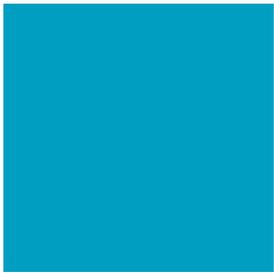
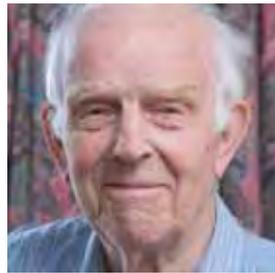


Face to Face and Side by Side



A framework for partnership in our
multi faith society

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multi faith society

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Foreword

According to the 2001 census, more than three quarters of us in the United Kingdom consider ourselves to have a faith.

Today, as they have for many generations, people of faith make a huge contribution to our society: to the economy, arts and culture, politics. And I believe faith has the potential to be an immense force for good in all our communities.



For many, faith is not passive, but active. The values of care for the vulnerable, and responsibility towards others, are lived out through practical acts of social concern. When there are problems in a neighbourhood – whether it is drugs, crime, violence or pollution – faith communities are often the first on the scene, making a difference and remaining steadfast and committed where others might despair. Their contribution should be valued and recognised. If we fail to make the most of it, we all miss out.

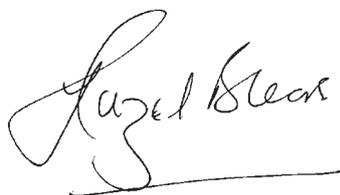
I am proud to live in a society where people of faith, and those of none, can come together as equals. I do not believe that government should be afraid of working with faith based organisations. Instead, we should provide opportunities for people of faith to come together and do more of the great work that many already do – work, as this framework shows, which can be as varied as promoting healthier living, supporting young men leaving prison, or renovating a much-loved public garden.

This framework sets out how, over the next three years, we will support a stronger dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs in every community and encourage the kind of practical inter faith cooperation that can make pleasant and harmonious neighbourhoods for all.

This is just one dimension of how government can work with faith organisations. Ultimately we will only achieve real and lasting changes at the local level if those changes are strongly supported nationally. As Minister for Communities and Local Government with responsibility for faith communities, I am committed to promoting a strong relationship between government and faith traditions. I look forward to continuing to work across government and with faith stakeholders to ensure that the relationship is based upon an informed, challenging, consultative and collaborative approach. Be that through consultative bodies such as the Faith Communities Consultative Council, by providing joint leadership on issues of common concern or by challenging all government departments to understand further and expand the opportunities for faith inspired organisations as service providers.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped us draw up this framework. They include all the respondents to our consultations and the Faith Communities Consultative Council.

Mary McLeod Bethune, a pioneer for civil rights in early 20th century America who knew a thing or two about struggling against the odds, once said that “without faith, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible.” I hope this framework will help many more people – whether they have religious faith, or simply a belief in the possibility of a better future for their community – put into practice the humanity, commitment and compassion of which we are all capable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hazel Blears". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the bottom of the name.

Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government



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Executive summary

In 2006 the independent Commission on Integration and Cohesion was set up to explore how people in different communities and places in England were getting along and what more might be done to bring people together. They were asked to consider how local areas can make the most of the benefits delivered by increasing diversity – but also to consider how they can respond to the tensions it can sometimes cause. The Commission was tasked with developing practical approaches to building communities' own capacity to build cohesion.

In 2007 the Commission delivered its report *Our Shared Future* to government. Its ambitious recommendations and its ideas for renewed local and national collaboration point the way ahead for much of the Government's work on cohesion. Above all, the Commission's findings reinforced our belief that cohesion is something which is built locally.

In *Our Shared Future* the Commission asserted that the way in which relationships between people with different religions and beliefs developed over coming years would be important for integration and cohesion – and that there needed to be more constructive relationships between those who were religious and those who were not. In response to this the Government made the commitment to develop an inter faith strategy – our framework for partnership.

This document *Face to Face and Side by Side: A framework for partnership in our multi faith society* aims to create more local opportunities both for face to face dialogue which supports a greater understanding of shared values as well as an appreciation of distinctiveness; and for side by side collaborative social action where people come together and share their time, energy and skills to improve their local neighbourhood.

Three core principles underpin the Framework for Partnership:

Partnership: valuing the contributions made by partners and working together to increase their impact.

Empowerment: people and government, working together to make life better.

Choice: local communities deciding what works best for them.

To help ensure that this Framework adds value to existing work and results in action, we held a three month public consultation which provided us with a valuable opportunity to hear from as broad a range of people as possible about how government can best support dialogue and social action and the circumstances in which it works best. Over 185 responses were received from a broad range of organisations and individuals. A summary of responses is being published alongside this document and is available to download at www.communities.gov.uk.

The Framework for Partnership draws on research and on the consultation responses. It contains examples of effective practice, practical suggestions for communities and local authorities and links to further sources of support and guidance.

The Framework for Partnership is structured around four building blocks:

- Developing the confidence and skills to 'bridge' and 'link'
- Shared spaces for interaction
- Structures and processes which support dialogue and social action
- Opportunities for learning which build understanding.

These building blocks have been developed both in the light of consultation responses and building on independent research into faith communities and the development of bridging social capital, i.e. the ability of individuals and groups to form connections with people they perceive as different from themselves. We believe that these represent the key enabling factors for effective dialogue and social action involving people with different faiths and beliefs and those with none.

The practical steps that government will take to support the delivery of the Framework for Partnership include:

- A **three year programme of investment and support worth over £7.5m**. This will be invested with a focus on delivering increased opportunities for dialogue and social action within local communities and we will be targeting our support through:
 - a new local **Faiths in Action** fund. This aims to support local activities and initiatives that have a direct link to one or more of the four building blocks. It will be open for all types of organisations at national, regional or local level in England
 - a programme of investment over three years in **Regional Faith Forums** to support and build their capacity in particular their interaction with local inter faith activity
- Producing a **guide for local communities** which shows ways in which individuals and groups can become involved in dialogue and social action involving people with different faiths and beliefs and those with none
- Providing **supportive guidance to local authorities** within the **Cohesion Delivery Framework** on the practical steps they can take to support dialogue and social action at the local level. This will incorporate the ideas for local authorities set out within each of the four building blocks within this Framework
- Signposting local authorities and their partners to **effective practice, resources and guidance** via the web
- Working in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK to support an Inter Faith Week. This will encourage communities at national, regional and local levels to hold events to celebrate and raise awareness of the positive inter faith work that is being undertaken everywhere. The aim of the week will be for people and organisations to use a variety of mediums to:
 - celebrate existing relationships and ways of working
 - create new opportunities to build relationships
 - showcase innovation.



- Organising a **national conference** to support networking and promoting effective practice in relation to each of the four building blocks
- Supporting the development of web based resources for people to make connections with each other and get ideas for activities which support the four building blocks
- Supporting the development of **regional Faith Links** (regional hubs for Local Authority Faith Leads) within each of the English regions by 2011. Faith Links will be coordinated by Government Offices and will provide Local Authority Faith Leads with guidance, support and networking opportunities. This will include the production of a **toolkit** which builds upon learning from successful approaches led by the Government Offices in London and Yorkshire and the Humber
- Supporting improved links with third sector structures and access to VCS resources through the publication of ***Believing in Local Action*** – case studies showing good practice developed with the Church Urban Fund and NAVCA
- Working with the Local Government Association, IDeA, the Inter Faith Network for the UK, the Faith Based Regeneration Network and the Community Development Foundation to update the existing ***Faith and Community guidance for local authorities***
- Work with faith communities, the Local Government Association and Charity Commission, to produce a standardised version of a **charter for excellence in public service delivery by faith communities**, building on existing models.



Introduction

Our cohesive multi faith society

English society is now more diverse than ever before and our openness and tolerance is part of what distinguishes us as a country. This is reflected in our high levels of cohesion, with 82 per cent of people agreeing that people from different backgrounds get along well together in their local area¹.

Each of us has our own unique identity, made up from complex sources, in which ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief can all play a part. The 2001 United Kingdom Census contained a voluntary question about religious identity which over 92 per cent of people chose to answer. Over three-quarters of respondents – more than 44 million people – identified themselves as having a religious faith and just over 15 per cent – more than 8.5 million people – stated that they had no religion. More than seven out of ten people said that their religion was Christian².

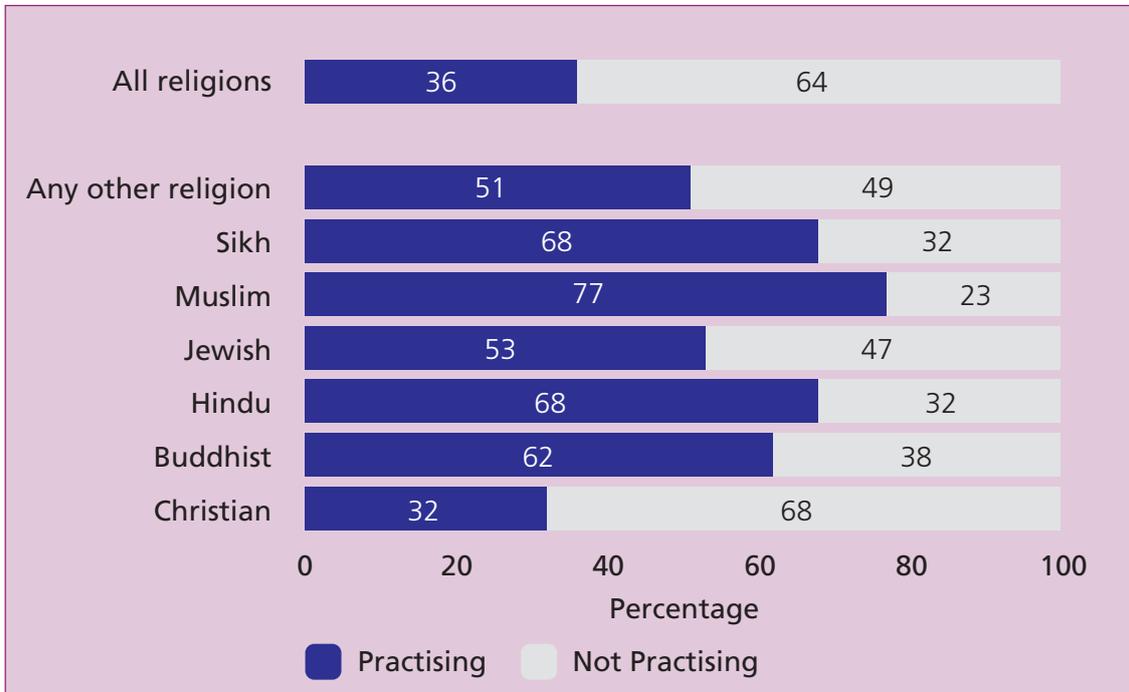
TABLE 1. POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN: BY RELIGION APRIL 2001			
	Total Population		Non-Christian religious population (Percentages)
	Numbers	Percentages	
Christian	41,014,811	71.8	
Muslim	1,588,890	2.8	51.9
Hindu	558,342	1.0	18.3
Sikh	336,179	0.6	11.0
Jewish	267,373	0.5	8.7
Buddhist	149,157	0.3	4.9
Any other religion	159,167	0.3	5.2
All non-Christian religious populations	3,059,108	5.4	100.0
No religion	8,596,488	15.1	
Religion not stated	4,433,520	7.8	
All population	57,103,927	100.0	

¹ Citizenship Survey, April 2007 to March 2008, Communities and Local Government, 2008.

² Census, Office of National Statistics, April 2001.



Analysis of the Citizenship Survey has shown that while the majority of people in England have some religious affiliation, not everyone considers themselves to practise their faith actively³.



Behind these statistics lie diverse stories about the different role of religion and belief in individuals' every day lives.

For some people their religion or belief will be central to their identity, what they think, what they do and what they say. For others their religion or belief will be important, but will share space with other influences such as family, career, social class, culture or gender. Others may profess to have no religion or belief, but may be influenced by the values they have grown up with or developed; while others may take part regularly in formal worship, but not place as much emphasis on wider social issues in their day to day lives. And of course, each of us gives different emphases to the different parts of our identity in different situations.

Just as the role of religion and belief in individuals' every day lives is multi faceted so are the relationships between government and different faith traditions. The relationship extends from the Church of England Bishops' role as lawmakers in the House of Lords, to the practical way in which thousands of faith inspired organisations and individuals are providing support to neighbourhoods and communities facing huge and complex social challenges; from dialogue between national faith organisations and Ministers on the development of policies and legislation with major ethical considerations, to the way in which government departments conduct public consultation in a way which effectively captures the

³ www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/research/citizenshipsurvey



views of a diverse society; and from local faith representation on Local Strategic Partnerships to the wider contribution of faith communities to civil society.



This Framework is primarily concerned with just one aspect of that relationship between government and faith traditions: how faith communities and government and wider society can work together, at all levels, to encourage and enable greater local activity which brings people with different religions and beliefs together.



Over the coming year we will also be working across government and with stakeholders to ensure we fully understand the role that faith inspired organisations are playing and wish to play as third sector providers of services. We also want to ensure that in delivering our plans set out in *Communities in control: real people, real power*⁴ the empowerment White Paper we recognise and reflect on the role that religion and belief can play in motivating and providing the opportunities for individuals to be active and empowered citizens.



Our focus on cohesion

We should be proud of the high levels of cohesion we have achieved in our diverse society. But it is not an achievement that we should take for granted.

The Government set up the independent Commission on Integration and Cohesion in August 2006 to explore how people in different communities and places in England were getting along and what more might be done to bring people together. The Commission's final report *Our Shared Future* was published in June 2007 and included a set of practical recommendations for promoting integration and cohesion in local communities⁵. The Government published a substantive response to the recommendations made by the Commission in February this year, which set out how we are following up all of the Commission's 57 recommendations – what we have already done, what we will do in the future and how we will further develop the Commission's ideas⁶.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is 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.

⁴ *Communities in control: real people, real power*, Communities and Local Government, July 2008.

⁵ www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Our_final_report.aspx

⁶ www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/governmentresponsecoic

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.

This Framework sets out how government, faith communities and others can work together to help realise the further potential for inter and multi faith activity to contribute to this vision of cohesion.

Celebrating and supporting positive relations

In *Our Shared Future* the Commission recognised that the way in which relationships between people with different religions and beliefs developed over coming years would be important for integration and cohesion – and that there needed to be more constructive relationships between those who were religious and those who were not.

Analysis of the 2007 Citizenship Survey showed that 80 per cent of people mix socially at least once a month in a range of different places such as sports clubs, cafés, at their place of worship or at their child's nursery or school⁷. Despite this, the majority of people surveyed felt that there was a need for people from different religious and ethnic groups in their local area to mix more with 33 per cent thinking that people mix enough, 64 per cent thinking they should mix more and 3 per cent thinking they should mix less⁸.

We know that meaningful interaction between people from different backgrounds can help address negative attitudes, not only in terms of feelings towards the specific member of the group that they come into contact with, but towards the group as a whole⁹. Contact is meaningful when:

- conversations go beyond surface friendliness; in which people exchange personal information or talk about each other's differences and identities
- people share a common goal or share an interest
- contact is sustained long-term.

⁷ Citizenship Survey, April-December 2007, England & Wales, Communities and Local Government, January 2008

⁸ Quarter 1 (April-June 2007) findings from the 2007 Citizenship Survey, Communities and Local Government, October 2007.

⁹ *Inter-group contact and integration: When, how, and why?* Professor Miles Hewstone, University of Oxford, Presentation to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, December 13, 2006.



We want to promote meaningful interaction by encouraging community-led approaches and by working in partnership with a broad range of individuals and groups who are committed to improving their local communities and the lives of all who live in them.



To support this, we are working with the National Community Forum and others to develop guidance for local areas on what works to promote meaningful interaction not just between people of different faiths but of different ages and cultures as well. We plan to publish this towards the end of the year as part of our Cohesion Delivery Framework.



The role of dialogue and collaborative social action



Inter faith dialogue is just one dimension of interaction between people from different backgrounds. But it is an extremely important one, and one that faith communities have long recognised and promoted.

There is a long and positive history in this country of people coming together to talk about and explore their own and each others' religions and beliefs in order to build understanding and respect. This has included dialogues between faith leaders and scholars; national level inter faith discussions; special projects; and forums such as local inter faith councils. There has been a significant increase in the number of local inter faith groups in recent years with 183 new inter faith groups established since 2000, with 52 of these coming into existence since 2005¹⁰.

In developing this Framework we recognise that creating opportunities for meaningful interaction involving people with different religions and beliefs and those with none is not about diluting difference – an appreciation of distinctiveness is important. Indeed, a review of available research carried out by the Faith Based Regeneration Network found that 'clear but co-operative assertion of different faith identities in inter faith interactions is helpful in promoting better relations between the different groups'.¹¹

Inter faith interaction can also be a good opportunity for intergenerational interaction. Intergenerational activity can be a key element in helping people from different ages and backgrounds feel like they are part of the same community, appreciate their similarities, and respect their differences. All generations should benefit from engaging with each other on equal terms, breaking down barriers and challenging negative stereotypes.

¹⁰ *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*, Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2007.

¹¹ Adam Dinham et al., *Faith based social action and the Inter Faith Framework*, Faith Based Regeneration Network, 2008.



The Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, has distinguished between “face to face” and “side by side” relationships. We think that these are really helpful concepts, and use them in the following way to describe activities which can support the development of strong and positive relationships between people with different religions and beliefs and those with none:

- **Face to Face dialogue** leads to people developing a better understanding of one another, including celebrating the values held in common as well as acknowledging distinctiveness
- **Side by Side collaborative social action** involves people working together to achieve real and positive change within their local community.

Both “face to face” dialogue and “side by side” collaborative social action can help to build cohesive, active and empowered communities. People of different religions and beliefs choose to take part in dialogue and social action for a wide range of reasons such as compassion for others, a strong sense of social justice, or a commitment to human rights, for some people it is their religion or belief which motivates them to get involved and go the extra mile.

The major faiths all share a core belief in the value of positive social action and faith-based organisations provide services, support and practical help to communities. Today, these range from major international aid organisations, to social enterprises, to charities, to self-help groups and grass-roots projects meeting local needs. It also includes inter faith dialogue and action from local to national levels. All of this extensive activity contributes to the building of social capital.

Faith based organisations and charities have long been at the forefront of social action in this country and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) identifies them as a ‘strong force’ within the third sector. Over half of faith based charities aim to serve the general public¹².

Research carried out by the Faith Based Regeneration Network reveals something of the extent of activity already underway:

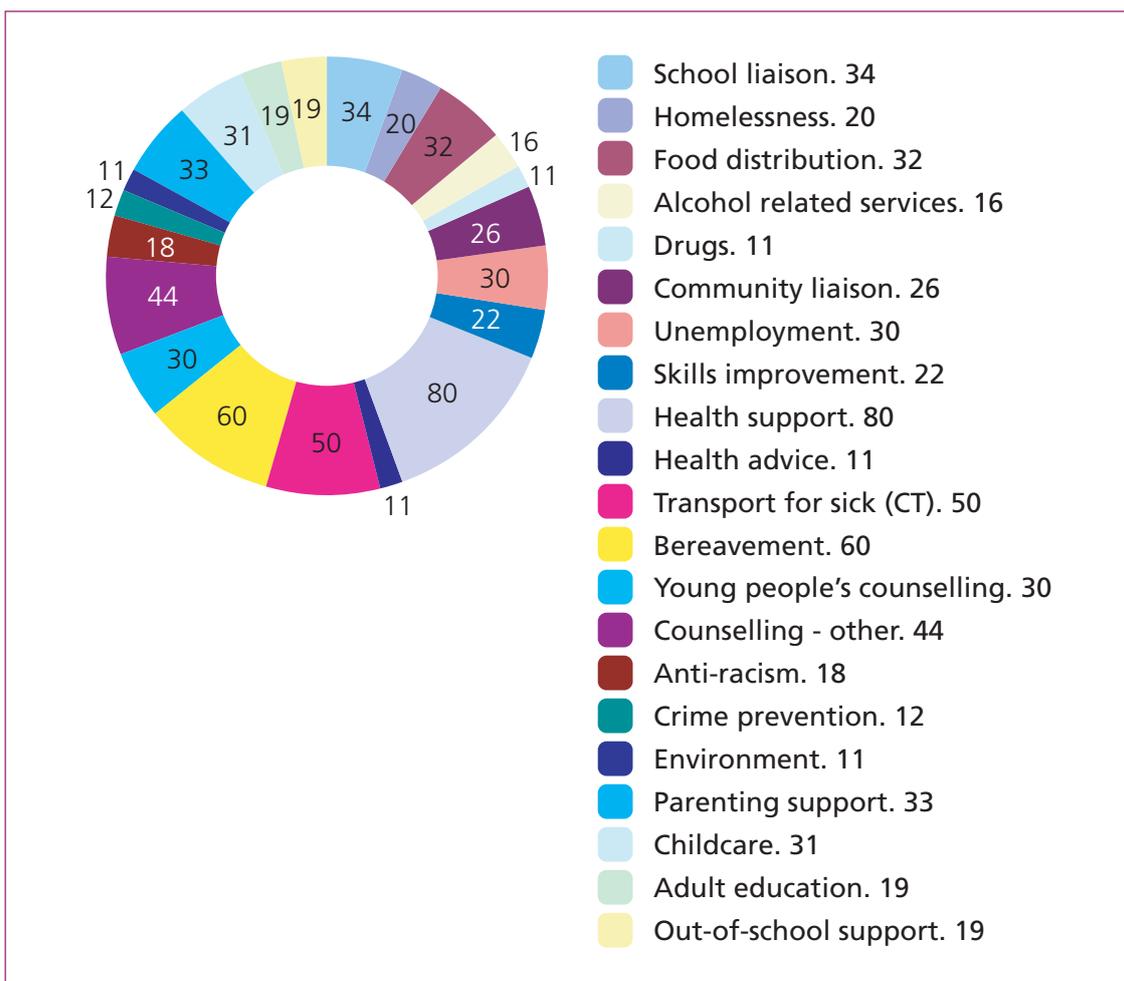
- 180,000 beneficiaries of faith based community development in the East of England
- 7,000 projects and 2,200 faith buildings in London
- 80 per cent of faith groups in the West Midlands deliver some kind of service to the wider community

¹² National Council for Voluntary Organisations, *Faith and voluntary action: an overview of current evidence and debates*, 2007.



- Faith communities are running more than 5,000 social action projects in the North West
- 90 per cent of churches in Hull are involved in social action
- 6,500 social action projects in Yorkshire and the Humber
- More than 2,500 faith based projects in the North East
- 165,000 people in the South West are supported by 4,762 activities led by faith communities
- Churches in the East Midlands run on average nine community activities.

