

## About Us

IRCV is a national, non-profit research institute with 501(c)3 status.

Our EIN is 57-115-2470.

### Mission

The Mission of IRCV is to strengthen civil society by exploring issues at the intersection of faith, citizenship, and pluralism and to serve as a catalyst to align public policymaking with our nation's core values.

### Philosophy

IRCV's work is predicated on a commitment to fairness, respect for deep differences, and the search for common ground. IRCV's work is informed by academic scholarship, collective wisdom, and the desire to eliminate the root cause of injustice through examination of core values. IRCV maintains a non-advocacy role in all of its activities.

### Impact

IRCV's strength lies in the respect, good will and value accumulated over a 16 year period in its previous incarnation as the Council on Islamic Education (CIE). IRCV carries forward CIE's track record of research and consulting projects, its reputation for producing quality publications, and its extensive network of contacts and associates in various fields. IRCV leverages CIE's methodology and reputation to enhance its core competencies and apply them to a broader range of activities pertaining to religion and society. IRCV intends to be a recognized leader conducting non-partisan research on the role of religion in contemporary society, and how the interplay of secular and religious identities and values inform public discourse and policymaking.

### Core Activities

#### Research

IRCV staff members peruse a broad range of literature pertaining to the religious and civic issues of the day. IRCV produces assessments (research-based reports on specific topics or issues) for policymakers and others, to support public literacy and informed policymaking.

#### Consulting

IRCV provides guidance and/or academic reviews pertaining to the design and content of instructional materials, project prospectus materials, strategic documents, programs, and select multimedia resources that address issues of religion, history, culture, and society.

#### Training

IRCV staff members offer training on religious, civic and educational affairs to international visitor groups, classroom educators, media representatives, civic leaders, congregations and community groups.

#### Resources

IRCV produces conceptual frameworks, guidelines, articles and essays, educational materials, and other resources to

assist a broad array of professionals achieve their respective goals in advancing knowledge and coordinating activities pertaining to religious and civic issues.

{mospagebreak title=Advisory Activities}

Advisory Activities  
Educational Programs

IRCV plays or has played an advisory role in regards to the following educational initiatives and programs.

Council for America's First Freedom:

National Program Advisory Board

IRCV supports the mission of the Council on America's First Freedom, to "promote and extend freedom of religion as a fundamental human right." IRCV's Founding Director Shabbir Mansuri is a founding member of the CAFF National Program Advisory Board. CAFF works in several areas to educate Americans about the importance of religious freedom, and to celebrate the historic significance of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom and its similarities to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Council is both non-political and non-denominational, and firmly believes that all persons are entitled to freedom of conscience in matters of belief. For more information on CAFF, please visit their website.

California Three Rs Project Advisory Committee

The California Three Rs Project is partly based on ideas in Finding Common Ground by Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas, a First Amendment guide to religion and public education published by the First Amendment Center. This document outlines the Rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, and the Responsibilities that citizens have to protect and defend the rights of all Americans [even those with whom they disagree], and the Respect that is necessary to maintain civil discourse about issues when people disagree because of deeply held beliefs. The California Three Rs Project publishes a bulletin, organizes workshops and other events, coordinates meetings, and gathers resources for educators. Shabbir Mansuri represents IRCV on the Advisory Committee of the California 3Rs Project, attending periodic meetings, conferring with colleagues, and exchanging insights on instructional content and teacher training experiences. For more information about the 3Rs Project, please visit their website.

The Asia Society:

States' Institute on International Education in the Schools

On November 17-19, 2003, Shabbir Mansuri participated in the second annual States' Institute on International Education in the Schools, co-sponsored by the Asia Society and the National Coalition on Asia and International Studies in the Schools. The conference brought together senior policymakers, lawmakers, and international experts in teaching

and education, as well as experts on trade, national security, and foreign languages and cultures. The main goal of the conference was to address American students' lack of knowledge about foreign history and international affairs. More information about the States' Institute may be found at the following website.

## Journal of Religion and Education

The Journal of Religion and Education, published semi-annually by the University of Northern Iowa, strives to be "a journal of analysis and comment advancing public understanding of religion and education." IRCV supports the important work of this publication. Shabbir Mansuri serves on the JRAE Editorial Board. Visit the journal's website.

## Civic Activities

IRCV plays or has played an advisory role in regards to the following civic activities and programs.

### Center for Citizen Peacebuilding (CCPB)

University of California, Irvine

Since 1999, it has been the mission of the Center for Citizen Peacebuilding (CCPB) at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) to help citizens seek realistic ways to improve human conditions locally and globally. CCPB activities aim to prevent violent conflict and, if violence occurs, to promote reconciliation and sustainable peace. The CCPB engages in research, education, and action supporting citizen participation in public peace processes. Turning research into action, the UCI center (co-directed by Dr. Paula Garb and Dr. John Graham) takes an integrated approach to studying the best grassroots peacebuilding methods in both domestic and international conflicts, and utilizes those findings in direct engagement in peacebuilding projects in neighborhoods in Orange County and Los Angeles, California as well as in selected communities in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Bosnia/Herzegovina, and the former Soviet Union. The CCPB helps oversee the Orange County Peacebuilders Network (OCPN), a non-advocacy group promoting connections and cooperation to build a community of peace, of which IRCV is a member.

