

FAITH BASED REGENERATION NETWORK

## A milestone for FbRN

FbRN reached a significant milestone a few weeks ago. The contact list, that is people who have asked to receive this newsletter, passed the 900 mark. The newsletter is also sent to a further 3,400 through the mailing lists of other organisations.

It seems to me that this demonstrates two things: first the need for FbRN, with its aim of providing a network that would enable faith based practitioners to

- learn, and gain inspiration from, each other across the different faith traditions of the UK
  - be a conduit between practitioners and policy makers
- and secondly the rapid increase in government interest in engaging with the faith sector.

There are many reasons for this increase in interest, mainly clustered around the delivery of services to the hard to reach groups and issues of community cohesion. Important though these are, and vital though it is for us in the faith sector to understand these, we must never lose sight of why we want to be involved in the first place. What is it in our faith that places us under an imperative to act for the benefit of the community, both our own faith community and wider society? This driving force is what makes us useful to policy makers and deliverers of services but it also means that, at times, we have a critical standpoint.

These themes are picked up in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report Faith Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing? featured on page 4.

Finally, don't miss the special offer on the new, expanded version of our *Tools for Regeneration*. Normal price will be £12.95 plus £2.00 post and packaging, orders quoting FbRN Newsletter Spring '06 £9.00 plus £2.00 post and packaging.

**Doreen Finneron**  
Executive Director

### In this Issue

#### **Can Community Matters help you?**

*Community Matters* explained and the new **VISIBLE** communities project launched.



#### **Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing?**

This new Joseph Rowntree Foundation report asks: do 'faith communities' divide a society or can they help hold society together?

**The Russell Commission** charity offers a free programme of capacity building activities for young volunteers and **Hubs** hold a launch conference. Plus information about **In Kind Direct: the charities' charity**.

#### **Some Interesting Funding Opportunities from:**

*Connecting Communities Plus, Community Grants; Capacity Builders; ChangeUp. Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales.*

**FbRN news** about a new edition of *Tools for Regeneration: Practical Advice for Faith Communities* plus some Faith and Social Enterprise Workshops.

**Letter from the Chair and a request for you to update your address with FbRN and note a slight change of address for us.**

# CAN COMMUNITY MATTERS HELP YOU?

**Community Matters** is the nationwide federation for community associations and similar organisations, with over 1100 member organisations in England, Wales and Scotland. Originally established as the National Federation of Community Associations in 1945, Community Matters plays a key role in promoting and supporting action by ordinary people in response to leisure, recreational, educational and social needs in their neighbourhoods and communities.

## What does Community Matters do?

**Community Matters** aims to promote, listen to, support and represent all those community organisations established democratically by people in their own communities to meet educational, social and recreational needs.

### Our objectives are:

- To develop the support provided to community organisations
- To ensure that the interests of community organisations are effectively represented locally and nationally
- To ensure that the people, funds and facilities are found to meet these objectives.

### Our services include:

- *Information and Advice* – we have a telephone advice line service open daily from 9.30- (closed 1.00 to 2.00) 5.00. Telephone number 0845 VISIBLE (0845 8474253).
- *Training* – we offer training courses on a range of topics such



Baroness Amos launching Visible

as **Community Buildings** – maximizing assets, **Developing Your Community Building**, **Committee Skills** etc, and can tailor make courses to meet the needs of an organisation on request

- *Community Consultancy* – Our services includes work on leases, constitutions, governance, finance issues, partnership working and community consultation. We also have a corporate consultancy programme tailored to the individual needs of organisation.
- *Insurance* – we act as brokers to two companies and can advise on insurance needs of organisations
- *Publications* – in addition to our information sheets (50+ titles) we have a range of publications including a reference manual for community organisations and advisors, an equality and diversity publication, and a quality standard workbook: **Becoming Visible**

- *Projects* – our project work includes Millennium Volunteers, Youth Development, London Development and **VISIBLE Communities™**

## What can Community Matters offer faith groups working at community level?

Our constituent members are primarily Community Associations. Community Associations are themselves local umbrella bodies that offer activities, premises and services to all the inhabitants of their area of benefit (whether it is geographical or population based) without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race, or of political, religious or other opinion. Many of our members already support faith groups by providing them with a place to meet and educate their young people, hold their regular worship and have community celebrations.

