

Henry Luce Foundation Grant Report

From the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

Scholar Retreat Overview

The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), an independent research organization conducting empirical research and offering expert policy analysis on the most pressing issues related to Muslim communities in the US and abroad, has assembled over 65 of the top scholars in their fields over its ten year period. Partnering with the Henry Luce Foundation, ISPU was able to bring together 27 of our most engaged scholars (see Attachment 1 for list of participants) from multiple disciplines and nine policy makers from a variety of government agencies for a two day retreat in a Washington, DC hotel Feb 9-10, 2012. These sessions provided the participants the opportunity to strengthen existing relationships, exchange valuable feedback, gain from each participant's nuanced approach and expertise, and receive customized media training.

Several tangible outcomes were achieved. These included mapping existing areas of opportunity in detail, gathering valuable feedback from policy participants, establishing a strategic vision for the next few years, and building a strong sense of community among the scholars. In light of the tenth anniversary of 9/11, the upcoming 2012 elections, and changes across the Middle East, important ideas on research priorities, current strengths, and potential growth were discussed to ensure ISPU's research remains relevant to the policy conversation. Separate roundtables with key policy stakeholders provided the opportunity to recognize best strategies for effective engagement within the policy arena. Several key policy takeaways included requests for short summaries with immediately applicable policy recommendations, in-depth analyses to add nuance to counterterrorism narratives, and ideas on how to better leverage diaspora communities. Throughout the retreat, essential questions critical to ISPU's research agenda were addressed and answered. To commence the two day retreat, a public event was held with over 100 people in attendance that focused on the one year anniversary of the Arab Spring (flyer attached.) This provided the opportunity for university students, the public and other interested organizations to engage with the expert panelists.

Retreat Preparation

Travel and transportation were arranged ahead of time with each scholar. A logistical packet and orientation memo was sent to all participants several weeks in advance and again a few days before the retreat. After several months of planning and preparation, ISPU chose the Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center for its prestigious reputation, convenient amenities and competitive pricing. We were able to leverage our relationship with ISPU Advisory Board member Professor John Esposito, Director of the Al Waleed bin Talal Center at Georgetown to secure university rates at the facilities. Several conference rooms were booked to provide the space and convenience for a large group, several breakout sessions, special media equipment, and a public event. Logistical details were handled with the assistance of an on-site conference manager. Meals, A/V equipment, transportation, check-in, room set-up, print materials, and registration were arranged and then regularly attended to by the ISPU research manager and administrative assistant. A detailed agenda was prepared for both the staff and the participants to guide the activities of the day (Attachment 2).

Media training

Understanding that the ability to be a spokesperson in their area of expertise is a key skill set for our scholars. We worked closely with a media consulting and training firm ReThink Media to design customized media training for our scholars. A media survey was also prepared and distributed prior to the retreat to help tailor the media trainings based on the needs of each scholar (Attachment 3). Because of our work with ReThink

Media via a grant from the Proteus Fund, this four hour media training and all of the preparation was provided free of charge to ISPU.

Goals and Outcomes

Below is a summary of our goals from our proposal and actual outcomes, as measured by our team.

Program Goal 1	Increase awareness of policy makers about the benefits of integrating context specific research and empirical data into the policy making/evaluation process.
Projected Output(s)	Strategic roundtable discussions with ISPU fellows and policy makers in their field
Measurement Tool(s)	Follow up conversations with policy makers, collaboration opportunities with policy leaders
Projected Outcome(s)	Policy makers will leave the sessions with ISPU fellows with a more nuanced understanding of the issues they deal with and resources for future collaborations.

Actual Outcomes: Strategic roundtable discussions were held with ISPU fellows and policymakers in small group briefings by academic field. Policymakers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage with expert scholars and provide their feedback on the most effective methods of communication and research dissemination. Relationships were further established and strengthened with policymakers and now ISPU is in regular contact with the policymakers to disseminate new research, gather feedback, and coordinate meetings. These policy makers have also helped to connect us with their colleagues in the field.

Program Goal 2	Improve ISPU responsiveness to key policy and research needs
Projected Output(s)	Strategic roundtable discussions with ISPU fellows and policy makers in their field
Measurement Tool(s)	post project survey of scholars, collaboration opportunities with policy leaders, more timely and relevant policy reports
Projected Outcome(s)	ISPU leadership and fellows will gain insight into important future topics of policy interest and will be able to more effectively plan a research agenda.

Actual Outcomes: Roundtable discussions with ISPU fellows and policymakers over two-days helped to map and document a more strategic research agenda based on policy interests, scholar expertise, and a collaborative vision. Post-retreat surveys were sent out and collected to gain additional feedback. Immediately following the retreat, an informational packet and research guide was sent to ISPU scholars based on the

feedback gathered from the retreat. Several action items were immediately implemented, including improved communication methods, regular research updates, and the initiation of potential research papers based on gathered feedback. The team is also working to implement recommendations on dissemination, including shorter, more accessible policy papers and reports.

