

FbRN news

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2005

Staff and an Office for FbRN

There have been a lot of developments at FbRN since the last newsletter. Much of the matched funding needed to draw the grant from the Special Grants Programme of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, has been secured. This has been from, the Church Urban Fund, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and the Calouste Gukbenkian Foundation.

It has enabled the Trustees to appoint two full-time members of staff, Doreen Finneron, as Executive Director, and Malcolm Deboo, as Development Officer, and to set up a permanent office base at the Charity Centre in Charles House, Kensington.

Most important of all it has meant that FbRN can now plan a programme of activity to take forward its vision of supporting and enabling faith based regeneration practitioners.

The programme for 2005 includes:

- In partnership with the Inner Cities Religious Council, facilitating a workshop on the value base of regeneration, at the Sustainable Communities Summit
- Organising a conference with Birkbeck College, the University of London, bringing together practitioners, theologians and academics to explore the foundations of faith involvement in regeneration
- Work with the Community Development Exchange and the Churches Community Work Alliance on connecting faith based practitioners with the wider voluntary sector
- Organising a national conference on the theme of community enterprise and faith
- Developing the web-site into a useful tool
- Beginning the first of a series, of local capacity building initiatives; these are with the Jain community in north London, and with the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in west London.
- Producing regular newsletters providing information and ideas for practitioners.

In this Issue

Round the Regions

Find out about journeys of discovery in Leicester, and a new study



of faith and regeneration in rural areas of the East Midlands. From the South East we hear about the role of a faith community representative on the Regional Assembly, and views from the perspective of the Regional Faith Forum.

Social Enterprise, Community Enterprise and Faith Based Regeneration

Alan Wallace examines the critical difference between social enterprise and community enterprise, points to the contribution that faith groups are making, and presents us with some challenges.

FbRN goes to the Summit

The Delivering Sustainable Communities Summit, organised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Do you know how to?

Readers ask for information and comment.

Community Cohesion

A new action guide from the Local Government Association

Meet the staff and letter from the Chair

The East Midlands

'JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY'

How Leicester's faiths contributed to the success of Leicester Expo '04

During the August Bank Holiday, the streets of Leicester came alive as people gathered to take part in a five day street festival of entertainment. Expo was about celebrating Leicester and all its key ingredients, so the Diocese of Leicester and the Leicester Council of Faiths teamed up with Leicester Shire Promotions to hold two free 'Discover Leicester Faiths' Bus Tours for people to gain an insight into the major faiths of the city. In total nearly 150 people attended the trips.

The tour consisted of a commentary about the faiths whilst driving past and visiting places of worship. On Thursday 26th there was a visit to

'The tours were excellent and very informative. The commentary was very clear. Lots of people took part and both young and old found the tours enjoyable.'

Mrs E.A. Frost of Sileby, Leicestershire.

Shree Sanatan Mandir on Weymouth Street and on Monday 30th, a visit to Masjid Ul Imam Il Bukhari on Loughborough Road. The tour participants were greeted by faith

leaders at both venues, given a presentation about the respective faith and given an opportunity to ask questions. Riaz Ravat, Regeneration Development Officer for Leicester's faith communities said that 'The turnout for both tours was superb. On the Monday we could have filled the bus twice over!'

Leicester is proud of its diversity and cultures but the time has come for the faith Communities to assert their mark on a city where over three quarters of the population belong to a faith tradition.

Rt Rev Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester



L to R: Elizabeth Wayne, Manjula Sood, Resham Singh Sandhu, Raiz Ravat, Suleman Nagid, Gill Jackson, Paul Brookes and Tony Nelson board the faith bus.

Pioneering faiths report for Leicester launched!

On Friday 2nd July 2004, 115 people attended the launch of a pioneering report examining the social contribution made by the faith communities to life in Leicester. **'Embracing the present, planning the future: Social action by the faith communities of Leicester'**, written by Riaz Ravat, Regeneration Development Officer for Leicester's faith communities, was launched by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Mary Draycott at the Shree Prajapati Association, Ulverscroft Road.



