

Faith in England's Northwest: How Faith Communities Contribute to Social and Economic Wellbeing

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FOREWORD

Faith communities make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of our region. For almost 10 years the Northwest Regional Development Agency has worked in partnership with faith communities to develop an evidence based approach to their contribution to the life of our region.

One key finding in our research has been the strength of faith communities, their buildings and volunteers, in areas of highest social need. This evidence has supplied the rationale for a number of faith-based projects funded by the NWDA. It has also led us to promote faith community engagement with other public sector partners and has led in turn to the NWDA taking the Regional Development Agency lead role nationally on faith.

This latest NWDA-sponsored research explores how faith groups effectively contribute to the outcomes of a range of public policy agendas. They do so as they pursue their day-to-day traditional role at the service of the community. In commending this report, I hope that it will enable many more people to appreciate the impressive level of social capital that exists behind the faith label.



Steven Broomhead
NWDA Chief Executive

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an in-depth evaluation of the contribution faith groups make to communities in the Northwest and assesses the success of these contributions in fostering social and economic wellbeing. It is based on research undertaken by the Change Institute for the Churches Officer for the Northwest, supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), and examines: why faith groups become involved in social action; how their activity fits with wider policy agendas; and what distinctive elements they bring to the communities they work with.

This extensive analysis of the role of faith groups comes at a crucial time. Increased focus on Third Sector delivery of public services and community development has resulted in the role of faith groups becoming more prominent in national public policy and service delivery agendas. The national policy agendas that faith group work addresses include: the arts and widening participation; community cohesion; crime reduction; employment; environmental awareness and improvement; Every Child Matters; health care and healthy lifestyles; regeneration; and Life Long Learning.

The NWDA has been at the forefront in identifying and assessing the contribution and impact of faith organisations on contemporary society. It funded key research in 2003 and 2005, surveying more than 2,300 faith communities across eight faith groups; evaluating over 5,000 faith projects; and assessing the significant economic value attributed to faith communities in the region.

This report draws its baseline from those two reports; working from the assumption that faith groups and projects have a multi-faceted contribution to make to individual and community wellbeing. This assumption is based upon the key findings of the previous research, which found faith communities are: strongest where social need is highest and reach parts of society that other groups struggle to connect with; active in areas of high need, such as homelessness, crime prevention and drugs and alcohol dependency; largely self-financing; and have the ability to stimulate unprecedented levels of volunteering.

This research – which takes the form of a literature review of relevant research and 12 comprehensive case studies involving faith projects – highlights the extensive and diverse social action these groups undertake in the region. It looks at how faith groups operate and the diversity of organisational structures through which social action is delivered.

The faith projects were chosen to illustrate the breadth of faith activity in the Northwest, their different interests, ways of working and resources. The variables taken into account during project selection included: religion, geographical location, organisational type and funding profile.

Assessment of the projects took the form of semi-structured interviews and focus groups and the responses were analysed against four evaluation framework themes: organisational development and delivery; development of social capital and its role in improving outcomes; assessment of faith additionality; and assessment of inter-faith working.

The research discovered that each project exists to respond to some sort of need, and their ability to do so is underpinned by: their longstanding presence in the area; their particular local knowledge; and their capacity to tap into wider networks and resources. All 12 projects have a strong emphasis on individual wellbeing and community involvement.

The research confirmed that most faith groups are rooted in their local communities and provide a level of continuity and sustained support that is hard for other voluntary organisations to match. Their central role within communities can generate local trust, commitment and financial or in-kind resources.

The projects exemplify the importance of committed individuals – in this case inspired by their faith – to work actively in paid and unpaid positions. The projects exhibit many of the features that are indicators of social capital, such as: fostering social inclusion; promoting integration across diverse groups; and facilitating new social networks. They meet the agenda for the “Face-to-Face Side-by-Side” multi-faith partnership framework, such as: promoting shared activities that enable people to get to know one another across faiths; and making premises available to local people as community meeting grounds.

