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, ING’s mission is to counter prejudice and discrimination against American Muslims by teaching about their traditions and contributions in the context of America’s history and cultural diversity, while building relations between American Muslims and other groups. ING emphasizes the importance of countering all forms of bigotry 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.
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .................................................. 1

1. Background .......................................................... 3

2. ING Output ........................................................... 11

3. ING Impact: Changed Perceptions .............................. 13

4. Evaluations of ING Content and Performance .............. 23

5. A New Venture: Online Curriculum ............................. 36

Conclusion ............................................................... 38

Appendices ............................................................... 39
Executive Summary

As an organization committed to interfaith and intercultural harmony and respect, we are happy to present to you this analysis of ING’s impact in changing perceptions and attitudes about Muslims and their faith and about other religious groups. We aim to provide documented evidence that our approach succeeds in dispelling Islamophobia and other prejudices still prevalent in the United States.

Since its inception in 1993, Islamic Networks Group (ING) has worked to promote understanding about American Muslims and their faith while addressing prevalent stereotypes and misconceptions and building relationships between American Muslims and other groups. ING provides education to diverse audiences utilizing trained speakers in both the Islamic Speakers Bureau (ISB) and the Interfaith Speakers Bureau (IFSB).

The ISB provides individual speakers on various aspects of Islam to schools, colleges, community organizations, and other venues. The IFSB provides panels of speakers to venues of the same sort, each panelist representing one of five major world religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Recently, the IFSB has begun organizing interfaith service projects, bringing people of diverse cultures and religions together for service as well as conversation.

ING also offers cultural diversity seminars to various professional groups, educating them on best practices in dealing with Muslim communities, employees, patients, and students.

ING has undertaken two initiatives to extend its reach beyond the San Francisco Bay area: providing online curriculum materials to educators in schools and postsecondary institutions and encouraging and supporting the development of affiliate organizations around the country on the model of ING that use its materials and procedures. There are now 23 ING affiliates in 21 states.

ING itself between September 1, 2009, and August 31, 2012, reached a total face-to-face audience of around 55,000 in 1,571 classes or other audience groups.

Over the three year period 2009-2012, ING administered surveys and evaluations of its educational outreach programs to measure its success in fulfilling its mission. Audience evaluations from presentations by the Islamic Speakers Bureau, the Interfaith Speakers Bureau, and cultural diversity trainings document an increased understanding and more accurate picture of American Muslims and their faith as well as improved readiness for positive interfaith relationships.

The change in attitudes documented by surveys before and after ISB presentations demonstrates ING’s effectiveness in making Muslims and their faith a better understood and accepted part of the American religious and cultural landscape. While only 18% of student respondents report a “high” level of knowledge of Islam before an ING presentation, after a presentation that figure increases dramatically to 60%. Responses to questions on six common stereotypes about Islam and Muslims show that this increased knowledge leads to changed attitudes. For instance, the percentage of respondents who see Islam as promoting peace increases from 56% to 80%. Similarly, the percentage recognizing that Muslims have long been part of America rises from 33% to 55%, while the number of respondents seeing Muslims as “Americans like myself” increases from 47% to 66%. On the other hand, the percentage believing that Muslims “see women as inferior” decreases from 23% to 5%. (See pp. 13-19.)

Audience evaluations also demonstrate the effectiveness of ING’s Interfaith Speakers Bureau. Over the past three academic years, well over 90% of audience respondents rate interfaith panel presentations “Excellent” or “Good,” with a majority (53%) rating them “Excellent.” Only 4% rated them “Fair,” and
only one respondent in the three-year period rated a presentation “Poor.” Open-ended audience comments also show the positive impact of ING’s interfaith presentations. (See pp. 19-22.)

Educators and other requesters also show satisfaction with the relevancy of ING content, both Islamic and interfaith. Over 98% of respondents to surveys of requesters rate content “Excellent” or “Good,” with a strong majority (68%) rating it “Excellent.” ING speakers likewise receive better than 90% ratings of “Excellent” or “Good” on all criteria, again with a strong majority (73%) rating them “Excellent.” Requester comments also register not only satisfaction with presentations but also striking evidence of their impact on audiences. (See pp. 23-33.)

ING cultural diversity training for educators, healthcare professionals, law enforcement officers, and corporate executives equips leaders in these fields with the knowledge they need to serve and work with Muslim populations effectively. Surveys of trainees show that, on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest rating, ING seminars, trainers, and materials are all consistently ranked at 3.75 and above. (See pp. 33-35.)

At a time when Islamophobia is a major threat to the harmony and cohesiveness of American society, the work of ING has never been so important. Enabling American Muslims to speak for themselves and define who they are rather than allowing others to define them is a powerful tool towards challenging dangerous stereotypes and hate. We hope that together we can continue to educate Americans about Muslims and their faith, while promoting religious literacy, understanding, and mutual respect and building relationships among people of diverse cultures and religions.

Dr. Henry Millstein
Programs Manager and Analyst

Maha Elgenaidi
Founder and Trustee

July 22, 2013
1. Background

ING Programs

Islamic Speakers Bureau

Initiated in 1993, ING’s original core program, the Islamic Speakers Bureau (ISB), provides trained speakers on Muslims and various aspects of their faith and life, using professionally prepared content that conforms to First Amendment Center guidelines described below. Our speakers, all American Muslims, present to schools, colleges, community organizations, religious groups, and other venues.

The ISB offers the following presentations:

- **Exploring Muslim Traditions and Practices:** Designed for middle school classes in world history and geography, this presentation teaches students about Muslim traditions and practices in relation to other world religions.

- **Getting to Know American Muslims and their Faith:** This presentation begins with basic terminology and the demographics of Muslims in the United States and the world, describes the major beliefs and practices of Islam, including major Muslim holidays, and expands on the faith’s principal theological teachings, including its relation to Judaism and Christianity. It also addresses common misconceptions about Islam and Muslims.

- **History of Muslims in the United States:** Most Americans are unaware of the long history of Muslims in the United States. This presentation remedies that lack, depicting the substantial, documented presence of Muslims among enslaved Africans in the Americas, describing both the successive waves of immigration that have brought Muslims to our country from the 19th century on and the rediscovery of Islam among African Americans in the 20th century, and highlighting notable American African Muslims today.

- **Muslim Contributions to Civilization:** Muslims have had a major and creative impact on world civilization. Particularly during the medieval Golden Age of Islam, Muslims in many lands made major contributions in diverse fields, including art, architecture, music, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and even cuisine, clothing, and furniture. This presentation shows how the Muslim world has related to, influenced, and interacted with other cultures from its beginning.

- **Muslim Women in the U.S. and around the World:** The role of Muslim women and Islam’s view of women is one of the most widely misunderstood and misrepresented aspects of the religion and its practitioners. This presentation describes Qur’anic and prophetic teachings about the role and responsibilities of Muslim women, including the different roles that women play in Muslim life. It also includes a description of notable Muslim women from the founding of Islam until the present and information about contemporary American Muslim women.

All ING presentations include ample time for question and answer with the speaker.
Interfaith Speakers Bureau

Initiated in 2007, the Interfaith Speakers Bureau (IFSB), is both a natural outgrowth of the interfaith friendships and connections the organization has built in the course of its work and a recognition that the acceptance of Islam and Muslims is intimately related to the degree to which our society accepts and welcomes cultural and religious diversity and pluralism in general. The Interfaith Speakers Bureau extends ING’s outreach efforts to build bridges among religious communities and enhance religious literacy and mutual respect.

By leveraging the success of the Islamic Speakers Bureau and through partnerships with over 50 Bay Area interfaith organizations, ING can provide schools, colleges, universities, and other organizations with onsite interfaith speaker panels that represent multiple religions. Every panel includes a Muslim presenter with one or more speakers representing Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, or Hinduism. The student and adult audiences enjoy the interactive dialogue and especially the opportunity to ask the panelists candid questions about their faiths.

The Interfaith Speakers Bureau offers two major types of panels. Requesters can choose the Five Faith Panel and select from one of the following topics:

- **Shared Values**: Religions and cultures differ, but all the major world religions share key values. In this panel discussion, panelists discuss the human and ethical values they share with one another. This panel illustrates the possibility, and indeed the necessity, for diverse religions to join together in a common effort for a more harmonious and peaceful world.

