Interfaith Speakers Bureau delivered school panels to 119 classes, with a total audience of 3,917.

Over the past several years, in the climate of increased Islamophobia and bigotry generally, the number and audience of ING’s school presentations have grown dramatically. The number of school classes reached by ING presentations grew by 65%, from 344 in 2012-2014 to 569 in 2016-2018, and the total audience of school presentations went up by 73% in the same period, from 9,488 to 16,387.

Other venues

Adult audiences for ING’s Speakers Bureaus grew by 14%

Worthy of note, and also almost certainly related to the political climate, is the increasing diversity of the audiences of ING presentations. While in 2012-2014 over half—52%—of ING’s presentation venues were K-12 schools, in 2016-2018 that figure had dropped to 34%, while the share of presentations to adult audiences in community, faith-based, and other venues grew from 58% to 66%.

Given the overall growth in the number of presentations, this did not happen at the expense of school presentations, which, as noted above, grew significantly over this period. This growth in broader community interest in the education and engagement that ING offers provides us with entrée to a wider segment of the public and witnesses to the growth of community interest in and concern with promoting mutual respect and harmony in an increasingly diverse nation.

The two most notable public events at which ING speakers presented were the January, 2017 Women’s Marches in San Francisco, where ING Content Director Ameena Jandali addressed around 500,000 people, and in San Jose, where ING founder and Executive Director Maha Elgenaidi spoke to around 30,000 people. (Because of their unusual nature, these events have not been included in the figures above.)

Other notable events at which ING speakers spoke include:

- Two Interfaith Gatherings for Peace, sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Oakland in September, 2016 (Ameena Jandali, audience of 500), and by the San Francisco Interfaith Council in August, 2017 (Maha Elgenaidi, audience of 1,000)

• Broader Impact of Trump’s Executive Orders, February, 2017, San Jose (Maha Elgenaidi, audience of 500)
• International Women’s Day Rally at San Jose City Hall, March, 2017 (Sobia Sultan, audience of 400)
• Two series of presentations on Islam sponsored by Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian, May, 2017, and April, 2018 (Maha Elgenaidi, total audience of over 1,500)
• Service of Peace and Justice in August, 2017, at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills (Maha Elgenaidi, audience of 500)
• Three presentations at Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) National Conference, September, 2017 (Ameena Jandali, audience of 1,700)
• Band Together Bay Area at AT&T Park, San Francisco, November, 2017 (Maha Elgenaidi, audience of 1,000)
• Keynote address to ISNA Education Forum, March, 2018 (Maha Elgenaidi, audience of 250)

**IFSB panels: Dramatic growth**

The demand and audience for ING’s interfaith panels grew even more than the growth of ING’s presentations overall. The number of classes and other audience groups reached by IFSB panels grew by 57% between 2014-2016 and 2016-2018, from 115 to 180; the total audience for IFSB panels more than tripled over the same period, from 1,654 to 7,357. All this indicates a considerable growth in interest in interfaith dialogue and understanding that likely also is related to the increased visibility of various forms of racism and bigotry over the past two years. After an IFSB panel in a San Francisco high school, a teacher summed up what seems to be a widespread sentiment: “I believe that if everyone would participate in a panel like this, there would be less violence in the world.”

“Many/most religious people don’t think that their religion is the only way. I always thought that to be religious was to preach your religion.”

- High school student, San Mateo
New IFSB Panel Topics

With the new urgency of building understanding between adherents of different faiths, ING has developed new topics for its IFSB panels. These include:

- **Women and Religion**, on the impact both positive and negative of religion on women and the role that women have played and do play in that area
- **Peacemaking and Religion**, on the traditions of peacemaking in doctrine and action found in different religions
- **Religion—What Is It Good For?** responding to contemporary critiques of religion as obsolete, oppressive, and opposed to science
- **Religious Holidays**, on the celebrations and holy days of the world’s major religions and their meaning for those who observe them
- **The Abrahamic Faiths**, on the commonalities and differences among the three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, that trace their ancestry to the figure of Abraham

ING has also revised the format of IFSB panels to make them more lively and interactive and added a call to action to conclude each panel, moving audiences to take what they have learned and experienced into their communities to promote mutual understanding and respect.

ING Islamic Speakers Bureau presenting to a community group.
Here is a sampling of Bay Area venues that hosted an ING presentation or panel in AY 2016-2018 in addition to the numerous middle and high schools:

**Faith-based:**
- All Saints Episcopal Church
- All Souls Episcopal Church
- Beit Tikkun
- Berkeley Buddhist Temple
- Berkeley United Methodist Church
- Buddhist Church of San Francisco
- Buddhist Churches of America
- Buena Vista United Methodist Church
- Calvary Episcopal Church
- Calvary Presbyterian Church
- Center for Spiritual Living
- Chochmat Halev
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Los Altos Stake
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, San Jose Stake
- Congregation Beth Jacob
- Congregation Kol Emeth
- Congregation Shir Hadash
- Evergreen United Methodist Church
- Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy
- First Congregational Church of San Jose
- Good Samaritan United Methodist Church
- Grace Cathedral
- Humanist Association of Silicon Valley
- Interfaith Council of Sonoma County
- Islamic Center of North Marin
- Islamic Center of Santa Cruz
- Islamic Society of North America
- Islamic Society of San Francisco
- Islamic Society of the East Bay
- Jewish Community Center of the East Bay
- Jewish Community Relations Council
- Jewish Learning Works
- Lehrhaus Judaica
- Marin Jewish Community Center
- Muslim Community Association
- Muslim Youth of North America
- Northern California Board of Rabbis
- Oshman Family Jewish Community Center
- Peace United Church of Christ
- Peninsula Jewish Community Center
- Peninsula Sinai Congregation
- People Acting in Community Together (PACT)
- SABA Islamic Center
- San Francisco Interfaith Council
- San Francisco Night Ministries
- Silicon Valley Interreligious Council
- South Bay Islamic Association
- St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church
- St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
- St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
- St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church
- St. Pius Catholic Church
- St. Thomas Episcopal Church
- St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church
- Stone Church
- Team Sweaty Sheep
- Trinity Episcopal Church
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Redwood City
- United Synagogue Youth
- Women in God’s Spirit (WINGS)