As well as sharing many of the organisational challenges that are common to other voluntary sector organisations – regarding capacity, resources, governance and management of volunteers – faith groups face additional challenges. While the value of faith groups has been recognised by number of government departments and agencies, it is not universally the case. Relationships are weak where there are concerns about the motivations of faith groups and where faith groups fear being forced to compromise in a partnership or contractual relationship.

In order for faith communities’ contribution to social and economic wellbeing to move forward, public bodies need to recognise the contribution faith groups make to a wide range of public policy outcomes and acknowledge them as legitimate partners. In turn, faith communities need to ensure they have effective representation within inter-faith groups in order influence statutory bodies effectively and they need to move away from “grants for worthy causes” mindset and take a “service delivery” approach to working.

Where faith groups are working successfully with public bodies, the groups are seen as credible and valued partners who can develop constructive and long lasting working relationships.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origins of the Research

The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) has the lead role on faith communities for the English Regional Development Agency Network. For the last nine years, the Churches' Officer for the Northwest – whose post is wholly funded by the Northwest Churches – has been co-located in the NWDA. As well as relating to the statutory regional bodies on behalf of the churches, the work of the post has included the initiation of the Northwest Forum of Faiths.

In 2003, building upon linkages made by the Churches' Officer for the Northwest, the NWDA sponsored research on the contribution made by faith communities to civil society in the region¹. The survey covered more than 2,300 faith communities across eight faith groups and demonstrated the important contribution to social and economic life across the Northwest. It showed the extent to which faith groups have a shared agenda with others, working for the good of their communities, and their potential contribution to outcomes that national and local government and others are seeking. Two years later, its findings were the subject of an economic impact assessment², which quantified in financial terms specific assets brought by the faith communities, such as their buildings and their volunteers.

The NWDA has commissioned this current research to probe more deeply issues that could not be explored in a large scale survey. The purpose was to examine in greater detail: why faith groups become involved in social action; what they are trying to achieve; how their activity fits with wider policy agendas; and whether they are bringing anything distinctive. The research has mainly been based upon 12 case studies covering different faith backgrounds, different types of activity and different locations across the Northwest.

The project commenced in November 2008, with research conducted between December 2008 and February 2009. Final reporting was submitted to the NWDA in March 2009.

The research is set within a context of recent interest among academic and policy communities; not only in the role of the Third Sector generally, but also in the engagement of faith communities. This higher profile in national life has partly been driven by concerns about equalities, community cohesion and the Prevent Strategy³.

Whilst recognising the validity of both these interests, the approach of this research was based upon the assumption that faith groups and projects have a more multi-faceted contribution to make to individual and community wellbeing. It seeks to explore how faith groups organise themselves in the delivery of social action in order to highlight

¹ *Faith in England's Northwest*, NWDA, 2003

² *Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment*, NWDA, 2005

³ *The Prevent Strategy*, HM Government, 2008

characteristics of faith-based social action in order to provide guidance for both public bodies and faith groups to improve engagement and partnership working. This report seeks to articulate this contribution in more detail. In doing so, it illustrates the considerable complementarity between the outcomes of faith projects and the goals of public sector organisations and other bodies. Specifically it aims to:

- Provide further the evidence of the role that faith-based civil society organisations play
- Highlight the extensive and diverse social action that faith groups undertake in the region and to highlight the particular contribution that faith groups can make
- Improve understanding of how faith groups operate and the diversity of organisational structures through which social action is delivered
- Illustrate how these activities link to a range of crucial policy agendas of relevance to all public bodies dealing with social issues, including the generation of high levels of social capital
- Draw out key messages about the relationship between public bodies and faith groups.

1.2 Report Structure

- Section 2: Outlines the background to the research, including its policy context.
- Section 3: Describes briefly the research methodology and gives an overview of the projects included as case studies.
- Section 4: Looks more closely at the case study projects and identifies a number of key themes.
- Section 5: Examines the significance of the project stories for social capital and the indicators in the Communities and Local Government's (CLG) Face-to-Face Side-by-Side partnership framework⁴.
- Section 6: Draws the report's conclusions together and points to their implications for both faith groups and public bodies.

