EQUI

Building Britain: British Muslims Giving Back

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Introduction

Charitable giving is strongly rooted in British society and is particularly important for faith communities. In the UK, Muslims are known to be the most generous community, donating four times more than the average adult to charity.[1] They donated around £2.2 billion in 2023/24,[2] with half of British Muslims indicating that they plan to increase their giving in the next year.[3] This report explores the potential in further harnessing this significant British Muslim generosity and in increasing the proportion that is directed to UK domestic causes. This sits alongside the longstanding commitment British Muslims show to global humanitarian causes.

This report presents an overview of the British Muslim charity sector outlining the opportunities that British Muslim charitable work offers the UK. After highlighting the untapped potential for charities seeking to strengthen their domestic impact, the report proposes policy recommendations which would support UK-focused programming and harnessing British Muslim charitable giving, including enhancing existing approaches.

Key Findings

1. British Muslims are the UK's most generous donors. While a significant share of British Muslim charitable giving supports international humanitarian causes, there is substantial untapped potential to expand support for UK-based initiatives.

2. A generational and cultural shift is gradually increasing Muslim domestic giving. Increasingly, young British Muslim professionals are directing their donations to causes in the UK, faith-based or otherwise. They are seeking to respond to visible crises on their doorsteps, such as homelessness, food insecurity and child poverty.

3. British Muslim charities increasingly provide crucial services that fill gaps left by a struggling welfare state. Despite barriers, both large and small organisations offer housing aid, emergency cash grants and psychological support aimed at diverse groups of beneficiaries, regardless of their faith. This is valuable work that directly eases pressure on strained public services, which often goes unrecognised.

4. Muslim charities face significant barriers when engaging in domestic programming. These include debanking, securitisation, restrictive government funding criteria and a lack of full government recognition.

5. There is a growing need for faith-literate, inclusive public policymaking that recognises the contributions of faith-led charities. Strategic engagement with Muslim and other faith-led organisations, based on principles of collaboration and inclusion, can enhance social cohesion, maximise benefit from Muslim initiatives and experiences and reshape perceptions of British Muslim contributions to civic life.

6. Existing tried-and-tested approaches, such as 'match-funding' could be used to incentivise an increase in UK domestic spending by faith-based NGOs. This approach would ensure that both domestic and international vulnerable populations are supported by UK aid.

Faith, Generosity and the Changing Landscape of British Muslim Giving

Charitable giving is central to the teachings of all major religions and is practised by those belonging to all faiths and none, not least by British Muslims. Deeply rooted in Islamic teaching and daily practice, it is understood by Muslims not only as a moral obligation but as a route to spiritual growth and divine mercy. Both Zakat (the compulsory donation of 2.5% of surplus annual wealth) and Sadaqa (voluntary giving) are emphasised throughout Islamic scripture.[4] According to the Ayaan Institute, Zakat constitutes up to 40% of total funds raised by surveyed Muslim charities in the UK, with the other 60% provided through other forms of donation, including Sadaqa.[5]

British Muslims are also the most charitable community in the UK.[6] Recent research shows that British Muslims collectively donate £2.2 billion every year. Compared to national averages, British Muslims are four times as generous when it comes to charitable giving, with the figure rising to ten times among high earners (with incomes of £75,000-99,000), as of 2024.[7]

Much of the charitable income generated by Muslim communities is collected and distributed by faith-informed charities. The rise of British Muslim charitable organisations has followed an impressive trajectory: from early mosques in Victorian England, to the emergence of Muslim-led aid organisations in the 1960s.[8] The number of Muslim charities in the UK focused on international humanitarian aid has increased from 2 in 1960 to 1,026 in 2020, which had a combined annual income of £708 million that year.[9] While valuable contributions are made by both grassroots and large-scale organisations, just 10 of the 1,026 charities accounted for 60% of all funding.[10]

