

## **Muslim Youth Groups and Engendering Civic Social Capital in Swiss Society**

### **General Aim of Project**

To analyse the integrative – or disintegrative – potentials of formal and informal Muslim youth groups and forums in Switzerland through detailed study of their activities, ideals, values and social networks and to work out criteria for best practice forms of bridging and linking social activities.

### **Summary**

Due to immigration, the Muslim population in Switzerland has grown considerably within the past 30 years. In 2010, 5.2% or around 400.000 people are of Muslim faith. Adolescents and young adults constitute a third (!) or about 120.000 people. Despite this number, conspicuously no in-depth study exists with regard to young Muslims, their religious and national-cultural identification, values, and attitudes towards Swiss society. This absence is even more notable, as these young Muslims will become next leaders of Muslim organisations and ideals and values of the upcoming generation will be crucial for the social incorporation of Islam and Muslims in Switzerland.

The research project aims to close the desideratum as it investigates the various perspectives and attitudes of Muslim youth on religion and society and asks to what extent embeddedness in religious associations impedes or enhances an integration and participation in Swiss society. In particular, the study will take-stock of the varied religious, cultural, and social activities of youth groups within and outside Muslim organisations. Using the approach and vocabulary of civic social capital as coined by Prof. Alex Stepick, the project will analyse to what extent Muslim youth group activities provide and promote the building of bridges and links towards the wider society.

The study will be of much interest for social and political decision-makers, the administration, and the wider Swiss public; it will provide knowledge about the various integrative and supportive activities offered by Muslim associations and will suggest perspectives of civic engagement of Muslim youth groups, forums and leaders. Also, the project will suggest criteria of best practice civic engagement. In general perspective, the project will be instrumental in providing insights for studying Muslim youth and young adults in Europe.

### **Project Team**

Prof. Dr. Martin Baumann, Dr. habil Samuel Martin Behloul, Dr. Jürgen Endres, Dr. Andreas Tunger-Zanetti

### **Funds and Duration**

Jacobs Foundation, CHF 385'000,-, January 2011 to December 2012 (24 months)