These projects can span a broad range of interests. The chart below provides a snapshot of activity underway within the East of England.



Through this sort of activity faith communities are also making an important contribution to a range of Government policies and programmes, including:

- tackling inequalities and improving well-being

CASE STUDY: WALTHAM FOREST FAITH COMMUNITIES FORUM'S "HEALTH PREACHERS" SCHEME

Developed from discussions with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Primary Care Trust (PCT) in relation to how the Forum could help to convey key health messages to people within Waltham Forest's religious congregations. The key concept behind this idea was that religious people might be motivated by their faith to make positive health changes, especially if they were able to access health messages as part of their faith community experience. The Forum had an enthusiastic response from the faith communities and recruited three Muslim, three Sikh and nine Christian leaders. In delivering the scheme they reported that they had learnt so much – not only about health but also about each other. The success of the 'Health Preachers' scheme led the Forum to promote it as something for others to emulate, a model for faith community engagement on the issue of health as well as for inter faith cooperation.

www.faithcommunities.org.uk/

- supporting the isolated and socially excluded such as older people, Gypsies and Travellers, the homeless, sex workers, and offenders in prison and the community



CASE STUDY: THE FELTHAM COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY TRUST (FCCT)

A registered charity, operating a multi faith project out of HMP and YO1 Feltham, which recruits and trains volunteers from diverse faith communities across London, enabling them to be-friend and support young men, of the same faith, who are returning to their local areas. FCCT works closely with community groups, voluntary organisations and statutory bodies such as Youth Offending Teams, the Probation Service, Social Services and the Police. FCCT was the first Community Chaplaincy Project to work with young offenders in the United Kingdom, its work in this area remains groundbreaking.

To meet the diverse needs of the young men leaving Feltham the volunteers come from over 12 different ethnic backgrounds and currently the project has links with many different faith communities. The volunteers are all trained and receive group supervision together, providing excellent opportunities for inter faith dialogue and interaction. Quite apart from their work with young offenders these volunteers return to their communities with a positive experience of working together with people of other faiths to tackle a common problem.

- developing resilience and a ‘whole community response’ to extremism in all its forms

CASE STUDY: CHURCHES AGAINST EXTREMISM

As part of its on-going engagement with issues facing local communities, the Church of England produced guidelines for senior clergy on how to deal with the media, incidents and interventions in relation to the Far Right. This happened in parallel with work by Searchlight, other churches and the (then) Commission for Racial Equality, as well as local initiatives looking to strengthen democracy and resilience; and work through an inter faith platform in places like Burnley and Leicester.

The Framework for Partnership

The Prime Minister has made clear his ambition to see stronger inter faith dialogue within local communities, and the Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* also highlighted the value that Government places on inter faith work involving local communities.

We want to build upon the positive history of “face to face” and “side by side” relationships in England by encouraging opportunities for more people to take part in dialogue and social action within their local community.



Aims of the Framework

The Framework aims to:

- Encourage inter faith dialogue which builds understanding and celebrates the values held in common such as integrity in public life, care, compassion and respect
- Increase the level of collaborative social action involving different faith communities and wider civil society where people work together to bring about real and positive change within their local communities
- Maintain and encourage the further development of good relations between faith communities and between faith communities and wider civil society
- Overcome barriers which may be faced by young people and women in participating in dialogue and social action.

Our core principles

This Framework is underpinned by three core principles which are at the heart of government's work with communities:

PRINCIPLE ONE – PARTNERSHIP – TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

We want to help build strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds. We aim to do this by helping to create more opportunities for people to come together and understand what they hold in common and for people to use these shared values to develop partnerships which bring about real and positive change with their local community.

We have called our strategy a 'Framework for Partnership' as we recognise that Government cannot do this alone, and that there are many individuals and communities, faith based and secular organisations already pursuing these goals and making a real difference. We want to work alongside these individuals, communities and organisations to create more opportunities for dialogue and social action. By sharing our ambitions, energy, expertise and resources we can achieve more.



PRINCIPLE TWO – EMPOWERMENT

Consultation responses suggest that a lot of existing inter and multi faith activity is led by a relatively small number of people within local communities. Together we need to create opportunities for more people to get involved. Empowerment is about people and government, working together to make life better. It involves more people being able to influence decisions about their communities, and more people taking responsibility for tackling local problems, rather than expecting others to. The idea is that government can't solve everything by itself, and nor can the community: it's better when we work together.

PRINCIPLE THREE – CHOICE

Government's role in developing this Framework is not to set out rigidly what needs to be done but rather to ask questions, listen to answers and use this information to develop a Framework which encourages people to take part and inspires local solutions to local issues. To support this, the Framework includes practical steps to support sharing of effective practice from communities in different parts of the country and to help local communities access useful resources and support from regional and national organisations.

Strengthening the Four Building Blocks

We drew upon observations made by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion in relation to meaningful contact as well as research carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation into social capital within faith communities¹³ to identify a number of enabling factors or 'building blocks' which support effective dialogue and social action within communities.

¹³ *Faith as social capital: connecting or dividing?*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006.



We have structured the Framework around these and aim to encourage opportunities for dialogue and social action by focussing on strengthening each of the following:



Building Block One

Confidence and skills to 'bridge' and 'link'

Building Block Two

Shared spaces for interaction

Building Block Three

Structures and processes which support dialogue and social action

Building Block Four

Opportunities for learning which build understanding

We want this to be a framework for everyday life so have also sought to identify opportunities for strengthening each building block within what the Commission on Integration and Cohesion termed the **four key spheres of interaction** – areas where a focus on interaction would help build integration and cohesion. These are:

- Schools
- Workplace
- Sports, culture and leisure
- Shared public spaces and residential areas.

In order to develop our understanding of how we can all better support multi faith social action, we also commissioned the Faith Based Regeneration Network to carry out a short piece of research to explore the contribution that faith based social action makes to social capital.

The Faith Based Regeneration Network also produced a piece of research exploring the role of Regional Faith Forums in relation to developing support for local inter faith structures and social action, and the relationships between Regional Faith Forums and other regional bodies.



The Local Government Association, in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK, also undertook research into the engagement of local authorities with faith and inter faith bodies in their areas¹⁴.



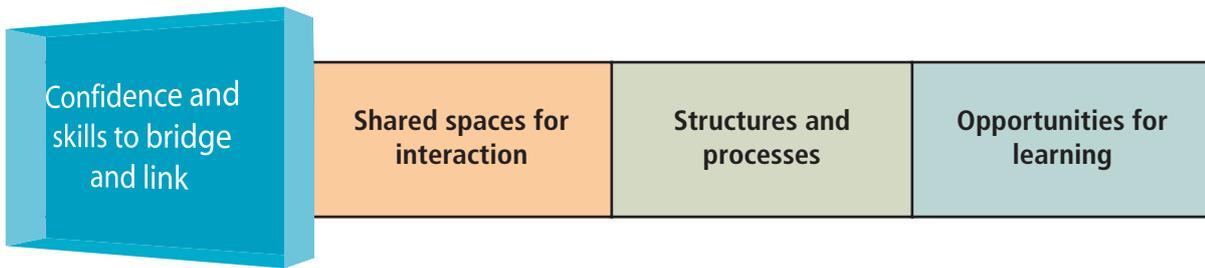
Through the consultation responses and the research findings we have been able to develop a better understanding of existing activity, the roles played by different partners, and what more is needed to maximise the impact of these contributions and support effective partnership working.



This Framework sets out the contribution being made by a range of different partners and the practical steps that government will take to strengthen each of the four building blocks, including our plans for investment. We have illustrated the Framework with case studies to highlight the different approaches being taken across the country, and have drawn upon the consultations responses and examples of effective practice that have been shared with us to develop a 'menu of options' containing practical ideas for how local authorities and local communities can get involved.



¹⁴ The final results of the LGA research came too late to inform the Framework, but early results have influenced its shape. A summary report will be published on the LGA website: www.lga.gov.uk



Building Block One

Developing the confidence and skills to 'bridge' and 'link'

Building trusting and active relationships within local communities

In this Building Block we explore how we can work together to:

- Strengthen and increase the bridging and linking social capital within local communities
- Help to develop the confidence and skills needed to build trusting and active relationships between people with different religions and beliefs and those of none
- Help to develop the confidence and skills needed to build effective partnerships between faith-based organisations and local decision-making bodies.

Faith communities create many opportunities for participation in society and they have long been a force for positive social change. From the perspective of their contribution to strengthening the common bond of citizenship, what is key is that they are alert to the risk of separateness and hence they contribute – as most do – to working across faith communities: this is inter faith action, which is an additional step beyond inter faith dialogue.

Where faith communities are an integral part of the community in this way, there is a dual benefit. They provide additional resources for dealing with social problems. And where they work across faith divides, they contribute to creating a greater sense of a shared purpose and inhibit the emergence of a 'them' and 'us' outlook.

Citizenship: Our Common Bond

www.justice.gov.uk/docs/citizenship-report-full.pdf



What do we mean by ‘social capital’, ‘bonding’, ‘bridging’ and ‘linking’, and why do they matter?

Social capital is the ‘social glue’ between people, organisations and communities that enables them to work together to pursue shared objectives. It also brings benefits to people, organisations and communities, as it provides networks of support and opportunity.

There are three categories of social capital¹⁵:

- **Bonding** – based upon 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 links between people or organisations beyond peer boundaries, cutting across status and similarity and enabling people to exert influence and reach outside their normal circles.

¹⁵ *The well-connected community: A networking approach to community development*, Alison Gilchrist, 2004



Bonding social capital is an essential foundation since without it people may not feel confident enough in their own identities to go on and bridge with people from different backgrounds. But we know that cohesion can be undermined if communities bond, bridge and link together in an unbalanced way – for example where there is strong ‘bonding’ social capital within different communities but little ‘bridging’ social capital to bring them together.

Again this is true for people from different ages and socio-economic groups as well as different faiths. In determining the balance between bonding and bridging activity the needs and make up of local communities need to be taken into account.

Social capital among people sharing the same religion or belief

Bridging can often take place within what are seen as single faith communities where these are made up of people of many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The evaluation of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF) found 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 groups¹⁶”.

For example while it is convenient to speak of the Muslim ‘community’ in England, this is an oversimplification. It rather consists of many communities from different ethnic backgrounds, such as Bangladeshi, Pakistani or North African. So a local mosque attended by people of different ethnic origins can be a focus for rich patterns of bridging.

This can support integration in important ways. Relationships with established communities can help newer groups to develop the communal structures that they need to thrive. For example a number of mosques supported people arriving from Somalia, often refugees from conflict in their own country, and during the recent immigration of people from Eastern Europe, the Roman Catholic Church has been an important focus of integration. Migration has also brought significant changes to congregations themselves – for example churches in the Anglican diocese of Southwark in London are now predominantly multi national and multi ethnic.

The continued presence of faith communities, through buildings, personnel or other resources, in local neighbourhoods can provide stability and a sense of continuity, especially through periods of change. The Church of England maintains a church and vicarage in every neighbourhood in the country.



¹⁶ www.cdf.org.uk

Faith communities can also add to social capital, making a valuable contribution to community empowerment and engagement, through offering:

- local networks with links to those who might otherwise be left out
- knowledge of local needs and ideas for how these might best be met
- management capacity, such as the capacity to host and run community meetings about local issues
- a major source of volunteers
- leadership in organising their communities to be active, linking the development of citizenship to the beliefs and teachings of faith traditions
- focal points for engaging the wider local community in projects to improve the neighbourhood and the quality of life for those living in it
- intergenerational activities, so young and older people can be brought together to learn from each other.

“Faith communities can empower and build community by generating a sense of connectedness in our lives and a sense of safety in our neighbourhoods; in a word, ‘neighbourliness’, which is a prime value, obligation and responsibility for faith communities... Agencies that are there for the long term, such as churches, can promote it most effectively. Faith projects such as prison/hospital/home visiting, industrial chaplaincy, drop in centres, faith schools, care and social service provision – to name just a very few – contribute substantially to cohesion and demonstrate to the wider society that the churches are not exclusive in their concerns.”

Extract from the Churches Regional Commission North East submission to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion

Shared values as a source of support for bridging

Shared Act of Commitment

On 3 January 2000 a major multi faith event took place at the Houses of Parliament. Hosted by the Government and developed with the assistance of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, this ‘shared act of reflection and commitment’ included presenters from all the United Kingdom’s major faith communities. Its aim was to celebrate shared values and it included the following Act of Commitment, created by the faith communities with the Inter Faith Network for the UK, and spoken together by all the faith community representatives:



In a world scarred by the evils of war, racism, injustice and poverty, we offer this joint Act of Commitment as we look to our shared future.

We commit ourselves, as people of many faiths, to work together for the common good, uniting to build a better society, grounded in values and ideals we share:

community, personal integrity, a sense of right and wrong, learning, wisdom and love of truth, care and compassion, justice and peace, respect for one another, for the earth and its creatures.

We commit ourselves, in a spirit of friendship and cooperation, to work together alongside all who share our values and ideals, to help bring about a better world now and for generations to come.

Shared values such as these can provide a platform from which to encourage constructive inter faith dialogue and open debate on the issues where there may be differences. They can also help inform the development of multi faith social action. This might typically involve people of different faiths and none coming together to tackle an issue of shared concern – such as a lack of play opportunities for children – and working together to achieve a positive outcome which benefits the wider local community – such as running an after school club.

Between 2006 and 2008 Government invested a total of £13.8m in faith communities through the **Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF)**. The Fund aimed to build the capacity of faith based organisations so that they could play a fuller part in civil society and engage more effectively – or ‘link’ – with public authorities. It also sought to improve mutual understanding and build cohesion through the development of partnerships – or ‘bridging’ – between faith groups and the wider local community.

More detail about the Fund and the projects that were supported can be found here www.cdf.org.uk

What faith communities have already achieved

In many ways, this country is seen within Europe as a leader in building good inter faith relations. The strong history of inter faith dialogue and multi faith social action in this country shows that there is a willingness and commitment on the part of people with different religions and beliefs to reach out and develop strong and purposeful relationships with each other.



Local faith communities themselves and related infrastructure organisations have developed substantial resources to help tackle barriers to bridging and linking. For example, the Inter Faith Network for the UK has developed the following resources which are available through its website: www.interfaith.org.uk:

- a **web-based Local Inter Faith Zone**, containing basic information about local inter faith activity and key resources to support bridging and linking, such as:
 - **The Local Inter Faith Guide** – a guide to setting up and developing successful local inter faith initiatives.
 - *Partnership for the Common Good*, a good practice booklet looks at some of the issues involved in working with, and helping establish, multi faith initiatives, taking into account particularly the context of partnership working between inter faith structures and local government.
 - *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs* – Short guidelines for inter religious encounter and dialogue.

Social action can be a powerful force for bringing people together. People of different faiths and of none can find a common purpose in tackling in practical ways an issue of common concern such as the quality of the environment.

Operation Eden is an example:

CASE STUDY: FAITHS4CHANGE

Operation Eden began in Merseyside and recently expanded as *Faiths4Change* to work across the North West. *Faiths4Change* is a multi faith programme giving professional support, advice, training and funding for community initiatives where faith groups are key partners. Using the environment as common ground the project helps local people from different backgrounds work together to transform places and communities. Through this they contribute to sustainable development, social inclusion, community learning and the Northwest's Regional Economic Strategy.

www.faiths4change.org.uk



What we have learnt from consultation responses: some barriers to bridging and linking

“There remains a significant challenge for faith communities themselves to make inter faith dialogue and cooperation into a mainstream concern rather than a minority interest”

Extract from Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales’ consultation response

In the consultation we asked people to tell us about the issues which limited their ability to bridge and link. The consultation responses revealed some consistent messages including:

- nervousness about offending others
- gender issues – some faiths and cultures have formal conventions about the way men and women relate to one another in public
- anxieties about a single faith group dominating
- poor local access to skilled facilitation and capacity building
- engaging ‘worshipping communities’ in other activities – the main focus for most members of a faith community is regular worship and they may not have the time or feel motivated to be committed in other ways
- a sense that a few people take responsibility for a lot of the current inter faith activity and that it can be difficult to recruit others
- communications and working effectively with the media – people recognised the power of the local media but felt it often concentrated on negative stories and that faith communities needed help with promoting positive stories about bridging and linking activities.



In response to these issues we will be:

- Working in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK to support an Inter Faith Week. This will encourage communities at national, regional and local levels to hold events to celebrate and raise awareness of the positive inter faith work that is being undertaken. The aim of the week is for people and organisations to use a variety of mediums to:
 - celebrate existing relationships and ways of working
 - create new opportunities to build relationships
 - showcase innovation.
- through the Faiths in Action Fund supporting local grassroots activity to develop bridging and linking social capital
- providing supportive guidance to local authorities within the Cohesion Delivery Framework on the practical steps they can take to support bridging and linking at the local level. This will incorporate the practical ideas for local authorities set out within this building block
- signposting local authorities and their partners to good practice/ resources/guidance in relation to bridging and linking via the web
- developing, with the LGA, the local authority role in supporting bridging and linking through processes leading to the updating of guidance for local authorities in Faith and Community.

“If inter faith dialogue and social action is going to impact upon community cohesion and other social issues, it needs to be sustained. Developing such initiatives is a marathon and not a sprint.”

Extract from Building Bridges Pendle consultation response

We also asked people about what hindered partnership working between faith groups and local government and public authorities.



Building effective partnerships between local communities and local government and other public authorities requires both parties to be willing to engage and to have the confidence and skills to ensure that the partnership is a productive one. Public authorities and other secular organisations revealed similar concerns to those raised by faith communities, but additional barriers include:

- a lack of 'religious literacy' – the skills and knowledge required to engage in an informed and confident way with faith communities
- anxiety about the use of public money to promote religion and a lack of clarity about formal or legal guidance on relevant financial issues
- concerns, also associated with the use of public money, about equalities issues, such as the attitudes of certain groups in relation to sexual orientation or the inclusion of women.

In response to these issues we will be:

- Working with faith communities, the LGA and Charity Commission, as stated in the Government's response to the report of the Commission on Cohesion and Integration, to produce a standardised version of a charter for excellence in public service delivery by faith communities, building on existing models
- supporting the development of web based resources for people to make connections with each other and get ideas for activities which can support bridging and linking
- publishing, *Believing in local action*, in association with the Church Urban Fund and NAVCA to strengthen links between faith based organisations and the wider third sector.

Communications – building effective relationships with the media

Responses to the consultation consistently identified working with the media as an area where faith communities need support to develop their skills.

People told us it is important that the local media should not run stories about faith which only give negative messages and that they felt that local media in particular had a duty to behave responsibly. Good news stories about bridging and linking and articles which tackle myths can both help to set a positive context for building cohesion.





In response to these issues we will be:

- Working in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK to support an Inter Faith Week. This will be an opportunity for local communities and organisations to showcase their work to the national and local media. It will also provide the local media with a “hook” to run special features
- Through the Faiths in Action Fund support local grassroots activity to develop media skills.

There are existing resources to help communities in working with the media.

The **European Charter for Media Literacy** exists to support the establishment of media literacy across Europe. By signing the Charter, organisations and individuals endorse a specific definition of media literacy, and commit to actions that will contribute to its development. The Charter thus facilitates consensus and networking amongst those working for media literacy in different countries across Europe: www.euromedialiteracy.eu

The Charter for Media Literacy
www.medialiteracy.org.uk/usr/downloads/charterformedialiteracy.pdf

How to use New Media guide
www.mediatrust.org/ict-project



The **New Media Case Studies** booklet contains best practice case studies showing how charities are using ICT to raise funds, awareness and campaign for change. The Media Trust works in partnership with the media industry to build effective communications for the charity and voluntary sectors:

www.mediatrust.org/ict-project

The East Lancashire and West London Pathfinders have pulled together some lessons learned from working with the media on community cohesion. They highlighted four key areas of work to build good relationships and improve reporting. These four areas are:

1. Establish links
2. Build understanding
3. Facilitate dialogue
4. Engage the community media

www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/33974

The media themselves also have a role to play in reporting accurately, sensitively and fairly. The Society of Editors and the Media Trust worked together to develop Reporting Diversity which is a practical guide for journalists to help them report fairly issues arising from the many and varied communities that make up Britain and without giving needless offence.

www.societyofeditors.co.uk/userfiles/file/Reporting%20Diversity.pdf

CASE STUDY: ST. CHAD'S COLLEGE, NORTH EAST

St. Chad's College was awarded a grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to run a project 'Making Sense of the Media'. Within the context of their project a DVD (Unveiling the Voice of Muslim Youth) was made by young Muslims aged 13-19 on Teesside. Six short films were made exploring issues such as identity, faith, media and citizenship. The short films challenged the perceptions of the Muslim community that suggest that Muslim Youth are disenfranchised and prone to extremist behaviour. Furthermore, the films can act as a source of discussion for Muslim Youth themselves and thereby challenge feelings of isolation and marginalisation. Negating misperceptions of Muslim Youth following 7/7 was important to this organisation and the young people they worked with across Teesside.

CASE STUDY: NATIONAL BOARD OF CATHOLIC WOMEN, NORTH EAST

In Round 1 of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund the organisation was awarded a grant to initiate a Women's Interfaith Media Literacy project. The project facilitated collaborative media literacy work among women of different faith communities through a web based resource designed to help them work together to become more active, informed and critical. In Round 2 the organisation was awarded a grant to deliver media literacy awareness raising events designed to help women from different faith communities to work together to become more active media users.

Supporting the development of bridging social capital

Faith and inter faith bodies have a special role to play in enabling people of different faiths and beliefs to develop skills and confidence to bridge.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion noted the importance of national faith communities continuing "to develop and deepen inter faith programmes which can resource their local member faith groups and can increase positive interaction between their members at local as well as national level". In some communities this work is already well under way and some, such as a number of Christian denominations and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, are already developing broad programmes of work in this area.

At local level, local inter faith councils and faith forums offer opportunities for bridging and there are also examples of faith leaders convening for regular meetings, often through the Anglican bishop or through another individual faith leader.

"Who needs to take action? Everyone who is genuinely interested and believes in the need for inter faith dialogue and social action. This is not action that demands some hierarchy – it must come from within."

Extract from Burton-upon-Trent Inter Faith Network and Burton-upon-Trent churches consultation response**Skilled facilitation of meetings**

There are often members within faith and inter faith bodies who have facilitation skills and these are important to draw on. Sometimes it can be helpful to engage the services of someone from 'outside' who is experienced in facilitating meetings between people in circumstances where there may be anxiety on both sides. Professional mediators, for example, will be used to working in situations where there is a history of real conflict. While meetings between people of different faiths for dialogue and social action are far removed from such conflict, someone experienced in mediation will have the skills to facilitate such meetings in the early



stages (if needed) when people may still be nervous about, for example, inadvertently causing offence. A local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or similar body may be a source of advice about finding someone with these skills – or a nearby local faith forum may itself already have someone capable of helping.