**Colleges and universities:**
- American Academy of Religion
- California Institute of Integral Studies
- California State University Monterey Bay
- City College of San Francisco
- Diablo Valley College
- Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
- Graduate Theological Union
- Holy Cross College
- Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley
- John F. Kennedy University
- Notre Dame de Namur University
- San Francisco State University
- San Jose State University
- Santa Clara University
- Stanford University
- University of California Berkeley
- University of California Davis
- University of California San Francisco
- University of California Santa Cruz
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Phoenix
- University of San Francisco

**Healthcare:**
- Chaplaincy Institute
- Homeless Prenatal Program, San Francisco
- Kaiser Permanente San Rafael
- San Francisco General Hospital
- San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
- Wellness Programs, San Francisco Unified School District
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<tr>
<th>Community organizations and other venues:</th>
<th>Kuvanis Club of Campbell</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abdelkader Education Project</td>
<td>Kuvanis Club of San Jose</td>
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<td>Ainsley House Museum</td>
<td>Kuvanis Club of San Ramon Valley</td>
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<td>Al Azhar Islamic Foundation</td>
<td>League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara County</td>
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<td>Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson</td>
<td>Los Altos Rotary Club</td>
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<td>Albany Library</td>
<td>Los Gatos Rotary Club</td>
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<td>American Association of University Women</td>
<td>Manchester (NH) School District</td>
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<td>American Civil Liberties Union Berkeley/North East Bay Chapter</td>
<td>Menlo Park Library</td>
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<td>American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley</td>
<td>Muslim Solidarity Group of Santa Cruz</td>
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<td>Andre-Boudin Bakery</td>
<td>National Council for the Social Studies</td>
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<td>Asian American Alliance of Marin</td>
<td>Northern California Regional Intelligence Center</td>
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<td>Band Together Bay Area</td>
<td>Northern Trust</td>
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<td>Burlingame Rotary Club</td>
<td>Oakland Peace Center</td>
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<td>Center for Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations</td>
<td>One America Movement</td>
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<td>Child Advocates of Silicon Valley</td>
<td>Pacifica Institute</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Club</td>
<td>Palo Alto Women's Club</td>
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<td>Dougherty Station Library</td>
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<td>East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy</td>
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<td>Edgewood Center for Children and Families</td>
<td>Richmond Branch Library</td>
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<td>Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco</td>
<td>Rotary Summit Center</td>
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<td>Girl Scouts of Northern California</td>
<td>San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Immersion Project</td>
<td>Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity San Francisco</td>
<td>Sebastopol Rotary Club</td>
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<td>Hospice of the Valley</td>
<td>Seniors at Home</td>
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<td>Interfaith Movement of Human Integrity</td>
<td>South Asian Bar Association of Colorado</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese American Citizens’ League</td>
<td>The Bill Wilson Center</td>
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<td>Jesuit Schools Network</td>
<td>Women’s March Bay Area</td>
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Affiliate support

Since 2000, ING has built a nationwide network with 19 affiliate Islamic Speakers Bureaus in 16 states and one Canadian province. These affiliates use ING’s presentations and approach to educate about Muslims and Islam in their regions. This past year, ING helped to organize new affiliates in Florida and West Virginia while continuing to support its existing affiliates through a variety of training and classes, including

- Speaker training twice a year
- A workshop earlier this year on outreach to media to publicize affiliates’ work
- Monthly webinars on responding to difficult questions about Muslims and Islam
- An online book club discussing new books relevant to the mission of ING and its affiliates

“Your ING speaker did a great job connecting with the students - he recognized early on what they knew/didn’t know – and jumped to where he needed in the presentation. This thinking on his feet made it possible to adapt the presentation for the audience.”

- Middle school teacher
Data shows a shift in attitudes before and after an ING presentation

ING’s effectiveness cannot, of course, be measured solely through statistics on the numbers reached either by live presentations or online. How effective is ING’s work in fulfilling the organization’s mission of promoting interreligious and intercultural understanding and harmony? ING has developed several means to gauge this impact.

ING tracks the impact of its ISB presentations through surveys of students who attend the most requested presentation, Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith. The survey is administered both before and after presentations to see how audience attitudes change after a presentation. ING sends out survey forms to teachers with instructions to do the pre-presentation survey at least one day before the presentation. This surveying procedure eliminates the possible distorting factor of having a Muslim presenter in the room while the survey is conducted. The post-presentation survey is given at least a day after the presentation, and teachers are provided with stamped and addressed envelopes to mail the completed forms back to ING. In 2016, ING switched to using Scantron forms for automatic scanning and delivery of data, thus eliminating office time taken up in data entry. Most of the students surveyed were studying about Islam in the context of world history or social studies at the time of the presentation, so some of the content is generally not new to them. However, ING presentations leave both students and adults better informed about the topic of Islam and Muslims, as indicated by the following results of surveys conducted between September 2016 and June 2018.