The figures reflect a strong generosity to those in need across the world, which is shaped by migration histories and connections to countries of origin. 66% of Britain's four million Muslims are Asian or British Asian,[11] and the pattern of charitable flow often mirrors this. For example, the top three countries in which British Muslim charities operate are in South Asia (45% in Pakistan, 35% in Bangladesh and 13% in India).[12] This does not only occur due to ancestral ties, but also because British Muslims generally tend to identify with the global Muslim community (Ummah). The responsibility to support the Ummah encourages the provision of support to those in need, especially in times of crises like conflict, poverty and natural disasters. At a time when the UK's international aid budget is facing cuts, the diverse and wide-ranging nature of British Muslim charitable activities abroad offers a particularly vital opportunity to maintain Britain's renowned international developmental expertise and soft power.[13]

Shifting Perceptions Among British Muslim Donors: Opportunities for Change

British Muslim charitable giving extends to both international and domestic causes. Recent polling by Savanta (commissioned by Equi) showed that Muslims exceed the national average in donating to mental health and healthcare charities at least once a year by about 10%. Whilst international humanitarian aid and relief remain the forerunner in British Muslim donor trends (almost double the national average), these numbers showcase the growing tendency amongst British Muslim donors to favour non-traditional causes, acting to remedy pressing issues 'at home.'

