

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

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Black British Muslims play an important role in British society but are poorly represented in public discourse, policy, and indeed across a range of sectors. To overcome structural disadvantages and racism in society and in Muslim communities, we aim to create a platform for interventions in discourse and representation as well as in power relations. Our effort is collaborative and aimed at exploring the diversity, contributions, heritage, as well as the history of Black British Muslims. Our objective in this report is to create a platform to review and consider the current state of race and power relations, while creating networks and partnerships.

In short, bringing Black British Muslim voices to the forefront is to work towards inclusion and belonging in British society and importantly, in British Muslim communities.

Our goal in this detailed study is to highlight the perspectives and contributions of Black Muslims from a wide range of fields and backgrounds; youth, teachers, leaders, artists, lawyers, and more. We aim to bring them into dialogue and raise key issues to be tackled in Britain.

Collaborations and new relationships have been central to bringing this together. This piece reflects several years of work between MCB, Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative (EMHAI), Black Muslim Forum and other Black Muslim-led organisations or those working within the sector.

Throughout the collaboration, it was clear that African and Black Caribbean communities have been marginalised and disadvantaged through lack of representation and discrimination in both the Muslim community and wider society. However, as contributing authors show, it was not a new or an unexpected finding for those from within the community.

In presenting deeply insightful experiences and perspectives, essays in this report employ a variety of approaches from academic research to personal reflections. They each represent a combination of challenges, achievements, and analyses in reference to what it means to be Black, Muslim, and British. Each essay speaks to the social and cultural dimensions of Black Muslim British lives, raising important questions in doing so.

Acknowledging and respecting the diversity that constitutes our communities, we employ 'Black,' 'Black Caribbean,' and 'African' by way of using inclusive categories. Each author's use of terms have been maintained to retain the originality of their piece.

ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

We provide an overview of collaborations between the MCB's PMB project and Muslim organisations, with an account of how this project came about. We then provide a synopsis of available demographic data on Black Muslims in the UK. A brief thematic overview of some of the central issues and challenges in Black Muslim communities precedes a set of forty essays, which consist of experiences of Black Muslims including youth and health workers, lawyers, civic and business leaders highlighting important and crosscutting contemporary issues in the Black Muslim community.

Authors describe achievements of individuals who tackle difficult challenges of social mobility, health, and environment, who have found ways to contribute to their communities and society at large. They also describe challenges faced by Black Muslim professionals who document their experiences and offer insight into the ways inequality and racism affect their work.

Finally, we present recommendations of Black Muslims from different fields and backgrounds on policy and on community leadership.

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SECTION 2

HOW THE PROJECT CAME ABOUT
& IT'S IMPORTANCE