Through the use of the Community Association facilities, faith groups become an affiliated member (a user group) of the Community Association this also means that a faith-based organisation benefits from some of the membership benefits of Community Matters enjoyed by the association.

Faith-based organisations can however become direct members of Community Matters provided that they have an open to all policy i.e. that they do not discriminate against anyone. Benefits of membership include:

- unlimited access to our advice line service
- access to the members only section of the website
- a free consultancy visit a year
- a free copy of each of our information sheets (over 50 titles available)
- a free copy of our bimonthly magazine Community
- six mailings a year
- 25% discount on Community Matters own publications
- discount on the PPL licence

### What is the VISIBLE Communities™ project?

*Becoming Visible* is the result of several years of consultation work arising from an initial request by Community Matters members for a quality standard for community organisations. It was piloted with organisations and agencies in fifteen areas across the country including local authorities. On 7 March 2006, Community Matters launched its new performance standards tool for multi-purpose

community organisations and other community centre charities. The standards are based around the VISIBLE Communities™ model, which encourages community organisations to set a broad mission and to achieve high standards in its delivery. *Becoming Visible* is a workbook which is used as a development tool and contains assessment charts of the 7 functional areas of the VISIBLE Communities™ model – Voice, Independence, Service delivery, Innovation, Building partnerships, Local focus and Engaging volunteers. Copies of the workbook can be obtained from

our publications department or by downloading an order form from the Community Matters website. Whilst the standard is currently one of self-assessment we are working towards having the programme kite marked with external validation. You can visit our website for further information on how this is progressing.

To speak to a member of the VISIBLE Communities team telephone 020 7837 7887. Further details about the project can be found on our website [www.communitymatters.org.uk](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk).

- Community Matters is the national umbrella body for community associations and similar multi-purpose community organisations in Britain. It was established in 1945 and has a network of around 1150 members.
- Community Associations are voluntary groups which exist for the benefit of their communities in the areas of education, recreation and social welfare. They usually manage a community building.
- *Becoming Visible* is a workbook and development tool containing assessment charts for each of the 7 functional areas of the Visible Communities model – Voice, Independence, Service delivery, Innovation, Building partnerships, Local focus and Engaging volunteers.
- *Firm Foundations* was launched by the former Home Secretary, David Blunkett in December 2004 and described community anchors as:
  - Controlled by local residents / groups
  - Addressing local needs in a multi-purpose holistic way
  - Involving all sections of the community including marginalised groups
  - Facilitating the development of communities in their area
- Community Matters has been funded by the Home Office as part of the Community Alliance (Bassac, Community Matters, Development Trusts Association and Scarman Trust) to support the development of a national network of community anchor organisations.
- For more information about this project contact David Tyler at Community Matters on 020 7837 7887.

# FAITH COMMUNITIES CONNECTING OR DIVIDING

## A new Joseph Rowntree Foundation report asks: Do 'faith communities' divide a society or can they help hold society together?

Faith communities – Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh – are creating valuable bridges and links across society, but they could do more if internal and external obstacles to development were overcome, according to new research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

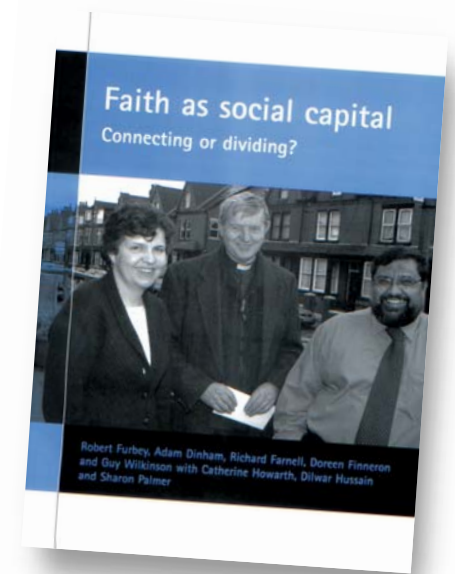
The report explores the expectations and realities of how faith communities connect or divide society. It recognises that the place of faith can be controversial and shows that religious belief and tradition can create division and conflict as well as engagement and understanding. Recent events in Britain and beyond have intensified long-standing debates about the social impact of religion, with violence as the ultimate expression of its potential divisiveness.

