

IDEA GENERATORS CONFERENCE PRESS RELEASE  
“ MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS COME TOGETHER TO MAKE CAMPUSES A  
“GREENER” PLACE.”

June 2, 2016 - Chicago, IL

“Muslims and Christians come together to make campuses a “greener” place.” The inaugural Interfaith Dialogue and Entrepreneurial Activity (IDEA) Generators Conference wrapped up Monday after three days of ideating, developing, and pitching projects designed to address environmental sustainability in North America college campuses and campus communities through an interfaith partnership. The event brought together 32 students, professors, and professionals from across the United States and beyond, to design projects that focus on “creation care,” a shared tenet of both Islam and Christianity. Each team was comprised of Muslims and Christians, men and women, students and professionals — all of whom worked energetically throughout the holiday weekend.

Kurt Berends, President of the Issachar Fund, and trustee of The IDEA Fund--the two organizations that sponsored this event--said, “We believe that interfaith dialogue, rooted in meaningful relationships that are geared toward cooperative action on important social issues, is a key strategy in fostering empathy and mitigating global hostility. Where there is empathy and action, there is peace.”

First- and second-place teams received \$15,000 and \$10,000, respectively, for their project ideas. Ideas included campus recycling projects, energy reduction initiatives in local churches and mosques, and reclaimed land use in distressed urban communities. Each project contained an integrated interfaith component, in which Muslims and Christians learn more about each other’s faith traditions, build relationships, and work together to address an environmental problem.

“We came into this hoping to come away with one good idea that we might be able to fund and implement,” said Berends. “It turns out, all six projects are compelling. We’re thrilled with the results.”

Participants were also enthusiastic about the Chicago event.

“The entire weekend brought me great comfort and joy,” said Suehaila Amen, a participant from Dearborn, Michigan. “Having the opportunity to learn from environmentalists, leaders of faith-based organizations, and students involved in environmental projects, globally, I was able to open my eyes and learn new things about the reasons why people of faith care so greatly about our world and environment.”

Saeed Khan, Professor of Islamic Studies at Wayne St. University in Detroit, watched a few of his former students engage the process with passion. “My students understand that while handshakes between the faiths are important, putting those

hands together to build healthy societies is most critical."

Plans are already being made for the next IGC, which is scheduled to take place in 2017 and which will likely focus on a different topic of interest to both faith communities. "This initial IGC was a resounding success, but we were still able to learn how to enhance future iterations, said Berends. "I'm excited to see what the next one will look like."

For more information on the IDEA Generators Conference and The IDEA Fund, visit [www.idea-fund.org](http://www.idea-fund.org). For more information on the Issachar Fund, visit [issacharfund.org](http://issacharfund.org).

To like our page, and view more photos of the event, visit [Facebook IGC Community Page](#)



Photo details from left to right:

Abdullah Almojel, Kurt Berends, Suehaila Amen, Anna Danusiar, Tahera Ahmad, Sean Lyon, Donna Childs, Abdullah T Antepi, Muddassar Ahmed and Dr. Sallama Shaker

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