



FAITH BASED REGENERATION NETWORK UK
Report for Communities and Local Government
in connection with the CLG Framework for
Inter Faith Dialogue and Social Action

FACE-TO-FACE AND SIDE-BY-SIDE

Part One

Regional Forums of Faiths, their Relationship to Regional Governance and Social Action

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Part Two

Faith Based Social Action and the Inter Faith Framework

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Part One

Regional Forums of Faiths, their Relationship to Regional Governance and Social Action

Introduction and Context

The Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) has been asked to establish:

- How the regional forums of faiths (RFF) relate to the structures of regional governance
- How they relate to social action, regeneration and community development
- Where their funding and support comes from in undertaking these roles

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) is conducting research as part of its own core work programme, to establish information about the inter faith work of the Forums, including how this is funded and resourced. Information from this will also help inform the development of the CLG Framework. FbRN and IFN have worked closely together to ensure that their respective research is complementary.

The regional forums to which this report refers are those which are recognised by regional governance instruments as the primary forum in their region and which, in most cases, nominate to the 'faith seat' in the Regional Assembly. There are regional forums of faiths in all regions except London and the North East where there are processes to bring one into being. For the sake of clarity in this report, the term RFF is used generically, though the exact nomenclature differs across the regions. Where just one regional RFF is being referred to, its particular name or abbreviation is used (see list of abbreviations above).

It is anticipated that readers of this report will need to access the material in a number of ways. It first looks at the information from the existing RFFs in relation to the questions asked by CLG. Then there is information on the stage of development in London and the North East and plans for the future. A section on the potential and resources needed for RFFs to develop follows.

Appendix one is a summary of each existing RFF, this means that there is some repetition of material from the main report, but we envisage that this

presentation of material may be most useful for some purposes.

Appendix two is a copy of the questionnaire sent to RFFs and Appendix three is a list of those consulted in preparing this report.

Methodology

FbRN has liaised with IFN on the production of a series of questions to the RFFs. Each organisation has sent its questionnaire separately, with the connection between them clearly explained. Each RFF (or embryonic RFF in 2 regions) responded to the questionnaire either in written form or in a telephone interview. FbRN has also used published information (hard copy and web-site) and interviews with other key stakeholders to gather the data. (See appendix 3 for full list).

Note on terminology: in different regions, the forum for the faiths uses different names and in some actually acts through an associated partnership agency (eg in the South West, the Council of Faiths is active largely through faithnetsouthwest). For the purpose of this report, the term RFF is used for all these bodies with the individual distinctions being given in the detailed regional sections.

Relationship with Structures of Regional Governance

The establishment of RFFs has, in the main, been a response to the regional agenda of Government. There are currently RFFs in all regions except London, where plans are well advanced, and the North East, where a group is actively seeking to develop an RFF. The existing RFFs are at different stages of development, have different structures and aspirations for future development. This section of the report focuses on the relationship that the existing RFFs have with regional governance. London and the North East are treated in a separate section.

All the established RFFs have a seat on the Regional Assembly, and all but the least well resourced (eg East Midlands) also contribute to committees and advisory groups connected to regional governance. For most of the RFFs, the initial reason for their formation was to develop this relationship between the faith communities and regional governance. However, all RFFs have seen the potential benefits of a regional level of operation for the development of other aspects of the work with faith communities and have either developed, or aspire to develop this further; for example the East of England and the North West RFFs have conducted research into the contribution of faith communities to wider society.

In a number of instances, the faith representative on the Regional Assembly is Chair or Vice-Chair of a sub-group or committee of the Assembly. The representative has been voted into these positions, it is not accorded them as a function of being the

faith representative. However it is a comment on the degree of involvement and competence of those sent to the Assembly by the faith communities, that they are elected into these positions.

The highest levels of engagement at the moment are with the Regional Assemblies and the GOs. The RFFs are aware that, as Regional Policy is changing, they need to develop better working relationships with the RDAs and are keen to do so.

However, a number report that so far this has been difficult and they perceive this is because of the RDA focus on jobs, skills and economic output. An exception to this is the North West where the RFF is based in the RDA offices, and this aids working relationships.

A table showing the relationships of the different RFFs to regional levels of governance and other governance structures follows.

Regional Forum	Relationship to Regional Level of Governance	Other governance relationships
<p>South West (<i>faithnetsouthwest</i>)</p>	<p>Regional Assembly: faith place filled by <i>faithnetsouthwest</i></p> <p>GO South West: places on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regional Rural Advisory Group ■ Black and Ethnic Minority Sub-Committee <p>RDA: have served on some advisory groups but want to develop better links</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ worked with several County and District Councils to establish and support local Faith Forums ■ have developed good links with Equality & Diversity Officers in Local Authorities across the region ■ work with the Regional Offender Management Service (ROMS) and have delivered training to staff from the Social Care Commission
<p>South East (South East England Regional Faiths Forum – SEEFF)</p>	<p>Regional Assembly: has two faith places</p> <p>GO South East: involved in 2 of GOSE networks and a GOSE meeting for local authority officers with a brief for faith communities</p> <p>RDA (SEEDA): good working relationship</p>	

Regional Forum	Relationship to Regional Level of Governance	Other governance relationships
<p>East of England (East of England Faiths Council – EEFC)</p>	<p>Regional Assembly: faith place filled by EEFC (as a result of lobbying from EEFC)</p> <p>GO East: close relationship, GO has part-funded research. GO also uses EEFC as consultants</p> <p>RDA (EEDA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ representative on EEDA’s Regional Equalities Forum ■ works closely with Inspire East (EEDA-hosted organisation with responsibility for sustainable communities eg organising a joint conference) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ works with the Faith Representatives to provide support on the LSP (about 20 out of the 54 LSPs have a Faith Representative) ■ aims to fill the gaps in LSPs where currently there are no Faith Representatives ■ Environmental Agency ■ Regional Offender Management Service
<p>East Midlands (Faiths Forum for the East Midlands – FFEM)</p>	<p>Regional Assembly: Faiths seat filled by FFEM</p>	
<p>West Midlands (West Midlands Faiths Forum - WMFF)</p>	<p>Regional Assembly: Faiths seat filled by WMFF Directorship of WMRA Membership of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Other Stakeholders Group ■ Equalities Partnership ■ Strategic Review Group ■ WMSPAR (asylum & refugee partnership) <p>Observer from WMRA attends WMFF meetings</p> <p>GO West Midlands: Observer from GOWM attends WMFF meetings. Co-working and consultation undertaken around cohesion and Primary English Test issues. Work and conferences on LA Faithlink Officers role and other issues. Regular meetings with GO officers</p> <p>RDA (AWM): Observer from AWM attends WMFF meetings. Meetings with AWM officers</p>	<p>Works with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WM Local Government Association ■ EHRC (WM Office) ■ HM Prison Chaplaincy Group ■ WM Fire Service ■ Sustainability West Midlands <p>Member of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National Offender Management Service pathway 7 Regional Group ■ Some engagement with LSPs ■ Work with MPs, councillors, LAs and faiths communities in setting up new sub-regional inter faith groups ■ Destination West Midlands – Regional ChangeUp Consortia

Regional Forum	Relationship to Regional Level of Governance	Other governance relationships
<p>Yorkshire and the Humber (Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum – YHFF)</p>	<p>Regional Assembly: Faith seat filled by YHFF Representation on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic panel. ■ National Offender Management Service ■ Rural Affairs Forum <p>GO Yorkshire and Humber: Very good working relationship, have regular quarterly meetings in GO offices</p> <p>RDA (YF): Works with YF</p>	<p>Works with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sheffield Council eg to make Sheffield the UK’s first City of Sanctuary for asylum-seekers and refugees ■ SEE Partners (Social, Economic and Environmental Agency) Yorkshire & Humber region
<p>North West North West Forum of Faiths – (NWFF)</p>	<p>Regional Assembly: 2 faith seats (one for NWFF and 1 for the Churches) Faith rep is Chair of SEE partners and Vice Chair of NWRA</p> <p>GO North West: Working relationship</p> <p>RDA (NWDA): Office of NWFF is based within the headquarters of NWDA and this aids the development of good relationships.</p>	<p>Representation on NW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Faith and Cohesion Unit ■ Department of Health ■ Culture North West ■ Migrant Workers North West ■ National Offender Management Service ■ North West Emergency Planning ■ Regional Economic Strategy ■ Regional Spatial Strategy (NWRSS) part of NWRA

All RFFs see the potential for further developing their work with the structures of governance. An example of what can be achieved is provided by the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Link Group (see below). A view from GO SE gives an idea of what a robust RFF will be able to contribute to the South East Region (see below).

The most common barriers to RFFs achieving their potential are:

- lack of capacity on the part of the RFFs (usually equated with a lack of funding)
- the high turnover of staff in some regional structures
- a mind-set and focus of officers in some of the structures in some of the regions which does not see the value and role of faith communities
- the effect of some government initiatives that produce the feeling that particular faith groups have been targeted for favourable treatment or restrictions

A Regional Government Office View of the Role of a Regional Forum of Faiths - From GO South East

At the moment the South East England Faiths Forum (SEEFF) is not effective because of a lack of funding, but SEEFF has recently taken steps to reinvigorate itself. It has begun a consultation process to find out what is needed from an RFF in the region. GOSE is supporting this by paying for the planning of a consultation conference and funding the SEEFF website and work on the data-base. The regional voluntary sector body, RAISE, in partnership with SEEFF has submitted an application to the Capacity Builders Improving Reach Programme. If successful this will provide SEEFF with a development worker based with RAISE.

GOSE wants to see faith communities fulfilling their potential in the Region. In this the role of SEEFF is:

- to represent faiths at organisational levels, for example, on the Equalities and Human Rights Network, the Regional Cross Sector Partnerships
- to develop local and regional awareness of the role of faith in social cohesion, social capital, the delivery of services
- to provide support to faiths and faith bodies at regional and sub-regional levels

The type of support for faith based social action SEEFF could provide includes, information on good practice, networking, briefing on policy, signposting to resources and training, linking local projects for mutual support, encouraging faiths to respond to regional issues.

It will be able to capacity build faith based organisations and support faith representatives on LSPs, making sure that the needs of communities are understood by the local authority service providers. SEEFF will be able to help identify priority work and the areas where faith based organisations can help to improve services.

SEEFF will encourage inter faith dialogue at all levels and be able to identify small, minority faith groups and encourage them to participate in inter faith work.

What SEEFF needs in order to fulfil these roles is:

- funding for core staff and other costs
- to establish a diverse membership and good representation from all the faiths.

Building effective links in Yorkshire & the Humber

Yorkshire & Humber Regional Faith Links Group

Yorkshire & the Humber's Faith Links group was set up in 2006 to address a set of needs and opportunities identified by both regional public sector bodies and key faith-based agencies delivering or supporting faith-based social action or initiatives promoting cohesion.

The Faith Links group aims to build trusting relationships between key players in all sectors and to provide a forum for sharing information and concerns and a platform for effective practical co-operation in the interests of promoting cohesion.

It didn't happen out of thin air. There was already an existing pattern of shared work involving faith groups and regional public bodies and a common acknowledgment of the immense potential (and actual) contribution of faith communities to community life in the region. But there was also recognition of a need for more effective communication and co-ordination - not least, a forum where full and frank discussion could take place around sensitive areas (including, for example, cohesion tension monitoring and some of the concerns of faith communities around the prevention of extremism agenda).

Hosted and co-ordinated by the Head of Community Cohesion and Faith at the Government Office (GOYH), its core membership includes key players from the region's strategic faith-based networks (the Regional Faiths Forum, the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire & Humber, the Active Faith Communities Programme, and local Faiths Forums as well as the Faith Seat holder on the Regional Assembly and senior officers from the Assembly and Yorkshire Forward).

This is not, however, some dry institutional quango. Meetings take place every couple of months over a whole morning and finishing with lunch. Once a year a much wider group of people from key agencies covering all sectors is invited to assemble, with shared food as the means of building the network and sparking opportunities for developing understanding and co-operation. The emphasis is very much on building relationships and the open discussion of community issues in order to create effective action in the long run. Bonding, bridging and linking in action!

So what is it achieving? For the public sector bodies it provides a direct link to the faith communities in the region and a critical friendship role with regard to decisions that affect them. For the faith communities it provides the opportunity to be kept informed of GOYH and central government policies and their implications for faith communities, and the opportunity to voice their concerns and needs. Already it has hosted two major consultation events on matters of current concern – one dealing with issues in relation to migrant workers, the other a meeting of leaders of Black Majority Churches in the region who highlighted, in no uncertain terms, the need for sustainable resources to fulfil their massive potential for social action. Perhaps even more potent is the range of contacts and relationships it has already created – for example introducing faith-based workers with skills in religious literacy and conflict resolution to academic institutions and local authority departments that need those skills and now plan to make use of them.

The Faith Links Group is a work in progress, but the indications so far are that - because of its informal style focused on developing trust first – it is very much achieving what it set out to provide: a channel of communication that makes a real difference, building co-operation and confidence and supporting practical action at neighbourhood level.

Ian Owers, formerly of Active Faith Communities Programme, West Yorkshire

Relationship to Social Action

Note on terminology:

Social action: projects, programmes or aspects of work that intend to achieve positive benefits for the welfare of the faith community or wider social groupings.

Regeneration: projects, programmes or aspects of work that are connected to the building up of community life which may, or may not, include the built environment.

Community development: empowering communities; it focuses particularly on disadvantaged and excluded groups, enables people to develop skills and confidence and participate actively in bringing about positive change in their community.

These terms overlap in many aspects and for the purposes of this report 'social action' is used to cover them all. The relationship between these terms will be explored in the final report.

The different RFFs have evolved different means of relating to faith based social action, this is because they have different histories, capacities and views of their purposes. The regions also have different needs, and the structures and support systems already in existence are different. Nevertheless there are interesting and useful points of overlap and comparison.

RFFs, in the main, do not see themselves as direct deliverers of social action, but rather as supporting and facilitating the faith communities and faith based organisations to take part in social action. All existing RFFs support faith based social action in their region by disseminating relevant information to faith based organisations and through networking activities.

In addition, four of the better resourced Forums (EEFC, *faithnetsouthwest*, WMFF, YHFF) also organise seminars or training. WMFF and EEFC offer mentoring to individual organisations.

All but one of the RFFs sees supporting faith based social action as being an important area for further development. The exception is the NWFF which does not aspire to be a delivery body but ensures that faith communities respond effectively to opportunities to influence policy issues determined by public agencies at regional level. While recognising the value of faith based social action, it believes that delivery is best left to local and neighbourhood groups.

RFFs see the potential for benefit to the faith communities, and to wider society, from faith based social action as being very great. The main barriers that prevent this are, lack of resources and capacity (primarily funding), and the short term of funding which makes planning for reliable support difficult. The longer established and better funded RFFs have developed this stream of work more fully than the newer RFFs.

The support for social action by **EEFC** is through **FaithNetEast**. FaithNetEast has been funded by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and its remit is as a regional infrastructure to mediate information and learning about policy, skills, funding and community development between the regional and the local. This body is not representative but rather acts as an agency to support the region's faith communities in social and community activity, including engagement with the public sector. At the same time FaithNetEast fosters a strategic focus, linking up initiatives across the regions where it is thought that networking and co-working might be of benefit, and tying locally based activities into regional thinking and practices.

The role and contribution of a regional forum of faiths

The Faiths Forum gives capacity to building the inter faith agenda and in creating the necessary respect and understanding to allow it to flourish. It is also about the building of long term relationships of trust which serve as a secure basis for working together to address common issues and agendas. Faith groups are part of the social fabric and the social glue. Though they may not drive the regional education, health and economic agendas as in long past eras, they are still major providers and users of services, especially at a local level. Where there are challenges in engaging with faith, enabling infrastructure bodies like RFFs, provide the opportunity to find solutions.

John Hall, WMFF

It is also careful to respect the power and autonomy of faith structures for social action at the neighbourhood level and sees itself as a facilitator of the local as and where it is sought out and welcomed. FaithNetEast also works with the Regional Development Agency to reflect the regional priorities as they relate to faiths. Thus it has set up 'specialist support networks' (mostly facilitated by ICT but also in face to face meetings) for faith groups doing work with migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, skills improvers and lifelong learners, social enterprise and people wishing to return to employment. It also runs seminars and events to support faiths in their social action.

Faithnetsouthwest is a similar body and is a partnership between four organisations, the South West Council of Faiths, the South West Churches Regional Forum, the Churches Council for Industry and Social Responsibility (ISR) based in Bristol and Swindon, and Exeter Diocesan Council for Churches and Society. Its aims are to, support all churches and faith groups engaging in social or community activity in the South West region, help faith groups and regional bodies involved in these activities to share information on good practice and share this information with funders and policy makers, help faith groups and local and regional bodies to reach a better understanding of one another and to support existing forums and develop networks where the distinctive voices of the faith groups in the region can be heard.

It supports regional and sub-regional faith-based infrastructure e.g. the faith forums such as those at County and District level and a number of thematic networks such as an emerging faith and equalities network, a network of faith groups interested in tendering for public contracts, a network of faith representatives on regional and subregional public bodies. This entails a degree of community development, forming structures of governance and communication and giving funding advice.

Faithnetsouthwest produces research reports, such as 'Faith in Action in the South West', demonstrating the contribution that faith groups are making in the South West of England in providing a wide range of social welfare and community services, both formally through projects, and informally through their work in the community. It provides the first comprehensive regional summary of these activities and includes some key examples of the kind of contribution that faith groups can make.

Faithnetsouthwest also organises conferences, such as 'People on the Move' to assist faith based groups wanting to work with asylum seekers and refugees. It advises faith groups on funding, capacity building, support and training on partnership working and community involvement, on setting up social enterprises and tendering for contracts.

WMFF aims include, to facilitate discussion between and research among faith communities on matters of social and religious concern, to help build the capacity of faith communities to engage with policy-makers and service providers at local, sub-regional and regional levels and to act as their advocate, to encourage community cohesion both through inter faith dialogue and discussion with the wider public.

WMFF has produced a number of reports aimed at raising the profile of faith based social action and improving its effectiveness including: '*Believing in the Region*' on the contribution of faith communities to life in the region; a policy paper: '*Key Issues for Faith Based Regeneration: maximising the contribution of faith communities in the West Midlands*' with a CD ROM providing valuable links to sources of technical support available to faith based organisations. It also organises conferences and training events such as the '*Light and Shade*' conference which explored faith and race in the West Midlands and '*Cohesion through Faith: good practice and positive action in the West Midlands*'.

WMFF, funded through CapacityBuilders, has a signposting and help desk to assist faith based organisations to identify and access a range of generic support services through the Hubs. Research has also been commissioned to provide a faiths engagement strategy for implementation by Change Up consortia as part of their mainstreaming equalities and diversity agendas. The resulting '*A Faith Group Engagement Strategy*' is a tool to help generic infrastructure support organisations to develop more responsive services. This project has been effective and well received and opened up many contacts and future possibilities.

WMFF uses its website and database to advertise and promote many services and events, sends speakers to a variety of seminars and other meetings of social significance and provides an independent chair for seminars and conferences – eg on migrant workers.

Views on the support of faith based social action

These activities are at the core of what the SW Council of Faiths and the other partner organisations set up faithnetsouthwest to do, and we would wish to develop them further. The challenges are to do with funding and capacity – there is no shortage of opportunity!

Heather Pencavel, faithnetsouthwest

We intend to focus on the poorest in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The mapping has been conducted. We want to move away from having tea and samosas, though it's a useful starting point, and take some action.

Inderjit Bhogal, Yorkshire and the Humber Faiths Forum

Most RFFs are well connected to the wider regional agendas. Working with a wide array of regional, sub regional and local organisations across sectors, they bring a faith voice to policies and initiatives and also act to link the faith communities to wider society in the region.

All RFFs report a good working relationship with other Voluntary and Community Sector bodies and in some cases this is very close, for example the Director of EEFC is the Vice-Chair of the VCS regional umbrella body and Chair of Rural Action East, and EEFC works on joint projects with the Black and Ethnic Minority Network Eastern Region. WMFF works with the WM Race Equality Partnership, and the WM Regional Observatory.

RFFs are keen to point faith based organisations to resources in the wider VCS where these are appropriate, for example WMFF is a part of the ChangeUp Consortium and has produced guidance for VCS generic support organisations to develop more responsive services for faith groups. They have no wish to duplicate or compete with VCS infrastructure bodies. However, a number report that faith based organisations experience barriers in accessing these resources, a point picked up in the accompanying report on faith based social action, and that there is a need for effective signposting and also the development and dissemination of specialist resources.

A number of RFFs said that they would like to develop more systematic strategies for ensuring that faith based organisations access VCS generic support. The emerging English Regional Faiths Forums Network is well placed to assist this sharing of good practice between RFFs.

There are a number of other organisations, local, regional and national which provide specific sup-

port to faith based organisations engaging in social action (see the section on faith based social action). In all cases the RFF seeks to work cooperatively with these organisations. However the regions are very different in terms of the existence and coverage of these organisations.