The report analyses the types of activities, social groups supported and problems faced by the faith communities when engaged in social action; the questionnaire on which it is based had a high response rate of 67%. It uncovered nearly 250 faith groups operating in Leicester who support about 450 different social projects.

The report includes case studies from five faith organisations and suggests recommendations for the faith communities, other social partners and national government.

To order a copy priced £4.99 telephone: 0116 248 7424 or email Pat.English@LecCofE.org

If we are to continue as the primary multi-faith and multi-cultural city in the UK, then statutory bodies and other service delivery agencies must work in partnership with the faith communities to challenge social exclusion and resource their valuable work.

Resham Singh Sandhu MBE, Chair Leicester Council of Faiths

STUDY OF FAITH AND REGENERATION IN RURAL AREAS OF THE EAST MIDLANDS

A highly significant study detailing the role of faith communities in economic development and social inclusion in the East Midlands began in September.

The region's development agency, EMDA, has provided funding for the research project to be undertaken by the East Midlands Churches Forum. The work, in advance of possible funding for a full time post, will look at the impact faith has on the quality of life in the East Midlands.

The study will look at potential ways and means of harnessing the faith communities' role in the economy and provide examples of community involvement, which could lead to large scale funding in future years.

The churches forum spokesman, Derek Markie welcomed the announcement. 'Faith groups should be working more closely with the economic development partners to build strong active communities, but their current contribution and means of maximising potential in the future needs to be quantified and evaluated. With three quarters of the UK's population claiming to have a personal faith, we know that the role faith plays in personal and community well-being is considerable. This research will provide detailed evidence and examples of how to add to community capacity in the next phase. It is intended to show that with appropriate development Churches and faith communities could form a platform for longer term investment and regeneration.'

For more information contact: Pauline Nichols, Administrator, EMCF, c/o YMCA, St Rumbold Street, Lincoln, LN2 5AR, Tel 01522 870017, Email enquiries@emcf.org.uk

ROUND THE REGIONS

The South East

REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Peter Southcombe gives his personal reflection on the issues facing the South East and the Regional Faith Forum (SEEFF).

The economy of the South East region is the 22nd largest in the world, bigger than Denmark, Austria, South Africa and Greece and covers the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and East and West Sussex and as home to over eight million people, it is the largest region in the UK. It is a large region and with it comes the problem of reaching our communities in a meaningful way with such limited resources. At present the executive are all developing the role and work of SEEFF in their spare time and within their voluntary capacity. The challenge is to find sufficient funds to enable a step change in delivery and activity – oh that national Government or the regional development agency would fund adequately in each region!!

Although regarded as extremely affluent, the region has areas of deprivation and poverty that often lie undetected in the Government's index of multiple deprivation (IMD). The juxtaposition of affluent wards with those that demonstrate poverty only highlights the desperate situation that often creates social tension and ill feeling on the ground. For example – the multi-million pound Thamesgateway project with its

huge investment of funding, large scale infrastructure and large development will only exacerbate the situation unless more attention and more importantly, funding, is given to the relatively smaller community programmes of social cohesion. The SEEFF Executive are certainly active and vociferous in commenting on regional policy. e.g housing and regional strategy, rural issues and The Thamesgateway. Our voices are translated into action by many local projects and programmes of work delivered on the ground by a myriad of workers, both paid and unpaid. In our recent survey, *Beyond Belief*, we discovered that on average just over two projects of social action were carried out from the premises of each faith centre in the region.

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The fact that the south east has unemployment rates of below 3.8%, (in places it is only 0.4%!) only seeks to alienate those who find themselves unemployed. The challenge for those of us from the faith sector who care for the marginalized, the poor and those suffering unemployment means we have our work cut out, as often funding for such projects amidst affluence is paltry, if indeed it

exists at all. In such circumstances it is probably only the faith groups that will remain and deliver, as many other charitable groups are unable to survive or exist with a viable project under such circumstances.