- **Living the Faith**: How do adherents of different religions implement and live their beliefs, practices, and values in the busy life they lead in the San Francisco Bay area? In this panel discussion, panelists answer this question, drawing on their understanding and experiences living in this region. Among the topics addressed are how religions influence everyday life, how people make room in their daily schedule for the demands of their religion, and how they negotiate possible tensions between religious practice and their working and living environment.

- **Separation of Church and State**: The relations between religious institutions and state power have been a source of controversy and conflict throughout human history. In this panel discussion, panelists discuss the different ways that their religious community has interacted with the state in history and in today’s world, demonstrating that all traditions can respect the independence and impartiality of government and that a secular state need not be a threat to religion.

- **Religion and Modernity**: The modern world is widely believed to pose unique challenges to traditional religions. Science can be viewed as threatening religious conceptions of the universe, while the emergence of new ideals and values may challenge traditional values and principles. Increasing communication and cooperation among people of diverse cultures and traditions may call into question the preservation of distinct cultural and religious traditions. In this panel discussion, representatives of major world religions address how their religion interacts with modernity.
• **Religion and Pluralism:** How do different religions view the beliefs and practices of other traditions? Is adherence to one religious tradition compatible with respect for the many other religious traditions and convictions in our world? In this panel discussion, representatives of the major world religions address these questions and explain how each of their traditions is able to adhere to its convictions while taking a positive and respectful stance toward the diverse beliefs of others.

• **Religion and Environmental Concerns:** Environmental degradation and climate change have become major global concerns that threaten our existence as we know it on this planet. In this panel presentation, panelists discuss their religion’s teachings about conservation and environmental preservation. While environmental issues are a new concern in the form they present themselves today, religious traditions have long addressed the question of how humanity relates to and interacts with the environment.

• **Religion and Extremism:** Various forms of fundamentalism and extremism pose a problem in all religious traditions and communities. In this panel presentation, panelists discuss the forms that extremism and fundamentalism take in their traditions and how their communities meet the challenge posed by such distortions of their beliefs.

• Requesters can also choose the Muslim-Jewish Panel, titled *Jewish-Muslim Relations in the U.S.: In the Shadow of the Middle East Conflict*. The purpose of this panel is to change the paradigm of Jewish-Muslim American conversations away from the Middle East conflict towards common interests as Americans, addressing topics such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and maintaining a religious identity as two of the largest religious minorities in the country.

ING’s interfaith work is now taking on a new dimension, bringing together people of different faiths together for service as well as conversation. The IFSB is organizing a series of interfaith service projects at five locations throughout the Bay area in cooperation with a number of social service agencies, both secular and faith-based.

### Cultural Diversity Seminars

Initiated in 1995, this program offers professional development seminars with a focus on American Muslims to meet the need for diversity education and cultural competency skills development. Seminars are especially designed for executives, administrators, managers, and educators. Due to growing negative perceptions about Muslims as evidenced in a recent survey by Gallup that shows Americans are more than twice as likely to express prejudice against Muslims than they are against Jews, Buddhists or Christians, our diversity seminars address contemporary issues and the need for education to eradicate harmful stereotypes, providing culturally competent services that improve the quality of life for American Muslims.

ING offers the following seminars:

• **Developing Cultural Competency: Working with American Muslim Communities:** This seminar is designed for police chiefs, captains, lieutenants, and sergeants; senior detectives, investigators and staff;
sheriffs and deputy sheriffs; and other law enforcement administrators and leaders. It begins with a discussion of common stereotypes about Muslims and their faith and the impact of such perceptions in a post-9/11 environment, followed by an overview of Muslim demographics, practices, and traditions and of pertinent contemporary issues and their implications for law enforcement work. It addresses protocols for interaction with both individuals and community institutions and provides law enforcement leaders an opportunity to share their policies and experiences interacting with Muslim members of the community. The seminar ends with a discussion of opportunities for cooperation.

- **Developing Cultural Competency: American Muslims in the Workplace:** This seminar is designed for corporate executives, human resources managers, diversity professionals, and other key department directors and leaders. It begins with a conversation about common stereotypes and other barriers faced by Muslims in the workplace, followed by an overview of Muslim traditions and practices, including those that specifically impact Muslim employees on the job. The seminar provides tips and strategies for preventing discrimination and steps towards building an inclusive and productive work environment where all employees can perform their best. Managers have the opportunity to share their current policies and assess how their departments are accommodating cultural diversity needs.

- **Developing Cultural Competency: Healthcare for the Muslim Patient:** This seminar is designed for hospital and healthcare executives and administrators; medical directors, physicians, nurses, and other healthcare service leaders; and deans, department chairs, and faculty in medical and nursing schools. It provides healthcare professionals with the information and skills to enhance their healthcare delivery to Muslim patients. After an overview of terminology, beliefs and practices, and demographics, topics include Islamic perspectives on illness and healthcare, family systems, decision-making processes, dress codes, privacy and gender issues, dietary guidelines, women’s healthcare, including reproductive issues and labor and delivery, Islamic views on death and dying and end-of-life issues, emergency treatment, life support, terminal illness, and palliative care. Participants are encouraged to share their current policies and experiences caring for Muslim patients. ING also offers a seminar specifically designed for mental health professionals.

- **Understanding Muslim Students: Fostering an Inclusive Environment:** This seminar is designed for K-12 school district administrators and staff, K-12 teachers and higher education faculty, college professors, deans and department chairs in colleges and schools of education, and pre-service teachers. It begins with a discussion of common stereotypes of Muslims and the sources of those stereotypes, followed by an overview of Muslim traditions and practices and relevant contemporary issues and their implications for Muslim students. It covers federal laws and education codes pertaining to teaching about religion, addresses the topic of religious practice in the public school system, and provides suggestions for accommodations for students’ religious practices. It concludes with tips for interacting with Muslim students in a post-9/11 environment while ensuring an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. Educators and administrators have an opportunity to share their experiences teaching in today’s diverse classrooms.
Online Curriculum

Initiated in 2012, the program makes ING content available online to educators in middle and high schools and colleges and universities. This is designed particularly to serve communities outside areas where ING and its affiliates can provide live speakers. ING’s online curriculum currently includes four of its most popular digital presentations related to teaching about Muslims and their faith: Getting to Know American Muslims and their Faith, A History of Muslims in America, Muslim Contributions to Civilization, and Muslim Women Beyond the Stereotypes. We also provide two of our multifaith panel presentations: Shared Values and Living the Faith, which address these topics as they relate to five major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Each curriculum includes several lesson plans with slides and scripts. Each lesson includes notes that describe each slide in the presentation, discussion questions, and suggestions for other learning activities, with links to films and discussion questions about the films. Each lesson concludes with references and suggested resources for both teachers and students.

Two additional curriculum resources focus particularly on clearing up misunderstandings and misconceptions about Islam: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Muslims and A Closer Look at Sharia in the United States.

These curricula are designed to be used either jointly or independently, depending on the time available and the desired focus of the teacher.

Affiliates

Initiated in 2000, this program encourages and supports the formation of affiliates around the country, providing them with materials and training that enable them to reproduce ING’s programs in their local area. ING now has 23 affiliates in 21 states ranging from New York to southern California. ING affiliates use ING content and adhere to the same professional standards as the parent organization in their speaker training and certification and the conduct of their presentations. All affiliates embrace the mission, values, and principles of ING.
The goal of the affiliate program is to extend the reach of ING across the country. The issues of Islamophobia and of intercultural and interreligious understanding that ING addresses are, of course, national (and international) in scope and in fact in many areas more pressing than in the San Francisco Bay region in which ING was founded. Through ING’s affiliates, the organization serves the Muslim and multi-faith communities throughout the United States.

ING affiliates normally begin by developing an Islamic Speakers Bureau. Recently, however, several affiliates have moved toward developing an Interfaith Speakers Bureau. In April, 2013, directors of six affiliates participated in a webinar on building an IFSB in their areas.