Funding of RFFs for supporting social action

The extent to which the RFFs have been successful in raising funding for this work varies greatly between regions. Generally speaking, the amount of funding bears a fairly direct and obvious relationship to the amount of work undertaken and the effectiveness of the RFF. However, it is striking that both NWFF and SEEFF have had no funding for this work, yet NWFF reports much more activity than SEEFF. The crucial difference is that NWFF is serviced by a full-time member of staff paid for by a faith community, receives in kind support from the RDA, is located in the NWDA offices and has good relationships with the structures and officers of NWDA. SEEFF, on the other hand, is supported by some time and office costs from existing staff from the churches in the region, and GO SE is supporting a consultation conference on the future development of SEEFF. This demonstrates the vital difference made by having core staff that are fully committed to the development of the RFF.

The following table relates to sources of funding and resources for the support of social action in the financial years 2006-7 and 2007-8. In addition to the sources listed below, the following RFFs reported that they generated income through contracting delivery of services to other organisations: *faithnet-southwest*, FaithNetEast, WMFF.

	Cap B £	FCCBF £	Reg gov £	Faith Coms £	Other £	In Kind
<i>faithnetsouthwest</i>	yes	yes		South West Churches		Nat gov: speaker Reg gov: conference venue, printing Faith coms: % of salary and costs
South East England Regional Faiths Forum						Faith coms: some time of their own paid staff, some office costs GOSE: supporting a conference
East of England Faiths Council and faithneteast		yes	EEDA: % of core work, research. GO-East: research	% of core work		GO-East: conference venue
Faiths Forum for the East Midlands						
West Midlands Faiths Forum	yes	yes	GOWM: grant		Local business	GO provides meeting rooms Faith communities and members give significant time and resources in kind
Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum	yes		YHRA, Yorkshire Forward			YHRA: temporary staff
North West Forum of Faiths				Salary		NWDA: office and costs.

Cap B: Capacity Builders

FCCBF: Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

Reg gov: Regional Government

Nat gov: National Government

Faith Coms: Faith communities

The amount of funding varies considerably across the regions. Three RFFs do not receive any funding, though one of these does receive regular in-kind support from the RDA and states that it sees its role as limited and specific and does not seek funding. The other two would like to further develop their potential for supporting faith based organisations.

Four RFFs do receive funding for their role in sup-

porting faith based social action. Three of these (EEFC, *faithnetsouthwest*, WMFF) have received grants from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund. Three (*faithnetsouthwest*, WMFF, YHFF) have received funding from Capacity Builders.

A number of different government departments have programmes that are interested in encouraging faith based social action. The funding streams associated with these programmes have sometimes been applied in a manner that has seemed, to those in the RFFs, not to be well coordinated. An example was the funding of Faith Action by the Office of the Third Sector, to be the voice of faith and community organisations delivering public services, and to develop regional hubs to carry forward this work. Two RFFs are now involved, but there is a feeling that better coordination by government funders could have used resources more efficiently.

Some RFFs receive funding from the regional governance organisations. This supports their engagement with regional governance, but also helps maintain a core from which to build the support of social action. YHFF receives funding from the RDA and the regional assembly, WMFF receives a grant from GOWM, EEFC received some core funding from the RDA.

All RFFs receive occasional support from the regional governance organisations, most often in the form of payment for conferences or specific pieces of work.

All RFFs depend heavily on in-kind support from faith communities, for example SEEFF depends on the work of paid employees of a number of churches and EEFF receives funding for its core work from the Church Leaders of the Region. The staffing for the NWFF is provided by the Churches Officer for the North West.

A number of the RFFs have funding which will run out at the end of March 2008. The funding they have received so far has been used to develop capacity, to engage with regional governance and support faith based social action. If CLG wishes to build on this capacity in the new 'Framework for Inter Faith Dialogue and Social Action' it is vital that there is cover for the gap in funding between the end of current programmes and the start of the new programmes associated with the Framework.

Towards Regional Forums of Faiths in London and the North East

Regional Faiths Network for the North East (RFN)

Background

The North East does not have a constituted RFF, but rather a Regional Faiths Network which could well evolve into a forum. This is being led by the Churches' Regional Commission in the North East (CRC). A Faiths Task Group was set up in 2006 comprising of all the known inter faith bodies in the Region. This group has agreed terms of reference which are currently out for consultation. Most of the inter faith bodies have taken an active interest and many are running focus groups as part of the consultation process.

The Faiths Task Group, which is the core of the Regional Faiths Network, meets monthly and organises regional events at least four times a year. It aims to develop local and sub-regional inter faith bodies across the region as well as to support those that already exist. It is addressing issues of concern to faith communities and stimulating public debate. The development of RFN is being funded through the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and One North East (the Regional Development Agency).

Relationship to governance

Government Office for the North East (GO-NE) as well as providing funding for some RFN initiatives, is encouraging the development of the RFF. It has asked the Task Group to run a consultation day on the CLG Framework for inter faith dialogue and social action

It is envisaged that the RFN will provide regional representation for all its members. There is currently one faith seat on the Regional Assembly that is shared by two people. One is nominated by the Church Leaders Group, the other by the Faith Leaders Group. The RFN is working on the implications of the Sub-Regional National Review as it affects the Assembly.

CRC, representing the Faith Task Group, is involved in the faith alliance taking forward the work of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in the North East.

RFN plans to work with local authorities, LSPs, and other public bodies. It is currently developing faiths training to help public bodies and faith communities to engage more effectively with each other. This is being funded by Government Office for the North East & One North East. The training will be based largely on “Understanding Faiths”, a religious literacy resource developed by the CRC for Yorkshire & Humber, the Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum, CRC for the NE, and the Churches’ Officer for the North West. “Understanding Faiths” was launched in the North East by the RFN.

Relationship to the VCS

The Chief Officer of CRC in NE leads on the faith strand in the Regional Voluntary and Community Sector Equalities Coalition. Through the Coalition, CRC receives a grant from One North East towards the work on the RFN as well as for other, related development of faith based social action.

Support for faith based social action

The Faiths Task Group envisage that the RFN will have supporting faith based social action as a key role. This has, and will include supporting faith representation on LSPs, organising forums on homelessness issues as they affect excluded groups such as Roma gypsies and travellers and returning offenders, and commissioning research on migrant workers and their families that will inform and underpin the development of the work. A project that is currently being planned, if funding from the EHRC is forthcoming, is to extend across the region the work of the Newcastle-based “Across Communities” Young People’s Project which aims to empower young people’s confidence and capacity alongside having their faith and cultural backgrounds validated in an atmosphere of trust and respect. The project brings many of the diverse communities together to work jointly on issues that affect them living in their communities (see case study in Section on Faith Based Social Action).

Resources needed to take this work forward

In order to achieve these aims RFN needs:

- A small core team of paid staff to develop and implement
- A stronger relationship with some regional bodies, for example the RDA and the Confederation of British Industry; this needs a greater willingness on their part to engage with the RFN.

Faiths Forum for London Project (FFLP)

Background

In 2005 the London Churches Group for Social Action funded a small scoping study undertaken by London Civic Forum to gauge the level of support for a Faiths Forum for London and to investigate the experience in other English regions. This provided the evidence to gain funding for a feasibility study funded by ChangeUP undertaken in the spring and summer of 2006.

The feasibility study had direct contact with about 150 organisations. The ‘First Findings Report’ of the study was launched in November 2006. The key recommendations included:

- to set up a regional faith forum for London (FFL).
- to provide, through the forum, a channel for faith communities to participate effectively in debates and decisions about regional social policy development.
- to develop the forum’s role in sharing information and good practice.

The London Development Agency provided funding for the initial development stages of the forum. Key activity over this period was based on the concern that while much progress had been achieved in establishing a clear desire for a forum, and an idea of what it might be, some of the essential issues of how this was to be achieved needed significantly more work.

The focus was on:

- establishing unambiguous support for the project from key stakeholders including faith leaders from the major faith traditions represented in London.
- establishing terms of reference and a model of governance that has sufficient support to allow the forum to move forward.
- establishing an infrastructure plan which will include staffing (numbers, roles, job descriptions), an initial work plan and logistical requirements.

During this period the faiths forum was housed within the London Civic Forum which provided structural and programmatic support.

This work is now almost finished and FFL will bring together:

- a] regional organisations and groups from the major faith communities of London
- b] local multi faith groups
- c] local faith communities and faith based organisations.

The work of the Faiths Forum will focus on enabling more effective access to public life by London's faith communities. FFL is currently (February 2008) advertising for an experienced development worker who will:

- complete the organisational and constitutional arrangements to enable the Faiths Forum for London to gain independent status
- organise a range of pilot programmes to demonstrate the value of the Faiths Forum for London to the faiths sector, the public sector and other interested parties in London.

It is expected that the forum will be formally launched in the Autumn of 2008 and will be a free-standing organisation by April 2009.

Relationship to governance

Governance of the London region is unique compared to other English regions. The Greater London Authority (GLA) has an:

- Elected Mayor with direct executive powers for Metropolitan Police Authority, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and Transport for London. The Mayor also heads the London Development Agency (LDA).
- Elected London Assembly representing the 32 London Boroughs plus the City of London.

The Faiths Forum for London Project (FFLP) has relationships with four functional bodies:-

- LDA – FFLP has received development funding and has been engaged with the London Civic Forum (LCF) to prepare the next stage of development of the Faiths Forum for London (FFL).
- GO-London
- London Councils (the umbrella body representing the 32 London boroughs plus the City of London)
- GLA which has a separate Secretariat.

FFLP also works with:

- London Boroughs Faiths Network (LBFN) – London has 5 sub regions, North, South, East, West, and Central. London, unlike the other English regions, is unique as it is comprised of boroughs. LBFN links Borough Officers to faith communities
- Lee Valley Park Authority – The Lee Valley Regional Park stretches 26 miles along the banks of the River Lee, from Ware in Hertfordshire, through Essex, to the Thames at East India Dock Basin.
- London Resilience Team for Emergency Planning and Preparation
- Metropolitan Police Service, Community Engagement Team
- Transport for London, Equalities Team and Communities Engagement Team

Issues in relation to FFL and governance structures:

- London region has a bigger population than the other regions. Compared to the other regions, the diversity in London is on a macro scale therefore some of the tensions have a sharper focus. Faith issues are often dealt with alongside issues to do with equality and race. FFL has sometimes encountered an attitude among regional governance staff that starts from 'how to redress the historical wrongs?' and this can lead to a culture of blame where faith communities can be seen as part of the problem. It does need to be acknowledged that in some cases some faith communities have been at fault. However, the majority of faith communities have a wider agenda which is about creating a better and a more just society.
- Lack of capacity on the part of FFL as it is new
- Because FFL is a recent development, some government officers already have their own contacts in the faith communities. Currently the FFL is in the development period so it is about building good relations, trust and confidence. It needs to prove that it will help to reach deeper and broader faith representation, which is regionally more diverse geographically and 'grass roots oriented'.
- London region has a wide range of governance bodies and for a small body such as FFL to maintain good relationship is challenging. Fortunately the high levels of staff turnover in governance bodies experienced in other regions, does not happen in London.

Relationship with the VCS and other structures

FFLP works with London Boroughs Faiths Network (LBFN) which links Borough Officers to faith communities. London Civic Forum has been key in the development of the FFLP (see above in Background).

Support for faith based social action

FFL does disseminate relevant material to faith based organisations, run seminars and training and facilitate networking. During the current consultation period, FFL will decide whether it will undertake support for social action.

Other organisations that support groups engaged in faith based social action in London include:

- Some local boroughs, for example – Camden, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, City of Westminster.
- VCS and LSP – vary from borough to borough.
- Borough Deans – Network of ecumenical borough deans established by the Greater London Churches Council in 1976.
- National faith based organisations in London also benefit local groups – eg. Faith Regen, CANDL, CUF, United Synagogue Community Development Group.
- London Citizens – originated from TELCO East London Citizens, which is a diverse alliance of active citizens and community leaders organising for change. Although it is non faith based a third of its members are faith groups. It gives support to local groups on community empowerment.

Resources needed to take the work forward

FFL is still in the development phase and the answer to this depends on what work it decides to undertake.

What Regional Forums of Faiths need in order to develop

The existing and emerging RFFs are different in terms of their structure, resources, experience and the context in which they are working. This report has shown that, even though there are these differences, each RFF has the potential to build on its experience and contribute significantly to its region in terms of, relationship between faith communities and regional governance, building the capacity of faith communities for social action and contributing to developing cohesion and resilient communities.

In taking this forward, the better developed RFFs should not be held back while the others catch up; it will not be possible to create a 'level playing field' where each RFF gets the same resources, the regional differences are too great. Neither will a 'one size fits all' approach to the way the RFFs are constituted be beneficial, it is not appropriate to the needs of the different regions, and would undo valuable work, and create frustration.

However the needs of RFFs to develop most effectively and appropriately in their region are markedly similar. The evidence gathered for this report and the experience of FbRN in this field indicate that the needs of RFFs are:

■ **Secure funding for core staff**

Core staff will be able to develop the RFF and implement its programme of work. Having core staff will provide a firm basis for building up other work strategically and securing additional resources. It will help the RFF to be more resilient and able to focus on its core work while choosing to use other funding streams if appropriate. Funding should be secure for a minimum period of three years.

■ **A good relationship with the structures of regional governance**

There are some very good examples of how this can work and the benefits that can ensue. These examples should be disseminated and regions facilitated to learn from each other. Staff in some of the regional structures should be encouraged and enabled to appreciate the value of working with the RFF; this may include training.

■ **Coherent policy and implementation**

It is sometimes the case that initiatives from government, or sponsored by government departments, when experienced at the level of the RFF, can cut across each other. Better coordination between government departments on policies that have an impact on faith communities would benefit the work of RFFs and others in the regions.

Some government initiatives have created the impression that some faith communities are being targeted, either for favourable treatment or restrictions. The atmosphere that this creates makes the work of the RFF in bringing the faith communities together, more difficult.

■ **A network for sharing ideas and learning from each other**

The RFFs have recently set up an English Regional Faith Forums Network (ERFFN). This is facilitated by the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK. A basic website is also being constructed. The aims of ERFFN are, to help RFFs to keep in touch with each other and to exchange resources and good practice, to work together on issues of common concern. This useful networking should be encouraged and resourced, but it should not develop a centralised and bureaucratic structure nor become a separate organisation.

Appendix one

Summary of individual Regional Forums of Faiths

East of England Faiths Council (EEFC) – founded 2002	
Contact Jenny Kartupelis East of England Faiths Council Unit 37 St John's Innovation Centre Cowley Rd Cambridge CB4 0WS	Tel: 01223 421606 Fax: 01223 421839 Email: eefc@cambcatalyst.co.uk Web: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk www.faihneteast.org.uk webmaster email: webmaster@EEFaithsCouncil.org.uk
Faiths involved	
Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian	
Aims of East of England Faiths Council (formerly known as East of England Faiths Leadership Conference)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide a clear point of contact with regional bodies and governance. ■ Ensure that faith communities are an effective stakeholder in the region, by making input to regional development and consultation at a strategic level, facilitating dialogue with senior decision makers. ■ Commission and publicise relevant research. ■ Support faith based community activity at local level through the FaithNetEast programme. 	
Activities	
<p>Quote from John Battle MP, the former Prime Minister's faith envoy: "When the faith communities work together, whether it be on issues of strategic development in their region, or on practical activities which strengthen local communities, the impact for good can be enormous. Since it was established, the East of England Faiths Council has built a forum for regular and very productive interaction between people who play key roles in their local faith communities, and ensured that they can speak with a common voice on matters which affect the lives of everyone in the East of England." (EEFC website)</p> <p>Faith in the East of England – A major piece of research commissioned by EERA, undertaken by the East of England Faiths Council in conjunction with the University of Cambridge for the East of England Development Agency in the spring of 2005.</p> <p>FaithNetEast – This is an information and learning hub for faith communities in the East of England region. Funded by the FCCBF and hosted by EEFC and is an initiative run in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. Its purpose is to bring together people and organisations from all faiths in the region in a network for sharing information, learning from one another, developing skills and activities and working together.</p> <p>Nominating body for the faiths representative on the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and its Panels.</p> <p>Regional Governance – Joint activities with EERA, EEDA and GO-East and Regional Forums and Consortiums.</p> <p>Regional Consultation – Active participation and written submissions to all main consultation documents.</p> <p>LSP Faith representatives – organise events to facilitate learning and networking.</p>	
Membership policy	
<p>Leading members of faith communities and representatives of interfaith organisations within the region.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings are attended by invited representatives of regional governance and VCS.</p>	
Database	
2000 faith groups in East of England	

Faiths Forum for the East Midlands (FFEM) – founded 2004

Contact Rev Chris Goacher

Faiths Forum for the East Midlands
Multi-Faith Centre
University of Derby
Kedleston Road
Derby DE22 1GB

Tel: 01332 591285

Fax: N/A

Email: chris.goacher@ntlworld.com

Web: N/A but serviced by Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby – www.multifaithcentre.org

Faiths involved

Bahá'í, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Pagan.

Aims of Faiths Forum for the East Midlands

- Be a channel through which local organisations, groups and people from among the range of faith communities linked with the affiliates of the Forum can feed into working groups of the East Midlands Regional Assembly and other regional initiatives.
- Be a channel through which working groups and initiatives can feed back, through the Forum's affiliates, to local organisations, groups and people.
- Be a mechanism of consultation and appointment to the East Midlands Regional Assembly for a faiths representative from a tradition other than the Christian tradition. The representatives alternate.
- Be a focus of mutual support, information, consultation and communications for faiths representatives on the East Midlands Regional Assembly, and for the faiths representative through the Forum.

Activities

Nominating body for the faiths representative on the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA).

Regional Consultation – Acting as a consultative forum for EMRA

LSP Faith representatives – sending representatives.

Promoting good community relations and raising inter faith awareness.

Membership policy

Open to any inter faith council, group or initiatives in the region which supports and furthers FFEM aims and work.

North West Forum of Faiths (NWFF) – founded 2005

Contact Monsignor John Devine,
Churches Officer North West
North West Regional Development Agency
(Faith),
PO Box 37
Renaissance House
Centre Park
Warrington
Cheshire WA1 1XB (WA1 2FR)

Tel: 01925 400254
Fax: 01925 400400
Email: john.devine@nwda.co.uk
Web: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

Faiths involved

Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian

Aims of North West Forum of Faith

- To be a strategic faith body for the North West.
- To relate to and help shape public policy by contributing positive insights from several faith communities on the basis of theological perspectives and spiritual values.
- To ensure appropriate faith community representation on statutory regional bodies, including the Regional Assembly.
- To promote good practice in relations between faith communities at every level of society.
- To promote the engagement of faith communities in public policy (civil society).
- To promote a vision of healthy spiritual values and integrated communities within the regional economic agenda (social cohesion)
- To promote the considerable experience and expertise of faith communities in caring for the weakest and most vulnerable in our society (service delivery).
- To provide a structure which will allow faith communities to have a voice alongside other sectors on the Northwest Regional Stakeholder Forum and in response to other regional initiatives.
- To promote religious literacy among strategic decision makers in the region.
- To provide a mechanism for responding to consultation initiatives at short notice.
- To explore potential funding opportunities for faith communities.
- To disseminate reports and other documentation relating to faith community engagement at national, regional, local and community levels.

Activities

Conferences: NWFF holds occasional conferences or other events on issues of regional concern open to the public.
Publications:

Faith in England's Northwest Conference Report (April 2005)

Proceedings of the Manchester Town Hall event of the 3rd February 2005 which marked the publication of '*Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment*' along with the inauguration of the website www.faithnorthwest.org.uk and launch of the North West Forum of Faiths.

Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment (February 2005). DTZ Pidea Consulting undertook this report, commissioned by the NWDA and the Churches Officer for the North West. Based on the findings of the report of November 2003 it demonstrates the value of the faith communities' contribution to life in the region in economic terms.

The Contribution of Faith Communities to Civil Society (November 2003). This groundbreaking report is based on a survey of every single place of worship of all faiths in the Northwest. With an overall 54% response rate the survey identified that faith groups are strongest where social needs are highest.

Faith in Partnership: Faith Communities & Public Life in the Northwest (Churches' Officer for the North West, April 2002)

The faith communities in the North West held their first regional conference in Blackburn to mark publication of the LGA document Faith and Community. It was on this occasion that the vision of establishing a regional faith body was first articulated. The event was addressed by John Battle MP, the (then) Prime Minister's Advisor on Interfaith Dialogue and Rumman Ahmed, the (then) Community Relations Advisor, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Nominating body for the faiths representative on the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) and its Panels. NWRA has 2 faith seats; the other is for Churches of the North West and its Panels.

Regional Consultation – Monitoring and responding swiftly to requests for consultation.

Focus of NWFF is strictly on regional matters rather than local matters.

Promoting good community relations and raising inter faith awareness on a regional basis.