Housing remains one of the greatest issues. Affordable housing for local people, key workers and young people remains a key concern in a region where the average for a house is £50,000 more than the national average, and yet the income is only £20 per week more. Poverty will be an increasing situation within our region and SEEFF will no doubt raise the concerns and look for solutions with partners as more and more people find themselves in financial hardship. <http://www.seeff.co.uk/RegionalKeyFacts/>

The executive are challenged constantly about 'representation' and like the West Midlands region, we have sought people of faith who are reflective rather than truly representative of the regional situation. The demographics of our area and the widespread low numbers of other faith groups within our region means, it is difficult to engender meaningful regional regeneration partnerships. Sub regional activity will be the answer and SEEFF aim to develop this over the next phase of its life and it may be a theme at our next conference, later this year. The SEE Regeneration network (www.seeff.co.uk) have invited SEEFF to run a workshop at the next regional conference on Faith and

Regeneration and we will report on the event later. Without doubt, religious literacy and understanding (or rather the lack of it) will be raised.

The executive of SEEFF are only too well aware of its failures and shortcomings in responding to a given situation, but we seek to raise the voice of the faiths and to be a voice for the those who find themselves marginalized or excluded in our so called 'sustainable' society. The Deputy Prime Minister constantly reminds us, that 'creating sustainable communities is not just about housing. It is about creating places that are pleasant to live in, safe, connected and economically successful'. The response regionally

is to establish a 'South East Centre of Excellence' and the initial focus for the centre will be to work with professionals and politicians to improve the built environment and to work with those employed in the core occupations identified in the Government commissioned Egan Review: *Skills for Sustainable Communities*. This includes local authority councillors, planners, urban designers, architects, developers and investors. The Centre will also address the skills required by those in other occupations that have a role to play in creating sustainable communities and skills within communities themselves'. SEEFF will play their part in this developing project and will ensure that people from the communities

within the growth areas will not only have their say, but will be enabled to play their part in creating their own communities.

The process of developing SEEFF will be slow, but the voice of faith within regeneration is essential for truly cohesive and sustainable communities.

Peter Southcombe is Chair of Executive of South East of England Faith forum (SEEFF) and Director of Regeneration and community development, Southern Synod of the United Reformed Church.

Faith Representation on the Regional Assembly

Ian Chisnall tells us what it is like in this new role as a faith representative on the Regional Assembly.

The South East England Regional Assembly was created in 1999 as a result of the Regional Development Agencies Act (1998) and like the other seven English Regional Assemblies or Chambers (London as the ninth region follows a different model) it was intended to involve both elected politicians and those from outside of the traditional political structures. The assemblies are intended to provide three key functions: advocates for



Voting at the South East England Regional Assembly

their region; holding their Regional Development Agencies to account and acting as the regional planning body.

The South East is the largest of all of the English Regions with some 8 million residents and inevitably the Assembly is also one of the

largest. Each of the 74 Borough, District, County and Unitary Councils in the region nominates one representative and a further three places were added, to accommodate the views of the foundational tier of local democracy, the town and parish councillors. This creates an "elected" component of 77 places. Government guidance states that no more than 70% of places in the assemblies should be taken up by elected representatives and so a total of 34 places were then created for those who could represent this huge community of 8 million people, in other ways.

Along with a number of other regional assemblies, the South East felt it would be appropriate to allocate space to the faith communities in the region, and in the South East two seats were set aside for this purpose. This created a huge issue, as none of the faith communities in the region had structures that in any way related to a region which covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, East and West Sussex and the Isle of Wight.

Thus substantial amounts of time and effort have gone into creating a mechanism to choose the people to sit in these seats, and whilst work is still in progress, in 2002 the steering group of the newly created South East England Faith Forum, selected Bassi Mirzania and myself to take up the two seats.

The role of an assembly member is diverse and can be challenging, both in terms of the complexity of issues covered, and the time required to understand these issues and to respond effectively.