**ING Standards**

**Speaker Training and Certification**

ING speakers in both the Islamic and Interfaith Speakers Bureaus are certified after a rigorous process of professional development, testing, and observation in a live setting by ING staff and veteran speakers. When presenting, ING speakers adhere to the First Amendment Center guidelines developed by legal scholar Dr. Charles C. Haynes. (For more information on the Center, go to www.firstamendmentcenter.org.) These guidelines emphasize that speakers must adhere to the highest level of academic neutrality and objectivity when teaching about religion.

All ING speakers are required to be active practitioners of the religion they represent and must belong to a congregation or community of that religion. They must agree to ING’s standards of professionalism and objectivity whenever speaking for the organization and are expected to follow ING content and scripts in their presentations.

The ING speaker training process for both ISB and IFSB begins with an introductory session presenting the ING mission and principles, the basics of ING presentations and content, the requirements for ING speakers, and the steps to be taken leading to certification.

Prospective ISB speakers must take an open book test at the conclusion of the day’s training and must pass with a grade of 85% or better to continue in the training process. They then receive a speakers kit with the content for the two most popular ISB presentations, *Exploring Muslim Traditions and Practices* and *Getting to Know American Muslims and their Faith*. Within the school semester in which they take the initial training, they must take a closed-book written exam evaluating their knowledge of presentation content and of the style of presentation appropriate for an American teenage audience. This exam must also be passed with a grade of 85% or better.

ISB trainees then deliver a test presentation to an audience of veteran speakers, who evaluate both the trainee’s knowledge of content and his or her
demeanor and style as a speaker. This evaluation must be passed with a grade of 90% or better from all the evaluators.

Prospective IFSB speakers, if they wish to continue in training after the initial session, receive the IFSB panelists kit, containing both ING’s principles and the content for all IFSB presentations for the five religions represented. Within the school semester in which they take the initial session, they must pass an open-book exam on ING principles and on the content for their religion with a grade of 85% or better. They must attend at least one IFSB presentation. They then deliver a test presentation to ING staff and speakers and must pass with a grade of 90% or better.

ING speakers are regularly audited and evaluated by ING staff and must renew their certification annually. ING organizes several speakers meetings each year to allow speakers to review their work and pursue further education in the content of their presentations.

Content

As noted above, ING has a variety of standard presentations. Content for these presentations is developed by the ING Content Department.

ING content is designed to supplement content standards in social studies and world history and addresses many of the themes developed by the National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Standards and the National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA. Many of these themes are also addressed in state social studies content standards of leading states, California, Texas, and New York. (All states now require instruction in major world religions as part of their history and social studies standards.) ING content is also designed to meet Federal, state, and corporate mandates on cultural diversity training.

All ING content is drafted by or in consultation with recognized academic scholars in the religion in question.
These scholars include:

- Ameena Jandali, M.A., Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley
- Maha Elgenaidi, M.A. candidate, Religious Studies, Stanford University
- Dustin Craun, M.A., Ethnic Studies, San Francisco State University
- Justin van Boom, Ph.D. candidate, European History and Religious Studies, University of California, Berkeley and Graduate Theological Union
- Haroon Moghul, Ph.D. candidate, Middle East, South Asian, and African Studies, Columbia University; Fellow in Muslim Politics and Societies, Center for National Security, Fordham Law School
- Dr. Kristy Coleman, Ph.D., Religion and Culture, Claremont Graduate School
- Dr. Henry Millstein, Ph.D., Jewish Studies, University of California, Berkeley and Graduate Theological Union
- Venerable JianHu Shifu, Abbot, Chung Tai Zen Center of Sunnyvale
- The Rev. Dr. D. Andrew Kille, Ph.D., Biblical Studies, Graduate Theological Union
- Dr. Karnamadakala Sreeharsha, San Jose State University
- Dr. Jim Ryan, California Institute of Integral Studies
- Rabbi H. David Teitelbaum, Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Beth Jacob
- Rabbi Joshua M. Berkenwald, Congregation Sinai

For ING cultural diversity training in corporations, law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities, professionals in those fields contribute to content development.
Islamic Speakers Bureau and Interfaith Speakers Bureau

From 2009-2012, about one third of ING’s presentations have been Interfaith panels

Over the past three years, ING has continued and expanded its effort to educate for religious and cultural literacy and mutual understanding and respect. This section examines ING’s output over the period 2009 to 2012.

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 on five major world religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Over the three-year period, 2009-2012, the ratio of audiences served by ISB to those served by IFSB was 70 to 30. (Year-by-year charts are given in Appendix 1.)

A Growing Demand among Diverse Audiences

Over this three-year period, the number of presentations and classes served by ING has remained consistent. (A presentation may be given to more than one class at a time, as for instance when classes are consolidated for a presentation or when a presentation is made at a school assembly. The number of classes, therefore, exceeds the number of presentations.) Audience numbers, however, have increased markedly, from around 12,000 in 2009-10 to over 37,000 in 2011-12, due largely to more vigorous and effective marketing and to ING’s participation in large-scale community events such as the San Francisco commemoration of the tenth anniversary of 9/11.

Over its long-term history, ING has gradually reached out to ever more diverse audiences. ING in its first years presented exclusively to grades 7-12 school audiences. The distribution of ING venues over the past three years can be seen in the chart below. Year-by-year charts can be found in Appendix 1.
Over the past three years, the proportion of ING school venues has remained at an average of half of ING’s presentations. The proportion of higher education venues has grown considerably (from 9% to 17%) while community organizations also increased to a lesser degree (from 15% to 18%; see Appendix 1 for year-by-year charts). Religious venues remained constant at around 17% as did cultural competency trainings which averaged about 7%.

Here is a sampling of some of the Bay Area venues that have hosted an ING presentation or panel, in addition to hundreds of middle and high schools:

**Faith-based venues:** Berkeley Buddhist Temple, Chaplaincy Institute, Family of Abraham, Hillcrest Congregational Church, Interfaith Center at the Presidio, Jain Center of Northern California, Or Shalom Synagogue, San Francisco Interfaith Council, Sikh Gurdwara of San Jose, South Valley Islamic Center, Vedanta Society, Willow Glen United Methodist Church

**Colleges and universities:** City College of San Francisco, Graduate Theological Union, Mills College, Santa Clara University, UC Berkeley, University of San Francisco, Zaytuna College

**Corporations:** Chevron, CISCO, Intuit, Lawrence Livermore Labs, Proctor and Gamble, Wells Fargo

**Healthcare facilities:** Kaiser Permanente, Mt. Diablo Medical Center, San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Facilities, St. Mary’s Hospital, Stanford Medical School, Sutter Health Center, Tenderloin Outpatient Clinic, UC San Francisco Nursing School

**Law enforcement agencies:** Berkeley Police Department, California Correctional Peace Officers Association, Fremont Police Department, Fresno Police Department, Napa Police Academy, Novato Police Department, Palo Alto Police Department, San Francisco Police Academy, Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office, UC Davis Police Department

**Community organizations and other venues:** Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Campbell Rotary Club, City of San Francisco, Corte Madera Lions Club, Girl Scouts of Northern California, League of Women Voters, Pacific Union Club, President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge, Silicon Valley Reads, The Terraces at Los Altos, World Affairs Council
Islamic Speakers Bureau Impact: Changed Perceptions and Attitudes

Data shows a shift in attitudes before and after an ING presentation

Over the academic years 2009-2012, ING conducted surveys and collected data from approximately 4,319 students from 182 classroom presentations, out of 27,558 students who attended 1,076 presentations during that period. (This represents a 17% rate of return, exceptionally good for surveys of this sort.) The surveys were administered to middle and high school students attending the most requested presentations, Exploring Muslim Traditions and Practices (middle school) and Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith (high school and adult). The survey was administered both before and after presentations to see how audience attitudes changed as a result of the presentation.

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. 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 2009 and June 2012.

Overall, respondents indicated that the presentation 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 chart.

Before the presentation, only 18% of students reported a high level of knowledge of Islam; that figure shot up to 60% after the presentation. Equally striking is the fact that the number of those believing they had only a minimal knowledge fell from 35% to 7%. (For more details see Appendix 2.)