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North West Forum of Faiths (NWFF) – founded 2005

Membership policy

NWFF is a 'forum of forums'. Membership will not be open to individuals but to representatives of existing sub-regional and local inter faith bodies.

Total membership will not exceed 25.

Members meet in person approximately 3 times a year and correspond electronically.

Members are not official spokespersons for their faith communities, but are expected to have an understanding of the nature and diversity of their faith community and some experience of engagement in public policy issues.

Appointment of members is managed by the five county / sub regional inter faith bodies or Christian ecumenical bodies where inter faith bodies do not yet exist. Sub regions are Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cheshire and Cumbria. Each sub region determines their own procedure of appointing members.

Appointment for the smaller faith communities (Bahá'í, Jain, and Zoroastrian) is managed by NW Forum of Faiths.

South East England Faith Forum (SEEFF) – founded 2001

Contact David Wrighton

South East England Faith Forum
34 Chalvington Road
Chandlers Ford
Eastleigh SO53 3DX

Tel: 023 80261146

Fax: N/A

Email: wrigdgshim@aol.com

Web: N/A, Being improved and Updated

Faiths involved

Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh.

Aims of South East England Faith Forum

- To encourage and enable faith communities in the South East of England Region to offer welfare, support and education to local communities, particularly communities suffering poverty and deprivation.
- Contribute to the social, community and religious well being of the region.
- Work together to develop and share experience, practice and learning for the benefit of local communities more generally as well as of faith communities themselves and to represent their views and experience to structures in the region.

Activities

Beyond Belief? A report researched and published by SEEFF. Working towards its implementation. Nominating body for the 2 faiths seats on the South East Regional Assembly (SERA) and its Panels.

Regional Consultation – Develop links with SERA, SEDA, GO-SE, RAISE.

LSP Faith representatives – Promoting good working regional models on community relations and raising interfaith awareness.

Following a research project and the resultant report about the future of SEEFF, a steering group was formed to secure funding to enable the organisation to employ a Development Officer, to develop the commitment and involvement of the faith communities in the region and to move forward on a stronger and more sustainable basis.

Membership policy

Welcomes both organisations and individuals who upon annual subscription are eligible to vote, access to website, SEEFF web mail group, and access to advice from Executive.

Database

Under development

South West Council of Faiths (SWCF) founded 1997 and active partner with faithnetsouthwest founded 2005 which is engaged in social action

Contact Revd Heather Pencavel	Tel: 0117 304 2298/9
faithnetsouthwest	Fax: N/A
162 Pennywell Road	Email: heather@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk
Bristol	Web: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk
BS5 0TX	

Faiths involved
Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Pagan, Quaker and Unitarian

Faithnetsouthwest is a partnership between 4 organisations:-

1. South West Council of Faiths.
2. South West Churches Regional Forum.
3. The Churches Council for Industry and Social Responsibility (ISR) based in Bristol and Swindon.
4. Exeter Diocesan Council for Churches and Society.

Aims of faithnetsouthwest

- Support all churches and faith groups engaging in social or community activity in the South West region
- Help faith groups and regional bodies involved in these activities to share information on good practice and share this information with funders and policy makers
- Help faith groups and local and regional bodies to reach a better understanding of one another
- Support existing forums and develop networks where the distinctive voices of the faith groups in the region can be heard.

Aims of South West Council of Faiths

- In conjunction with South West Churches' Forum, to appoint, support and guide the work of the Faith Communities Member on SWRA.
- To acknowledge the spiritual dimensions of our communities in the region and represent the values and social concerns shared by the participating faith communities through Faith Communities Member on SWRA.
- Be a channel through which local organisations, groups and people from among the range of faith communities linked with the affiliates to SWCF can feed into working groups of the SWRA and other regional initiatives.
- Be a channel through which working groups and initiatives can feed back, through the Forum's affiliates, to local organisations, groups and people.
- Be a focus of mutual support, information, consultation and communications for faith representatives on the SWRA and for the faith representative through the SWCF.

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South West Council of Faiths (SWCF) founded 1997 and active partner with *faithnetsouthwest* founded 2005 which is engaged in social action

Activities

Publications

Daily Service: How faith communities contribute to neighbourhood renewal and regeneration in the South West of England – Researched and produced a report in partnership with University of the West of England and GO-SW. The research focused on faith communities in selected areas in the South West of England that exhibit multiple deprivation. It sought to establish the extent to which these faith groups engaged in wider social and community activities, especially regeneration initiatives. The areas included urban wards designated as Neighbourhood Renewal areas and other relatively deprived wards.

Faith In Action: Report of the *faithnetsouthwest* survey conducted during 2006. Faith in Action in the South West demonstrates the contribution that faith groups are making in the South West of England, in providing a wide range of social welfare and community services, both formally through projects, and informally through their work in the community. It provides the first comprehensive regional summary of these activities and includes some key examples of the kind of contribution that faith groups can make.

People on the Move: Report on conference held on 27th June 2006. Many people are unaware of the difficulties asylum seekers and migrant workers face. Churches in the South West need to think more regionally on these issues and organisations like Refugee Action can provide information and resources for those wanting to do more.

Nominating body for the faiths representative on the South West Regional Assembly (SWRA) and its Panels.

Regional & Local Consultation – Acting as a consultative forum for SWRA. Making statements on social issues. Consulted by local government on local issues.

LSP Faith representatives – sending representatives, engaging in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal work.

Faith representatives – Helping faith groups and local bodies to promote good community relations, raising inter faith awareness, visiting places of worship, diversity training, education events and exhibitions.

Advice to faith groups on funding, capacity building, support and training on partnership working and community involvement, on setting up social enterprises and tendering for contracts.

Membership policy

SWCF

Open to all faiths with groups or congregations in the South West and can nominate up to two representatives.

Open to regional Inter Faith Groups, County Ecumenical Officers, Social Responsibility Officers, professional and non professional bodies concerned with the development of the South West region from a faith perspective. These groups can nominate one representative.

faithnetsouthwest

No membership policy as such.

Will work with all faith groups in the area.

West Midlands Faiths Forum (WMFF) – founded 2004

Contact Revd Dr John Hall

Tel: 024 7652 1326

Chair West Midlands Faiths Forum

Fax: N/A

1 Hill Top

Email: john.hall@wmfaiths.org.uk

Coventry CV1 5AB

Web: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Faiths involved

Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Zoroastrian.

Aims of West Midlands Faiths Forum (WMFF)

- interface with regional agencies delivering government policies in the West Midlands and advise them on the impact of such agendas on faith communities
- facilitate discussion between and research among faith communities on matters of social and religious concern
- help build the capacity of faith communities to engage with policy-makers and service providers at local, sub-regional and regional levels and to act as their advocate
- encourage community cohesion both through interfaith dialogue and discussion with the wider public.

WMFF has, over the past 3 years, established a strong network of faith-based organisations and individual members of faiths traditions committed to engaging with government policy makers to strengthen community cohesion through working collaboratively.

The USP is the breadth and inclusivity of engagement across faiths with strong 'grassroots' participation and covering the whole of the West Midlands region.

WMFF is a specialist regional 'faiths hub' able to provide faith perspectives on government policy agendas and facilitate inter faith dialogue on key policy issues

Activities

Hold regular conferences and seminars on a wide variety of nationally, regionally and sub-regionally important themes for the faith communities. These are published and the reports placed on the WMFF web site. Conferences held in Feb 2008 by way of example were as follows:

- 1 Feb. Access to Resources, Stafford
- 13 Feb. Access to Resources, Solihull
- 14 Feb. Inter faith Strategy Consultation, Birmingham
- 18 Feb. 'Believing We Can' NOMS consultation, Birmingham
- 25 Feb. West Midlands Fire Service 'Places of Worship', Coventry

Published 2 Conference Reports, 1 Policy paper and a CD Rom providing a wide range of useful resources and web links for faith based organisations.

- *Believing in the West Midlands*
- *Key Issues for Faith-based Regeneration*
- *Light & Shade – Race and Faith*
- *Cohesion Through Faith*
- *Engagement version 2 – Faiths and statutory, community and voluntary sectors working together*
- *Widening the Net – The work of WMFF's working policy groups*

Nominating body for the faiths representative on the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) and its Panels.

Regional Consultation – Providing a faith perspective as a partner for WMRA, WMDA, GOWM and other policy bodies including the police, fire, prison chaplaincy, equality and human rights.

LSP Faith representatives – supporting faith link officers.

Promoting good community relations and raising interfaith awareness.

Membership policy

Over 500 members.

Membership is open to all practicing members of a faith who live or work in the West Midlands region; and to faith, multi-faith and interfaith organisations based in the West Midlands. These may also include:

- Local faith umbrella groups
- Local faith voluntary initiatives
- Sub-regional faith leaders groups
- Faith representatives working elsewhere in the voluntary sectors
- People of faith and link officers in local and national government

Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum (YHFF) founded 2005

Contact Revd Inderjit Bhogal OBE

Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum
Suite E12
Joseph's Well
Hanover Walk
Leeds LS3 1AB

Tel: 0113 245 6444

Fax: 0113 245 6333

Email: info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

Web: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

Faiths involved

Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian

Aims of Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

- Advance the contribution of faith communities in the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- Encourage and educate faith communities to work together in matters of policy, strategy and action.
- Challenge all forms of discrimination and injustice against persons or groups of people, particularly on the grounds of religious belief.

Activities

Conferences:

Faith in the Media? (April 24th 2008)

YHFF to host a conference for the media and faith communities to create a platform to explore ways of working together more appropriately on issues relating to faith. This forms part of the YHFF's work to tackle discrimination particularly in relation to faith.

Chaplains in Higher Education (20th May 2008)

Regional Conference at the University of Bradford.

Body and Soul: Sport and Faith in Health and Wellbeing (20th March 2007)

Organised at the Megacentre, Sheffield by YHFF in partnership with Sport England and the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber (CRC). This conference aimed to promote the role of sport amongst faith communities, identify what faith communities and groups need from sport organisations, how we can work more closely, and obtain funding. This event was the first step in working more effectively with faith communities to encourage participation in sport and recognise the role of faith communities.

Faith 2 Faith Conference (12th December 2006)

Organised by YHFF, 138 young people belonging to a multitude of faiths from across the region came together for this occasion at Leeds University Student Union.

Nominating body for the faiths representative on the Yorkshire & The Humber Regional Assembly (YHRA).

Regional & Local Consultation – Acting as a consultative forum for YHRA. Making statements on social issues. Consulted by local government on local issues.

LSP Faith representatives – sending representatives.

Promoting good community relations and cohesion, multi faith dialogue, raising interfaith awareness, diversity training.

Develop a Youth Council and an annual Culturally Diverse Food Festival.

Membership policy

- YHFF Executive come from the nine faiths linked in formal membership by the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom.
- The Forum and its activities are open to all people of faiths and those who profess no particular religious faith.

Appendix two: Questionnaire sent to RFFs

Questions about relationship with regional governance

1. Which of the regional governance structures do you work with?
2. Are there sub-regional or other structures of governance that you work with? If so please say what they are.
3. Do you work with identified officers? If so who are they (job title rather than name)?
4. Are there regional or sub-regional or other structures of governance that you would like to work with but do not? If so what are the barriers that prevent this happening?

Lack of capacity on our part	
Lack of funding for us to be able to do this	
Structures of governance do not have the capacity to engage	
Structures of governance do not wish to engage with us	
Government officers question our ability to represent faith communities	
Other (please specify)	

5. Does the Regional Forum of Faiths have formal representation on any regional or sub-regional structures? If so please describe these.
6. Has the relationship with the regional forms of governance shaped the pattern of representation that the Forum has adopted? If so please give details.
7. What is most effective in the way that the Forum relates to the structures of governance in the region? What should or could be changed to improve this?
8. What are the weakest points in the way the Forum relates to the structures of governance? What could or should be done to improve this situation?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the relationship between the Forum and governance structures in the Region that we have not given you the opportunity to say?

Questions about social action, regeneration and community development

10. Bearing in mind the material that FbRN used in its publication Priceless, Unmeasurable? Faiths and Community Development in 21st Century England, to which you contributed and a copy of which is attached, is there anything you would like to add about the extent and role of faith based social action, regeneration and community development in the Region?

11. Does the Forum directly undertake social action, regeneration or community development? If you do please give details and examples; how do you measure the effectiveness of what you do?

12. Does the Forum offer support for social action, regeneration or community development? What form does this take?

Dissemination of relevant information to faith based organisations	
Seminars and training	
Networking	
Advice (eg on legal status, constitutions etc)	
Consultancy to individual organisations/people	
Mentoring to individual organisations/people	
Support services such as payroll	
Other: please list	

13. Would the Forum wish to offer more support, or become more involved in these activities? If so please say what this would be. What would be the challenges and opportunities associated with offering such support?

14. What other organisations, both faith based and non faith, are there that support groups engaging in faith based social action, regeneration and community development in the Region?

15. What other organisations has your Forum worked with in supporting faith based social action, regeneration and community development in the Region?

16. What government interventions affect faith based social action, regeneration and community development in the Region? In what way?

Local Strategic Partnerships	
Local Area Agreements	
Neighbourhood Renewal	
Prevention of Extremism Pathfinders	
Safer Neighbourhoods Programme	
Crime and Disorder Partnerships	
Others, please list	

17. What funding or other support did the Forum receive for its work in connection with faith based social action, regeneration or community development in the current and previous financial years? (2006-7 and 2007-8)

Source	Money	In Kind
national government		
regional government		
other government funding streams (please specify)		
lottery		
charitable trusts (please say which)		
other organisations (please say which)		
Other (please specify)		

18. Does the funding you receive include full cost recovery in respect of your work on social action, regeneration and community development?

19. Do you have any further comments on the funding or support for this type of work?

20. How many staff do you have working on faith based social action, regeneration and community development?

Paid staff: Full time equivalent number	
Volunteers: number	

21. What support and assistance would help to make your Regional Forum of Faith as effective and comprehensive as you would like to be in faith based social action, regeneration and community development?

22. Is there anything else that you would like to say about social action, regeneration or community development or ways the work of the Forum benefits the wider community?

General

23. To what extent do you feel supported in these areas of your work by regional and national government agencies and Third Sector infrastructure bodies?

24. Is there anything else that you think we need to know?

Appendix three

List of people consulted in the preparation of Part One

Inderjit Bhogal	Yorkshire and the Humber Faiths Forum
John Devine	North West Forum of Faiths
Maggie Fivian	GO SE
Chris Goacher	Faiths Forum for the East Midlands
John Hall	West Midlands Faiths Forum
Jenny Kartupelis	East of England Faiths Council
Steve Miller	Development worker for the Faiths Forum for London
Dave Norman	GO Yorkshire and the Humber
Ian Owers	Active Faith Communities, West Yorkshire
Heather Pencavel	<i>Faithnetsouthwest</i>
Paul Southgate	Chief Officer, Churches Regional Commission in the North East
David Wrighton	South East England Faiths Forum

Part Two

Faith Based Social Action and the Inter Faith Framework

1. Contexts

The UK government's Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is preparing a framework for interfaith working, for which a consultation document is currently in circulation (see *Face-to-Face, Side-by-Side: a framework for inter faith dialogue and action*).

As part of that process, CLG has commissioned the Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN) to report on faith based social action and regional activity. This paper reports on the faith based social action dimension of this work.

The report is intended for use by government officials and Ministers in their preparation of the framework. It will also be of interest to policy makers and practitioners in faith based settings, and their partners, outside of government.

Questions, Processes and Methods

The questions addressed in the paper were agreed in consultation with CLG and are specific to them. They are:

- What is the scale and scope of faith based social action?
- What is the relationship of faith based social action to the ideas of social capital?
- What is the relationship between faith based social action and contact theory?
- What Government interventions are effective in supporting bridging and linking social capital?
- How does faith based social action relate to wider community and civil society? What do faiths bring?
- What evidence is there for faith based social action accessing non-faith specific Government funding streams?

- What support mechanisms are there for faith based social action?
- What is the role of Government, national, regional and local, in relation to faith based social action?

We have addressed these questions in four broad categories:

- 1] The scale and scope of faith based social action
- 2] The relationship of faith based social action to wider civil society
- 3] Support mechanisms for faith based social action
- 4] The role of government

We have taken the following approaches:

- 1] Overview of relevant literature to inform structured interviews with key individuals to produce initial findings and observations (see Appendix A for interview schedule)
- 2] Review of literature and online sources
- 3] Search for and review of grey literature and other material held at community and neighbourhood levels
- 4] Further and extended telephone interviews with key actors in local faith based social action (see Appendix A for interview schedule)
- 5] Telephone interviews with key actors in national, regional and local government. (see Appendix A for interview schedule)
- 6] Liaison with Community Development Foundation over the use of material emerging from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund
- 7] Analysis of grant awards from selected non-faith specific government funded grant programmes to establish the patterns of access by faith based groups; followed by interviews with key actors to establish what are the factors that influence a positive pattern

A Note on Definitions and Terms

It should be noted that the key ideas underpinning this report mean different things to different people. It is crucially important to acknowledge this, both for the sake of clarity within this report but more importantly in terms of how these ideas are put into practice in the inter faith framework. The terms in question are:

- Faith based
- Social action
- Inter faith

In particular, 'faith based social action', which is the remit of this report, is not necessarily the same thing as the 'inter faith dialogue and social action' referred to in the title of the consultation document. This is because inter faith social action is distinct from faith based social action, which may or may not be inter faith. These categories carry a high degree of practical meaning in faith communities. The framework must be crystal clear whether it means one or the other or both.

Our conversations with people of faith tell us that the idea of 'faith based social action' is preferred because it includes inter faith social action as well as social action initiated in single faith settings.

It should also be noted that even in single faith settings, there can be, and often is, significant bridging and linking activity with others in wider society. It has been observed therefore that

"Members of single faith groups were often from different parts of the same town, of different ages, different genders, different sub-religious groups or different national or sub-national ethnic groups"

(James 2007 p70).

This is often overlooked because of suspicion that single faith groups are motivated by an unchecked desire to evangelise. Experience shows that this is rarely the case in relation to social action. Indeed, in addition, beneficiaries of activities arising out of single faith settings frequently include people of other faiths and none. Therefore, as well as inter faith social action, activities arising out of single faith settings should also be regarded as an important and legitimate part of faith based social action.

Another key issue here is that 'dialogue' is a distinct activity from 'social action' and the relationship between the two varies widely. In some cases the one is rooted in the other. Elsewhere dialogue and social action are completely unrelated. While the two may overlap, complement or coincide they can at the same time be quite distinct and happen independently. Both social action and dialogue are beneficial and many faith groups say that they value the space to engage in dialogue as a basis for their social action. Where reflection does not happen it is often as a result of lack of resources and it is widely felt that potential for social action is unfulfilled in consequence.

Debates about the use of these terms and the contexts in which they are deployed range around the following summary of arguments:

- The 'usefulness' of faiths is a key starting point of the public policy view
- Faiths have a long tradition of being 'useful' but they also see themselves in terms of the experiences lived by individuals and groups standing in a tradition of their own. They feel strongly that this should be understood and respected
- That one defining characteristic of faith is belief, an obvious factor but one which is often overlooked – the starting points and values of belief must be respected as well as what faiths can 'offer'
- That the idea of 'faith' takes some additional starting points which may be unfamiliar to a policy audience
 - 'faith' is about stories, experiences and values and these may be expressed in their own distinctive 'language'
 - fellowship and worship are important aspects of faith as well as the practice of social action. Many see the one as rooted in the other
- That talk of a 'faith community' belies the sheer diversity of faiths, within and between traditions. Faiths can differ within and between one another in important ways – we cannot talk of one 'faith community'

- That there can be discontinuity as well as continuity between the various 'parts' of faith communities – leaders, representatives, projects, volunteers and worshippers may or may not have very much to do with one another even though they are all based within the same church, mosque or other religious centre. The meaning of 'faith based' is therefore debated – based in what aspect of faith and/or what part of the faith community?
- Similarly the relationship between 'dialogue' and 'action' is not always clear
- And there are many very good examples of faith based social action which is NOT inter faith, even though it may benefit or work with people of other faiths or none.

In terms of social action, there are also debates:

- That social action can be quite challenging, perhaps politicised, on the one hand or may be very locally focused, practical and pragmatic on the other
- That most faith based social action consists somewhere in between the challenging and the locally practical
- At the same time, faiths have shown a capacity for politicised perspectives on poverty and disadvantage, for example in '*Faith in the City*' the Church of England report on urban priority areas
- That policy makers should be ready to hear the critical perspectives of some faiths and make room for faiths to be 'critical friends'

For the purposes of this report, we chose a pragmatic and relatively broad definition which sees faith based social action as projects, programmes or aspects of work undertaken by organisations or groups with a direct relationship with faith communities that intend to achieve positive benefits for the welfare of faith communities and/or wider social groupings.

