

Faiths & Frontiers

on the Starship Social Enterprise: boldly going as faith based entrepreneurs?

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Executive summary

Faith traditions have always played an important rôle in communities, especially where there is need and disadvantage. In recent years this rôle has become a focus of policy in the UK where governments have come to regard faiths as repositories of staff, buildings and resources for the wider social good, as well as potential sources of community cohesion and strengthened citizenship.

Social and public policy promises many opportunities for faiths to become more engaged. For example, faiths are increasingly delivering public sector contracts for the provision of services; they are more involved in setting up faith schools; many are frequently active as partners in neighbourhood renewal initiatives; and growing numbers are represented in regional assemblies and local strategic partnerships.

As faiths have demonstrated their ability to deliver, government has become interested in how they can be encouraged to 'stand on their own feet' by generating their own income from the services provided, which is then ploughed back into those services.

Exploring Faiths and Social Enterprise

The Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) has come together with Community Development Banking NatWest/RBS and the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Anglia Ruskin University to explore what social enterprise means for faiths.

This report asks key questions about faith groups as social enterprises: Is there a rôle for faith based social enterprise? Is it already happening? What works? What doesn't work? How do faith groups themselves understand social enterprise and do they want to engage in it?

The report is NOT a survey of faith based social enterprises. We leave that enormous task to the future because we want to focus here on the definitional, values and practice issues surrounding faiths and social enterprise.

Starting Points

Our starting point is that the **contribution and potential of faith communities**, in terms of social enterprise, is just beginning to be recognised. 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

We also began with the view that there are **two main needs** if this sector is to grow:

- the building of vision, capacity and confidence on the part of faith based organisations
- the connecting of action on the ground in communities with local, regional and national policy agendas.

Definitions of Social Enterprise

The Government's Social Enterprise Action Plan – *Scaling New Heights* – defines a social enterprise as

"... a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners." (www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector)

Social enterprise might also have some or all of the following three key characteristics or 'ethos dimensions':

- an **enterprise orientation** – they are directly involved in producing goods or providing services to a market.
- **social aims** – they have explicit social and/or environmental aims such as job creation, training or the provision of local services.
- **social ownership** – governance and ownership structures are based on participation by stakeholder groups e.g. employees, users, clients, local community groups and social investors. (www.socialenterprise.org.uk)

The Process Behind this Report

During 2006 and early 2007 we ran five seminars across England with participants from different faith traditions. These took place in Liverpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, Plymouth, Leeds, and Tower Hamlets in East London. In addition to raising vision, giving people tools and skills and integrating faith groups more into the wider field of social enterprise, the seminars generated much material relevant to the policy dimension of faith engagement in social enterprise. This material has been the primary source for this report.

Findings

The rôle and contribution of faiths to social enterprise

- **values or attitudes:** hopefulness, non-judgmentalism, caring and compassion, focus and commitment, holicism, issues of ethos, distinctiveness of mission, transformativity, helping the disadvantaged; participants strongly saw faith communities as bringing a specific and additional ethos to the table.
- **skills and practice orientations:** skill and talent, stability, continuity, long-termism, sustainability, leading by example, buildings and resources, responsiveness and speed, reaching parts others can't reach.
- **relationships and networks:** rooted-ness in communities, reaching into communities more broadly, community cohesion/social capital, educative about faith values, educative about faith in wider contexts, encouraging of diversity; here the spiritual, or 'God' dimension, of motivation to be in community and relations is emphasised.

What do faiths need in order to do social enterprise?

- **organisation:** support and leadership, including mentors, a strong community, resources (volunteers, staff, finances, buildings), knowledge and skills, good governance

- **practical framework:** good communications, documents in clear English, research and evidence, appropriate supportive policy and procurement contexts, templates and models for key tasks, eg community audits
- **business planning:** clear market and strategy for engaging with it – a business plan, clear product or service, distinctive idea and creativity
- **connections with the wider community:** strong partnerships, understanding of other traditions and practices, to go out into the wider world
- **passion, faith and a strong motivational commitment**

What opportunities are there for faiths to do social enterprise?

- **increasing human well-being:** serving the community, broadening people's experiences, raising aspirations, increasing morale and empowering communities.
- **the image and rôle of faiths in public space:** faiths are in the public eye and actively being sought as partners, counters the negative images of faiths, engaging with partners of other faiths.
- **developing influence, credibility and capacity:** finding further opportunities for funding, a chance to get better organised, a 'standard' which lends credibility, opportunities to raise issues with government.
- **greater access to public sector contracts**

What are the advantages for faith groups themselves?

- can foster a strong sense of identity
- making the most of their social capital, resources, skills and local knowledge
- can increase sustainability and independence

What are the advantages for others?

- a **practical** dimension – buildings and resources, local trust, social capital and knowledge, infrastructure, skills and talents, good at risk taking
- a **spiritual** dimension – a ‘whole person’ view embracing a wider vision
- an **ethos** dimension – independence and values

What are the difficulties and challenges for faiths doing social enterprise?

- a **sense of lacking**: skills, resources, partnership skills and capacity, adaptability, governance know-how and ability, volunteers, staff, time.
- a **sense of fear**: of not knowing how to professionalise, of competition with others, of getting on the wrong side of legal obligations, of risk taking, of a resulting

disjunction between business aims and values, of what IS known being swamped by what ISN'T and ultimately, fear of failure.

- a **sense of ignorance**: about what social enterprise is, how to do it and what effects it could have.

What rôle does government play in supporting faith based social enterprise?

- **what government could do**: continue to extend forms of participation in governance, increase their knowledge of faith groups, be more sympathetic to the aims and methods of faith groups, use less jargon, be less remote, be more facilitative and trusting, stop setting very short deadlines.
- **government can be unhelpful**: may be seeking to exploit faith groups, is idealising faiths in its bid to use them for policy implementation, sometimes changes the rules and moves the goalposts

Recommendations

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	
	FOR FAITHS GROUPS	FOR GOVERNMENT
Rôle of faiths – values and attitudes	Develop and disseminate statements of values, or tools for devising them, for engaging in social enterprise	Develop a ‘compact’ with faith groups which states the government’s position in relation to them as social enterprises
Rôle of faiths – skills and practices	Develop and disseminate examples of good practice	Fund and support dissemination and training in national, regional and local government
Rôle of faiths – relationships and networks	Extend and consolidate single, inter and multi faith networks inclusively	Encourage government representation at regional and local level in faith networks Provide opportunities for mentoring and exchange between faith groups and government settings

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	
	FOR FAITHS GROUPS	FOR GOVERNMENT
What faiths need – practically	Work with government to develop faith-friendly procurement policies	Fund and support training in social enterprise start-up Produce clear documents and other support materials Devise faith-friendly procurement policies
What faiths need – actions	Engage in training for business planning, working with already established social enterprises Use community visioning techniques to identify the produce or service most needed	
Supportive contexts	Use congregational development techniques to identify opportunities, needs and skills amongst the community Pray and reflect	Give guidance on good governance in social enterprise
Making the most of opportunities and advantages	Develop local partnerships Be inclusive – involve people broadly through steering and planning groups, boards of trustees etc Capitalise on buildings by thinking about rental income and other social uses Provide opportunities for thinking about the ‘God’s eye view’ on community needs and share this with non-faith partners	Disseminate information about public sector delivery opportunities via FbRN and other faith networks Work participatively through local and regional government to start where faiths are
Difficulties and challenges	Ask for help from those who are already doing it	Produce and/or support faith-friendly guidance, information and training on doing social enterprise
Rôle of government	Talk to local, regional and national government representatives about concerns – develop relationships with responsible officers	Set up systems of support for faiths wanting to engage in social enterprise

The main report also provides case study examples of faith based social enterprises intended as descriptive accounts of the journeys taken by others towards successful engagement in this area. We hope these will be useful as new and emerging faith based social enterprises start their own journeys.

Foreword

The potential and possibilities for developing social enterprise have probably never been greater. Recent welfare policy announcements will dramatically change the way in which most public services are delivered, from health care, prisoner rehabilitation, programmes for getting people into work, work with children, to care for the elderly. Not only is Government planning to engage social enterprise in this delivery, it is actively seeking the participation of faith based groups.

Faith based organisations have a long tradition of caring for and supporting the most vulnerable groups in society. Many have managed to combine this with a campaigning and challenging rôle, playing a vital part in changing policy and public perception of social problems.

The new rôle offered by government holds much promise for faith based organisations. They may be able to use it to achieve some of the positive changes in society that they long for; it offers a route to sustainability, away from grant funding. But is it the right path for all faith based organisations wanting to change their communities for the better? What do they need to take into consideration in order to make the decision? What skills, knowledge and support will they need? Do they have a particular rôle? If Government wants to encourage and facilitate faith based social enterprises, what does it need to know and do? What changes does it need to make?

Who better to answer these questions than faith based organisations themselves? In late 2006 and early 2007, the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK organised five seminars in different areas of England to ask these questions. ***Faiths and Frontiers on the Starship Social Enterprise: boldly going as faith based entrepreneurs?*** is our report of the process, what we found, and what it means for policy making and for faith based groups.

