

QUARTER 3 - 2024 NEWSLETTER

# SISTERHOOD IN ACTION



Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand



# IWCNZ

2024/2025 ISSUE NO. 3 & 4



## IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to our third and fourth quarter newsletter! In this edition, we're excited to share glimpses of our upcoming events and initiatives, giving you a preview of what's in store. We'll also reflect on the past few months, celebrating our collective achievements and activities. These quarters, we're proud to spotlight Muslim sisters in business, highlighting their successes and contributions across various industries. Be sure to read the inspiring message from our National Coordinator. Join us as we explore the dynamic and inspiring world of our community and the mahi being done here at the IWCNZ.

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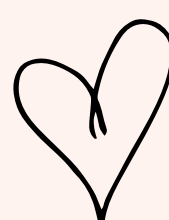
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With love,  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM



IWCNZ NEWSLETTER



# YOU'RE NOT FALLING APART

A message from our  
National Coordinator

Assalamu alaikum my dear Sisters,

There once was a woman who felt unseen. As the world whirled around her moving fast, loud, confusing, and heavy; she wondered if her voice actually mattered. If her efforts, hopes, prayers made any difference. She looked around and then into herself and asked, “Am I falling apart?”

But down in that darkness, something steady still flickered. She didn't always have the words for it, but it was there: the feeling that maybe, just maybe, she was here for a reason and that she was not alone.

Maybe you have felt that way too?

Maybe you've carried grief, disappointment, or pressure. Maybe your heart is tired from the news, from trying to be everything to everyone, or just from moving in uncertain times. But here is something worth asking yourself:

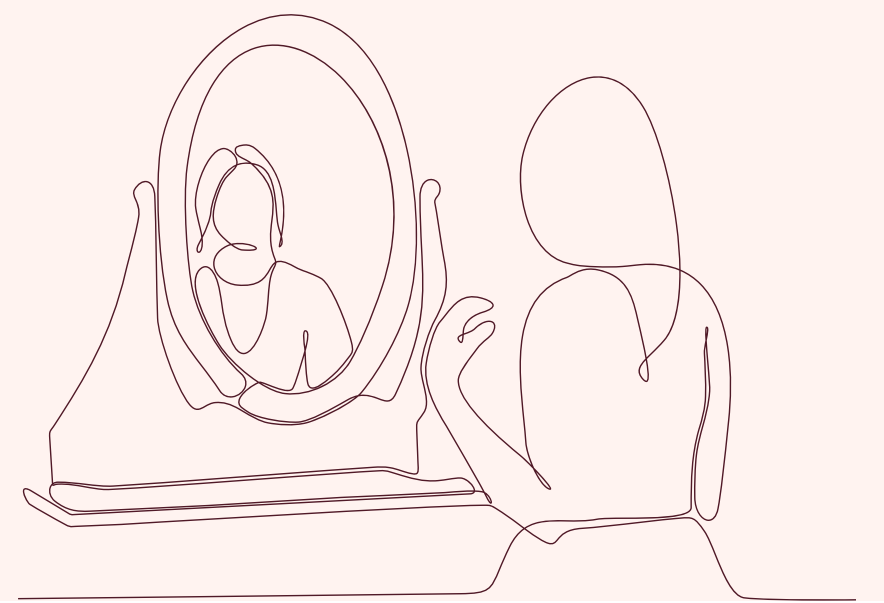
**What if this moment isn't your breaking point?**

**What if it's your becoming?**

What if you are the answer to someone's du'ā: a prayer made yesterday or 100 or even 1,000 years ago? A prayer whispered in war, in love, in longing. A mother asking for safety. Someone fallen asking for justice. A teacher asking for light. And then came you



## Message from our National Coordinator (continued)



You are not just here by chance. You are part of something greater. A path that others began long before you that has been paved with faith, sacrifice, and hope. You are not alone in your pain or your purpose. You are part of a chain of believers who held on to Allah (SWT), even when the world didn't make sense.

And remember, you do not walk this path alone. You are part of a community. A living, breathing, evolving ummah. It is a tool to use, a space to lean into, and a circle you help shape. Let community hold you when you're tired. Let it remind you that you belong. And when you can, help build it for someone else.

Reflect upon the guidance of Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an:

*"It may be that you dislike something, and it is good for you; and it may be that you love something, and it is bad for you. Allah knows, and you do not know."* (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:216)

And do as Prophet Muhammad (SAW ) said:

"Strive for what benefits you, seek help from Allah, and do not give up."  
(Sahih Muslim)

Now might be the time to consider: What are you asking for? And what are you doing about it?

You don't need to be perfect to make a difference. You don't need to be fearless to stand up. With patience and trust, you just need to begin.

**You are not falling apart; you are simply falling into place!**

Sending my love and prayers, one Muslimah to another,

Wassalam

Aliya



# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE



We congratulate our National Coordinator, Aliya Danzeisen, on her recent investiture into the New Zealand Order of Merit, recognizing her tireless dedication to supporting and empowering Muslim women and advocating for our community.

Additionally, Aliya was a finalist in the Not-for-Profit Governance Leader Award at the Women on Boards New Zealand Awards, celebrating her leadership in strengthening the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand. Her work in building mentorship, governance programs, and cultural understanding continues to motivate.





# BIG NEWS



## CHILL WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

IWCNZ's CHILL campaign, launched earlier this year to challenge stereotypes and elevate Muslim women's voices in New Zealand. The IWCNZ won the Shorty Impact Award in the Gender Equality and Refugee & Immigration categories! Competing alongside global brands and organizations, we are proud to see CHILL recognized on the international stage.

CHILL (Challenge Islamophobic Language and Loathing) shares the personal stories of eight sisters in our community as they navigate everyday life, working, teaching, and sharing moments of joy as Muslimah's in New Zealand. The campaign reached over 300,000 people, resonating locally and globally, with some stories achieving tens of thousands of views online.

This award reinforces IWCNZ commitment to amplifying Muslim women's voices and inspiring change. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our community for your ongoing support as this win is for all of us! ALHAMDULILLAH!!