2. Scale and Scope of Faith Based Social Action

Faith based organisations are ‘a strong force’ in the charitable sector, which encompasses a large range of social action projects and programmes (NCVO, 2007:15). Within this, some charities are engaged in religious activities and NCVO’s 2007 report notes that at least one registered charity in seven is thus engaged. Of these, Christian-based charities outnumber charities based on other faith traditions. It is noted that “The total income of faith based registered charities is estimated at £4.6 billion” though income appears to be unevenly spread across organisations so that “those with an income of less than £200,000 account for 90% of organisations but generate only 11% of the total income (NCVO, 2007:16). This reflects the case that many faith based organisations are very small, informal and heavily dependent on volunteers, although others are amongst some of the largest charities.

Over half of faith based charities aim to serve the general public, and two fifths place a particular focus on children or young people (NCVO 2007, p15). Grant-making is the majority area of activity (56% of faith based organisations) followed by service provision (35%) (NCVO 2007, p15). This is supported in other research which shows that a significant amount of work across England focuses on children/young people and the elderly, although faith based organisations are engaged in many other activities (see Dinham 2006, p9).

Jewish Care

Jewish Care is the largest health and social care charity for the Jewish communities in London and the South east, caring directly for nearly 7,000 people every week. It believes that Jewish people should have access to specialist services designed to meet their needs and consequently the care provided recognises traditions, beliefs and cultures frequently shared by Jewish people. Jewish Care works right across the community providing care regardless of the level or nature of an individual’s religious observance and as such recognises people’s differences as well as their similarities. 1,100 dedicated staff and 2,500 volunteers are involved in running over 70 centres and specialist services for

- People with mental health problems
- People with a physical or sensory disability, including those who are visually impaired
- People with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia
- Holocaust survivors and refugees
- People caring for others (Carers)
- Younger people

www.jewishcare.org

Swindon Young People's Empowerment Programme (SYEP)

The Swindon Young People's Empowerment Programme (SYEP) was started in January 2001, by Bahá'ís of Swindon, in order to work with young people on such things as anti-social behaviour, uncontrollable anger, bullying, depression, fear of failure and poor school attendance. Its main aim is to develop a healthy human spirit in children and young people, and adults who work with them, which means developing one's full and positive potential as a human being. Originally funded by the Bahá'ís of Swindon, the European Social Fund (ESF), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Partnership Development Fund, SYEP now has several other funders including Lloyds TSB and the Tudor Trust.

Developing a healthy human spirit isn't new or radical. It is mentioned in many government documents including OFSTED's document of 2004 called *Promoting Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development*.

Measuring/evaluating the development of a healthy human spirit.

The impact of SYEP is measured in 3 main areas:

- 1] Increase in sense of self worth, which helps develop an enquiring mind.
- 2] Increased motivation to learn and improve behaviour.
- 3] Desire to be of service to others.

These have been identified as characteristics of a healthy human spirit and as SYEP has been expanding in eight local schools, much evaluation has been carried out both within the project and externally, providing compelling evidence that this approach is working. Dr Stephen Bigger, of the University of Worcester, has been working as an external evaluator over the past few years. In a recent report he stated: *"SYEP sets out to change the way young people think about themselves and their potential. It seeks to help them realise that their lives can be meaningful ... It is innovative, and we can find no systematic provision similar to it countrywide."*

"In my view, the Swindon Young People's Empowerment Programme has distinctive methods in focusing on the needs of 'dispirited' young people which are already beginning to grow beyond Swindon and have the potential to become much more widespread. This concern for building self-esteem and personal meaning is an important factor in truancy and disaffection, and is very appropriate for a faith community. This Bahá'í contribution, in the experience of those involved, has been open and inclusive social action, bringing benefits to a wide range of young people in Swindon. This could also make a major contribution to the government's concern for both spirituality in schools, and the social and emotional aspects of learning."

Dr Stephen Bigger, Director of the Centre for Education and Inclusion University of Worcester in his evaluation of SYEP.

www.syep.org.uk

Jimmy's Night Shelter

Jimmy's is named in memory of Jim Dilley, who spent much of his life sleeping rough in the region, or spending winter nights in one of Cambridge's temporary shelters. In the last few years of his life, Jim slept under the M11 motorway bridge at junction 13. In the winter of 1993, Jim was told he had lung cancer. Sadly he died in Papworth hospital in June 1994, and subsequently his ashes were scattered at his old 'home' - junction 13 of the M11. His moving story so inspired a small group of people from the churches that they were determined to establish a permanent night shelter in Cambridge. Plans for the Night Shelter were drawn up in early 1995 and in May of that year, the Council gave permission for the Shelter to be established in the basement of the Zion Baptist Church on East Road.

Crucial to setting up the Shelter were funding and donations. Jimmy's was lucky to receive funding from CRISIS, the Opportunities for Volunteering scheme, plus countless donations from many other organisations and individuals. These included kitchen equipment from BT in Ipswich, furniture from the Eaden Lilley department store, a food mountain from the OLEM church.

Even at this stage, Jimmy's was reliant on - and extremely grateful to - an army of volunteers, who worked tirelessly to get the Shelter up and running. These volunteers came from all over: the wider church community, Cambridge's two universities, individuals who had heard or read about Jimmy's in the media, retired people, busy business people, our neighbours in Petersfield - the list really is endless! An especially important group was that drawn from the homeless who helped with decorating, collecting donations, cleaning, cooking, odd-jobbing - already we knew our guests would help make Jimmy's a very special and unique night shelter.

Our services then, although essential, were rather basic: bed, breakfast and an evening meal. It was quickly realised that, important though these are, the needs of the guests were far wider. Working with our guests we have established laundry facilities, a dedicated clothing store, a quiet reading room, pool table, sports afternoons, annual seaside trips, free internet access, guest advocacy, chiropody, move-on houses and visiting agencies such as street outreach team, drug & alcohol services, psychiatrist and St. John Ambulance footcare team.

Services like Jimmy's Night Shelter will always be needed. We aim to ensure that whatever the future holds, we will continue to offer love, support and a place of safety and security for all our guests - in memory of Jim Dilley and the many others like him.

Richard, who runs Jimmy's Night Shelter says: Homelessness is often misunderstood because most people have a stereotype image of what a homeless person looks like, what their habits are and what potential threats they present. It is something we at Jimmy's are always ready to challenge, although challenge or confront may be too strong for the way we do it.

Our style of working has always been to keep our heads down and just get on with the work. We do not campaign publicly for understanding of what we do, but we do try to protect our guests from any disadvantages that we are aware of. At meetings particularly, we are able to voice concerns and fears we have for the homeless from unfair treatment, from inequalities that exist, from unreasonable enforcement of the law and from political whims or influences that would ostracise this group of people even more than they experience at present.

Of all the groups of people I meet, the most hardened are those who have some political agenda and those who have to follow a political line. Surprisingly, the Police do not fall into this category, most of those we meet are quite sympathetic of the lot of the homeless and will move them on rather than arrest, or even direct them to Jimmy's! Defending our ethos; our principles and values, also becomes hard, but it is always good to be able to talk about the standards, the morality and the ethics of our work, that is - love. It often falls, though, on deaf ears.

In all of this we are mindful of the need for funding, where it comes from (central government) and the fact that the Government does not like nightshelters and soup runs and clothing runs, etc., because they "sustain people in a street lifestyle" and do not assist them out of it. We should invite more politicians to visit Jimmy's and see just how we do assist people out of homelessness.

www.jimmysnightshelter.org.uk

At the same time, most faith based social action takes place through projects and associations. Many of these are not established as charities and operate within the formal structures of the wider faith organisation, often the religious framework, such as a diocese or equivalent structure. The majority of these are orientated towards the wider community and not confined only to the faith group itself.

East London Mosque and Muslim Centre

ELM takes a holistic view of the community, aiming to provide a range of culturally sensitive services for the communities of London with a view to improving quality of life and enhancing community cohesion. Its work is wide ranging, much of it bearing the characteristics of community development.

Through its unique position in the community, ELM is able to focus on the needs of the diverse Muslim community while ensuring that services are open to all. It meets the needs of the local community by promoting health, education and employment opportunities; provides Muslims and non-Muslims with the opportunity to learn and understand Islam; and contributes to the social, cultural, spiritual and economic enhancement of the whole community through policy and strategy development combined with service implementation.

The Improving School Attendance in Partnership project aims to address low school attendance rates by using a faith based approach. Working with families, pupils, teachers and faith leaders, it makes the connection between faith and the need for children to achieve their full potential. Exceptional improvements have been achieved in attendance, punctuality and parental involvement in education. New parenting workshops will aim to empower parents with the necessary knowledge and tools that will enable them to play a greater role in the education of their children.

The Healthy Living Project starts from the barriers that the Muslim community faces in accessing mainstream health care provision, and the high incidence of certain diseases among the population. In partnership with Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust, ELM runs seminars on diabetes and heart disease, offers a screening service and has placed 60 people on a three month health and fitness programme.

The Women's Project, with two female staff, provides support, time and recovery services for women facing a wide variety of social and domestic problems.

ELM is part of London Resilience, a London-wide initiative that prepares contingency plans for a variety of possible disasters and emergencies. Some of these were put into rapid effect within minutes of the bombings on the London underground network in July 2005 (ELM is a few yards away from Aldgate station). ELM was immediately opened to the general public and some of the victims received initial treatment there. Because of its already good relationships with other faith groups, ELM was able to act with them to counter a possible backlash against the Muslim community.

www.eastlondonmosque.org.uk

Some faith based social action is distinctive because of its pioneering work with groups that others have found difficult to address. A good example is the work of the Lighthouse Project set up by Hull Community Church.

Lighthouse Project / Hull Community Church UK

This project, working with women in the sex industry in Hull, began as a voluntary service by women from two churches in the Hull area. However, they quickly learned that offering “tea and love”, although a positive start welcomed by the target group, was not enough. In conversations with them it became clear that a drop-in centre was required.

“One of my most vivid memories is of a woman who came into our drop-in covered in blood. She didn’t want to talk she just wanted to go into the toilets and clean up. Not long after, her boyfriend came in shouting for her, and she left with him, shouting and screaming at each other down the street. We sat there helpless, looking at each other. We prayed. And did nothing. A few months later she was murdered. What could we have done?” Anne Dannerolle volunteer and trustee, writing about the early days of the project. <http://www.emergingchurch.info/stories/hull/index.htm>

Recognising that women who accessed the service had drug addictions and needed support with that as well as child care, health services, domestic violence, homelessness and welfare rights led to the realisation that a full time worker was needed. The volunteers began the task of raising sufficient funds. Importantly the first funder was the Church Urban Fund (CUF). This gave the project a strong air of “respectability” that would encourage others to contribute to the effort. The funding criteria required evidence of working together with other service providers and agencies, so this encouraged and supported the churches’ belief that integrated working was necessary. With the aid of CUF on funding proposals, the workers obtained funds to employ a full time project manager.

The service is accessed via the project outreach bus, a mobile resource travelling around the two red light districts of the city. The bus acts as a venue for sex workers to meet people from the project and is intended as a safe space in which to befriend them as a starting-point for identifying practical support as needs arise. Following a one to one assessment, and preparation of a care plan, the project workers act as advocates and co-ordinators to facilitate access to local services.

The Project, which grew out of churchwomen’s concern for women in the sex industry, now provides practice learning for social workers as well as support and consultation for others setting up similar services nationally.

“The Lighthouse project is regarded as a pioneer in this work and its input in the development of other projects has been sought and highly valued.”

Adam Dinham *The Mustard Seed Effect* (Church urban Fund, 2005)

In each of the nine English regions there has been some sort of mapping of faith based social action activity to identify what faith groups are doing. In some regions this has been extensive. Thus, *Beyond Belief* (March 2004) reports that there are at least two community action projects for each faith centre in the South East. *Faith in the East of England* (July 2005) identifies 180,000 beneficiaries of faith based community development in the East.

Neighbourhood Renewal in London: the role of faith communities (May 2002) identifies 7000 projects and 2200 faith buildings in London. *Believing in the Region* (May 2006) reports that 80% of faith groups deliver some kind of service to the wider community in the West Midlands. *Faith in England's North West* (November 2003) shows that faith communities are running more than 5000 social action projects and generating income of £69m - £94m per annum in the North West.

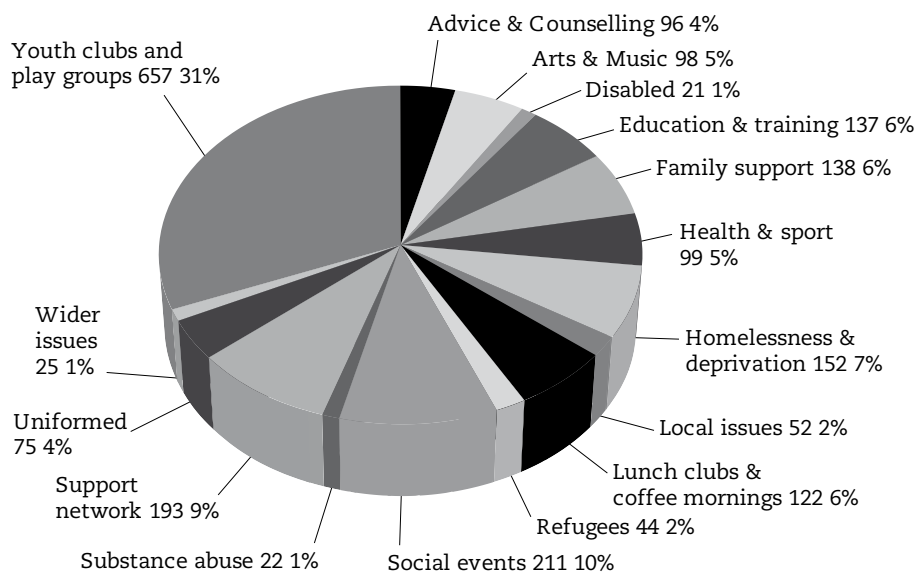
In Yorkshire and the Humber, *Count Us In* (2000) shows that in Hull 90% of churches are involved in social action and *Angels and Advocates* (November 2002) reports that there are 6500 social action projects in churches across Yorkshire and the Humber. *Faith in the North East* (September 2004) shows that there are more than 2500 faith based projects in the North East. *Faith in Action* (June 2006) demonstrates that 165,000 people are supported by faith groups in the South West by 4762 activities. *Faith in Derbyshire* (May 2006) claims that, on average, churches run nine community activities in the East Midlands.

A review of the regional data has summarised the types of social action in each area and these data are presented as pie charts (below).

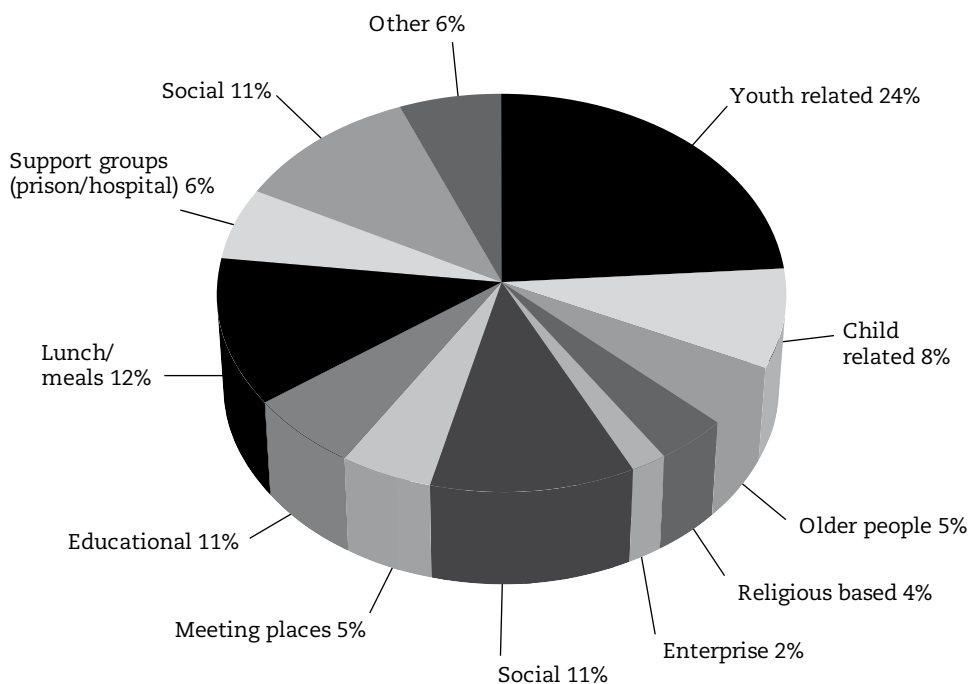
Summary of Regional Data

(Source: Dinham A 2007 *Priceless; Unmeasurable: faith based community development in 21st Century England*. Please note there is no pie data for the South East of England because the data were not available in a format amenable to such a presentation. It should also be noted that methodological differences between the regions mean that none of the data is comparable between regions.)

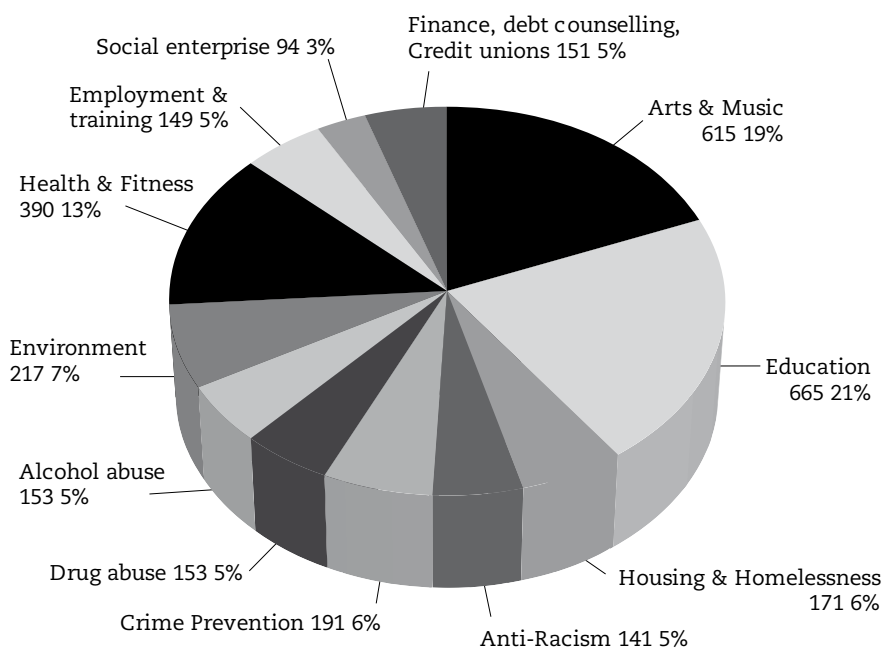
Categories of Faith Based Projects, London



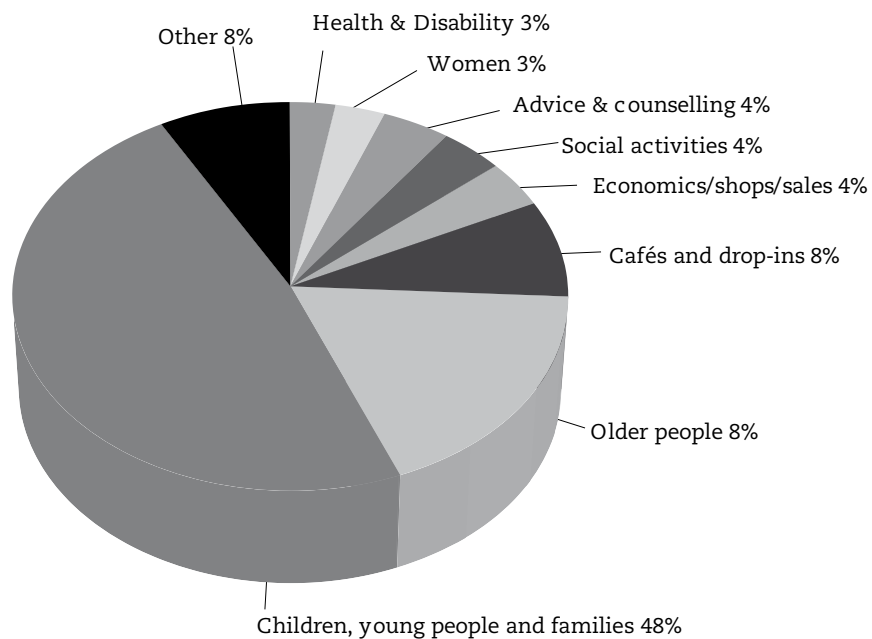
Categories of Faith Based Projects, West Midlands