Program Goal 3	Increase media presence and visibility of ISPU scholars
Projected Output(s)	Media training
Measurement Tool(s)	Post project survey, Number of successfully placed op-eds and media pitches for 1 year after the program.
Projected Outcome(s)	ISPU Scholars will be more prepared for potential media engagement and therefore, more confident and responsive to opportunities. This will enhance ISPU's visibility overall.

Actual Outcomes: Post-retreat surveys of scholar attendees expressed appreciation for the informative media training portion of the retreat, with several scholars immediately implementing gained knowledge in published op-eds and on-camera interviews. Since the retreat more than 65 op-eds have been placed by those attend the retreat. Trainers also worked with ISPU scholars and staff to suggest ways to improve outreach to media. As a result of the training, ISPU staff custom built each individual scholars webpage with the intention of creating a portal for media seeking comment on a developing story, an interview subject, or a potential writer. Updates include a link to download a high resolution photo for use in the media, space to promote online presence and easily searchable areas of expertise for media looking for a specific area.

Program Goal 4	Increase engagement and opportunities for collaboration among the ISPU network of scholars
Projected Output(s)	Reintroduction to ISPU, opportunities for networking and strategic project discussions
Measurement Tool(s)	Pre and post project survey, number of new or joint projects that emerge from retreat
Projected Outcome(s)	The strength and vibrancy of ISPU's research will increase by allowing the space for new ideas and collaboration.

Actual Outcomes: Several new ideas and potential projects emerged from the retreat with one larger project already in its initial phase several months after the retreat. Relationships between ISPU scholars were also established or strengthened with scholars now more regularly in contact with each other on the ISPU group page. Due to increased awareness of the expertise and strengths of other present scholars, ISPU fellows were able to exchange fresh ideas, nuanced approaches, and future collaborative projects. ISPU scholars have been regularly sharing speaking, publishing and research opportunities via a newly established scholar listserve.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Due to the valuable feedback, strengthened relationships, and key takeaways provided by the convening, we hope to hold a scholars retreat with the majority of scholars every other year to assess changes, impact, and needs.

Also, as a result of the feedback and insightful comments from scholars, policymakers, board and staff, ISPU is in the process of conducting a review of the impact of ISPU's work in its ten year history as well as mapping the field of similar organizations and individuals to help focus the mission and work of ISPU.

Photos from the Retreat



ISPU Staff and Scholars engaging policy makers



Foreign policy scholars' small group working session



Global health scholars engaging policy makers

Attachment 1

List of Participating Scholars and Board

Aasim Padela

Abbas Barzegar

Ahmed Humayun

Akbar Ahmed

Altaf Husain

Aminah McCloud

Asifa Quraishi

Asma Uddin

Azeem Ibrahim

Cynthia Arfken

Daniel Tutt

Farid Senzai

Farhan Latif

Hamada Hamid

Haroon Moghul

Hena Khan

Hishaam Aidi

Iltefat Hamzavi

John Esposito

Karam Dana

Mazen Asbahi

Muqtedar Khan

Muzammil Ahmed

Radwan Ziadeh

Saeed Khan

Sahar Aziz

Saima Akhtar

Sameera Ahmed

Sulayman Nyang

Teeb Al-Samarrai

Wahiba Abu-Ras

Zahra Jamal

Zareena Grewal

Attachment 2

**Institute for Social Policy and Understanding
Scholars and Advisers Retreat
February 10-11, 2011**
Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center

*with support from:
The Henry Luce Foundation
Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
ReThink Media*

Friday, February 10th

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 8:30 – 9:30 | ISPU Board of Advisers, Board of Directors and Research Team Breakfast Meeting
<i>Location: Conference Room 3</i> |
| 8:30-9:30 | ISPU Scholars Breakfast
<i>Location: Salon EF</i> |
| 9:30-10:00 | Program convenes
<i>Location: Salon EF</i>
Welcome from ISPU <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on ISPU activities, accomplishments and DC expansion
Farid Senzai, Director of Research• Goals for the Retreat
Shireen Zaman, Executive Director• Review of Agenda
Nadia Roumani, Facilitator |
| 10:00-10:30 | Group Introduction Exercise |
| 10:30-10:45 | Break |
| 10:45- 12:00 | Large Group Discussion: ISPU Making an Impact
Nadia Roumani, Facilitator
<i>Location: Salon EF</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scholars share assessment of policy and research environment- Areas of opportunity for ISPU- Share stories of impact |
| 12:00 | Break out room assignments/Policy guests arrive |
| 12:15-1:00 | Lunch
<i>Location: Faculty Club Restaurant- Room B</i> |
| 1:00-1:30 | Break for Prayer/Move to break out rooms
<i>Location for Prayer: Salon EF</i> |

1:30-3:30

Break out into Policy Roundtables (concurrent sessions)

Engaging American Muslims

Location: Salon EF

- Facilitated by Zareena Grewal, Director of CSAM

Policy Participants:

- Paul Monteiro, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement
- Stephen Lassiter, Legislative Assistant, Office of Congressman Keith Ellison
- Daniel W. Sutherland, Office of Strategic Operational Planning, National Counterterrorism Center
- George Selim, Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Department of Homeland Security
- Akil Vohra- Senior Advisor, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