# CHILL IN THE MEDIA

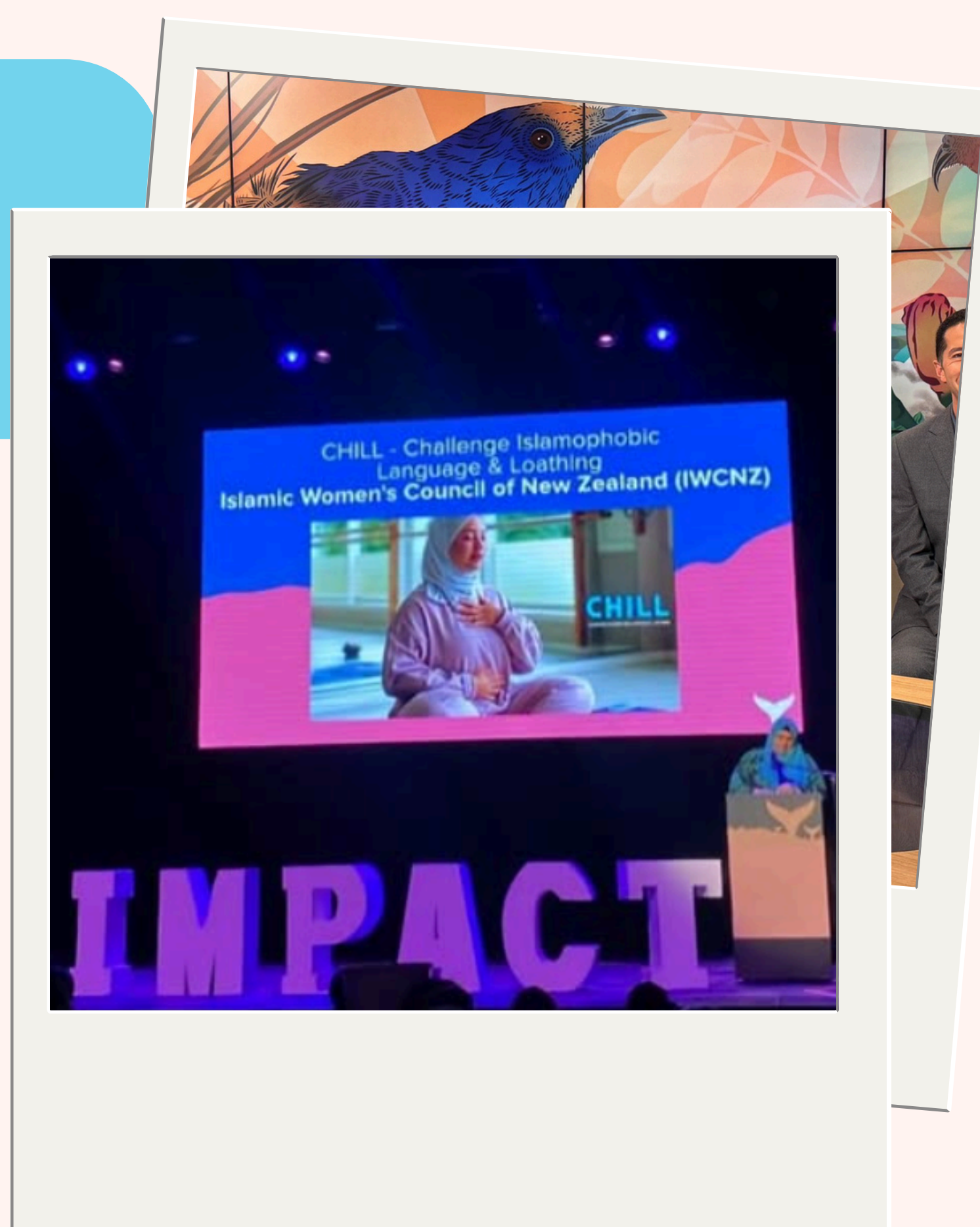
Through the CHILL campaign, IWCNZ set out to increase media awareness, strengthen Muslim women's voices, and celebrate their achievements and we're proud to see this vision come to life. Sister Rand, our community lead, and Naeema, a featured sister in CHILL, appeared on the TVNZ1 Breakfast Show to share the campaign's impact in New Zealand. They discussed how CHILL highlights the multifaceted lives and talents of Muslim women, challenging stereotypes and promoting a richer understanding of their contributions to the community.

Naeema shared her own experience balancing careers in health and art, demonstrating the diverse paths Muslim women pursue in New Zealand.



*Just*  
**CHILL**  
*New Zealand*  
**WE'VE  
GOT THIS**

Meanwhile, Ugeshni, another talented participant along with Rand, were featured on TVNZ digital series, where they discussed their experience with CHILL and its positive influence. These appearances are helping more people connect with CHILL's message of representation and community strength.





So  
Grateful  
for Your  
Support!







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# OUR QUARTER THREE MAHI

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## Beyond the Trail: A Guided Nature Tramp

The Youth Muslimah tramp offered an adventurous experience, teaching girl's outdoor skills through an 8km guided walk. They learned about local flora and fauna, safety protocols, appropriate gear, and the history and cultural significance of the land.

The tramp focused on building confidence, with participants gaining practical knowledge about tramping, including navigation, hydration, and preparing for various weather conditions. Feedback highlighted the sense of accomplishment, newfound confidence in outdoor exploration, and a deeper appreciation for nature and sustainability.



## Growing Together: Mum's and Teen's Event

The Mums & Teens event united Muslim mums and teens for an engaging, insightful session on navigating the influence of social media. While the mums attended a parenting talk by Justine, an experience parenting coach, the teens enjoyed a creative activity where they discussed the current challenges they face.

**Parenting Talk Highlights:** Justine's session provided evidence-based strategies for mums to support their teens. Key points included the importance of parents as primary support figures, understanding teens' online activities, insights into teenage brain development, and fostering open communication. Justine also highlighted the role of temperament in shaping a parent's approach, enabling mums to build stronger connections with their teens.

**Teen Activity:** The teens crafted polymer clay keychains and shared personal experiences, creating a supportive space to discuss common struggles. Topics included pressures of career decisions and exams, encounters with racism, social media's impact on self-esteem, and friendship dynamics. This activity led to constructive and open conversation in a safe space, offering the teens both a creative outlet and a sense of community.







## Navigating Through Menopause Zoom Talk

The *\*Navigating Menopause: A Muslimah's Guide\** discussion with Dr. Juhaina from Sakina was a highly informative session, with valuable insights into managing menopause through both Western and traditional remedies.

Dr. Juhaina's holistic approach, which included recommendations for supplements and lifestyle adjustments, provided practical tools for navigating this life stage. The session also covered emotional well-being and how to maintain balance during menopause. It concluded with an engaging 20-minute Q&A session where Dr. Juhaina addressed various questions, further deepening the discussion.

Overall, the event was well-received, offering a supportive space for learning and reflection. The event provided a unique opportunity to approach menopause from a holistic perspective, combining medical advice with cultural and spiritual considerations.



## Women In Leadership

We are excited to wrap up our *\*Women in Leadership\** programme in Christchurch at the end of the month, with great anticipation for the growth and impact it's had so far. Recently, we had our midpoint catch-up, which was an amazing opportunity for reflection, meaningful conversations, and reconnecting with one another.

The energy and insights shared during the session truly highlighted the strength and support within our community. Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce that two new cohorts will be launching in Auckland and the Central Region, providing even more women the chance to engage, learn, and grow in leadership. We can't wait to see how these new groups will continue to thrive and inspire!