The role of an assembly member is diverse and can be challenging, both in terms of the complexity of issues covered, and the time required to understand these issues and to respond effectively. The current workload has increased significantly to handle a "regional spatial strategy" which is a plan for all of the developments in the region over the years 2006 –

2026. This includes the siting of new hospitals, schools, roads and of course, houses. During the period of the plan, the South East is expected to increase in population by one million people. As a person of faith, it is sometimes unclear what added value one brings, yet there are many occasions when applications of Justice or Mercy are clearly needed. The provision of space and resources for the cultural and spiritual development of a region of 8 million people is also part of our role, and gives us the privilege of working with the leaders of many of the Councils and other agencies in the region. Do please contact me if you have any questions or require more information. IanPChisnall@aol.com 07976 811654

Opportunities with the Regional Forum

The Executive of the South East England Faith Forum is keen to reflect the diversity of faiths in the Region, but at the moment, there are a relatively large group of Christians involved. If you want to find out more about the Regional Faith Forum, or how to become a member of the Executive, contact Peter Southcombe, email, peter.southcombe@btopenworld.com

New Report from the North East

The recently produced report *Faith in the North East: social action by faith communities in the region*, by Kath Smith is well researched and clearly written. It gives both statistics based on a survey, and analysis of key issues. There will be more on this in the next issue of FbRN News. Meanwhile, for more information and to get a copy contact, the Churches Regional Commission in the North East, 0191 3735453, email crcnorth-east@btconnect.com website www.northeastchurches.org.uk

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE AND FAITH BASED REGENERATION

ALAN WALLACE EXAMINES THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE, POINTS TO THE CONTRIBUTION THAT FAITH GROUPS ARE MAKING, AND PRESENTS US WITH SOME CHALLENGES.

The term 'Social Enterprise' covers a multitude of activities: co-operatives, social firms, development trusts and community enterprises, private firms with social objectives, mutuals and so on. Although just one part of the social enterprise agenda, community enterprise is a distinctive and important one. It's about enterprise in support of the community – usually a community of place – to achieve the community's renewal objectives, not the use of the community as a market to support enterprise.

One immensely important lesson was learned over 20 or more years of regeneration and renewal: to be successful the process has to be led and owned by the community concerned. The arrival of 'social enterprise' as the latest pathway to achieving sustainability seems to have pushed that message towards the back burner somewhat. Every community based organisation is being challenged to be more 'business like' and to turn their activity into a 'social enterprise'. How we understand and position community enterprise within the ongoing debate, and thereby influence policy and the consequent range of support and

training frameworks, is critically important. Faith based organisation have a crucial role in this.

So what's so special about community enterprise?

If community enterprise remains undifferentiated within social enterprise, we will find ourselves increasingly pushed towards a market driven model of renewal in which all services can be structured as products and services, marketed, tendered for and delivered under contract. Training and support into the sector will reflect a business model which excludes an understanding of community itself; how investment and support is needed in different forms to address different needs; how for some communities, support for individuals and groups at the smallest level is required, and so on. The Department of Trade and Industry will dominate the operating context, determining the approach to be adopted by Regional Development Agencies, and the civic renewal, regeneration and communities' agenda tied to the approach of the Home Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, imperfect as it is, will be lost. The smallest groups will be thrown even more on to the local authorities for support as they continue to struggle for resources.

We will see a two tier regeneration landscape where larger, more enterprise-focused groups win contracts to deliver service, driven by outputs and value for money, where the survival and success of

the enterprise is paramount, and the ownership and leadership of the enterprise by the community is secondary. Tied to big local authorities and the RDAs, they will push small scale local activity and community initiative to the background and continue their dependency. Statutory bodies, having contracted the delivery of this service to 'a social enterprise' will feel entitled to tick their boxes and move on. Of course it does not have to be like that and already there is encouraging evidence that the community enterprise model can exploit enterprise in the service of community.

Effectively, faith based regeneration activity and community development has had a better chance of overcoming the 'assets issue'.