Community development has a useful contribution to make to enable people of different faiths and beliefs to 'bridge' and 'link' because it encourages different groups to make links with one another, identify common interests and deal constructively with differences. Community development practitioners work alongside local people to assist them understand what needs to change and helping them to achieve this.



National organisations such as the Community Development Foundation www.cdf.org.uk, Community Development Exchange www.cdx.org.uk and Federation for Community Development Learning www.fcdl.org.uk may be able to help with identifying practitioners, trainers and projects in local areas who are working to promote good inter community relations.



There are a number of resources available to support communities develop bridging activities, including, for example:

- Messer, 2007 (CDF) Participatory toolkit, available online: www.cdf.org.uk
- DIY Guide to improving your community, available online: www.togetherwecan.direct.gov.uk/resource-centre
- Passport to community engagement, available online: www.togetherwecan.direct.gov.uk/resource-centre

CASE STUDY: ABRAHAMIC DIALOGUE AND INTERFAITH EDUCATION PROGRAMME LED BY THE WOOLF INSTITUTE

Following the success of the 2006 programme funded by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund a new initiative, Abrahamic Dialogue Interfaith Education (ADIE), was created. The Programme was run in Greater London, the East Midlands and the East of England between November 2007 and March 2008. Funded by the Communities and Local Government Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, ADIE provided educational courses promoting a sense of shared citizenship, tolerance and respect, with emphasis on the three branches of the Abrahamic Faiths and their intra-relationships. By educating key members of society, such as police officers, teachers, social workers, clergy, local government and members of different faith communities, these courses have contributed to a greater understanding of and sensitivity to interfaith encounters.

www.woolfinstitute.cam.ac.uk/courses/adie.php

CASE STUDY: SIKH COMMUNITY AND YOUTH SERVICE EAST MIDLANDS

Sikh Community and Youth Service (East Midlands) received a grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to improve the capacity of the Sikh Community to engage with local authorities, inform future policy decisions and play a fuller part in their local community. Through a number of inter faith community events the project engaged effectively with school assemblies, local businesses and existing community networks. Excellent links with Muslims and Christians have also been developed. A conference was organised for public and voluntary sectors, and local business to discuss how to make diversity work. The project enabled the Sikh community to establish working relationships with the public sector, inform the local authorities on the needs of their community, and improve public services to faith groups.

The role of sport, culture and the arts

A number of imaginative projects have been developed which can be a resource to support local bridging activities. These may use sports or arts and culture, such as the Berakah Project and Kalapremi.

CASE STUDY: BERAKAH PROJECT

An inter faith music initiative dedicated to crossing boundaries of race, religion and culture through the arts. Its core aim is to promote dialogue and understanding between people of different faiths. Music can sometimes build bridges that other methods cannot, especially if there is a powerful and positive message in the music itself. The Berakah Project (meaning Grace or Blessing), serves to promote this message. Berakah's board and group contain members of the following faiths: Jewish, Christian and Muslim, all of whom have provided input into the ethos, aims and planning of the project and are committed to its work. Berakah has built up a network of contacts from all faiths who are committed to promoting respect, acceptance of differences and explorations of common or shared origins.

www.theberakahproject.org



CASE STUDY: KALAPREMI

Kalapremi is a South Asian art development organisation that promotes understanding of various cultures through art performances, cultural and inter faith activities. The majority of their Board members are from Hindu background.

Kalapremi was awarded a grant in round two of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to organise and run a weekend faith and global peace conference. The underlying aim of this was three-fold: to create dialogue to look at different faiths, to bring together representatives of several faiths and to increase young people's respect for, and understanding of, other faiths. The intention was to bring in respected international speakers who would be happy to encourage audience participation and discussion.

The conference brought together around 300 delegates, from the UK, India, Germany, Switzerland and USA and a variety of faiths were represented, including Christians, Hindus, Jews, Sikhs and Muslims. It was the first time that there had been this sort of initiative of facilitating inter and intra faith dialogue about global peace in the North East region. The event gave people the chance to talk about the way that religion has become imbued with political meaning and, more importantly, to think about ideas so that people do not feel afraid to say that they are a member of a religion. A souvenir guide was produced and the conference was reported on in the media.

The process of organising the conference, and the conference itself, enabled Kalapremi to build relationships with a variety of regional, national and international organisations.



Supporting the development of linking social capital

Effective engagement between government and faith communities is important at all levels. Linking is a two-way street. Faith communities and funding and decision-making bodies need to understand each other's roles and contributions. Unless communities, including faiths, understand local structures, and know how and when to engage effectively, they will feel marginalised.

Government has developed careful guidance for consultation patterns at national level with faith communities. At a national level it has convened a number of multi faith groups to inform policy development and recognises the value of bringing different faiths groups together to discuss issues of shared interest and share expertise. The main forum of this kind is Communities and Local Government's **Faith Communities Consultative Council (FCCC)**. This was established in April 2006 as the successor to both the Inner Cities Religious Council and the Working Together Steering Group. The FCCC is a national strategic forum, chiefly concerned with issues related to cohesion, integration, the development of sustainable communities, neighbourhood renewal, and social inclusion. It also has general oversight of engagement between central Government and faith

communities. FCCC is an important forum for linking, its effectiveness depending to a large extent on the degree to which members are able to network through their own faith communities.

Other government departments have developed their own internal structures and consultative fora. For example the **Prison Service Chaplaincy Council** oversees the work and development of chaplaincy in prisons and provides faith specific advice to help inform operational policy. The Council brings together national faith leaders from the Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh traditions to work together with a common purpose, sharing their experiences and expertise to help ensure that chaplaincy teams are able to 'serve the needs of prisoners, staff, and faith communities.' The Council recognises that, individually we can do much, but together we can do much more. The Chaplaincy Council goes beyond just talking about inter faith matters, and actually works together across faith boundaries for the common good of prisoners and staff.

As well as government convened forums, there are other contexts where faith communities come together at national level to discuss issues relating to public life, including the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. In addition to multi-lateral routes of engaging with government, the different faiths also have their own individual mechanisms for engaging with 'public square' issues. For example Peers from the faith communities initiate debates in the House of Lords, faith based international development aid agencies undertake advocacy campaigns such as the Jubilee and MDG campaigns and the Archbishop of Canterbury engages with such issues through major lectures and addresses at home and abroad.

Dialogue and social action: supporting community empowerment

"Most religious communities work in secular organisations and there is therefore already contact between people of faith and those with no religious beliefs. This contact can be enriched through joint humanitarian relief work, joint sports activities and joint work on environmental issues."

Extract from Muslim Council of Britain consultation response

Government is committed to devolving more decisions to local level, not just to local authorities but to local people and communities. The Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, on the future role and structure of local government was published in October 2006. It set out many changes, including plans to give people more say on public services and action in their area. This requires genuine engagement with local people and communities and helps to provide incentives and opportunities for bridging and linking.

This Framework forms part of this wider work to empower communities. In July we published *Communities in control: real people, real power* the Empowerment White Paper. www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol



Through this we aim to take practical steps to implement the proposals of *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, promoting more empowered citizens and giving communities more control over their lives and more influence in local decisions.

At national, regional and local levels, much inter faith activity, particularly when it involves linking, will be strengthened if it is seen explicitly as a contribution to empowerment and can where possible be linked to the structures designed to support empowerment.

The National Empowerment Partnership (NEP) is already funded by Communities and Local Government to promote an improvement in the quality of community engagement and empowerment policy and practice. The NEP's work so far, managed by CDF, has been predominantly delivered through the regions to support local action. An NEP Regional Empowerment Partnership (REP) operates in each of the English regions, generating activities shaped specifically to the conditions and priorities of that region, and linking thematically with other regions and national partners to share experience and learning. The REPs' work includes an equalities remit.

The regional tier of organisation is a question being addressed with respect to faith communities alongside this Framework. The North West Development Agency has recently been appointed as the lead RDA for faith communities. This role will have the potential to help develop effective linking within regional structures and the Regional Faith Forums obviously have an important role to play. These matters are discussed in this Framework in more detail in Building Block Three.

Communities and Local Government is also funding a programme to improve practice in community engagement and empowerment within the local government sector. This is being achieved primarily by funding IDeA (managed by CDF) to develop the Network of Empowering Authorities (NEA). The NEA will lead the sector by spotlighting and publicising examples of best practice in empowerment, promoting learning amongst councillors and officers, and contributing to national policy development.

Faith communities will need support to take advantage of all the opportunities to link more effectively which these measures offer. The following resources are especially relevant here:

- **Principles of Representation** – a set of seven guiding principles intended to assist the local third sector to organise itself and maximise the impact of its voice on partnerships in general and LSPs in particular. Faith communities are specifically referred to under the Equalities Principle. A web link is in the footnote below¹⁷

¹⁷ www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/principlesofrepresentation



- **Work by faith communities** themselves towards faith/religious literacy training for officials in local authorities and other public agencies
- **Believing in local action** – case studies and guidelines for partnership working between faith communities and local third sector infrastructure organisations, published by Church Urban Fund alongside this Framework.

Building the confidence and skills of young people

“Young people are passionate about, and have a need to discuss, a wide range of issues, especially those that are often considered more controversial and political, and become frustrated by programmes that place a limit on what is permissible to discuss. This is particularly important given the challenges in exploring controversial issues in (for example) domestic settings and therefore cohesion programmes need to provide opportunities that young people would not otherwise have to develop informed points of view, and to express these.”

Views shared as part of Diversity & Dialogue facilitated consultation event

The importance of developing children and young people’s social and emotional skills is at the heart of the Children’s Plan published in December 2007 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Schools and youth services have an important role to play in building the skills and confidence of children and young people to bridge and link with others from different backgrounds. The following DCSF support and developments are particularly relevant:

- Increased pupil confidence and development of communication skills are an integral part of the new secondary National Curriculum in schools. The non statutory PSHE programme of study contains much about building confidence and improving self esteem. Active Citizenship in schools is encouraged which helps build confidence, for example, involvement in a school council
- The Social and Emotional, Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme is currently used in primary schools to develop social and emotional skills of children through a whole school approach and is being now extended into secondary schools
- The School Linking Network launched in October 2007 is providing support to schools to make links with other schools so that they can provide opportunities for their pupils to interact with pupils from different backgrounds to develop knowledge, understanding and skills
- Aiming High: A ten year strategy for positive activities seeks to build the confidence and interpersonal skills of young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, through access to structured positive activities, support and guidance and good quality facilities



- Plans for a national body for Youth Leadership to work in collaboration with others from the public, commercial and voluntary sectors to create more opportunities for young people to develop their leadership skills and have them recognised.



Practical ideas for communities and local authorities

To support local authorities and communities, we have drawn upon consultation responses and examples of existing effective practice to develop a 'Menu of Options' which sets out some practical suggestions in relation to developing the confidence and skills to bridge and link.



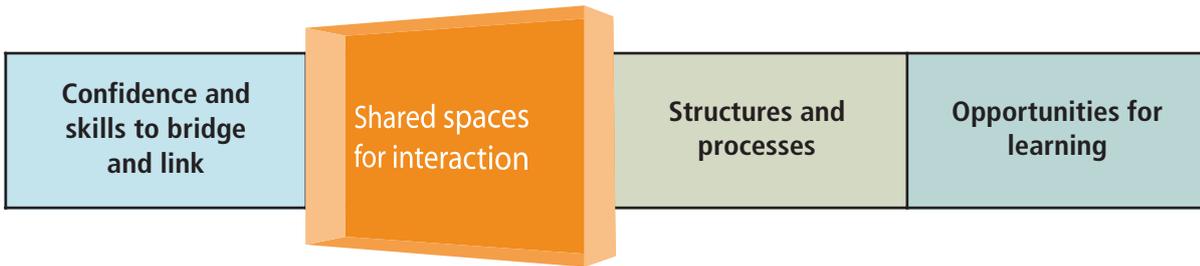
What can local communities do?

- Encourage faith leaders to send positive messages to local people and give a clear and practical commitment to inter and multi faith activity
- Develop resources at national level to help local worshipping communities link well with members of other faiths
- Develop links with other local communities and designate members to participate in local inter faith structures and projects
- Ensure that local inter faith bodies are working to engage all key faith groups in their areas. Look for opportunities to build bridges
- Look for opportunities to develop partnerships in building and developing media skills. Cross community training sessions will build skills and relationships
- Build relationships with local media. Invite them to open days and events. Publicise success stories through the local media to build confidence within communities and show the benefit of collaborative action
- Adopt the Inter Faith Network for the UK Code of Conduct "*Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*"
- Get to know your local CVS and find out how they are supporting local organisations. Ensure that you are on the mailing lists for training events and new funding opportunities
- Hold an open day for wider community organisations such as those working on regeneration or community safety initiatives. Use this as an opportunity to build relationships and find areas of common interest.



What can local authorities do?

- Implement Principles of Representation for LSPs and ensure a strong link between local inter faith structures and the LSP
- Appoint an official with a clear lead on faith and ensure that local faith communities know who this is
- Set up a local forum to bring local media and local communities together to discuss the impact of local reporting. This will provide an opportunity for local faith communities and local media to meet and develop further areas of work
- Ensure that local inter faith work and projects you are supporting are promoted to the local media
- Work with local communities and organisations in developing joint news releases where appropriate. This can help to build capacity and understanding within faith communities of how the media works and how to get messages across
- Identify opportunities where you can bring faith based organisations and other community groups together to work on shared issues. For example if you are instigating a community response to local issues such as anti social behaviour or domestic violence think innovatively about who can be partners
- Recognise that faith communities have a role to play in all parts of local initiatives and policies. Bring together local faith leaders and senior local authority officials to identify areas where there is potential to work in partnership. Do not think of them solely in terms of equalities. Research has shown that local inter faith organisations can help to support and deliver objectives of cohesion/creating a sense of belonging; empowerment; active citizenship; and preventing violent extremism
- Work with local communities and structures such as SACREs to develop locally focussed religious literacy programmes
- Be confident in funding faith based and faith inspired organisations. If there are areas of the project that you cannot fund – such as proselytising – then be confident and open about this. Focus on what can be done.



Building Block Two

Shared spaces for interaction and social action

Working towards space that actively promotes expression, empowerment and action.

In this Building Block we explore how we can work together to:

- Share resources and expertise
- Use resources to bring people together
- Recognise the role of physical and virtual spaces.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion identified that shared spaces – including parks, leisure centres, and shops, as well as transport networks – that are safe and well managed are important in encouraging interaction and in creating opportunities for people to pursue shared activities.

We use the term spaces in this chapter to include:

- sacred buildings;
- neutral rooms within faith buildings;
- shared and mutual spaces;
- church halls;
- community centres;
- civic and secular spaces – town halls, civic centres, shops, sports centres and leisure facilities;
- personal spaces such as homes and gardens;
- enclosed environments that encourage dialogue and sharing experiences.

Being in the same physical or virtual space is an essential ingredient for meaningful interaction and we know that one of the key factors in successful spaces is that they are safe. Safe spaces are not just places which are secure from physical risk but spaces that have an environment or ethos which allows people to be themselves and:

- be honest yet respectful
- be comfortable but not complacent
- be constructive in recognising difference
- be open to sharing concerns and values
- and help people to move out of their “comfort zone” when, and if, they are ready to do so.

With 54,000 places of worship in the United Kingdom, faith communities are essential providers of sacred and secular spaces for people to interact and pursue shared activities. These spaces are found in all parts of all our communities from large cities to small rural villages. They are used by local people for local events and activities and often function as the primary resources and buildings for community spaces and essential meeting places.

CASE STUDY: ST. PHILIP'S, LEICESTER

Leicester is often cited as one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse cities in England. St. Philip's, an Anglican Church in the city, has become the site of a vibrant Centre for fostering inter faith relations, while providing facilities for local groups and different communities. Over the years, a good relationship of mutual respect has been built up between St. Philip's and the large mosque in close proximity, a respect which proved critical after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the USA and 7 July 2005 in London. In June 2006 the St. Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi Faith Society was opened by the Archbishop of Canterbury as one of three national centres for education and training for church leaders and congregations about Christian presence and engagement concerning inter faith awareness and issues of religious diversity. The Centre, which is an independent Trust and governed ecumenically, offers secular agencies (eg health workers, police recruits, local government workers and members) training in religious literacy for working in ethnic and religiously diverse areas, as well as acting as a consultant to church bodies and local city managers from some European countries, it also offers academic courses. It plays a leading role in stimulating dialogue between Christians and other faiths in the city.



The evaluation of the first round of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF) – *Faith, Cohesion and Community Development*¹⁸ shows that many of the funded organisations were providing safe community spaces for local people to interact and share experiences. This everyday interaction was based on informal and formal opportunities and included cultural and social events and seminars to improve ways of working with local authorities.

The report also found that:

- Many of the organisations funded through FCCBF, and the vast majority of organisations visited as part of the evaluation, were providing local community spaces to local users
- The users of these projects supported the value of these local spaces; they often stated that what they most valued about the organisations was the space they provided, rather than their activities or services
- Informal (unfacilitated) spaces are sometimes as important as formal (facilitated) ones in allowing people to confirm or create networks of support. FCCBF funded organisations provided both the formal and the informal spaces for people to interact on an everyday level
- Many respondents liked FCCBF organisations because of the chance to meet new and different people.

¹⁸ www.cdf.org.uk/SITE/UPLOAD/DOCUMENT/FCCBF-website.pdf

Malcolm James' subsequent paper "*Faith based organisations and the hidden power of local community spaces*" draws on the data from the evaluation and looks at seven types of space:

- a. spaces that promote integration
- b. safe spaces
- c. free spaces
- d. active spaces
- e. spaces for expression
- f. spaces of empowerment
- g. and spaces of support.

The paper found that faith communities create intentional and unintentional spaces that are underpinned with a culture of safety, freedom, action, expression and empowerment and this is what was valued most by users.



CASE STUDY: THE TENT

The wasteland behind St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, left derelict after the IRA destroyed the church in 1993, has been transformed into an unexpected and private space dedicated to the meeting of faiths *as equals* (as opposed to guests in each other's spaces). The Tent draws on Bedouin traditions of hospitality, and was made of goats hair in the Middle East.

The unusual 16-sided structure was designed by Prof. Keith Critchlow, a world expert in sacred geometry, who was charged to create a "sacred" space without using symbols specific to any one religion. Using the universal languages of geometry, algebra, astronomy and harmony he has created a perfectly proportioned space which draws on the traditions of *Al-Andalus* – Southern Spain during the middle ages, where Jews, Christians and Muslims shared the space in relative peace for 300 years. The interior is carpeted with rugs woven in places of conflict throughout the world and it sits in a tranquil peace garden. The Tent was generously provided by the Co-Exist Foundation.

The Tent provides an experimental meeting space where people of different faiths can come together in different ways to explore differences, transform conflicts, and to build firm foundations for collaboration. The programme of activities is based on a "Spectrum" which defines ten categories of inter faith engagement. These range from specific dialogue processes, through methods for studying sacred scriptures together, storytelling (sharing personal narratives) to devotional gatherings using various forms of meditation and music. Particular attention is paid to learning and teaching facilitation and group work skills to group leaders.

For more information contact:

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The space provided by faith organisations is often cheaper for other groups to use than statutory or commercial premises. This is one way in which they are indirectly supporting flourishing local communities. One of the key messages that came from projects we funded under FCCBF was that space can shape the success and outcomes of activities that take place within it.

What we have learnt from consultation responses

In the consultation we asked what spaces were being used and what the barriers were to sharing spaces.

"...most people of faith are not anywhere near as easily offended about their faith as many others assume."

RAISE consultation event participant

The responses clearly demonstrate the wide range of physical spaces that faith communities are using. These include faith buildings, schools, private houses, cafés, green spaces, community centres, local authority premises and even supermarkets. Faith communities are also part of what one respondent called “dialogue” spaces such as LSPs, community empowerment networks, faith forums and local media.

“... some of the best dialogue happens between parents at the school gate, in the park with the children after school, in the local shops, community centres and streets. In acknowledgement of this we have intentionally encouraged small numbers of people to come together in social spaces that everyone is comfortable with – homes, park, multi-cultural café, community centre.”

Extract from The Salvation Army consultation response

Respondents have told us that there is a need for secular and faith based spaces which can be shared. They also told us that barriers can be raised unless there is a shared understanding of sacred space. This sacred space is, and should remain, distinctive in belonging to a particular faith.

“There are real and imagined concerns about differing customs across faith and cultural groups that make people nervous about visiting places that are unfamiliar to them. A fear of showing a lack of respect seems to hold some people back and not knowing the customs or ‘procedures’ which is down to lack of knowledge.”

Extract from Southampton Council of Faiths/Southampton Interfaith Link Consultation response

Some local authorities were praised for their generosity in making civic space available while many organisations felt that the local authority only offered premises when pressed. Non-faith based community organisations were also seen as playing a pivotal role in providing safe neutral spaces. Many respondents emphasised that secular spaces can provide neutral territory that provides a safe arena to explore difference particularly during the early stages of building relationships. This is not to say that shared spaces cannot be created but it takes time and relationships and trust may need to be in place before further steps can be taken. A large number of respondents felt that local authorities had a key role to play not only in identifying and sharing secular space but also championing the sharing of space by faith communities.



Local authorities also need to consider whether they should take steps to encourage the initiating or strengthening of local inter faith related learning opportunities. The provision of a 'civic umbrella' to help capacity build inter faith initiatives during their early stages as part of a concern for the wellbeing of the local community as a whole can be a very effective means of showing support – for instance, by providing a neutral secular space in which different faith communities can engage in dialogue or involving faith community representatives in wider civic ceremonies and events.

The need for local and other public authorities to recognise that it may be more appropriate to hold meetings on neutral premises when engaging with faith communities was regularly emphasised by respondents. Whilst visiting a place of worship may appear to be reaching out into communities it can in practice mean that some parts of local communities feel, and to some extent are, excluded from the process. Spaces can define relationships and if these relationships are to be equitable and productive it is important that public authorities get this right. However some respondents also commented on a perceived unease by some local authorities in visiting places of worship. This disparity in approaches would appear to reflect a disparity in the level of success in building proactive partnerships and understanding between faith communities and their local authority.