The Christchurch programme has truly set the bar high, and we're excited to carry that momentum forward as we expand to new regions. As always, our focus remains on empowering women to step into leadership roles, build lasting networks, and create positive change in their communities.

## Voices of the Heart: Healing Through Words Poetry Competition

The Mental Health Week poetry competition provided a platform for young Muslims to share reflections on mental health, resilience and faith. Drawing on themes like patience (sabr), trust in Allah (tawakkul), and healing (shifa), participants illustrated how Islamic teachings offer comfort and guidance in hardship. The event normalised mental health discussions within the Muslim community, highlighting the close connection between faith and well-being, and offered an expressive outlet for processing emotions.

  
Islamic Women's Council New Zealand

MUSLIMAH YOUTH (12-30)  
POETRY COMPETITION

*Voice of the Heart*  
**HEALING THROUGH WORDS**

Use the power of words to highlight mental health through an Islamic lens. Reflect on themes like patience (sabr), trust in Allah (tawakkul), and healing (shifa) as you creatively express how Islam provides comfort and strength in times of hardship

Submission Deadline: 11th Oct  
MORE INFO & RULES IN THE CAPTION BELOW

 **ENTER TO WIN PRIZES**



# VOICES OF THE HEART: HEALING THROUGH WORDS

## FIRST PLACE: KULSUM

From Despair to *Tawakkul*:

I lie on my bed, restlessly fidgeting as my mind unfolds the day's events.  
What felt like a hazy blur earlier, hits me clear, sharp and cold like a jagged shard of glass tearing through my mind.  
The pain engulfs me as I let out a voiceless cry, trapped beneath the crushing weight of anxiety in my chest.  
*Why me?*

From overwhelming expectations to failing all my exams to simply looking in the mirror, my mind nitpicks at every detail from the day, dissecting it with guilt, shame and disgust.  
The words I left unsaid, the tasks I failed to accomplish and the dysmorphic reflection that stared back at me from the mirror.  
*Why me?*

The same agonising pain haunts me every night; wherever I go, I cannot escape. Thoughts of ending it all linger in my mind, ever-present, but today they feel too strong, filling me with a suffocating dread that I won't make it till tomorrow. *Why me?*

But suddenly, my mind goes blank, as if all my thoughts have finally found an exit, vanishing without a trace.  
A deafening silence shrouds my room, offering a faint sense of solace, and for the first time in years, I let out a sigh of relief.  
Amid the stillness, I hear a comforting voice rising from deep within my heart, whispering "*this is all a test*"

And so, I change my question to a single plea:

*YaAllah!*  
The thoughts I had of ending everything, now seem so meaningless, as Allah fills my hollowed heart with *Tawakkul*.  
It wraps around me, embracing me into a warm hug, reminding me that I am not alone, that he hears my silent screams.  
*YaAllah!*

I think of the prophets and their immense struggles: Yusuf (AS) in the depths of his dungeon, Ayub (AS) enduring his illness.

The *Sabrun Jameel* they clung onto through every trial calls out to me, urging me to have *Shukr*  
So, I close my eyes, whisper his name and let go of all the fear, for it is only in Allah's mercy that I will find *Shifa*.  
*YaAllah!*

## SECOND PLACE: RAHMA

In the depths of silence, I hear my soul's plea,  
A heart weighed down, seeking to be free.  
The world rushes by; chaos fills the air,  
But in my heart, I find Allah's care.

Through the trials, I whisper His name,  
For in His wisdom, there's no blame.  
Sabr wraps around me like a warm embrace,  
Reminding me that this too is Allah's grace.

In the storm, my heart weighed down,  
But Allah's love turned it around.  
The wind may roar, the world may shake,  
Yet in His care, I never break.

There were days when my heart felt heavy,  
But Allah's love made it steady.  
I trust in the path that I cannot see,  
For His guidance is enough for me.

Tears may fall, but they're not in vain,  
Each one a drop in a healing rain.  
For every struggle, there's a brighter dawn.  
In Allah's plan, I am never alone.

In quiet moments, I feel His light,  
Breaking through the darkest night.  
I remember the story of Ayoub's pain,  
How he endured loss but never complained.  
Through patience, his faith only grew,  
A reminder that Sabr makes us strong too.

Each test and trial is sent with love.  
Though my heart may ache and my eyes may cry,  
I know, with Allah, I can always rely.

With tawakkul, I let go of the fear,  
Knowing His mercy is always near.  
I trust in the path that I cannot see,  
For His guidance is enough for me.

Each test and trial is sent with love,  
Though my heart may ache and my eyes may cry,  
I know with Allah, I can always rely.

I find beauty in the quiet pain,  
Through it, I call His name again.  
It is in the struggle that I am made whole,  
As I surrender to Him, body and soul.

So I hold tight to the rope of faith,  
With sabr and hope, I navigate.  
Through every storm, I walk with grace,  
For I know, in Allah, I find my place.

## THIRD PLACE: ZUNAIRAH

### The whispers of the night

In the quiet of the night, my heart feels the weight,  
A storm inside, though my face shows calm and faith.  
Eyes lifted to the sky, where stars shimmer bright,  
I seek comfort in the darkness, a guiding light.

In moments of doubt, when my soul feels weak,  
I turn to Him, for solace I seek.  
Sabr, they say, is the shield I wear,  
To face the battles, the burdens I bear.

Yet patience is more than silent pain,  
It's hope in hardship, like sunlight in rain.  
Through waves of anxiety, I bow and pray,  
Trusting His wisdom will show me the way.

Tawakkul, the rope that pulls me through,  
A lifeline of trust when I'm feeling blue.  
Though fear whispers doubts in the dark of night,  
His mercy brings peace, His light shines bright.

Each tear that falls, a seed of shifa,  
For healing flows where faith grows deeper.  
My struggles are real, but faith remains,  
In Allah's love, I break my chains.

Islam teaches that in every low,  
There's a strength in faith that helps us grow.  
And in my heart, I find relief,  
Through trust in Him, I conquer grief.

In silence, I hear His words, so clear,  
"Do not despair, for I am near."  
With every prayer, my heart grows strong,  
Through faith and struggle, I find where I belong.

The journey of healing is slow but true,  
Each step a reminder, of the One I turn to.  
With Islam as my compass, I find my way,  
Through the darkest nights to a brighter day.

