

Darakshan Raja (she/her)

Muslims for Just Futures



What brings you to work at your current organization? What are the passions, interests and experiences that led you to where you are now?

The belief in people power. Faith in a better future and a firm commitment to *when we fight, we win*.

What, if anything, was the impact of having the Community of Practice as a space/container to share thoughts, experiences, and ideas?

It was a beautiful and healing space; it was nice to be in a room with other WOC leaders and EDs and learn from them and their experiences. Thank you for convening and gathering us.

How have the funds (\$10,000 stipend) received through the LL Community of Practice supported your work?

The stipend supported my time in the program and also gave me the space to invest in professional development. Often we don't really think of investing in women leaders of organizations, and my hope is to model that professional development and investment also needs to occur at the top in order to sustain growth. We cannot pour into others if we don't model investing in ourselves as well.

Who are liberatory ancestors, teachers, guides, loved ones, and comrades that inspire your work and values?

My grandparents and the women in my family; they are the reason I am here.

How do you hold yourself accountable to your values?

Surround myself with people who aren't afraid to call me in, and cultivating consistent check-ins with myself and my body to assess whether I am truly in alignment with what and where I want to be.

How do you sustain yourself as you engage in your work? What are the resources, practices, and spaces that support your well-being?

Still working on that but family, music, joy, color, and the water.

Can you share examples of how your organization practices and embodies liberatory leadership?

This is a difficult question because I would actually like to ask my staff this question.

Are there any challenges that you have experienced as a result of embodying liberatory leadership in a non-profit organization?

I think the hardest piece is we are living in racial capitalism and it requires a level of grind and production from our subset of organizations that is unfair, but I have struggled to find an alternative that also allows us to raise funding at the level we need to sustain livelihoods.

What gives you hope? What keeps you motivated?

My family, community, joy, and music.

What seeds of wisdom would you give to someone who is interested in liberatory leadership but does not know where to start?

Cultivate a space for internal check-ins consistently; learn to listen to your body's pain and truly build a deeper relationship with yourself so you can have clarity and feel grounded in how you show up. The internal work supports the external work.

If you were to lean into your most radical imagination, what does your idea of liberation look and feel like? What is the future that you are building towards?

Lightness, gentle breeze, soft waves, warm sun, and sweetness.