In response to these issues we will be:

- Providing supportive guidance to local authorities within the Cohesion Delivery Framework on the practical steps they can take to support shared spaces for interaction
- Signposting local authorities and their partners to good practice/resources/guidance in relation to shared spaces for interaction via the web
- Organising a national conference to promote effective practice and networking with a part focus on the role of local authorities in supporting shared and safe spaces
- As part of the implementation of the Quirk review publish guidance on local authority asset management and supporting local partnerships to demonstrate good practice. Extend this demonstration programme to 30 more areas in 2008 and a further 30 in 2009
- Supporting through the Faiths in Action Fund grassroots activity to create shared spaces for interaction
- Supporting the refurbishment of community buildings through the £30m Community Assets programme.



People also told us of the importance of community spaces in reflecting and recognising the diversity of our local communities in terms of culture, ethnicity and faith. However these spaces need to recognise the whole community including those of no faith yet give people of faith the opportunity to define and express themselves in their own terms. These are complex challenges but bringing communities together will help us all to navigate a way through this.

In response to these issues we will be:

- **Supporting a national inter faith week that celebrates the sharing of spaces and encourages local communities to take a first step towards reaching out.**

In the focus groups facilitated by the Citizenship's Foundation Diversity and Dialogue project young people told us there is a strong sense that there needs to be more accessible physical spaces, such as youth clubs and football pitches, to provide young people with somewhere to go and with something purposeful to do. Many participants talked about how confusing and challenging teenage years and youth can be, and of the need to not only learn about the diversity of other people's identities, but to also come to terms with their own often multiple and conflicting identities. They also spoke of the need to create a safe and constructive space where young people from varying backgrounds can discuss issues that are often of common concern.

Our consultation has also told us of the need for dynamic virtual spaces that provide people with the opportunity to interact, have dialogue and share experiences and explore values. This is particularly important in creating an environment where young people can engage with one another. Websites can create virtual spaces that reflect national diversity which can be particularly important to people (particularly young people) who are living in mono ethnic/faith/cultural communities. The internet is the simplest and most convenient way for people to access information and bring together people from different backgrounds and different physical locations. The growth in social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace has demonstrated this.

In response to these issues we will be:

- **Supporting the development of web based resources for people to make connections, get ideas and share spaces**
- **Supporting through the Faiths in Action Fund grassroots activity to create shared spaces specifically for young people**
- **Supporting Safe spaces for young people to go through the MyPlace programme.**



Space for women and their access to community facilities was raised by a number of respondents. Women are at the heart of communities in a multitude of roles and cohesive and resilient communities cannot be built and sustained without the active participation of women who make up more than half of society. For example there are over 800 registered mosques in the UK, of which the large majority do not have facilities for women. In some cases this is not because of their theological following but because the architecture of the mosque does not allow for a separate space for women. Most mosques are not purpose built and are accommodated in residential properties which only have very limited space.



There is support within the Muslim community to allow women access and MPACUK have been leading a campaign to actively involve women in Britain's mosques. The East London Mosque has involved women in their day to day activities and programmes that take place within the mosque and women have also been praying there since 1985. They state that women have been vital contributors in the day to day running of community services, activities and fundraising. In recent years there have been a growing number of Muslim women on the Board of Trustees and the management committee.



In the CDF report of the Survey of Women¹⁹ it was highlighted that women-only community spaces provided spaces for "support, sharing, freedom and friendship". One of the most important issues for women using the FCCBF funded projects was the alleviation of isolation. Women in the survey were asked how much of their spare time they spent within 15 minutes walk of where they live. 41 per cent responded that they spent most of their time in the local area, 33 per cent spent some of their time in the local area and 22 per cent of people a little of their time. Three per cent spent no time at all. Although this is only a rough measure it does indicate that local spaces are essential for local women.

In response to these issues we will be:

- Working with partners such as the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) to improve accessibility to mosques for Muslim women
- Supporting through the Faiths in Action Fund grassroots activity to create shared spaces for interaction
- Supporting a national inter faith week that celebrates and show cases the contribution of women to their local spaces.

¹⁹ www.cdf.org.uk/SITE/UPLOAD/DOCUMENT/Research%20and%20Evaluation/report_surveys_of_women_final_version.pdf

Existing spaces

The concept of shared space can be interpreted in many ways. This can include outdoors space, the space of an organisation's own building and the space of another organisation within which the organisation's services are delivered.

Shared spaces can also be places where people come together to carry out activities. This does not mean just in buildings but communities. **Faiths4change** www.faiths4change.org.uk has used the environment as a theme to build common ground. Communities have worked together to transform physical places and communities. These physical spaces have allowed people to come together and work together for the benefit of the wider community, through this they have built common ground and transformed not only their local communities but their relationships.

"The best shared spaces are actually shared moments – when the motivation of faith brings together different faith adherents around a common cause – the feeding of the hungry, the championing of the vulnerable or the mutual commitments to human dignity."

Extract from Faithworks' response to the consultation

Workplaces are key potential shared spaces for interaction and social action which can promote integration and provide opportunities for expression, empowerment and support. St. Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace has produced a guide called *Recovering the Calm*. This provides employees and employers with best practice in creating and managing prayer space for employees and how to explore key issues, possibilities and potential pitfalls. www.stethelburgas.org



CASE STUDY: ST GEORGE IN EAST GARDENS, TOWER HAMLETS

Tower Hamlets Located in the heart of the East End of London, the public park of St George-in-the-East Gardens was created in 1877 from the burial grounds of the adjacent Grade I listed Hawksmoor Church and a Wesleyan Chapel – one of the first, perhaps the first, such ‘conversion’, involving many legal complications for Harry Jones, the Rector and prime mover, as it predated the Metropolitan Open Spaces Act 1881. Intended as a green oasis amidst an overcrowded neighbourhood, this holds true in a multicultural area still densely populated, subject to social and economic deprivation and where access to public space is nearly three times below the recommended provision. In May 2007, a programme of landscape and repair works was begun, principally funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the local authority. The project’s specialist advisers, Alan Gardner Associates, in consultation with English Heritage staff and others, allowed for a programme of on-site training, educational visits and public talks. One of the first events was a two day training programme on lime mortar and brick repairs, which extended beyond the specialist subcontractors to a wider group including Conservation Officers, Building Craft College Lecturers and young “Local Labour in Construction” Apprentices. One of the most positive things to come out of the training was the sharing of different experiences and the recognition of the different skills that people can contribute to a project as part of a team. The response has been very positive from all those that attended and they will be able to take forward their new skills and experiences to other projects. The ongoing partnership between the local authority and the church in managing the whole site will be a good test of the public policy issues, on which the council, police and churches have begun to work together across the whole borough.



Buildings and places to meet

Multi-purpose community organisations can be a cornerstone of regeneration projects and a key aspect of how the third sector can generate prosperity and enterprise and provide opportunities for cohesive, empowered and active communities. This would cover faith-based organisations where they serve the needs of the whole community. The joint Communities and Local Government and Office of the Third Sector Community builders investment programme, recognises that the ability of many community organisations is undermined by financial fragility and aims to strengthen their sustainability through investment in developing asset holdings and developing the services and activities they provide.

The community organisations which this programme aims to support are those led by local people with a secure asset base and which play a key role in the transformation of local neighbourhoods. They empower the whole community through a range of activities, services and facilities which allow people to have greater influence and say over their own lives and that of their communities. The features of a community organisation which will benefit from the programme are those that:

- offer a place for communities to meet
- support and promote active and empowered citizens and community groups
- stimulate and support community voice
- provide and host community and public services
- mobilise opportunities and resources within and into a neighbourhood.

Religious organisations are likely to be eligible under the programme if they meet wider criteria on local community control and being inclusive for the whole community and have an investment project to help them develop greater sustainability. In many cases, particularly in rural areas, the local church for example may be one of the few available community assets. However, the activities that any organisation would have to undertake to qualify would have to benefit the whole community, not just members of one particular religion. The BIG lottery fund has used a similar approach in relation to eligibility for their Community Buildings programme. Using religious organisations physical assets to anchor benefits for the entire community and can help facilitate greater inter faith and secular interaction and understanding.

Defra's **Rural Community Buildings Network** was set up in July 2006. It has been organised to improve communication on matters that affect rural community buildings; share information and best practice; and provide a unified voice to influence local and central government. This gives those with a shared interest in rural community buildings, including parish councils, community building managers and advisers a unique opportunity to work together.

For rural communities community spaces are often places of worship and church buildings are often the only space for community meetings. The research report *Faith in Rural Communities: Contributions of Social Capital to Community Vibrancy*²⁰ highlighted the role of these spaces in the context of bridging social capital that brings people together. The research found that to develop bridging social capital there is a need for both physical and social space. The Rural Community Buildings Network was set up in July 2006. It has been organised to improve communication on matters that affect rural community buildings; share information and best practice; and provide a unified voice to influence local and central government.

²⁰ www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/publications_and_resources/publications/faith_in_rural_communities/full.pdf



Civic spaces and public services can play a key role within our local communities. Bringing diverse communities together can often be a side output of a particular project or service rather than a primary aim, and shared spaces for faith can also provide important spaces for reflection. For example in a number of larger courts and tribunals, including the Royal Courts of Justice, rooms and space has been set aside for people to observe their religion or belief. The areas are specifically set aside and appreciated both by those for whom prayer is a religious obligation and also by those who will simply appreciate the opportunity for quiet reflection for any reason.

Although the provision of such rooms is not a legislative requirement, the benefits to staff have been recognised and go beyond meeting diversity objectives. It has been found to be good practice for general health and wellbeing, and in reducing the stress levels for those working in or coming to court.

Schools can also provide an important focal point for interactions between individuals of different ethnic, faith and socio-economic backgrounds as well as those from different age groups. For those schools whose pupils are predominantly from one particular background or group the newly introduced Schools Linking Network will help to provide one way to broaden the pupils' knowledge and experience.

The extended schools' 'core offer' can help to provide young people with a range of opportunities for inter faith interaction between people of all ages within the local community. The extended schools' 'core offer' has five parts:

- Wraparound childcare, 8am-6pm
- A varied menu of activities including study support
- Parenting and family support (including parenting programmes and family learning)
- Swift and easy access to specialist services (including counselling and work with children with additional needs)
- Community use of facilities (including supplementary schools, cross cultural groups and adult learning).

Schools are also being asked to work together in clusters and with other organisations to deliver extended services, or access to them, which also provide further opportunity for meaningful interaction for children, parents and the wider community (shared childcare between schools for example).



CASE STUDY: MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS

'Meet Your Neighbours' was a project carried out through a partnership involving Communities and Local Government, UNISON and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council which brought together groups of young boys from a Jewish school in Liverpool, a predominantly Muslim school in Blackburn, a Catholic school in Wigan and a non-faith school in Manchester for a weekend in the Lake District. The project aimed to get young people who had not had the opportunity to meet people of other faiths to get together and discover the many things they have in common. It also gave the young people the opportunity to ask questions of each other which they may find difficult to ask adults. After the weekend, the pupils reported back to their classmates and wider school communities. It is hoped that the schools will wish to build on the links they made by keeping in touch. Communities and Local Government and UNISON funded a similar project for young girls across the faiths last year and the schools involved from across the North West enjoyed a reunion, which they initiated, in the summer following the project to build on the friendships and understanding that had developed between people from different faith backgrounds.

One of the young boys was heard to say *"that the two days were more than I expected because the depth of what we learnt was so strong"*.

Another said: *"Yes, I have learnt a lot about racism and will look at it in a different way from now on"*.

www.blackburn.gov.uk/upload/pdf/meet-your-neighbours.pdf



How is Government currently supporting community spaces?

Following publication of the Quirk Review in 2007, the Government has made a commitment to promote an increase in the transfer of public assets to community management and ownership, for use as community centres and other multi-purpose community facilities, amongst other uses. The continuing need for capital investment and capacity building support has been recognised, and this will in part be met by the proposed Community Anchors development fund referred to in the Investment Summary of this Framework.

The £30m Community Assets programme also plays a key role in this. The programme, which is funded by the Office of the Third Sector and delivered by the Big Lottery Fund, aims to empower communities by giving grants to refurbish assets that are being transferred from local authority ownership to the third sector. Having a greater stake in their own building means more independence for local groups, as they are better placed to plan ahead, be innovative in responding to local needs, and develop financial sustainability. Applications were accepted in 2007; in April 2008 38 projects were offered in-principle grant awards.

The community buildings refurbished through the Community Assets programme will be used for a wide variety of purposes, from healthy eating to cutting edge art and theatre, alternative education and facilities for faith groups. For example, one inner city community centre is the only venue that promotes community activities in the heart of a deprived housing estate, but has fallen into disrepair. The area has a large BME community and many low-income families. The centre is used by over a dozen community and faith groups, including an African Caribbean group, Muslim and gospel groups. It is currently not running to its full capacity due to poor accessibility, security and state of repair, but following refurbishment will provide a range of leisure activities and learning opportunities to include youth clubs, healthy eating programmes, pensioners club and job club.

Places of worship are often the most noticeable buildings in an area. People tend to feel strongly about them, whether they visit them regularly or not. They contribute to local identity and can help communities to understand their distinctive local history and cultural diversity. The Government and its sponsored bodies provide a comprehensive package of funding streams that support the maintenance and repair of religious buildings as part of our heritage. Church of England churches and cathedrals make up 45 per cent of all Grade 1 listed buildings, but many other denominations and faith groups also look after historic buildings.



- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) makes grants equivalent to the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship in the UK. The scheme is available until 2011 unless a permanent reduced VAT rate is agreed by the European Commission in the interim. The scheme has granted (currently) over £75m to around 9,000 buildings since 2001. Contact details for the scheme can be found at: www.lpwscheme.org.uk
- English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund operate the joint Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme. Since 2002, £118m of grants have been awarded to more than 1,000 listed places of worship for building repairs. Details can be found at: www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1122
- The Heritage Lottery Fund operates other programmes which fund repairs to church and cathedral buildings, along with new works, conservation of artefacts and heritage outreach activities
- A wide variety of faith groups have received funding from other Lottery programmes to support community-facing activity and new amenities in church buildings and halls.



Safe spaces for young people to go where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities and get information and advice from people they trust is an important priority. *myplace* funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and delivered by the Big Lottery Fund, will be investing £190m of capital funding to improve youth facilities over the next three year. Through £1-5m, *myplace* will support ambitious projects to deliver world-class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people and their views and needs as part of the Government's *Aiming High* youth strategy. The ten-year youth strategy was announced in July 2007 to help young people, particularly those in deprived areas, take part in positive activities that will help them develop new skills and raise their aspirations.

Practical ideas for communities and local authorities

To support local authorities and communities, we have drawn upon consultation responses and examples of existing effective practice to develop a 'Menu of Options' which sets out some practical suggestions in relation to shared spaces for interaction.

What can communities do?

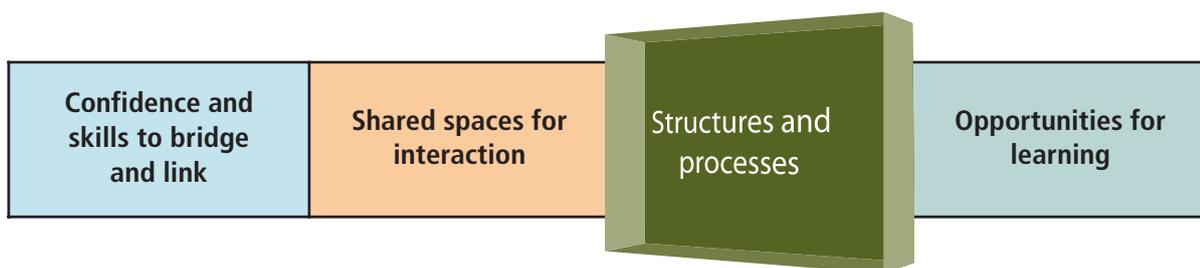
- Look at, and share, good examples of where communities have worked together to create spaces where all are welcome. Ensure where possible that premises are open to all, even if this means exploring cultural taboos
- Develop creative solutions that encourage access for women. Encourage women to actively participate in developing these
- Find informal and positive opportunities to explore sharing spaces such as walks of faith or faith festivals
- Work together to create mutual, not just neutral, spaces
- Share space in faith buildings with other local VCS organisations as well as other faiths – particularly neutral space. Meet from time to time in the neutral spaces of places of worship of different communities
- Discuss which parts of your premises might be made available for use by groups outside your community who might wish to rent these for meetings or events
- Hold an 'open day' once or twice a year
- Work with the local authority to create a register of faith buildings with 'neutral' spaces which can be hired for meetings or events. Use this opportunity to build relationships
- Understand that faith etiquette, unconscious 'rules' and ways of behaving can impose constraints on sharing or creating mutual spaces. Transparency can help to ease this and create the right space
- When planning changes to existing buildings, or acquiring new ones, ask yourselves whether the wider community could benefit from the use of the building. How could it be made more 'friendly' and 'accessible'? What would we have to do to find the answers to these questions?'
- Find out about the needs and concerns of the wider community in your area. You may want to join with another faith or a community group to do this. It is sometimes called a community audit and there are methods and tools to help you do this. Can you, working with others, do something to meet these needs, and change your community for the better? There are many examples of where this has happened and tools for helping you to get started for example the FbRN website: www.fbrn.org.uk



What can local authorities do?

- Advertise local authority and civic premises that are available for use by faith communities. You will need to first check on their requirements, and could use this as a means of building a relationship and getting to know them
- Understand the importance of neutral spaces. Do not assume that there is a need to meet in a place of worship when engaging with faith communities
- Support and promote informal spaces for interaction such as festivals and faith events and actively engage so as to secure the best possible outcomes for building future relationships
- Make use of faith community space that is offered
- Champion the sharing of space by faith communities. Encourage faith communities and the wider VCS to engage in partnerships and build further links where appropriate
- Remember that faith communities provide a wealth of local knowledge to help you develop and realise the benefits of community spaces. Begin partnership early and use this as another means of building relationships and routes into local communities.





Building Block Three

Structures and processes which support dialogue and social action

Sharing our energy, skills and expertise to create more opportunities for people to take part

In this Building Block we explore how we can work together with national, regional and local organisations to:

- Strengthen existing ways of bringing people together within local communities and supporting the development of formal and informal structures and processes where these do not yet exist
- Ensure that structures are effective in engaging a broad cross section of people from within the local community and result in real and positive change.

What we know

Research has found that *'one of the strongest indicators of increasing bridging and linking social capital has been the rapid growth of formal and informal associational structures within and between faith communities and the increasing connections with wider civil society'*²¹. Where these work well, they can lead to positive and enduring relationships developing between people from different backgrounds – including people with different religions and beliefs. Government believes that effective structures and processes can help create cohesive communities by providing opportunities for sustained contact, where people feel comfortable exchanging personal information or talking about each other's differences and identities. They enable people to explore shared interests, be that in finding out more about each others religion or belief or by working together on a project which benefits the whole neighbourhood such as developing a community garden.

²¹ *Faith as social capital: connecting or dividing?*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006



Of course, relationships like these can and do develop spontaneously, but rather than leave it to chance we want to promote structures and processes which when taken together create numerous opportunities or pathways for people to get involved in dialogue and social action.

What we have learnt from the consultation responses

Responses to the consultation revealed a wide range of formal and informal structures and processes including organisations, groups, forums, meetings, visits, sporting and cultural events which are proving effective in bringing people from different faith backgrounds together. In many places different structures have evolved to carry out different activities such as inter faith dialogue, promoting understanding of shared values, mobilising community involvement in social action, or acting as a consultative body to feed community views into decision making by the local authority.

In the consultation we asked people to tell us what was needed to strengthen existing structures and support the development of effective arrangements in areas where they did not yet exist. Respondents said that partners needed to work together to:

- Increase awareness of organisations/structures, the roles they play and their achievements
- Improve information flows between national, regional and local bodies
- Improve representation and governance arrangements
- Support more strategic working with statutory bodies and the wider third sector
- Identify routes towards sustainability
- Ensure structures are not seen as an end in themselves, but rather bring about increased dialogue and social action involving people from different backgrounds within the local community
- Supporting inter and multi faith activity in areas with little apparent diversity.

There is a clear and shared ambition amongst partners to create opportunities for more people within local communities to take part. This building block sets out government's contribution to supporting structures and processes which support dialogue and social action. It includes examples of how activity led by partners at national and regional levels is helping to support local activity and how partners are working together to widen participation and ensure that structures and processes do result in action. One of the core principles running through this Framework is choice – and while Government works at national, regional and local level, we recognise, respect and actively support the right of partners and communities to choose how to organise themselves. We value existing effective arrangements and want to support the sharing of good practice.

National structures and processes

At a national level, the Government is a key sponsor, alongside the faith communities, for the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom. The Inter Faith Network was established in 1987 and links representative bodies of the faith communities; national, regional and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies with a focus on inter faith relations. It provides information and advice on building good inter faith relations and publishes resources on a wide range of topics to help people working to promote good inter faith relations and working to strengthen best practice. More information about the work of the Inter Faith Network can be found on its website: www.interfaith.org.uk



There are **over twenty other national inter faith organisations** with particular emphasis and specialist resources operating in the United Kingdom²². Some have a bilateral faith focus, for example supporting dialogue between Christians and Jews, Hindus and Christians while others have a trilateral focus for example focusing on 'Abrahamic' dialogue (involving Christians, Jews and Muslims). Other initiatives focus on specific issues such as peace and conflict resolution or youth inter faith dialogue.

CASE STUDY: A NATIONAL INTER FAITH BODY SUPPORTING LOCAL ACTIVITY

The **Christian Muslim Forum** used funding from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to support young Christians and Muslims at Bradford University in developing the Bradford Young People's Christian-Muslim Group. The young people involved were concerned at the lack of contact between fellow students but felt that they lacked the opportunities and space to work together to tackle this. The Group has provided them with the opportunity to understand each other as members of different faiths and to build trust and friendships which will provide a firm foundation for working with the wider student body and beyond.

www.christianmuslimforum.org

CASE STUDY: A NATIONAL INTER FAITH BODY WORKING WITH A LOCAL AUTHORITY

As a national inter faith organisation that has been working on the relationship between Muslims, Christians, and Jews and wider society for the past 11 years, the **Three Faiths Forum** (TFF) were approached by the Barnet Council for Voluntary Youth Services (BCVYS) to offer opportunities for young people to engage in inter faith activity in a serious and long-term way. TFF received an enthusiastic response from Muslim, Christian, and Jewish youth leaders when presenting its educational programme "Tools 4 Trialogue" at BCVYS' annual conference

A select team of youth leaders have been working with TFF on the pilot "Barnet Faith & Youth Partnership" (a working title) which will launch in Autumn 2008. The programme will involve 14-15 year olds – six from each of the three faiths – meeting once every three weeks throughout the school year for dialogue, trust games, explorations of identity, and ultimately an artistic project. The partnership will culminate with an exhibition/celebration in Barnet to involve the friends and families of the participants, extending the inter faith engagement to the three communities involved.