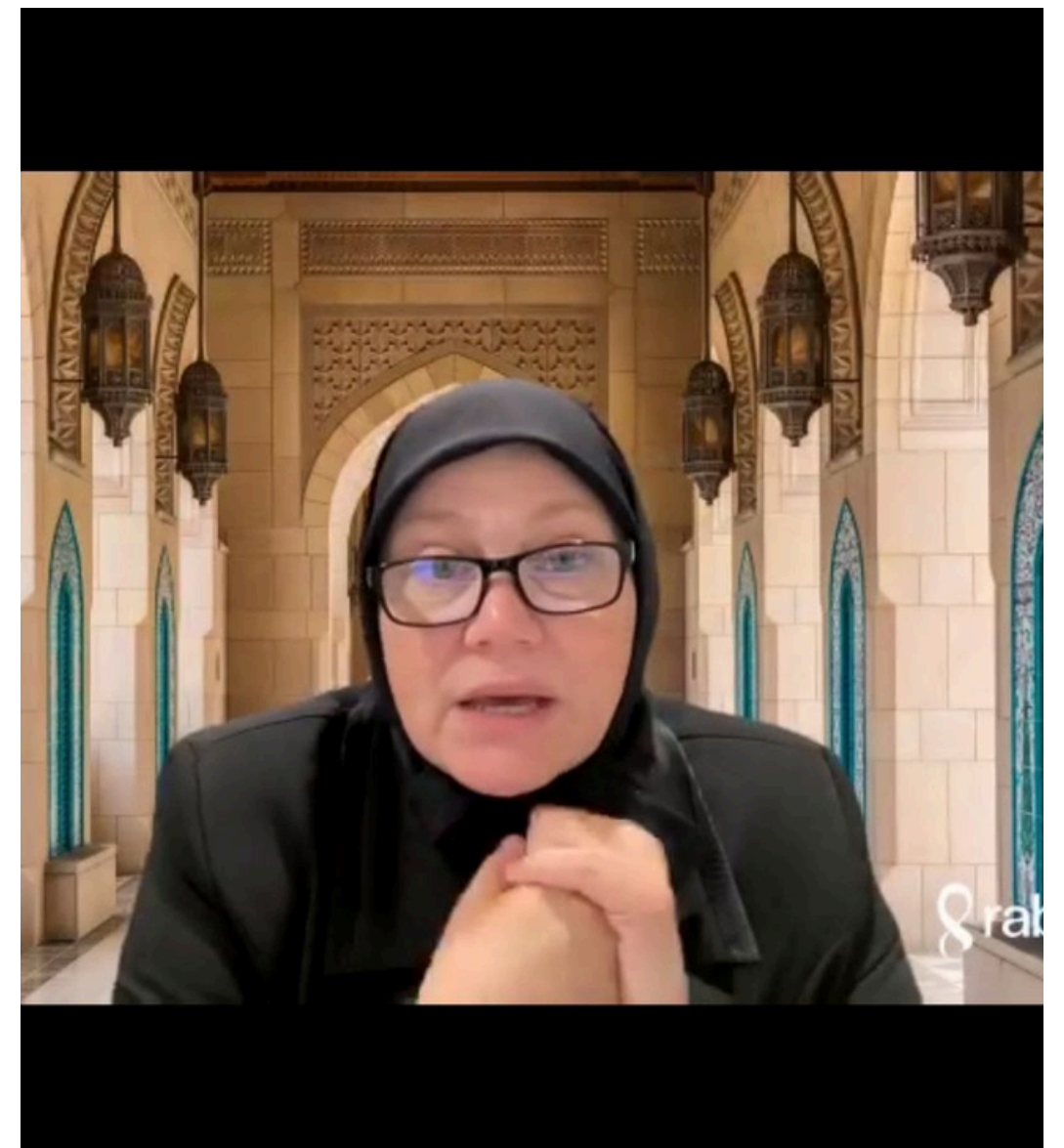


## Culture vs Islam

The second "Lean into Deen" session featured Dr. Tamara Gray, who guided participants through the nuanced distinctions between cultural practices and Islamic values. The talk provided clarity on how to balance cultural norms with religious teachings.

Dr. Gray's insights, using examples from both everyday life and Islamic history, helped debunk common misconceptions and offered practical advice on staying true to Islamic principles amidst cultural pressures. The session concluded with a valuable Q&A, and feedback rated it highly for being both informative and enjoyable.

Watch the Recording: [Click here](#)



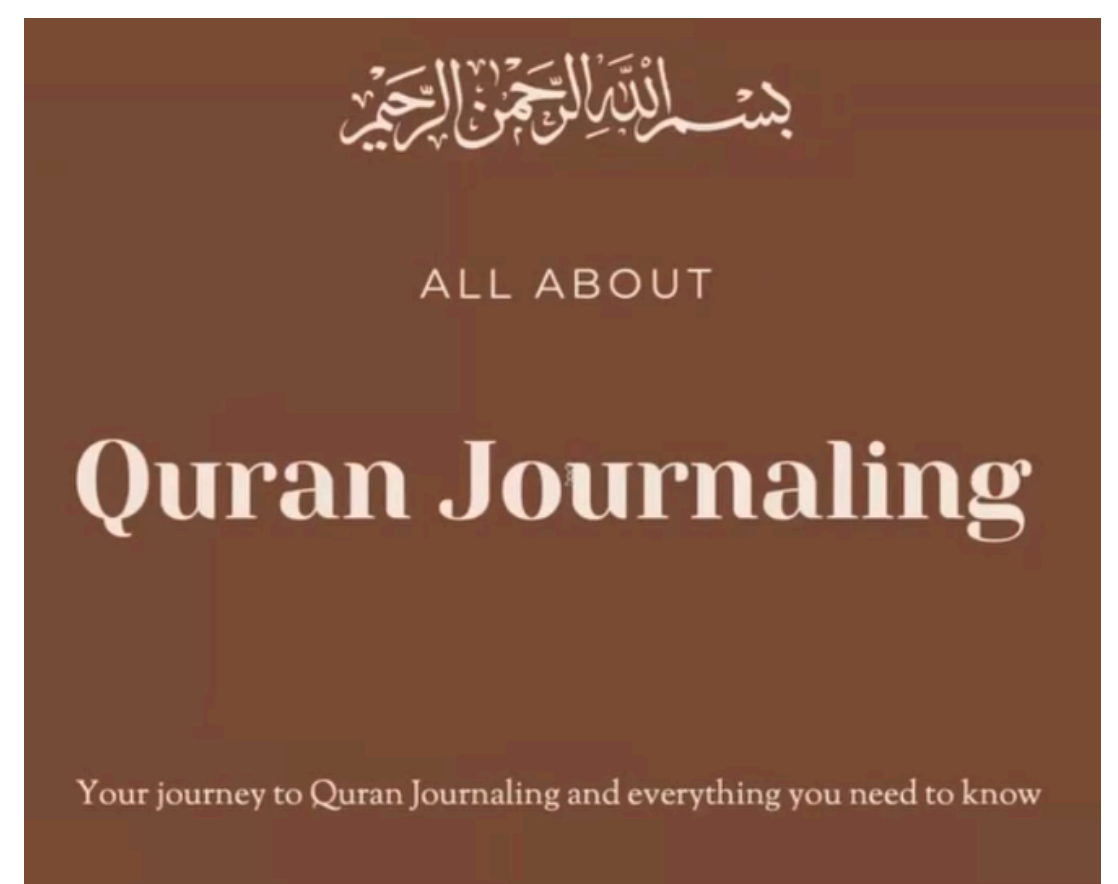
## Sculpt & Style Workshop

On August 3rd, IWCNZ held a sold-out ceramics workshop in Auckland, where Muslimah youth gathered to explore creativity through pottery. Guided by Mud Studios, participants crafted unique cups and bowls while learning ceramic techniques. The session opened with a reflective Islamic message, likening the process of sculpting clay to the journey of self-improvement in Islam—shaping oneself to become the best version in line with faith. This message set a meaningful tone, connecting art with spiritual growth. The strong response highlighted community interest, and IWCNZ is considering future sessions to continue promoting creativity and personal development.