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.
Of the 30 responses in the survey, 15 are "Muslim positive" (for example, "Islam promotes peace") and 15 are Islamophobic (for example, "Islam promotes terrorism"). ING presentations over the past three years have brought about a sharp reduction—over 60%—in the frequency of Islamophobic responses, as shown in the accompanying chart. (For more information on survey forms and a year-by-year breakdown of positive and negative responses, see Appendix 2.)

"I have learned much more about Islam. I now understand it is a religion of peace and not hate.”
~ Middle school student

"I was surprised to learn that Jihad was not a holy war that all Muslims were bound to fight. Jihad was actually turning faith into action. When Muslims see something wrong, they try to fix it.”
~ Middle school student

**Stereotype 1:**
**Islam and Muslims promote violence.**

The survey included several responses relating to whether Islam or Muslims promote or engage in violent behavior. Both before and after the presentations, only a small 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,” fewer than 6% of high school students (but over 9% of middle school students) circled “terrorism.” After a presentation, that number dropped to less than 2% for high school students and to 3% for middle school students. There was a larger change, however, in the number of students who answered the same question with “peace.” Before a presentation, 56% of high school students chose that answer; that figure rose to 80% after a presentation.

**Stereotype 2:**
**American Muslims do not assimilate.**

Two questions sought to determine whether audiences see American Muslims as fitting into American culture and life. The first 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 middle-school students choosing this response fell from 21% before a presentation to 8% afterwards. On the other hand, the number of high-school students responding that American Muslims “have long been part of the history of this country” rose from 33% to 55%.

ING presentations also increased the percentage of high school students who view Muslims as “ethnically diverse” from 45% to 70%. Likewise, the percentage who believed that American Muslims are “diverse members of the community” rose from 60% to 73%.

“It was very interesting to hear about your life as an American Muslim.”
~ Middle school student

“The kids can see a Muslim person and hear that the speakers aren’t that different from them, and that helps reinforce the fact that Muslims are ordinary people as they are.”
~ Middle school teacher
Stereotype 3: Muslims are intolerant of and have little in common with other religions.

When asked whether Muslims “share common beliefs with other religions,” 67% of high school audiences initially selected that response. This increased to 82% after a presentation. In response to the question “I believe that Islam promotes the following,” 47% of high school students selected “respect for other religions” before a presentation; the percentage of students making that choice increased to 65% after a presentation. The percentage of high school students choosing to identify Muslims as “monotheistic” increased from 61% to 77%.

“I learned a lot about the Islamic religion. I didn’t realize how similar Islam was to my own religion (Christianity). I went from thinking Muslims and Catholics have nothing in common to the fact that they have very much in common.”

~ High school student

“I as a Jew feel a closer connection with Muslims. We are praying to the same God and come from the same founding father. I feel better knowing that Muslims are like half-brothers/sisters.”

~ Middle school student
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 high school students responding in the affirmative rose from 47% to 66%. When high school students were presented with the option that American Muslims “contribute to the well being of the U.S.,” the percentage responding in the affirmative rose from 55% to 70%.

“I used to think of the Muslim religion as really strict and strange. Now I know that Islam is very much like Christianity and it is not strict at all. The ING speaker explained how her everyday life is like everyone else’s in the United States.”

~ Middle school student

“Before learning about Islam in school, I imagined Muslims all like Osama Bin Laden. Now I know that Muslims are a lot like us, and that we have the same roots.”

~ Middle school student
Stereotype 5: Islam promotes misogyny.

Several questions were asked about Muslim women and the perception that they are oppressed. Before attending a presentation, 19% of high school students circled the response that Islam promotes the “oppression of women”; that number decreased to 4% after a presentation. The percentage of those affirming that Muslims “view women as inferior” dropped even more dramatically, from 23% to 5%.

"Most people think of Islam as a religion in which males dominate and females are inferior. The ING speaker’s person and manner and her explanation of some of the customs, like the use of the veil, dispelled this misconception."

~ Middle school teacher

“On the way home from the mall, I saw a Muslim woman dressed modestly. My mother also noticed, and thanks to you, I could explain it to my mother.”

~ Middle school student

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 11% of high school students initially chose “high level professionals.” That percentage nearly doubled to 21% after a presentation. Similarly, the percentage of those stereotypically seeing Muslims as “taxi cab drivers” dropped from 12% to 5% after a presentation.

"Most people think of Islam as a religion in which males dominate and females are inferior. The ING speaker’s person and manner and her explanation of some of the customs, like the use of the veil, dispelled this misconception."

~ Middle school teacher

“On the way home from the mall, I saw a Muslim woman dressed modestly. My mother also noticed, and thanks to you, I could explain it to my mother.”

~ Middle school student
A table giving a year-by-year breakdown of the responses to these questions can be found in Appendix 2.

These and other results show the impact of ING’s presentations in challenging common perceptions and stereotypes. ING will continue to administer these surveys to various audiences and to evaluate responses in its effort to improve its performance and impact.

**ING’s Interfaith Speakers Bureau Impact:**

**Modeling Interfaith Harmony and Enhancing Religious Literacy**

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. The questions asked are given below.

Over the three academic years 2009-2012, IFSB panels presented to 468 middle and high school, college, and community audiences comprising around 14,000 people. Audience surveys were made after 85% of the presentations, and the rate of return was around 40%.

**Overall Panel Quality**

When asked to rate the overall quality of IFSB panels, the great majority of the respondents rated them “Excellent” (53%) or “Good,” the percentage of those doing so averaging 96% over the three years. (Charts giving the ratings for each year can be found in Appendix 3.)

![Audience Evaluation of IFSB Panels, 2009-2012](chart.png)

An ING interfaith panel: Michael Bennett (Buddhist), Maha ElGenaidi (Muslim), Richard Heiman (Jew), Jean Ramacciotti (Christian)
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

When asked what *moved, interested or surprised you the most from the panel today*? the vast majority answered as follows, in order of frequency of answers:

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“**How different** and yet similar religions really are and the commonality of positive values such as modesty, compassion, tolerance, kindness, and humility and the emphasis they had on ethical behavior; commonalities of values, ideals, and principles; they had the same goals with the Golden Rule; how they really did have a lot more in common than I thought before.

“**How civil** the representatives were toward each other’s views; how they talked respectfully with each other; they were passionate, yet objective and well educated; I was surprised to see a Muslim woman and a Jewish man connecting as good friends; the fact that everyone sitting on the panel was so respectful of one another; sincerity of the speakers and their genuine efforts for peace-making; their ability to get their points across without offending each other; they weren’t just tolerant, they were appreciative of each other; their sense of humor; the accepting approach to dialogue that every speaker took.

“**The contrast** between the stereotypes and the teachings of these religions; before the panel, I knew very little about the different religions beyond what is portrayed on TV, I now know what their religion is about.

“**I was surprised** how well the speakers handled the students’ questions; the speakers were very open— they answered every question honestly and openly.

“**Thank you** so much. This was one of the [most] insightful and resourceful classes I have had the pleasure to attend! Wonderful to learn about this incredible organization. Such an organization, where religions can work toward harmony and coexistence, is incredibly inspiring.
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When asked have your views changed about any of the religions or people who follow them? the vast majority of the answers dealt with Islam and Muslims since they are the most commonly stereotyped in the United States, followed by comments about Judaism and Buddhism, in this order of frequency:

“*My views* of Islam have changed completely from what the media created; I learned about the diversity of Muslims who vary widely from country to country; I didn’t know why Muslim women covered, I thought it was about oppression and inferiority, I now know it’s about modesty and humility; I learned that Islam isn’t a religion that causes terrorism, it’s the people who abuse the religion; I thought Muslim women were subservient but the speaker we had was strong; I learned that Islam is not actually against the United States; I have a greater understanding about the difference between radicals and moderates; I used to not understand Islam and think of it as a violent religion, but after seeing how peaceful and holy the ING speaker was, my whole view changed.

“I used to think Jews were not good people, but that’s changed in my mind, Judaism is a peaceful religion; I have a much better understanding of Jewish beliefs and practices; I didn’t realize the diversity within Judaism.

“I’ve gained a much deeper understanding of Buddhism; they view women as equal; I didn’t realize the similarities in values between Buddhism and Christianity.

