



Story Money Impact

14 & MUSLIM

CASE STUDY

IMPACT PRODUCING IN A CANADIAN FRAMEWORK

FUNDED BY

TELEFILM PARTNER
CANADA OF
CHOICE



PRODUCED BY

Story Money Impact 2021 Pod Team

THE FILM

14 & MUSLIM (2018)
44 MINUTES

SYNOPSIS

Shot over six months, *14 & Muslim* follows three fourteen-year old Muslim students - Sahar, Malaika and Ahmad - as they graduate from a private Islamic elementary school and take their first tentative steps towards adulthood. Will they choose the familiar Islamic high school or will they opt for a public or even Catholic high school? Their stories move from the familiar to the strange, the known to the unknown, all unfolding against the larger societal backdrop -- a world increasingly hostile to Muslim youth. As we accompany Sahar, Malaika and Ahmad on their journeys, they reveal fears, anxieties, hopes and dreams. Up-close and personal, *14 & Muslim* looks at how issues of diversity, identity and tolerance play out in the Canadian classroom.

FILM TEAM

- Writer & Director - Wendy Rowland
- Producer - Cornelia Principe
- Editor - Mahi Rahgozar
- Director Of Photography - Matt Gallagher
- Executive Producer - Nisha Pahuja
- Associate Producer - Aeyliya Husain
- Music Composed & Performed By Justin Small & Ohad Benchetrit
- Sound - Dave Draper, Peter Sawade, Jason Milligan, David Best, Chuck Kraft
- Archival Research- Erin Chisholm
- Translation - Mariam Zaidi
- Sound Editor/ Mix - Grant Edmonds
- Impact Producer – Jackie Garrow, Ring Five Impact Docs

VIDEO



WEBSITE



IMPACT

14 & Muslim arrived at a time when anti-Islamic attitudes and hate speech were on the rise, when crimes against Muslims were becoming more frequent and after a deadly attack on a Canadian mosque. At the same time, there's been a steady erosion of civil liberties post-9/11, in some instances specifically impacting the Muslim community. Producers Cornelia Principe and Nisha Pahuja didn't plan on having an impact campaign when they began this project. But filming in schools opened their eyes to its potential to spark transformative dialogue about these important issues.

Resources and networking within key partnerships made *14 & Muslim's* robust impact campaign possible. Impact Producer Jackie Garrow and Ring Five Impact Docs successfully cultivated relationships with funders and stakeholders including the Inspirit Foundation, the Tessellate Institute, the Toronto District School Board, the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the film's participants and the CBC. Energized by the goal of sparking transformative conversations in Ontario schools and within the public at large, this exciting coalition supported student screenings, moderated panels and special public events.

Before solidifying their strategy, the impact team consulted with the Muslim community and anti-racism educators about whether the film served their mandate and the likelihood of schools embracing a series of participatory screenings. Their research showed an affirmative response to both. Seed money was also invested to host preliminary screenings to create further partnerships, solicit endorsements and recruit qualified individuals to help with post screening conversations. During this community consultation phase, the team noted several teachers lacked the awareness and training to properly facilitate classroom discussions and a few showed concerning prejudices. To address both concerns, a *14 & Muslim* Educator's Guide was created to support and build teacher capacity and Aasiyah Khan, Education Lead for The National Council of Canadian Muslims, was selected to facilitate a select portion of the student screenings. Partners with the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the Tessellate Institute and the equity leads of school boards were also recruited to carry out post-screening conversations with sensitivity and care. In addition to school events, the impact team held professional development screenings for teachers, community leaders, parents and the general public. For the later, the CBC provided a publicity team and high-profile hosts to moderate special events in Toronto and Ottawa.



The impact campaign focused in Ontario so limited resources could be used carefully. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) was targeted first. Tapping into pre-existing networks of stakeholders with established and influential audiences amplified reach. The quality of these events created momentum for expansion. And wow, was it a success! For the GTA Schools Initiative during Islamic Heritage Month in October 2018, **6100** students and **468** teachers participated in **48** school screenings, **3** professional development screenings for teachers and a public engagement screening supported by CBC. **80%** rated the experience as excellent. One teacher said, “We will be using this film as a reference in the years to come! It is a valuable resource that will help to build the capacity to generate empathy across religious differences.” Aasiyah Khan of the National Council of Canadian Muslims noted, “A lot of us are having these conversations around anti-black racism, around Islamophobia, around sexism, etcetera...The screenings really enabled us to use this documentary as an entry point.” The GTA screening model was replicated the following year in Ottawa, again during Islamic Heritage Month and again with great success. Here **2500** students and teachers participated in a series of school screenings as well as a public engagement screening sponsored by CBC.

The film was also made available on CBC CURIO where it reached an estimated **12,150** students with data analysis showing **19,300** film website visits and **1643** educational guide downloads. With **90%** of teachers saying they would use the film again and a total of **20,750** students reached, the campaign successfully facilitated personal, honest and transformational conversations about intersectional identities, discrimination faced by the Muslim community and the lived experience of Muslim Canadians. It also engaged youth in conversations around discrimination and stereotyping. Feedback from participants confirmed that *14 & Muslim* contributed to the creation of safer more inclusive school and community environments in Ontario. Educator Qaiser Ahmed, the VP of the Toronto District School Board, shares his experience:

“14 & Muslim came out at an almost perfect time. ... While observing the expressions of the students and listening to their questions, you could easily notice that everyone was engaged and the message was resonating with the students and staff, especially because the content was Canadian (rather than coming from another country). It showed both the diversity and commonality amongst Canadian youth.”



IMPACT CAMPAIGN GOALS

- Increase general knowledge and understanding about the lived experience of Canadian Muslims and especially Canadian Muslim youth;
- Build deeper school and community-based capacity to value diversity and generate empathy and respect across cultures (students, teachers, parents);
- Provide an arena for youth to speak up about faith-based stereotypes and develop calls to action around Islamophobia, racism and discrimination;
- Foster solidarity between Muslims and non-Muslim students;
- Empower Muslim Canadian youth to express pride in their unique and complex identities

14 & Muslim's impact campaign is a perfect example of what is possible when an impact producer, impact funding, community stakeholders and partnerships come together to amplify a film's message beyond traditional distribution models. Film participant Malaika Khan summarizes it well when she says,

“My favorite part would have to be the events following the screenings, just because I would talk to so many different people and learn about intersectional identities and how using a single label as a Muslim is not an entire identity. It's being a woman, it's being an immigrant, or it's being a child of an immigrant. And all these things showed me the systematic issues in our world. ... One of the negative things was learning about the discrimination that a lot of people face. It's become a catalyst for what I want to do in the future and what I want to fight against. The documentary itself was impactful, but the screenings that followed have been so substantial. ...I changed my view on a lot of things about the world and how much I can do.”

Malaika's testimony speaks to the empowering effect of *14 & Muslim* and its impact campaign. Let us remember Malaika's is one voice among many similarly impacted, with the culminative effects reverberating out into the world never to be fully known. Just imagine if available funds and resources had facilitated an impact campaign with an even farther reach.

NOTICE PICTURES IS PLEASED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITY IMPACT PARTNERS FOR *14 & MUSLIM* SPECIAL SCREENINGS AND ACTIVITIES.

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