The Three Faiths Forum sees vast potential in this kind of partnership, building on the developed experience and learning through such programmes to enhance inter faith youth provision in any and all local communities.

²² Most of these are members of the Inter Faith Network. Details on national, regional and local inter faith initiatives can be found in *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*, Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2007.

CASE STUDY: NATIONAL FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITIZENSHIP FOUNDATION

Diversity and Dialogue, a UK multi-agency project led by the Citizenship Foundation, has been working to build better understanding between young people with different beliefs and from different communities since September 2004. In partnership with Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, Jewish Council for Racial Equality, Muslim Aid, Oxfam, Save the Children and World Jewish Relief, and with advice from the Inter Faith Network for the UK, Diversity and Dialogue facilitates meaningful interactions and community cohesion programmes between a broad spectrum of young people aged 16-19, so as to build trust and understanding, address stereotypes and discrimination, engage with challenging and timely subject matter, and empower youth to play an active role in their communities. On its website it has a directory of innovative projects and resources, and you can find out more at:

www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk
www.christianmuslimforum.org

Respondents to the consultation were clear that faith leaders have an important role to play in encouraging people to get involved in dialogue and social action.

"Faith communities should disseminate information about the importance of inter faith to their followers and congregations"

Extract from Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (Birmingham) United Kingdom consultation response

Other organisations can also provide an important leadership role, for example the **Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB)** published its draft standards for mosques in November 2007. One of the core standards is for mosques to "ensure that inter faith activities take place within local communities." For more information, see: www.minab.org.uk

In addition to national inter faith organisations, many national faith bodies also play an important role in supporting inter and multi faith activity.



CASE STUDY: THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AS THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH

In partnership with other Christian churches the Church of England seeks to build good relations with people of other faiths, and wherever possible to cooperate with them in service to society. Bishops, clergy and lay people of the Church of England are involved in a wide variety of local, regional and national inter faith and multi faith initiatives.

At the national level and in partnership with its Jewish, Muslim and Hindu partners, the Church of England initiated with other Christian Churches the three national bilateral dialogues – the Council of Christians and Jews (1942), the Hindu Christian Forum (2005) and the Christian Muslim Forum (2006). It provides a Co-Chair of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the Chair or officer for over a third of all the Faith forums listed in the Inter Faith Network's Directory.

At parish level through its 14,000 parishes and cathedrals covering the whole country, the Church of England is publicly available to all who live within the parish and its 27,000 licensed ministers are required to have a duty of care for all parishioners irrespective of their religion or belief.

Within the Church's 44 dioceses, bishops act as convenors for the majority of Faith leader's groups. The Church has two full time national inter faith relations advisers and a network of 50 diocesan inter faith relations advisers, together with a community of scholars specialising in the study of different religions. The advisers provide specialist advice and encouragement for church leaders and parishioners who seek to develop good relations with members of different faiths.

Some of the ways in which local churches are involved in inter faith work include:

- Joining or helping to establish councils of faiths or inter faith groups
- Practical partnerships, eg caring for homeless people or asylum seekers; urban regeneration schemes; young people's projects; groups to fight racism
- Building up links with nearby mosques, synagogues, temples, or gurdwaras – arranging visits, exchanging seasonal greetings

Continued



- Combating misinformation, prejudice and bigotry about other faiths.

The Church of England provides theological reflection and teaching for its work in a multi religious society, for example, *'The Way of Dialogue'* (1988); *'The Mystery of Salvation'* (1996); and *'Generous Love'* (2008). It has also produced resources to support local churches in their inter and multi faith activity. One example, *Presence and Engagement: the churches' task in a multi faith society* focuses on the role of churches in multi faith neighbourhoods, with the aim of re-affirming the commitment of the Church of England's ministry in these areas, encouraging dioceses to review their strategies for supporting clergy, and encouraging theological reflection. Resourcing centres have been set up in Bradford, Leicester and Greater London to support this work.

The Government provides financial support to the Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN) a national multi faith network for community regeneration and social action. It aims to encourage the active engagement of faith groups in local regeneration initiatives and partnerships by demonstrating the benefit of cross-faith collaboration and cooperation while promoting the diversity and plurality of faith traditions. Its work also includes building the capacity of faith groups by identifying, demonstrating and promoting good practice, and it provides an interface between the various levels of decision making, from national strategic policy to grass roots action.

There are a number of bodies springing from a single faith (though often working with others) which have made supporting social action within local communities their primary focus. These include:

- The **Church Urban Fund** which has been supporting social action in the most deprived areas of England for over 20 years: www.cuf.org.uk
- The **Churches Community Work Alliance** which initiates, supports and encourages community development work in the life of the churches: www.ccwa.org.uk
- The **United Reformed Church Community Development Programme** which has been in operation since 1982 providing training and resource packs to support community development and encouraging local church congregations to become involved in community development: www.urc.org.uk
- **Caritas** the umbrella organisation for Catholic social care organisations working within England and Wales, which produces research reports and resources to support social action: www.caritas-socialaction.org.uk



- **United Synagogue Community Development Group** which provides training and networking opportunities and publishes resources to encourage community development and volunteering by the Jewish community: www.theus.org.uk
- **Faithworks** a movement of thousands of individuals, churches and organisations motivated by their Christian faith to serve the needs of their local communities: www.faithworks.info
- **FaithAction** a new national network which is using government funding to bring together grassroots faith and community organisations that are delivering or seeking to deliver public services and helping them to access funds, deliver contracts and create more effective partnerships with government at every level: www.faithaction.net



The **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)** also has an important role to play in supporting and strengthening good relations, by forging greater understanding within local communities. The Commission was launched on 1 October 2007 and took over the responsibilities of the three former equalities commissions: the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It also has responsibility for other key areas of equality – religion or belief, age, gender reassignment, and sexual orientation – as well as human rights.

The EHRC will be working in partnership with religion or belief organisations, amongst other key stakeholders, to harness their strengths and resources in developing good relations between people and promoting and protecting human rights. An interim funding programme has been used to support a range of projects, including those which encourage good relations between people with different religions and beliefs. The EHRC will be encouraging public services to foster better engagement with religious and non religious groups to enhance their understanding and inclusion of all citizens and the changing needs of society. Local activity will be supported by regional teams. The Commission intends to work with a wide range of organisations to develop a three year strategic plan which will set out its agreed priorities and activity for the period 2009-12. More information about the Commission's work can be found here: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Partnership working at the regional level

The Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* made clear our commitment to changing the way we work to give communities a bigger say, to enable local partners to respond more flexibly to local needs, and to reduce the amount of top-down control from central government. In England, our approach to decentralisation includes working effectively with and through regional and sub-regional partners.

Government recognises and respects the fact that faith communities choose to organise themselves in a range of different ways. Not all faiths have regional structures and there is no expectation on the part of Government for faith communities to develop these. Some of the existing regional structures developed by different faith communities include:

- The **Churches Regional Network** which draws together those appointed by the churches to relate to regional government and Regional Development Agencies. The Network shares experience and good practice, and the regional church bodies represented engage in a variety of ways depending on their capacity; seeking to address issues relating to regional economic policy, community development and cohesion. The majority also have links to regional faith fora. Some engage in project management and a number have carried out research around faith communities and social provision
- Regional **democratic representative bodies being set up by the Board of Deputies of British Jews** to enable Jewish communities to engage and interact with regional and devolved Government within the English Regions and Wales. The project will develop and train individual Jewish leaders through a series of seminars on leadership, fundraising, advocacy, regional Government structures and other regional stakeholders²³.

Regional **Government Offices** (GOs) act as a bridge between central and local government connecting national policy and local people and places²⁴. They work in partnership with each local authority to develop the three year **Local Area Agreement** (LAA) which identifies the priority issues for the local area and focuses activity to deliver improved outcomes for local people. GOs share their knowledge of local and regional challenges and solutions and preferred ways of working with central government to inform the development of national policies, and they work closely with other regional bodies to ensure a 'joined-up' approach to tackling the issues that matter most to people in the region.

²³ www.boardofdeputies.org.uk

²⁴ www.gos.gov.uk



This includes supporting and working with local and regional partners to create cohesive and active communities with a thriving third sector, in which people of all races, faiths and backgrounds feel safe, valued and able to play a positive role within their local community. GOs take forward a range of activities to help achieve this, for example the Government Office for London (GOL) has developed the London Local Authorities Faith & Community Cohesion Group. The Group was developed in response to a commitment in the Government's race equality and cohesion strategy *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* to set up regional networks of local authority officials to work with faith communities.



CASE STUDY: FAITH LINKS

The **London Local Authorities Faith & Community Cohesion Group** is sponsored by the Government Office for London and comprises local government officers with responsibility for religion and belief from participating London Boroughs. The Group aims to improve the capacity of London Boroughs to work with and develop relationships with their local faith communities. It seeks to achieve this by:

- helping to **interpret national and regional information and policy for faith communities and public service providers at borough level** and providing feedback from the boroughs to central government to **inform policy development**
- providing a forum for members to **share information and best practice** and learn from what has and hasn't worked, to add value to borough-level working and stimulate innovation
- enabling the borough faith leads to provide each other with **mutual support and advice**, particularly where issues are urgent or sensitive, for example in response to the London bombings in July 2007
- **promoting cross-borough working** as appropriate.

The Group also acts a **regional hub for faith issues** and aims to become an exemplar for other regions, developing demonstration projects to facilitate this.

Contact: Hyacinth Parsons
hyacinth.parsons@gol.gsi.gov.uk

The Government will support networking opportunities for Local Authority Faith Leads, by:

- Supporting the development of regional Faith Links (regional hubs for Local Authority Faith Leads) within each of the English regions by 2011. Faith Links will be coordinated by Government Offices and will provide Local Authority Faith Leads with guidance, support and networking opportunities
- Drawing upon the experiences of the regional Faith Links in London and Yorkshire and the Humber to develop a toolkit for Government Offices to support them in working with local authorities and faith communities to develop Faith Links

Faith communities are also working closely with other regional government bodies to help improve the lives of individuals and communities. For example, responsibility for delivering a reduction in re-offending is devolved to nine **Regional Offender Managers (ROMs)** and **Directors of Offender Management (DOMs)** in England and one DOM in Wales. Faith based organisations including large numbers of volunteers have also been working with offenders in prison and the community for many years, reaching out to those that need them and helping to resettle some of the most challenging and socially excluded individuals. The Probation Service also ensures that unpaid work by offenders benefits faith communities and gives these communities a say in the work delivered.

CASE STUDY: PLIAS RESETTLEMENT LONDON

PLIAS Resettlement was awarded a Round 2 FCCBF Small Inter Faith Grant of £4,550 to organise a seminar and a number of workshops that invited local faith organisations to include 'concern about crime in the community' in their religious agenda.

The seminar and workshops engaged the community to explore ways in which faith based organisations can contribute to reducing gun and knife culture which is a problem for many communities up and down the country. The seminar brought the community together to examine the impact of crime on the community, the role faith organisations can play in supporting victims of crime, the role of the Criminal Justice System, ways in which faith organisations can support the resettlement of offenders and awareness of avoidable crime.

The project brought together faith groups along with government and other agencies through a multi agency approach and partnership to share ideas, views and solutions on how to support and tackle the reduction of gun and knife crime. It provided a useful tool for faith communities to come together to network and share experiences, and to develop a more focused way of working together.



The **National Offender Management Service's** partnership with the **third sector** including faith-based organisations has a strong focus on improving links with communities, and involving the third sector, local people and communities in shaping services and policy. An important part of this work is about promoting partnership working across and within sectors and within communities.

In November 2007, the **National Offender Management Service** and the **Youth Justice Board** launched a faith consultation paper, ***Believing We Can***, to further explore the role of faith interventions in reducing re-offending. The consultation paper sought to promote the contribution faith-based organisations can make to reducing adult and youth re-offending, exploring barriers to strengthening engagement in the broadest sense, with a focus on diversity. Final agreed actions will be part of the Ministry of Justice/NOMS third sector paper ***Working with the Third Sector to Reduce Re-offending*** to be published later this summer.

CASE STUDY: GUILDFORD DIOCESE, DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (DSR)

The Faith in Criminal Justice conference held in Leatherhead successfully brought together 120 representatives of the criminal justice service and the faith communities in a way which has hitherto not been possible in the South East region. DSR is currently responding to requests to coordinate an annual event based on the success of this initial event. The project has led directly to recognition of the value of this coordination and to the aspiration for an annual gathering.

"The project has been a great success ... The Faith in Criminal Justice conference has developed a network in the piloted area which has already developed the capacity of its engagement and the potential to deliver more effectively targeted and coordinated support to resettlement and family support schemes. The way in which DSR has worked throughout the project has seen it develop as a natural and accepted coordinator for the faith communities. DSR will continue to work with partners to develop this work and replicate the pilot across the less well represented areas of the SE region."

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) support business development and competitiveness by encouraging public and private investment and by connecting people to economic opportunity by improving levels of education, learning and skills. RDAs also contribute to enhancing the region's environment and infrastructure²⁵. They work in partnership with a wide range of regional partners, including local businesses, government, universities, community and volunteer groups to develop and deliver the Regional Economic Strategy which sets out the economic aspirations of the region and how they are going to be achieved.

²⁵ www.englishrdas.com

Faith communities make a valuable contribution to regional economies. They have an excellent record of bridging the gap between the affluent and the deprived with their volunteer networks and community infrastructure. To maximise the contribution of faith communities to the economic and social development of the North West and encourage them to participate along with other stakeholders in the formulation of regional policies, the **Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) has supported the establishment of the Northwest Forum of Faiths**. This has been a mutually productive partnership. In 2007 the NWDA provided two years funding for a Muslim project worker to work with a Canon at Blackburn Cathedral to develop dialogue between faiths, cultures and communities across Lancashire and beyond.

CASE STUDY: EXCHANGE BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

To complement plans for the physical regeneration of Blackburn's town centre spearheaded by NWDA and Blackburn Cathedral, the NWDA has partnered exChange, the cathedral's community cohesion and inter faith development agency. Together they have achieved a world first: the appointment of a Muslim member of a cathedral's staff. Anjum Anwar is working with Canon Chris Chivers to try and focus on human regeneration through the release of faith community social and economic capital.

"Regular inter faith and intergenerational dialogues on touch-stone subjects like 'the veil', 'British identity' and 'the causes of extremism' have," says Anjum, "attracted audiences of between 30 and 500."

"In May 2008," adds Canon Chivers, "*Anne Frank [+ you]*", an interactive exhibition from the Anne Frank Trust UK, attracted 13,000 visitors, among them well over 6,000 young people from 101 schools and colleges Lancashire-wide.

The exhibition also included material relating to the little-known story of Albanians who rescued Jews in the Holocaust, thus ensuring a unique buy-in from Asian – predominantly Muslim – citizens, which transformed attitudes and is now leading towards a bid to host the National Holocaust Memorial Day in Lancashire.

"This," as Anjum acknowledges, "would have been almost unthinkable before the work began." Canon Chivers adds: "Working together we can transform youth leadership, and so enhance the economic landscape through improved social cohesion."



On 1 April 2008, the NWDA took on the new **RDA lead role for faith** nationally. Building on existing good practice in measuring the economic impact of faith communities this will involve:

- Sharing contacts and good practice via the faithnorthwest website²⁶ with links to the national RDA and individual RDA websites
- Promoting research on the economic value of the social capital that faith communities represent and the added value that faith community partnerships bring to the delivery of projects in deprived areas
- Maintaining an up-to-date repository for RDAs of relevant resources, initiatives, reports and policy developments on the contribution of faith communities to regional economic and social development
- Convening a national event in 2009 on the value of the social capital that faith communities represent.

Regional Forums of Faiths

With the Faiths Forum for London in the process of developing a permanent constitution and structure, and the North East in the final stages of establishing a regional faith network, there will soon be nine Regional Faith Forums formally in existence. Contact details for each of the forums can be found in the Useful Contacts section.

The initial reason for the formation of most of the forums was to develop the relationship between faith communities and regional governance, and all have seen the potential benefits of a regional level of operation in relation to a range of issues including cohesion and regeneration. Regional Faith Forums have created different links and working relationships with regional institutions according to the needs of the region, preferred ways of working and the resources available.



²⁶ www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

CASE STUDY: THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE WEST MIDLAND 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 about building long term relationships of trust which serve as a secure basis for working together to address common issues. Faith groups are part of the social fabric and social glue. Though they may not drive the regional education, health and economic agendas, 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".

West Midlands Forum of Faiths www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Some forums have specified multi or inter faith dialogue as part of their range of activities and have evolved different means of relating to faith based social action. They play an important role in supporting and facilitating faith communities and faith based organisations to take part and do this by disseminating relevant information and through networking activities. Some also offer training events or mentoring to individual organisations.

CASE STUDY: EAST OF ENGLAND FAITHS COUNCIL (EEFC) AND FAITHNETEAST

EEFC provides a point of contact between the faiths of the region and regional bodies across the public, voluntary and private sectors: it is a consultee in public policy and strategy; holds regular meetings and events; and commissions research. Through the FaithNetEast programme, which is run in partnership with the Faiths and Civil Society Unit, EEFC also provides support for social action. FaithNetEast links initiatives across the region where networking and joint initiatives might be of benefit and ties locally based activities into regional thinking and practice. It is careful to respect the power and autonomy of faith structures for social action at the neighbourhood level and sees itself as a facilitator. It has set up 'specialist support networks' for faith groups involved in social action with migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, skills improvers and lifelong learners, social enterprise and people wishing to return to employment. EEFC works closely on these issues with its Regional Development Agency (which is its co-funder together with faith leaders of the region) and with its Government Office.

**www.EEFaithsCouncil.org.uk
www.faithneteast.org.uk**



These forums can also play an important role in:

- **Linking local inter and multi faith structures** by acting as a 'hub' or focal point in the region; supporting the development of networks and partnership approaches; and sharing effective practice
- **Creating strong links to regional governance and strategies** enabling faith communities to make a positive contribution
- **Encouraging faith communities to take part** in local and regional inter faith and multi faith activity.



Government will work in partnership with Regional Forums of Faiths, the Inter Faith Network for the UK (of which the regional forums are members), the Faith based Regeneration Network, the Community Development Foundation and Government Offices to build upon the existing achievements of the Regional Forums and further develop their capacity to act as a resource for local projects and groups and to encourage complementary working at national, regional and local levels.

To support this, Government will provide a three year package of investment and support for Regional Faith Forums – worth £1.89m from 2008 to 2011. To reflect the fact that forums have different priorities and ways of working, individual agreements will be developed in partnership with each Forum setting out priorities.

Government will also continue to work closely with the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the Faith Based Regeneration Network as they enable the regional faith forums to discuss common issues of interest and share news and good practice through the **English Regional Faith Forums Network (ERFFN)**. ERFFN is facilitated by both organisations, reflecting the fact that the regional faith forums' work spans both inter faith dialogue and faith based social action.

Prioritising local structures and processes

A strong message coming through the consultation was that the strategy needed to be 'a framework for everyday life' with multiple and appropriate opportunities or 'pathways' for people within local communities to take part in dialogue and social action. Responses highlighted a need to focus on the contribution that all partners could make to strengthening existing local structures and encouraging the development of structures or processes which support dialogue and social action where they did not yet exist.

At the local level, there are now over 200 inter faith organisations in existence – many of which are in membership of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. In recent years, there has been a rapid growth in local inter faith activity and many local groups are relatively new organisations. Since 2000, 183 new local inter faith organisations have been established with 52 of these coming into existence since 2005.

Through the consultation we have heard about a broad range of innovative work being taken forward by different groups to bring people with different religions and beliefs together, from formal meetings, to sporting events, to visits and peace walks, to work with schools and colleges, and even an adventure playground.

CASE STUDY: ST JOHN'S WOOD ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

"We have run a programme called 'Have Some Faith in Play' for a few years."

This programme takes children on visits to local churches, synagogues and the London Central Mosque. These outings are supported by art and craft activities which further contribute to the children's understanding and appreciation of others' faiths and cultures. The programme provides an insight into the neighbourhood's diversity while supporting its cohesion. At the end of the programme we invite the faith leaders to the Adventure Playground. The programme has been popular with children, their families, faith leaders and the wider local community. This has brought the neighbourhoods' clergy together and they now meet on a regular basis. Their group is called Pathways and they hold public meetings and visit schools."

Contact: Steven Derby
Senior Coordinator and Interfaith Advisor
Steve@adventureplayground.org.uk

What do young people think about the programme?

"This is the first time I have been in a synagogue or met a rabbi. I really learnt something about a religion I did not know before."

Ehsan Abdulrahilmzi (aged 15 from Afghanistan)

As with the regional faith forums, local inter and multi faith groups have different histories, structures and aims, and the resources available to them vary considerably. In some cases their development has been driven by the local authority – perhaps to support its work on cohesion, regeneration or community empowerment – in others, the impetus and resources have come from faith communities or from individuals within these.



Government values this diversity of approach. One of the key principles running through this Framework is choice: one size does not fit all and local communities and partners are best placed to know:

- which issues matter most to local people
- who they need to work with to have an impact
- what type of activities (dialogue, social action or a mixture of both) are needed to help achieve their goals.

CASE STUDY: GATESHEAD INTERFAITH FORUM

Gateshead Interfaith Forum was awarded a grant from the Faith Community Capacity Building Fund to develop their **Positive Images Project**. This is a community-based education project which seeks to celebrate faith and cultural diversity in order to bring about improved community cohesion. Positive Images has delivered a successful programme of activities which have specifically focused upon faith-based issues. An outreach project has begun to involve more local young people in inter faith work where previously there was no such provision. This project has now expanded to include a partnership with Gateshead Borough Youth Council and will form part of a new body of work with the North East Regional Faiths Network. Positive Images Project Manager Andrew Tinkler pointed out that: “the FCCBF allowed us to lay the foundations for what will be a very important development for young people in Gateshead and the North East generally”.

There has also been a new initiative to encourage the active participation of women (from different faith traditions) in the delivery of work in local secondary schools. Andrew commented that: “Through our FCCBF award we have been able to induct volunteers from the community here in Gateshead. Their contribution to our work in schools has provided us with valuable insight into the reality of life within a faith tradition”.

This funding has also allowed the Positive Images Project to maintain close working relationships with faith communities who see that their involvement can lead to on-going positive social change. The project has previously worked with Gateshead Youth Offending Team and local faith communities to intervene in cases of hate crime; illustrating that working in collaboration can help to challenge the negative impact of racism by actively involving members of faith communities in challenging prejudice and discrimination.