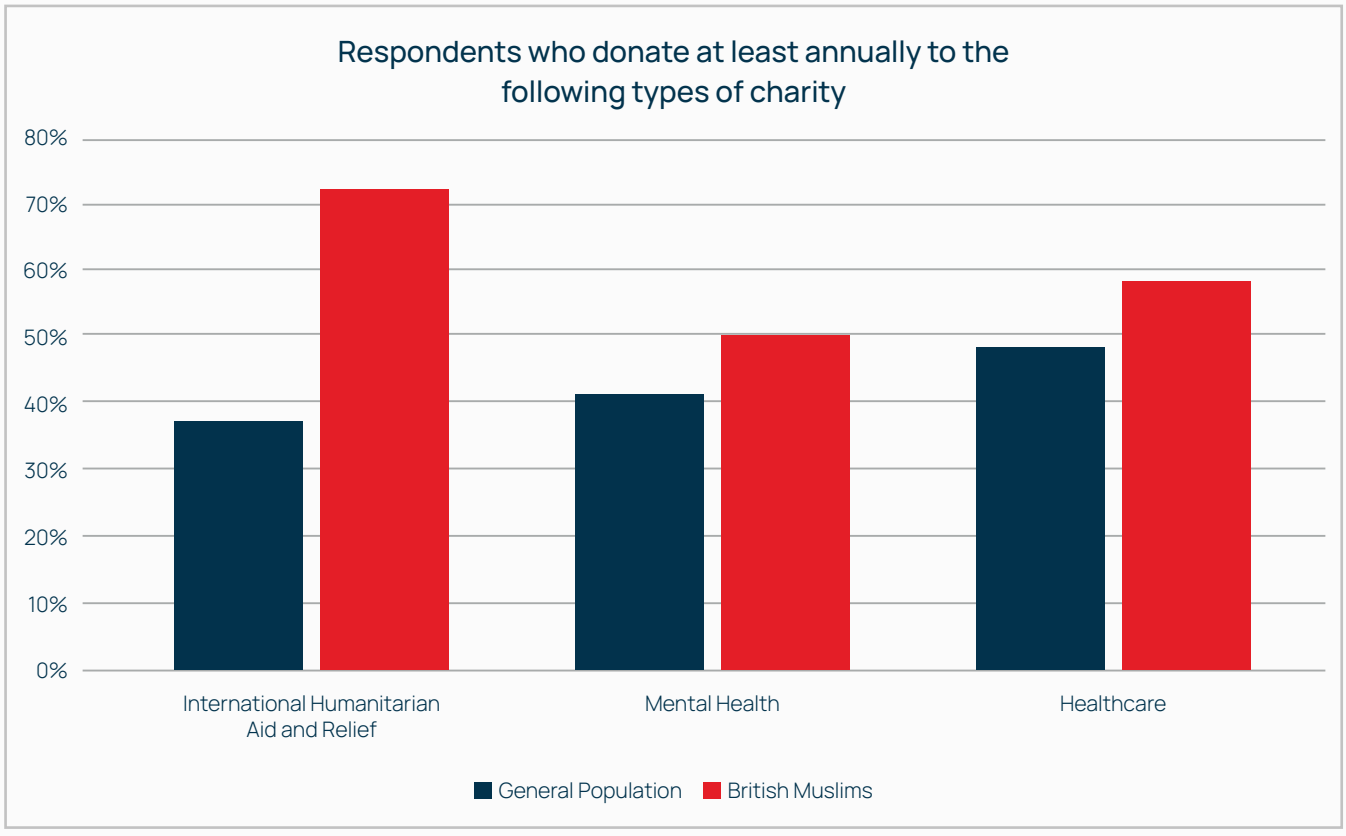

Chart 1: This data is based on a poll commissioned by Equi and conducted by Savanta.

Many British Muslim charities have traditionally prioritised international aid, yet there is real opportunity to complement this with enhanced local interventions, especially in light of challenges such as poverty, housing pressures and demands on health and social care.

Part of the explanation behind this continued focus on international giving lies in varying levels of awareness. Some British Muslim donors are unaware of the scale of problems within the UK. For example, while British Muslims donate generously to organisations supporting orphans abroad, they are often unaware of the needs of vulnerable children in the UK.[14] This may in part be because of an assumption that mutual support is readily available, shaped by their own positive experiences with faith-based informal support, which is not always the case. Another factor is the limited visibility of domestic need. International campaigns often feature moving images of suffering, but people in the UK are often uncomfortable appearing in local charity appeals, fearing stigma and shame.[15] These dynamics create a complex landscape for British Muslim charitable work. While support for global causes remains vital, there is a growing opportunity, grounded in both faith and collective social responsibility, to expand the focus of British Muslim charities towards domestic programming.

British Muslims are increasingly directing their charitable giving towards local causes. Third and fourth generation immigrants constitute a large proportion of Britain's 4 million Muslims, who feel a clear sense of belonging within the UK. This shift is also being expressed by charity workers and faith leaders when speaking about the need to strengthen British Muslim charitable giving towards UK domestic causes, to produce a tangible long-term impact in local communities. Experts in the British Muslim charity sector, such as at Islamic Relief's Zakat Advisory Board, believe that domestic giving follows the Islamic principle of 'beginning charity at home.'

> ***"He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbour goes hungry."***
>
> ***Prophet Muhammad***

The rising awareness of the need for charity at home has prompted many British Muslims to engage more deeply with their local communities. As Ehsan Choudhry BEM, the co-founder of the Open Kitchen,[16] recalled: "One Ramadan in 2015, I was about to send my donation to Pakistan, but my daughter informed me that there was a huge number of homeless people around here [in the UK], so I decided to redirect my charity towards these causes."[17] The number of people experiencing poverty has increased due to austerity measures under successive governments,[18] which have limited the effectiveness of the country's welfare services. Muslim charities have often stepped in to fill in these gaps.

Localisation of Aid: The Contributions of British Muslim Charities at Home

The landscape of British Muslim charities working on domestic programming now consists of both very small and large organisations. Among some of the more established organisations operating in this context are the National Zakat Foundation, Islamic Relief UK, Al-Khair Foundation and Solace UK.