### Orange County Superior Court Advisory Forum

The Orange County branch of the Superior Court of California invited IRCV (CIE) to serve on the Court/Community Advisory Forum from 2002-2005. The forum was established to help the court progress in its strategic planning to improve community access to the court. During the period of service, IRCV representatives attended conferences pertaining to juvenile and family court, the state fiscal crisis, and other topics.

{mospagebreak title=Staff}

## Staff

Shabbir Mansuri, Founding Director

Shabbir Mansuri has maintained a lifelong interest in studying the American institutional apparatus and policymaking system that has helped position the United States as a beacon of freedom, democracy and opportunity. In 1990, after decades of private analysis, and in light of new developments in K-12 education related to history-social studies curricula, Shabbir founded the Council on Islamic Education (CIE). Through this non-advocacy vehicle, a scholar-based research institute dedicated to improving coverage of world history and world religions in the American education system, Shabbir was able to leverage his accumulated insights and knowledge and test his understanding of American institutional mechanisms for advancing the public good. The CIE experience confirms that Muslims, like other groups, have a place at the American institutional table, and that the system at large accepts contributions that strengthen America and reinforce core values.

Shabbir served as the Founding Director of CIE from 1990-2006, and now serves as the CEO/Founding Director of IRCV, a successor organization that expands the work of CIE into various arenas through a broadened mission. In this capacity, Shabbir fulfills a number of key roles:

- As a strategist, Shabbir demonstrates a unique capacity to evaluate multiple factors, human motivations and concerns, and available resources to understand complex scenarios and chart a path for effective engagement in which multiple parties achieve their respective goals.
- As an analyst, Shabbir conducts daily research and media analysis regarding public policy, education, politics, religion, and discourses about American pluralism. Shabbir is able to see interesting patterns, strategies, and frameworks at play, leading to the exploration of unconventional yet effective avenues for engagement of various shapers of civil society and public policy.
- As a liaison, Shabbir interfaces with institutional partners such as the First Amendment Center, the Asia Society, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and many other organizations. Shabbir also serves as an advisory member on various academic and public educational bodies, and represents IRCV at major national and international events and gatherings. Each experience contributes to the cumulative repository of important contacts, exchanges, and resources available to the organization.
- As a trainer, Shabbir explores constitutional parameters for teaching about religion with classroom educators and policymakers, and hosts international visitors invited by the U.S. State Department for intensive training sessions that address civil society, politics, the media and education.
- As a leader, Shabbir provides valuable input on projects and initiatives, and stresses the importance of establishing a sound process for maintaining high standards and productive outcomes.

Munir A. Shaikh, Executive Director

Munir Shaikh has a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies and is currently completing his PhD. in Islamic Studies at UCLA, with a specialization in the history of medieval Islamic Spain. Since 2003, Munir has taught undergraduate courses on Middle Eastern history, Islam, and world history at several universities.

Munir has been associated with CIE/IRCV since its founding in 1990, having previously served as the organization's Administrator. In his capacity as Director, Munir oversees the majority of the organization's services and activities, and fulfills a number of key roles:

Munir plays an instrumental role in articulating the organization's non-advocacy model and ensuring the scholarly integrity of the organization's manuscript reviews, analyses, reports and educational resources.

- As a reviewer/analyst, Munir produces academic analyses of frameworks, project proposals, manuscripts, artistic works, and other materials produced by third parties, including K-12 textbook publishers, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, media outlets, etc.
- As an author and editor, Munir contributes to numerous publications, teaching units and lesson plans produced by the organization, with a meticulous eye for detail and balanced presentation.
- As a trainer, Munir explores constitutional parameters for teaching about religion with classroom educators, as well as substantive content related to Muslim history, world history, and world religions.
- As an administrator, Munir helps formulate organizational policies & procedures, manage office staff and logistics, and design and coordinate new initiatives and projects.

Ruby Ahmed, Operations Manager

After attaining a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology with a minor in Education from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2004, Ruby Ahmed completed her Master's Degree in General Education from Loyola Marymount University in 2005. During her undergraduate studies, she served on the administrative staff of an outreach project that tutored and mentored high school students in a low-performing area and encouraged them to continue their higher education. While attaining her Master's, she worked as a research associate conducting research on single-sex education and schools. Since 2005, Ruby has worked as a Family Child Care Analyst in the non-profit sector, and taught at Muslim private schools located in the greater Los Angeles area. Her interests include educational equity and issues of diversity and culture in the educational context.

Associates

Al Grindon, Research Associate

Al Grindon is an IRCV-affiliated researcher, writer, editor, and educator. He contributes to IRCV's research projects pertaining to education, religion and public policy, reviews manuscripts and instructional materials, and helps design IRCV pedagogical approach. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Northwestern University, where he studied philosophy and economics. He graduated from Yale Divinity School, and continued his graduate studies in Yale's Department of Religious Studies, where he concentrated on moral theology and philosophy of religion. For the past 13 years Al has worked in Catholic education, teaching religion and humanities courses. He was chair of the Religious Studies Department at Marist School in Atlanta, where he was also co-founder of "Peace by Piece," a groundbreaking partnership between three high schools for inter-religious education, service, and fellowship among Jewish, Christian and Muslim students. He has been active in inter-religious education and dialogue at both the local and national levels, and serves on a scholarly working group on Catholic-Muslim inter-religious education sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