Broadly speaking, local structures or processes tend to take forward one or more of the following activities:

- inter faith learning through dialogue, talks, visits to each others' places of worship and working on particular projects and events
- tackling prejudice and discrimination through awareness raising, diversity training and educational programmes
- raising awareness about the importance of peaceful and respectful coexistence in a multi faith society
- advising local government, LSPs, the Police and other public services on religious issues and the needs of users of different faiths
- assisting on local multi faith civic ceremonies and events
- responding to any local incidents such as attacks on places of worship or cemeteries²⁷.

One of the key messages from the consultation was that partners needed to work together to ensure that local structures and processes result in concrete outcomes.

²⁷ Inter Faith Network for the UK, *Local Inter Faith Guide and Local Inter Faith Zone*



CASE STUDY: THE ACTIVE FAITH COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME (WEST YORKSHIRE)

The Active Faith Communities Programme (West Yorkshire) received a grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to run a mentoring project. This project organised capacity building workshops and provided on-going support to smaller faith based organisations across Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. The grant enabled the project to build the capacity of the smaller faith organisations in the area, and strengthen their own capacity. Over the year AFCP provided intensive mentoring support to 12 projects, all of whom reported increased capacity. 87 groups took part in at least one of five information-sharing events/thematic workshops, and 14 of these were known to have started projects before the end of March 2007. The programme made a significant contribution to the involvement of faith communities in community life throughout West Yorkshire. It also increased awareness within public and voluntary sectors of the contribution the faith groups can make to the well being of a community. The report from the Active Faith Communities Programme demonstrates that the grant strengthened the ability of the grant holder organisation to support local faith groups. It helped to build local infrastructure and led to improvements in the resources and support available to the faith sector locally. The funded activities helped to improve networking. The Active Faith Communities Programme reported "a greater awareness within other sectors of the contribution the faiths can make" to the wider community.



Respondents said that it was important to be realistic, to set attainable goals and move on from there. They also noted that to start with it may be necessary to "work with those who have come to the table" and attract and engage a wider group of people as the group or project gains momentum.

"Secular agencies and faith communities need to spell out in practical terms what is hoped for and what realistically can be achieved. All parties need to sit down and agree the objectives and the resources and the long-term capacity issues as well as the short-term gains".

Extract from Merseyside Council of Faiths response to the consultation



The Inter Faith Network for the UK has produced a range of resources to support local groups including *The Local Inter Faith Guide: Faith Community cooperation in Action* which offers ideas and practical suggestions for people facilitating existing inter faith initiatives or planning new ones. The guidance covers topics such as developing a successful programme; membership and governance arrangements; volunteers, employees and premises; and money matters, and can be downloaded for free through the Inter Faith Network's website. Also accessible through the Inter Faith Network website is the **Local Inter Faith Zone** which provides advice and ideas for local groups and a directory of regional and local groups. The website also contains a range of other resources including **Connect: different faiths, shared values** a free online action guide for young people published by the Inter Faith Network in association with TimeBank and the National Youth Agency. **Connect** aims to empower young people to design and develop their own initiatives to support dialogue and social action and includes a series of case studies from across the country. It can be accessed at: www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/connect-web.pdf



CASE STUDY: "MY COLLEGE, MY COMMUNITY" INTERFAITH YOUTH COUNCIL AT CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

City of Wolverhampton College hosted the launch of the Wolverhampton Interfaith Youth Council. Civic and faith leaders from across the city gathered to support and celebrate the work of the Youth Council in promoting dialogue and discussion amongst young people of many faiths and backgrounds.

The Youth Council is an extension of the Wolverhampton Interfaith Council which for 40 years has promoted dialogue between faith groups. The college actively engages with and supports the Youth Council predominantly through its multi faith chaplaincy. It is chaired by one of the college's governors and many of the college's students are members.

The Council explores the faith and cultural diversity within the community and the demands made on young people to fit in and engage with different values and beliefs. The students are committed to turning respect for one another's faiths into reality through partnership and engagement with schools, colleges and organisations in the city and in the local area. Tackling sensitive issues and building bridges between traditional and contemporary lifestyles affecting many of our communities are also high on their agenda.

The Council gives young people a real opportunity to make a real difference to community cohesion in sharing common faith values with one another, a concept City of Wolverhampton College is keen to promote and lead on.

Colleges are at the heart of their local communities, offering a myriad of opportunities for people to get involved.



Access to funding was highlighted through the consultation as a key concern by local groups.

"There should be more investment at local level – this is where most action takes place and where differences are real".

Extract from Black Country Churches England consultation response

In addition to the package of investment and support for Regional Forums of Faiths which will encourage networking opportunities for local groups, Government will **support formal or informal local structures and processes which support dialogue and social action through the Faiths in Action Fund**. Details of the Fund can be found in the Investment Summary section of this Framework.

We also want to help make it easier for individuals and groups to know about and access sources of funding. Details of central Government funding programmes which may be of interest to local inter and multi faith projects can be found in the Investment Summary section of this Framework.

Another key message related to the need for religion and belief based organisations to develop effective and more strategic relationships and ways of working with other third sector organisations.

"...faith should be an integral part of the so called third sector. We feel that the approach taken in Burnley, where there is an F in VCFS is a successful way to engage".

Extract from Burnley Pendle and Rossendale Council for Voluntary Services and Burnley Community Network consultation response

To support this Government has worked in partnership with the Church Urban Fund and the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) to produce *Believing in Local Action* which contains case studies and good practice on developing effective partnerships between faith based organisations and other third sector partners.

A key role for local authorities

Local authorities have an important role to play in creating cohesive, empowered and active communities. At the heart of the Government's approach to cohesion is the principle that cohesion is something that can only be understood and built locally. This is because levels of cohesion in an area depend upon a series of interacting factors: the characteristics and history of an area; residents' personal characteristics; and residents' attitudes²⁸. We also know that there is no single or small group of factors which can explain the level of cohesion in the area – even the strongest influence – the level of deprivation – can only explain a few percentage points difference. This complexity of influences on cohesion means that improving cohesion is about addressing multiple issues at the same time²⁹.

The Government believes dialogue and social action involving people with different religions and beliefs has an important part to play as part of wider work to build cohesion within a local area. This view is shared by the Local Government Association (LGA) who said in its response to the consultation that it would *'continue to promote its view that inter faith activity is a positive factor in building and maintaining cohesive communities'*.

We want this Framework to encourage and support more local authorities to play a full role in developing and promoting opportunities for dialogue and social action involving people with different religions and beliefs within their local community.

²⁸ Ref Laurence and Heath.

²⁹ Ref DTZ Consulting.



Learning from existing local authority activity and experience

The consultation provided a valuable opportunity to find out about the extent and nature of existing involvement. Findings from the consultation have been complemented by research carried out by the Local Government Association in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

A questionnaire was sent to all local authorities in England and Wales and 30% of authorities responded. Responses were received from a spread of authority types across a range of regions. There was a slight bias in the pattern of responses towards authorities in areas with a more diverse religious population break-down. Results give an indication of trends across England and Wales, but should not be considered as fully representative.

A full report will be available from the LGA website later in 2008 at: www.lga.gov.uk

Recognising the contribution of faith communities to local life

Through the consultation it was clear that some local authorities recognise the important – and sometimes unique – contribution that faith communities make to the wider local community:

“The City Council recognises the role that faith communities play in social action within the city, in particular their work with asylum seekers and refugees. ...it is hugely important to the city, as often faith communities are able to reach these groups more effectively than the local authority can.”

Extract from Leicester City Council consultation response

Other respondents shared this view, but noted that it was not always one that was widely held:

“There needs to be greater acceptance by all statutory, voluntary and community bodies, indeed the general public, that faith communities have something substantial to contribute to the whole community.”

Extract from joint consultation response from Islington Council, Islington Faiths Forum and other local partners

Some respondents felt that local authorities had an important leadership role to play in addressing this:

“There needs to be clear political will and leadership evidencing that the role of faith communities is integral to the regeneration of communities and that faith communities are welcome to participate in civic action.”

Extract from Rotherham Community Cohesion Partnership consultation response



The research carried out by the LGA in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK showed that just over half of the local authorities who responded had an officer with formal responsibility for faith and inter faith issues and just over a third had a councillor with lead responsibility for these issues.

The nature of local authority involvement with local inter faith organisations and initiatives

The research showed that 64 per cent of respondents had a main local inter faith organisation in their area and 47 per cent were aware of other local inter faith initiatives. The majority of authorities were positive about how well the local inter faith organisation helped to support and/or deliver the authorities' overall objectives of cohesion, empowerment and active citizenship. However with respect to helping support or deliver the authority's objectives in relation to preventing violent extremism, respondents were not as consistently sure of the local inter faith organisation's value, with approximately 47 per cent responding positively and just over 43 per cent saying that they did not know.

"From our local perspective, a key driver for the development of the Blackpool Faith Forum has been the sustained cooperative role and financial support of our Local Authority and Local Strategic Partnership. This has helped the Forum with a number of recent initiatives including:

- The establishment of an Interfaith Plan for Blackpool
- Hosting of a civic multi faith celebration event 'Under One Sky'
- Development of the Blackpool Interfaith Forum for Young People (BIFY) which is professionally supported through the Council's Youth Service
- Directly helping the LSP identify a suite of core values for the overarching Sustainable Communities Strategy."

Extract from Blackpool Faith Forum's response to the consultation

The majority of authorities that had a local inter faith organisation consulted with it on local policy matters (74 per cent). Policy issues that the local inter faith organisations were consulted on included: cohesion/sense of belonging (81 per cent); equalities (68 per cent); priorities for Local Area Agreements (57 per cent). A third of the authorities which did not use their local inter faith organisation as a forum for consulting on local policy matters had alternative arrangements for consulting with faith communities. These included consultation groups and dialogue with contacts.



Over two-thirds of authorities reported regular, direct bilateral consultation with at least one religious belief group. Over half of authorities reported consulting with Christian and Muslim groups and around a quarter reported consulting with non-religious belief groups such as Humanists.

The public consultation highlighted the importance of ensuring that there were effective mechanisms in place so that all parts of the local community – including faith communities – should have the opportunity to participate in local decision-making.

To help support the development of effective partnerships between faith communities and LSPs and local inter faith groups, the Government has worked with partners to produce *Principles of Representation* – a set of seven guiding principles intended to assist the local third sector to organise itself and maximise the impact of its voice on partnerships in general and LSPs in particular. Faith communities are specifically referred to under the Equalities Principle.

In terms of financial support, the Local Government Association and Inter Faith Network for the UK research revealed a fairly even split between those authorities that had made grants to their local inter faith organisation in 2007-08 (39 per cent) and those who had not (49 per cent). Approximately 40 per cent were providing funding in this financial year. Current funding was used for: core work of the inter faith organisation (35 per cent); specific projects (29 per cent); and events (23 per cent).

Just over a third of authorities reported providing specific training for staff and/or members working with faith groups and local inter faith structures. Of those that did offer training, a large majority offered general religious literacy training (86 per cent) and the majority aimed this at all staff (81 per cent). Around a quarter of respondents reported using guidance and support material, but a large majority commented that updated or additional written guidance or support would be useful. The most popular topic areas were: working in partnership with inter faith bodies to increase cohesion and integration; working with faith groups; and guidance for inter faith organisations on working with local authorities.

In response to the issues raised by local authorities Government will:

- **Work in partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA), the Inter Faith Network for the UK, the Faith Based Regeneration Network and the Community Development Foundation to update the existing guidance for local authorities in 'Faith and Community' published in 2002 by the LGA**
- **Provide supportive guidance for local authorities within the Cohesion Delivery Framework on the practical steps they can take to support dialogue and social action at the local level**



- Signpost local authorities and their partners to effective practice, resources and guidance via the web
- Work in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK to support a national inter faith week which will provide the opportunity to celebrate effective structures and processes and encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and with statutory and other third sector partners.

Practical ideas for communities and local authorities

To support local authorities and communities, we have drawn upon consultation responses and examples of existing effective practice to develop a 'Menu of Options' which sets out some practical suggestions in relation to local structures and processes for dialogue and social action.

What can communities do?

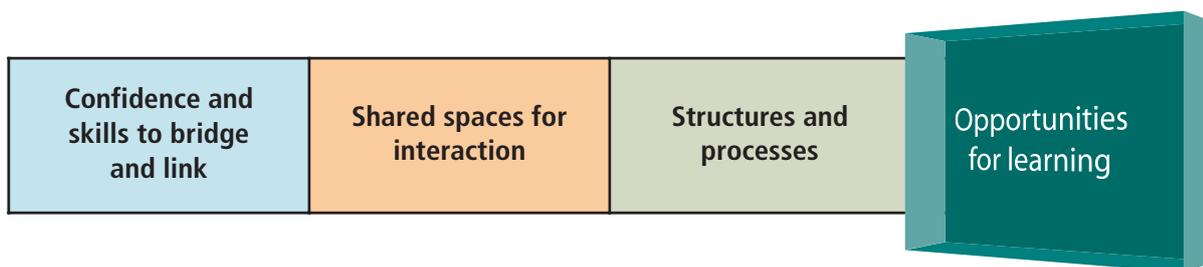
- Publicise local, regional and national structures better – so people know they exist and what they do, and how you can get involved, for example through the faith communities, the CVS, local authorities and other public agencies
- Get to know voluntary and community groups in your area. The local CVS is a good place to start. You can find this via the NAVCA website
- Ask your local authority who the lead person on faith is and get to know them
- Find out who your representatives are on partnership and decision-making bodies such as LSPs
- Find out about inter faith structures in your local area and region via the Inter Faith Network for the UK website:
www.interfaith.org.uk/local/directory.htm
- Get to know the other faith communities in your area. Try to include as many people from your faith community as you can, not just the leaders or the people who usually go to this type of meeting. Make it enjoyable and build up slowly in small steps



What can local authorities do?

- Find out what faith and multi faith structures exist in your area. As far as possible do this through the faith communities themselves. Aim to use the process to build your capacity to engage and also that of the faith communities. If you use an external consultant, choose one that will develop capacity rather than just produce a list
- Ensure that you are sharing information across the range of faith and multi faith structures in your area. Encourage these structures to disseminate this information widely
- Raise the profile of local structures with key partners you are working with, for example local businesses and voluntary sector organisations
- Find out what the structure of leadership of multi faith groups is. Ensure that local authority officers know who to contact and have the skills and confidence to do this
- Ensure that officials who lead on working with faith communities are members of their regional faith links. Use this link to help you work in partnership with your local community
- Ensure that local partnership structures are working with local inter faith forums and with local communities
- Clearly and openly define your expectations of and commitment to local structures for engagement with faith communities. Engage in dialogue with them to establish this. Again, this could be a confidence and capacity building exercise





Building Block Four:

Opportunities for learning which build understanding

Appreciating distinctiveness, celebrating shared values

In this Building Block we explore:

- the important role of schools in building understanding
- the opportunities for learning within Further and Higher Education
- the role of faith communities and inter faith initiatives in promoting informal learning
- the important part played by libraries, exhibitions, the arts and cultural activities.

Introduction

"There needs to be a continual and sustained emphasis on building awareness of different faiths – because knowledge rather than ignorance leads to trust, understanding, and recognition of shared beliefs and values."

Extract from West Midlands Faiths Forum consultation response

Having the opportunity to learn about different religions and beliefs and the relations between them is an important part of developing a sense of shared values. It can also help to tackle myths and misconceptions which can fuel suspicion, fear and mistrust, and enable people to develop an understanding of the distinctive elements of different religions and beliefs. It is important that people have access to reliable and up-to-date information – and can use both formal and informal learning opportunities involving schools, local community initiatives, cultural events, visits and day to day activity and contact. It is also



important to recognise that learning opportunities need to be provided, accessed, structured and facilitated in a considered and sensitive way. This will help to ensure that the potential risks of inappropriate or selective learning which may result in misunderstanding and antagonism are both anticipated and carefully managed.

What we have learnt from the consultation responses

In the consultation we asked people to tell us what was needed to increase opportunities for learning which build understanding. Respondents said that partners across the statutory, voluntary, community, business and faith sectors needed to work together to:

- Improve the content and way in which children learn about different religions and beliefs in school
- Improve school linking to encourage interaction between pupils from different faith backgrounds
- Develop links between schools/colleges and local faith communities
- Increase opportunities for appreciating the benefits of faith diversity within Further and Higher Education
- Develop multi faith student support – prayer facilities, chaplaincy services, spiritual development
- Create more opportunities for learning within local communities – in particular by exploring the role that arts and culture can play – with an enhanced role for local authorities
- Improve access to reliable information, learning resources and tools to help people to better understand their own religion or belief and that of others
- Learn about the diversity of other people's identities whilst coming to terms with and feeling confident about one's own identity
- Promote 'best practice' approaches based on openness and respect to help build trusting relationships
- Create learning spaces to explore and work through areas of conflict and disagreement
- Develop the knowledge and skills of faith leaders and worshipping communities in relation to other faiths



- Encourage places of worship to adopt an 'open door' policy towards inviting people of other faiths and beliefs to visit
- Develop opportunities for learning within the workplace
- Increase faith literacy among public officials, in schools and colleges, the voluntary sector and community organisations
- Maximise the contribution of local media in building understanding between different groups and challenging stereotypes
- Publicise positive examples of inter faith collaboration
- Use young people as 'faith ambassadors'.

The important role of schools

Education is at the heart of building understanding between communities, providing people with a deeper understanding of different faiths and beliefs, and helping to develop an appreciation of common values. It also provides opportunities for people of different backgrounds and ages to interact and build positive relations.

Statutory duty to promote community cohesion

Schools are well placed to become a focal point for the local community and to foster better relationships between diverse communities. The introduction of the duty on schools to promote community cohesion recognises the good work that many schools are already doing to encourage community cohesion and aims to achieve a situation whereby children understand others, value diversity and have real and positive relationships with people from different backgrounds, and feel part of their local community. Meaningful interaction between children from different groups is one way that schools can help prepare their pupils for living and working in an increasingly diverse and globalised society. Schools should consider how to give their pupils the opportunity to interact, learn with and from those from different backgrounds, for example through links with other schools and community organisations.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has therefore, established the Schools Linking Network (SLN) – a new agency that will support schools and local authorities to develop linking partnerships between schools to enable children from different backgrounds to develop an appreciation of both distinctiveness and shared values first hand. Linking with a school in a different context is also one practical way that schools can contribute towards meeting their duty to promote community cohesion.



Strengthening the secondary curriculum

One of the reasons for revising the secondary curriculum has been to generate a **new focus on personal attributes and skills for life, learning and work**. The new curriculum will start to be taught in secondary schools from September 2008, beginning with Year 7 pupils. In the revised curriculum, a new 'key concept' has been introduced into the Citizenship Programmes of study called *"Identity and Diversity: Living Together in the UK"*.

This programme of study will cover the following key concepts:

- Appreciating that people living together in the United Kingdom have individual, group and national identities, which can change over time and are informed by a person's understanding of what it means to be a citizen
- Understanding connections between the diverse cultures and communities in the UK
- Understanding connections between the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe and the wider world.

This year also saw the introduction of **'Who do we think we are?' Week** which encouraged schools across the country to focus activities learning towards an exploration of identities, diversity and citizenship. This gave all young people the chance to foster a stronger sense of their own identity and what it means to be a British citizen.

Religious Education

Effective Religious Education (RE) can play a key part in promoting inter faith understanding and dialogue and can address the prejudices brought about by a shallow knowledge of world religions and provides pupils with a safe forum for the discussion of controversial issues. This is an essential part of RE's contribution to community cohesion.

DCSF has recently announced the **RE action plan – a range of initiatives, backed up by £1m of funding, designed to improve teaching and learning in RE.**

Through this action plan, the DCSF has made a commitment to support the work of key stakeholders including the Religious Education Council, the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) and the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). The funding provided to NATRE will strengthen their capacity to support teachers in primary and secondary schools, including the development of web-based resources for teachers and the development of local network groups of teachers.

Teacher recruitment and training is of paramount importance. Through the RE action plan the DCSF will work with partners to identify how continuing **professional development and initial teacher training in RE** can be improved. In conjunction with this, DCSF have commissioned the development of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Handbook, which will include a chapter on dealing with controversial issues in the classroom.

In terms of initial teacher training, the Government, working with the Training and Development Agency (TDA), has already introduced **incentives to encourage more of the best graduates to become RE teachers.** Since September 2006, people taking PGCE courses in RE have been entitled to a training bursary worth £9,000 and a 'golden hello' of £2,500 after working in a school for a year. As a result of these initiatives, the number of people achieving qualified teacher status has been growing steadily to well over 500 in the most recent year on record.

SACREs

Local authorities have a significant role to play in supporting inter faith activity in schools. One important way in which local authorities can achieve this is through the support they give for their **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**. A SACRE is a statutory local multi faith body whose broad role is to support the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in local schools. SACREs where properly supported by the local authority can act as powerful vehicles for building, appreciating and managing differences in beliefs and values in schools, education more widely and the local community. They are a partnership between faith communities in each local area and with the Local Authority and its schools. SACREs are predominately focussed on education, but are also a statutory group that can be consulted on inter faith issues, act as sounding boards or work in partnership on broader initiatives.



To support SACREs, the DCSF, through the RE action plan, is **funding NASACRE to improve training and increase the diversity of members from minority religions**. In addition, the Hindu Forum of Britain have sought to build up community representation in SACREs by identifying suitably qualified individuals, maintaining a data base of teaching experts, and providing training for SACRE members, whilst the Network of Buddhist Organisations has sought to facilitate the creation of a supportive network where individuals associated with SACREs can broaden their knowledge and understanding of the diverse Buddhist traditions and share experiences and resources. The Inter Faith Network for the UK and NASACRE are currently in discussion about a joint day conference to be held later this year to look at how SACREs and local inter faith bodies can work jointly to increase awareness about faith and inter faith issues.



The contribution of faith organisations to learning

A wide range of national and local faith organisations play an important role in supporting learning in schools about the beliefs and practices of different individual faith communities and the role played by places of worship within their local areas. Places of worship are often the most noticeable buildings in an area. People tend to feel strongly about them, whether they visit them regularly or not. Looking at religious buildings can help young people understand an area's distinctive local history and cultural diversity.

The new *Engaging Places Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage partnership* aims to exploit the rich learning potential of cultural buildings like places of worship and sacred places. *Engaging Places* is designed to offer teachers accessible, curriculum linked ways to unlock the educational potential of their built surroundings. Beginning in September 2008, a new package of support will be developed for schools across England over the next three years. This includes:

- A national partnership of leading cultural and education organisations
- A co-development network for schools and educators providing practical local support and resources supporting the new curriculum
- An on-line resource for schools providing a national database of heritage/built environment curriculum resources, developed by Culture 24
- Increased support to the DCMS/DCSF *Find Your Talent* programme and the DCSF's *Learning outside the Classroom Manifesto*.