The National Zakat Foundation (NZF)

NZF was founded in 2011 for the purpose of using Zakat to help alleviate poverty in the UK and support domestic causes, including debt support, homelessness and economic deprivation. It was amongst the first major Muslim charities founded exclusively to tackle domestic issues and is now the biggest domestically focused Muslim charity organisation in the UK. Since NZF's inception, it has allocated over £25 million for the benefit of more than 21,000 people, making NZF the largest distributor of direct cash grants in the UK.[19] NZF provides three funds: the Housing Fund, the Hardship Relief Fund and the Work Fund. 76% of the £7 million Zakat donations they received in 2023 was allocated to the Hardship Relief Fund.[20] In the year 2022-2023 alone, NZF distributed over £375,000 to 824 individuals as part of its Housing Fund to help with rent arrears.[21] In doing so, NZF safeguarded recipients from evictions, providing direct support where it was needed most. Overall, in 2023, NZF helped local authorities save £28.8 million - money that the government would have had to spend on support services if NZF's beneficiaries had been made homeless.[22] Research shows that each pound of charity yielded savings of £73 for the public purse,[23] demonstrating the immense support organisations like NZF offer in tackling crises facing the British public.

> ***"Financial support from the Muslim communities in Britain can make real and direct contributions because [...] these are communities who have heritage in other parts of the world who have been through multiple generations of migration experience. [...] Let's use Zakat to support the process of supporting people who've come into this country as asylum seekers."***
>
> ***Dr Susannah Pickering-Saqqa***
> *Lecturer, University of East London*

Islamic Relief UK (IRUK)

IRUK initiated a formal domestic grants programme in 2020, where they began to systematically support local causes, building on years of established domestic work, such as during the Boston floods in 2013 and during the COVID-19 pandemic.[24] In 2024, IRUK received over 100 applications and issued

circa £5 million in grants to various UK projects and organisations, supporting both Muslim-led and non-Muslim charities.[25] This included organisations like Youth Zone, Burnley FC Foundation and Street Doctors, demonstrating that IRUK supports organisations based on impact rather than religious affiliation.[26]

IRUK also supports asylum seekers and refugees as the core pillars of their domestic programming,[27] relieving pressure from national and local government budgets which have faced criticism for being used to support these vulnerable groups at home.[28]

Al-Khair Foundation

The Al-Khair Foundation is another leading British Muslim charity, which has also built on their established international aid programme by contributing to inclusive initiatives at home. For example, their £300,000 grant to Great Ormond Street Hospital supported a multi-faith dedicated space and reflection, strengthening social cohesion and promoting holistic wellbeing for people of all backgrounds. Al-Khair has also provided domestic emergency support, including during the Rochdale floods where one of their volunteers received a Prime Minister's Points of Light Award for coordinating assistance to vulnerable residents.[30] The organisation supported affected families following the Grenfell Tower fire and continues to engage in wider social cohesion efforts including government work on tackling anti-Muslim hatred.[31] Through its regional branches Al-Khair delivers food distributions and community support programmes that address immediate needs across the UK.

Solace UK

Organisations like Solace UK, a charity working to support women by providing emotional, financial and social services, significantly help to decrease the burden on public welfare systems. For instance, their financial literacy courses reduce reliance on the benefits system, whilst their faith-based psychological support relieves pressures on the NHS.

> ***"A number of initiatives that we have are making it easier for government bodies. As a Muslim charity, we can provide the faith-based space required for psychological support. Service users favour Solace over the government route, because they know they will be supported by someone who will understand the nuances that come with their faith-related challenges."***
>
> ***Aliyah Quadri***
> *CEO, Solace UK*

Equi's 2024 report on loneliness highlighted how British Muslim organisations are strengthening local communities and helping to tackle loneliness, in addition to providing services such as food for the homeless, mental health counselling and upskilling.[32] Most of these initiatives are not limited to Muslim beneficiaries alone. For example, Open Kitchen estimates that 60% of their service users are British citizens of other faiths (or none).[33] At crisis points, such as the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Muslim charities of all sizes were among the first respondents, delivering prescriptions, food parcels, clothing, small grants and personal protective equipment (PPE) to the most vulnerable in their local areas, regardless of faith.[34]

In summary, British Muslim charities play an immensely valuable role in reducing the administrative and financial resources that the government spends on public services, filling crucial gaps. British Muslim aid charities have significant untapped potential to do more in the UK, benefitting not only Muslims, but the whole of British society, and this opportunity should be embraced in public policy.