Overall, respondents indicated that the presentation significantly increased their knowledge. The survey asked students to rate their knowledge of Islam before and after the presentation, with the results shown in the accompanying charts. Before the presentation, 44% of students reported a high level of knowledge of Islam; that figure shot up to 71% after the presentation, an increase of almost two-thirds. Equally striking is the fact that the number of those believing they had only a minimal knowledge fell from 25% to 6%—a drop of over 75%. The sense of understanding thus gained is itself a blow against Islamophobia; people are less likely to be afraid of things (and people) with which they have some familiarity.
Survey Results Regarding Common Stereotypes

ING presentations cause significant shift in perceptions

The survey asked five questions about attendees’ understanding and perception of Islam and Muslims, with a total of 30 possible answers and no limit on the number of answers selected. ING designed these questions to track audience attitudes about six areas that are often stereotyped by the general public. ING uses the results of these surveys to gauge its impact in promoting more accurate perceptions of Muslims in relation to these areas. In evaluating the following data, two facts must be kept in mind:

1. Although our data now includes survey data from some ING Affiliates, the bulk of the data below is from the San Francisco Bay area, considered one of the most liberal regions in the U.S.

2. Student audiences for ING’s introductory presentations on Islam will generally have had some instruction on Islam.

These two factors make it overwhelmingly likely that most students surveyed go into an ING presentation with a considerably more positive view of Muslims and Islam than the U.S. population as a whole. It is, therefore, very probable that the change in attitudes documented by the survey data below would be much more dramatic in other sectors of the U.S. public.

Of the 30 responses in the survey, 15 are “Muslim positive” (for example, “Islam promotes peace”) and 15 are “Muslim-negative” or Islamophobic (for example, “Islam promotes terrorism”).

ING presentations over the past two years have brought about a sharp reduction—almost 75%—in the frequency of Islamophobic responses, as shown in the accompanying chart.

“ING comes very highly regarded and offered sophisticated, appropriate material for high school kids…[The speaker] was superb! She was personal and accessible—offering both her personal experience and history of Islam. She offered many personal anecdotes to accompany the statistics and the data on women in Islam…Thank you for an outstanding and valuable presentation.”

~ High school teacher, Ross
Stereotype 1: Islam and Muslims promote violence.

Both before and after the presentations, only a minority—but more than an insignificant minority—of students stated that they thought so. For instance, when asked before a presentation to complete the sentence “I believe that Islam promotes the following,” 10% of students circled “terrorism.” After a presentation, that number dropped to 4%—a drop of 60%. Similarly, 9% of students indicated before a presentation that they thought Islam promoted violence; that dropped to 3% after a presentation. On the positive side, 61% of students initially circled “peace” as a response to the same question; after a presentation that figure rose to 74%, an increase of 21%.

“I believe that if everyone would participate in a panel like this, there would be less violence in the world.”

~ High school teacher, San Francisco

“I believe that if everyone would participate in a panel like this, there would be less violence in the world.”

~ High school teacher, San Francisco

“Thank you very much for coming to my world religions class. I learned so much in the short 45 minutes you were here. You really opened my eyes to what Islam is really about. I feel we are so heavily influenced by the news that everyone assumes Islam promotes violence. It was great to see firsthand the real teachings of Islam.”

~ High school student, Hayward
Stereotype 2: Muslims are not integrated into American life.

Several questions sought to determine whether audiences see American Muslims as fitting into American culture and life. One stated, “When I think about American Muslims, this is what comes to mind.” One possible answer was “foreigners who do not speak English.” The percentage of respondents choosing this response dropped from 15% before a presentation to 8% afterwards, a drop of almost 50%. On the other hand, the number of respondents responding that American Muslims “have long been part of the history of this country” rose from 59% to 76%, a 29% increase. ING presentations also increased the percentage of who view Muslims as “ethnically diverse” from 40% to 63%, an increase of almost 60%, showing that ING presentations dispel the stereotyping of Muslims as Arabs.

“It’s always interesting for the students to see that most Muslims do not live in the Middle East. Facts like these are very helpful in combating stereotypes…We’d love to have you back next year!”

~ Elementary school teacher, San Francisco

“[The speaker] was very polite, welcoming, and knowledgeable. She was open to any questions that were asked, and I appreciated her honest answers. I would look forward to working with her again.”

~ High school teacher, San Francisco
Stereotype 3: Muslims are intolerant of and have little in common with other religions.

ING presentations cut almost in half the percentage of those believing that Muslims “are intolerant of other religions,” from 9% to 5%.

ING presentations also brought about modest increases in the percentages of respondents affirming that Islam promotes “respect for other religions” (from 69% to 75%) and that Muslims “share common beliefs with other religions” (from 69% to 78%)—in other words, ING presentations cut the percentage of those believing that Muslims do not share common beliefs with other religions by almost 50%. As noted above, on these questions most of the audiences of ING presentations already have generally favorable views of Muslims and Islam, so it is reasonable to conclude that changes would likely be more dramatic in audiences that came to a presentation with more negative attitudes.