This report is aimed at:

- people working at policy and implementation levels in national, regional and local government who wish to work effectively with faith based social enterprises
- people in faith based groups and organisations who are considering moving to a social enterprise model.

We hope that it will help both groups to know each other better and develop more effective and sustainable relationships.



Doreen Finneron

Executive Director, FbRN UK



We would like to thank all of the participants in each of the five cities where workshops took place.

Introduction

Faith traditions have always played an important rôle in communities (Finneron and Dinham 2002¹), especially where there is need and disadvantage. In recent years this rôle has become a focus of policy in the UK (and elsewhere, especially in the USA). UK Labour governments since 1997 have come to regard faiths as repositories of staff, buildings and resources for the wider social good as well as potential sources of community cohesion and strengthened citizenship (Furbey, Dinham et al 2006²).

The Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform has said that “The rôle of faith based groups in ensuring people have access to welfare services will be of growing importance over the coming years” and that government “believe[s] that faith based groups offer an invaluable link into communities...”³

The extension of policy for faith groups is encapsulated in the Home Office report, *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities* (Home Office 2005⁴). This outlines how social and public policy promises many opportunities for faiths to become more engaged in service delivery, strategies and activities for strengthened communities, and extended participative forms of democracy and governance. For example, faiths are increasingly involved in public sector contracts for the provision of services (Dinham 2007⁵); they are increasingly, and more diversely, involved in setting up faith schools (for example, Flint 2006⁶); many are frequently involved as partners in neighbourhood renewal initiatives (Farnell 2001⁷); growing numbers are represented in regional assemblies, local strategic partnerships and in other forms of extended democracy (Berkley et al 2006⁸).

Exploring faiths and social enterprise

Against this backdrop, the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) came together with Community Development Banking NatWest/Royal Bank of Scotland (NatWest /RBS) and the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Anglia Ruskin University to explore what social enterprise means for faiths. We know that many faith based organisations and groups are already engaged in social enterprise and that many more are doing something like it, even if they do not give it that name. We have worked with faith groups to explore this and to begin to think about what the opportunities, challenges and risks are in doing so.

This report asks key questions about faith groups as social enterprises: Is there a rôle for faith based social enterprise? Is it already happening? How do faith groups themselves understand social enterprise and do they want to engage in it?

The report is NOT a survey of faith based social enterprises. We leave that enormous task to the future because we want to focus here on the definitional, values and practice issues surrounding faiths and social enterprise. We believe that we cannot in any case survey faith based social enterprise until we have a better understanding of what faiths think social enterprise IS and what their attitudes are in relation to it.

At the same time, our many encounters with faith groups and organisations during the course of the work have given us insights, experiences and stories about faith based social enterprise. It is illuminating to think about these, and we include many of them here.

What is social enterprise and where did it come from?

It is arguable that many non-government actors, including faith groups, have been doing social enterprise for decades or even longer. An example is the ubiquitous Oxfam shops whose income supports wider community work in the developing world. Whilst many organisations might be engaged in social enterprise, according to some of the definitions of it, many more do not think of themselves in that way.

Nevertheless, government is enthusiastic about social enterprise as an approach to developing the self-sufficiency and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector, in particular where organisations almost always depend upon relatively limited amounts of funding, competitively sought and usually time limited, ie to one or three year cycles.

The UK Labour government launched its Social Enterprise Strategy in 2006. This envisaged a dynamic and sustainable social enterprise sector as a key part of both welfare delivery and of a strengthened economy. The strategy set out a three-year plan to promote and sustain social enterprise and was accompanied by the setting up of a Social Enterprise Unit, now based within the Office of the Third Sector (www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector) to:

- act as a focal point and co-ordinator for policymaking affecting social enterprise
- promote and champion social enterprise
- take action needed to address barriers to growth of social enterprises
- identify and spread good practice

Definitions of social enterprise

Social enterprise may be thought of in at least two key ways. The first relates to structure. The second is associated with ethos. Thus, social enterprise can be:

- a definition of an organisational structure
- a certain kind of mind set, attitude or approach – its values

Government and business-support frameworks focus strongly on the organisational dimensions of social enterprise and thereby tend to characterise them in this way. The government in its Social Enterprise Action Plan – *Scaling New Heights*⁹ (www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector) therefore defines a social enterprise as :

“... a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.”



Other perspectives might focus more on the 'values' dimensions and less on structure. For example, the Social Enterprise Coalition, established by the social enterprise movement as its national umbrella body in 2002 (www.socialenterprise.org.uk), focuses on three key characteristics or 'ethos dimensions' of social enterprises:

- **Enterprise Orientation** – they are directly involved in producing goods or providing services to a market.
- **Social Aims** – they have explicit social and/or environmental aims such as job creation, training, or the provision of local services.
- **Social ownership** – governance and ownership structures are based on participation by stakeholder groups (e.g. employees, users, clients, local community groups and social investors).

Any combination of these characteristics may give an organisation a social enterprise perspective or ethos. Some of the most well known examples include Café-direct, The Big Issue, The Co-operative Group, Welsh Water (Glas Cymru), the Eden Project and Jamie Oliver's 'Fifteen', each of which is organisationally quite different from the others.

In addition, there are many thousands of smaller, less well known, social enterprises. In early 2006, the Government extended the mainstream business survey to include social enterprises. It estimated that at least 55,000 businesses with employees fitted the Government's definition of social enterprise. This represented about 5% of all businesses with employees, with a combined turnover of about £27 billion.⁹

Where has the interest in social enterprise come from?

A number of factors have coincided to drive an interest in social enterprise:

- building societies and the co-operative movement have had to review their purpose and activities in the face of de-regulation and financial pressures
- local authorities and other public sector bodies have passed on, to new or pre-existing organisations, areas of work they used to run themselves like social housing, leisure or social care. This is part of the extension of the mixed economy of welfare, which started under the Thatcher governments of the 1980's and has been vastly extended under New Labour to involve non-government actors, including faith groups, as much as possible in welfare and social care activities
- charities, including faith based organisations, have to remain financially sustainable while many traditional sources of funding, such as membership fees and institutional grants, become harder to access
- more recently, individuals and groups thinking of meeting local needs have perceived a business or commercial approach as a more flexible and sustainable route to delivering multiple social benefits – members, staff and customers can all be beneficiaries in different ways.



What can social enterprise do for faith based organisations?

Much of the focus of published material and policy, in relation to social enterprise, is on what particular sectors can do to get involved. Whilst that is important and useful, it is also instructive to reverse the question. Providers of the sorts of services and initiatives which are the target of government policy for social enterprise are often working with vulnerable and challenging groups, are financially stressed and may be struggling to keep staff and resources going in a climate of short term funding and constantly and rapidly changing political contexts. This is as true for many faith based organisations as for others in similar sectors. Many may feel that before they start to think about what they can offer to social enterprise, they want to see what social enterprise can offer them. This has been one of the key areas we have considered in this project.

Some of the ways in which social enterprise can help organisations are as follows:

They can sharpen organisational focus

Social enterprise is demand-led. A strong social enterprise will have to provide a service that people actually want. So, instead of trying to do too many things for too many people, a social enterprise will identify the most effective and needed programmes.

This does not necessarily mean eliminating a programme just because it loses money. If community members wish to focus on programmes that meet important needs, organisations need to meet the managerial challenge to find other sources of revenue to cover the cost.



They can help expand impact

Despite having fewer, more focused, programmes, successful social enterprises are still able to serve more people. Because they are able to concentrate more of their resources on fewer programmes, they have more time to develop strategies and marketing plans that work and are able, selectively, to add new programmes to meet the emerging needs of their communities.

They can enable financial sustainability and growth

For many community and faith based organisations, the main reason for going down the 'social enterprise road' is to increase income. Many organisations are jaded by the never-ending cycle of struggling to find next year's funding whilst at the same time trying to plan for the longer term, retain staff and sustain the intellectual and reflective momentum to keep the core business fresh and alive. Social enterprise can seem like an attractive option where it promises a constant stream of income.



What do faith communities bring to social enterprise?

This is one of the questions which the project has hoped to address. We started though, with what we know faiths say about themselves, in terms of their distinctiveness, in the broader context of the community work they do.

We acknowledge that this list may not be unique to faiths and there may be many other kinds of organisation that share some of these characteristics. At the same time, it is possible that faith groups tend to identify more strongly with some or all of these and do so in more constant combinations:

- bias to the poor
- long term view of community
- view of people and the world that includes a spiritual dimension
 - some may call this redemption
- integrity and trust
- particular potential to attract volunteers and money (for example via the worshipping communities from which faith based organisations spring)
- passionate transformational vision
 - often shown in pioneering work with groups that others find difficulty with
- some faith communities have the ability to reach groups that other organisations do not.

Models of social enterprise organisations

We identify five models of social enterprise organisations:

1] Maximising earned income from programmes

These are programmes which are directly related to the organisation's primary purpose but which aim to become increasingly self-sufficient financially by covering more of the core costs through earned income.

