

Faithfully Sustainable

by Zainab Koli

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ
الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللّٰهُ أُولَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ
تَعْدِلُوا وَإِنْ تَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

“O you who believe! Be most upright in upholding justice, bearing true witness for the sake of Allah alone- even if it is against your own selves or your parents, or your nearest relatives- regardless of whether one party is rich and the other is poor...(Qur'an Surah An Nisa 4:135)

Islam, at its root is inherently sustainable. This belief is what drove my co-founder, Kadiatou Balde, and I (Zainab Koli) to create Faithfully Sustainable in February 2020. Despite seeing the principles of environmental and social justice deeply ingrained within our faith, we wondered why we weren't seeing many Muslims in the sustainability, environmental, and climate justice spaces we found ourselves in, even within BIPOC spaces. We found a few answers to this question:

- 1) lack of awareness due to inaccessibility to decolonized education about this intersection between Islam and sustainability
- 2) decentering of BIPOC Muslims involved in these movements
- 3) secularization of environmental movements
- 4) limited financial resources to implement sustainable solutions within our communities

All of this drove us to **our mission to bridge Islam with environmental, climate and social justice by equipping Muslim Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) with the educational and financial resources to create a more sustainable world.** Our vision is to build a translocal movement of young Muslims fighting for justice within and outside of their communities. We want young BIPOC Muslims to collectively learn, raise our consciousness, visualize ourselves in the sustainability movement and find our own unique role in the fight for liberation for people and the planet.

By the end of 2020, in less than a year, we had already created and circulated 160 educational social media posts, held 9 events at the intersection of faith and sustainability, fostered a community of over 2,750 members, partnered with 17 community organizations (mosques, college Muslim Student Associations, small businesses, workers rights organizations, national and global environmental

The Award for Excellence in Climate, Environmental Justice, and Sustainability from the Tishman Environment and Design Center Student, granting us \$2,000, has allowed us to meet our community's requests by supporting us in organizing a virtual event series focusing on the intersection between environmental, climate justice, sustainability and Islam.

When we began planning this series in February 2021, the Clubhouse platform was gaining popularity and many community members requested that we begin hosting events on that platform as it allows for more open discussion between community members rather than just having a few speakers speak to attendees. With this in mind, we created a Faithfully Sustainable Club on Clubhouse, which now has 330 members and followers, and hosted the following five bi-weekly ‘Community Chats’ from February to April 2021. For the panel events, we highlighted community members with expertise on the topics, but generally most of the events were open forums for anyone and everyone to speak. We also hosted a weekly ‘FS BookClub’ beginning with the book *Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet* by Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, who himself joined the discussions. Each event engaged upto 50 people, including existing community members and attracting new ones to our page from all over the world.

The image displays two identical social media posts side-by-side. Each post has a light beige background with a decorative brown leafy branch on the right side.


Left Post:

- Date/Time:** Tuesday Feb 23 @7pm est
- Title:** WEEKLY ON CLUBHOUSE
- Day/Date:** TUE, FEB 23
- Time:** 7:00 PM
- Topic:** Muslims who care about environmental/social justice & Islam
- Hosts:** Five circular profile pictures of women.
- Description:** w/ Zainab Koli, Kadjahtou Kadjahtou, Fiza Akram, Cassandra Tejada & Zeynep Demi — Join Faithfully Sustainable in welcoming all Muslims interested in environmental and social justice! Let's get to know each other and chat about topics we wanna discuss in future weekly rooms! 🌱🍷

Right Post:

- Date/Time:** Tuesday, March 2nd @7pm EST
- Title:** WEEKLY ON CLUBHOUSE
- Day/Date:** TUE, MAR 2
- Time:** 7:00 PM
- Topic:** FaithfullySustainable: individual action vs systemic change
- Hosts:** Four circular profile pictures of people.
- Description:** w/ Zainab Koli, Kadiatou Balde, Fiza Akram & Cassandra Tejada — Join the Faithfully Sustainable community in discussing how we as Muslims (+ allies) can balance individual actions and systemic change for sustainability 🍷🌱

Footer: Both posts include the handle @faithfully.sustainable at the bottom.




BLACK MUSLIMS & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Location: Clubhouse
Date: March 9, 2021
Time: 7-9 pm EST

Panelists:
Ibrahim Abdul-Matin,
Abou Ibrahim-Biangoro,
Zahra Shihabuddin,
Mouhamadou Niang

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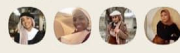
THE NEW SCHOOLS Tishman Environment and Design Center



Tuesday, March 23rd @7:30pm EST ON CLUBHOUSE


TUE, MAR 23

7:30 PM
What is Islamic Farming? (Recording)



w/ Zainab Koli, Kadiatou Balde, Fiza Akram & Cassandra Tejada — Join Faithfully Sustainable for a discussion on Islamic Farming! How is sustainable agriculture part of the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Quran, and how can we practice them in our lives? 🌱📖


Link: bit.ly/islamicfarming



Tuesday, Apr 6 @6pm EST


TUE, APR 6

6:00 PM
Sustainable Ramadan: How are you preparing?



w/ Fiza Akram, Kadiatou Balde & Zainab Koli — Join FS as we talk about how we can use this Ramadan to get closer to Allah while building a more sustainable Ummah!