Challenges Facing British Muslim Domestic Programming

"The charity sector is largely in crisis. [...] But there are specific challenges that have disproportionately affected Muslim charities."

Dr Samantha May
Lecturer, University of Aberdeen

In their efforts to expand their domestic work, many British Muslim charitable organisations describe facing a number of barriers in the UK which can hinder their domestic programming. These challenges include a lack of government recognition and faith literacy, securitisation, stigmatisation and financial and funding-related challenges, all of which can restrict charities from realising their full impact.

1. Lack of Government Recognition

When asked about the primary domestic challenge faced by their charities, professionals in the third sector often expressed frustration at a perceived lack of recognition from the government for their work. This is despite the life-saving and transformative early interventions that Muslim charities carry out, which offset costs and alleviate pressures from the UK's public services. Without adequate government acknowledgement and support, the scale and value of these contributions are at risk of remaining overlooked, which can limit the charities' reach and operational abilities. Instead, public appreciation of such vital work that goes beyond symbolic statements creates opportunities for improved coordination and engagement between charities and government. This would ultimately streamline domestic programming alongside existing public services and ensure better outcomes.

Charities have reported informal acknowledgement, such as individuals praising or recognising their work in private settings. For example, Dr Sohail Hanif (CEO of NZF) referred to an MP who described NZF's work as the "scaffolding upholding the capital."[35]

While local councils do engage with charities and other grassroots organisations at times, charities report that the national government is rarely a primary collaborator. Ehsan Choudhry (co-founder of Open Kitchen) explained how he felt that Muslim grassroots charities are often neglected in wider government initiatives and events, in favour of major charities and politicians.[36] Public and formal acknowledgement from governmental bodies would serve as an important motivator, encouraging British Muslim charities in their invaluable domestic work that benefits broader public welfare.

As the largest distributor of individual cash grants in the UK, bordering around £10 million a year, Dr Sohail Hanif believes that NZF has "earned its spot" in nation-wide conversations.[37] In light of this, it is important that both local and national government engage meaningfully with British Muslim-led charities and representative community bodies such as the Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) in order to understand "what the wider challenges [are]

and how all actors in this space [can] collaborate to create a net that saves everyone… including local government and non-governmental organisations."[38]

"It is to the detriment of public welfare that all actors [such as ourselves] are not [at] the table, along with local government actors and other parties, to see how [we can] put the pieces of the puzzle together to maximise public advantage"

Dr Sohail Hanif
CEO, National Zakat Foundation

2. Lack of Faith Literacy

Another crucial barrier that hinders domestic charitable work when interacting with government is the lack of faith literacy among local authorities, which can manifest on different levels. For example, NZF has pointed to a level of food poverty "hidden" to some local authorities because of the lack of culturally sensitive foodbanks offering halal or other foods that cater to religious or dietary needs.[39] Solace UK also explains how categories such as "vulnerable adults" are often defined in a way that neglects "layered forms of vulnerability."[40] Like many women in broader society, vulnerabilities that affect Muslim women range from financial issues to domestic violence, which Solace UK feel are not adequately reflected in the current definition. This can exacerbate intersectional implications, especially for the women assisted by Solace UK who have previously converted to Islam and therefore often lack family support systems. Collaboration and discussions with Muslim-led charities would allow government and local authorities to understand the specific barriers that inhibit people from accessing vital services and help strengthen British Muslim domestic giving.

"COVID-19 should have proven how important [Muslim-led charity work is] because it was Muslim communities and Muslim charitable actors that were amongst the first responders."

Dr Samantha May
Lecturer, University of Aberdeen

Working towards better faith literacy would also tackle another pressing challenge that the British Muslim third sector faces: a tendency by the authorities to direct Muslim-led charities to officials responsible for faith. Charities, on the other hand, express a need to work with officials with a shared background in their work, who treat them as professionals in their respective fields,

allowing for relevant, targeted and impact-focused ways of engaging. To limit faith-based charities to solely faith-centred engagement indicates a lack of understanding of how faith can inspire vital charitable work. This misconception risks obscuring charities' resolve, action and impact in levelling up communities across specific areas of expertise.

