Arsht Research on Ethics and Community Grant

The Eco-Islam Project: Utilizing Islamic Environmental-Health Ethics to Positively Affect Contemporary Environmental Health Choices

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Abstract

Environmental health challenges arising from human choices continue to have significant effects on the global human family as well as on the ecosystem as a whole. As we embark on a new millennium, a new approach is needed that will be bold enough to tackle these challenges in unconventional ways. Historically, environmentalists and scientists have approached problems from a predominantly scientific point of view. However, in this new millennium, science will need to be coupled with a non-traditional yet powerful partner: religion. Specifically, Islamic principles are firmly established and strongly adhered to as a source of guidance and motivation for the 1.2 to 1.5 billion Muslims across the world today. This relatively untapped resource may either advance or de-rail positive environmental health programs, practices, and ideas. The Islamic tradition contains a rich source of resources and tools, which can serve to provide a necessary connection between Muslims and their environmental health decisions, as, may be shown in both historical and modern examples. The areas of the world populated predominantly by Muslims today continue to have some of the most severe environmental health problems with global impacts. This proposed study will build on a previous Arsht funded project to focus on disseminating the rich source of Islamic-environmental health teachings in a modern manner attractive to numerous audiences. This task will be accomplished by: 1) expanding and updating the Eco-Islam Guidebook and website; 2) designing an Eco-Islam children's book; and 3) designing and delivering several workshops, with a formal assessment of the effectiveness of the workshops.