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Thursday March 4th @8pm EST WEEKLY ON CLUBHOUSE

TODAY

8:00 PM
FS Bookclub: Green Deen Intro



w/ Kadiatou Balde, Zainab Koli, Fiza Akram, Cassandra Tejada & Zeynep Demi — Join the Faithfully Sustainable community for our weekly BookClub reflecting on the book Green Deen (intro) by Ibrahim Abdul Matin. All are welcome even if you haven't read the intro! 🌱

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We also organized the following three zoom events in partnership with other organizations to reach their communities who otherwise would not have engaged with these topics at Faithfully Sustainable.

WTF is Going on With Spirituality with [Sustainable Brooklyn](#)
[Recording](#)

WTF IS GOING ON WITH SPIRITUALITY?

A discussion with Sustainable Brooklyn & Faithfully Sustainable

Date: Wednesday, April 14th
Time: 12:130 pm EST

RSVP: bit.ly/wtfspirituality
This event is geared towards BIPOC communities, but all are welcome to attend.

The New School
 MATE
 Sustainable Brooklyn
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Sustainable Fashion & Environmental Justice from a Muslim Perspective sponsored by Fordham University Lincoln Center Muslim Student Association, Honors Program, Environmental Studies Program, Fashion Studies Program, Fashion for Philanthropy Club, & Office of Multicultural Affairs

[Recording](#) & [Resources List](#)

SUSTAINABLE FASHION & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
From a Muslim Perspective

Date: Thursday, April 1
Time: 1:00 PM EST
A Panel Discussion

Zoom Meeting ID: 894 6145 3416
Passcode: 9176

Sponsored by the FOLC Muslim Students Association
 FOLC Honors Program
 Fordham Environmental Studies Program
 Fordham Fashion Studies Program
 Fordham Fashion for Philanthropy Club
 Office of Multicultural Affairs
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Saja Elmishri

is deeply motivated by emerging social and political concerns around sustainability. Having grown up in Sweden and later moving to the UK, Saja currently works as a freelance writer and recently published articles at Eco-Age that explores if sustainability has become a westernized concept.

Saja is currently working as a freelance journalist writing about the intersection of sustainability, fashion and social justice and was recently selected for the FashMash Young Pioneers program, recognized to drive positive change in the industry.

[@faithfully.sustainable](#)

A Faithfully Sustainable Ramadan sponsored by Drexel University Muslim Student Association

[Recording](#) & [Resources List](#)




IMAM SAFFET ABID CATOVIC

SAARAH YASMIN LATIF

A FAITHFULLY SUSTAINABLE RAMADAN

Date: Thursday, April 22
Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM EST

Link: bit.ly/fsramadan

DREXEL MUSLIM STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
ESTABLISHED 2019

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Imam Saffet Abid Catovic

Imam Saffet Abid Catovic has been a long-time US Muslim Community Organizer/Activist and Environmental Leader. He is a member of the Parliament of the World's Religions Climate Action Task Force and Board of Trustees; He is also a member of the Statewide Clergy Council of Faith in New Jersey and also serves on their Board of Directors.

Saffet is a GreenFaith Muslim Fellow and serves as their Senior Muslim advisor; He is Co-founder and Chair of the Green Muslims of New Jersey (GMNJ); founding board member of the Islamic Society of North America's (ISNA) Green Initiatives; consultant to the Drafting Committee of the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change; founding member of the Global Muslim Climate Network (GMCN); Co-drafter of the FCNA (Figh Council of North America) "Fatwa" Religious ruling on fossil fuel divestment.

Imam Saffet serves as the Muslim Chaplain at Drew University where he also received MA in Religion and Society specializing in Religion and the Environment.

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Saarah Yasmin Latif

Saarah Yasmin Latif is a Guyanese American Muslim raised in New Jersey. Her enthusiasm and work focuses on the intersection of sustainability, urban farming, community building and faith based education rooted in Islam. Saarah has a Master's degree in Sustainability and Leadership from Montclair State University.

She is a part of the Greenfaith Fellowship Program and co-authored an e-book entitled "Forty Green Hadith: Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) on Environmental Justice & Sustainability." Saarah takes much inspiration from her faith and believes that nature should be used to better know, serve, and worship God.

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Social Media Content:

Other than these events, over the past few months since February 2021, our social media team has created various campaigns and educational posts on the topics discussed during our events. These can be found on our Instagram page [@faithfully.sustainable](https://www.instagram.com/faithfully.sustainable).



What is Islamic Farming?

HISTORY, SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES, & JUSTICE

@faithfully.sustainable



DECOLONIZING FORAGING:

AMPLIFYING INDIGENOUS & BLACK KNOWLEDGE

notes collected from listed sources

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How to have a Sustainable Ramadan:

"sustainability = social + environmental justice"

sponsored by



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Special Thanks

All of this has only been possible because of the dedication of our incredible team members who have done this work voluntarily with small stipends provided from the Tishman Award grant. A huge thanks to Fiza Akram (Events Fellow), Kadiatou Balde (Co-Founder), Zeynep Demirer (Graphic Designer), Hadeel Abbas (Social Media Fellow), and Cassandra Tejada (Social Media Fellow), all Black and Brown Muslim women. Additionally we are incredibly grateful to our community of over 4,400 community members from around the world, who engage with us, support us, challenge us, inspire us, and learn and build with us, everyday. Lastly, but most importantly, Alhamdulillah (all praise is due to Allah) who continues to guide us in this work and has blessed us with a faith that guides us in upholding justice with ourselves, with people, and with the Earth. We pray that Allah accepts our efforts.