2] Social purpose business ventures

These are formally structured as a separate entity from the primary faith based organisation but have a social purpose to their business activity either by:

delivering services directly to customers or users (often on behalf of a government agency, perhaps after a process of public sector tendering)

providing employment to people who are excluded from the conventional job market.

3] Earned income strategies that have an indirect social purpose

This might include utilising under-used resources such as renting out premises to local groups or creating companies, such as charity shops, expressly to raise money to support the main purpose of the organisation.

4] Business partnerships between charities/faith based organisations and businesses or statutory agencies

This might include 'cause related marketing' where a commercial product is identified with a charitable cause or 'cause related purchasing and procurement' where a major company or government agency buys supplies or services from a social enterprise.

5] Related activities – not strictly social enterprise

These include:

social franchising – developing a network of social enterprises based on an existing successful model

community Credit Unions – providing access to finance for people on low incomes who do not have access to formal financial institutions like banks

Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS) – by focusing on exchange of skills this builds up local economic activity without having to have conventional financial capital.

Processes of government and social enterprise

Social enterprise models are of interest to a number of government departments, as these hybrid organisations offer the possibilities of meeting targets in several policy areas.

As mentioned above, the Government has set up a **Social Enterprise Unit**, now located in the **Office of the Third Sector**, with a three year strategic action plan⁹ which states that social enterprise is a force for change that can contribute to society by:

- having a key rôle to play in overcoming social injustice and exclusion
- tackling environmental challenges
- setting new standards for ethical markets, raising the bar for corporate responsibility
- improving public services, shaping service design and pioneering new approaches
- increasing levels of enterprise, attracting new people to business

The nine **English regions**, through the regional development agencies, all have strategies for increasing economic participation, which include social enterprises.

The **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs** sees social enterprises as a key partner in all five of their strategic priorities¹⁰:

- combating climate change, improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty
- sustainable consumption and production
- enhancement of biodiversity and access to, and enjoyment of, the countryside
- meeting the needs of rural communities by helping to create a strong, sustainable and socially inclusive economy.
- reconnecting farmers more directly with their markets, thus helping to achieve a sustainable farming and food sector.

The **Charity Commission** has increasingly relaxed its limitations of what constitutes a legitimate activity for voluntary and faith based organisations¹¹. The primary question now is not whether an organisation meets the historical criteria for charities but that it passes a wider and all embracing test of 'public benefit'. This means that at certain levels of activity a faith based organisation can engage in social enterprise without setting up a new company. But even where a separate structure is desirable, the government has introduced new forms of legal entities, including the Community Interest Company specifically designed for social enterprises.

The **Department for Work and Pensions** not only plans to increase the rôle of social enterprise in delivering its services, but sees a rôle for faith groups. The Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform, Jim Murphy MP, said that faith groups are in a unique position; they have access to people, are good at making relationships and inspire trust. They have the potential to go far beyond what the State can do. The DWP is developing a centre of expertise within the procurement team working with the Third Sector to specifically cover the needs of faith based groups³.

The **Department of Health** believes that social enterprises can help put people in control of their healthcare, and offer patients and users a greater choice from a wider selection of convenient, innovative and responsive services. It has set up a pathfinder programme to test this out¹².



Methods, approaches and starting points

Who We Are

The Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) is the leading national multi faith network for community development and regeneration. It aims to link practitioners to learn, and gain inspiration, from each other across the different faith traditions in the UK, to encourage the active engagement of faith groups in regeneration, to build their capacity for this, and to provide an interface between policy makers and communities. It is managed by a Trustee body drawn from nine faith traditions: Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian. It produces a newsletter that reaches over 4,000 individuals and organisations active in the sector, runs seminars and conferences, and is a member of the Government's Faith Communities Consultative Council. Over 4,000 copies of the *FbRN Tools for Regeneration: Practical Advice for Faith Communities*¹³ are in circulation. FbRN is funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Church Urban Fund and the MB Reckitt Trust.

The Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Anglia Ruskin University has been developing a programme of faith-based research and is emerging as a centre for the investigation of faith based activity and engagement with social policy and politics. Previous projects include the use of faith buildings in urban regeneration (Dinham and Finneron 2002), the rôle of the Church Urban Fund in areas of urban disadvantage (Dinham 2005), the rôle of faiths as social capital (Furbey, Dinham, Farnell & Finneron 2006), a critical mapping of faith communities in a regional context, and a national review of faith based activity in community development.

An international programme of seminars is also underway to bring together academics and research-minded practitioners during 2007/08. The aim is to develop a programme of action and policy focused research across disciplines and interests in order to build, collaboratively, an evidence base for policy makers and practitioners.

Community Development Banking NatWest /RBS is committed to supporting this Faith and Social Enterprise programme because faith based organisations have a key rôle to play in the regeneration of disadvantaged communities. As well as contributing financially, they have assisted in planning the seminars.

The MB Reckitt Trust aims to promote research and activities that evaluate and develop social structures, processes and attitudes in order to release energies for change, from the perspective of Christianity and the other principal faith traditions.

Where We Came From

Our starting point is that the contribution and potential of faith communities in terms of social enterprise is just beginning to be recognised. 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

We also began with the view that there are two main needs if this sector is to grow:

- the building of vision, capacity and confidence on the part of faith based organisations
- the connecting of action on the ground in communities with local, regional and national policy agendas.

What Happened

During 2006 and early 2007 we ran five seminars across England with faith participants. These took place in Liverpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, Plymouth, Leeds and Tower Hamlets in East London. The seminars were intended to explore faith and social enterprise by:

- raising participants' vision of social enterprise
- generating enthusiasm
- giving people tools and skills
- creating and strengthening local networks of support and local partnerships
- integrating faith groups more into the wider field of social enterprise

Each seminar included a presentation on the rôle of faith communities in community and social enterprise, at least one local case study, workshops on skills and expertise, and a discussion session using a 'café dialogue' technique. In this method, the room is set up to resemble a café, with refreshments and music, as a backdrop for more relaxed interaction between participants. Each table represents a question or area of exploration. Participants choose the table they want to join and enter into periods of discussion. They keep short notes which are scribbled on the (recyclable paper) tablecloths as a record. At intervals, participants are asked to disband and reconvene in different combinations in order to discuss another area or issue. The tablecloth notes are later analysed using a process of theme identification so that key thematic issues can be identified and explored. These are reported on, below.

The questions or areas of discussion in the café dialogues were:

- 1] What rôle can faiths play in social enterprise?
- 2] What do faiths need in order to do social enterprise?
- 3] What opportunities are there for faiths to do social enterprise?
- 4] What are the difficulties and challenges for faiths doing social enterprise?
- 5] What rôle does government play in supporting faith based social enterprise?

This report provides a discussion of the process, and its findings, in the following sections:

- analysis of the café dialogue records with identification of key themes
- examples of local case studies
- recommendations
- some useful references and sources of assistance



Brief Analysis of Participants

FAITH TRADITION	LIVERPOOL	PLYMOUTH	NEWCASTLE	TOWER HAMLETS	LEEDS	TOTAL	% of TOTAL
Baha'i	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buddhist	1	0	0	3	1	5	2
Christian	26	31	41	40	27	165	71
Hindu	2	1	1	2	0	6	3
Jain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jewish	0	0	2	2	0	4	2
Muslim	12	2	2	1	1	18	8
Sikh	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.5
Zoroastrian	1	1	0	1	1	4	2
Multi Faith	1	1	0	0	0	2	1
None	2	1	7	1	0	12	5
Don't know	5	0	11	0	0	16	7
Total	50	37	64	51	31	233	



Café dialogue – thematic findings

The responses to each question are given below. They are recorded randomly, as on the tablecloths. An analysis follows of the key themes identified.

These themes have been identified using Boyatzis' method for the analysis of qualitative data through coding (Boyatzis 1998¹⁴). This method involves the researcher reading carefully through all the responses and organising them into headings which emerge. This process is repeated many times until no further themes emerge. The researcher then organises these themes into clusters which seem obvious or helpful. By this process the responses are refined and organised in ways that make sense of the data.