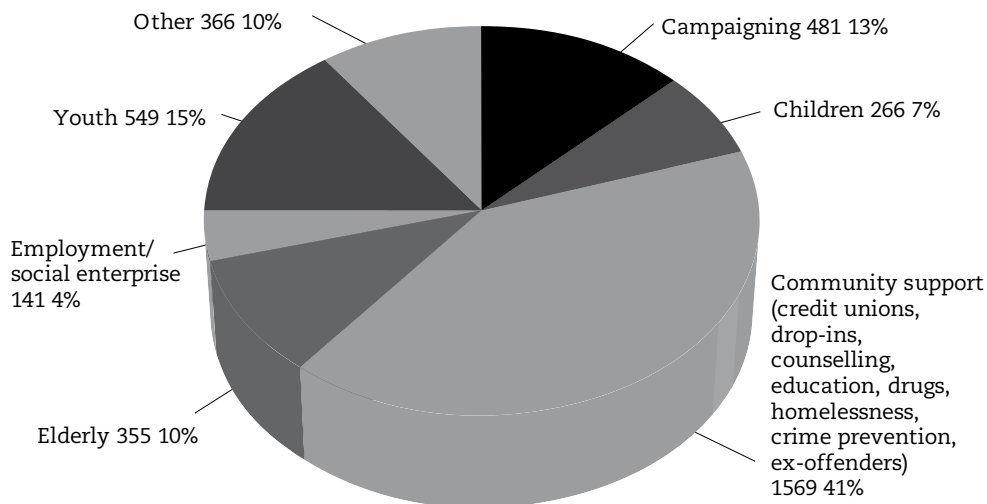
Categories of Faith Based Projects, North West



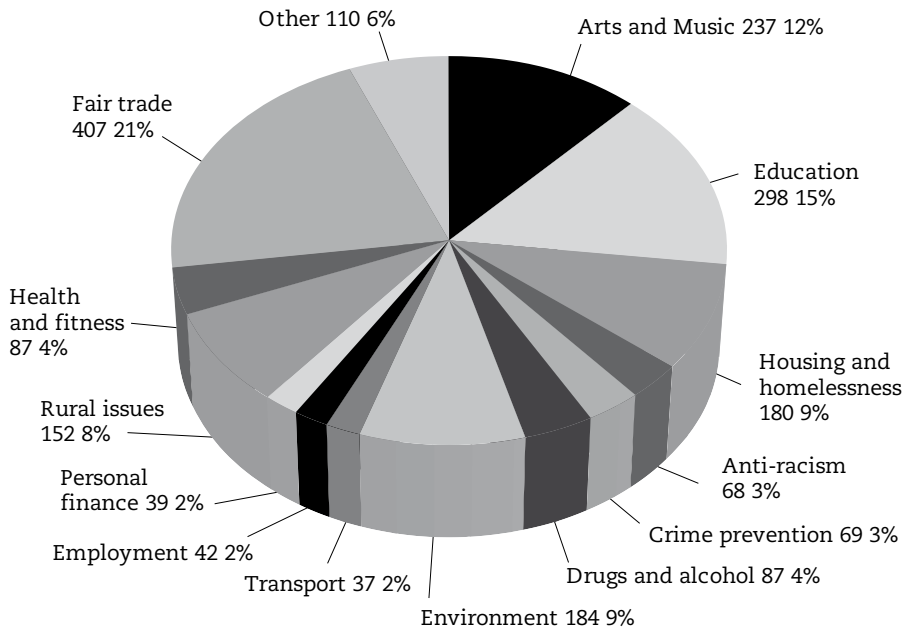
Categories of Faith Based Projects, Yorkshire and the Humber



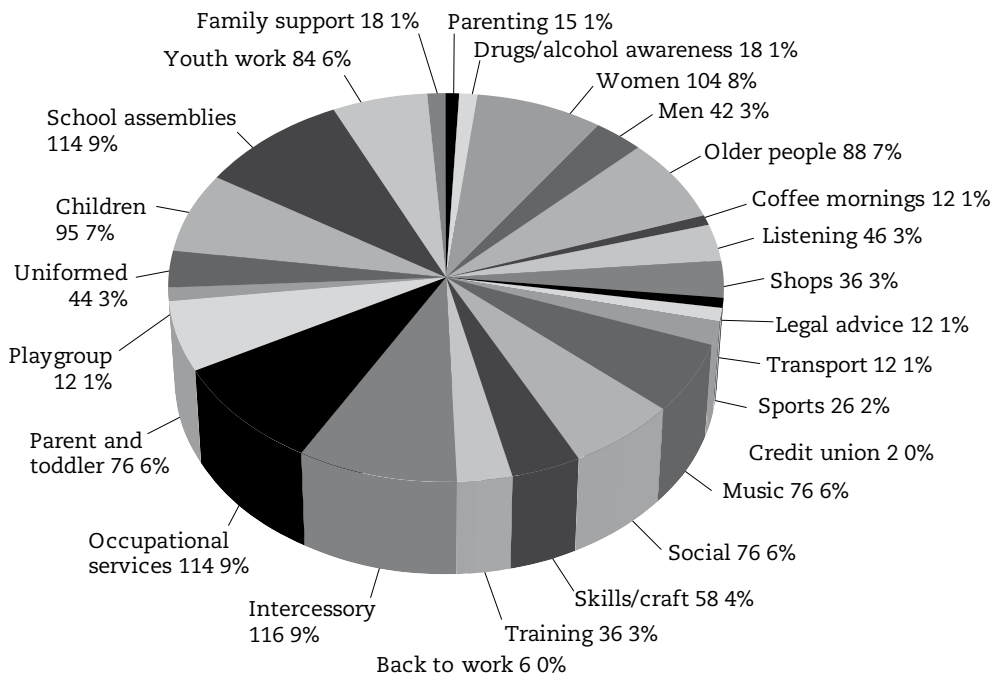
Categories of Faith Based Projects, North East

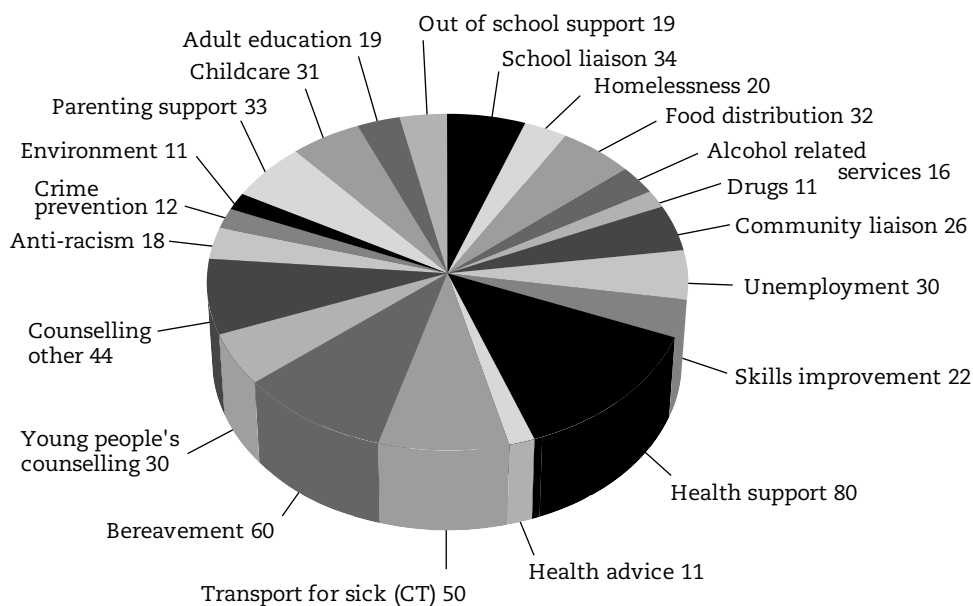


Categories of Faith Based Projects, South West



Categories of Faith Based Projects, East Midlands





It should be noted that a major difficulty in establishing an analysis of this faith based social action is that there is no national dataset nor at this stage any standardised tools for building one. This means that the wealth of regional and sub-regional data which is available cannot be effectively compared, except crudely.

A process of agreeing shared definitions of terms would be of great value both to faiths and to policy makers in developing tangible ways of communicating activity within, between and beyond faith groups. This in itself would provide a framework for establishing a standardised tool for analysis across a national dataset and is an important strategic next stage.

It should also be noted that the data does not currently distinguish between activities undertaken by different faiths and there is practically no data

therefore on what each tradition contributes. It would be beneficial in terms of targeting capacity building to map activities by faith tradition.

Nevertheless, even in its absence, a review of the regional data shows that there are four key ways in which faith communities engage in their wider contexts (Dinham 2007):

- Faiths in projects (partnerships, projects and associations more widely)
- Faiths in fellowship (within congregations, in faiths forums and their equivalents)
- Faiths in strategies (partnerships, networks)
- Faiths in governance structures (leaders and representatives)

The regional aspect of this last point is addressed in the 'Regional Forums' section of this report.

Operation EDEN – Faiths4Change

Inspired by the Bishop of Liverpool the Rt Rev James Jones, Operation EDEN enabled volunteers from faith communities in Liverpool to work in partnership with other local residents to create small scale environmental projects that transformed Merseyside communities. Projects undertaken included community food growing, a recycling service for housebound people, and cleaning up the Leeds Liverpool canal in Bootle town centre. Volunteers received support from the Project Team, including one to one advice, training, network events and grant funding to develop projects.

In Anfield, Liverpool, a Pentecostal church – Liverpool Lighthouse – receiving donations of furniture, needed to create a showroom to enable local people to view the low cost, good quality furniture available. The Al-Ghazali Multi Cultural Community Centre, set up by members of Liverpool’s Muslim communities wanted to create a space where young people could come together to grow their own food and learn to care for the environment. Operation EDEN was able to support Liverpool Lighthouse and Al-Ghazali with training, networking events and grant funding to make both projects a reality.

In total EDEN supported 57 projects which involved more than 1500 volunteers and over 200 partners including faith communities, local authorities and residents groups.

Now, a new regional project Faiths4Change has received funding of just over £1 million to use the experience gained through Operation EDEN to develop a multi-faith, environmental transformation project in urban areas within Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Burnley and Preston. The funding is mainly from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), the Environment Agency and local authorities. The project is supported by world faith communities. www.faiths4change.org.uk.

John Devine, Churches Officer for the Northwest and patron and board member of Operation EDEN said:

“Research undertaken by the NWDA has demonstrated that faith communities are strongest in areas of highest social need, Operation EDEN was a perfect example of how statutory and voluntary bodies could work in partnership with faith communities to engage with hard to reach groups in the community. With further funding now being given to the Faiths4Change programme, we can take those lessons forward and continue to allow people in deprived areas to enhance their skills and make positive changes to their environment.”

www.operation-eden.org.uk

Across Communities: the Young Peoples’ Project

“Across Communities: The Young Peoples’ Project” was launched in Newcastle in February 2003 with the aim of empowering young people in confidence and capacity alongside having their faith and cultural backgrounds validated in an atmosphere of trust and respect. The project brings many of the diverse communities together to work jointly on issues that affect them living in their communities. The young peoples’ involvement and participation have been crucial to the development of the project over the past 5 years. Through many consultation days the young people articulated the main issues that impact on them and created a common agenda for future work. Furthermore, the young people have their own management group, chosen by their peers, which runs in parallel to the adult management group, making this a grass roots youth led project. Many of the young people involved are from traditionally socially excluded communities.

The Churches Regional Commission in the North East is supporting the project and assisting it to grow and develop further.

www.northeastchurches.org.uk

Faith communities contributing to the Bradford New Deal for Communities

Faith organisations have much to contribute towards the regeneration process. Every faith has a social justice agenda, which is supportive of the aims of a regeneration partnership such as, reducing poverty and increasing educational attainment. Faith communities contribute their buildings for social and economic regeneration. They possess a great willingness and desire to improve the well being of their area and community.

Faith organisations share a unique relationship with their members encompassing both a spiritual and moral aspect. A good example of how effective this relationship can be is demonstrated by the Aerobics classes, which were run by a Hindu temple in the area for the elderly. In most cases uptake for this type of project would have been low but because the Temple ran the classes it proved to be extremely successful. Faith organisations have also served as a conduit to access hard to reach groups such as the elderly and those for whom English is a second language. In the Trident area, the mosques have served as a means to access elderly and new immigrant Muslim populations.

Faith Communities, through their faith organisations, have the ability to at times identify and react to situations quicker than either the Local Authority or NDC in our case. The best example of this locally has been the work currently being undertaken by mosques and churches in our area with asylum seekers and refugees and European economic migrants, who have not been engaged as extensively by statutory services.

www.bradfordtrident.co.uk

We can also aggregate the regional data to consider the predominating forms of faith based social action. This is necessarily crude because the data is not comparable. The following table does this, though it should be noted that this is indicative rather than conclusive. These figures should not be read as exhaustive. They indicate the trends and represent what regions report themselves to be active in doing. It is highly likely that there is considerably more activity than the existing data shows and a detailed census of activity nationally would be a very desirable next step in more fully apprehending the scale and scope of faith based social action. It should be noted that this would also give a sharper understanding of the exact nature of those activities, some of which is currently captured in a very general way through the use of self-reporting 'catch all' categories like 'community support'.

Type of Social Action	Number of Initiatives
Child, family, young people	1681
Community support	1595
Education and training	1126
Arts and music	1032
Health	671
Homelessness and housing	525
Campaigning	506
Employment and training	406
Older people	372
Social activities	305
Alcohol related	297
Drugs	292
Crime prevention	274
Social enterprise	240
Advice and counselling	239
Anti racism	227
Support groups	222
Environment	196
Finance, debt and legal	193
Economic activity	163
Cafes, drop ins, coffee mornings, lunch clubs	161
Women	104
Transport	99
Local issues	52
Refugees	44
Men	42
Disability	21

Table 1: Aggregate of Faith Based Social Action Activities

Source: These data are derived from a range of regional sources reviewed in Priceless, Unmeasurable: faith and community development in 21st century England (Dinham A 2007). They are aggregated to give an overall indication of the frequency of the range of activities. They are not exhaustive. The aggregation is crude because there are currently no national data sets nor modes for achieving them which can ensure comparability

Faith and Social Enterprise

Another area in which faiths are active in wider society is through social enterprise. As non-government partners, faiths have increasingly demonstrated a limited but significant capacity for delivering social action, and government has become increasingly interested in how they can be encouraged, with other social actors, to 'stand on their own feet' by generating income from the services provided which are then ploughed back into those services. At its starkest, this is the model of social enterprise which government has committed to.

Faiths have a long tradition of engaging in social enterprise and they are important because they:

- Are seedbeds for this type of enterprise. Many of the most quoted examples of social enterprise began as faith based organisations
- Make a significant contribution to economic and social life in the UK
- Have the potential to reach the most marginalised and excluded groups

Research about the role of faiths in social enterprise carried out in 2006/07 identifies a number of issues which are distinctive to faiths in this regard. Working with multi-faith focus groups, we asked what role faiths think they play in social enterprise. They identified a number of distinctive characteristics which they felt add value. These included a range of values, such as non-judgementalism, hopefulness, compassion, commitment, and a 'whole-person' view of problems.

They also identified distinctive practice orientations, including stability, continuity, long-termism, sustainability, leading by example, buildings and resources, responsiveness & speed and an ability to reach parts others can't reach

A third important area they identified is associated with relationships and networks. These include rootedness in communities, reaching into communities more broadly, community cohesion/social capital, an educative bent which includes reaching beyond faith groups, as well as being educative about faith in wider contexts.

At the same time, these focus groups identified some concerns about their engagement with social enterprise. Some of these were to do with a sense of lacking – that they do not necessarily have the skills, resources, partnership experience and capacity, adaptability, governance know-how or time to be effective.

Others were associated with a sense of fear – of not knowing how to professionalise, of competition with others, of getting on the wrong side of legal requirements, of corrupting or diluting their values with a business ethos, and finally a fear of failure.

These are all serious concerns which will need to be addressed through targeted programmes of support and research in framing approaches to inter-faith social action as it relates to social enterprise. What is also striking about these findings is that they might apply more widely both to what faiths can offer and also to what they need in social action outside social enterprise as well as within it. It is likely that the lessons here can be applied more widely across faith based social action in general.

But for faiths, social enterprise is not a panacea. It is also crucial to recognise that much of the social action undertaken by faiths is unlikely to attract financial self-sustainability and that resources may need to be committed in the long term in these cases outside of social enterprise.

The RISE Project

The 'Refugees into Sustainable Employment' project was set up in 2003. It arose from the Northumbria Churches Training Consortium [NCTC] in Newcastle upon Tyne which closed in December 2007. However, RISE was an independent project with its own management systems and sources of funding and is now in the Walker area of the city and under the umbrella of the St Anthony of Padua Community [but without affiliation to any faith].

The Project is based around providing the participants, all with refugee status, a 26 week employment opportunity. A minimum wage is guaranteed and paid by the RISE project. The placement enables refugees to gain experience of the UK job market and working culture. The Project earns money through contract agreements, for example with New Deal for Communities Scheme, and Job Centre Plus as well as other funders; it also does some education work for employers.

Although initially employers had some concerns about the refugees' legal status, they were motivated to support the project for a number of reasons including: social concern, skill shortage, personal interest, cultural benefit and diversity. The Project is pro-active in approaching enterprises, large or small in private and public sectors, to take the refugees on placement. RISE covers the whole of Tyne and Wear, at the moment they have placements in Gateshead, Durham, Sunderland, Jarrow and several in Newcastle itself.

Overall, the RISE Project is a successful and enterprising initiative. Currently there is a 77% success rate into permanent employment. It is measurably providing a useful and meaningful service to the refugee communities around the Tyne and Wear area. The project is also proving to be a learning experience for employers and the related infra-structure organisations such as Guidance Services and Job and Employment agencies. The success of the project is evidenced by secured funding for five years, from both statutory and charitable sources, and holds the Learning and Skills Beacon status from the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA)

www.thebiggive.org.uk

FRC Group: Furniture Resource Centre

Liverpool is a city of nearly half a million people. Throughout the 1980's it lost a substantial amount of its manufacturing base leading to high levels of unemployment and poverty. The housing stock also suffered serious decline in this period and there was a concurrent rise in levels of crime, drugs and ill health.

The shift from grants to loans in the UK government's Social Fund in the 1980's made it more difficult for local people to obtain payment for necessary household articles. Recognising the impact on the quality of everyday life, a partnership of churches in Liverpool came together to tackle this issue.

In 1988, the Furniture Resource Centre was a project with a staff of 4 supported by volunteers. It supplied donated white goods and furniture items directly to people who needed them. In 20 years Furniture Resource Centre has grown into a nationally and internationally recognised exemplar of social enterprise.

Furniture Resource Centre today delivers a 'one-stop' services of complete packages of furniture, white goods, carpets, curtains and home-starter items. In 2007/08 we made over 4,000 deliveries across the UK. The goods we deliver enable our customers (registered social landlords, local authorities, charities etc.) to provide homes for or to improve the homes of their tenants.

Furniture Resource Centre has won a number of significant contracts to supply furniture to this market including preferred supplier to Procurement for Housing, a collective procurement organisation representing more than 600 Housing Associations.

The work of the Furniture Resource Centre has expanded since 1994. FRC Group is now a group of social businesses (including Furniture Resource Centre) addressing issues of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. Furniture Resource Centre has grown from a project with a turnover of £89k in 1988/89 (80% of which came from grants) to a group of social businesses with a turnover of £3.3m in 2006/07 (7% of which came from grants).

Other businesses within FRC Group are:

- Bulky Bob's – collecting and recycling bulky household waste (furniture and white goods) under contract to local authorities. Since 2000, Bulky Bob's has made more than 400,000 collections and saved 290,000 items from going to landfill sites.
- Revive – selling 'pre-loved' furniture and white goods in a high quality retail environment, marketed to low-income households -more than 20,000 low-income customers since 2000.

and

- Cat's Pyjamas – a joint venture with Urban Strategy Associates, providing consultancy and learning opportunities around social enterprise
- FRC Solutions – consultancy and dissemination of learning and experience

The development of the 'Bulky Bob's' strand was particularly significant as it allowed the project to build up the amount of furniture it collected, to earn income from doing so, and to ensure that this valuable community resource is available to people who need it.

Providing training which can turn people's lives around is at the core of FRC Group. Since 2000, more than 200 people have taken part in our "Driving Change" training programme, gaining experience and qualifications relevant to employment in the logistics industry. Since 2004, 94% of those who completed the programme have gone into sustainable employment.

THE AL GHAZALI MULTI-CULTURAL CENTRE, LIVERPOOL

The Al Ghazali Centre has refurbished a redundant church on Earle Road in Liverpool 7 and now provides a wide range of support to the whole of the local community. It was established in 1992 by parents from the local Yemeni community led by the current Director, Dr Ustath Ahmed Saif, and originally focused on providing Arabic language and cultural studies to the children of the local Muslim community. Drawing inspiration and vision from the Islamic tradition, epitomised by the great eleventh century thinker, Al Ghazali, and building on the experience gained in setting up an organisation to serve the needs of their Muslim community, the Centre's commitment has been extended to working with a wider and more diverse local community. The purchase and refurbishment of the church building was made possible through local and international fundraising.

Examples of the work at the Al Ghazali Centre

The Parent's Advocacy Project supports parents in dealing with the educational system, advocating and attending school meetings if necessary. It also includes parents' drop-in sessions in schools, an after-school club for children and setting up courses for parents at the centre. Initially funded by grants, now, partnerships are developing with the Liverpool Education Authority and other agencies that will enable this work to be taken forward.