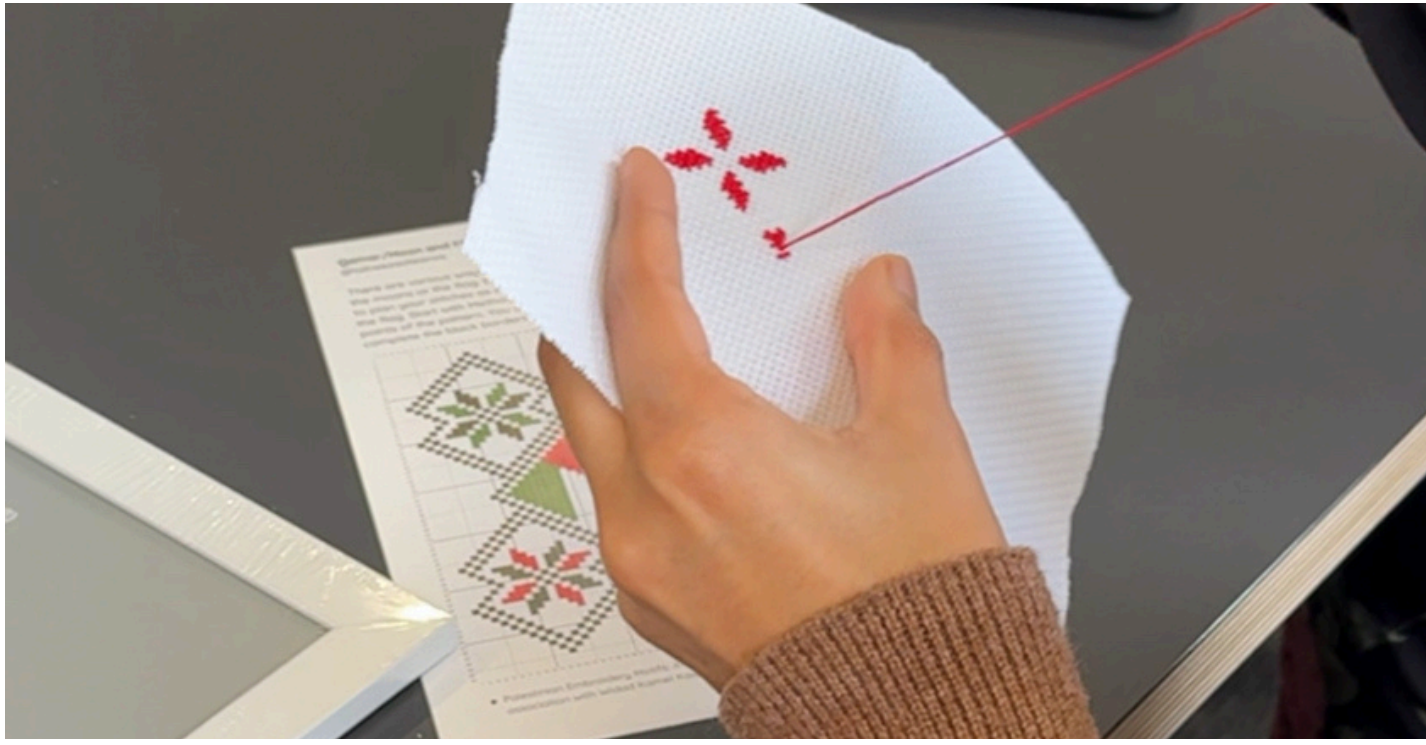
## Quran Journalling

On September 14th, the third session of the Lean Into Your Deen series introduced Muslimah to Quran journalling as a means to deepen their connection with the Quran. Led by Sister Noor, the session covered essential steps for starting this reflective practice, including setting intentions, choosing a journalling style, and applying Quranic lessons to daily life. Noor shared resources and interactive activities, making the session both practical and spiritually enriching. Positive feedback highlighted the value of the clear, actionable steps, with many participants eager to begin their journalling journey.

Watch the Recording: [Click here](#)







## Tatreez Workshop

On September 7th, IWCNZ hosted a sold-out Tatreez workshop, where Muslimah youth connected through the traditional Palestinian art of embroidery. The event, led by a passionate Palestinian artist, offered hands-on learning in Tatreez while promoting mental well-being, highlighting the craft's calming, mindful nature. An Islamic message on preserving culture showed the importance of sharing and valuing heritage. Participants enjoyed an icebreaker game, an engaging history of Tatreez, and created their own pieces to frame at home. This enriching workshop promoted cultural pride, community bonds, and relaxation through creativity.



## Raranga Kete Workshop

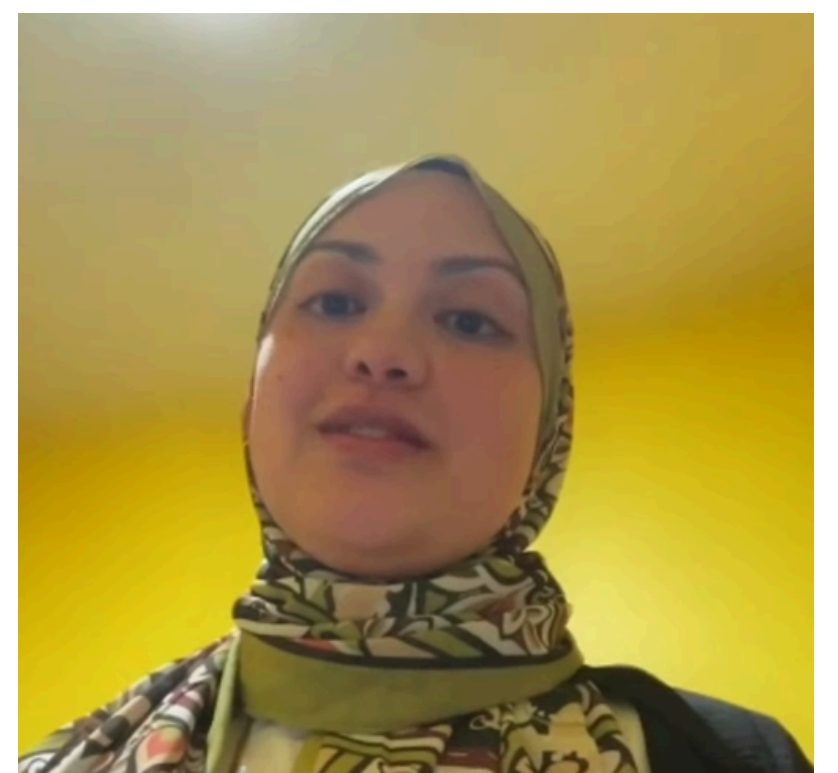
On October 12, the IWCNZ hosted a Raranga Kete Workshop, bringing Muslimah youth together to learn Māori weaving traditions in honour of Māori Language Week. Inspired by Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), the event highlighted the beauty of cross-cultural understanding. Participants learned to weave a kete and engaged in whakawhanaungatanga, sharing Māori words and discussing similarities between Māori and Islamic practices. Guided by expert weavers, the youth learned practical skills and took home their creations along with new vocabulary. The workshop was a meaningful exchange, cultivating mutual respect and appreciation between Māori and Muslim communities.