1. What rôle can faiths play in social enterprise?

NEWCASTLE

RESPONSIVE
LOCAL PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF LOCAL NEEDS
NON-JUDGEMENTAL
A RÔLE IN MAKING PEOPLE WHOLE
BEYOND THE MATERIAL TO A MORE HOLISTIC VIEW
THINKING BEYOND THE RATIONAL
HOPE
ADD VALUE
CARING
LONG-TERM
ETHOS
HIGH LEVEL OF SKILLS
IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL
VOLUNTEERS
A CALLING, NOT JUST A JOB
STABILITY
QUALITY
BUILDINGS
FOCUS AND COMMITMENT
VOLUNTEER POOL TO DRAW ON
CULTURAL SENSITIVITY
HOLISTIC VIEW OF HUMANITY
QUICKLY RESPONSIVE
A DIFFERENT VIEW OF MAKING PROFITS
KNOWING LOCAL NEEDS RATHER THAN IMPOSING A SOLUTION
CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER FAITHS
HEARING THE HEARTBEAT OF THE COMMUNITY

LIVERPOOL

WELCOMING
TRUST
DIVERSITY
IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS
COUNTER TO ISOLATION
AWARENESS
COMMUNITY ACCESS
ABLE TO ASK QUESTIONS AND HAVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF EACH OTHER'S VIEW POINTS
POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE
MECHANISMS FOR EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION
RESPECT FOR BUILDINGS AS A COMMUNITY FOCUS AND CAN OFFER THEIR USE
EMPLOYMENT TRAINING
A SAFE HAVEN
FINDING OUT WHAT GOD WANTS FOR US
SENSE OF PURPOSE
NETWORKING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL
STABILITY AND LONG TERM CONTINUITY
A LIFE LINE
MEETING THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF COMMUNITY
KEEPING THE ECONOMY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
FEARLESS
DELIVERING SERVICES WITH A SMILE
STRONG FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION
CAN BE DIVISIVE - IE GOSSIP AND HYPOCRISY
CELEBRATORY OF LIFE
ACCESSIBILITY
CAN BE PATRIARCHAL
WHOLESMENESS - SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL
TRUST BASED ON RECOGNISABILITY
PREVENT DIVISION BY WORKING TOGETHER ACROSS FAITHS

TOWER HAMLETS

FAITH IS TRANSFORMING
THEY CAN EDUCATE OTHERS ABOUT WHAT FAITH IS
ACCESS TO THE GRASS ROOTS
RESOURCES SUCH AS PLANT
PASSING ON VALUES THROUGH BRINGING PEOPLE ON THE JOURNEY
THEY PROVIDE FOR THOSE GOVERNMENT CAN'T REACH OR DOESN'T REACH OUT TO
FAITH BUILDINGS CAN BE A FOCAL POINT AND THEIR PEOPLE CAN ACT AS INTERMEDIARIES IN COMMUNITIES
FAITH BASED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GROUPS CAN REACH OTHER SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GROUPS
CAN POINT PEOPLE TO VALUES AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC
FAITH COMMUNITIES CAN HELP THOSE WHO DON'T APPEAR ON THE STATUTORY RADAR
CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIVES OF EMPLOYEES BEYOND WAGE AND WORK
PEOPLE AS PEOPLE, NOT AS STATISTICS
DIVERSITY
PEOPLE CENTRED ETHOS
THEY CAN BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER WITH SHARED VALUES
FAITHS HAVE A UNIQUE SELLING POINT
HOLDING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER IN HARD TIMES
MANY CHURCHES HAVE A LONG HISTORY IN THE AREA
ESTABLISHED NETWORKS AND COMMUNITIES
DEVOTE TIME AND SKILLS
FAITHS CAN MODEL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN ORGANISATIONS
FAITH BASED SOCIAL ENTERPRISES PUT FAITH AND RELIGION INTO THE MARKET PLACE ALONGSIDE OTHER BUSINESSES
RELIGIOUS GROUPS HAVE VALUES WHICH CAN BE PROPHETIC
RECOGNITION THAT THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN THE MATERIAL WORLD
USING EXISTING ASSETS AND RESOURCES

LEEDS

PEOPLE OF FAITH AND A POSITIVE OUTLOOK ARE HEALTHIER AND OVERCOME ILLNESS / SURGERY MORE QUICKLY AND LIVE LONGER
AN ACCESSIBLE 'EAR' ATTACHED YET DETACHED
OFFERING ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES (I.E. CHURCH HALL)
DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF PEOPLE OF FAITH ON COMMUNITY GROUPS E.G. GOVERNING BODIES OF SCHOOLS ETC
OUR CHURCH CONTRIBUTES TO COMMUNITY SPIRIT
THE CHURCH (OR FAITH COMMUNITY) IS THERE WHEN PEOPLE NEED US AT CRISIS TIMES IN PEOPLE'S LIVES
CONTRIBUTE TO CULTURALLY SENSITIVE SERVICES
FAITH COMMUNITIES ARE NOT ALWAYS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY BUT SOMETIMES JUST AN INSULAR SUB GROUP WITHIN IT.
PEOPLE COME TOGETHER ABOUT THE SMALL THINGS AND THEN DISCUSS THE BIG THINGS
VOLUNTEERS CAN GET EXPERIENCE - GET TO JOB MARKET
CHURCH HISTORY DEMONSTRATES A PASSION FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGE.
IT CAN BUILD COMMUNITY COHESION
A GREATER PROPORTION OF FAITH COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING
CHURCHES AND FAITH GROUPS ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF HARD TO REACH AREAS/GROUPS AND ARE A LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE.
FAITH COMMUNITIES DON'T WANT TO GET ANYTHING OUT OF IT FOR THEMSELVES - FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS
IMPROVE PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING IN A HOLISTIC WAY

Emerging Themes: rôle and contribution of faiths to social enterprise

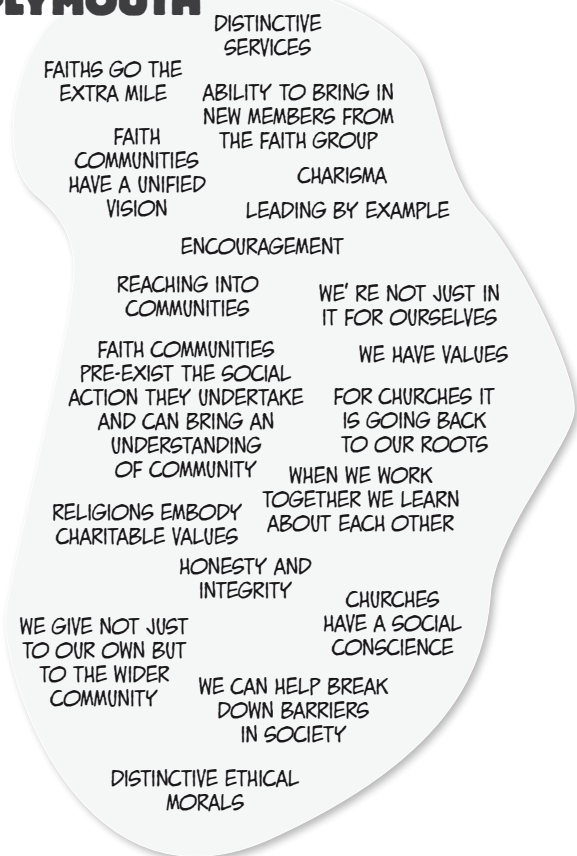
(in the order they emerge)

Responses show that participants regard faiths as contributing in the following ways, and playing the following rôles.

- a] Rootedness in community, where needs are better known
- b] Hopefulness
- c] Non-judgmentalism
- d] Caring and compassion
- e] Quality of skill and talent on offer
- f] Stability, continuity, long-termism, sustainability
- g] Focus and commitment
- h] Holisticism – God’s eye view of the human

- i] Resource of volunteers
- j] Reaching into communities more broadly
- k] Ethos – honesty, integrity, inclusiveness, values
- l] Leading by example
- m] Buildings and resources
- n] Distinctive motivation – mission
- o] Community cohesion/social capital
- p] Responsiveness and speed
- q] Faith as transformative
- r] Educative about faith values
- s] Educative about faith in wider contexts (but NOT proselytising)
- t] Encouraging of diversity
- u] Helping the disadvantaged
- v] The ‘Heineken Effect’ – reaching parts others can’t reach

PLYMOUTH



One cluster of these themes is associated with **values or attitudes** (hopefulness, non-judgmentalism, caring and compassion, focus and commitment, holisticism, issues of ethos, distinctiveness of mission, transformativity, helping the disadvantaged) and participants quite strongly see faith communities as bringing a specific and additional ethos to the table.

Other themes are associated with particular **skills and practice orientations** (skill and talent, stability, continuity, long-termism, sustainability, leading by example, buildings and resources, responsiveness and speed, reaching parts others can’t reach).

A third cluster is preoccupied with **relationships and networks** (rooted-ness in communities, reaching into communities more broadly, community cohesion/social capital, educative about faith values, educative about faith in wider contexts, encouraging of diversity). Here the spiritual, or ‘God’ dimension, of motivation to be in community and relations is emphasised.