The Health Project aims to increase understanding and awareness in the areas of nutrition, environment, physical activity and general well-being. Sessions and activities have been created for children and adults, and working partnerships have been formed with professional and health agencies.

Sports and recreational activities are provided and are well used by the wider community. Basketball, football, swimming and karate are top favourites for girls and boys both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Many of these activities in response to local needs began as a result of successful funding bids. As partnerships have developed, the way forward for some of them is a community enterprise route. The refurbished Centre, while dependent on fundraising in the first instance, now has the potential for use a venue which can be hired out for events such as the FbRN seminar. It is likely that the Al Ghazali Centre, like many faith based social enterprises, will follow a mixed economy.

Dinham, A. (2007) *Faiths and Frontier on the Starship Social Enterprise, boldly going as faith based entrepreneurs?* London, FbRN UK

3. What Faiths Bring to Wider Society

It is clear that faiths contribute significantly in terms of social action through projects and initiatives at local level, through social enterprise, and, as the 'regional forums' section of this report shows, in governance and extended forms of participation.

But there are other more intangible but no less practical and important dimensions to what faiths bring.

NCVO shows that "faith based organisations are integral to civil society; that is they are part of associational life, they are part of the space and place for dialogue within civil society, and they contribute to negotiating collective notions of what a 'good society' might look like" (NCVO 2007:53). They also often provide and participate in spaces for argument and deliberation (e.g. dialogue groups/inter faith councils) as well as participating in external deliberative activities (e.g. through participation in governance structures such as LSPs).

Faith and Local Strategic Partnerships

Research by the Church Urban Fund and FbRN into faith representatives on local public partnerships in 2006 identified 222 faith representatives across England. The vast majority of these were on Local Strategic Partnerships, which is the only form of local public partnership that has really endorsed the concept of 'faith representatives' being there to represent the constituency of local faith communities. Over 80 per cent of the representatives were from the Christian faith tradition, with the majority of these being from the Anglican Church. The research identified the main reason for this as being lack of capacity on the part of other faith communities. There was a perception among the representatives that measures should be taken to enable other faith traditions to take a more active role. There was also a concern about the issues of representation and accountability.

Berkeley et al, (2006) *Faithful Representation: Faith representatives on local public partnerships*, London: Church Urban Fund

In addition, there are two key concepts which are also useful in exploring the relationship between faith based social action and wider society.

These are:

- Social capital
- Contact theory

These are pertinent because evidence suggests that faiths are particularly effective agents of social capital and that contact between faiths, and between faiths and others, has the potential to promote community cohesion.

Faith & Social Capital

Field (2003) offers a useful definition of social capital. At the heart of the concept is the idea that relationships matter. "By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks; to the extent that these networks constitute a resource, they can be seen as forming a kind of capital" (Field, 2003:1).

Different types of social capital can be identified (see Furbey, Dinham et al 2006:7):

- **Bonding**: "based on enduring, multi-faceted relationships between similar people with strong mutual commitments such as among friends, family and other close-knit groups"
- **Bridging**: "Formed from the connections between people who have less in common, but may have overlapping interests, for example, between neighbours, colleagues, or between different groups within a community"
- **Linking**: "Derived from the links between people or organisations beyond peer boundaries, cutting across status and similarity and enabling people to exert influence and reach resources outside their normal circles"

The Gujarat Hindu Society of Preston illustrates the progression from bonding social capital, to bridging and linking. It was first necessary to build up the confidence of the Hindu community in Preston, and secure a base from which they could inter-act with the wider community. This path has taken many years, and is one that is increasingly being followed by the faiths that are newer to Britain. A forthcoming report from the Community Development

Foundation examines the issue of single identity funding. The authors of the current report agree with the findings of the CDF report that; funding should depend on an organisation's ability to deliver outcomes and not on its identity, single faith or other and; single identity groups need support to develop diverse leadership, provide culturally appropriate services to their communities, link with other communities, and engage with the public agenda.

The Gujarat Hindu Society, Preston

The community centre and temple with its portico of carved marble is a remarkable sight in a Preston suburb. Founded in the early 1960s by a small group of Hindus, GHS was set up to serve the religious and cultural needs of the Hindu residents of the area.

At first the funding came from the faith community members, and they bought and refurbished an old school building. When this became too small, grants, further community efforts and a loan made the new building possible. The smart new, well equipped premises are well managed and used, providing an income stream as well as benefitting of the community.

Other organisations like to use our Centre because it's in the right place, it's convenient for the town centre and the station, it's well equipped and there's plenty of parking.

Ishwer Tailor; President of GHS

It is also about the type of building, it's about relationship. Lancashire County Council sees GHS as a faith organisation that has achieved a great deal against the odds. They are proud to be associated with a Hindu faith organisation that has raised the profile of the area.

Vijayanti Chauhan; External Relations Policy Officer, Lancashire County Council.

For local people the Centre provides:

- Jobs information and advice
- IT Training
- A youth development programme
- A lunch club run by elders
- Sports activity for all ages
- A worship centre

Over the years it has established itself as one of the major community organisations in the borough, and worked in partnership with Social Services to provide services for older people, the Youth Service to train leaders and support youth work, the Learning and Skills Council, and, with the North West Lancashire Health Promotion Unit, has set up a Gujarat Health Users Forum.

GHS has thrived and grown because, while remaining rooted in its own community, it has had the vision to make a place for itself in the wider world, and has never been afraid of a challenge.

www.ghspreston.co.uk

A major Joseph Rowntree Foundation study on faith and social capital in 2006 found the following:

Faith communities contribute substantial and distinctive bridging and linking social capital through:

- Co-presence in urban areas
- Connecting frameworks (infrastructure)
- Use of their buildings
- Spaces that their associational networks open up between people
- Engagement in governance
- Work across boundaries with others in the public domain

On the other hand there are also difficulties and obstacles identified including:

- Misunderstanding and suspicion of faiths amongst partners
- Financial barriers
- Inappropriate buildings
- State managerialism and regulation
- Bridging and linking is undertaken by a small minority within faith communities
- The evidence shows that women and young people participate less in bridging and linking forms of social capital and more in bonding, probably because of issues of power and the role of women (and young people)

It is also noted that faith buildings stand as physical markers of faith presence and diversity and in many cases they become places where community activity is focused.

At the same time, it is observed that some faith communities can bond so tightly, within their buildings and more widely in their associational spaces, that they never move on to bridging and linking and in fact resist attempts to do so. This has been called the 'dark side' of social capital.

Examples of social capital connection include:

- National faith, interfaith and multifaith structures (e.g. Inter Faith Network for the UK; FCCC; Faith Based Regeneration Network UK; Council of Christians and Jews; informal dialogue groups for Muslims and Jews, Christians and Muslims)
- Regional and local structures (e.g. faith representatives on regional groups; faith forums and councils; friendship arrangements via informal associations for discussion and action)
- Linking with the wider voluntary and community sector
- Participation in formal governance structures (eg LSPs and Regional Assemblies on which regional faiths forums have seats), which promotes linking social capital.
- Partnerships and projects at community level – this is where most faith based bridging and linking takes place (as the case studies, below, show)

Baker and Skinner (2006:4-5) develop the idea of social capital by talking about spiritual and religious capital:

- Religious capital: "is the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups". This relates to the practical actions and resources FBOs contribute in the spaces of civil society.
- Spiritual capital: "energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and a worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis of faith." This relates to the motivation of FBOs to act in civil society.

Of great importance to faiths is that government and other partners take seriously the relationship between their spiritual and their religious capital. One is often grounded in the other and there is very strong feeling amongst faiths about the importance of policy nurturing both rather than 'taking' the social or religious capital without acknowledging or understanding the spiritual capital that underpins it.

Contact Theory

Whilst there is much evidence and data concerning the role of social capital in relation to faith, there is very little in relation to contact theory.

In his 1954 volume, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport proposed that under certain conditions, bringing together individuals from opposing groups could reduce intergroup prejudice. This clearly has potential in terms of government's agenda for community cohesion, particularly as it relates to faiths. At the same time, Allport warned that superficial contact between members of different groups would, in fact, reinforce stereotypes.

The basic formulaic version of the contact hypothesis has four elements: that those in contact with each other should have

- a) equal status
- b) common goals
- c) institutional support
- d) a perception of similarity between the two groups.

There are three practical approaches associated with how contact works:

- The **deategorization** model (Brewer & Miller, 1984) proposes minimizing the use of labels altogether, and instead interacting on an individual basis (focusing on relationships between people of different traditions).
- The **recategorization** model (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989) suggests that intergroup contact could be maximally effective if perceivers reject the use of "us" and "them" in favour of a more inclusive, "we" category (giving a focus on acting together aside from differences in faith traditions).
- The **categorization** model (Hewstone & Brown, 1986), points out practical problems with personalized, as opposed to group-based, interactions and instead promotes keeping group boundaries intact during intergroup encounters (eg faiths remain highly identified with their traditions and engage with one another from within them).

An Example from Evidence

Ensari and Miller (2002) asked a traditional Islamic associate to dress and describe herself in a manner typical of her group and disclose personal and unique information to an unknown participant. The two then undertook a cooperative task (see Miller, 2002). The exercise was repeated but this time with atypical attire and self-description, and disclosure of impersonal information. The combined perceptions by the unknown participant, of a personal disclosure, along with typicality of dress and self-description produced the best reported outcomes in terms of reduced bias toward the Islamic confederate after the cooperative task. These findings indicate the importance of the intimacy of contact and its potential to personalize the outgroup member, but they also suggest that despite the importance of a personalized interaction, maintaining a clearly expressed boundary about identity is also important.

The research presented here thus suggests that ignoring or overlooking group membership during contact may not necessarily result in better intergroup attitudes and relations. Rather, it is suggested that clear but co-operative assertion of different faith identities in inter faith interactions is helpful in promoting better relations between the different groups. This has very important implications for inter faith working.

That said, the faith based evidence for contact theory is very limited. Though it may have application to faith based contexts, and potentially promise much for strengthened and resilient communities, the evidence currently needs to be built up significantly. A programme of research would be required prior to an effective application of contact theory to faiths and community cohesion policies and this would be a beneficial part of an inter faith framework.

A Key Related Idea: Community Cohesion

Embedded in the idea of social capital, and contact theory as a mechanism for promoting it, is the related notion of community cohesion. The CLG response to the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion adopts the Report's vision and definition of an integrated and cohesive community as being based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

Faith based social action, emerging from the needs and realities of community life, can be an important contributor to many of these aspects of community cohesion, as the case studies below show. Cohesion is a particularly important concept for faith communities as faith is increasingly acknowledged to be a marker of identity along with race and ethnicity and it is along these 'fault lines' that cohesion is ensured, or fractures emerge.

At the same time, it is crucial that faith and ethnicity are not confused. Whilst they may often overlap, ethnicity cannot be taken as a predictor of faith, nor vice versa. To do so risks forming a framework which does not reflect the real diversity and local contingencies of faiths, and therefore to alienate rather than to engage.

Faith Together in Leeds 11

Leeds 11 is home to around 170,000 people living in 7,761 households, 20% of whom belong to ethnic minorities – an area suffering from multiple deprivation and social exclusion, reflected in high levels of unemployment and crime. It is an area where poor health and bad housing go with living in the most deprived ward in Leeds and well within the 5% most deprived wards nationally. It was against this background that this unique grassroots partnership of Christian Churches and Muslim and community organisations took shape.

A team of staff and volunteers provide a range of services for the local community that are sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of the people involved. For example, the luncheon club takes into account differences in diet, languages and customs, open to different groups on each day. In 2003 a £1.5 million Hamara Centre was completed with backing from the Single Regeneration Budget, the Community Fund, local churches and community fundraising, Church Urban Fund, Methodist Multi-Racial Projects Fund and Tudor Trust. This encompassed a Healthy Living Centre, Community Hall and Parenting Centre which aims to meet the project's objective of 'improving educational attainment and reducing crime and the fear of crime by tackling some of the longer-term social and economic factors that contribute to it.'

During a visit in February 2006, Archbishop Sentamu praised local people for working together. For more information visit www.faithtogether.org.uk.

Based on an extract of *Angels and Advocates: Church social action in Yorkshire and the Humber* published by Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber www.crc-online.org.uk.

ICLS (West Yorkshire)

The Intercultural Communication and Leadership School (ICLS) is a programme of residential seminars for young adults (generally aged 20-30) from diverse cultures and backgrounds. In West Yorkshire it is run by the Active Faith Communities Programme (AFC) - an independent, multi-faith infrastructure support organisation with a specific focus on building the capacity of the faith sector to engage in social action and community cohesion.

Since 2002 AFC has organised 10 seminars with over 100 participants. Each seminar runs for five days and is held at Scargill House, near Kettlewell in the Yorkshire Dales. In the last two years seminars have also been held in other cities in the UK, including Leicester, Peterborough and the West Midlands.

The content of the seminar includes:

- Leadership skills
- Conflict resolution
- Working with the media
- Culture, beliefs and identity

Just as important as the programme content is that participants have a chance to learn about each other and from each other in a space where they are able to ask difficult questions and have honest discussions.

After the seminar, all participants become members of a growing network of people who are active in their own communities and committed to developing healthy and positive relationships between communities. Many of the participants to date have demonstrated the effectiveness of the programme through community projects they have set up or engaged in, and by the life choices they have subsequently made.

The ICLS in West Yorkshire is part of an international programme with links in Europe and Asia. Recently a UK-wide ICLS organisation has been formed and is currently seeking funding to develop the programme nationally.

www.activefaiths.org

4. Support Mechanisms for Faith Based Social Action

There is a range of support mechanisms for faith based social action operating at national and regional levels. It is also certain that there is a degree of local support in some areas but this is almost entirely undocumented and rather patchy. Support activities are predominantly characterised by activities including dissemination of information, seminars and training, promotion and support of networks, advice, consultancy and mentoring.

National Structures

At the national level, there is one multi-faith organisation, the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN UK) which supports faith based social action and one key interfaith organisation, the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN UK), which, though not focusing on social action, is key in building social capital with faith groups.

Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN)

The Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) is the leading national multi faith network for community development and regeneration. Set up in 2002 by practitioners of faith based community development, regeneration and social action, it aims to:

- link practitioners to learn and gain inspiration from each other across the different faith traditions in the UK
- encourage the active engagement of faith groups in regeneration
- build their capacity for this
- provide an interface between policy makers and communities.

It is managed by a Trustee body drawn from nine faith traditions: Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian.

FbRN has 1,400 individuals and organisations on its contact list. By cascading through other organisations, its newsletters and email bulletins reach 9,000. It produces a Toolkit for practitioners, *Tools for Regeneration: Practical Advice for Faith Communities*,

4,000 of which are in circulation. It runs seminars and training events, for example in 2006/7 on Faith in Community Development and Faith Communities and Social Enterprise, resulting in policy focused publications and further good practice guides.

FbRN is a member of the Government's Faith Communities Consultative Council and the CLG Third Sector Partnership Board. With the Inter Faith Network for the UK, FbRN facilitates the developing English Regional Faiths Forum Network.

FbRN is developing a new website which aims to be a major resource for practitioners and policy makers.

Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN)

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between people of different faiths in Britain. Its 150 member organisations include national representative bodies of the Bahá'í; Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jain; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; and Zoroastrian communities; national, regional and local inter faith organisations; and academic institutions and educational bodies concerned with inter faith issues.

The emphasis of the IFN's work is on linking, cooperation and communication. It provides information and advice to a wide range of organisations and individuals on inter faith matters and on how to contact communities at both national and local level. It holds regular national and regional meetings and organises seminars and conferences on a variety of issues and projects and publishes material to help encourage and resource inter faith activity.

In recent years a Faith Communities Forum has been developed within the framework of the Inter Faith Network for the UK to provide a mechanism for consultation between national faith community representative bodies on matters of mutual concern, including issues on the public agenda as well as the development of inter faith relations. IFN services, with FbRN, the recently formed English Regional Faith Forums Network.

Alongside these multi and inter faith organisations, a number of bodies springing from a single faith (though often working with others) are also key. They are as follows:

Church Urban Fund (CUF) provides support in the form of funding for small faith based community projects, practical advice and information for them and acts as a vehicle for representing their voices at all levels. CUF has been operating for 20 years and emerged from the 'Faith in the City' report (see also Dinham, 2005). The overall aim is to tackle poverty and deprivation. CUF does this via targeting funding at small and local faith based social action projects that are open to all. These projects need to be located in the top 10% of poorest areas in England in accordance with the Index of Multiple Deprivation and/or serving intrinsically deprived communities. They make grants totalling between £1.5 and £3 million per year. The average annual grant is £5,000. CUF is also funded by the Cabinet Office in support of its CUF Xchange (CUFX) initiative, aimed at creating a voice for small faith based social action projects and encouraging them to network together (mostly at national level, but also at regional and local too). Through this they run an interactive website. The longer term aim is to broaden this network to include all faiths and projects that are not receiving CUF funding but that meet CUF's funding criteria as well as the 500 projects that are currently supported. Other support activities offered by CUF and CUFX include conferences, training workshops, tool kits, one to one consultancy, signposting, infrastructure development and advocacy work.

A recent study showed that CUF funding results in much greater impacts than originally intended by the grant itself (Dinham 2005) and that these arise out of a number of distinctive factors, many of which are shared with other faith based support structures and indicate something of what can be distinctive about the faith 'offer':

- Strategic and prophetic insight – seeing beyond the immediate to the long-term and sustainable
- Making small grants targeted towards needs that would otherwise be unmet or find difficulties in getting support
- Strong local and historical presence via diocesan and parish structures – giving voice to grassroots organisations

- A developmental approach which is responsive, flexible and creative
- Linking up local work with diocesan, regional and national agendas
- Commitment to building capacity
- Challenging others to 'join in' – setting an example
- Encouraging and allowing people to take risks and be distinctive

Churches Community Work Alliance (CCWA) is an infrastructure organisation with a remit to work across all parts of the UK and Republic of Ireland to advance and encourage church-related community development work. It promotes community development values and principles as the most effective and authentic way to engage with communities and it seeks to support frontline workers and organisations in delivering training and services. CCWA has a comprehensive website to help build capacity in the sector (www.ccwa.org.uk). CCWA is currently undergoing a major review of how it will provide capacity building support in the future and is looking at the major challenge of how it will sustain itself financially and structurally as an organisation. This is likely to result in CCWA becoming a virtual network of organisations and workers, with its website being the major tool for providing information, advice, resources and discussion. In accordance with community development values, CCWA wants to equip frontline organisations and workers to become better informed about a range of issues and policies, and be able to participate in networks and policy critique more effectively and to reflect on the theological motivations for community engagement, as well as how their own work can have more impact.

United Reformed Church (URC) Community Development Programme was a pioneer in Church Related Community Development. Its CRCW programme has been running since 1982. It trains community development workers who are then deployed in local areas and are paid a stipend in the same way as the clergy. It also encourages local church congregations to become involved in community development and produces resource packs and a video. The CRCW Programme is serviced centrally by the URC.

Caritas is the umbrella organisation for Catholic social care organisations working within England and Wales. It produces research reports and resources for Catholic social action.

United Synagogue, Community Development Group encourages community development and volunteering by the Jewish community. It works to develop strong leadership and community empowerment. The CDG recognises that the faith community needs encouragement to build up their confidence and capabilities and supportive relationships through which they can develop social capital. It runs a range of programmes including networking and training, and publishes resources.

Faithworks is a national second tier support agency specialising in the Christian faith sector which has three core aims:

- 1] Empowering and inspiring individual Christians and local churches to develop their role in their community
- 2] Challenging and changing the public perception of the Church by engaging the media and government
- 3] Encouraging unity and partnership to meet needs of the community

Faithworks offer training resources, telephone advice, consultancy and tool-kits and are active in supporting and encouraging the development of networks between Christian faith based organisations.

The above organisations have as their primary purpose the supporting of faith based social action. There are, in addition, national bodies of faith traditions, some of which support and encourage their members in social action as part of a wider remit. It is not feasible to list all these organisations here and a full list can be found on the website of the Inter faith Network www.interfaith.org.uk

Support Structures at the Regional Level

Faith Councils/Forums of Faiths

A range of regional faith bodies have been developed which work in various ways as structures of support to faiths. (For details see the 'Regional Forums' section of this report). Faith councils or forums exist in eight of the nine English regions:

- Northwest Forum of Faiths
- South East of England Faith Forum
- West Midlands Faiths Forum
- Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum
- Forum of Faiths for the East Midlands
- East of England Faiths Council
- South West Council of Faiths
- London has a Boroughs Faiths Network and is developing a Faiths Forum

The regional section of this report explores the regional forums in detail. For the purposes of this report it should be noted that, at regional level, it is predominantly the Christian Churches that have geographical spread of population, physical presence and infrastructure. Thus, in each region a number of Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses, United Reformed Church Provinces, Methodist Districts and other groupings may well map onto the footprints of regional governance, as also the ecumenical Churches Together bodies that exist at county level in many parts of the country. That said, they are all working with other faiths to one degree or another (as the regional section of this report shows). The issue of differing capacities and resources between the faiths is an important one in framing a way of interfaith working. Faith forums recognise that it is crucially important to avoid institutionalising inequalities of capacity as this will further disadvantage the faiths which are newer to Britain, many of which also share minority ethnicities.