Faith based organisations have a remarkably successful track record of sustained activity at the local level. Given the fact that often the faith based activity has the advantage of significant human and physical resources to call on in the form of buildings, volunteers and, in some cases, locally based staff, this is hardly surprising. Effectively faith based regeneration activity and community development has had a better chance of overcoming the 'assets issue'.

Assets anyone?

Certainly asset ownership is not for everyone, but reflect for a moment on the financial state of many

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE AND FAITH BASED REGENERATION

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Some of the most dynamic and successful anchor organisations in the country are resource centres built around the assets of Hindu, Muslim and Christian buildings. The success of these needs to be emulated throughout the faith based network and it needs too to be promoted vigorously to statutory agencies as compelling evidence of what can be done if the balance sheet is strong.

community based organisations: If they were in the private sector they would be wound up, so shaky are the finances. For those with an asset base however, it is evident that they have a much enhanced ability to secure their own future and to operate and grow as their communities would wish. Asset acquisition can be a transformational change in the development of an organisation and important opportunities have been opened up by the changes last year in the rules governing the transfer of publicly owned assets to the voluntary and community sector. A recent symposium held by the Development Trusts Association and the Local Government Association, explored the potential of this in some detail and more can be found on the DTA website www.dta.org.uk.

In the ownership of community enterprises, assets can secure and anchor organisations within a community, provide the context within which smaller community initiatives can flourish and provide service, deliver financial security, and the longer-term sustainability we all talk about so much. Of course asset acquisition is not straightforward, it's difficult to achieve but in all the talk about enterprise and earning income we don't seem to be hearing very much about the balance sheet side of the accounts. We need to press more for asset endowment to community owned and led enterprises.

Faith based organisations in hard-pressed communities have effectively been acting as anchor organisations for some time. They have been able to use their physical facilities and draw on the 'paid staff' as well as the volunteers of their religious group. This has provided a kind of 'asset port' in the frequent storms of council cutbacks, terminations of lottery funding streams and windings up of SRB programmes and the like which other groups cannot survive.

Income and Impact

For most, community enterprise activity will always be just one source of income among many, which enables the group to deliver its services and to develop. Community based organisations can be located along a continuum of income source; from 100% grant dependent to 100% traded income. Where each group is located on this continuum reflects the mix of

their income sources. But while we might want to encourage groups to secure more traded income, we don't want to see that at any cost. Too often the cost is community impact, the very thing that set us all going in the first place. Scoring high on the traded income graph is not much use if the effect is a reducing score on the impact line.

Faith based organisations and their networks, and sponsoring bodies, and religious groups have a major responsibility here. As the keepers of independent resources and with their close affinity to, and embeddedness in, the community,

Smaller, less slick, belt and braces type community groups and personal volunteering will continue to be what enables the most hard pressed to survive in poverty.

they can help to keep the social enterprise movement 'honest'. Community groups, often with faith led groups to the fore, have been earning income from trading for decades, if not centuries. They know that sustainability requires resource and commitment for the long term, and it is precisely that commitment and the availability of resource which has kept faith based groups in business while others have come and gone.

This experience implies two important messages to get to the Social Enterprise Unit, and the

Social Enterprise Coalition, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the Active Communities Unit, and the RDAs. Firstly, to be successful communities need assets. It is neither right nor viable, to demand and expect successfully trading enterprising activities in our poorest communities to deliver successful neighbourhoods without asset investment from the public sector.

Secondly, there will be some successful enterprises in our poorest communities and they are to be welcomed. But they will provide only part of the answer and smaller, less slick, belt and braces type community groups and personal volunteering will continue to be what enables the most hard pressed to survive in poverty. Neither the brave new world of social enterprise, nor the successes of some community enterprises should result in anyone taking their eye, or their funding support, off the smallest, most local, least glamorous, best practice at the tough end.

Perhaps there is a third message here too, aimed at those faith based organisations which are not looking as imaginatively as they might, at the potential of their own resources. Some of the most dynamic and successful anchor organisations in the country are resource centres built around the assets of Hindu, Muslim and Christian buildings. The success of these needs to be emulated throughout the faith based network and it needs too to be promoted vigorously to statutory

agencies as compelling evidence of what can be done if the balance sheet is strong.

