

It's been quite some time since our last Newsletter; we have been increasing the frequency and quality of our email bulletins. We know from readers that these bulletins are much appreciated (if you don't get our email bulletins and would like to sign up, please fill in the enclosed form and send it to us – or fill it in online at [www.fbrn.org.uk/newsletterdetails](http://www.fbrn.org.uk/newsletterdetails), or send us an email). There are some things though, like reflecting on the Government's **'Face to Face and Side by Side: a Framework for Partnership in Our Multi Faith Society'** (see page 2) that seem to be covered better in the newsletter, and of course not everyone is on email.

FbRN was very involved in the work to develop the Framework, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July. Our research looking at the role and scope of faith based social action, and also at the relationship of the Regional Forums of Faith to regional governance and social action, was used by CLG in preparing the Framework (see our website for a downloadable copy).

The Faiths in Action Fund, which replaced the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, came out of the Framework and the information on our website [www.fbrn.org.uk](http://www.fbrn.org.uk) received hundreds of hits before its November 1st closing date.

At the moment we are working with a group from the faith communities on developing a religious literacy programme for the public sector. There are already a number of training providers, some delivering excellent quality courses. The approach we are aiming for is to provide benchmarking and to fill gaps, so as to improve quality. For more details see our website, and if you run a course, please get in touch.

We are planning our next national conference **"Joining-up-the-Dots"** for March 2009 (see page 7). The focus will be on bridging the gaps between people and organisations working in communities from their faith base, and other sectors, for example, other voluntary and community groups, people in government and the private sector.

Faith based groups can be more effective and flourish when they are well connected. We aim to help participants see what connections will benefit them and how to make those connections.

Look out for more details in our Spring Newsletter and on the website.

**Doreen Finneron**  
 Executive Director

Get Fair campaigning: p5



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# FACE TO FACE: A REFLECTION

## Face to Face and Side by Side: a Framework for Partnership in Our Multi Faith Society

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/facetofaceframework>

Religious traditions generally think and talk in terms of eternal values and ideas. The language we use has invariably evolved and been honed over centuries to reflect subtle and many layered intentions and meanings.

Government departments think and talk in much more immediate terms – tangible changes

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### ***the encounter between government and faith communities is bound to throw up challenges***

that can be achieved within a limited time-span. The language used changes just as often and reflects various influences – popular, academic, professional, and ideological.

So, the interesting encounter between government and faith communities that has taken place over the last ten years is bound to throw up some challenges.

We don't always think or talk in the same way, and even when we appear to be saying the same things, sometimes it turns out that, after all, there are significant differences.

***“Face to Face and Side by Side” is full of currently significant policy language.*** In particular there is the language of ‘social capital’ – referring to



the importance of ‘bonding’, ‘bridging’ and ‘linking’ activities to create vibrant and healthy communities. The paper also establishes three core principles – partnership, empowerment and choice – three terms that have either been revived or established recently as cornerstones of the Government’s policy on communities, cohesion and empowerment.

**It is easy to be critical of this kind of approach – common**

**in government – which tries to tidy all of society into categories, types and neat all-embracing structures.**

Realistically, it is probably the only way Government can approach a complex issue or area – to chunk it down into manageable ideas and strategies. We all do it ourselves when confronted with the unfamiliar but we resist it firmly when someone else tries to do the same to our own area of life or activity.

## Steve Miller independent consultant and FbRN special adviser

So, a challenge for all of us is to see beyond the possibly clumsy, and occasionally irritating, language and structure of *"Face to Face"* and to see the substantive positive content that forms its bulk. At the very least, and through many short case

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### ***there are some real commitments to specific action***

studies, it establishes the active role that faith communities are already playing in many areas and it is full of practical ideas for faith communities and others – perhaps too many as, inevitably, many will simply get lost in the crowd.

In addition to these interesting ideas and examples there are some real commitments to specific action which include support for regional faith forums

who are able to take a strategic perspective, yet still maintain regular relationships with local groups, and programmes to equip local authorities and voluntary sector infrastructure bodies to become better at responding to the needs of faith communities.

But, despite the desire to impose order and structure, and one DCLG staff member wondering out loud whether the paper was possibly too theoretical, my main criticism is not about its attempt to impose a structure but actually that, once you get beyond the chapter headings, it very quickly loses its coherence amidst a mass of examples, suggestions, links and references. Those who



Doreen Finneron and Val Rushton at CLG's *Face to Face* launch

are not already insiders will be struggling to keep up with all these references and may lose interest – which would be a great shame as there is potentially much of value.

Even if we are critical, my reaction to the paper is similar to my advice to local faith groups who complain about being ignored by local authorities and councils for voluntary service.