“I was surprised to learn about a lot of the commonalities and overall ideals shared among all the religions represented; that although people may hold different beliefs, it is still possible to be friends and agree on issues facing today’s world; my views of Islam and Judaism changed greatly—I was fascinated by how both of them had so much similarity to Christianity; the stereotypes I had before have now been debunked; yes, my thoughts have changed because I did not know that all of the religions were so similar; my view has changed to know that everyone really wants peace and love—I am more open to listen and understand about everyone’s culture.
When asked *have your views on religious people changed?* respondents reported changed attitudes which are reflected in the following comments based on their frequency in the answers:

“*I am leaving content* knowing that if we only lived by the religious beliefs and values that are espoused by these speakers, we would all be living happy and in peace.

“*I now understand* that it is lack of religious understanding that causes conflict in the name of religion; this panel taught me that people need to learn more about their own religion; my views of Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam have changed because I’ve never really known much of what they were about, but through this presentation I have received better perspective on all of these religions; I have more respect for other religions

“*I’ve realized* the humanity in all of us; that we should get to know each other instead of prejudging people; I didn’t really think five very different people could be together and listen to each other so well; I thought each presenter would emphasize differences, not similarities, there is a great sense of peace with all; I didn’t realize how open-minded and open these different religions are to one another and how they respect each other’s beliefs; everyone was so open and caring.

“*I’ve always been skeptical* of deeply religious people but in the course of listening to these people, I was able to see that they were inspired by their religion’s calling for peace, love, and acceptance; these panelists seemed to be truthful and honest individuals who understand their faith, I now know that all religious people are not fundamentalists; I always thought religious people are stern and strict, but this panel was totally chill; I used to think all religious people were crazy or naive but now I know they’re smart and clear about what they believe.

When asked *what did you enjoy the most about this panel?* the vast majority answered as follows, in order of frequency:

“*I was very impressed by the cooperation* among the speakers; their respect and appreciation of each other; diversity of the speakers; openness and tolerance of each other; they complemented and reinforced each other; they were nice, insightful and respectful; they were entertaining and engaging; their sense of humor and friendliness; they were completely honest and straightforward; they made it interesting; their enthusiasm and joy in doing this panel; they were very pleasant; all religions modeled for us today were all one in body and mind; I loved the unity; they were remarkably normal and accepting of other religions; charismatic personalities; they looked like they were having fun up there; the diversity of the panel; they were funny but very informative; they didn’t preach, they informed; they were accepting of one another.

“*Question and answer* session and the time we had to interact with the panelists; you weren’t afraid to ask any question you had on your mind; it was a safe space to talk and ask questions; the dialogue with the audience; I loved the question and answer session-it was a good way to connect.

“*Content of the presentations* they gave; their stories; diversity of views and explanations of different aspects of their religion; their descriptions were easy enough to follow where we can all connect with each of them; despite the limited time, I learned a lot in the few minutes we had; the professionalism that all presenters exhibited, and that all seemed to enjoy presenting their areas of expertise; I think that I was very lucky having this great chance to know about several religions all together; I liked the fact that each person told personal stories relating to their faith.
Teachers and University Faculty Find ING Content Relevant and Effective

Beginning in September of 2009, ING has been conducting surveys of teachers and university faculty who requested Islamic Speakers Bureau (ISB) presentations or Interfaith Speakers Bureau (IFSB) panels to gauge their level of satisfaction. Between September 2009 and August 2012, 222 out of approximately 356 requesters (62%, an extraordinarily high rate of return) volunteered to take the online survey which is administered a few days after the presentation.

The survey evaluates the requester’s overall satisfaction with the presentation or panel. It also asks specific questions about timeliness in scheduling, relevancy and effectiveness of ING content, and the efficacy of ING speakers, who are trained and certified by ING to speak on specific ING presentation titles or panel topics. Results of the surveys for academic years 2009-2012 are as follows.

**ING Retention Rate and Marketing Effectiveness**

Requester responses show a high rate of repeat requests

Based on the surveys, of the total number of people who had requested an ING presentation or panel over the three years 2009-2012, 43% had requested an ING presentation for the first time, which represents the effectiveness of our marketing material, while 57% had previously requested a presentation, which represents an extraordinarily high retention rate. The year-by-year figures are shown in Appendix 4.

**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,” over 98% over the three years answered “yes.” The year-by-year breakdowns are shown in Appendix 4.
ING Office Scheduling Administration

Almost 100% satisfaction with the scheduling process

The ING scheduling process is simple and efficient. When a requester asks for a presentation, the ING Scheduler contacts an appropriate speaker or speakers. When the requisite speakers have agreed, the Scheduler sends out a confirmation e-mail to the requester, with a copy to the speaker(s), giving full details of date, time, and location. More than 99% of respondents said that their “request for a speaker” had been “responded to in a timely manner”—in fact only 1 requester over the entire three-year period reported that it had not—and over 96% felt that ING had adequately prepared them for the presentation. The year-by-year charts in Appendix 4 show a steady improvement on the latter score.

Relevancy of ING Presentation or Panel Content

Vast majority of requestors reported the content met their expectations

As noted in the introduction, 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,” 98% over the three years thought it did an “Excellent” (68%) or “Good” job of doing so. Only 2% answered “Fair,” and no requesters found content “Poor.” The chart on the right gives figures for the entire three-year period; charts with year-by-year breakdown can be found in Appendix 4.
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.

The following is a representative sample of responses to the question **what section of the content was most important or relevant for you?**

**Relevant Content**

**Insights into Islam and Muslims**

- **Islamic beliefs.** Given that there is such confusion/misconception about this these were the most important things my students learned.

- **The Islamic contributions** to the areas of science, medicine, math, and art.

- **Learning that Islam** is all over the world, affecting a variety of people that don’t necessarily meet the stereotypes.

- **The modern connections** of Islam in the current world. What it is like today.

- **Helping students understand** the diversity piece - most American Muslims are native born/American citizens.

- **Islamic contributions** to civilization.

- **Addressing Islamophobia,** providing spiritual care in a healthcare setting.

- **When the spokesperson** provided a rational calm opinion on the Qur’an burning issue.

- **The reciting** of prayer and the demonstration of how Muslims pray.

- **Dispelling many** of the common myths about Islam.

- **Hearing about beliefs** and practices directly from a Muslim.

- **Surprisingly,** the arts and Islam.

- **The statistics** about how many Muslims there are in the world, where they live; how cultural differences are manifested in the various populations, similarities between the 3 monotheistic religions.

- **The diversity** of Muslims and Muslims around the world today.

- **I wanted the audience** to leave feeling more informed about Islam and more open to seeing it as an appealing, and for those who choose it, a compelling religious way of life. The speaker conveyed this not only in content but also in her non-defensive and open demeanor and in her incisive and intelligent presentation and handling of questions and comments.

- **The orientation** touched on the hot topics that were of concern to my congregation and the speaker presented the material in such a delightful way that people could not help but respond. The second speaker was well received and there was great interest in the role of Jesus in Islam.
The comparisons to traditions and faith that the students already know.

I think it was particularly helpful to show the relations between the Abrahamic religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Q&A session. Students were able to make connections between Islam and Judaism and notice differences.

I think the ties between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism were relevant, as was the respect that was exemplified by the panelists for each other.

Explaining similarities between Islam and other religions.

I appreciated the Muslim dialogue as a litmus for my students to understand inter-religious dialogue today.

Positive interpretation of women’s rights in the Qur’an, feminist perspective on the hijab as a symbol of women’s strength and identity.

The historical/religious role of women in Islam -- and the protections for women stated in the Qur’an. Also, the explanation of Sharia law.

Quotations from Qur’an regarding the place of women, evidence of women scholars and entrepreneurs from Muslim history.

She did a great job on elaborating women in Islam.

When speakers discussed their lives and their experience of complex social issues through the lens of their faith.

Students were able to get clarification or deepen their knowledge of Islam as we had already gone through the Foundations and Beliefs part of the unit. As middle schoolers, they are always interested in fasting and prayer. As humans, they wonder what the experience of going to Mecca is like.

What it’s like growing up as a Muslim woman in America. Daily life, dating, marriage, family life, etc.

The speaker’s unique perspective. I am able to teach some basic facts but can’t talk about what it means to wear a hijab, live in an Islamophobic culture, the spiritual purpose and fulfillment of fasting during Ramadan or making a Pilgrimage to Mecca.