Engaging Places is being funded over the next three years by CABE and English Heritage with additional support from DCMS, DCSF and the Academy for Sustainable Communities.

DCSF's *Learning Outside the Classroom* initiative is supporting a *Sacred Space* sector partnership. *Engaging Places* will ensure that the work of the *Sacred Space* partnership is linked into wider policy developments on the cultural dimensions of children and young people's policy.

CASE STUDY: RELIGION AND PLACE IN TOWER HAMLETS

An innovative education project about 167 extraordinary places of worship in one of the most deprived and ethnically diverse boroughs in the country. It is led by The Building Exploratory, with support from English Heritage, ACE and London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It was developed in response to research by English Heritage into the architecture of religious buildings of all faiths and denominations in Tower Hamlets.

With more than 16 faith groups worshipping in the borough, ten buildings were selected for exploration in the project covering a range of faiths including different Christian denominations, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. The project brought together 150 Tower Hamlets secondary school students with five artists to explore and challenge, through workshops and visits to faith buildings, their understanding of the practices of other faiths. Students learned new creative skills and used these to develop their own responses to the buildings and their users. The artists interpreted the students' responses through three dimensional 'Faith Chests' which will be displayed in the Building Exploratory's permanent exhibition. A book of the project and a map showing all 167 places of worship in the borough is being distributed to all Tower Hamlets secondary school students. A website www.religionandplace.org.uk has been built to support an interactive map of the faith buildings in Tower Hamlets.

The independent evaluation highlights the intrinsic ability of the arts to facilitate the response of individuals on both an intellectual and emotional level. The learning outcomes achieved centred around the themes of diversity of people and religions, the heritage of Tower Hamlets in relation to this diversity and the concept of continual change. One participant said: *"I did talk to my family about visiting a gurdwara and a church. I told them everything we did there, they felt really happy and were regretting they couldn't go"*.

'Faith in the System'

Through its Faith Group stakeholder meetings the DCSF works with a wide range of faith school providers and faith organisations with an interest in education to share best practice with the aim of raising standards. In September 2007, the *'Faith in the System'* document was launched which presented a joint vision statement between the Government and the faith school providers on the contribution of schools with a religious character (popularly known as faith schools) and their faith communities to the school system. It was endorsed by



organisations representing the five faiths with schools open or approved to open in the maintained sector – various Christian denominations, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu who between them are responsible for around one third of all maintained schools in England (6,817 maintained faith schools out of a total of 20,499 maintained schools). 4,621 of these schools are Church of England and 2,028 are Roman Catholic along with 118 other Christian, 38 Jewish, nine Muslim and three Sikh schools, while the first maintained Hindu school will open in September 2008.

The Government and faith school providers believe that all schools – whether they have a religious character or not – play a key role in providing a safe and harmonious environment for all in our society, thereby fostering understanding, integration and cohesion. *'Faith in the System'* sets out our shared commitment to this endeavour and the principles that continue to underlie our joint vision and understanding of the contribution which faith communities and their schools make to educating young people in England, to nurturing young people in their faith and to promoting community cohesion.

Faith groups are keen to keep up the momentum from *'Faith in the System'* in a number of ways – partly through initiatives like school linking and through continuing the joint working between the faith groups and DCSF. They are also working on a follow up to *'Faith in the System'* which will look at the key issues outlined in the document – and aim to report back on their work at a national conference in 2009.

A pdf version of *'Faith in the System'* can be viewed at:
www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/faithinthefsystem

Opportunities for learning within Further and Higher Education

Colleges, Universities and other post 16 providers are in a unique position to support community cohesion and improve aspirations, achievement and social mobility. In some areas of the country, they are often the place where young people meet for the first time people from a range of different backgrounds and faiths. Engaging effectively with faith communities, promoting the understanding of difference, and providing opportunities for young people to explore issues of culture, faith and belief must therefore be an important part of a college's approach to equality and diversity.

There are many examples of excellent practice in this across the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) Sectors. Some Colleges and Universities provide multi faith support for students, including facilities for prayer, access to chaplaincy services, collaboration with local faith communities and provision for students' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Others take a more secular approach and prefer to rely on facilities available at places of worship close to the campus. What is important is that colleges and their leaders take this issue seriously and reflect the needs of all faith communities represented in the student/learner community as far as reasonably possible.



Further Education

In 2007, the National Ecumenical Agency in FE (NEAFE) along with Faiths in FE Forum and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership published *'Making space for faith: values, beliefs and faiths in the learning and skills sector'*. This report of a national enquiry into opportunities for spiritual and moral development in further education contains recommendations for all major stakeholders in the sector.

The National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in FE (fbfe), which has representatives from the main faiths and beliefs found in the sector and sector stakeholder organisations, has replaced NEAFE and the Faiths in FE Forum from March 2008 and is now ideally placed to address issues affecting learners and staff from all faith backgrounds and none within FE settings.

Leadership is vital in this area, but this needs to be underpinned by good practice guidance and professional support. Led by NEAFE, and now fbfe, there has been considerable work done to support the development of strong faith-based support within FE settings, including the new training pack for Chaplains, and a Good Practice Guide for Chaplains in FE. www.fbfe.org.uk/documents/current/fbfe%20documents/LSC%20Good%20Practice%20Guide.pdf

Regional Development Officers provided by the National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in FE continue to work with many colleges to help them think through and develop partnerships with local faith communities, multi faith student support services and regional forums bringing together colleges and faith communities.

Communities and Local Government are developing a framework of standards and a recruitment process for institutions engaging Muslim chaplains in public service, including further and higher education institutions.

These are due to be published in summer 2008 and DIUS will be encouraging colleges to make use of these standards when recruiting or training their chaplains. The recently formed Association of Muslim Chaplains in Education will also be a valuable resource for colleges and Universities to draw on in developing their plans for building the capacity of chaplaincy for Muslim students.



DIUS has recently closed a consultation on the role of FE providers in promoting community cohesion. This ran from 11 February to 6 May 2008 and the response to the findings will be announced in autumn 2008. The consultation proposed some key objectives which included:

- To promote and reinforce shared values; to create space for free and open debate; and to listen to and support mainstream voices
- To break down segregation amongst different student/learner communities including by supporting inter faith and inter cultural dialogue and understanding and to engage all students/learners in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society.

Colleges and other educational settings can be very valuable in providing opportunities for people to discover shared values and build greater mutual understanding and respect. DIUS will work with the sector to identify how to strengthen its capacity to meet these objectives.



CASE STUDY: GRIMSBY INSTITUTE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The College has created a DVD, entitled '*Cultural Diversity – Life in the Different Communities*', following nine communities in North and North East Lincolnshire: Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Chinese, Polish, African, and Bangladeshi. Through interviews and following members of these communities in their daily lives the reality of life in today's society for minority groups is explored. The project used the skills of a local film company which spent four months closely following the people representing the communities. The DVD will be available with additional paper-based materials as a training resource for organisations and will be added to the Institute's distance learning package on Diversity.

The DIUS consultation document on the five objectives for FE for promoting cohesion and tackling extremism is available at: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Community%20Cohesion%20PDF.pdf. The consultation ended 5 May.

The Church of England & FBFE guidance for multi faith chaplains – good practice guide 2007 is available at: www.fbfe.org.uk/documents/current/fbfe%20documents/LSC%20Good%20Practice%20Guide.pdf

Higher Education

The Higher Education Equality Challenge Unit in conjunction with Universities United Kingdom have published guidance to the Higher Education sector on promoting good campus relations which gives advice on promoting inter faith and inter cultural dialogue and how to deal with race and faith issues in Higher Education. This guidance can be found at:

bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/promotinggoodrelations.pdf

The National Union of Students (NUS) has recently been in discussion with the Inter Faith Network for the UK following a process of facilitated dialogue between the national student faith community bodies which resulted in a shared statement during 2007 about their commitment to build good inter faith relations on campus and is hoping to develop a programme of work.

A report by The Revd Jeremy Clines on multi faith chaplaincy in HE, *'Faiths in Higher Education Chaplaincy'*, was commissioned by the Church of England Board of Education and supported by many of the main faith communities. It includes a wide-ranging survey of 111 chaplaincies within the 128 HE institutes in England. The report shows how chaplains actively demonstrate how religious communities can work alongside each other in an environment of mutual respect that promotes dialogue and builds community cohesion. Examples of good practice highlighted in the report include facilitating inter faith projects and supporting inter faith societies, organising visits to places of worship and mounting a 'faith week' to raise awareness about different world faiths. The report points to the key role such projects play in fostering good relations between the future leaders of different faith communities in the United Kingdom. It urges the creation of a national *'Faiths in Higher Education Forum'* and recommends collaboration with national chaplaincy advisors, chaplains, Universities UK, the Equality Challenge Unit, the NUS and the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

The report can be found at:

www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education/hefe/fihecrep.pdf

National faith and inter faith organisations also play an important role in promoting better inter faith relations on University campuses.



CASE STUDY: TÊTE À TÊTE PROJECT LED BY THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Tête à Tête focuses on the future of interfaith relations on and off campus by equipping professionals who work with young people to build up lasting alliances between faith and cultural groups. It empowers University chaplains and other professionals with the resources to engage young people in critical inter faith dialogue, empowering them to challenge religious and racial stereotypes, and equipping them with the tools to tackle injustice and discrimination wherever they find it. The central focus is to engage today's youth in positive contact with 'the other' to ensure strong relationships between faiths that will last into the future.

For many young people, University is the first time they are able to explore their own identity away from their family and immediate community. University chaplains, student welfare officers and others provide an important source of support for students and also form a bridge between the local faith community and the student body. Student clergy, Muslim Imams and Jewish Rabbis are encouraged and helped to find positive answers to difficult questions which can then be fed back into the student community.

www.ccj.org.uk/Tete_a_Tete.html



Opportunities for learning within the local community

"I feel more connected to Birmingham because I've got someone I can approach in another community who has opened up their religion to each one of us, and this has built up trust and I think it's been really wonderful."

Faith Encounter Programme participant

A key theme coming through the consultation is the need for opportunities for life long learning. We want this to be a framework for everyday life. It is important to explore formal and informal opportunities for learning within a range of community settings including places of worship and secular spaces such as libraries and museums. Arts and culture also need to play a significant role.

Faith Communities

National faith based organisations can play an important role in developing programmes based on the teachings of their own faiths to help their members engage better at a local level with members of other faith communities. Some organisations have a dedicated inter faith lead eg Church of England, Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Local faith leaders enjoying direct access to ‘worshipping communities’ can encourage people to both recognise the importance and value of learning about different faiths and to take part in inter faith activity. They can also promote the adoption of an ‘open door’ policy towards inviting people of other faiths and beliefs to visit their own places of worship in order to learn more about a particular faith’s beliefs, values and practices. It is particularly important that women and young people as well as men are actively involved in this local level engagement.

It is also important that there is access at all levels to reliable information about different faiths. Clergy and lay leaders of all faiths need to have a basic degree of literacy about other faith communities in their areas. Some theological colleges provide relevant training and the United Synagogues have recently started a helpful course for synagogal members.

CASE STUDY: HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Heritage Open Days, run by the Civic Trust with funding and support from English Heritage, is a four day annual event which engages volunteers of all ages in using the educational potential of the built environment, from broadening access to cultural activities to encouraging cross-faith understanding. To increase the diversity of properties participating, the English Heritage Outreach team has developed multi faith trails, bringing together people from different faiths to work together to open up their buildings. In 2003, there were six buildings from faith groups other than Christian mainstream denominations. In 2006, the HODs programme included ten synagogues, 12 mosques plus a Muslim burial ground, six Sikh temples, three Buddhist temples, four Hindu temples, two multi faith trails, two multi faith centres, a multi cultural festival, two Thai restaurants and seven Greek Orthodox Churches. This success was built on in 2007 as a similarly wide range of faith buildings, inter faith trails and culturally significant venues took part, which helped to attract a diverse audience from groups which are traditionally under-represented in the historic environment sector. One of the highlights in 2007 was the participation of Europe’s largest Hindu temple, the Shri Venkateswara (Balaji) Temple in Oldbury.

New Qualification in Faith community leadership

Communities and Local Government and DIUS funded the **National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)** to deliver a new faith community leadership qualification that will contribute to building confidence, knowledge and skills amongst those leading and working with faith communities to enable them to play a strong leadership role in their wider communities. This should ensure that faith communities are stronger in themselves and more resilient to violent extremists.



The course has been piloted by Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity and the Council for Mosques, St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in Leicester, Sheffield Pakistan Muslim Centre and Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum. A key message from the pilots was the potential of this qualification to enable people from different faith communities to build relationships and mutual respect through learning alongside one another.

The course includes sessions on legislative content, leadership, faith and diversity, values and governance, community development, working with children and young people, safeguarding children and organisational finance.

Multi faith centres

Multi faith centres within learning institutions are one way of seeking to explore key issues and concerns from a faith based perspective in settings that encourage open and free discussion, value the raising of questions and doubts, and appreciate diverse histories, attitudes and values. They should ideally be non-threatening safe spaces where questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life can be discussed and different philosophies and beliefs listened to sensitively.

As well as multi faith centres, there are a growing number of centres in institutions of Higher Education which run courses on different aspects of inter faith relations and on engagement with an increasingly religiously diverse society.

CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF DERBY MULTI FAITH CENTRE

The University of Derby Multi Faith Centre exists to promote mutual understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs and to build respect between people as fellow human beings. The Centre is a shared space where people are invited to speak freely and fearlessly, in the spirit of *"Listen to others as you want them to listen to you"*. The idea of a Centre emerged from the grassroots in a group drawn from the local Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities alongside the University of Derby.

www.multifaithcentre.org/

Local inter and multi faith organisations

Local inter faith organisations make an important contribution to promoting opportunities for interaction and learning between people of different backgrounds and beliefs within the same local communities. They bring both individuals and groups together in learning more about each others' perspectives, customs and cultures through discussions and visits, raising awareness about the importance of peaceful and respectful coexistence in a multi faith community and advising public sector bodies on the needs of users of different faiths.



CASE STUDY: MILUN WOMEN'S CENTRE, LEEDS

The Milun Women's Centre was set up about 20 years ago to give Asian women the opportunity to meet one another through social, recreational and educational activities. The aim of the project was to set up an additional weekly discussion group for Hindu and Sikh women, and then to run a variety of activities for Muslim, Hindu and Sikh women to spend time together formally and informally. The first activity for the two groups together was a social event so that the women could get to know one another – a visit to Scarborough with their children. Other activities included visits to a local church and a local Gurdwara, religious festival celebrations and learning to play the Indian drum and the harmonium. Outcomes included strengthening women's confidence and abilities, strengthened links with other local faith organisations, increased knowledge about other faiths, opportunity for formal and informal inter faith discussions, breaking down barriers, understanding the similarities and being inspired by the differences, increasing interest in other faiths, visiting places of worship and learning new musical instruments.

Promoting positive engagement with the local media

Different faith communities collaboratively engaging with a range of local media outlets can help to educate local communities about the value of inter faith dialogue and activity, gauge their response to key issues and challenges, and nurture a wider sense of civic pride, well being and morale.

CASE STUDY: THREE COUNTIES INTER FAITH GROUP

Inter faith groups from Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire contributes once a month on a Sunday to a radio slot 'Melting Pot' on Three Counties Radio. In each slot there were three different speakers, each from a different religion and from a different county of the three counties. Previous programmes can be listened to at: www.bbc.co.uk/threecounties/faith/

The format has subsequently changed to one more focused on specific events, religious festivals and topical issues of the day with varying degrees of involvement from individuals drawn from the local area and adhering to different faiths and beliefs.



In response to these issues we will be:

- Providing supportive guidance within the Cohesion Delivery Framework on the practical steps that can be taken at a local level to support learning initiatives which help to build understanding
- Signposting local authorities and their partners to effective practice, resources and guidance in relation to learning initiatives via the web
- Supporting the development of web based resources for people to access concise and reliable information about shared values and distinctive features of different religions and beliefs and exchange 'learning' ideas and practice
- Supporting through the Faiths in Action Fund grassroots activity to promote local learning initiatives which help to build understanding
- Working in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK to support a national inter faith week which will provide the opportunity to showcase existing formal and informal learning initiatives – and encourage the development of new approaches within local communities which effectively engage relevant statutory and third sector partners.

Role of libraries and public exhibitions

Libraries have often been described as universities on the street corner. Their collections of reading and electronic material are used by many people wishing to extend their knowledge through self study. For many residents who have little or no formal education, libraries are a place where they can develop basic literacy skills without the pressures associated with formal learning. ESOL classes provided in libraries are a perfect example of the service's ability to draw people of different racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds together for a common purpose, and to assist them in integrating with each other and with wider society. The cross-cultural and inter faith work of libraries starts young with baby 'rhyme time' sessions, toddler storytimes and children's 'Chatterbooks' reading groups.

A touring version of the British Library's recent 'Sacred' exhibition is visiting public libraries in a dozen towns and cities across England. The exhibition seeks to show the many historical links and shared values between Islam, Christianity and Judaism and allows people to explore the many similarities between the three faiths. The exhibition is accompanied by a programme of training to enable local partners to deliver dedicated and intensive discussion sessions with local communities and, in particular with young people, about the contents of the exhibition. The regional touring programme is supported jointly by Communities and Local Government and DCMS.

A specific initiative undertaken by the British Library as part of the 'Sacred' exhibition is the Diversity & Dialogue young people's workshop which brings together students every Wednesday after school to discuss religion and science. One of the participants commented that:

"There were people who were perhaps atheist, agnostic, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, it wasn't a massive group of people but I think every bit of the world was represented in a way. It was really amazing. It was a free experience so you could actually talk without being, like, 'Oh G-d, let's not talk and get everyone annoyed'. We worked together on the projects, and we disagreed and we agreed and we had fun, it was amazing. And it lasted six months as well, so we really got to know each other."

Supportive guidance and signposting will be provided to local public bodies and their partners on the practical steps they can take to support opportunities for learning at the local level. This will include existing examples of good practice.

Role of arts and cultural activities

The place of the arts in creating living, vibrant and diverse communities is increasingly understood. They play a major role in galvanising community engagement and participation and help both individuals and communities to develop a sense of identity and pride. Artistic and cultural initiatives can help to



build bridges of understanding across potential boundaries of faith and culture, promote interaction between people of different beliefs and backgrounds, replace stereotypes with acceptance and respect, and demonstrate the connection between faith and people's daily lives. They influence how people feel about the multi faith communities which they live in, the faith related facilities and activities which they can access, and the means by which they and others can fulfil both their individual and shared creative aspirations.

CASE STUDY: UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE UK – 'SPIRIT OF THE NATION'

Over the past five years the Trustees of URI UK have been developing a programme which uses the Arts to transcend difference and to build bridges between the Faiths. The most accessible art form is photography.

In the words of Anita Neyyar, a young Muslim woman from the 'Spirit of Bolton' project;

"These exhibitions are made by a group of young adults from all the Faiths in our community and they show an individual from a faith group in the town who makes a real contribution to the local economy and community – a doctor, community worker, secretary and so on. We don't just photograph them at work but also at prayer. The outcomes of 'Spirit of Bolton' were:

1. *Our group got to know each other really well and became friends across the barriers. I have become a Youth Ambassador to the Faith Groups in Bolton.*
2. *When we take the Exhibition round schools, colleges and Faith Centres – churches, Mosques, Gurdwaras – it really helps people to understand and respect the multi faith nature of our town.*
3. *It was good for our group of young adults to be seen working positively together.*
4. *Young adults can make a really positive contribution to community cohesion – we wanted to acknowledge that this emanates from a spiritual base."*

United Religions Initiative UK works with communities to identify 20 young adults (aged 18-30) who are active in their community and representative of their faith group. Together we create an exhibition, 'Spirit of (name of town or city)' so that everyone can begin to share in the concept that *spiritual diversity is a blessing not a threat.*

CASE STUDY: SIKH UNION

The Sikh Union were awarded £10,100 to run a celebration of diversity in Slough and as a result to promote greater cohesion amongst its communities. The one-off multicultural event promoted cultures through performance and dress. Nothing on this scale had been attempted in Slough and the Borough Council was brought in as a partner to assure its success.

The project was a successful example of what the IOSS strategy expected in terms of cultural activities playing an increasing role in promoting an understanding of, and celebrating, the diverse elements in local life.

The impact of the project has gone beyond original expectations and has resulted in the formation of a multicultural organisation to represent Slough's diversity in the Olympic Games in 2012. Furthermore Slough Borough Council appears to have recognised the impact of such events and has:

"Promised to assist us to carry this on every year and make it bigger where no community is left out due to no funds or manpower."

Role of prison chaplaincy

Chaplaincy teams in prisons (and community chaplaincies) bring together and provide a role model of people of different faith traditions respecting their differences and working together to ensure the religious and pastoral needs of offenders are met.

CASE STUDY: FESTIVAL OF FAITH FORTNIGHT, LOW NEWTON PRISON

This idea was raised by two prisoners at a Race Equality Action Group meeting. The Festival of Faith Fortnight ran at the beginning of November – a festival-rich time of year incorporating All Saints, Samhain and Diwali.

The entire prison joined in enthusiastically. The library put on a fantastic display, the kitchen put on a whole range of special foods, and the education department gave some relevant examples of prisoners' work. Prisoners spoke movingly about their own faith journeys. Other highlights included a demonstration of Indian dancing and drumming and prisoners dressing in saris having their faces painted with delicate patterns. There was also the sight of people from all nations singing and swaying enthusiastically with the choir from the African Pentecostal church.

Women far from home were reconnected with their own customs, food and culture. The benefits of a more open attitude towards other faiths among both prisoners and staff are being reaped.



Practical ideas for communities and local authorities

To support local authorities and communities, we have drawn upon consultation responses and examples of existing effective practice to develop a 'Menu of Options' which sets out some practical suggestions in relation to opportunities for learning which build understanding.

What can communities do?

- Get involved – perhaps as part of their local inter faith group – and share ideas for improving learning opportunities within the local community, eg by using a shared value such as caring for the environment to inspire a community project
- Look for opportunities to find out how faith can give you a shared motivation to make a difference within your local community
- Create innovative ways for local people to learn about each other, this can be through the arts, cultural activities or even sharing food
- Hold an open day at your place of worship or community building.

What can local authorities do?

- Invest and support their local SACRE to be effective by building its capacity and capability
- Explore the role that arts and culture can play in helping to increase understanding of different religions and beliefs and shared values within the local community perhaps through exhibitions and festivals in secular spaces, eg libraries, schools and sports centres
- Create opportunities for informal learning such as cultural or arts events that bring people together. Shape these events so that people can explore what it means to be part of the local community and the role faith and belief play in this
- Encourage and support their local inter faith body and SACRE to work with local faith communities – and perhaps a local FE college or HE institution – to produce a short book and linked website on faith communities in the authority area and on why inter faith work is important. Photography students could take the photographs.