Notably, NZF's activities are often characterised as "faith work," which in turn masks the charity's measurable and concrete impact through poverty alleviation and housing security in the UK. Robert Hillier (Head of Research at NZF) compares Muslim-led charities to other faith-based charities, such as Christian-led anti-poverty initiatives that use church networks to support foodbanks. He argues that some of NZF's counterparts of other faiths do not face the same assumptions as NZF. "The minute it's NZF, [the government] says: 'you'll have to speak to our Faith Minister.' Why would we be speaking to the Faith Minister? The conversation that we're having in terms of the work that we want to do, it's not actually about the faith. Yes, it's at the core of what we do, but we're trying to help secure a better future for an under-represented and marginalised community."[41] This reductive approach not only creates additional logistical and administrative hurdles for the charities in their efforts to interact and collaborate with government, but it also limits their impact by directing them to one department, creating additional bottlenecks in misaligned channels of engagement.

More strategic engagement with British Muslim charities could build on an established tradition of government actively engaging with other faith-inspired charitable initiatives as not simply faith actors, but experts in their respective sectors. This engagement should include ongoing dialogue about existing barriers to faith-informed charities seeking to fully engage with policymakers.

> ***"[Being a] religious charity shouldn't mean that we get taken less seriously."***
>
> ***Robert Hillier***
> *Head of Research,*
> *National Zakat Foundation*

3. Securitisation and Stigmatisation

In addition to the lack of government acknowledgement and faith literacy, British Muslim-led charities often face a heightened level of scrutiny under counter-terrorism legislation.

> ***"Policy since 9/11 has really made charity, but particularly Muslim-led charity, conflated with terrorism, extremism and things that are not evidenced. It's based on assumptions and this has fed into people's [...] stereotypes of what Muslim charity is."***
>
> ***Dr Samantha May***
> *Lecturer, University of Aberdeen*

Muslim charities are often subjected to "disproportionate and unwarranted" counter-terrorism measures, both financially and legally.[42] The Prevent strategy in particular has been "ingrained into Muslim-led charities in a way that it isn't for other faith-based work or secular work."[43]

Dr Susannah Pickering-Saqqa joins critics of the Independent Review of Prevent (2023) by arguing that it centred Muslim charities and NGOs in the discussions on counter-terrorism, positioning them through a securitised lens.[44] Prevent has been repeatedly raised as a key challenge for British Muslims because of how it stigmatises civil society actors by virtue of their faith, such as by linking funding in the arts and culture to security issues.[45] This often leads to a breakdown of trust between British Muslims and the government.[46] The findings of this report further drive home the damaging effect that securitisation has had on British Muslim charities.[47]

The adverse impact of Prevent on faith-based charities includes funding with strings attached. Previous work has highlighted the ramifications of accepting such funding and the issues they pose for Muslim organisations, including the erosion of community trust, fear of increased surveillance and stigmatisation, to name a few.[48] Considering the relative lack of awareness amongst smaller

Muslim and other faith-led charities on the types of funding available, alongside the positive work and opportunities that can be realised by such charities in the UK, restrictive funding criteria should be rethought to maximise charitable impact, including by faith-informed actors.