Questions and answers as fielded by the speaker. An opportunity for the students to see an individual rather than a generalization in the text.

Each panel member spoke of how they lived out the principles and values of their faith tradition. They also shared the challenges. Their message was authentic, realistic, compassionate, and human.

Religious beliefs as they affect oral health care and dentistry.

Overview, history, and some common ways that teachers can better serve Muslim students.

Cultural aspects that relate to families and patients both in the home and in the hospital.
Significant Learning Moments

The following are representative sample of responses to the question

*Please list one or more ideas that stand out as significant learning moments for the class/audience, and for yourself.*

**Positive images of Muslims, dispelling stereotypes**

"That Muslims are Americans!"

"Islam is a religion of peace and not all Muslims are Arab."

"We discussed many aspects of terrorism and its association with Islam. I think the speakers did a good job of conveying that terror is not part of Islam."

"Muslims speaking out against anti-Semitism and terrorism."

"I appreciated the students seeing how Muslim peoples are of different ethnicities and are regular people just like everyone else."

"The students were very surprised to hear that the speaker came from an interfaith family, and that his Muslim father very much respected the religion of his Catholic mother."

"I appreciated the speakers’ descriptions of what Jihad means, the diversity among Muslims, and that much of what we see in Muslim countries is influenced by local cultural beliefs (how women are treated, the level of secularism in politics, etc.)."

"The Golden Age of Islam and the overall concept of tolerance contrary to common perception."

"It was important for the students to be reminded that Muslims come in all nationalities, colors and backgrounds."

"When students heard that being a Muslim is normal."

**Muslim women**

"My students were particularly interested in the modesty rules for women, and our speaker answered every question with such kindness and humor when appropriate."

"They are always fascinated with the Hijab vs. the Burqa, and the role of women. Also, the beauty of the Arabic script from Ismael."

"It was interesting to hear that a woman must give her consent to marry - marriages are not forced without their consent. It is a Muslim woman’s decision about wearing the hijab. The many freedoms a woman has as a Muslim with regard to money and property."

"When she spoke about Muslim women in history."

"The students really responded to learning that interpretations vary depending on region. For instance, one student wanted to know about what brides wear on their wedding day. This was a great springboard for discussing how interpretations of “hiding beauty” can change."

"All of the content was very fitting with what we were studying in social studies class."

"Interactive Q & A session."

"The Q&A section was extremely well done."

"The specifics about religious practices and the candid presentation of problems of bias and discrimination."

"Interactive Q & A session."

"The Q&A section was extremely well done."

"The specifics about religious practices and the candid presentation of problems of bias and discrimination."
Other insights into Islam and Muslims

“The speaker drew upon experiences from Muslims all over the world to illustrate reasons for how and why American Muslims express their faith today in the US. Really helpful.

“The students enjoy seeing real items such as the prayer mat and the Qur’an. They also liked seeing the presenter put on her hijab and demonstrate some of the prayer positions.

“The stories, especially about the creation of chess, and the added insights in response to student questions were wonderful.

“The opening with the Arabic writing & calligraphy demonstration: students really enjoyed that.

“It was interesting for the class to see the presentation from a Muslim woman.

“I asked at the end of the presentation who learned something new about Islam, and everyone raised their hand.

“The speaker brought Islam “to life” in a way a textbook never could.

“Information about early Muslims who were important or influential people.

“PEACE! By far the biggest impression. After that the ideas of charity and living a good, moral life.

Relations between religions

“The speaker answered all of the students’ questions honestly. I especially appreciated his handling of the questions about Islamic terrorists and why Muslims do not believe that Jesus is God. His faith and the respect that he showed my students was a wonderful example of how we can all live together celebrating our similarities and differences.

“Just that we (Muslims, Christians, Jews, etc) are much more similar than we are different, which is a beautiful thing.

“The importance of justice and the connection with Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the Qur’an.

“Speaker’s knowledge of the Old Testament and its relationship to other religions and to experiences today.

“For me the most significant learning was about the relationship of Jesus to Islam and the expectation that Jesus will return. Also, I came to a better understanding of the significance of the meaning of the word Prophet.

“Seeing how the histories of Christianity and Islam are similar in that modern interpretations of each of them have diverged from the original preachings of their founders, largely because of the cultures in which they have developed (and are still being interpreted today).

“The distinction between the faith of Islam and culture/politics; the many parallels between Islam, Judaism and Christianity; the many variations in spiritual practice.

“The connections between faiths and similar values.

Personal experience of religion

“My class definitely liked and was most interested in the presentation’s personal experiences (example - prayer, pilgrimage to Mecca, pork and alcohol, etc.). After reading about it, it was interesting for them to actually talk to someone who believes and practices the Muslim faith - we are a Catholic school so there is not a lot of religious diversity for the students.

“The questions are best. Students want to know what it’s like to be a practicing Muslim and how Islam affects a Muslim’s everyday life.
Effectiveness of ING Speakers

Requesters give high ratings to speaking skills as well as speaker’s knowledge of the content

The ING speaker certification process, described in the introduction, 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 had positive evaluations of ING’s speakers. When multiple speakers presented at a single venue, the requester had the opportunity to evaluate each speaker individually. Overall, when asked about a speaker’s “effectiveness in conveying the material covered,” 99% considered it “Excellent” or “Good,” and only 1% felt it was “Fair.” No one considered it “Poor.” In the accompanying chart we give the evaluation figures over three years. Year-by-year charts are found in Appendix 4.

This data and feedback make clear the high degree of satisfaction with ING speakers. For all criteria, a strong, and sometimes overwhelming, majority of respondents rated speakers as “Excellent”; likewise, the percentage of those rating speakers as “Fair” or “Poor” on any point was invariably less than 10%.

We are dedicated to enhancing our continuing education to improve the knowledge and ability of certified speakers in both the IFSB and ISB.

Speaker’s Knowledge of Content

Nearly all found to have good knowledge of the subject matter

Ninety-nine percent of respondents considered the speakers’ “knowledge of the subject matter” to be “Excellent” or “Good,” and only 1% found it “Fair.” No respondent found it “Poor.” Here too we see a steady improvement from year to year, as shown in the charts in Appendix 4.

Speaker’s Delivery Skills

Majority of speakers rated “excellent” or “good”

Ninety-five percent of respondents considered their speaker’s delivery skills to be “Excellent” or “Good,” while 5% considered them “Fair.” Only one respondent over the three-year period rated them “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,” 95% rated their speaker “Excellent” or “Good,” 4% found their speaker’s ability to connect with the audience “Fair,” and fewer than 1% felt their speaker’s connection was “Poor.”

Speaker’s Time Management

Once again only one “poor” rating in three years

Finally, when asked to evaluate if speakers managed time well and provided “sufficient time for Q & A,” 93% answered “Excellent” or “Good,” and 7% chose “Fair.” Only one requester in the entire three years selected “Poor” as an answer.

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. Following are representative sample of answers to the question do you have additional comments about the speaker or speakers?

2009-2010

“Your speakers are wonderful people and taught me a lot of things! They are all excellent at public speaking and I would recommend them to anyone.

“Leticia was not only… knowledgeable, she was also very patient. 7th graders are not terribly sophisticated, but she connected with them well. They still talk about her!

“Fouzi was terrific. His presentation worked perfectly with the outline of our Friday morning talks and he left plenty of time for questions. He is very personable and our students found it easy to ask questions and were engaged by him.
"Thank you for sending Yusuf and Omar. They are very good speakers.

Haleh was lovely, interacted well with students, handled questions beautifully!

I was impressed and appreciate the information presented by Ruxana. My class definitely benefited from the visit - thank you!

Thank you for the informative presentation! Shahzad is an excellent speaker. I would love for him to return next year!

Aisha’s background as a teacher is visible in her presentations. I loved how she connected kids’ prior knowledge to the content she spoke of. I also loved how she wasn’t shy about filling in knowledge gaps, such as reviewing with the students how to figure out what century something happened in.

Naima was able to skillfully balance all the questions the students had with the delivery of the content.

Ismael was very relaxed, organized, in command of his presentation and the time... and used a variety of instructional strategies that captured the attention of the students.