Alan Wallace is a freelance consultant specialising in community enterprise and neighbourhood renewal. He was formerly Regional Director of the Development Trusts Association and Chief Executive of the Coalfields Regeneration Trust. He remains a Trustee of Priory Campus in Barnsley, a project he helped to establish ten years ago. He can be reached at alan.wallace@fsmail.net

STOP PRESS

A new fund of £3 million for faith groups was announced by the Home Secretary on 19th January. This is part of the Government's new strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion, Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society. For more details see the Home Office website.

NEW COMMUNITY COHESION GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Local Government Association have issued a new publication giving case studies of good practice following their previous Guide in 2002. It demonstrates what can be achieved, but acknowledges that there is still much to be done. There is a section on working with faith communities, and the Guide was produced in partnership with the Inter Faith Network of the UK.

Faith is seen as a key area for community cohesion because it can be a powerful factor in personal and community identity. The guidance recognises the significant role faith communities have in public life at both national and local level and the enrichment different faiths and cultures bring to neighbourhoods.

Community Cohesion – An Action Guide: Guidance for Local Authorities, is available free from:

LGA, Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ, 020 7664 3131, info@lga.gov.uk or download from their website www.lga.gov.uk



DO YOU KNOW HOW TO?

Readers ask for advice or information.

Planning for good relationships

There is quite a lot of advice on how to develop good relationships in multi-cultural and multi-faith neighbourhoods, but what about areas that are currently fairly mono-cultural and set for change? One reader is based in an area of local authority housing on the edge of a multi-cultural city. At the moment the people there are mainly white and Christian, or of no religion. Because of local authority policy, this is about to change. People of different ethnic origins and from different faith traditions will soon be living there. It will be important to establish good relationships between the different groups, and surely this will be easier to do if the right moves are made early in the process.

Do you have any advice about this situation? Have you had a similar experience that we can learn from? Are there any guidelines available?

Accessing the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

A number of readers have been asking about the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. In some areas it seems that faith groups have had difficulty accessing this funding, and that local authorities still have difficulty in understanding the rationale for funding faith organisations. FbRN

would like to begin to build up a picture of what is happening so that we can help to spread good practice.

Have you received money from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund? What channels did it come through? Have you had difficulty accessing this funding?

If you can help with, or have comments on either of these, or have a question or issue, please write to, The Editor, FbRN UK, J2: 4th Floor, Charles House Charity Centre, 375 Kensington High Street, London W14 8QH, or email admin@fbrn.org.uk

ZEN AND THE ART OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

FbRN goes to the Summit – the ‘Delivering Sustainable Communities’ Summit, that is.

FbRN has been invited, in partnership with the Inner Cities Religious Council, to run a workshop at this major three day event being organised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in Manchester from 31st January to 2nd February. This is a follow-up to a similar event two years ago and aims to ‘explore national, regional and local perspectives on sustainable communities in thought provoking plenaries, workshops, masterclasses, site visits, a range of fringe events and a vibrant exhibition’. Two thousand delegates are expected and speakers include the Chancellor and the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Summit presents FbRN with a uniquely valuable opportunity to advocate for the role of faith communities in regeneration and to make links with organisations and individuals from the many sectors involved in regeneration.

The workshop, with the seventy places already booked, will explore the values that should lie at the heart of regeneration. What do people and communities make of all the language about the successful delivery of sustainable communities? How is success measured? Might the ‘grass roots’ know something the professionals have forgotten? Do faith traditions bring any distinctive insights?

In the summer edition of the newsletter, we will report back on how it went.

MEET THE FbRN STAFF

Doreen Finneron

Executive Director



I first became involved in faith based regeneration and community work when I was 'volunteered' to be my church's representative on a group setting up a homelessness project. We were very raw, and made a lot of mistakes that I later realised we could have avoided if we had been in contact with other similar groups, or had guidelines to follow. The organisation we set up has developed from those beginnings, and is still making a contribution to the neighbourhood, but the experience convinced me of the value of networking and sharing good practice.