## Rest and Reset Zoom Session

During Mental Health Awareness Week, Muslim women learnt self-care tools rooted in mindfulness and Islamic principles. Led by holistic wellbeing coach Heba Elshindidy, the session covered mindful breathing techniques, journalling for self-reflection, and the benefits of dhikr for emotional grounding. Participants actively engaged, asking questions and sharing experiences, with many expressing appreciation for the session's practical focus on mental and spiritual well-being. Feedback highlighted the session's value, with attendees eager for future events supporting mental health and spiritual growth.

Watch the Recording: [Click Here](#)







## De-Stress with Deen

This zoom session, part of the Lean into Your Deen series. It was led by Sister Sayema Zulfeqar, an Islamic psychologist. The session focused on managing stress and anxiety from an Islamic perspective, offering practical and spiritual tools for emotional resilience. Participants explored faith-based coping strategies, understanding the impact of the menstrual cycle on mental well-being, and learning signs of stress that may require professional support. Sister Sayema's guidance helped to reduce stigma around mental health, promoting a supportive environment for Muslim women.

Watch the Recording: [Click here](#)



## Netball Tournament

On October 19th, IWCNZ hosted its Annual Netball Tournament, attracting 100-150 Muslimah youth. With 15 teams competing across Junior, Youth, and Open categories, the day was filled with energy and excitement. The event kicked off with a Quran recitation and a message on sportsmanship, highlighting Islamic values of kindness, teamwork, and respect.

The tournament featured 21 fast-paced games and showcased incredible talent, with two teams qualifying for the Fiji FANCA tournament. Awards were presented, with the Muslimah Ferns and SAMA teams taking top spots in various categories. Sister Farhana was honoured for her leadership. The tournament successfully promoted community spirit and offered a safe, supportive space for young women to compete, grow, and bond.



## Muslimah Mindset: Cultivating Gratitude

The Muslimah Mindset Zoom session, led by Sister Nina Fashik, delved into the concept of gratitude (Shukr) in Islam, its importance, and practical ways to integrate it into daily life. Gratitude was presented not only as verbal thanks but as a mindset shaping one's actions and outlook. Quranic verses and Hadiths were shared to highlight its significance, including Surah Ibrahim (14:7): "If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favour]." Sister Nina described gratitude as a form of worship, encouraging both contentment and remembrance of Allah, especially during difficult times. Practical advice included keeping a gratitude journal, making daily supplications, and expressing thanks to others.





## Chocolate Making: Wellington

The Youth Muslimah Chocolate Making Workshop provided Youth Muslimah with an engaging introduction to chocolate making, blending culinary skills with community building.

Led by a professional chocolatier, participants learned the essentials of chocolate making, including tempering techniques and the importance of ethical ingredients. The girls then moved to the hands-on portion, where they created their own chocolates, experimenting with different flavours, moulds, toppings, and decorating techniques to make unique treats to take home.



## Wax and Wix Candle Making Christchurch

The Youth Muslimah Candle Making Workshop in Christchurch offered the youth a chance to learn the basics of candle making. An experienced candle maker taught the basics, from choosing wax, the importance of temperatures to pouring techniques, and each participant got to personalise her own candle with unique fragrances and decor.

The girls enjoyed exploring their creativity and adding another skill to the list whilst spending time with friends.

## Detox & Sunnah : Zoom talk

The Detox and Sunnah ZOOM talk by Sister Ohoud from Hijama Clinic NZ, explored the essential role of the lymphatic system in health, the impact of toxins, and the importance of detoxification.

Attendees learned how the lymphatic system, part of our immune defence, removes toxins and waste but can be overwhelmed by modern pollutants, chemicals, and stress, leading to poor circulation, inflammation, and illness. The discussion highlighted Hijama therapy (cupping) as a Sunnah remedy that aids detoxification, improves circulation, and supports lymph flow.

A Hadith describing Hijama as an effective treatment underscored its value, encouraging participants to consider it for disease prevention, pain relief, and overall wellness while connecting with a traditional Islamic healing practice.







# EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAMME



## Pakuranga College

On October 23rd, IWCNZ held its sixth School Awareness Lunch at Pakuranga College, welcoming 20 students and five Muslim teachers to connect and share resources. Rand and Nabeela introduced IWCNZ's mission and youth development work, highlighting the community support available, beyond school.

A video showcased IWCNZ's youth initiatives, sparking enthusiasm among students, with some inquiring about future events and volunteering. The informal setting over pizza, allowed for meaningful conversations, cultivating a sense of belonging and community. Students left inspired to engage further, taking home brochures away with them to share with family and friends.

## Rangitoto College

On September 3rd, IWCNZ held its fifth School Awareness Lunch at Rangitoto College, part of our Education Outreach Programme.

Around 20 students attended to learn about the support available to them as Muslim youth. Rand and Nabeela introduced IWCNZ's mission and youth initiatives, highlighting the importance of community. Students shared both their appreciation for the school's Muslim association—which provides Jummah prayers and events—and the challenges of openly expressing their faith.

The lunch promoted a sense of belonging and excitement for future IWCNZ events. Brochures were shared to keep students and their families connected.





# Winter ESCAPE

# 2024

The North Island Winter Escape in August 2024 was a weekend getaway designed to provide a break from everyday life and reconnect with nature. Held at Ohakune Lodge on Mount Ruapehu, the event included activities like skiing, snowboarding, hiking, and relaxation in hot pools.

Participants also took part in a painting workshop and Islamic reflections, with a focus on the 99 Names of Allah and gratitude. The weekend was a mix of adventure, creative expression, and spiritual growth, strengthening bonds between sisters from Auckland, Hamilton, and Palmerston North.

Overall, it was a memorable experience that combined outdoor fun with personal enrichment in a supportive community environment.