2. What do faiths need in order to do social enterprise?

LIVERPOOL

EQUIPMENT SELLING THEIR
SUPPORT DIRECTION TRAINING ASSETS
LEADERSHIP PASSION FOCUS
UNDERSTANDING OF PARTNERSHIP
AND SERVICE PROVISION RATHER
THAN A SEARCH FOR FUNDING UNDER-
STANDING OF OTHER FAITHS
VOLUNTEERS COMMUNITIES
AND OTHER WORKING TOGETHER
RESOURCES EASY ACCESS INFORMATION
TO IDENTIFY ENTREPRENEURS
NICHE MARKETS MARKET RESEARCH
CREATIVITY GOOD GIFT AID A GOOD
MANAGEMENT SKILLS MIX
RECOGNITION EVIDENCE OF PRODUCTS
EFFECTIVENESS AND SERVICES
TRAINING CONFIDENCE DISTINCTIVENESS
UNIQUE SELLING INFRASTRUCTURE
POINT (USP)
DEFINED IDEAS AND TRUST
PRODUCT MARKETING
BOUNDARIES
MENTORS

PLYMOUTH

INSPIRATION IMAGINATION
MOVING WITH THE TIMES PARTNERS TIME ENCOURAGEMENT
FEEDBACK COMMUNITY RESEARCH RESOURCES
AUDIT A LONG TERM VIEW BUILDING
LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT LOCAL FAITHNET IN GOVERNMENT TRUST
THINK OUT OF THE BOX NEEDS TO BE SMALLER CLEAR OBJECTIVES
MECHANISMS FOR KEEPING SOCIAL AND MORE LOCAL PROJECT TOOLS TO
ENTERPRISES ON THEIR FAITH INSPIRATION LEADERS KNOW HOW TO
MOORINGS MORE AND POLICIES STRATEGY ACHIEVE GOALS
TOGETHERNESS A TEMPLATE FOR COMMUNITY AUDIT OPEN-MINDEDNESS
STREAMLINE LINK WITH OTHER
ACTIVITIES GROUPS - DON'T
REINVENT THE WHEEL

TOWER HAMLETS

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO GET STARTED MONEY
NETWORKS ACCESS TO LEGAL VISION
STAFFING CAPITAL ADVICE SECTOR-WIDE RESEARCH
GOOD GOVERNANCE BEST PRACTICE DRIVE PROFESSIONALISM
SUPPORT AND ADVICE ENTERPRISE CAPACITY
ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY A CONDUCTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF
PROCUREMENT BUSINESS CAPITAL UNDERSTANDING OF
ENVIRONMENT OTHER FAITHS
MONEY-MANAGEMENT SKILLS POSITIVE REASON GOOD NETWORKS
TO START
LONG-TERM COMMITMENT FAITH RELEVANCE EDUCATION OF COMMISSIONERS RISK-TAKING
MENTALITY
SOLID REASONS TO START PROMINENT OFFICERS TRUST AND CO-OPERATION CHARITY BANK
SUCCESSFUL PLANNING IDENTIFYING NEEDS
AND RESPONDING TO
THEM APPROPRIATELY

LEEDS

RESOURCES FOR HERITAGE /OTHER SOCIAL BENEFIT SUSTAINABILITY
FOCUSSED ADVICE AND SUPPORT FINANCE - INCOME GENERATING FINANCE BASE LINKING TO VOLUNTARY ACTION NETWORKS CVS'S OWNERSHIP OF THE VISION WITHIN
CONSISTENCY A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO GIVE FAITH COMMUNITIES START WITH LOOKING AT ASSETS
ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION EXPLORE AND VALUE ENTERPRISE AS WELL AS SOCIAL FIELD IN THE VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SECTOR LONG-TERM STRATEGIC ADEQUATE FUNDING SCHEMES SYSTEMS / ORGANISATION CONSULTATION
FUNDING / CAPITAL HOW TO ARTICULATE WHAT WE HAVE GOT CONSULTANCY VISION / COMMITMENT GOOD TEAMWORK
APPROPRIATE INFORMATION RE: GOVERNANCE EXAMPLES WRITTEN UP - SHOWCASE THESE CLARITY AND VISION COMMUNICATION FIND WHERE TO GET PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO START A BUSINESS
USE EXTERNAL SUPPORT (BUSINESS PLANS) LONGER-TERM SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO ENTERPRISE SECTOR COACHING / MENTORING THROUGH PROCESS
GETTING FOCUSED ADVICE AND SUPPORT RE AREAS NOT SKILLED OR EXPERIENCED IN PLAIN ENGLISH ALL ROUND. IT MAKES IT EASIER TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

Emerging Themes: What do faiths need?

(in the order they emerge)

In terms of what participants felt faiths need in order to engage in social enterprise, the responses are mostly practically orientated.

- a] Support & leadership, including mentors
- b] Resources (volunteers, staff, finances, buildings)
- c] Knowledge and skills
- d] Clear market and strategy for engaging with it – a business plan
- e] Strong community
- f] Strong partnerships
- g] Understanding of other traditions and practices
- h] Clear product or service
- i] Distinctive idea and creativity

- j] Strong motivational starting points, eg trust, passion, openness
- k] To live in the real world – going out into the world
- l] Good communications
- m] Faith
- n] Documents in clear English
- o] Research and evidence
- p] Appropriate supportive policy and procurement contexts
- q] Templates and models for key tasks, eg community audits
- r] Good governance

This **practical orientation** is reflected in a focus on things that could happen to support a social enterprise culture (provision of support and leadership, resources, skills training, understanding of other faiths, good communications, documents in clear English, research and evidence, supportive policy and procurement contexts, templates and models).

Another strand in this emphasises **practical actions** for engaging in social enterprise, such as identifying a clear market and having a clear product or service.

It is supplemented by an emphasis on **supportive general contexts** for doing social enterprise (strong community, strong partnerships, distinctive idea and creativity, strong motivational starting points, living in the real world, supportive policy and procurement contexts, good governance). Some of which can be learnt or taught, for example governance, others of which are more difficult, though by no means impossible, to generate or bring about, for example a sense of community and readiness and openness to engage in partnerships.

A final and very important theme here has to do with the **rôle of faith**. One respondent said starkly that what faiths need in order to do social enterprise is **faith**.



3. What opportunities are there for faiths to do social enterprise and with what advantages?

LIVERPOOL

COMMON IDENTITY
LOCAL TRUST
SEEING THE COMMUNITY EFFECTIVELY
CHANCE TO GET CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE SERVICES
CREATE EMPLOYMENT
FACILITIES TO DELIVER
INCOME GENERATION
LEADING TO SUSTAINABILITY

FAITHS ARE IN FASHION!
RESOURCES
CREATE MONEY
PROMOTE INTEGRATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF SOCIETY
ASSET BASE
ECONOMIC REGENERATION

BUILDINGS TO USE
FAITH GROUPS HAVE GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL AREAS
INCREASES FAITHS POWER TO SUPPORT THE MOST VULNERABLE

NEWCASTLE

SERVICE DELIVERY BASED ON OUR PERCEIVED NEEDS, NOT THOSE SET BY OTHERS
CHURCHES CAN DELIVER EVEN WHEN FUNDS ARE WITHDRAWN BECAUSE OF THE COMMITMENT OF THEIR VOLUNTEERS
CHURCHES ARE OFTEN BASED AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITIES
PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF TRUSTWORTHINESS
CHANCE TO COUNTER THE NEGATIVE VIEW SOCIETY HAS OF FAITHS
FAITHFUL CAPITAL

RESOURCES
MULTI-TALENTED
ADD VALUE
CONTACTS AND NETWORKS
RAISING THE ASPIRATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE COMMUNITY

OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE ISSUES WITH GOVERNMENT
ALREADY DOING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
ACCESS TO COMMUNITY AT THE GRASS ROOTS
BECAUSE FAITH IS ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA NOW WE CAN MAKE THE BEST OF THAT

TOWER HAMLETS

SUBSIDISED ROOM HIRE
MAKE USE OF EXISTING NETWORKS WITHIN FAITH COMMUNITIES
ACCESS LOTS OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES
MORE ACCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY
POLITICAL CLOUT
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
STANDARD GIVES CREDIBILITY
OPENS UP TO MORE FUNDING

INVESTORS, EG SOME FAITH COMMUNITIES HAVE STRONG BUSINESS LINKS AND TRADITIONS
TRUST
ACCESS TO SPECIALISMS
WELL CONNECTED
SUSTAINABLE
FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS ARE WELL PLACED - ALREADY HAVE INFRASTRUCTURE
MAKING FAITH FRIENDLY
RAISING THE PROFILE OF FAITH IN THE COMMUNITY

PLYMOUTH

BROADEN PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE
OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT - A KIND OF INDEPENDENCE
PAY AND PRAY
VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF
SENSE OF COMMITMENT AND BELONGING
EXISTING MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

FOCUS
LONG TERM PRESENCE - SUSTAINABILITY
IN-BUILT SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE
FUNDING FOLLOWS
PERSISTENCE
PRAYER - THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION
PARTNERSHIP
CAN EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY - NOT JUST THE VICAR!

ENGAGING WITH OTHER FAITHS - REACHING OUT AND ACROSS
FASHIONABLE - TOP OF GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA
SCRIPTURES GIVE AN IDEAL VISION
RAISING MORALE
LIKE-MINDED GROUPS OF PEOPLE
TRUST OF COMMUNITY
SPACE
RESPECT
LOOKS AT BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

LEEDS

CREATING AND PREPARING VOLUNTEERS FOR THE JOB MARKET
ADVANTAGE IS THAT FAITH COMMUNITIES HAVE CAPACITY BY HAVING A PLACE
INITIATING NEW PROJECTS AND DEVELOP FURTHER
PLUGGING INTO ESTABLISHED SUSTAINABLE NETWORKS
THE BENEFIT FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES IS THAT WE CAN INTEGRATE INTO COMMUNITIES THAT WOULD NOT USUALLY WALK THROUGH THE DOOR.