US Policy in the Muslim World

Location: Conference Room 4

- facilitated by Farid Senzai, Director of Research

Policy Participants:

- Shahed Amanullah, Senior Advisor for Technology for the Office of the Special Representative to Muslim Communities, US Department of State
- Fatema Sumar, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Health and Development

Location: Conference Room 3

- facilitated by Hamada Hamid, Director of the Center for Global Health

Policy Participants:

- Zeenat Rahman, Deputy Director, Center for Faith Based and Community Initiatives, USAID
- Kimberly Konkel, Associate Director for Health, HHS Center for Faith-Based & Neighborhood Partnerships
- Khizer Husain, American Muslim Health Professionals
- Dr. Jamila Rashid, Associate Director for Research and Policy in the Office of Minority Health, Dept of Health and Human Services

3:30-3:45

Break/ prayer

Location: Salon EF

3:45-5:00

Small Group Discussions in Research Center Groups

See room assignments above

- Discussion on projects, ideas and collaborations based on the day's discussion

7:00

Optional Dinner for ISPU Scholars and Team

Shuttle Departs Hotel Lobby at 7:00 PM sharp

Mai Thai Restaurant

Saturday, Feb 11th

Morning

Check out of Rooms and Store Luggage

9:30-11:00

Breakfast Discussion
Feedback on Retreat and Next steps for ISPU
Location: Salon EF

11:00-11:15

Break

11:15-12:30

Media Training- in Partnership with ReThink Media

Group A: Making Effective Broadcast Appearances

Location: Conference Room 4

A comprehensive training designed to review the essential top do's and don'ts before conducting a television interview.

Group B: Building Relationships With Reporters

Location: Salon EF

A training designed to transform the transactional experience of one-way pitching into a sustainable relationship with a journalist and their outlet by laying out the framework for success.

12:30-1:15

Lunch: Discussion of How To Connect with Your Audience

Location: Salon EF

ReThink will facilitate a discussion about the hurdles and things we all need to consider when trying to connect with non-expert audiences.

(Prayer in Conference Room 4)

1:15-3:00

Media Training- in Partnership with ReThink Media

Group A: On Camera Interviews

Location: Conference Rooms 3, 4

The participants in the morning broadcast training will be divided into two breakout rooms for practice interviews. Everybody will have a chance on camera and the group will collectively provide feedback on each interview with the trainer.

Group B: Building Your Media Profile Training

Location: Salon EF

Brief review of how the news cycle works and how you can effectively engage the news cycle which will then be accompanied by work on creating personal plans and timelines for increased media engagement and building a marketing package, etc...all with the goal of increasing your leverage along with ISPU's to fill news holes.

3:00-3:30

Close Program- Full Group

Location: Salon EF

Depart for Flights

Attachment 3

Media Training For Scholar Retreat Participants- Survey

Thank you for participating in the ISPU scholars retreat. We look forward to seeing you there. We would like to incorporate two (or three depending on time) core media trainings into the convening to assist you individually and ISPU organizationally to incorporate enhanced, hands-on communications around relevant issue areas. ReThink Media, a communications shop designed specifically to assist organizations like ISPU on national security and human rights issues, has a strong understanding of the limited capacity of communications at the individual and organizational level. ReThink Media will be running the workshop as part of our retreat agenda. As we design the agenda, **we would like to make these trainings tailored to fit the needs of the scholars attending.** Please answer the following questions and return by December 23rd. This will only take a few minutes and your responses will not be made public but will only be used for internal planning purposes.

1. Have you ever published an op-ed? If so, how many?
2. Have you ever been interviewed for TV? If so, how many times?
3. Radio? If so, how many times?
4. Newspaper? If so, how many times?
5. How often are you asked to comment in the media?
6. What is your greatest area of expertise when it comes to engaging the media?
7. What is your greatest blind spot when it comes to engaging the media?

If you could implement one individual strategy to effectively target media you would like to influence over the next year, what would that strategy be? *Example: Op-eds, television appearances, reporter outreach, etc....*

8. Have you ever participated in a media training session? Was it helpful?
9. What do you hope to learn from the media training session at the ISPU scholars retreat?
10. Please identify the top 2 trainings you would like to participate in below:

Understanding News Values: Understanding what journalists consider "news" plays a critical role in crafting your media engagement and releases, but the definition of "news" changes, depending upon audience and outlet.

Op-Eds and Editorial Boards: Writing meaningful opinion pieces for local audiences, holding engaging editorial boards, and creating comprehensive and well-received editorial packets.

Building Your Media Profile: Creating personal plans and timelines for increased media engagement; identifying key reporters to target; creating a strong expert marketing package and understanding how your profile fits into ISPU's media profile in an effort the leverage overall position to fill news holes.

Making Effective Broadcast Appearances: Review top tips about effective broadcast appearances and the essential do's and don'ts of body language and connecting with your audience, followed by...on-camera practice sessions.

Connecting With Non-Expert Audiences: Sometimes issue experts think they need to "dumb down" their message - but that premise couldn't be more wrong. Learn how to meet your audience where they are, respect them for what they know (and you don't) and successfully communicate about difficult or wonky subject matter.