Both Conservative and Labour Governments for many years have looked to faith communities as partners in a range of social policies and regeneration programmes, often citing them as 'social glue'. The Prime Minister's Inter-Faith Envoy, Rt Hon John Battle MP said: *"Faith Communities have long contributed to social policy and practice. Significantly all major faith communities are present in urban centres and poorer neighbourhoods. Moreover, if faith*

*communities withdrew their social services provision and the state had to step in, local and central government would be bankrupt. Faith communities have become an important force for change: their strong social networks and use of 'social capital' has been vital in enabling them to achieve significant practical work."*

The research uses the concept of 'social capital' – the accumulation of trust and mutual support as a means of understanding how people can be helped or hindered through different social networks. Critics of the term social capital argue that it tends to be used in remorselessly positive terms but the report concludes that, on balance, the concept does have something valuable to offer. Nevertheless, the research also found that social capital can be negative in its consequences and that faith networks are not always benign. Faith communities have not always encouraged difference or welcomed participation and debate. Power inequalities within faith communities can also make it more difficult for social networks to develop, particularly for women and young people.

The research focused on particular places and examples involving Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh people, along with those from secular organisations. Spanning English regions characterised by ethnic and religious diversity (mainly the West Midlands, Manchester and the North West, Yorkshire and London)



the research identified faith groups crossing boundaries, sharing activities and building trust.

Co-author Rob Furbey of Sheffield Hallam University said: "Government needs to invest time and look for opportunities for informal encounters where trust can be built; and it will need to be more tolerant of different styles of working. Rather than social glue binding communities together, effective operation of faith communities could be compared to machine oil, providing mechanisms through which citizens can edge together, living with and working through difference."

*Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing?* is published by The Policy Press and available from Marston Book Services, PO Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4YN (01235 465500); price £12.95 plus £2.75 p&p. A summary of findings and the report can be downloaded, free of charge from [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk).

# VOLUNTEERING AND HUBS OF EXPERTISE

## FREE TRAINING FOR YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

The Russell Commission charity has launched a free programme of capacity building activities, to help organisations work more effectively with young volunteers.

The new charity, which will be launched on 8 May 2006, aims to engage up to 1 million new young volunteers over the next five years. The training will help organisations to gear up for this challenge, enabling them to develop high quality youth volunteering opportunities for 16 - 25 year olds.

Follow this link for a booking form for a series of free one-day training events on "Designing and developing programmes to engage young people":

<http://www.russellcommission.org/capacity-building-events/programme/booking-programmes.doc>

Bookings will be taken on a first come first served basis, and we anticipate a high level of demand, so act quickly to reserve a place.

For more information on Russell Commission activities, visit: <http://www.russellcommission.org/capacity-building-events/index.html>

The charity's first funding rounds for volunteering opportunities will also be announced on 8th May, and will provide organisations with financial resources to develop their youth volunteering programmes.

## HUBS HOLD LAUNCH CONFERENCE (Article supplied by Bassac News)

The six national hubs of expertise for the voluntary and community sector held a series of workshops to showcase their work so far at the end of last month.

The hubs representing finance, governance, ICT, performance, volunteering and workforce are part of the government's framework to improve the sector's infrastructure and capacity, known as ChangeUp. This was published in 2004, with £188m committed over three years.

The governance hub has launched a website which has practical advice for voluntary and community organisations. It has also set up a partnership scheme to work on new governance ideas with the sector. The ICT hub has a free helpdesk offering strategic ICT support and an online directory. It plans to create a bursary scheme to enable organisations to share learning.