2010-2011

Sobia was a great speaker and very knowledgeable.

Ameena was inspiring, informed, a good educator, entertaining.

Aisha was great as usual.

Outstanding. Just what the public face of Islam should be.

Both speakers conducted themselves in a very professional manner.

Omar is a fantastic speaker. My 7th grade students thoroughly enjoyed his presentation and meeting him. He was relaxed and confident. He was interested in the students. He was knowledgeable and not afraid to handle any question. The students were engaged and focused and truly interested in what he had to say. He was fabulous.

Ms. Elgenaidi and Ms. Jandali were a wonderful addition to the conference. Ms. Jandali’s talk provided a perfect framework for the patient panel that followed.

Nora was amazing.
“All of the speakers came on time and were prepared. We could not have asked for anything more. Keep up the great work.

“The presenter’s knowledge of the content and her presentation were excellent. She held the students’ attention, answered questions, and did not dwell for too long on one aspect of the presentation.

“Maahum was a great presenter. She was lively and engaging. I would love for her to come again next year.

“We look forward to begin the next school year with ING!

“Ismael was soft spoken and the students loved it when he wrote their names in Arabic. Reshma was very warm and outgoing and shared some of her own experiences along with the slides.

“Thank you for your generosity with your time and willingness to share your knowledge with the class.

“All speakers do a wonderful job at presenting the materials.

“Ismael was received very warmly and greatly appreciated.

“Maha was amazing! We would love to have her come again!

“It was great to have two female speakers at an all girls school...it made it very easy for the students to connect and also very relevant.

“Great, great, great. Ameena has come to our class several times. She is better every time. I highly recommend her to any group. And she does well with nurses, even though she is not a nurse.

“Maahum was extraordinary.

“Meeting Amany was a lovely, rich experience.

2011-2012

“They were both wonderful! Their rapport with my students was outstanding. Thank you ING!

“We are very appreciative of the time and effort that you all put in to make these presentations happen! The speakers were great! And, when Reshma became ill, I was so impressed by the willingness and hard work put in to fill in the speakers and make sure that all of our students had the opportunity to have a speaker. We are so grateful! Thank you!
Thanks to all of them for this important work

Enjoyed seeing Nora again.

Besides being very intelligent and thoughtful and adept at communicating with her audience, Ameena was effective also because she was a woman. Most people think of Islam as a religion in which males dominate and females are inferior. Ameena’s person and manner and her explanation of some of the customs, like the use of the veil, dispelled this misconception.

Aisha Morgan was wonderful; it helped that as an experienced teacher she knew how to catch the attention of my sometimes unruly 12-year-olds.

Great speaker, approachable, responsive to students’ questions.

I appreciate ING coming into the classroom without cost because it is a valuable resource for my students.

Ismael was prepared, knowledgeable, and interacted well with the students. He answered all of their questions and had them interested and engaged throughout the presentation.

Reshma Hyder connected well with my high school students....she was approachable and particularly interesting and well informed about diverse cultures.

I am deeply grateful for their time and generosity.

I thought everyone was great. Really... I am so thankful for this opportunity and hopeful that the college students who attended got something meaningful from the experience.

Impact of ING Diversity Seminars for Leaders Overwhelmingly Positive

Participants rate both presenters and content high in all areas

Following each cultural diversity seminar in 2009-2010, participants were given an opportunity to evaluate the training program in five major areas. Results from 120 surveys or 80% of the attendees are as follows:
In response to the question whether the seminar met the educational objective specified, respondents gave an average response of 3.6 out of 4, with a higher response of 3.75 when asked about whether the presentation gave a basic overview of Muslims and their faith.

Overall average ratings for the quality and relevance of the seminar were also high, around 3.65 out of 4.

The highest ratings were in response to the question of whether the seminar adequately addressed cultural competency skills building, with an average response of 4 out of 4.

Attendees also highly rated the ING presenter, with scores at or close to 4 out of 4.
Seminar materials, which included PowerPoint slides, handouts and resources, were also given an average score of 3.7.

When asked to give examples of how they will incorporate what they have learned in their teaching or administrative responsibilities, attendees in the field of education responded that they would be more

“...aware of student needs and accommodations for prayer, food, holidays, hijab, and other practices, would have an increased recognition of holidays and practices, and would implement discussions and activities and refer to resources given here to see how these things can best be implemented.

Healthcare providers responded to the same question about incorporating what they have learned with:

“I will be able to consider the ethnicity, culture, and other things in dealing with Muslim patients but not to generalize them on a whole; have a better understanding of religious requirements and also of their rights in terms of medical care; and be more sensitive to people’s belief, point of view and traditions and culture.

Law enforcement officers responded to the same question with:

“I will need to ensure that this information is passed onto all of my uniformed officers as they will have the most contact with Muslim Americans and businesses; understanding of non-emergency home visits; more knowledgeable in respect to my dealings with Muslim employees, community people, and business members.

It is clear from the feedback that this program is effective in its goals of increasing understanding of American Muslims and enhancing the ability of executives to foster a tolerant, more harmonious work and service environment. ING Diversity Seminars for Leaders are available live and through webinars.
In September, 2012, ING launched a new venture: online curriculum packages that can be downloaded free of charge by teachers for use in their classrooms. Each package includes a slide presentation with accompanying script and notes, content and discussion questions, classroom activities, and a resource list with links to appropriate videos to accompany each lesson. ING now has four Muslim curricula—Getting to Know American Muslims and their Faith, A History of Muslims in America, Muslim Contributions to Civilization, and Muslim Women Beyond the Stereotypes—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.

ING also has put responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about Muslims and Islam, as well as Sharia, on its website for download by anyone interested.

Thirty-seven teachers from fifteen states and one Canadian province, most of whom are not near an ING affiliate, have registered to download full curricula. This is largely the result of word of mouth and of search engine finds. ING plans to market these materials systematically next year.

“This new set of curricula from ING provides teachers with a useful set of tools to use in their classrooms when teaching about Islamic history and the global contributions of Muslims. The presentations and supplemental films will enable students to see Muslims in a new light.” — Reza Aslan, professor, UC Riverside, author of No God, But God.

“These curriculums will benefit my students, in helping them to come to understand Islam in a fuller way—recognizing the history, complexity, and depth of the tradition. I hope to use these curricula in my dialogue and human rights classes next fall.” — Sr. Marianne Farina, CSC Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Department Chair of Theology at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology.
Conclusion

Since its founding, ING has sought objective information to gauge its effectiveness and improve its work. To that end, ING collects data from both audiences and requesters of presentations and uses a variety of sources to evaluate its programs.

The surveys administered both before and after basic Islamic Speakers Bureau presentations (Exploring Muslim Traditions and Practices and Getting to Know American Muslims and their Faith) primarily measure attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. Other ING survey instruments primarily evaluate the quality of presentations; however, particularly in the case of the Interfaith Speakers Bureau audience evaluations, they also demonstrate the change in attitudes which often occurs after an ING presentation. Additionally, ING often receives thank-you notes from audiences, especially school audiences, that contain valuable evaluative information about our presentations.

The results summarized in this report show not only that an overwhelming majority of respondents evaluate the quality of ING’s work very highly, but also that ING presentations, both Islamic and interfaith, consistently bring about significant shifts in understanding and attitude both towards interfaith dialogue and understanding and towards minority religions and religious communities. The data cited in this report also shows that ING is succeeding in its effort to reduce Islamophobia, provide accurate information about Muslims and their faith, and promote interreligious understanding and respect. While ING continuously seeks to improve its work, it is clear that the organization is doing an excellent job in fulfilling its mission in a well structured, organized and consistent manner.

Until fall of 2012, and thus within the period discussed here, ING speakers brought the forms and allowed time for attendees to fill them out before and after the presentation. However, since filling out the survey took away time from the presentation, ING has changed the procedure and now sends survey forms to requesters in advance, asking them to administer the pre-presentation survey at least one day before the presentation and the post-presentation survey any time within a week after the presentation. This not only allows more time for the presentation and Q & A, but also may result in more candid results, as surveys are not conducted in the speaker’s presence. Future surveys may therefore provide still more accurate information about ING’s performance.