“[What moved, interested, or surprised me was] that most religions are really accepting and can work together with others.”
- High school student, San Mateo

“It interested me how they all have many things in common.”
- High school student, San Jose

“This is an important and significant opportunity for students of all ages to see followers from a major religion sit together with mutual respect, listen, and learn from each other.”
- High school teacher, San Ramon
Stereotype 4: Muslims cannot be good Americans.

These questions gauge audience perceptions of American Muslims’ relationship with the United States.

Presented with the statement that American Muslims are “Americans like myself,” the number of respondents answering in the affirmative rose from 74% to 84%. Attending an ING presentation cut the number of respondents holding that Muslims are “not true Americans” by almost 30%, from 7% to 5%. The percentage affirming that American Muslims “are productive citizens” rose modestly, from 71% to 79%—meaning that the percentage who did not see Muslims as productive citizens fell by almost 50%.

“I am very grateful your organization offers the opportunity for students to learn about Islam from your speakers.”

~High school teacher, Oakland

“Thank you for coming to teach us about the achievements of Muslims. I didn’t know that Muslims had achieved so much!”

~ Middle school student, Palo Alto
Stereotype 5: Islam promotes misogyny.

Several questions were asked about Muslim women and the perception that they are oppressed.

Even among ING audiences who seem generally to have held relatively positive attitudes toward Muslims and Islam, negative views of Muslims’ attitude toward women were relatively widespread, more so than of any of the other widely held negative stereotypes of Muslims. Before attending a presentation, 17% of respondents circled the response that Muslims “view women as inferior”; that number dropped by around 65%, to 6%, after a presentation. The percentage of those believing that Islam promotes “the oppression of women” decreased just as sharply, from 14% to 5%. On the other hand, the percentage of those affirming that if a Muslim woman wearing hijab sat down next to them, they would be “glad for the opportunity to talk with a Muslim” rose by 20%, from 27% to 35%, while the percentage of those saying they “would feel sorry for her because I think she is oppressed” dropped a full 50%, from 9% to 6%, and the percentage of those saying that they would feel “uncomfortable, but not sure why,” dropped almost as sharply, from 19% to 10%.

“My students gave many positive reviews, esp. about the Quranic foundations of women’s rights and duties in Islam.”

~ College instructor, San Francisco
Stereotype 6: American Muslims are disadvantaged.

The survey also sought to gauge audience attitudes toward the perceived socioeconomic status of Muslims in America.

When asked to complete the statement “When I think about American Muslims, this is what comes to mind,” only 10% of respondents initially chose “high level professionals.” That percentage rose to 20% after a presentation. Similarly, the percentage of those stereotypically seeing Muslims as “taxi cab drivers” dropped by a third, from 6% to 4%, after a presentation.

“All of the background information of what Muslims believe was great, much of the misconceptions info was good, and the Q and A time was superb.”

—High school student, Wenatchee, WA

These and other results show the impact of ING’s presentations in challenging common perceptions and stereotypes.

Of particular note here is the sharp reduction in negative attitudes that ING presentations brought about for the minority of the audience coming in negatively disposed toward Muslims and Islam; this indicates the effectiveness of ING’s approach to dispelling prejudice and misconceptions, a vital task in the current political climate surrounding Muslims and Islam. ING will continue to administer these surveys to various audiences and to evaluate responses in its effort to improve its performance and impact.

“Thank you for your help in educating our staff and students so we can break misconceptions and stereotypes about others. Content was easy for middle school students to follow and still keep their attention span.”

—Middle school teacher, San Jose
Interfaith speakers point the way to interreligious understanding

After an interfaith panel presentation, the audience is asked a series of questions to evaluate the panel’s impact in a number of areas. Except for one question asking for an overall evaluation of the quality of the panel (from “poor” to “excellent”), the questions call for open narrative responses.

A sampling of responses is given below. Over the two academic years 2016-2018, IFSB panels presented to 180 middle and high school, college, and community audiences—a 57% increase over the previous two years—comprising around 7,357 people. Here we summarize the results from 459 surveys returned.

Overall Panel Quality

When asked to rate the overall quality of IFSB panels, the majority (55%) of the respondents rated them “Excellent,” while 39% rated them as “Good” and only 5% as “Fair.”

“I like that everyone was so honest and open.”

~High school student, San Mateo

![IFSB Audience Evaluations, AY 2016-2018](image)

ING Interfaith Speakers Bureau panel at a church.
Select Quotes from Interfaith Panel Evaluations

Audiences were impressed by commonalities between faiths and the civility between panelists.

The following are a sample of audience responses which illustrate the value of this important work in building interreligious understanding and mutual respect, creating more peaceful, harmonious communities, and preventing hate crimes and discrimination. They point up the effectiveness of ING’s approach to building interfaith and intercultural understanding and dispelling stereotyping and prejudice through education and face-to-face encounter.

Audience members were asked the following four questions about the panel they had just experienced:

- What moved, interested, or surprised you the most from the panel today?
- Have your views changed about any of the religions or people who follow them?
- Have your views on religious people changed?
- What did you enjoy the most about this panel?

Since the answers to different questions often overlapped in their subject matter, on the following pages we present a selection of responses grouped according to the themes most often touched on.
Respondents frequently remarked on the civility and friendship among panelists despite their differing religious beliefs and practice. For some, this was itself a surprise and a revelation:

“...I thought it was cool how the people of different religions wanted to learn more about other religions even if they don’t share views.