The accountable body for the volunteering hub is Volunteering England. It has begun to develop good practice materials. Other plans include a commission on the future of volunteering, a conference on leadership in volunteering and a package of support for employer supported volunteering.

The performance hub has developed a training package on the national occupational standards (NOS). Future plans include promoting the new NOS for trustees management committee members.

**Finance:** [www.financehub.org.uk](http://www.financehub.org.uk)

**Governance:**

[www.governancehub.org.uk](http://www.governancehub.org.uk)

**ICT:** [www.ictconsortium.org.uk](http://www.ictconsortium.org.uk)

**Performance:**

[www.performancehub.org.uk](http://www.performancehub.org.uk)

**Workforce:**

[www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk](http://www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk)

**Volunteering:** [www.volunteering.org.uk/aboutus/volunteeringhub](http://www.volunteering.org.uk/aboutus/volunteeringhub)

## IN KIND DIRECT – The charities' charity

In Kind Direct's monthly catalogue offers voluntary organisations a great selection of new everyday essentials – from toiletries and tools to office and household equipment plus much more – all for a fraction of the usual cost. A charity itself, In Kind Direct redistributes surplus products, donated by many of the country's best known companies, to UK charities working at home and abroad. Partner organisations pay an annual registration fee of £50 and a small handling charge on orders, which covers delivery to their doors. In a number of parts of the country, there are subsidised registration fees at £35.25, which includes £75 of vouchers exchangeable for goods worth up to £750 from the catalogue. For further information please call 020 7860 5927 or visit [www.inkinddirect.org](http://www.inkinddirect.org)

## STOP PRESS

### MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT CHANGES

Some of the government changes announced at the beginning of May will have an impact on how the government relates to faith communities.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has been split up and no longer exists. Most of its responsibilities will pass to the new Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), headed by Ruth Kelly. It will also take on some of the functions previously attached to the Home Office. The DCLG will have responsibility for most of the government agendas associated with relationships with faith communities including regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, communities and civil renewal. The Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund will move to the new Department. The second round will still happen, but we anticipate that it will be delayed from the planned June date so that new Ministers can oversee the process.

More details and up to date information can be obtained from [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

### CONNECTING COMMUNITIES PLUS, COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is administering a new grants scheme for local communities, on behalf of the Home Office, to increase race equality and community cohesion within their own communities.

This £1 million fund **Connecting Communities Plus, Community Grants**, welcomes applications from small, locally run and managed voluntary and community organisations.

The Fund has four key priorities derived from 'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society', the Government strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion:

- A. Improving the experience of people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds in relation to access to outcomes from the public services – education, employment, health, housing and the Criminal Justice System:
- B. Increasing the confidence of people from BME backgrounds that public services are delivered

in a fair and equitable way:

- C. Tackling racism and extremism:
- D. Bringing together communities from different races and faiths, and promoting a shared sense of belonging (community cohesion).

The fund is available for groups/organisations in England. Details can be obtained from: [www.cdf.org.uk/bfora/systems/xmlviewer/default.asp](http://www.cdf.org.uk/bfora/systems/xmlviewer/default.asp)? And from CDF on 01223 400343 or email on [ccplus@cdf.org.uk](mailto:ccplus@cdf.org.uk) **Closing date for applications is 5th July 2006**

### CAPACITY BUILDERS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The new team in charge of Capacity Builders, the agency managing the £150 million ChangeUp programme, became fully functional at the beginning of this month. The focus of Capacity Builders will be to implement the ChangeUp investment programme, designed to build capacity and infrastructure framework for the voluntary and community sector. [www.changeup.org.uk](http://www.changeup.org.uk)

### LLOYDS TSB FOUNDATION

The Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales currently has two programmes of grant-making, the Community Programme and a new Thematic Programme, with the first two themes being launched this year.

1. **Community Programme** (including Collaborative funding)

This programme will continue in 2006 with approximately two-thirds of the Foundation's grant-making budget, responding to local, regional and national needs. The focus will be on identified priorities for each region, Wales and the England and Wales-wide programme.