Investment Summary

Our new investment

We have developed a three year programme of investment to support the delivery of our Framework for Partnership. A total of **over £7.5m** will be invested with a focus on outcomes to our local communities and we will be targeting our support through:

1. A three year programme (2008-11) of investment and capacity building in **regional faith forums** to support and build their capacity and the capacity of local communities.

This aims to ensure that by 2011 there is an independent Regional Faith Forum in each of the English regions which:

- Supports increased opportunities for dialogue and social action at the regional and local level, in a way that is complementary to the work of local and national agencies
- Works in partnership with regional decision-making bodies (such as Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies) on issues of religion and belief in the region.

2. A two year period of funding (2009-11) under the new **Faiths in Action Fund**.

This aims to support local activities and initiatives that have a direct link to support work under each of the four building blocks:

- Developing the confidence and skills to 'bridge' and 'link'
- Shared spaces for interaction
- Structures and processes which support dialogue and social action
- Opportunities for learning which build understanding.

The Fund will be open for all types of organisations at national, regional or local level in England to apply for funding. However any activities and initiatives that are funded must take place in local communities and have a strong local impact.

Single groups will be eligible to apply for funding but the impact of the activity or initiative must be felt in terms of the four building blocks. We will particularly welcome partnership applications.





We have asked the Community Development Foundation to administer and manage the Fund on behalf of Communities and Local Government. They will be publishing full guidance on the Fund when it is launched.

Wider government investment in the third sector

Communities are at the heart of the Government agenda and the Government very much recognises the contribution of a thriving third sector to social cohesion and social action. The *Third Sector Review* set out that the Office of the Third Sector would invest over £515m in third sector programmes from April 2008-11.

Some of the key investments over the next three years include:

- £130m for the Grassroots Grants programme, with £80m for small grants and £50m for endowments for local funders
- £117m for youth volunteering, through the organisation v
- £88.5m for sector support services through Capacitybuilders
- an additional £65m for the Futurebuilders Fund, bringing the total value of the fund to £215m by 2011
- £30m for the Community Assets Fund
- £10m for the risk capital fund for social enterprise
- £10m for investment in community anchor organisations³⁰
- £6m to build the partnership between government and the sector, through support for the Commission for the Compact
- £5m for the new national third sector research centre
- £5.4m for the Regional Development Agencies to improve business support for social enterprise
- £4m for a programme of training for volunteers and volunteer managers
- £2m for an Access to Volunteering fund to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to volunteer.

Further details on some of these investments are given below. There are also programmes of support and investment from a number of different Government Departments. The Government funding portal provides information about government grants for the third sector and can be found at www.governmentfunding.org.uk/Default.aspx

³⁰ This has risen to £70m with the launch of Communitybuilders



£130m for small community organisations through the Grassroots Grants and local endowments programme

The £130m fund, which will run from 2008-11, will be divided into two parts: an £80m small grants fund for community organisations; and a groundbreaking £50m endowments programme to enable local funders to generate additional donations on a matched basis and invest them in endowments, thereby building their capacity to provide long-term funding for frontline community organisations. More information is available at:

www.cdf.org.uk/bfora/systems/xmlviewer/default.asp?arg=DS_CDF_TECHART_23/_page.xsl/27&xsl_argx=2



£85m for Capacitybuilders

Improved access to appropriate advice and support is one of the most pressing concerns of frontline organisations; Capacitybuilders is funded through the Office of the Third Sector to help address that need. The new national support services that Capacitybuilders is providing will mean an easy point of access for frontline organisations seeking support. This will connect them with a diverse range of support providers.



The Improving Reach programme from Capacitybuilders provides extra resources to extend support services available to frontline groups that are working with excluded communities: those facing problems such as unemployment, poor housing or family problems. Improving Reach particularly prioritises organisations developed by and working with black and minority ethnic, refugee and migrant communities, faith groups and isolated rural groups. Specialised support will help these frontline groups to represent their community's voice and deliver services that meet their specific needs. Grant applications are now closed, and in June 2008 up to 100 three year grants were announced.

Capacitybuilders – funds for 'second tier' infrastructure support for third sector organisations. Capacitybuilders is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) set up in 2006 to take over the management of the ChangeUp programme and to work with other funders to build the capacity of the Third Sector. Capacitybuilders was set up to improve the effectiveness of frontline organisations through improving support to them. More information is available at: capacitybuilders.org.uk/content/WhoWeFund.aspx

£117m for v for youth volunteering

The new £75m national youth volunteering programme, **vinvolved**, began in April 2008. The aim of the programme is to involve 500,000 more young people aged 16-25 to volunteer in England over the next three years.

With £75m from the Office of the Third Sector, the youth volunteering charity v is funding third sector organisations to offer a range of exciting volunteering opportunities, and to support young people who want to get involved.

£30m Community Assets programme

The £30m Community Assets programme recognises that a community building can promote cohesion by bringing different people and groups together for a wide range of activities. The programme, which is funded by the Office of the Third Sector and delivered by the Big Lottery Fund, aims to empower communities by giving grants to refurbish assets that are being transferred from local authority ownership to the third sector. Having a greater stake in their own building means more independence for local groups, as they are better placed to plan ahead, be innovative in responding to local needs, and develop financial sustainability. Applications were accepted in 2007; in April 2008 38 projects were offered in-principle grant awards.

The community buildings refurbished through the £30m Community Assets programme will be used for a wide variety of purposes, from healthy eating to cutting edge art and theatre, alternative education and facilities for faith groups. For example, one inner city community centre is the only venue that promotes community activities in the heart of a deprived housing estate, but has fallen into disrepair. The area has a large black and minority ethnic community and many low-income families. The centre is used by over a dozen community and faith groups, including an African Caribbean group, Muslim and gospel groups. It is currently not running to its full capacity due to poor accessibility, security and the state of repairs, but following refurbishment will provide a range of leisure activities and learning opportunities to include youth clubs, healthy eating programmes, pensioners club and job club. Further information can be found at:
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_community_assets.htm

The Office of the Third Sector aims to build on the experiences of the Community Assets programme through its commitment to invest £10m in organisations that function as 'community anchors'. The Office of the Third Sector and Communities and Local Government are working together on their contributions to this agenda. Broadly, community anchors are seen as locally controlled organisations that address their neighbourhood's needs in a holistic way. They empower local people by stimulating community-led action. They often draw in resources for smaller community groups and act as strong advocates for those whose voice is rarely heard.



Strategic partners

The Office of the Third Sector wants the concerns and priorities of the third sector to be clearly expressed to and heard by government, and the strategic partners programme aims to ensure there are organisations that are empowered to help make this happen.



The Office of the Third Sector third sector strategic partner organisations are funded to enable them to fairly reflect the views of their members to government, through activities including events, conferences, research or consultation. For its part, the Office of the Third Sector will consult and involve partners in policy development, taking into account the evidence, advice and opinion they provide.



Strategic partnerships represent long-term cooperation and support between government and the sector. It is grant funding, and these grants are managed by Memoranda of Understanding. They are reviewed annually, as well as throughout the year. The relationships are subject to review and will initially last for a minimum of three years.



The Office of the Third Sector has two lead *faith strategic partners* – FaithAction and Church Urban Fund. They are tasked with enabling faith based third sector organisations to have the infrastructure and support to enable them to bid for public service delivery contracts if they so choose.

Further details can be found at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/about_us/strategic_partners.aspx

Strengthening the evidence base

The Citizenship Survey and research commissioned to support the work of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion have helped to shape this Framework. As with all policy making, it is important to have information and data that is as robust as possible. We will continue to support the development of an evidence base which relates specifically to faith communities.

There are already substantial 'audits' of faith-based activity, at regional and local levels. These have mainly been carried out by faith-based organisations themselves, though often with support from a public source such as a Regional Development Agency or local authority. A good example is Faith In England's North West³¹.

Though extremely valuable, these surveys are conducted for different reasons and from different perspectives, and it is sometimes difficult to interpret data from the various reports in comparable ways. We have therefore supported an initiative by the Faiths and Civil Society Unit³² at Goldsmiths, University of London, to develop national indicators designed to promote a more consistent approach to evidence gathering.

Why this matters

Strengthening the regional and local evidence base will help to ensure:

- decision making is more transparent and evidence-based
- resources and activity are sufficiently targeted
- impact of initiatives and activity can be measured
- effective practice can be identified and shared.

Research used to inform the development of the Framework for Partnership

In support of the development of the Framework, in addition to the valuable information we gained from the public consultation on face to face and side by side, we also commissioned research from the Faith Based Regeneration Network. This research drew on a considerable body of existing research and is in two parts:

- **Part One:** Regional Forums of Faiths, their Relationship to Regional Governance and Social Action
- **Part Two:** Faith Based Social Action and the Inter Faith Framework.

This research can be accessed on the Communities and Local Government website³³.

³¹ www.nwda.co.uk/publications/people-and-jobs/faith-in-englands-northwest—.aspx

³² www.faithsunit.org

³³ www.communities.gov.uk



The Local Government Association (LGA), in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK, has also carried out research to explore the involvement of local authorities with local faith and inter faith organisations. This research, Local authority engagement with faith and inter faith groups, was not completed in time to be taken fully into account in the Framework, though early results have helped to inform it. The summary report will be posted on the website of the LGA in the near future³⁴.



The Office of the Third Sector will be carrying out a new national survey of third sector organisations – including faith based charities – later this year to understand better the issues which influence the well-being of the sector. OTS are working with a range of third sector partners to explore how the survey might include smaller community organisations.



Encouraging faith organisations use existing resources to measure the impact of their work

There will always be a valuable place for audits or evaluations conducted by faith organisations themselves. There are a number of resources available to support faith organisations using community development approaches to engage with communities, build capacity and evaluate outcomes. These include:

Resources on evaluation

- Alan Barr and Stuart Hashagen (2000) *ABCD handbook – A framework for evaluating community development*, London: CDF
- *Tell Your Story: Community Impact Mapping* (available from Development Trusts Association)
- *LEAP: Step by Step: An introductory guide to the LEAP framework* Second Edition, by Alan Barr and Jane Dailly, 2007, CDF
- Barr, A. and Dailly, J. (2008) *LEAP: A manual for Learning Evaluation and Planning in Community Development*, London: CDF

³⁴ www.lga.gov.uk



Resources on capacity building

- Rumman Ahmed, Doreen Finneron and Steve Miller (2007) *'Tools for Regeneration: Practical Advice for Faith Communities'*, London: FBRN
- Skinner, S. and M. Wilson (2002) *'Assessing Community Strengths: A practical handbook for planning capacity building initiatives'*, London: CDF
- *Setting up for success: a practical guide for community organisations*, by Anna Allen and Catriona May, 2007, CDF
- Similar resources could also be found on:
<http://togetherwecan.direct.gov.uk/resource-centre>

Sharing effective practice

Existing work being carried out by Inter Faith Network for the UK and Faith Based Regeneration Network through their websites and downloadable resources.

English Regional Faith Forums Network – facilitated by the Inter Faith Network and the Faith Based Regeneration Network – supports networking and sharing of effective approaches between Regional Faith Forums.

Role for Regional Faith Forums in supporting sharing effective practice between local areas.

Signposting of effective practice for local authorities and practitioners through the Institute of Community Cohesion's online One Stop Shop or 'portal'.

Faith Communities Pulling Together: Case studies from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, by Irene Evison (CDF, 2008) – this book presents lessons learnt from the projects, focusing on benefits to faith communities themselves, the relationship between faith communities and Resource Directory: a selection of resources produced with funding from the Faiths Communities Capacity Building Fund and Connecting Communities Plus, Community Grants, from August 2008 will be available online from: www.cdf.org.uk



Next steps



Our commitments	Completed by
Provide a three year programme of investment support and capacity building in regional faith forums, in particular their interaction with local inter faith activity	March 2011
Launch the Faiths in Action Fund to support local activities and initiatives that have a direct link to one or more of the four building blocks	Autumn 2008
Publish a leaflet for local communities which based on a summary of the practical steps outlined in the Framework document shows ways in which individuals and groups can become involved in dialogue and social action	July 2008
Provide guidance to local authorities within the Cohesion Delivery Framework on the practical steps they can take to support dialogue and social action at the local level	Autumn 2008
Signpost local authorities and their partners to effective practice, resources and guidance via the web	2009
Work with the Inter Faith Network for the UK to organise an inter faith week	2009
Organise a national conference to support networking and promoting effective practice in relation to each of the four building blocks	2010
Support the development of web based resources for people to make connections with each other and get ideas for activities which support the four building blocks	Autumn 2009
Support the development of regional Faith Links for local authority faith leads within each of the English regions. This will include the production of a toolkit which builds upon learning from successful approaches led by the Government Offices in London and Yorkshire and the Humber	Spring 2011
Support improved links with VCS structures and access to VCS resources through the publication of <i>Believing in Local Action</i> – guidance and good practice developed with the Church Urban Fund and NAVCA	July 2008



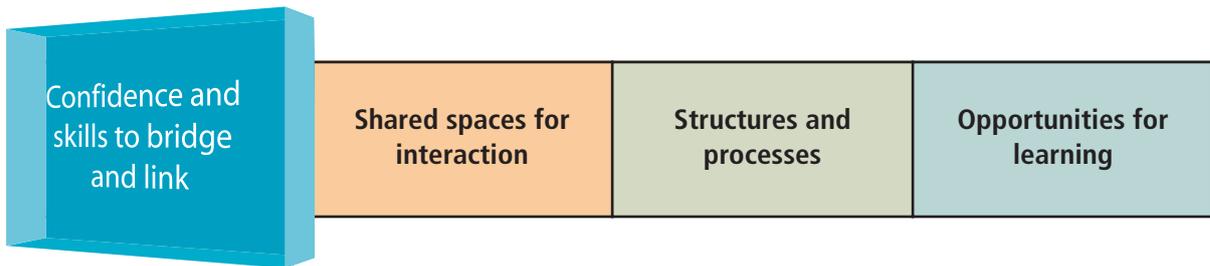
Our commitments	Completed by
Update the existing <i>Faith and Community</i> guidance for local authorities in partnership with the Local Government Association, the Inter Faith Network for the UK, the Faith Based Regeneration Network and the Community Development Foundation	2009
Produce a standardised version of a charter for excellence in public service delivery by faith communities	2009



Annex A

Menu of options' for local authorities





Building Block One

Developing the confidence and skills to 'bridge' and 'link'

How we can work together to:

- strengthen and increase the bridging and linking social capital within local communities
- help to develop the confidence and skills needed to build trusting and active relationships between people with different religions and beliefs and those of none
- help to develop the confidence and skills needed to build effective partnerships between faith-based organisations and local decision-making bodies.

Practical suggestions:

Implement Principles of Representation for LSPs and ensure a strong link between local inter faith structures and the LSP.

Appoint an official with a clear lead on faith and ensure that local faith communities know who this is.

Set up a local forum to bring local media and local communities together to discuss the impact of local reporting. This will provide an opportunity for local faith communities and local media to meet and develop further areas of work.

Ensure that local inter faith work and projects you are supporting are promoted to the local media.

Work with local communities and organisations in developing joint news releases where appropriate. This can help to build the capacity and understanding within faith communities of how the media works and how to get messages across.



Identify opportunities where you can bring faith based organisations and other community groups together to work on shared issues. For example if you are instigating a community response to local issues such as anti social behaviour or domestic violence think innovatively about who can be partners.



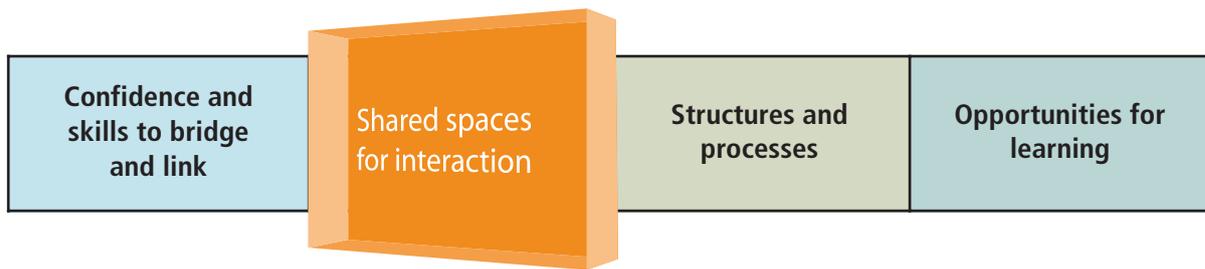
Recognise that faith communities have a role to play in all parts of local initiatives and policies. Bring together local faith leaders and senior local authority officials to identify areas where there is potential to work in partnership. Do not think of them solely in terms of equalities. Research has shown that local inter faith organisations can help to support and deliver objectives of cohesion/creating a sense of belonging; empowerment; active citizenship; and preventing violent extremism.



Work with local communities and structures such as SACREs to develop locally focussed religious literacy programmes.



Be confident in funding faith based and faith inspired organisations. If there are areas of the project that you cannot fund – such as proselytising – then be confident and open about this. Focus on what can be done.



Building Block Two

Shared spaces for interaction and social action

How we can work together to:

- Share resources and expertise
- Use resources to bring people together
- Recognise the role of physical and virtual spaces.

Practical suggestions:

Advertise local authority and civic premises that are available for use by faith communities. You will need to first check on their requirements, and could use this as a means of building a relationship and getting to know them.

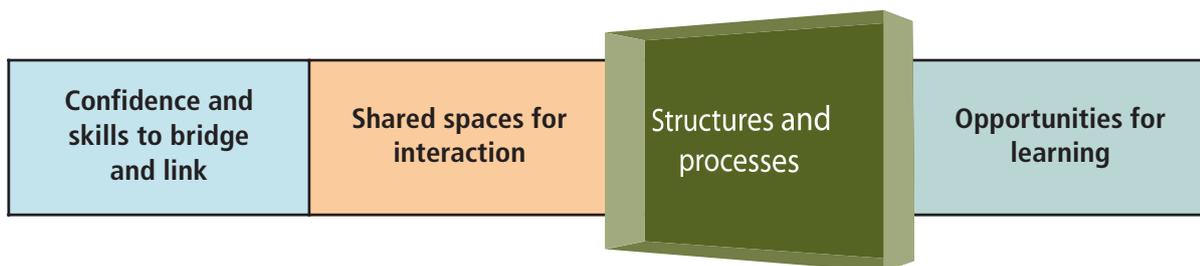
Understand the importance of neutral spaces. Do not assume that there is a need to meet in a place of worship when engaging with faith communities.

Support and promote informal spaces for interaction such as festivals and faith events and actively engage so as to secure the best possible outcomes for building future relationships.

Make use of faith community space that is offered.

Champion the sharing of space by faith communities. Encourage faith communities and the wider VCS to engage in partnerships and build further links where appropriate.

Remember that faith communities provide a wealth of local knowledge to help you develop and realise the benefits of community spaces. Begin partnership early and use this as another means of building relationships and routes into local communities.



Building Block Three

Structures and processes which support dialogue and social action

How we can work together to:

- Strengthen existing ways of bringing people together within local communities and supporting the development of formal and informal structures and processes where these do not yet exist
- Ensure that structures are effective in engaging a broad cross section of people from within the local community and result in real and positive change.

Practical suggestions:

Find out what faith and multi faith structures exist in your area. As far as possible do this through the faith communities themselves. Aim to use the process to build your capacity to engage and also that of the faith communities. If you use an external consultant, choose one that will develop capacity rather than just produce a list.

Ensure that you are sharing information across the range of faith and multi faith structures in your area. Encourage these structures to disseminate this information widely.

Raise the profile of local structures with key partners you are working with, for example, local businesses and voluntary sector organisations.

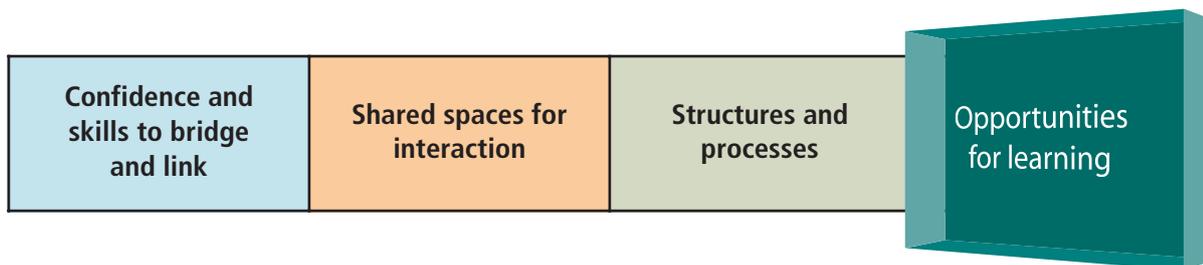
Find out what the structure of leadership of multi faith groups is. Ensure that local authority officers know who to contact and have the skills and confidence to do this.



Ensure that officials who lead on working with faith communities are members of their regional faith links. Use this link to help you work in partnership with your local community.

Ensure that local partnership structures are working with local inter faith forums and with local communities.

Clearly and openly define your expectations of and commitment to local structures for engagement with faith communities. Engage in dialogue with them to establish this.



Building Block Four

Opportunities for learning which build understanding

How we can work together to promote:

- the important role of schools in building understanding
- the opportunities for learning within Further and Higher Education
- the role of faith communities and inter faith initiatives in promoting informal learning
- the important part played by libraries, exhibitions, the arts and cultural activities.

Practical suggestions:

Invest and support their local SACRE to be effective by building its capacity and capability.

Explore the role that arts and culture can play in helping to increase understanding of different religions and beliefs and shared values within the local community perhaps through exhibitions and festivals in secular spaces, eg libraries, schools and sports centres.

Create opportunities for informal learning such as cultural or arts events that bring people together. Shape these events so that people can explore what it means to be part of the local community and the role faith and belief play in this.

Encourage and support their local inter faith body and SACRE to work with local faith communities – and perhaps a local FE college or HE institution – to produce a short book and linked website on faith communities in the authority area and on why inter faith work is important. Photography students could take the photographs.

Annex B

Useful Contacts

Information on funding to support the Framework is available from the Community Development Foundation www.cdf.org.uk

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has a number of on line resources to support local inter faith bodies www.interfaith.org.uk

The Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN) works to build the capacity of faith groups by demonstrating and promoting good practice, and it provides an interface identifying between the various levels of decision making www.fbrn.org.uk



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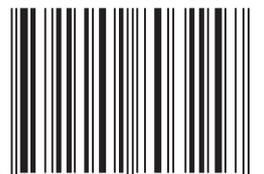
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