I’ve noticed how much less bigoted (by that I mean not at all) than I thought they were about each other.

I now know that people who are religious don’t need to be close-minded.

I enjoyed most about this panel the diversity and respect.

I loved how much respect I felt in the room. It was certainly amazing to see so many people of different religions being absolutely calm and respectful of each other and their beliefs.

I was moved by how peaceful and respectful each religious representative was towards another. It is refreshing to see different religions coexist peacefully.

I was most interested by the connections that all of these groups can make between each other despite their differences.

I enjoyed the fact that the panel was accepting of each person’s religion and enjoyed talking to others and informing.

I was impressed that all these world religious leaders came together to inform and teach rather than debate and argue.

The panel absolutely proved how people of different religions can coexist peacefully.
Audiences were often surprised and grateful to learn of commonalities among different religions:

“I was really surprised by how much each religion is similar. I learned that Judaism and Islam and Christianity have many similarities.

[What moved, interested, or surprised me was] how similar each religion’s beliefs/values are.

I was surprised by how many concepts crossed over so many religions.

It was really interesting to hear how similar, yet different, the core values are.

The number of similarities between the religions both interested and surprised me.

I now think of religions as more interconnected than I previously considered.

What surprised me was how much these religions had in common. Of course there are distinctions, but all believe in love, kindness, compassion, and helping your enemies and the less fortunate.

I found it interesting how similar the religions were in their ideologies and morals.

I loved to hear about the intersectionality of all the religions.

One thing that was interesting to me was how similar Islam is to Judaism and Christianity.

[What moved, interested, or surprised me was] the commonalities between religions.

It interested me how they all have many things in common.

All of the religions have at least one thing in common.

I’ve realized that we are all more similar than we believe.

I was surprised at how many commonalities all the religions share.

It was amazing to see how much different faiths have in common.

An ING interfaith panel educates about world religions and their adherents at a high school.
Respondents expressed gratitude for learning more about religion and religious people in general and about religions of which they formerly knew little or nothing, and in particular for the changed attitudes towards religion generally or towards some faiths specifically that learning brought:

"I now understand more about Buddhism and about the various types of Judaism.

It was really cool to listen to someone who was Buddhist.

I definitely had some underlying assumptions before that were faced today, and I feel much more comfortable with thinking about religion now.

I have realized religion is more tolerant than I previously thought.

I think now that religion can be more helpful than I thought before.

I’m more accepting—they solidified the idea that [religious people] are like everyone else.

They inspired me to be more interested in my family’s religious practices.

My views on Buddhism changed for the better because I didn’t know much about it and it seems like a peaceful religion.

I learned more about some religions that I didn’t know before.

I have changed my views on some religions. For example, not all Muslims wear hijab, and that changed my view of Muslims.

[The panel] makes me feel more open and thoughtful towards religious people, as they’re often stereotyped and spoken bad of through the media.

One thing that really moved me was when [the ING speaker] said that Hinduism is about forgiveness, compassion, and truth. Hinduism was the one that really interested me today. I didn’t know anything about it so when she spoke about it, it brought comfort to me. I believe in those things.

Religion can unite people together and make them feel connected to their culture.

[How have your views of religious people changed?] Muslims—they get such a bad rap because of Muslim terrorists. Not all Muslims are terrorists.

I am more knowledgeable in the basic beliefs of these religions. I have heard both sides (positive and negative) of each religion.

I feel a lot more comfortable with religions. Religion used to feel somewhat like a threat to my way of life, but maybe it’s okay for us to all just coexist.

My view of the Islamic religion has changed, because the media are always blaming the whole religion.

I have a better understanding of all the other religions but my own (Christianity), because I went to a Christian private school and always thought all religion was bad but my own. My perspective has changed. I’m not as judgmental with other religions as I used to be.

I learned about other religions dealing with extremism, not just Islam."
Audiences were also impressed by the personal qualities of the panelists and how they worked together:

“...
I thought each panelist sharing the essential values of their religion really stood out. Panelists were incredibly knowledgeable and didn’t just make generalizations.

I like that everyone was so honest and open.

I liked how everyone built off each other’s answers and contributed something new.

I was really surprised that one’s faith can actually be so strong.

[What I enjoyed most about this panel was] the clearly educated and passionate panelists.

[What moved, interested, or surprised me was] the way they listened and built on one another’s ideas.

It was so cool seeing people of all different faiths who were so passionate about their spirituality and religion tell us about their faiths and give us more insight into their religion.

Not all super-religious people are insane! It was refreshing hearing very religious people talk about religion like normal people.

[What I enjoyed most was] the general positive atmosphere of the panel.

I enjoyed the enthusiasm that each panel member brought with them.

[What I enjoyed most was] the people! They were so sweet and interesting.

I enjoyed that the panelists were very fun and open about their religion.

[What I enjoyed most was] the humor that the presenters brought to the table.

The speakers were fun/funny.

My view [of religious people] hasn’t changed but grown stronger. I respect all religious people and have now a stronger respect.

I enjoyed the enthusiasm and passion that the speakers put into their speeches. I could tell that everybody felt highly of the religion they were promoting.

I liked how passionate the speakers were for their religion.

I liked how the speakers related their speech through their experiences, and how they seemed so open and accepting.