We have to take some steps ourselves – to engage, to become visible, to let others know what we are already doing, and to be open to learning from a wide variety of others. We can't afford to stand on the sideline criticising this kind of initiative – only showing interest when there is the possibility of some money being handed out – and then criticising again when, inevitably, there isn't enough.

Whatever the actual language used, the message is clear – we have a lot to offer society and we have a lot to gain by **engaging actively with others.**



Dorab Mistry (FbRN Trustee) and Doreen Finneron with Parmjit Dhandar, then CLG minister with responsibility for faith.

# PASSPORT TO PEACE AS FAITH TOURISM COURSE CHECKS IN!

## “Introduction to Faith Tourism” course in Leicester

free and accredited by The National Open College Network  
[www.stphilipscentre.co.uk](http://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk) 0116 2733459

Leicester, as a city which houses many diverse communities and some attractive, and active, places of worship, has a good reputation. However, when public authorities and their partners tour the world to appeal for trade and investment, how genuinely do they refer to the contribution that the faith communities make to the economic and social life of the city or its county?

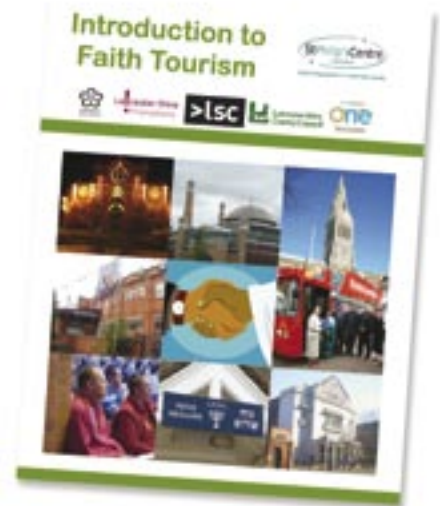
When it comes to tourism, museums, science parks and theatres spring to mind. The infrastructure to monitor how many visitors have attended, how much money they spent and what the quality of their experience was, is available. It is even possible to assess whether visitor numbers have gone up or down year by year.

However, do we know how many visitors come into our Churches, Temples, Synagogues or Mosques? Do we know how many visitors took part in small scale faith exercises such as stalls at village fetes or Melas? What was their experience? How will their learning be taken forward? With faith in the media spotlight, and a tangible desire from the public to learn more about world religions, are we able to demonstrate the contribution that our places of worship and other faith activities are making to the life of our towns and cities? With tens of thousands of tourists expected to visit our shores before and during London 2012, how do we make sure that these guests are welcomed to our places of worship or are able to learn about how faith assists in the creation of a cohesive society?

It was because of the need to answer these questions that the St Philip's Centre, Leicestershire Promotions Ltd and Leicester City Council, through the Learning & Skills Council, met earlier this year to establish how we could take the first steps on the road to making faith a key part of the tourist map of the city and county.

My colleague Clare Downing and I set about drawing up a faith tourism course which would pass on, and develop, the lessons learned from Ruth Tetlow's work in Birmingham. Our course would train volunteers, or those wishing to develop careers in tourism, about understanding their own faith as well as those of others. However, a critical part of our course was to develop the communication, presentation and customer service skills of the participants. Whether greeting people inside places of worship or staging an exhibition stand, these skills are vital if we are to showcase the positive contributions that our faiths make to our world. The course will focus on improving on Leicester's good reputation; therefore how we communicate with our different visitors is important.

Our biggest challenge was to establish a 'buy-in' for our course. It was clear that both Leicestershire Promotions and Leicester City Council needed no convincing about the value that this course could bring to the city. They instantly supported us with funding and course content. The result was that a new ten week 'Introduction to Faith Tourism'



course began in October 2008. Participants from six different faiths have signed up and we are already receiving applications for the January 2009 course.

**The commitment and enthusiasm shown by the participants so far has already materialised in positive changes.** I know of one participant who, alongside his church volunteers, has begun work on a visitor guide document to cover the story behind the building as well as the human stories such as the work volunteers do in the name of faith, for example, charitable collections and activities for young people.

There are many possibilities and opportunities for the faith tourism course and its participants which we are still exploring with our partners. **The course has demonstrated how faith can be showcased in an imaginative and innovative way.**

Riaz Ravat Faith Training  
Development Manager, St Philip's  
Centre, Leicester

# GET FAIR CAMPAIGN



## Get Fair's aim is to eradicate UK poverty by 2020.



So far, more than 50 organisations have joined the coalition and, as the campaign gathers pace, the message will get louder.

On September 11th this year, following a parliamentary launch in May, Get Fair launched a website and the public-facing campaign against poverty in the UK.

The hope is that this will be a stimulus for organisations and individuals to build grass roots support over the following weeks and months, with regular campaign updates. **Get Fair** aims to help people to understand clearly that poverty exists and what it means to be poor in the UK.