Under the Community Programme, the Foundation encourages innovation and new ideas and

## MORE TOOLS FOR REGENERATION

The second edition of FbRN's popular Toolkit is now available. *Tools for Regeneration: Practical Advice for Faith Communities* is based on the needs of practitioners of faith based regeneration and community development. It contains updated and expanded sections on:

- The context of faith involvement in regeneration
- Setting up and managing a community organisation
- Community development and capacity building in faith based organisations
- Evaluation and performance measurement
- Fundraising and resource mobilisation
- Working in partnership

And new sections on:

- Staffing and employment; a step by step guide to employing a worker in a faith based organisation
- Social enterprise; from basics to marketing and impact

recognises the need for core funding to enable tried and tested ways of working to continue.

The Foundation is keen to support collaborative work within the sector.

2. This year, the Foundation is launching a new **Thematic Programme** with, in future years, a significant proportion of the Foundation's grant-making budget.



Sections are clearly set out so it is easy to find what you need. Packed with information and practical 'how to do it' advice, it is a valuable aid to those just starting out as well as those who are longer established. Practitioners from other sectors who are seeking to work in partnership with faith communities will also find much that is useful.

FbRN is grateful to Royal Bank of Scotland/NatWest Community Development Banking for support in publishing this new edition.

Price £12.95 + £2 to cover postage and packing. Available from FbRN

The first theme will provide support for charities working with ex-prisoners with an emphasis on their families and mental health issues.

There will be a two-stage process for applications – an expression of interest stage and a full application stage.

[Http://www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk](http://www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk)

## FAITH AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORKSHOPS

**Are you thinking of starting a social enterprise strand to your work?**

**Do you already do social enterprise and want more information and ideas?**

Building on the success of the FbRN national conference 'Seeds of Social Enterprise', in September last year, we are running a series of workshops around the country.

The FbRN workshops aim to help you:

- Get started
- Get advice and ideas
- Learn about governance, community participation and representation
- Get up to date on information on procurement, tendering and contracts.

The workshops will be held in September at six locations; Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield, Liverpool, Tower Hamlets, Plymouth and Crowborough in Sussex.

For dates and more details see the enclosed leaflet or the FbRN website.

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF FbRN UK

## THE HON BARNABAS LEITH



When I attend my faith community's meetings and events, I don't immediately think of this as contributing to 'social capital'. Meeting in fellowship with my fellow Bahá'ís to pray, to study our scriptures, to share stories, to reflect and to plan is just what I do as a person of faith and as a member of my community. I don't have to justify it to others in socio-economic terms.

And yet faith communities are increasingly being seen as sources and enhancers of 'social capital' – a phrase that has entered the political lexicon in recent years.

Some people regard the phrase as having unfortunate connotations. Not everyone wants to speak of what faith communities do in such materialistic and instrumental terms. However, if we strip away the jargon and think of social capital in terms of building good relations with others, we can see that this is precisely what faith communities – at their best – nurture.

Of course, there are long and technical debates to be had about all the terms in the phrase *Faith and Social Capital*, which happens to be the title of a research report recently launched by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (I'm very happy to note that our own Doreen Finneron was a member of the research group that produced the report.) But I will leave these to others.

It seems to me that the crucial message is that the good relations nurtured by faith communities (some might prefer to think of these relationships as 'fellowship') can have a highly positive impact on community development and regeneration.

Regrettably we have to acknowledge that faith, taken in certain ways, can be a source of division and conflict (both within and between communities), but all the great faiths include strong aspirations towards a transcendent human solidarity that can nurture and support the kind of wider prosperity that will benefit the whole of humankind.

It is this that FbRN-UK seeks to promote through its work, so it is entirely appropriate that we should be involved in trying to unpack the meanings and implications of the concept of faith as social capital.

### HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

If you haven't notified FbRN you will not receive email bulletins. Please remember to give us your new email address.

A growing number of people want email only copies of the Newsletter. Please let us know if you would prefer this method.

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