[What I enjoyed most was] the openness and the way they expressed modern-day people/topics.

[What I enjoyed most was] the eloquence of the speakers.

”
Audiences were impressed by the knowledge of panelists and their ability to present issues clearly:

"All the people on the panel gave deep, thoughtful answers to each of the questions. I liked how they didn’t give simple answers. They went in depth on things.

I enjoyed how our panelists were able to clarify many confusing parts of their religions, and how supportive they were of one another.

[What I enjoyed most was] the variety and depth of the answers. Remarkable.

I enjoyed how open they were about the questions we had and the detail they put into their answers even for just one simple question.

I liked how much information was given, and how they are able to incorporate their religions into their daily lives.

The panel knew how to answer every question thoroughly and each of their religions seemed intriguing.

I was surprised that the panel had so much information and answers to every question.

[The panelists] were all very informative and clear!

[What moved, interested, or surprised me was] how open people were about answering controversial questions.

An IFSB panel presenting to a community group."
4 Requesters Give ING High Grades

ING Retention Rate

Requester responses show broad knowledge of and respect for ING

Of the total number of people who requested an ING presentation or panel in AY 2014-2016, 27% requested an ING presentation for the first time, while 73% had previously requested a presentation.

Since ING has not been sending out marketing materials, the percentage of first-time requesters indicates strong recommendations to colleagues from previous requesters and a positive reputation of ING in the community.

ING Presentation or Panel Satisfaction

Requesters report incredibly high rates of satisfaction with ING presentations

Overall, requesters reported overwhelmingly positive experiences. When asked if they would “likely request another presentation or panel in the future,” an overwhelming majority (96%) answered “yes.”

“The speaker was young, cool, loved the kids, and very openly answered their many questions. That as a whole was significant for them…We loved it! Many commented that it was their first time “meeting a Muslim” (at least holding a conversation about Islam with a Muslim person) and they were totally mesmerized by everything [he] said. It added a level of credibility and buy-in that made it way more meaningful for the kids.”

~ High school teacher, East Palo Alto
Relevancy of ING Presentation or Panel Content

Vast majority of requesters reported the content met their expectations

ING content is designed to help fulfill state educational standards in history and social studies, while providing informative and entertaining presentations for non-school audiences as well. In response to the question whether the presentation or panel content was able to “fulfill what you hoped to convey to the audience,” 96% of requesters thought it did an “Excellent” (78%) or “Good” (18%) job of doing so. Only 4% answered “Fair,” and no requesters found content “Poor.” The accompanying chart gives the figures for the biennium.

“ING is not only informative but easy to work with. Panels are well organized and helped me coordinate other aspects of the interfaith day.”

- College teacher, Belmont
Requester Feedback Shows What They Valued Most From the Presentation or Panel

Requesters also had the opportunity to add their thoughts, ideas, and recommendations about the presentations and panels. Here is a sampling of their comments:

“The response of the people in attendance was welcoming, and very thoughtful – because [the ING speakers] made their stories so compelling.

Every aspect of the presentation was outstanding, the content, the presenters, the engagement of the speakers. They both were exceptional.

The speakers are generally great, the material covered is excellent and having that personal connection makes a big difference in combating stereotypes and Islamophobia.

ING comes very highly regarded and offered sophisticated, appropriate material for high school kids...[The ING speaker] was superb! She was personal and accessible—offering both her personal experience and history of Islam. She offered many personal anecdotes to accompany the statistics and the data on women in Islam...Thank you for an outstanding and valuable presentation.

Thank you for your help in educating our staff and students so we can break misconceptions and stereotypes about others... Content was easy for middle school students to follow and still keep their attention span.

Our presentation was about Islamic Achievements, and it was all interesting and relevant. Good pictures made the presentation engaging for students...Thank you! My students enjoyed the presentation, and we appreciate the time that the presenter took to teach us, and also answer our questions.

It was important to learn that Bay Area Muslims are well educated and integrated in our communities. They are not “the other.”

It’s always interesting for the students to see that most Muslims do not live in the Middle East. Facts like these are very helpful in combating stereotypes...We’d love to have you back next year!

Attendees gained knowledge and perspective about women and Islam. The importance of differentiating cultural traditions, political regulations from the tenets of Islam provided a significant reframing of perceptions...It was excellent, impressive, and perfect for our purposes...[The ING speaker] is inspirational. She graciously lingered long after her presentation and the formal Q&A to answer questions and converse informally and more personally with those who lingered after the formal program had concluded.
Effectiveness of ING Speakers

Requesters give high ratings to speaking skills

The ING speaker certification process is designed to ensure that speakers have both a mastery of content and the speaking skills needed to convey it effectively. Requesters’ evaluations of ING speakers reflect the success of our training and certification practices. Respondents overwhelmingly have positive evaluations of ING’s speakers.

When multiple speakers present at a single venue, the requester has the opportunity to evaluate each speaker individually. Overall, when asked about a speaker’s “effectiveness in conveying the material covered,” 98% considered it “Excellent” (77%) or “Good” (21%) and only 1% rated it “Fair” or “Poor.” In the accompanying chart we give the evaluation figures for the two-year period.

Speaker’s Knowledge of Content

Overwhelming majority found to have good knowledge of the subject matter

As shown in the accompanying chart, 98% of respondents considered the speakers’ “knowledge of the subject matter” to be “Excellent” (89%) or “Good” (9%). Only 3% found it “Fair” and only 1% “Poor.”