The sensitive political climate in which British Muslim charities operate can also limit the scope of domestic programming. As Dr Samantha May explains, a key barrier is "the amount of effort and resources and time that Muslim charities have to spend on responding to issues and events that have absolutely nothing to do with charity, in a way that other charitable sectors do not."[49] Indeed, major Muslim charitable organisations, such as IRUK, stated that limited funds and resources make it difficult to dedicate members of staff for advocacy or policy for the purpose of tackling harmful anti-Muslim rhetoric, especially in the aftermath of terrorist attacks.[50]

Ultimately, the association of British Muslim charities with extremism exacerbates a narrative that displays strong elements of anti-Muslim prejudice, despite the impactful and transformative work of Muslim charities in the UK.[51] The effects of this securitisation can be felt across the board. For example, NZF has reported issues with advertising campaigns being blocked on social media platforms such as Meta, due to the algorithm flagging words such as 'Muslim' or 'Zakat.'[52] When British Muslim civil society faces securitised and restrictive standards based on events outside of their control, the powerful impact that Muslim-led charity work can have in the UK is limited.

As such, the government and official bodies, such as the Charity Commission, need to build more visible, positive, recognition of the efforts of Muslim charities operating in the UK. Public engagement with the sector, for example through representative bodies such as the MCF, aimed at finding more constructive ways to frame Muslim charitable giving and activities, is of key importance. It would aid the shift away from the high-risk, securitised lens that has dominated the sector for so long, towards an approach based on principles of collaboration and mutual trust.[53]

4. Financial Challenges

Organisations and individuals are at an increased risk of being debanked due to their political affiliation or faith identity. This includes high-profile political figures, such as Nigel Farage, and several UK-based humanitarian organisations. British Muslim charities in particular have been disproportionately affected by restrictions on their banking activities, severely restricting their ability to conduct their operations. Whilst debanking may be understandable in cases of violation of the law, due process should be followed to ensure that charities, institutions and individuals are not unfairly targeted.

MCF, the umbrella organisation for Muslim charities in the UK, released a report in 2024 on the issue of debanking in the context of counter-terror legislation and its impact on British Muslim charitable activities. Their survey of 19 charities showed that nearly half of charities operating exclusively in the UK reported significant banking or financial problems, including delays in transferring funds domestically.[54] The report demonstrates that, like international aid organisations, "domestic-focused charities are [...] vulnerable to banks' decreased appetite for financial risk."[55]

Some British Muslim charities operating in the UK have also been subject to restrictions by funders, due to their work being interpreted as being of religious nature. When applying for funding from a grant-making charity specialising in the women and girls' rights sector, Solace UK faced restrictive criteria specifying that the funding should not be for the advancement of religion.[56] This is despite the fact that the organisation does not promote religion but rather supports women who have previously chosen to convert to Islam, given the challenges many convert Muslim women face. The grant would have aided Solace UK's effort to support vulnerable women and continue to alleviate pressure from social and public services. However, the inherently religious identity and ethos behind Solace UK's work was classed as a barrier to accessing this important fund. Similar funding regulations and financial requirements from governmental bodies, including HMRC, can be seen to stipulate criteria excluding charities or bodies that may be seen as "support[ing] or promot[ing] religious activity."[57]

"[Our Muslim identity] is central to who we are. You have a service user who [for example] is fleeing domestic violence. Islam doesn't necessarily have to come into it, but our faith comes in in terms of emotional and mental support. So, when we are applying for funding, we're very limited in what we can apply to, which I feel is unfair to a certain extent, because we are alleviating costs to the government and the local authorities by offering the free support that we are. [It's] kind of a catch-22 situation. I certainly feel that is our main challenge."

Aliyah Quadri
CEO, Solace UK

Financial limitations, influenced by the previously discussed political factors, therefore have adverse results on the activities of British Muslim charities and restrict their vital work. Policymakers should pay particular attention to ways to facilitate these charities' financial activities, whether through funding or banking regulations, to encourage and build on their impact.

Policy Recommendations

1) The government and its statutory agencies should seek increased, proactive engagement with Muslim and other faith-based charities, acknowledging and enabling their potential to increase support for UK domestic causes.
The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) should continue to work and collaborate with grassroots, local and national charities to co-produce solutions and co-commission services to reduce public service spend. This should include developing partnership frameworks to encourage collaborations between faith-based charities and secular agencies, including government departments. Faith-based charities with direct experience of working with local communities should be consulted in discussions shaping policies, strategies and definitions within the remit of their work, in order to provide more comprehensive and faith-literate services. Government should formally recognise the vital work done by faith-based charities and ensure that public bodies, such as the Charity Commission, maintain structured ongoing engagement with this sector.

