

Commentary 2**Vatican Reflection May 5th, 2023*****Sayyeda Mirza****Executive Director**Hub Foundation*

The Faith and Philanthropy Summit of the Galileo Foundation initiative in partnership with Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy's Muslim Philanthropy Initiative, the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists, the Global Compact on Education, the UBS Optimus Foundation, and the Jewish Funders Network was a thoughtful convening. It was a philanthropic adventure in Rome participating in a whirlwind of meetings with esteemed colleagues, philanthropists, and fashionable celebrity personalities. The Vatican setting was perfect, with hopes to meet his holiness Pope Francis, which laid the foundation of a faith-based perspective engaging in meaningful intentional dialogue regarding the legitimate role of faith in philanthropy. The endeavor created a brief space to imagine together a healed world with faith at the core, reflecting on values dear to the American Muslim community and others. The mini summit's convening built awareness of our responsibility as devoted professionals and philanthropists to focus on our *amanat*, the sanctified trust we all have with God and stewardship. The mood of the convening was also captured in the magical melodic hypnotic concert in the palatial Palazzo Colonna that left us elated. A reflection was also that God conscious philanthropy that evolves the human soul is a transformative process that benefits both grantor and grantee and unifies both in the collective good of human evolution. Within the framework of divine reflection from the Muslim tradition, intentionality is paramount and leads to impact that has measurable imprints also at a metaphysical level. This idea has applications to strategic philanthropy and impact investing.

Thought leadership themes were also highlighted as to how faith-based communities could engage faith to advance the sector. There was discussion of how our common humanity connected to our faith and shared vision could be applied to systemic global issues, e.g., climate change and refugees. Within this context the organizers hoped to launch a new philanthropic fund at the summit: The Human Family Fund, providing capital (matched by UBS) for new interfaith partnership projects. Organizers offered framing questions: What does the world look like in the year 2047? What are the obstacles that prevent us from getting there? How can philanthropy overcome these challenges? Moreover, American Muslim philanthropy peers had deep discussion focused on capacity building, strategy, impact investing, partnerships, collaboration, advocacy, and the need for inclusion in portfolios of secular philanthropic institutions and current marginalization.

The convening was a commendable first effort, and it is evident that this dialogue should continue to harness the momentum built in Rome and capture the learnings for potential collaboration. It was an honor and privilege to self-reflect about our roles engaging faith and philanthropy and the magnitude of what we

can accomplish with the spirit of God and faith-based philanthropy allies—the potentiality of tangible global transformation left me in awe witnessing this historic event. Aptly said, one participant articulated the need for the next generation to separate the essence of something from the expression of it as it relates to faith and philanthropy and the important pursuit to raise consciousness globally and connect Muslim consciousness to humanity as a value-based offering, God willing.