UNITE COMMON CONCERNS SUCH AS THE ENVIRONMENT (SCHOOLS, CHURCH ETC) WHICH CAN RESULT IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (I.E. ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS)
GOVERNMENT HAS WAKENED UP TO THE EXISTENCE OF FAITH COMMUNITIES
OPPORTUNITY FOR FAITH GROUPS THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TO DEVELOP STRONGER LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

CHURCH UNITY AND COMBINED RESOURCES.
CHURCH UNITY AND COMBINED RESOURCES.
PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN FAITH GROUPS
PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIETY
INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
AVOID RESOURCE LED PLANNING

Emerging Themes: What opportunities are there for faiths to do social enterprise and with what advantages?

(in the order they emerge)

Responses here have been separated into opportunities on the one hand and advantages on the other.

In terms of **opportunities**, participants responded in four areas.

One area of interest clusters around issues of **mission** (serving the community, drawing people into its benefits, engaging with partners of other faiths, and none).

A second is interested in ideas of the **image and rôle** of faiths in public space (faiths are in fashion, counters the negative images of faiths).

A third is associated with increasing **human well-being** (spiritual hunger, broadening people's experiences, raising aspirations, increasing morale and empowering communities).

A fourth is about developing **influence and credibility** (finding further opportunities for funding, a 'standard' which lends credibility, opportunities to raise issues with government).

In terms of **advantages**, responses fall into two overall themes: advantages for faith groups themselves; and advantages that faith groups bring to others.

For faith groups themselves

- a strong sense of identity
- they are met at their starting points, not those of others
- sustainability
- greater access to public sector contracts

For others

- a **practical** dimension – Buildings and resources, local trust, social capital and knowledge, infrastructure, skills and talents, good at risk taking
- a **spiritual** dimension – a 'whole person' view embracing a wider vision
- an **ethos** dimension – independence

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAITHS ENGAGING IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

- a] Faiths are in fashion
- b] Increasing capacity
- c] Spiritual hunger for it
- d] Lots of examples of good practice already
- e] Counters the negative image of faiths
- f] Serves the community
- g] Draws people into its benefits
- h] Raising the aspirations of people in communities
- i] Broaden people's experience
- j] Find further opportunities for funding
- k] Engaging with partners of other faiths and none/extended networks
- l] Raise morale and empower the community
- m] New areas of mission
- n] Chance to get better organised and develop capacity
- o] The sky's the limit! Putting more and more money back into the community
- p] Social enterprise 'standard' gives credibility
- q] Opportunity to raise issues with government

ADVANTAGES OF FAITHS ENGAGING IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

- a] Common identity
- b] Buildings, resources
- c] Making money
- d] Local trust
- e] Local knowledge
- f] Social capital
- g] Meet needs as faiths see them, not as others do
- h] Skills and talent in faith communities
- i] Wider vision – the whole person and community
- j] Good risk takers
- k] Access to the community
- l] They can be sustainable
- m] They are independent of government
- n] They bring the spiritual dimension
- o] They have existing management structures and infrastructure
- p] Getting public sector contracts

4. What are the difficulties and challenges for faiths doing social enterprise?

NEWCASTLE

BEING INNOVATIVE OVERCOMING LETHARGY
 DETERMINING LACK OF TRUST BEING BRAVE
 OPTIONS FOR GOVERNANCE BREAKING THE RELIANCE CYCLE
 FACING UP TO CHANGE HOW TO DEAL WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY
 UNDERSTANDING PARTNERSHIP WORKING PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS
 DISJOINTING THE FAITH PROJECT FROM THE FAITH GROUP FEAR MATCHING BUSINESS AND SOCIAL AIMS
 GETTING SHARED VISION WITHIN WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES AND PROJECTS WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VOLUNTEERS AND PROFESSIONAL INPUT CROWDED MARKET PLACE
 ENGAGING WITH TECHNICALITIES CONFIDENCE FAITHS DO NOT NECESSARILY WANT TO BE ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY WORK
 DIFFERENCES OF LANGUAGE BETWEEN SECTORS ENGAGING WITH OTHER FAITH GROUPS LOSS OF CORE VALUES HOW TO ACHIEVE MULTI-FAITH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?
 STAYING TRUE TO INTENTIONS COMPETITION WITH THE BIG PLAYERS
 INABILITY TO MAKE SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO SUPPORT PROJECTS WHAT HAPPENS TO FAITH GROUP IF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GOES WRONG?
 OVERSTRETCHED VOLUNTEERS NOT WANTING TO TAKE ON ANOTHER ROLE

LEEDS

OUTPUTS OR OUTCOMES - SOCIAL BENEFITS AS WELL AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPING A SKILLED VOLUNTEER FORCE - ESPECIALLY IN A DEPRIVED AREAS LACK OF EXPERTISE ON THE GROUND
 FINDING YOUR WAY THROUGH FUNDING LOTTERY FUNDS ETHICALLY PROBLEMATIC FOR MANY FAITHS TOO MUCH JARGON
 TIME SPENT APPLYING FOR FUNDING CONVINCE OTHER AGENDA WE ARE WORTH IT - WE CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE NEW REGULATIONS RE FIRE SAFETY / SAFEGUARDING
 CHALLENGE OF CHANGING NATURE OF SPIRITUALITY AND DISLOCATION OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY AVOIDING POSSIBILITIES OF LITIGATION ALL NEEDS MORE ADMIN, MORE KNOWLEDGE

LIVERPOOL

HOW TO KNOW HOW TO BEST SERVE OUR FELLOWS HAVING THE SKILLS
 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP HAVING THE RESOURCES
 UNEQUAL PLAYING FIELD IN TERMS OF BEING ABLE TO TENDER FOR CONTRACTS - CAPACITY TOO MUCH PAPERWORK AND INFORMATION OVERLOAD RULES AND REGULATIONS
 PAYING THE GOING RATE FOR A JOB THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CLIMATE
 ADAPTABILITY INDIVIDUAL FOCUS IN SOME FAITH BASED COMMUNITY WORK
 IGNORANCE SHORT-TERMISM VERY HARD TO GET PEOPLE INVOLVED

PLYMOUTH

RISK OF INCREASING FINANCIAL CAPITAL WHILST DECREASING FAITHFUL CAPITAL GETTING LONG TERM COMMITMENT EXPECTATIONS
 SKILLS AND CULTURE DEMANDS GREATER PROFESSIONALISATION?
 LACK OF OF FAITHS UNDERSTANDING
 MAINTAINING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY TIME UNSURE OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
 SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES

TOWER HAMLETS

MEETING CRITERIA CULTURE CLASH BETWEEN FAITHS AND COMMISSIONING AGENCIES
 SUSTAINABILITY DEFINING THE FACTS CAPACITY AND RESOURCES FOCUS ON GOALS AND BENEFICIARIES, NOT ON WHAT VOLUNTEERS AND WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES GET OUT OF THEIR ROLES
 LOSING VALUES SPEAKING DIFFERENT LANGUAGES - JARGON COMPETITIVENESS HOLDING ON TO LONG TERM VOLUNTEERS REQUIRES PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY
 MOVING GOAL POSTS IN CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Emerging Themes: What are the difficulties and challenges for faiths doing social enterprise?

(in the order they emerge)

- a] Understanding how to serve within a social enterprise culture
- b] Having appropriate skills
- c] Having resources to set up and keep going
- d] Partnership skills and access with non faith groups
- e] Partnership skills and access with other faith groups
- f] Bureaucracy
- g] Demands to professionalise
- h] Competition with others, including 'big players'
- i] Adaptability and flexibility
- j] Ignorance
- k] Risk taking and innovation
- l] Energy
- m] Governance – who, how, what, relationship to rest of the community?
- n] Procurement procedures
- o] Language – a clash of cultures? [jargon-speakers and non-jargon-speakers]
- p] Fear/threat of the unknown
- q] Confidence
- r] Disjunction between business aims and social aims – 'values'
- s] Overstretched staff and volunteers not wanting to take on more responsibility
- t] Legal requirements unknown
- u] Time
- v] A shift of focus from rôles (eg volunteers and worshipping communities) to goals and outputs
- w] Fear of failure

Difficulties and challenges are frequently associated with anxiety about engaging with social enterprise. Key concerns are about a **sense of lacking** – in skills, resources, partnership skills and capacity, adaptability, governance know-how and ability, volunteers and staff and time.

A second important set of challenges is about a **sense of fear** – of not knowing how to professionalise, of competition with others, of getting on the wrong side of legal obligations, of risk taking, of a resulting disjunction between business aims and values, of what IS known being swamped by what ISN'T and ultimately, fear of failure.