2) Match-funding policies should be introduced to bolster existing support for domestic causes.
Match-funding is a powerful policy employed elsewhere by the UK government through UK Aid Match, which works with the Disasters Emergency Committee to match donations by the British public for international aid.[58] This approach should be replicated for domestic purposes, including for faith-based charities with a proven record of successful initiatives, to strengthen domestic delivery.

3) His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) should strengthen and develop policies, including tax relief, to support domestic work by faith communities, civil society organisations and charities.
HMT must safeguard and develop tax relief policies like Gift Aid, which are crucial for charities of all sizes in supporting their operational costs and ensuring financial stability. Strengthening these fiscal measures would help level the playing field for smaller and faith-based organisations that often face barriers to accessing large-scale grants. HMT should ensure these measures remain accessible to charities working in high-need areas.

4) HMT must safeguard financial inclusion for registered charities of all sizes and faith identities.
HMT must work with banks to ensure that derisking does not unduly target or impact faith-based charities and their activities, domestic or otherwise. In order to mitigate existing barriers for faith-based charities to carry out their crucial work, HMT should guarantee a right to a basic bank account for charities registered in the UK, thereby removing financial barriers to their important charitable activities.

5) The government should make a distinction between faith-based organisations that promote religion and those that offer faith-literate services to people of all faiths and none.
Faith-based charities have reported not being able to support domestic causes because of funding limitations that disproportionately affect organisations whose faith identity is at the heart of their work. In order to fully support domestic causes, the government must make the distinction between charities that promote religion and organisations

that offer faith-literate services (which may or may not be faith-inspired), so that people of all faiths and none can benefit from their expertise. This will not only open up funding opportunities for these charities, but will allow them to be connected to the correct departments and officials within government so that their work can be expanded and replicated elsewhere.

Recognising Life-Saving British Muslim Charity Contributions in the UK

British Muslims donate £2.2 billion each year to charitable causes, up to four times the national average. While these donations have largely been sent abroad, there is an increasing desire for more domestic spend, which benefits Britons of all faiths and none. This shift towards UK-focused giving provides a significant opportunity to leverage Muslim generosity for the good of all segments of British society, regardless of faith background.

Domestic efforts by British Muslim-led charities have significant potential to build on faith-informed giving, harnessing this generosity to reduce financial and logistical pressure on an already over-stretched welfare state and acting as service providers to people of all faiths and none. Their faith literacy and connections within their local areas enable British Muslim organisations to tackle issues that the government and local authorities may struggle to address in critical areas such as food security, housing and poverty.

To maximise the contribution of British Muslim charities, it is essential to dismantle existing barriers that restrict their work in the UK and support its growth. These barriers include a lack of formal recognition and faith literacy from the government, securitisation, stigmatisation and financial limitations. The refinement of established mechanisms used in other areas of work, such as match-funding, would be a powerful catalyst for increasing domestic spend, ultimately saving public funds.

Through genuine partnership with this dynamic, engaged and generous part of the British charitable community, the government can unlock substantial social and material benefits, ensuring that British Muslim charitable work continues to contribute meaningfully to the nation's shared prosperity.

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About Equi

Equi is a pioneering think tank. An independent, non-partisan organisation whose mission is to develop and promote new public policy ideas for a just and prosperous society for all. Born from a recognition that British Muslims are not included in the crucial arena of public policy formation, it has been driven by a desire to contribute more fully to the health and wellbeing of the UK bringing into play the values and ethics of public service. Outcomes are driven by British Muslims, but not simply for British Muslims. We work in partnership with academics and other experts and conduct studies based on empirical research. Equi is committed to an evidence-based approach to policy development and retains copyright and full editorial control over all its research.