FaithNetEast

has been funded by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and its remit is as a regional infrastructure to mediate information and learning about policy, skills, funding and community development between the regional and the local. This body is not representative but rather acts as an agency to support the region's faith communities in social and community activity, including engagement with the public sector. At the same time FaithNetEast fosters a strategic focus, linking up initiatives across the regions where it is thought that networking and co-working might be of benefit, and tying locally based activities in to regional thinking and practices. It is also careful to respect the power and autonomy of faith structures for social action at the neighbourhood level and sees itself as a facilitator of the local as and where it is sought out and welcomed. FaithNetEast also works with the Regional Development Agency to reflect the regional priorities as they relate to faiths. Thus it has set up 'specialist support networks' (mostly facilitated by ICT but also in face to face meetings) for faith groups doing work with migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, skills improvers and lifelong learners, social enterprise and people wishing to return to employment. It also runs seminars and events to support faiths in their social action.

www.faithneteast.org.uk

FaithNetEast and Faithnetsouthwest

In addition to the regional forums of faith, in two regions there are also information and learning hubs which support the social action activities of faiths. These are in the East of England and the South West. The following case study gives examples of the work of one of these hubs, for more information on FaithNetEast and faithnetsouthwest please see the regional section of this report.

Churches Regional Network

CRN coordinates the input of the Churches into regional development, supports the Churches Regional Officers. The Churches regional structures have different names in the different regions. CRN frequently acts to support social action through good practice, experience and information sharing either informally or formally via events.

A particularly active example of a regional structure is the Churches Regional Commission (CRC) for Yorkshire and the Humber which provides advice, training, conferences, seminars and briefings. It has given funding to projects in the past, but its primary activity involves engaging at regional level with policy and strategy, and acting as a catalyst for action and networking. CRC Y&H supports the sharing of good practice and has provided help with funding bids, especially in the area of heritage and tourism. It also employs two people in North Yorkshire who work with a Christian organisation called Farm Crisis Network, providing (alongside volunteers), free advice and support to farmers. CRC Y&H was

also key in setting up the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum. With the Faiths Forum they run 'Faith Matters', a programme which trains people in secular organisations to better understand faith communities and how to work with them; 4,000 people have completed this training.

Sub-Regional & Local Structures

Specific faith based support is also available through structures at sub-regional level. The availability of other support varies greatly across the country. There are models of good practice to build on and we focus here on two: the Active Faith Communities programmes in West Yorkshire, and the Hull Search project.

It should also be noted that the Anglican Church is particularly strong in having staff located in most dioceses across England that have as at least a part of their role the support of church based social action. The other larger Christian denominations (Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, United Reform) have their own equivalents.

A recent survey by the Church Urban Fund (CUF 2007) found that the projects it supports (mostly Christian and with links to churches) are most likely to seek help from a Church or faith organisation and it uses the Anglican diocesan structures to 'reach' those communities in need.

The next most likely source of support is the local authority or a local council for voluntary service.

Background to Active Faith Communities – West Yorkshire

Introduction

The potential for faith groups as a stimulant and focus for community activity has long been recognised:

‘The vital regenerating, life-enhancing role of faith communities re-connecting people and encouraging them to work together to serve each other must no longer be neglected’

John Battle MP

John Battle went on to argue that faith groups along with their buildings have a supremely significant part to play in the rebuilding of a more inclusive and more human 21st Century Britain.

Active Faith Communities is an innovative multi-faith, multi-cultural charity set up in 2003, specifically focused on equipping faith communities in West Yorkshire to unlock their potential for developing social and community projects in partnership with the wider VCFS.

Faith groups are uniquely placed to work with the local communities in which they are based to develop projects for the common good; however they often need advice, information and support to develop projects. AFCP exists to fill this gap.

AFC’s vision is of a world where faith communities work in partnership to create a fair, inclusive and sustainable society and its mission is to maximise the ability of faith groups to work with others to play a part in fulfilling the potential of their communities, and to build bridges between communities of all faiths and none.

AFC’s current aims for the period 2008 to 2011 are:

- To build the capacity of the sector
- To build bridges and create cohesion
- To empower local faith-based organisations to lobby and influence decision makers

AFC’s current activities include:

- organising and delivering regular Intercultural Communication and Leadership Seminars, a residential Programme aimed at 18 to 30 year old community activists from different cultural and faith communities
- a capacity building project supporting faith based community development and social action projects with areas such as governance, organisational development, and fundraising.
- Cohesion projects on the Holmewood Estate in Bradford and in Beeston, South Leeds .

AFC’s Structure – AFC is governed by a Board of Directors drawn from a number of different faiths including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism.

www.activefaiths.org

Hull SEARCH

In Hull the KEY Churches Together Group, with the support of the local CVS established Hull SEARCH in 1999 to support local church-led community action in Hull and district. It is ecumenical in both its structure and its approach, and works at grass roots level. The work of SEARCH is primarily aimed at the poorer and least well resourced churches, it is for all churches and Christian groups.

Hull Search provides help with:

- **Finding out:** helping churches find out about the needs and resources in their local communities, to ensure new developments meet real, identified need.
- **Project development:** helping churches to make a realistic assessment of their current resources, strengthen existing social action and plan future developments
- **Signposting:** pointing churches in the direction of information and resources to assist their development plans
- **Training:** helping churches to identify training needs and supporting them in accessing relevant training for staff, volunteers and participants
- **Networking:** helping churches develop links with other local churches and projects, community groups and organisations/agencies that may be thinking or working in a similar way.
- **Funding:** working closely with other local agencies to provide up-to-date funding information, support and advice in applying for grants for projects and activities
- **Information:** a bi-monthly newsletter with information about training, funding, resources, events and local developments. An E-mail bulletin service, providing an, up-to-date source of information
- **Database:** a database of existing church-based social action and community activities, which can be accessed by churches and other organisations
- **Conferences and events:** an annual training programme of training events, enabling networking and sharing of best practice

www.keyct.org.uk/SEARCHhomepage.htm

The local 'Churches Together' (see the Hull Search case study) frameworks in towns and cities provide the most used opportunities to engage in partnership work.

There is no comparable information about other non-Christian faith communities, most of which do not have similarly well established structures, though their faith based social action itself is extensive. As noted above, it would be beneficial to map activities by faith tradition. It would also be useful to map and database structures of support in order to target capacity building in these area and as a resource for faiths everywhere.

Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

The Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF) has been another key source of support. In its two years of funding faiths (2005/06 and 2006/07) it has supported 338 faith based capacity building

initiatives and 238 interfaith initiatives. Funded projects gave an indication of which faiths they would be working with. Of 139 projects reporting, in receipt of large grants, 609 faith groups were identified as end beneficiaries of their projects. Of those, the breakdown by faiths is as follows:

■ Christian	114 (17.3%)
■ Muslim	111 (16.9%)
■ Hindu	85 (13%)
■ Sikh	79 (12%)
■ Jewish	71 (10.8%)
■ Buddhist	62 (9.4%)
■ Bahá'í	48 (7.3%)
■ Other	33 (5%)
■ Jain	32 (4.8%)
■ Zoroastrian	22 (3.3%)

Source: Derived from data on p14, Faith, Cohesion and Community Development: an evaluation report from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

The breakdowns for small grants follow a similar distributive pattern amongst faiths.

The evaluation of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund indicates that there are several key learning points in relation to interfaith dialogue and social action:

- That capacity needs to be built from the 'bottom up' and reflect the diversity of faiths by being supported at regional, sub-regional and local levels
- That funding streams should use these networks to respond to local needs and be set up in such a way as to hear them
- That there needs to be a realistic mix of paid and unpaid staff and volunteers at the local level. It should not be assumed that faiths have an unlimited supply of labour and other resources
- Projects dominated by one faith may have diverse beneficiaries but often find it hard to attract diverse governance. There is a specific capacity building need around some of the faiths which are newer to Britain.
- It is important that when capacity is built in one place it is not at the cost of effective existing work in another.

Our discussions with faith groups also indicate that there is concern that FCCBF was effective in building capacity in year one but subsequently squandered much of it by not funding some of the year one initiatives in the second phase. It is important to strike a balance between supporting innovation on the one hand and consolidating excellence on the other. Faith based social action should not be regarded as solely or perpetually innovative. It must be allowed also to become established.

A Note on Non-faith Based Support Structures

Faith based organisations are also able to turn to secular VCS organisations at national, regional and local levels in the same way as other organisations can. It has been noted by Barnes and Berkeley (CUF 2007:6) that faiths are most likely to seek help from a faith organisation, local authority or local Council for Voluntary Service. This may reflect the fact that many of them feel their voice is heard by faiths themselves or at the local rather than national level.

There is also strong evidence from users that faiths appreciate and express a need for support that is informed by awareness of and sensitivity to the culture and practices of their organisations and, indeed, preferably by faith based organisations. Partners in the VCS and elsewhere need to develop faith literacy.

A 2007 report by the National Council for Voluntary Service concluded that while many of the support needs of the faith sector could be provided by generic VCS infrastructure organisations 'there may be a case for targeted support to meet the needs of particular constituencies'.

Whilst some communities and faith based organisations are aware of and will use voluntary, and occasionally public, sector support agencies, others are ignorant or suspicious of the support they provide and do not access them. Research based in Guildford for the Governance Hub concludes that smaller 'faith based organisations are unlikely to search for VCS support or belonging' and that 'existing faith sector infrastructure needs greater recognition and support'. (Jones, P 2007).

Some CVSs and culturally specific support agencies are well attuned to the needs of faith groups and report a significant take up of their services from faith communities, but there is still a mismatch with the perceptions of some faith groups who feel their faith-specific contexts are not adequately understood. A clear written compact between VCS structures and faiths would be of great value.

What do Support Structures Do?

At present there are five main ways in which faiths are supported. They:

- Provide mechanisms for communication with membership/clients/contacts: this may be through email/telephone help lines, attendance at events
- Conduct research: some organisations undertake specific research and consultation with faiths
- Facilitate dialogue amongst networks and between groups and individuals
- Disseminate literature, for example guides, toolkits and other sources and resources
- Formulate and interpret policies, information and opportunities around all parts of faith based activity

Many of these sources and resources are produced at local and regional level. While some are effectively and widely disseminated, others seem to be bound by their localities and it is likely that opportunities for support and learning could be more widely shared round.

Barriers to Using Support Structures

Some of the barriers to accessing support structures include:

- Many faiths do not see themselves as part of the VCS and therefore do not go to those wider structures for support
- There can be misunderstanding and, in some cases, hostility towards faiths from non-faith support structures
- Suspicion of official bodies, especially in the context of a focus on prevention of extremism
- Such suspicion can transfer from suspicion of government to suspicion of other 'official' sounding bodies such as CVS's
- Poor publicity/knowledge of support available
- In some cases there are limited resources and lack of capacity for seeking support
- A key barrier is lack of time where reliance is placed on volunteers with many other commitments. This is often consolidated by the perception by others that faiths are time and resource rich whilst in reality this may only apply to paid officers and within the more established traditions

Comments from Faith Groups about Support Structures for Faith Based Organisations (FBOs)

'Many FBOs connect with wider society'

- if a FBO is active on a particular issue, it is likely they will come across other groups active on the same issues
- sometimes the connections of FBOs to wider society are not understood by others in the VCS or other sectors.

'Many FBOs operate in an isolated way'

- faith based social action is and should be reaching out to wider communities, although this is not always achieved in practice

'More needs to be done to publicise activities of FBOs that are open to the wider community'

- for example, food provision at Mosques at Friday prayers which is intended for people in the wider community as well as those active in the faith community
- there is scope for wider connections with society to take place. This is starting to happen, although there needs to be something in place to broker these connections, for example having an officer who is dedicated to working with FBOs and understands associated agendas

Source: Interviews conducted for this report (see Appendix B)

5. ‘Non-Faith Specific’ Central Government Funding

The Funding Environment

The Third Sector has had a key role in government policy for over a generation but it is only in the last ten years that

- the language of partnership has become all-pervading
- faith communities have been drawn into this framework alongside other sections of the Third Sector

To receive public funding, organisations, including faith organisations, must demonstrate that they are working in ways that enable key policies and strategies to be delivered. Within this context, whilst faith communities have increasingly been seen as groups with much to offer the government agenda, at the same time they are viewed in some quarters with suspicion as a result of:

- an historic assumption that public sector funding should not be used to ‘promote’ religion
- the perception by some that faith communities are in some sense culpable for some of society’s ills such as discrimination, social disturbance, and violent extremism

Politicians have repeatedly stated the importance of faith communities for delivering social change but in practice the funding environment is potentially confusing both for public sector officers and for faith communities. From the perspective of public officials the sheer diversity of organisations and traditions amongst faiths can be overwhelming and the language of faith can be very different from the language of government. From the perspective of faith communities, there is a concern that their independence might be compromised, and about a lack of experience and capacity to engage.

The Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and, with a much tighter policy focus, the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund primarily aimed at supporting integration and positive civic engagement in the Muslim community, have made steps

towards addressing these concerns. In the context of these specifically targeted funds, it is important also to identify the extent to which faiths have been successful in accessing mainstream government funding programmes too.

Despite best efforts, it is not always the case that major government departments co-ordinate their funding programmes. This often means that applicants are faced with a confusing range of potential targets and criteria. The broad policy streams that are supported by funding include:

- Economic development, social inclusion and regeneration
- Healthy Communities
- Community cohesion and integration
- Active citizenship and volunteering
- Delivering more effective public services

Some of the key funding programmes to deliver these objectives include:

- **Cabinet Office – Futurebuilders, £150million over four years**
- **Cabinet Office – Capacitybuilders Improving Reach, £18million over three years**
- Cabinet Office – Community Assets Programme, £30million (operated by Big Lottery Fund)
- DCFS – Local Network Fund, £150million over five years
- **DCSF – Parenting Fund, £14million over two years.**
- **DCLG – Connecting Communities Plus, £18million over three years.**
- **Department of Health – Opportunities for Volunteering, £6.7million in current year.**
- **Department of Health – Section 64 Grant Scheme, £17.2million in current year.**
- Home Office – European Refugee Fund, £1million in current year.
- Government Offices for Regions – Community Champions, £9million over three years.

The focus is on the six funds identified in **bold italic** in this list as these funds represent a considerable volume of funding for the Third Sector, four different government departments and a range of policy objectives.

It should also be noted that there are a number of other funding sources. These include:

- Government supported or mixed programmes in the arts and sport
- Lottery funding through programmes such as the Big Lottery Fund, Awards for All, and the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Regional and local regeneration funds
- Learning and Skills Councils
- Connexions
- Primary Care Trusts
- Local authority funding

Some methodological considerations

Data

Given the limited resources for this study it was only possible to survey funds where information was publicly available (on the internet). Although the majority of funds do give good information in this medium, the format and quality varies from fund to fund so comparability is not possible. Some funds have insufficient information and have therefore been excluded from this study.

Websites of recipients of funding have also been used to determine whether they were faith-based organisations or not. This raised further questions, (see below), but in relation to the data itself it should be noted that not all organisations have a website and that the quality of those that do varies.

Timing

The initial time frame for the study was the 2006-7 financial year as it was assumed that this would be the most recent year in which all the funds would have full reporting information. In fact, some of the funds only give information for the most recent funding round (2007-8). Nevertheless all six of the funds have good information available for either one or both of the years from 2006-8 and cross-checking, where possible, showed that there was little difference in the broad patterns over this two-year period.

Classification

This important issue is not just a methodological inconvenience. It also goes to the heart of the discussion about the nature of faith-based organisations and recurs in the analysis of the funding programmes. An important aspect of this is that there is a significant confusion in some cases between ethnic minority organisations and faith based organisations. This points up a more general confusion between ethnicity and race. As far as possible all organisations that claim to be faith based have been classified as such. So, for example, with regard to major national organisations, The Children's Society, Barnardos and YMCA all still claim in their literature to be Christian or Christian-based and this is reflected in their long histories and current governance although it may not be reflected in their staffing, volunteers or users. On the other hand the YWCA, another historically important Christian agency, makes it very clear that they are **not** a faith-based organisation any longer. A more recent example of this confusion is the Bromley-by-Bow centre in East London. Although it is regularly hailed as one of the most successful faith based social enterprises and was based around the Bromley-by-Bow church, in current literature it is difficult to detect any remaining indication of its faith connections. Where it is not stated but historical information indicates a faith base, it has been included.

Analysis of funding programmes

In each funding programme this report presents a summary of the purposes, criteria and scope of the programme, together with some of the basic figures relating to faith-based recipients. This will be followed by a brief discussion of one or two salient issues that arise from the examination of the pattern of grant making. What is presented here is indicative. Each theme is identified in connection with just one of the funding schemes. There then follows a general summative discussion.

Summary

Start date: 05/07/2004 / End date: 30/01/2011

With an emphasis on service delivery, it has become important for government to invest in the Third Sector so that it can actually compete for service delivery contracts from statutory bodies. A key feature of Futurebuilders is that a significant proportion of any funding is in the form of low-interest loans. The loans are paid back with revenue from contracts with public sector agencies such as local authorities and primary care trusts.

Total Fund Value: £150,000,000. The Total Fund Value represents the amount allocated to Futurebuilders for 2004-08. The minimum amount offered is £50,000 in the main programme although smaller development grants are also available.

The website reports that since its launch in 2004, Futurebuilders has offered over £108 million of investments in over 235 organisations, although these figures are increasing all the time as funding decisions are made at any point.

Basic figures

The publicly available information on the website shows funding of £69.2million from the start of the funding, spread over 164 projects. Of these, there are 14 projects that are identifiably faith-based – either by name (League of British Muslims) or clearly stated on their website. These projects are in receipt of approximately £9.5million.

Discussion

In the Futurebuilders criteria, unlike many other funding programmes, there is no mention of faith or religion, either as a qualifying or disqualifying factor. The implication seems to be clear – as long as an applying organisation can show that they can deliver the outcomes required it makes no difference to the funder whether they are faith based or not. Perhaps because of this ‘faith neutral’ approach, Futurebuilders has attracted a rather different range of recipients than some of the other programmes.

They appear to fall into three main categories.

- Organisations which are clear about, both their faith base and the intention to serve a primarily, although not exclusively, faith-connected community where this is meeting a real need that is unmet in other ways. This includes the Bayis Sheli project for children with special needs in the orthodox Jewish community, and the League of British Muslims offering a range of services to Muslims and others in east London.
- Physical and social regeneration projects centred around church re-building programmes. These include InSpire at St Peter in Walworth, London which, like many inner-city churches is reconstructing its building to serve local needs, and Cottingley Cornerstone Centre in Bradford and All Saints in Birmingham which are both concerned with re-developing ‘village’ communities on the edge of major cities.
- Most interesting are a third group whose faith and operational profile are significantly different from a previous generation. Primarily Christian, these organisations, are confidently ‘up-front’ about their religious motivation, but serve a wider community regardless of faith. These include the following (which have been anonymised):

***** *Christian ***** Project ... Practical, emotional and spiritual needs are cared for during and beyond a person’s residency.*

***** *Enterprise is a charity which seeks, out of Christian conviction, to help the most disadvantaged in the local community.*

***** *As a Christian organisation we prayerfully seek to bring out the best in the people we serve, pursuing excellence in all we do.*

Clearly the model of ‘investment’ and loan operated by Futurebuilders has attracted some exciting initiatives but it is equally likely that it has discouraged others who might otherwise be well able to deliver local services. In a mixed funding environment it may be a positive factor to have a range of funding approaches. It is noted that the format of Futurebuilders may change, although it is unlikely to be substantive, from 2008 when the operating authority changes to the Adventure Capital Fund.

Summary

Start date: 30/10/2007 / End date: 31/03/2008

Capacitybuilders has grown out of the government's ChangeUp programme to build up infrastructure, support and capacity building services in the voluntary sector. The focus of the Improving Reach programme is to ensure that this initiative is accessible to "frontline organisations working in and with excluded communities; including BME communities, refugee and migrant communities, faith communities and isolated rural communities". The first round of funding under this programme applied to 2006-8, and it is this round that is discussed here, and a second round of applications for funding in 2008-9, has just closed.

Basic figures

In the two year period of 2006-8 allocations equivalent to a total fund of £10.5million are listed. This fund is spread over 126 projects. The programme currently proposes that in the three year period beginning April 2008 the total fund value will be £18million.

For a break down of funding amongst different groups see the discussion below.

Discussion

The analysis of the Improving Reach funding programme highlights the confusion between the category of 'faith' and the category of 'BME'.