Both concerns – 'lacking' and 'fear' – are underpinned by a **sense of ignorance** about what social enterprise is, how to do it and what effects it could have. Overall, there is enormous anxiety amongst many people of faith that they simply won't know what to do, how to do it or whether they want to. It seems easier to plough on as before than to engage with this complicated and rather frightening new agenda from government.



5. What rôle does government play in supporting faith based social enterprise?

NEWCASTLE

TWO WAY COMMUNICATION BUILD TRUST
GOVERNMENT CONFUSES RACE AND FAITH
FACILITATING DIALOGUE
CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION
GOVERNMENT DOES AS LITTLE AS NECESSARY
TOO REMOTE STANDARDISATION
HELP WITH THE PROCESS OF SERVICE DELIVERY
CONTRADICTION BETWEEN FUNDING
INCONSISTENCY WHAT GOVERNMENT SAYS AND WHAT IT DOES TERMS ARE TOO SHORT
LEVELS AND IN DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS IDENTIFY PROBLEMS AND SUGGEST SOLUTIONS MONITORING PROCESSES ARE COMPLICATED
PROVIDE PLACES AT THE POLICY TABLE FOR FAITH GROUPS
VALUE VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS FAITHS NEED TO EARN GOVERNMENT'S TRUST

TOWER HAMLETS

GOVERNMENT CONCERNS THAT FAITHS WANT TO USE SERVICE PROVISION TO EVANGELISE
ENSURE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF FAITH GROUPS IN RECEIPT OF FUNDING
LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT 'USE' FAITHS WHEN THEY NEED TO GET A DIFFICULT JOB DONE
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENCOURAGE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO ENGAGE MORE
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DRIVE FOR STANDARDISATION SHOULD NOT COMPROMISE THE UNIQUE VALUE OF FAITH GROUPS
RECOGNITION INCONSISTENT IN LONG-TERM STRATEGY
GOVERNMENT COULD RAISE AWARENESS OF FAITHS' POTENTIAL RÔLE
PROVIDES ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
GOVERNMENT COULD PROVIDE PLANNING SUPPORT
WHY SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT BE INVOLVED IN YOUR FAITH?

LIVERPOOL

DEPENDENCY ON GOVERNMENT FUNDS
COMMUNITY CHAMPION - HELPFUL FRIEND IN HIGH PLACES
GOVERNMENT GETS US ON THE CHEAP
LACK OF ANY JOINED UP THINKING
DANGER OF TICK BOX MENTALITY
DIFFERENT APPROACHES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS
CARROT AND STICK
RED TAPE DEADLINES ARE TOO SHORT
GOVERNMENT NOT ALWAYS UP TO SPEED OR SYMPATHETIC
LISTENING TO PEOPLE
GOVERNMENT COMPLICATES SIMPLE ISSUES WITH JARGON AND DOCUMENTS
A GOOD IDEA WILL FLY WITH OR WITHOUT GOVERNMENT
TARGET SETTING EQUALS BOX-TICKING
GOVERNMENT STATISTICS DO NOT REFLECT REAL SITUATIONS

PLYMOUTH

BUREAUCRACY IS A PROBLEM
NEEDS TO DEVOLVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRODUCING EVALUATION RATHER THAN WEIGHTING VIABLE ORGANISATIONS WITH PRODUCING FEEDBACK
SEEING FAITHS AS THE CHEAP OPTION?
MONEY GOES IN AT THE TOP BUT DOESN'T REACH THE GRASS ROOTS
THINKING UP HOOPS FOR US TO JUMP THROUGH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAN BE A TALKING-SHOP
GOVERNMENT PROCESSES ARE INEFFICIENT
TAKING FAITHS SERIOUSLY
THREE YEAR CYCLE OF POLITICS MEANS THAT WE GET NO LONG-TERM THINKING
GOVERNMENT HAS FOUND SOMEONE ELSE TO PAY THE BILL
GOVERNMENT KEEPS CHANGING THE RULES AND MOVING THE GOAL POSTS
GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES FAITH GROUPS' HISTORICAL RÔLE AND EXPERIENCE IN DELIVERING
GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO FACILITATE RATHER THAN CREATE OBSTACLES

Emerging Themes: What rôle does government play in supporting faith based social enterprise?

(in the order they emerge)

The rôle of government in supporting faith based social enterprise is experienced in two main ways by the faith groups we encountered. One set of views is positive and is about **what government could do** to support faiths. Another is negative and raises **concerns that government exploits** faith communities.

- a] Dependency on government funding
- b] Providing extended forms of participation in governance
- c] Government not always up to speed or sympathetic
- d] Carrots and sticks
- e] Bureaucratic; tick-box mentality
- f] Government exploits faiths
 - getting things on the cheap
- g] Government is irrelevant – good work happens regardless
- h] Inaccessibility of government
 - jargon; remoteness
- i] Idealisation or romanticisation of faith communities – not reflecting the realities
- j] Short deadlines and short-termism
- k] Be facilitative of faiths getting engaged and build a trusting environment
- l] Seeking standardisation – may not be helpful
- m] Government says one thing and does another
- n] Government keeps changing the rules and the goal posts
- o] Local government can be a talking-shop

The ‘what government could do’ cluster is associated with ways in which government has changed things to work with faiths (extended forms of participation, facilitation, trust).

The more significant ‘**government exploits**’ cluster is concerned with ways in which government is not helpful or might be actively unhelpful (not being up to speed, producing ‘sticks’, being bureaucratic, being inaccessible, idealising faiths, setting short deadlines, saying one thing and doing another, changing the rules).

Some of these negative themes are also **ambiguous**, however. Hence ‘sticks’ might also have ‘carrots’, where faiths are idealised some might use this to argue their right to be in public space, standardisation might help faiths to be more consistently understood, and talking-shops might be better than silence.



Summary of themes

A great many responses were recorded across the five café dialogue sessions. Their organisation into themes and issues in the discussion above represents one interpretation of what we encountered. We hope this is a useful and stimulating starting point.

We also recognise that others may want to consider the responses, and their meanings, in their own way and in their own time. One suggestion for doing so is to use the summary of themes, below, as a trigger for forming your own clusters and themes around the responses. At the same time, we hope that the summary can also act as a 'quick reference guide'.

QUESTION	CLUSTER	THEME
What rôle can faiths play in social enterprise?	Values or attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hopefulness ■ Non-judgmentalism ■ Caring and compassion ■ Focus and commitment ■ Holisticism ■ Ethos ■ Distinctiveness of mission ■ Transformativity ■ Helping the disadvantaged
	Skills and practice orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skill and talent ■ Stability ■ Continuity ■ Long-termism ■ Sustainability ■ Leading by example ■ Buildings and resources ■ Responsiveness & speed ■ Reaching parts others can't reach
	Relationships and networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rootedness in communities ■ Reaching into communities more broadly ■ Community cohesion/social capital ■ Educative and reaching beyond faith groups ■ Educative about faith in wider contexts ■ Encouraging of diversity

QUESTION	CLUSTER	THEME
What do faiths need in order to do social enterprise?	Practical orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provision of support and leadership ■ Resources ■ Skills training, understanding of other faiths ■ Good communications ■ Documents in clear English ■ Research and evidence ■ Supportive policy and procurement contexts ■ Templates and models
	Practical actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifying a clear market ■ Having a clear product or service
	Supportive general contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong community ■ Strong partnerships ■ Distinctive idea and creativity ■ Strong motivational starting points ■ Living in the real world ■ Supportive policy and procurement contexts ■ Good governance
	The rôle of faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Having faith

QUESTION	CLUSTER	THEME
What opportunities are there for faiths to do social enterprise and with what advantages?	Opportunities	
	Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Serving the community ■ Drawing people into its benefits ■ Engaging with partners of other faiths and none
	Image and rôle of faiths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Faiths are in fashion ■ Counters the negative image of faiths
	Human well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spiritual hunger ■ Broadening people's experiences ■ Raising aspirations ■ Increasing morale ■ Empowering communities
	Advantages	
	For faith groups themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identity ■ They are met at their starting points, not those of others ■ Sustainability ■ Access to public sector contracts
	For others	
	(i) A <i>practical dimension</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Buildings and resources ■ Local trust ■ Social capital and knowledge ■ Infrastructure ■ Skills and talents ■ Good at risk taking
	(ii) A <i>spiritual dimension</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A 'whole person' view embracing a wider vision
	(iii) An <i>ethos dimension</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Independence

QUESTION	CLUSTER	THEME
What are the difficulties and challenges for faiths doing social enterprise?	A sense of lacking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skills ■ Resources ■ Partnership skills and capacity ■ Adaptability ■ Governance know-how and ability ■ Volunteers and staff ■ Time
	A sense of fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Of not knowing how to professionalise ■ Of competition with others ■ Of getting on the wrong side of legal obligations ■ Of risk taking ■ Of a resulting disjunction between business aims and values ■ Of what IS known being swamped by what ISN'T ■ Fear of failure
	A sense of ignorance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What social enterprise is ■ How to do it ■ What effects it could have



QUESTION	CLUSTER	THEME
What rôle does government play in supporting faith based social enterprise?	What government could do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extended forms of participation ■ Facilitation ■ Trust
	Government as exploiter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not being up to speed, producing 'sticks' ■ Being bureaucratic ■ Being inaccessible ■ Idealising faiths ■ Setting short deadlines ■ Saying one thing and doing another ■ Changing the rules
	Ambiguity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 'Sticks' might also have 'carrots' ■ The idealisation of faiths might also validate them ■ Standardisation might help faiths to be more consistently understood ■ Talking-shops might be better than silence



Recommendations

The recommendations are based on what has been identified in the clusters (above) as key issues for the participants in this enquiry. They begin with the cluster, or issue, and explore positive ways in which responses could be made. Some of these are recommendations for government. Others are recommendations for faith groups.