The various forms of evaluation that ING has used amply demonstrate the effectiveness of ING’s work. There can be little doubt that ING has made and continues to make a substantial contribution to the intercultural and interreligious understanding that is its mission and goal. The expansion of the network of ING affiliates and the availability of online curriculum have already begun to expand ING’s reach across the country and even internationally.
Appendices

Appendix 1

Year-by-year ING Output

Ratio of IFSB to ISB Classes Served 2009-2012

ING Venues 2009–2012
Appendix 2

Year-by-year Impact Comparison

Remarkably consistent results over the three year study period

The impact of ING presentations, as measured by the responses to student surveys, has remained remarkably constant over the past three years. The table below gives the results for the question on knowledge of Islam before and after presentations. The year 2009-10 seems to show a lower self-estimated knowledge of Islam than the other two years, though it is not certain whether the difference is statistically significant.

The following table gives the number of positive and negative survey responses before and after ING presentations, first for the entire three-year period, and then year-by-year. There is considerable consistency to the degree to which positive responses increased and negative responses decreased after a presentation.

The table below gives an aggregate of survey responses on the six stereotypes of Muslims and Islam discussed above. These figures were derived as follows. The questionnaire responses were grouped into categories, each category indicating a positive (rejection of the stereotype) or negative (acceptance of the stereotype) attitude towards Muslims. Thus, for stereotype 1, “Islam and Muslims promote violence,” the following statements were considered positive, rejecting the stereotype:

- “I believe that Islam promotes the following: helping others.”
- “I believe that Islam promotes the following: peace.”

The following statements were considered negative, accepting the stereotype:

- “If a Muslim woman wearing hijab sat next to me, I would feel: afraid.”
- “I believe that Muslims: have little regard for human life.”
- “I believe that Islam promotes the following: violence.”
- “I believe that Islam promotes the following: terrorism.”

### Knowledge of Islam grades 7-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overall positive and negative survey responses, 2009-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>“Muslim-positive” responses</th>
<th>Islamophobic responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>32,086</td>
<td>37,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>9,505</td>
<td>11,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>12,273</td>
<td>14,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>10,308</td>
<td>12,236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of affirmations of each group of statements was then divided into the total number of possible affirmations of the group (the total number of respondents x 2 in the case of the positive responses and the total number of respondents x 4 in the case of the negative responses), producing the percentages shown. In other words, the percentages show the percentage of affirmation of positive or negative statements as a percentage of the total that would have been tallied had all respondents given one sort of response or the other.

The first line, 2009-2012, gives the aggregate response over the three years in question. The figures for the three years are, for the most part, remarkably consistent with one another and with the three-year average. Whether such variations as are found should be considered statistically significant is unclear. It is interesting, however, that in stereotype 3, concerning tolerance, the initial perception of Muslims as tolerant has decreased significantly over the three years considered, although the post-presentation perception has declined somewhat less markedly. This probably indicates that ING presentations remain effective despite a worsening cultural climate towards Muslims. There are some interesting differences in the responses to different stereotypes. Stereotypes #1 and #4 (“Islam and Muslims promote violence” and “Muslims cannot be good Americans”) meet initially with the smallest negative response (i.e., agreement with the stereotype) and the largest positive response (rejection of the stereotype). Positive responses to stereotype #1 (“Muslims are peaceful”) increased markedly after a presentation, whereas positive responses to stereotype #4 (“Muslims are productive Americans”) increased somewhat less.

The stereotypes drawing the highest percentage of initial negative responses were #2 (“American Muslims do not assimilate”), #5 (“Islam promotes misogyny”), and #6 (“Muslims are disadvantaged”), followed closely by #4 (“Muslims are intolerant of and have little in common with other religions”). Stereotypes #2 and #6 seem to relate to a common perception of Islam as foreign to the American scene, as manifested in claims that the U.S. is a “Christian” or “Judaeo-Christian” country (effectively contradicting not only the religious neutrality guaranteed in the Bill of Rights but also the reality that in fundamental beliefs and values Islam is closely allied with its Abrahamic siblings); it is also related to the mistaken conception that Islam and Muslims are newcomers to U.S. history. Stereotypes #4 and #5 relate to common misconceptions about Islam’s nature; the history of Islam is often presented, even today, as a history of intolerance, and the social reality of Islam is often portrayed as oppressive to women.

These figures show overall the effectiveness of ING in breaking down stereotypes and building a positive appreciation of Islam and Muslims, through face-to-face encounters with Muslims living their faith as Americans.
### Stereotype 1: Islam and Muslims promote violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Positive: Muslims are peaceful.</th>
<th>Negative: Muslims are violent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stereotype 2: American Muslims do not assimilate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Positive: Muslims are integrated into community.</th>
<th>Negative: Muslims are insular and foreign.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stereotype 3: Muslims are intolerant of and have little in common with other religions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Positive: Muslims are tolerant.</th>
<th>Negative: Muslims are intolerant.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stereotype 4: Muslims cannot be good Americans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Positive: Muslims are productive Americans.</th>
<th>Negative: Muslims are “Islamists.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stereotype 5: Islam promotes misogyny.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Positive: Muslims respect women’s equality.</th>
<th>Negative: Muslims oppress women.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stereotype 6: American Muslims are disadvantaged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AY</th>
<th>Positive: Muslims are educated professionals.</th>
<th>Negative: Muslims are disadvantaged.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

Year-by-year Audience Evaluations of IFSB Panels

Here we give year-by-year results of the audience evaluations of IFSB panels, aggregate results of which for the three-year period are given above.

Appendix 4

Year-by-year Requester Survey Results

Here we give year-by-year results of the requester evaluations of ING scheduling procedures, content, and speakers, aggregate results of which for the three-year period are given above.

First-time Requester
Expect to Request Again

Expect to request again 2011-12: No 2% - Yes 98%

Expect to request again 2010-11: No 1% - Yes 99%

Expect to request again 2009-10: No 4% - Yes 96%

Timely Response to Request

Timely response to request 2011-12: No 0% - Yes 100%

Timely response to request 2010-11: No 1% - Yes 99%

Timely response to request 2009-10: No 0% - Yes 100%

Received All Information

Received all information needed 2011-12: No 2% - Yes 98%

Received all information needed 2010-11: No 4% - Yes 96%

Received all information needed 2009-10: No 5% - Yes 95%
Content Met Expectations

Content met expectations 2011-12
- Excellent 62%
- Good 34%
- Fair 4%

Content met expectations 2010-11
- Excellent 73%
- Good 27%

Content met expectations 2009-10
- Excellent 70%
- Good 28%

Effectiveness of ING Speakers

Speaker effectiveness 2011-12
- Excellent 67%
- Good 31%
- Fair 2%

Speaker effectiveness 2010-11
- Excellent 74%
- Good 25%

Speaker effectiveness 2009-10
- Excellent 71%

Speakers' Knowledge of Content

Speaker's knowledge 2011-12
- Excellent 88%
- Good 12%

Speaker's knowledge 2010-11
- Excellent 84%

Speaker's knowledge 2009-10
- Excellent 82%
Speakers' Delivery Skills

**Speaker's delivery skills 2011-12**
- Excellent: 69%
- Good: 24%
- Fair: 7%

**Speaker's delivery skills 2010-11**
- Excellent: 77%
- Good: 20%
- Fair: 3%

**Speaker's delivery skills 2009-10**
- Excellent: 65%
- Good: 29%
- Fair: 5%

Speakers' Ability to Connect with the Audience

**Speaker's connection with audience 2011-12**
- Excellent: 69%
- Good: 28%
- Fair: 3%

**Speaker's connection with audience 2010-11**
- Excellent: 79%
- Good: 15%
- Fair: 3%

**Speaker's connection with audience 2009-10**
- Excellent: 65%
- Good: 29%
- Fair: 5%

Speakers' Time Management

**Speaker's time management 2011-12**
- Excellent: 63%
- Good: 30%
- Fair: 8%
- Poor: 1%

**Speaker's time management 2010-11**
- Excellent: 79%
- Good: 16%

**Speaker's time management 2009-10**
- Excellent: 69%
- Good: 24%
- Fair: 7%
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Ahmed Nawaz
Shaista Ali
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