In the funding criteria for 2006-8, four priority categories were identified

- Black and minority ethnic groups (BME)
- Refugee and migrant groups
- Faith groups
- Isolated rural groups

In addition, the fund specified that grants "may not be used to support or promote religious activity." This phrase or similar phraseology in other programmes has often served more to confuse than to clarify. As has already been seen in the Futurebuilders discussion, there are many organisations which see serving the community as central to their religious activity.

In the end a judgement on these issues needs to be made and more than one approach is possible. In this report the view has been taken that if an organisation did not mention any faith connection anywhere in their self-description, and were not otherwise known as a faith-based organisation, then they were not a faith-based organisation.

A potential confusion arises where an organisation is working in settings where there is an overlap of the BME and faith identification (e.g. Bangladeshi or Somali) and where there is no indication that it is a faith-based organisation. More than one possibility exists – they have made a deliberate choice to focus on ethnicity rather than faith as their distinguishing characteristic, or they may have downplayed their faith character either deliberately or accidentally. Following an 'inclusive' approach which acknowledges applicants as faith based where there is evidence of either dimension, the analysis of the Improving Reach recipients shows several groupings:

- Secular organisations whose target is BME communities including those who mention faith communities. There are 26 of these organisations who are in receipt of £2.2million.
- Secular organisations who specifically mention faith communities in their target groups i.e. a sub-set of the above. There are 8 of these organisations in receipt of £644k.
- Faith-based organisations working with any of the priority groups (i.e. including BME, refugee and faith groups). There are 14 of these organisations in receipt of £1.2million.
- Faith-based organisations who are working specifically with faith groups (as opposed to the other target groups) i.e. a sub-set of (c). There are 9 of these organisations in receipt of £710k.

Summary

Start date: 09/12/2005 / End date: 31/03/2008

Deriving from the policy emphasis on education – in its broad sense – and enabling children to fulfil their potential, good parenting is seen by the Government as an important strategy. This fund assists voluntary and community sector organisations who support parents where families are at risk, for one reason or another, and who may have not been able to get hold easily of the services they need. The Family and Parenting Institute (FPI) is managing the Parenting Fund on behalf of the DCSF. Funds examined here were allocated in 2006 for a two year period from 2006-8.

Basic figures

In this two year period just over £14million has been allocated to 131 organisations.

Of these there are twelve projects working with BME communities which might include faith communities but which are not specified. These organisations are in receipt of £1.2million.

There are six faith-based projects in receipt of funds totalling £724k.

Discussion

Of the six faith based projects, all are Christian organisations – two are Barnardos, two are YMCA and one is the Southwark Diocese in London. The sixth is also a Christian organisation based in south London. This spread of recipients does raise some questions, particularly if it may be assumed that in the locations identified as priorities for parenting support work there is an over representation of BME populations and, whilst the overlap between faith and ethnicity is not clear cut, it could be assumed that many of these people would come from faiths which are newer to Britain.

Is it assumed that either the secular organisations or the Christian organisations work most effectively with those whose prime identification is with their non-Christian faith? In practice this is unlikely to be the case and it may well be therefore that there are existing local parenting support groups who are receiving no support from this fund.

Summary

Start date: 01/01/1968

This is a long-standing grants programme which originated in the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968. For the 2008/09 funding round there was an over-arching aim of 'making a difference to the quality of people's lives'. The Section 64 scheme then identifies a range of priorities – in 2008-9 there were 32 separate priority themes - in line with departmental policies. Within these themes projects of national significance are prioritised. The Section 64 scheme provides for both project funding and core funding. It is very common for organisations to have several projects funded at the same time as well as a core grant.

Basic figures

In both of the years 2006-7 and 2007-8 the total funds made available were in the region of £17.2million.

In 2006-7 311 projects were funded and 113 core grants made. Of these there were eight projects from faith-based organisations (seven separate organisations) receiving £202k in funding. There was one core grant to a faith based organisation of £140k (this grant is unusual in nature and arose from particular historical circumstances).

In 2007-8 287 projects were funded and 91 core grants were made. Of these there were eleven projects from faith based organisations (ten separate organisations) receiving £437k in funding.

Discussion

National and strategic funding.

The Section 64 scheme is unusual amongst the schemes surveyed in that it places most emphasis on funding national organisations or, at least, projects with national significance.

Clearly for those organisations operating in the health sector – broadly defined – the core funding provided by this scheme is of significance. The majority of the funded organisations are directly related to health provision but there are a few who are receiving a core grant and whose aims are more generally related to a 'healthy society'. But this does raise questions regarding the funding of national or strategic organisations in other sectors.

Summary

Start date: 10/04/2006 / End date: 31/03/2009

The policy focus is the Government's strategy to increase race equality and improve community cohesion. There are two parts of the Connecting Communities Plus programme. A fund for "strategic and project grants" (£12million) and a fund for community grants. We will be focusing on the latter.

The four themes for the fund are

- Improving access and outcomes for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in education, employment, health, housing and the Criminal Justice System.
- Increasing BME communities' confidence in public services.
- Tackling racism and extremism.
- Bringing together communities from different races and faiths, and promoting a shared sense of belonging (community cohesion).

Basic figures

The total fund value over a three year period is £3million.

In the first round (2006-7) a total of 122 organisations were in receipt of £1.1million. Of these 17 projects mentioned faith or religion at some point in their project description, and were in receipt of £143k. There were five specifically faith based organisations in receipt of £37k.

In the second round (2007-8) a total of 99 organisations received £999k. 20 organisations mentioned faith or religion and were in receipt of £190k. There were eight specifically faith based organisations in receipt of £79k.

Discussion

This fund emphasises ethnic minorities as the prime target for funding so it is not surprising that there is a relatively low level of funding to faith based organisations. But, questions might be raised as follows.

- In order to include as many projects as possible we have included all projects that have even a passing reference to faith. In some it is clear that this is just seen as an extra term to use in a package of other characteristics and there would be some doubt regarding whether the project actually linked to faith communities in any meaningful way.
- Did the funding criteria actively deter faith based applicants? Although faith is mentioned in one of the themes, the following were specified as activities which 'could not be funded'
- services or events where the key purpose is to promote a religious doctrine; mission or proselytisation;
- promotion of the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising);
- acquisition of religious artefacts or publications for the use of followers in worship;
- the cost of supporting religious personnel in their normal duties in their place of worship;

Although these are all legitimate in themselves, together they give a very off-putting impression and are not necessary for the fulfilment of the programmes objectives. As has been seen in the Futurebuilders criteria, an emphasis on the positive characteristics can be equally effective.

In addition, at a time when government was actively pursuing faith based groups as potential partners it might be assumed that a changing pattern might be witnessed between the first and second round of funding. But, although there is a change, it is relatively small – from five to eight faith-based groups funded.

The total fund is relatively small and the majority of grants were in the £5k-£10k range. Yet there are a huge number of BME and faith-based organisations. This sets up a competitive environment which often leaves those who 'fail' with strong emotions, often directed at successful recipients and at government. This is unlikely to result in a positive environment to foster partnership working.

Summary

The purpose of Opportunities for Volunteering is to use the expertise of the Third Sector “to identify new health and social care needs and to contribute to the development of innovative service models that involve volunteers”. Unlike other programmes described in this report, the main channel for distributing the funds is through sixteen ‘national agents’. These agents include many ‘household names’ including the Children’s Society, Barnardos and Churches Together in England.

Basic figures

In the year 2006-7 £6.7million was distributed to the national agents who in turn funded 311 local projects.

Discussion

Regional variation.

Several of the funding reports break their narrative down into regional categories so this analysis for this particular fund could be repeated for the others.

In the table (right):

Column one shows the total amount in grants given for that region, and below that the number of actual projects.

Column two shows the amount channelled through the faith-based organisations. Below that is the percentage channelled through faith-based organisations and to the right is the number of organisations.

The Children’s Society and Barnardos use the majority of their funding to support local projects within their organisations. Churches Together encourages applications from local groups – they say that they should be Christian groups although there appear to be some exceptions to this rule. In addition are a small number of faith based groups who receive grants from one of the other national agents.

Department of Health Opportunities for Volunteering		
TOTAL	FAITH ORGS	
East of England		
£606,527	£9,000	
37 projects	1.48%	1 project
East Midlands		
£513,967	£69,908	
24 projects	13.60%	4 projects
London		
£1,397,281	£142,210	
56 projects	10.18%	8 projects
North East		
£348,833	£22,150	
16 projects	6.35%	1 project
North West		
£722,073	£135,153	
38 projects	18.72%	9 projects
South East		
£728,274	£67,292	
39 projects	9.24%	3 projects
South West		
£581,913	£106,800	
29 projects	18.35%	4 projects
West Midlands		
£362,431		
18 projects		0 projects
Yorks & Humber		
£1,021,725	£110,107	
33 projects	10.78%	4 projects
TOTAL FOR ENGLAND (EXCLUDING NATIONAL PROJECTS)		
£6,283,024	£662,620	
290 projects	10.55%	34 projects

The analysis above appears to show considerable regional variation. The most obvious is the case of the West Midlands with no faith-based projects. (The 2007-8 figures were also checked and showed two faith based projects in the West Midlands.)

Without knowing the detailed approach adopted by each of the national agents it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the clear variation between regions – and it should not be assumed that the national organisations were failing to engage in important work in these regions – possibly, only that they were not using this particular funding stream to support their work. Yet, even at the most basic level, the variation raises some questions about its possible causes. Although not part of this exercise, a parallel analysis was undertaken of projects that indicated work with BME communities and this showed a similar regional variation.

Involvement of minority faith communities.

The three faith based national agents are all Christian organisations. All would claim to deliver their scheme across all sectors of society – although through different mechanisms. Barnardos and Children’s Society mainly use this funding to deliver their own programmes, and Churches Together takes applications from local Christian groups who are responsible for delivering local projects. While there is no doubt of the high quality of the work undertaken, there must be a question regarding the ability of these organisations to deliver these services in areas of high need where minority faith communities form a significant part of the population.

General questions and issues arising from the data

What is a faith based organisation?

This study has focused on the receipt of funds from government funding schemes by faith based organisations. But it raises the question, 'What is a faith based organisation'? It may be that a worship congregation (church, mosque, gurdwara etc) is easily defined as such – but there are very few of these who are in receipt of government funds. Is an organisation which was founded 200 years ago out of a strong faith conviction, but is now seen as part of the general voluntary sector, still a faith based organisation? Is an organisation that defines itself in terms of its ethnicity (Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali, for example) but is rooted in what otherwise would be recognised as a faith community, a faith based organisation? Is an organisation that includes the name of a faith tradition in its title but, in practice operates on a purely secular basis (i.e. there is no religious motivation to its work) a faith based organisation? Is an organisation founded by a religious cleric, and still with clerics among its staff, but otherwise completely secular in nature, a faith based organisation?

A clear working out of what makes an organisation 'faith based' would be extremely useful. It would have to be developed in partnership and consultation with faiths, however, in order to ensure credibility.

A useful typology might include the following determining characteristics:

- a] by its governance,
- b] by the nature of its volunteers, staff and activists,
- c] by the nature of its users,
- d] by the nature of its history.

But all of these important policy initiatives will be futile if faith based organisations do not have the capacity and supporting infrastructure to enable them to engage properly with government programmes. Discussions informing this report suggest that much of the good work started under the FCCBF programme will simply cease to exist at the end of this financial year, with little replacement support available.

Some strategic considerations.

Government programmes are far from being the only potential funding source for faith based organisations. But the crowded funding environment does not work to the advantage of organisations and sectors which are low on capacity and experience in the first place. While, in theory, a diverse funding environment may be a good thing, in practice, those who are experienced in negotiating this territory will continue to be more successful, leaving many smaller or less experienced organisations struggling.

Just looking at a small number of Government funding programmes will lead an outside observer to ask why there is such a confusing number and type of schemes. From the perspective of Government the answer is simple – there are many Government departments, each with a variety of policy and strategic objectives and each operating in its own way to engage with the Third Sector as appropriate. From the perspective of faith based organisations, and other Third Sector bodies, it appears to be a confusing and uncoordinated world. At the same time it is a very important world to the Third Sector and the faith communities, as funding is one of the main ways that policy is turned into practice.

There is clearly a need for a mixed funding environment but there is a danger that important organisations may fall between the cracks. These may be local organisations which are unaware of funding streams or lack the capacity to apply to them, but it may also be organisations whose principal function is strategic rather than service delivery. There are a small number of grants being made available at national level for organisations, including faith based organisations, but, as yet there is little funding for regional organisations which often provide a unique role – in touch directly with local 'front-line' groups, and able to take a strategic view on policy and delivery issues.

6. What Government and Faiths Can Do

In extending the public policy table to include faiths, government must clearly play an active role in helping to make that work. Faiths are generally very welcoming of the policy agenda that is unfolding in their direction and many recognise that there have been significant efforts to support them, for example through the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, the Faith Communities Consultative Council and the Cohesion & Faiths Unit in CLG.

At the same time our discussions indicate that there are a number of important perceived unmet needs:

- There could be much understanding & openness between faith and non-faith partners, and this must be cascaded down to the local government level where it is currently largely unheard
- There needs to be better evidence and research which is nationally comparable as well as locally and regionally descriptive so that the added value of faiths, and the challenges and opportunities for engagement, can be communicated and addressed
- There needs to be a clear understanding of what faith networks and infrastructure already exist. Developing new structures risks creating parallel spaces which duplicate effort, dilute support and introduce competition where there has been partnership. This would result in the breakdown of trust and reciprocity in contexts where years of work have been done to build them up
- The wider VCS should make a stronger commitment to reaching and engaging faiths at local, regional and national levels, working in partnership with existing faith agencies rather than setting up their own new 'faith units' or equivalents
- There is also a significant need for intensive, face-to-face, medium to longer term, tailored support to build capacity, developing what has already been started under the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund
- Support is needed to help faiths engage in extended forms of governance, especially among minority faiths and smaller community projects which are stretched

- Faiths need to have time to reflect on practice in order to maintain the crucial relationship between their worshipping communities and the social action which arises from them. Meanings matter greatly to faiths and reflection upon them is the bedrock of their social action. This will support a continuing creative grass-roots constituency of 'active citizens'

Our interviews and discussions with faith groups, and our review of the evidence and other sources, indicates that faiths have some strong views on what would help government and faiths to work together within an effective framework for interfaith dialogue and social action, in a range of areas:

Network & communicate

Opportunities for sharing information and learning should be resourced and embedded in neighbourhoods and supported by the regions. Regional infrastructure should be consolidated by national networking to ensure the dissemination of good practice.

Make available clear channels of communication up and down the policy/practice/research ladder which are sensitive to the lived experiences of faiths at community levels, for example through regular focus groups in local situations, perhaps facilitated by bodies such as the Faith Communities Consultative Council.

Ensure that organisations and agencies, whose policies and practices have a major impact on faith based social action, work together positively.

Promote effective working between faiths and VCS structures at all levels but especially the local.

Faiths themselves need to work to ensure effective relationships between worshipping communities, which are the bedrock, and the wider social activities in which they engage. They could do so using techniques such as 'congregational development'.

They also need to work to ensure that there is trust and confidence in leaders and representatives as they increasingly work in new public spaces.

Resource & support

Signal clear support for faiths at the public table at all levels of government, especially the local where it is largely unheard. Articulate clear rationale which emphasise respect for faiths as well as the value they can add.

Continue to provide resources for building capacity, distributed in partnership with local and regional partners.

Provide resources for maintaining effective and established infrastructure for faiths' engagement, in consultation with the regional faiths forums.

Promote opportunities for faiths to be represented and develop and resource training for skills to engage effectively (eg 'mutual concepts and values literacy' training, and training for participating in formal structures such as LSPs and other partnership bodies)

It should be recognised that there is a need for funding as well as for extending social enterprise approaches to faith based social action. Faiths often work with the hardest to reach and with approaches which will not attract self-sustainability.

In some cases, particularly amongst faiths which are newer to Britain, help is needed to build up infrastructure to ensure effective engagement.

Research & evidence

The building and maintenance of an evidence base on the added value of faiths is key to identifying what needs they are fitted to respond to and how to address them. It is also a key part of communicating added value to partners and funders.

A national dataset requires the development of a shared language for measurement and a process needs to be gone through with faiths to achieve this.

Faith based social enterprise activities should be mapped, their benefit audited and activities categorised in order to establish the potential for extending a social enterprise dimension to faith based social action, and for understanding its limits.

Contact theory has potential as a tool for understanding and promoting better interfaith relations and community cohesion. A programme of research would be required prior to an effective application of contact theory in this area.

Policy & processes

Building on broad support for the Faith Communities Consultative Council, work with it to identify an effective practical and grounded role

Work with and build up existing structures at national, regional, sub-regional and local levels. Avoid introducing new ones which do not have the networks, trust, confidence and track records and which risk duplicating effort and introducing competition where there is currently effective partnership

Make support structures more faith friendly, for example through funding and monitoring criteria which reflect what is valuable to faiths as well as how faiths are valuable to wider society

Build the faith dimension into all new policies and initiatives to ensure that their contribution is part of the natural and established landscape of policy formation and implementation

But make efforts, working with faith communities, to refresh, renew and 'grow' the people who appear in that landscape to ensure that they reflect what is really happening at local level – the likelihood of hearing repeatedly from a small number of the same people is higher amongst some faiths where there is growing demand for 'voices' to be heard and a limited number of people available to respond. This compromises representativeness at the same time as 'burning out' key figures

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Appendix A

Interview Schedule

1. Does your organisation support social action by faith based organisations?
2. If so what do you do?

(You may find the following helpful)

Dissemination of relevant information to faith based organisations
Seminars and training
Networking
Advice (eg on legal status, constitutions etc)
Consultancy to individual organisations/people
Mentoring to individual organisations/people
Support services such as payroll
Other: please list

3. How do you know what support is needed?
4. Do you know of other organisations that also provide support to FBOs? (either faith based or non faith based)
5. What support needs are you aware of that are currently unmet?
6. Do you consider that FBOs experience barriers when accessing support services?
7. If yes: What is the nature of these barriers? Do you have any evidence or examples of this? (probe for whether there is a difference between support offered by faith based organisations and non faith based organisations)
8. What can or should the government do at local, regional and national level to increase the amount of faith based social action and to make it more effective?
9. Explain the definitions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital (use the JRF work). What do you think is the relationship between these types of social capital for FBOs? (possible prompts: faith groups are sometimes perceived as being good at bonding but not at bridging and linking; sometimes a view is expressed that faith groups need to move on from bonding)

10. What can or should government do to increase the bridging and linking social capital of FBOs?

11. Explain 'Face-to-Face' and 'Side-by-Side' (see below). Is there a relationship between these activities? What do you think it is? For example, does one lead to the other? Do they exist independently?

12. In your experience, does faith based social action connect faith groups with wider society and/or make a contribution to civil society? Could you explain how and give examples?

Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side

The Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, has distinguished between "face-to-face" and "side-by-side" relationships.

- "face-to-face": relates to dialogue which leads to faith communities having a better understanding of one another, including celebrating the values held in common as well as acknowledging distinctiveness
- "side-by-side": relates to collaborative social action involving different faith communities and wider civil society, which brings about positive and concrete change within local communities

Appendix B

List of people consulted in the preparation of this report

Name	Organisation
Syd Bill	Burton-on-Trent Inter Faith Network
Liz Carnelly	Churches Regional Commission in Yorkshire and the Humber
Ian Chisnall	Churches Regional Commission (national)
Vijayanti Chauhan	External Relations Policy Officer, Lancashire County Council.
Nils Chittenden	Churches Community Work Alliance
Billy Dann	Church Urban Fund
Anne Dannerolle	Hull Lighthouse, Trustee
Doreen Finneron	Faith Based Regeneration Network UK
Jenny Kartupelis	FaithNetEast
Aurangzeb Khan	Bradford Trident (NDC)
Shaynul Khan	East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre
John Kuhrt	Grooms, Shaftesbury Society
Barney Leith	Bahá'í Community of the UK
Leonie Lewis	Office of the Chief Rabbi
Virginia Luckett	Faithworks
Fidelma Meehan	Bahá'í Community, Swindon
Annie Merry	Operation Eden/Faiths4Change
Dorab Mistry	Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe
Ian Owers	Active Faith Communities Programme West Yorkshire
Ernest Schlesinger	FbRN Adviser
Natubhai Shah	Jain Samaj of Europe
Sandra Spence	The Rise Project, Tyne-and-Wear
Paul Southgate	Churches Regional Commission in the North East
Ishwer Tailor	President, Gujarat Hindu Society of Preston

Additional case studies researched by Val Rushton.

Appendix C

Abbreviations used

CRC	Churches Regional Commission	RAISE	The Voluntary and Community Sector in the South East
EEFC	East of England Faiths Council	RDA	Regional Development Agency
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission	RFF	Regional Forum of Faiths
FFEM	Faiths Forum for the East Midlands	SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
GO	Government Office	SEEFF	South East England Regional Faiths Forum
LA	Local Authority	VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	WMFF	West Midlands Faiths Forum
NWFF	North West Forum of Faiths	YHFF	Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum
PET	Primary English Tests		