I worked for thirteen years as a community development officer with the Anglican Diocese of Manchester, and for four years as the National Development Officer of the Church Urban Fund. Most recently, I have been a consultant and worked for a number of organisations, secular and faith-based, including FbRN. I am looking forward to putting FbRN on a more regular footing and taking forward its vision of supporting and enabling faith based regeneration practitioners.

Malcolm Deboo

Development Officer



Shortly after leaving university in 1990, I was requested by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe to set up an in house educational course on Zoroastrianism. The ZTFE was established in 1861 to look after the interest of the Zoroastrians of Europe. As the Information Officer and Archivist for the ZTFE, since 1992, my primary responsibilities were coordinating interfaith activities, disseminating information on Zoroastrianism, especially to interfaith establishments, local and national government agencies. My singular achievement with the ZTFE is that as one of core team members, I have succeeded in creating awareness of the Zoroastrian faith in the UK.

My new role as the Development Officer for the FbRN will be to assist its Executive Director, Doreen Finneron to help realise FbRN's vision of practitioners creating a voice for themselves. I see this as a pioneering role, and look forward to the challenges in ensuring that the FbRN becomes a familiar name within the faith communities of the UK.



TOOLS FOR REGENERATION: A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

The Toolkit, published by FbRN in March 2004, has been well received by practitioners, the local authority sector and other regeneration professionals. There has also been a surprising, and pleasing demand from university departments, teaching regeneration skills to students entering the voluntary, community and government sectors.

The Toolkit offers both theoretical frameworks and practical tools, providing a holistic approach to understanding techniques, skills and responsibilities. It will be useful to faith practitioners and to those seeking to work in partnership with faith communities.

Contents include, the context of faith based regeneration, setting up and managing a community organisation, community development and capacity building, evaluation and performance measurement, fundraising and resource mobilisation, working in partnership.

Cost £9.95 plus £1.90 p&p from the FbRN office.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF FbRN UK

This year FbRN starts an exciting new phase of its development. We have appointed our first Executive Director and we have moved into our new office.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Dr Doreen Finneron as our newly appointed Executive Director. Doreen has been working as our development consultant for quite some time now and knows FbRN's business as well as anyone. We already have a work plan for the year and we are confident that FbRN will move forward rapidly under Doreen's expert guidance. We are also happy to welcome Malcolm Deboo, who has been appointed as Development Officer. Malcolm will take up post mid-January.

The other significant development is our move into office space at Charles House at the Olympia end of London's Kensington High Street. All of this gives us a sense of FbRN as a 'proper' voluntary organization, registered as a Charity, with its own address, and with full-time paid staff.

Of course, no voluntary organization can be 'proper' without a vision and achievable objectives. FbRN, which includes nine faith traditions (Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian), is the only organization in Britain for regeneration practitioners who identify with faith traditions, or who work with or for faith community organisations. Our vision is to help these practitioners and their communities develop their capacity to engage in the vital work of regeneration and to share their values, their knowledge and their experience with each other.

I am thrilled to have been elected Chair of the Trustees/Directors of FbRN, but FbRN could not be where it is now without the vision, the knowledge and the loving motivation of my predecessor, Rumman Ahmed. It was Rumman's vision to start FbRN and it was his persistence and energy that got representatives of the member faith communities together to begin to build the network. Unfortunately ill health made it impossible for Rumman to continue as Chair, but FbRN will continue to grow on the foundations that Rumman helped us build. Rumman remains an adviser and consultant to FbRN and all of us who know him value his friendship.



FbRN shows how people from different faith communities can work together for the common good and, through their collaboration, develop ever deeper friendships. It's an important lesson for the world today.

I look forward to an exciting 2005.
Barney Leith

The Faith Based Regeneration Network UK is funded by the Special Grants Programme of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and supported by the Church Urban Fund, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

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