The campaigners want to inspire people to take action in their communities. There are activities planned for February 2009 (Poverty and Homelessness Action Week) and a mass constituency lobby of MPs scheduled for April 2009.

To register your support and to find out more about how you can get involved, with campaign packs and regular updates, go to [www.getfair.org.uk](http://www.getfair.org.uk)

### Coalition members

Among those already signed up to the campaign are: Church Action on Poverty, Church Urban Fund, Disability Alliance, Help the Aged, Inclusion Scotland, Mind, Muslim Council of Britain, One Parent Families, Oxfam UK Poverty Programme, Refugee Action, Refugee Council and Save the Children. Everyone in the coalition is committed to challenging poverty and lobbying government to commit to zero poverty by 2020.

### Timetable of events

The campaign will focus on activity in the run up to the next General

Election, which will take place in 2009-10. This approach will achieve maximum profile and engagement with supporters, civil society groups and the wider public. In October a rally was held in Trafalgar Square and next year's plans include:

**February 09 – Action Week:** 'Poverty Monologues' telling the real life stories of how poverty impacts on the lives of people across UK

**Spring 2009 – Lobby and rally event** (provisional) supplemented by on-going activities

Regular bulletins, e-actions, and a campaign pack are available for campaigners. For further information or to register support for the campaign and to receive campaign updates by post or email, visit: [www.Getfair.org.uk](http://www.Getfair.org.uk) or contact Niall Cooper, email: [niallc@church-poverty.org.uk](mailto:niallc@church-poverty.org.uk)



pics, inc front page: October's rally in Trafalgar Square, photos with permission of End Child Poverty

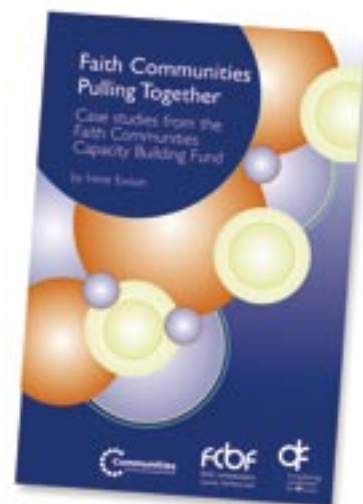
# PUBLICATIONS

## Faith Communities Pulling Together

Case studies from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

by Irene Evison

This excellent new publication from the Community Development Foundation draws key messages from the hundreds of projects funded through the FCCBF. These messages and learning points are about: developing structures and processes that facilitate interaction and social action, improving opportunities for learning that build understanding between communities, supporting shared spaces for interaction and social action, fostering confidence and skills to bridge and link, women and young people, and contributing to civil society. These messages are underlined by the case studies which give a depth of understanding to the analysis. The book will be useful to anyone active in faith based social action, community development and regeneration, in developing and growing their own work, and also in providing an analysis that demonstrates the value of faith based work to wider society.



### **Faith Communities Pulling Together**

is available from the Community Development Foundation: price £14.95.

Other CDF publications which might interest you include **Faith Groups and Government**, and **Faith, Cohesion and Community Development**.

CDF, Unit 5, Angel Gate, 320-326 City Road, London EC1V 2PT [www.cdf.vbnlive.com](http://www.cdf.vbnlive.com)

## Who is my neighbour?

A Church response to social disorder.

by Dr Joe Aldred, Dr Sophie Hebden, Dr Keith Hebden

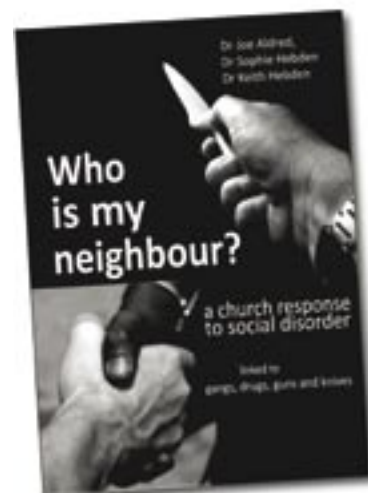
© Churches Together in England Charity Number 1110782

As knife crime becomes a heightened national concern, Churches Together in England (CTE) have produced this report. It recommends ways in which the government, churches and the police service can work together more effectively to reduce gang related crime linked to drugs, guns and knives.

At a time when gun and knife crime reports and discussions are dominating the headlines, **Who is my neighbour?** is an expression of CTE's deep concern about violent disorder and violent crime, especially the death of young people. The report highlights these worries and suggests practical ways to work together to address the issues head on. The recommendations encourage long-term strategic partnerships between churches, community groups, the police, criminal justice partners and local authorities.