Speaker’s Delivery Skills

Overwhelming majority of speakers rated “Excellent” or “Good”

The overwhelming majority (96%) of respondents considered their speaker’s delivery skills to be “Excellent” (80%) or “Good” (16%). Only 3% rated a speaker “Fair” in this regard, and only 1% “Poor.”
**Speaker’s Ability to Connect with the Audience**

Majority of speakers rated “Excellent” or “Good”

When asked how well “the speaker connected with the audience,” 96% rated their speaker “Excellent” (76%) or “Good” (20%), 4% found their speaker’s ability to connect with the audience “Fair,” and none felt their speaker’s connection was “Poor.”

**Speaker’s Time Management**

Overwhelming majority of speakers rated “Excellent” or “Good”

Finally, when asked to evaluate if speakers managed time well and provided “sufficient time for Q & A,” 95% answered “Excellent” (71%) or “Good” (24%), and only 5% chose “Fair” and 1% “Poor.”

“He was very receptive to our questions and we enjoyed the presentation very much.”

- Congregational leader, Milwaukee, WI
Additional Comments about Speakers

Personalized comments convey the development of a relationship

Requesters also have an opportunity to make open-ended written comments on speakers. The following are a representative sample of answers to the question “Do you have additional comments about the speaker or speakers?”

“

The candor of the presenter allowed us to relax and learn some of the cultural aspects of Muslim culture. She spoke of her children and some of the same concerns that many of our staff and clients address daily.

[The ING speaker] made a huge positive difference in the presentation. Having the perspective of a faithful Muslim woman was an honor.

[The ING speaker] connected very well with the audience, who mostly seemed very grateful for the presentation. She handled the two more critical audience members effectively and courteously.

[The ING speaker] is knowledgeable and skilled at presenting the material in a friendly and personal way that the audience can understand and appreciate.

[The ING speaker] was superb! She was personal and accessible—offering both her personal experience and history of Islam. She offered many personal anecdotes to accompany the statistics and the data on women in Islam.

Very warm and engaging person. Very knowledgeable.

[The ING speaker] is charismatic and makes an excellent impression.

Very impressed with how each speaker brought a different angle and perspective. The students really connected with [the ING speaker] because he was young and relatable to the kids.

[The ING speaker] did a great job connecting with the students – he recognized early on what they knew/didn’t know—and jumped to where he needed in the presentation. This thinking on his feet made it possible to adapt the presentation for the audience.

The candor of the presenter allowed us to relax and learn some of the cultural aspects of Muslim culture. She spoke of her children and some of the same concerns that many of our staff and clients address daily.

I thought each panelist sharing the essential values of their religion really stood out. Panelists were incredibly knowledgeable and didn’t just make generalizations.

The group was quite impressed with [ING speaker 1]—it was inspiring to see such an accomplished and poised young woman having the courage to educate others. [ING speaker 2] so effectively modeled what it is to be an ally. And [ING speaker 3’s] enthusiasm, energy & humor really enabled people to connect with her. All three were so well received.

“
Supplementing content standards in social studies, religious studies, and world history, ING’s online curriculum, which is designed for educators, is downloaded free of charge for use in the classrooms all across the country.

ING’s online curriculum is available for download at www.ing.org/academic
ING’s efforts in education are not limited to face-to-face presentations. We have produced online curriculum packages based on our ISB presentations and IFSB panels available free of charge to educators for use in classrooms. These curricula include the complete slide show and script of the corresponding presentation or panel, supplemented by content and discussion questions, suggested classroom activities, links to appropriate videos, and resource lists. ING now has five Muslim curricula—Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith, A History of Muslims in America, Muslim Contributions to Civilization, Muslim Women Beyond the Stereotypes, and Emir Abd El-Kader: A Muslim Hero for Our Time—and two interfaith curricula—Shared Values and Living the Faith—available online. Anyone is free to download the table of contents and first lesson of each curriculum; confirmation as an active classroom teacher is required to download an entire curriculum. These have been downloaded by 430 educators in 43 states and three Canadian provinces. Interest in these materials has soared since 2016; the number of educators downloading ING’s online curriculum grew 360%, from 55 in AY 2014-2016 to 253 in AY 2016-2018. This is doubtless related to the current political climate discussed above.

Also recently made available for download to anyone who is interested are ING’s responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about Muslims and Islam, as well as about Sharia, ISIS, and Ramadan. Since February of this year, 440 people—more than one per day—from 40 states and from every continent have downloaded these materials.
ING Workshops Prepare the Next Generation of Speakers

Over the past two years, ING has looked to several avenues, apart from its continuing expansion of ISB and IFSB presentations and panels, to build its reach and impact.