The Winter Escape provided a much needed opportunity for participants to step away from their busy routines and immerse themselves in the stunning landscapes of the North Island. With the snow-capped peaks of Mount Ruapehu as a backdrop, sisters enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities, from scenic hikes to snowboarding and skiing lessons.

The trip was also an opportunity for personal reflection, with workshops on spiritual topics like the importance of gratitude and caring for one's body as an Amanah (trust). Many attendees experienced snow for the first time, adding to the excitement and sense of adventure. The event also included time for relaxation, with some participants unwinding in local hot pools and others bonding over shared meals and conversations.

The sense of community was a key highlight, with sisters coming together to create lasting memories and deepen their connections. In the evenings, they gathered for reflective sessions and creative activities, such as the guided painting workshop, where they expressed their experiences through art. The journey back to Auckland and Hamilton was just as memorable, with a scenic stop in Taupō, allowing everyone to relax and reflect on the weekend.



# Activities at the Winter Escape

## PAINTING WORKSHOP

The painting workshop was a highlight of the weekend, offering participants a chance to express their personal reflections through art.

Guided by an instructor, sisters painted individual canvases depicting the majestic Mount Ruapehu, capturing the beauty of the landscape and their experiences. This creative session allowed everyone to connect with nature in a different way, while also providing a peaceful and meditative space for personal expression.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

The physical activities at the Winter Escape offered a range of options for all levels of adventure. On the slopes of Mount Ruapehu, participants had the opportunity to try skiing and snowboarding, with lessons provided for beginners and more experienced riders enjoying the fresh snow.

For those who preferred a more relaxed pace, there were scenic hikes through the beautiful surrounds of Ohakune, with trails ranging from easy walks to more challenging treks.

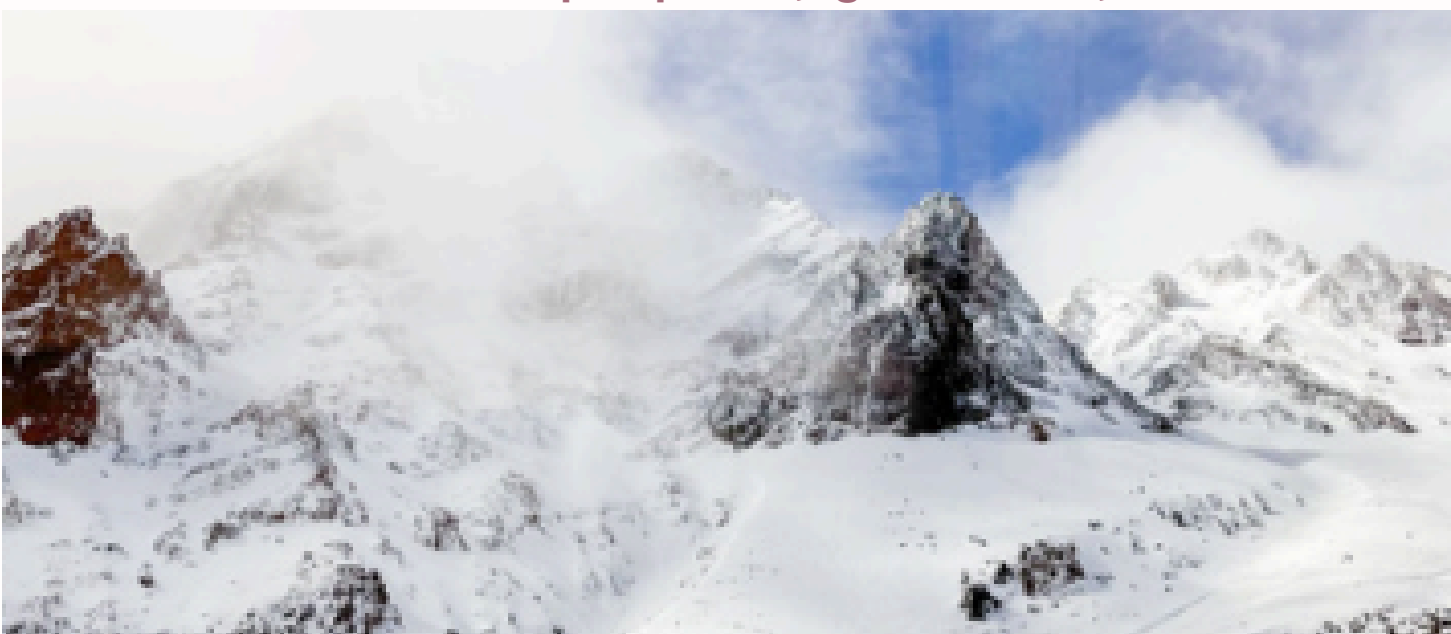
Some sisters embraced the thrill of sledding, while others enjoyed panoramic views from the gondola. Whether it was skiing, hiking, or simply taking in the landscape, the physical activities allowed everyone to engage with nature in their own way, adding an element of adventure to the weekend.



## POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The Winter Escape fostered a deep sense of sisterhood, with participants forming lasting connections and strengthening bonds within the community. Many attendees reported feeling refreshed and rejuvenated, having gained both physical energy from outdoor activities and spiritual growth through workshops.

The event also provided valuable opportunities for personal reflection, with sisters leaving with a renewed sense of purpose, gratitude, and connection to both Allah and each other.







# EMERGING CAREERS NETWORKING



An inclusive networking event for Muslim women in the early stages of their careers was launched by IWCNZ in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch.

This initiative is designed to support Muslim women who are either in the early stages of their careers or university journeys, offering a unique platform for professional growth, networking, and community-building.

The networking event was open to all Muslim women, whether they have attended university or not. Whether they are planning to start a business, transition into a new career, rejoining work after a break or are currently in the first 0-5 years of their professional journey and looking to take the next step!

## How To Network Effectively

In November 2024, IWCNZ launched the Emerging Careers Networking Series across Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch, bringing together 74 Muslim women in the early stages of their careers. The first session, "How to Network Effectively," was led by an HR professional and coach Andrea Hardy, who shared insights on building confidence, creating professional connections, and navigating career growth.

Attendees engaged in speed networking rounds, building valuable relationships and career discussions. Sisters highlighted the need for career-specific mentorship and recruiter involvement in future events. The series provided a supportive space for Muslim women to connect, learn, and grow in their professional journeys.





# IWCNZ YOUTH COUNCIL 2024



Adeela Razali

My name is Adeela. Originally from Malaysia, it was hard to adapt to the cold weather here! I studied psychology, and I am currently working in cybersecurity. Outside of that, I do photography, and I am passionate about operating in the entrepreneurial space through leadership and personal development. I really value learning from the experiences of others and to then pay it forward. I want NZ Muslimah to have a strong community that they can connect with and empower each other as we have many strengths to build upon together.