Enquiries: **Bishop Joe Aldred** (Chair, Council of Black-led Churches) 0777 536 2288 [joe.aldred@cte.org.uk](mailto:joe.aldred@cte.org.uk)  
A pdf copy is available at [www.churches-together.net](http://www.churches-together.net)

Hard copies of the report are available from Churches Together in England, contact [office@cte.org.uk](mailto:office@cte.org.uk) or phone 020 7529 8132. £6.50 each including post & package



## **Joining-up-the-Dots FbRN's national conference in March 2009**

We know that faith based groups contribute to communities, to cohesion, and to social and economic development, but **members of these groups can often feel that they are small, insignificant dots on the landscape.** However, when they work in a 'joined-up' way with other voluntary and community organisations they can increase the impact of what they do and even make their work easier. These connections can give access to better resources and support. Links with local government, social services and other public sector organisations help to create the type of climate in which faith based groups can thrive. Links with business can help too with resources and support, sometimes in unexpected ways.

If you are with a faith based group, **Joining-up-the-Dots**, FbRN's national conference in March 2009 will help you to see what connections will benefit you and how to make them. If you are aiming to work with faith groups, it will help to build your profile and develop your understanding of what faith based groups need and can contribute.

There will be more information in e-bulletins, in the next newsletter and on our website from the end of December.

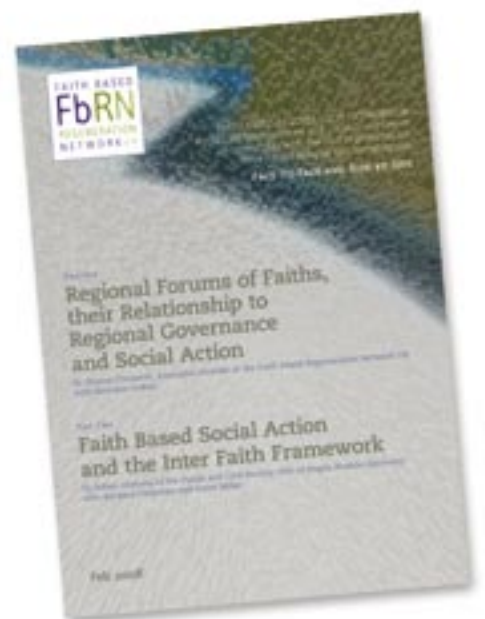
## **Report on Regional Forums of Faiths**

Available on our website (as a download only) is a report on the relationship of the regional forums of faiths to regional governance and social action. Commissioned by the Department of Communities and Local Government and produced in February 2008, it demonstrates the roles and potential of the existing and emerging regional forums of faiths.

## **Faith Based Social Action: looking at scale and scope**

This FbRN report is also available on our website. Commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government in connection with the Framework for Partnership in our Multi Faith Society and written for FbRN by Dr Adam Dinham of Goldsmiths College, University of London, it includes:

- What faiths bring to wider society
- Support mechanisms for faith based social action
- The effectiveness of non faith specific funding in reaching faith based community groups
- What government and faiths can do.



## Letter from the Chair of FbRN

**the Hon Barney Leith**

The global financial crisis is forcing us to think again about the nature of prosperity.

It is time to re-examine the prevailing patterns of social and economic development.

The relentless pursuit of wealth in an impersonal marketplace can no longer be seen as the best – let alone the only – way to sustainable prosperity for the world's peoples. We can surely no longer believe that a purely materialistic approach to development will give us the peace and prosperity we seek.

It is clear that most people, regardless of whether they have a specific faith or not, do not think of themselves as purely material beings.

The world's great faiths teach that we are moral beings with spiritual aspirations and purposes. It is time to look to the world's spiritual resources and values as roots of our work – something that we at FbRN regard as being fundamental to what we do.

When spiritual principles are fully integrated into community development activities, the ideas, insights, and practical measures that emerge are more likely to promote self-reliance and preserve human honour. An approach to development that incorporates moral and spiritual imperatives is more likely to lead to enduring changes in both individual and collective behaviour.

If it is to be effective, development activity must directly address the inner life and character of human beings as well as the organization of society. Its purpose must be to promote a process of social change that engenders cooperation, compassion, rectitude of conduct, and justice.



### FbRN Trustees

Barney Leith	Bahá'í
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Dr Natubhai Shah	Jain
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### The Faith Based Regeneration Network UK

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

### Using the FbRN website [www.fbrn.org.uk](http://www.fbrn.org.uk)

We have been improving our website over the past year and it is, of course, an on-going process with new sections in development. You can send items for inclusion to me at [valr@fbrn.org.uk](mailto:valr@fbrn.org.uk) or for jobs, events and news you can choose either to input them yourself or send them to me. Many of the items are also used in the e-bulletins which means that they reach a few thousand people around the country.

And it's all free! *Val Rushton*