ISSUE/CLUSTER	RECOMMENDATION	
	FOR FAITHS GROUPS	FOR GOVERNMENT
Rôle of faiths – values and attitudes	Develop and disseminate statements of values, or tools for devising them, for engaging in social enterprise	Develop a ‘compact’ with faith groups which states the government’s position in relation to them as social enterprises
Rôle of faiths – skills and practices	Develop and disseminate examples of good practice	Fund and support dissemination and training in national, regional and local government
Rôle of faiths – Relationships and networks	Extend and consolidate single, inter and multi faith networks inclusively	Encourage government representation at regional and local level in faith networks Provide opportunities for mentoring and exchange between faith groups and government settings
What faiths need – practically	Work with government to develop faith-friendly procurement policies	Fund and support training in social enterprise start-up Produce clear documents and other support materials Devise faith-friendly procurement policies
What faiths need – actions	Engage in training for business planning, working with already established social enterprises Use community visioning techniques to identify the produce or service most needed	

ISSUE/CLUSTER	RECOMMENDATION	
	FOR FAITHS GROUPS	FOR GOVERNMENT
Supportive contexts	Use congregational development techniques to identify opportunities, needs and skills amongst the community Pray and reflect	Give guidance on good governance in social enterprise
Making the most of opportunities and advantages	Develop local partnerships Be inclusive – involve people broadly through steering and planning groups, boards of trustees etc Capitalise on buildings by thinking about rental income and other social uses Provide opportunities for thinking about the ‘God’s eye view’ on community needs and share this with non-faith partners	Disseminate information about public sector delivery opportunities via FbRN and other faith networks Work participatively through local and regional government to start where faiths are
Difficulties and challenges	Ask for help from those who are already doing it	Produce and/or support faith-friendly guidance, information and training on doing social enterprise
Rôle of government	Talk to local, regional and national government representatives about concerns – develop relationships with responsible officers	Set up systems of support for faiths wanting to engage in social enterprise



Examples of local case studies

As well as the café dialogue exercises which were undertaken, social enterprises in each area presented their work as examples of good practice and learning. The following social enterprises were presented:

The Al-Ghazali Multicultural Centre, Liverpool

35 Earle Road, Liverpool L7 6AD 0151-734-3843

Liverpool Lighthouse Furniture Outlet

www.liverpoolighthouse.com

The Gujarat Hindu Society, Preston

www.ghspreston.co.uk

Martha & Mary Coffee Shop

Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne

Martha & Mary's Café, 212 Chillingham

Road, Heaton 0191 461 8100

Tamar View Community Complex, Plymouth

www.tamarviewcc.co.uk

Co-active Ltd, Plymouth

www.co-active.org.uk

Bookshop at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre, Tower Hamlets, London

The Old Courthouse, 43 Renfrew Rd,

London SE11 4NA 020 7820 8787

Cornerstone Christian Books and Crafts Ltd, Skipton

Newmarket Street, Skipton, North Yorkshire,

BD23 2HX 01756 793673

www.skiptonandgrassingtonmethodist.org.uk

Community Transporters, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

a project supported by Ethnic Minority

Volunteers, Mill Lane Youth Centre,

Sceptre Street, Elswick, Newcastle

upon Tyne, NE4 6PR 0191 273 9127

Below, we provide summaries of three of the nine local case studies presented at the seminars, which are strong examples of the range of 'stories' we encountered. (For further information about the other social enterprises, we have provided contact details).

We also provide one further example of faith based social enterprise (the Liverpool Furniture Resource Centre www.furnitureproject.org.uk) from a case study which was not used in this seminar series but which has been published elsewhere (Dinham A 2005¹⁵). We hope this will be useful in understanding further some of the character of faith based social enterprise.

These are intended as encouraging narratives summarising the journeys of a few faith groups as they moved towards social enterprise. We encourage readers to use these case studies as a basis for thinking about their own attitudes and readiness for social enterprise and as a basis for asking questions about what they want and how they might get there.



THE AL-GHAZALI MULTICULTURAL 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, which 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 as 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.



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 in the area.

At first the funding came from the faith community members. 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 carefully managed to provide an income stream, as well as benefitting 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: Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Liaison Officer, Lancashire County Council.

For local people the Centre provides:

- information and advice on employment
- IT training
- a youth development programme
- a lunch club, run by elders
- sports activities for all ages
- a worship centre

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

The Gujarat Hindu Society 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.



CORNERSTONE BOOK SHOP, SKIPTON

Skipton has a large shopping population and a significant tourism industry. Until Cornerstone, there was no resource for Christian books, cards and other materials. The Methodist church decided to take a risk to address this and took a short lease on a shop in 1992. Volunteers staffed the shop and also put in finance to set it up. This went well and after a year they looked for another property. At this stage, they needed a stable group of stakeholders who would take an interest and who would contribute expertise, and so they set up a management group.

Growth and publicity is mostly by word of mouth. The enterprise is responsive to feedback from customers and has developed customer loyalty.

The shop had started as a project of the Methodist Circuit, which promoted 'ownership' by the local churches who subsequently formed the management committee. It became a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. This makes it legally sound and makes the future more secure. A property has now been purchased and has staff who are paid.

The bookshop also has a coffee shop in it, providing an 'accessible face' for people to come in who may not otherwise go into a bookshop.

"We don't have an agenda that we impose on people who come in. They come in on their own terms" *Jim Hope, Manager.*

The bookshop's assessment of its own success is that a number of factors have been key:

- that they are people focused
- they had a clear business plan
- they follow through on customers' enquiries
- there is a breadth of stock and appeal
- and that they have a sense of humour.

LIVERPOOL 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.

The Furniture Resource Centre is a social enterprise providing furniture and white goods direct to low income households. In addition there is a 'one-stop service' providing such items for social landlords on a collective basis within a service level agreement. The project promotes sustainability by employing local people in its activities and also provides training for people who have been long-term unemployed.

There are also now five trading arms providing furniture, white goods and bulky household items, a contract collection service to local authorities (through 'Bulky Bob's'), dissemination of best practice in social and environmental responsibility within business, a partnership development consultancy, and an office furniture recycling enterprise. 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 therefore to make greater provision to service users.

In these ways the project aims to be sustainable and has developed into a major social enterprise in pursuit of this goal. Thus it operates these five business strands and employs approximately 80 local people. In particular, the project has sought to create substantial employment and training opportunities for local people, and to share its learning and best practice with other social enterprise organisations (and is adept at generating income from doing so)

“We do good things, running businesses which promote equality and create livelihoods for people who really need them” *Director of FRC*

In the year 2003/04, the project provided furniture to 22 low-income households every working day. 3,428 households were furnished for tenants of social landlords in that year. The project employed approximately 80 people and provided training for 48 unemployed local people.

More broadly, the furniture project has expanded since 1994 and now encompasses a cluster of social enterprises under the umbrella of the FRC group. Thus the project has moved from an annual turnover, from grants, of £250,000 to an annual turnover in 2003/04 of £4.5 million.



Finding assistance

Given that the number of social enterprises is growing and that there is widespread support from government it is not surprising that there are numerous resource agencies at national, regional and local level targeting social enterprises.

At a national level these include:

Community Action Network – a national organisation with roots in faith communities; now providing support to hundreds of faith and non-faith-based social enterprises. www.can-online.org.uk

The Social Enterprise Coalition – is a broad umbrella organisation to support the development of social enterprises across the country. www.socialenterprise.org.uk

Office of the Third Sector, Social Enterprise Unit – aims to: act as a focal point and co-ordinator for policymaking affecting social enterprise; promote and champion social enterprise; take action needed to address barriers to growth of social enterprises, identify and spread good practice. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector

The Community Development Finance Association – a network of Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs). CDFIs are independent financial institutions that provide capital and support to enable individuals, or organisations, to develop and create wealth in disadvantaged communities or under-served markets. www.cdfa.org.uk

Development Trusts Association – the national body for development trusts, cultivating enterprise and building assets: www.dta.co.uk

Conventional financial institutions including the **Community Development Banking NatWest/RBS**, are also increasingly interested in providing finance and advice to the social enterprise sector.

All of these organisations, operating at a national level, are reflected by regional and local organisations.

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