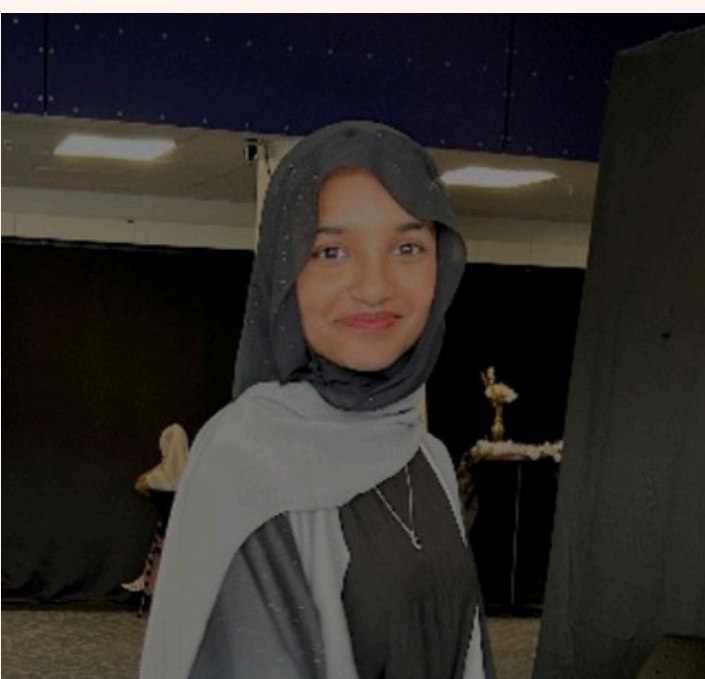
Layan Khalil

My name is Layan, and I'm a Palestinian born in New Zealand, and raised in the middle east. I'm currently studying Law and Business and I am passionate about youth activism, working both nationally and internationally to advocate for social justice. I also engage in media to bring attention to the Palestinian movement, which keeps me grounded in my purpose. Being part of the IWCNZ Youth Council allows me to support and uplift our Muslimah community, building a strong foundation where we can inspire and empower one another. When I'm not studying or at community engagements, you'll definitely find me at car meets and events!



Hajra Iqbal

My name is Hajra and I'm so excited to be part of the first ever Youth Council with IWCNZ! Experiencing IWCNZ community events that have made me feel welcome has inspired me to be a part of creating the same sense of belonging for others. Some things I like to do in my free time include photography, baking and spending time outdoors.



Haya Aman

My name is Haya Aman, I'm a first-year Space Science student at Victoria University. Growing up, the support of my community and the bonds I built within my local Masjid has been a huge part of my journey. That's why I'm passionate about giving back and helping other young Muslims feel as connected and supported as I have. When I'm not studying or volunteering, you'll probably find me reading books or watching F1.





**Fatima Abbas**

My name is Fatima and I am passionate about strengthening the Muslim youth community in New Zealand. I strongly believe staying connected with other youth is so important, especially since we live in a non-Muslim country. It's one of the best ways to stay grounded and get that much-needed iman boost when things get tough. I'm currently in my third year of studying Data Science, and when I'm not stressing over assignments or work, you'll find me road-tripping with family or spending time with loved ones—whether it's through random adventures or just chilling:)



**Aliyah Thotathil**

My name is Aliyah and I am currently a 4th year medical student at the University of Auckland. My background is from India and I grew up in the lovely Kirikiriroa. I am passionate about helping people and improving lives through promoting holistic health and wellbeing, inspired by the principles of Islam. In my spare time I like to bake, craft and spend time in nature :)



**Zemirah Koiki**

My name is Zemirah, and I am currently studying Health Sciences and Information Systems at the University of Canterbury. I am a big believer in the adage, "It takes a village to raise a child," having grown up in a spiritual, community-centered environment. This foundation has fuelled my passion for community building, which remains at the core of everything I do. As a member of the IWCNZ Youth Council, I am excited to contribute to initiatives that uplift and strengthen our communities. On warmer days, you'll likely catch me cruising on my longboard or chasing waterfalls around the beautiful Canterbury region.



**Malaaha Hussein**

My name is Malaaha and I moved to Auckland from my home country of the Maldives seven years ago. In my time here I have found my community in the sisterhood of Muslim women – an incredibly positive experience that I wish on everyone. It is a personal goal of mine to help develop and give back to this community in any way I can. In my free time you can find me knitting or at the beach – sometimes both at once!



**Faazia Khan**

My name is Faaiza, I come from an Indo-Fijian background and was born and raised in Auckland, NZ. I am currently just about to complete my undergraduate degree in Psychology at the University of Auckland. Being part of the Youth Council at IWCNZ means doing my part in strengthening and uplifting the sisterhood that I take pride in. Contributing to this community is my sadaqah jariyah and a way for me to keep myself spiritually grounded. I've been told I'm a bit of a workaholic as I'm someone who loves to stay busy (even when it stresses me out!), but when I do remember to take out some time for myself, you'll find me napping, reading or outdoors spending time with my loved ones.



# YOUTH COUNCIL RETREAT



The Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand (IWCNZ) hosted the inaugural 2024/2025 Youth Council retreat from September 20th to 22nd in Auckland. This event marked the establishment of the Youth Council and was their first-ever strategic planning retreat.

The retreat focused on brainstorming, solution-based discussions, and workshops aimed at promoting holistic wellbeing while promoting teamwork and sisterhood. Nine Youth Council members collaborated to set clear goals, values, and priorities for their term, with support from the IWCNZ Youth Workers.



Throughout the weekend, many workshops and activities were held, focusing on strengthening team cohesion, identifying youth issues, and aligning on a shared vision.

A few of the workshops included a "Strengths and Synergy" session promoting self-awareness and collaboration, a Vision Mapping exercise to shape the council's strategic plan, a Halaqa session to deepen understanding of Islamic leadership values, a wellbeing hike, workshop to set priorities and goals and finally presenting to the National Coordinator for guidance.

The retreat also included team-building activities like crafting and a Muslimah Masterchef competition, providing members with a strong sense of purpose and actionable goals for the term ahead.

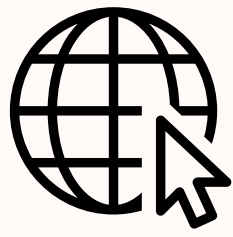
The IWCNZ Youth Council retreat shared a sense of purpose, developed actionable goals, and strengthened the bonds among its members. The outcomes of the retreat lay the foundation for impactful initiatives that will address pressing issues within the youth space and create lasting change within the Muslim community.



**Sisters and fellow adventurers!**

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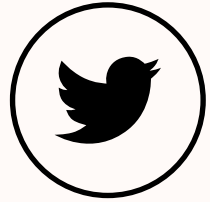
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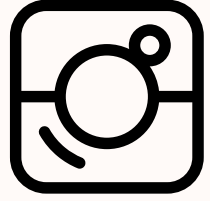
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