Starting in late 2014, ING has been building up INGYouth, a program of workshops that equip young American Muslims with the Islamic literacy, speaking skills, and self-confidence to speak effectively with their peers about their faith, answer challenging questions, and push back against bullying and harassment. One-day INGYouth workshops combine instruction in basic Islamic literacy with live practice in answering questions about Muslims and Islam; they aim not only at imparting information but also at strengthening young Muslims’ spiritual grounding and self-confidence. INGYouth has thus far held 23 workshops (of which 13 took place in AY 2016-2018) in ten states: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia. Muslim teens who participate in an INGYouth workshop are eligible to continue in an INGYouth speaker training program. Youth who successfully complete that program are certified as youth speakers, and ING notifies their school that they have the requisite skills and knowledge to do classroom presentations. Over the past two years, 89 youth in eight states have been certified and have delivered at least 40 presentations to a total audience of around 6,000.
7 | Media Outreach: ING Reaches Out to Tens of Millions

Both social and traditional media bring ING’s message nationwide

Traditional Media

In the biennium just past, ING worked to expand its reach in traditional print and broadcast media, garnering 457 media hits, including coverage in National Public Radio, the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and NBC News, reaching an audience of tens of millions. These have included both articles and programs partly or wholly about ING and its work and articles by ING staff and speakers on various topics. Among the headlines are

- Supreme Court Decision on Travel Ban Promotes Bigotry (San Francisco Chronicle, 6/26/18)
- More Than a Headscarf: Forum takes aim at misconceptions about Muslims (Detroit Free Press, 4/29/18)
- Turning Rampant Anti-Muslim Bullying into Teachable Moments (National Public Radio, 4/16/18)
- Trump’s Anti-Muslim Tweets Exemplify Schoolyard Bullying (USA Today, 12/1/17)

This effort is a return to ING’s roots, since the organization initially focused on engaging with media to promote more accurate coverage of Muslims and Islam. Now ING has a quarter century of experience and accomplishment to draw media attention.

Social Media

ING has continued to expand its social media outreach. Over the past two years, our Facebook “likes” more than doubled, from 16,967 to 42,213. We have 7,170 followers on Twitter, which we use to share the most inspiring stories of the day alongside our own content. Our YouTube channel, which hosts event footage, interviews, curriculum highlights, and video reports, has had around 42,000 views in the six years of its existence and garnered just under 12,000 views in the past two years.

In addition, ING recently opened an Instagram account to make use of what is now the most popular social media site among young people.
In the past two years, over 469,000 users viewed our website content or interacted with our online educational materials. This represents a remarkable 40% increase in traffic from the previous two-year period. The FAQs alone had over 232,000 page views over the two years, a 55% increase from 150,000 in the preceding biennium. Our Calendar of Important Islamic Dates received over 46,000 page views. We have also used over $190,000 of Google Grant money to distribute our content through targeted ads.

“"He was very receptive to our questions and we enjoyed the presentation very much.""
- Congregational leader, Milwaukee, WI
ING-led network grows to over 100 organizations nationwide

We have also dramatically built up our Know Your Neighbor Multifaith Encounters (KYN) program. KYN emerged from the Know Your Neighbor Coalition initiated at the White House in December 2015 to foster understanding and unity among Americans of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. The Coalition tasked ING with developing a grassroots component of the movement. In response, ING launched KYN. This campaign is a response to the voices of hate and division which have grown louder and more numerous in the past several years.
years, particularly against Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities and other minorities. Together, we seek to respond to anti-minority sentiment, bigotry, and hatred by encouraging and facilitating face-to-face engagement, relationship-building, dialogue, and action between people of different religious traditions, beliefs, and cultures. Thus far, this effort has worked primarily through social media campaigns focused on sharing experiences and resources for bringing diverse Americans together for mutual learning and encounter. The network of participating national, regional, and local faith-based, interfaith, and civil rights organizations has grown to over 100, and the six social media campaigns that have been held starting in June, 2017, have had a combined reach of over five million, with 10 million impressions. The topics of these campaigns included:

- **Share Your Story** (sharing what people would like others to know about them and their community)
- **Back to School** (resources and experiences for making schools more inclusive)
- **New Year’s Resolutions** (encouraging commitment to actions to be taken to promote pluralism and inclusion)
- **Be an Upstander** (on standing up for one another in a climate of division)
- **Share Your American Story** (sharing immigrant and multicultural experiences)
- **Creating Inclusive Classrooms** (more resources and experiences in promoting pluralism and mutual understanding in schools)
Looking Ahead: ING’s Next 25 Years

Challenging times demand ambitious plans

As the past two years have dramatically demonstrated, the struggle for understanding and harmony across racial, ethnic, religious, and other lines is far from over. ING expects to be pursuing its mission for another 25 years and beyond. Where are we going in the next quarter century? Our plans must match the magnitude of the issues we confront. ING has become the voice of not only of Muslims but also of other diverse groups at the grassroots level in many towns and cities and thus has made itself known as a peace-making organization that is dedicated to helping people know their neighbors through education, interfaith engagement, and joint action. Among the new initiatives that we are planning as we move forward are:

1. Launch of a new speakers bureau that explores the interconnectedness of bigotry across racialized communities, and how to combat it together.

2. INGyouth teens working with Jewish and Sikh youth to prevent bullying and raise awareness of cultural diversity on school campuses.

3. Institutional impact in lower income Bay Area regions that supports African American and immigrant youth as well as parents of Middle Eastern and South Asian backgrounds.

4. New artistic performances of Halaqa Seder programs that explore Muslim, Jewish, and Christian perspectives of shared prophetic traditions.

5. Release of updated presentations and answers to questions about Islam and Muslims.

This is an ambitious agenda, but the times demand no less, and our record of past success gives us confidence for the future.
ING Islamic Speakers Bureau speaker presenting before a classroom.

“Thank you very much for the work that you do!”

- College instructor, San Francisco

Know Your Neighbor selfie!