⁴ *Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side: A Framework for Partnership in Our Multi-Faith Society*, CLG, 2008

2. BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

2.1 Faith Groups and their Involvement in Social Action

Faith groups have long played important roles in public life at local and national levels and faith groups undertake significant amounts of activity that make a positive contribution to public life. Their traditions of social action are underpinned by a deep rooted commitment and values that promote stewardship and public service that are common across all faiths, though not exclusive to them.

The Christian Churches have had an historic influence in shaping British society in a wide range of areas such as: community development; education; social inclusion; and heritage. Churches have made, and continue to make, a particular and distinctive contribution to the development and implementation of Government policy in many areas⁵. For example, the Church of England⁶ identified the acute social and economic problems affecting inner city areas in the 1980s as well as reflecting on how it could improve its own capacity to serve such areas.

Following post war immigration, religious pluralism has also become a defining feature of contemporary Britain. The 2001 census for the first time since 1851 provided an insight into the religious affiliations of UK citizens. In addition to 1.6 million adherents of Islam⁷, there are also significant communities of Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and Sikhs as well as smaller communities of Baha'is, Jains, Zoroastrians and other traditions. According to the census, 76.8% of the population of the UK regarded itself as having some religious affiliation, and 71.6% identified itself as Christian, making it the largest faith community in the UK.

A body of research on the contribution of faith groups toward civil society and social action has been emerging in the UK. Reports – such as one by the Local Government Association⁸ – have identified faith groups as an important part of the voluntary and community sector. The report noted the “distinctive characteristics and potential” of faith which underpinned considerable benefits to engagement and sought to encourage local authorities to engage with faith groups as part of a broader engagement agenda.

The NWDA has been at the forefront in identifying and assessing the contribution and impact of faith organisations on contemporary society. Its 2003 research⁹ was a groundbreaking survey of faith communities in the region, revealing the scale of faith communities' contribution to regional development and their position as important stakeholders in the region.

⁵ *Working Together: Cooperation Between Government and Faith Communities*, Home Office, 2004

⁶ *Faith In The City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation*, Church House Publishing, 1985

⁷ Recent labour market survey estimates suggest that this figure may now be nearing 2.4 million

⁸ *Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*, LGA, 2002

⁹ *Faith in England's Northwest: The Contribution Made by Faith Communities to Civil Society in the Region*, NWDA, 2003

Key findings of the report were that faith communities:

- Are strongest where social need is highest
- Are active delivery agents of care in their local communities
- Have the ability to stimulate unprecedented levels of volunteering
- Are significant patrons of arts and sports
- Play significant roles in regeneration activities
- Undertake activity across a range of other areas including: housing and homelessness; anti-racism; crime prevention; drug and alcohol misuse; employment and training; social enterprise; personal finance; health and fitness; art and music; and education
- Are largely self financing
- Reach the parts of society that other groups cannot.

A further NWDA study¹⁰ used the survey findings to measure the economic impact and, in particular, the value of the two assets that faith communities have in abundance: their buildings and their volunteers. The report showed that faith communities were running more than 5,000 social action projects in the region, with volunteers generating between £69.6 million and £94.9 million per annum. In addition, premises made available by faith communities in the Northwest generated between £574,755 and £811,472 per annum. It concluded that faith communities make an overall contribution of between £90.7 million and £94.9 million per annum to civil society in the Northwest region.

Various studies undertaken in other parts of the UK provide a similar picture of the social and economic contribution of faith communities. A report by Gweini¹¹, the Council of the Christian Voluntary Sector in Wales, identified an economic contribution of £102 million by faith communities to civil society in Wales and noted the significant provision of: volunteers; premises for community use; and support for the revival of the Welsh language that faith communities provide.

A Greater London Enterprise and London Churches Group report¹² identified 7,000 projects and 2,200 faith buildings in London, and a SEARCH report¹³ indicated that 90% of churches in Hull were involved in some form of social action. According to the

According to The Churches Regional Commission in the North East¹⁴, there were more than 2,500 faith-based projects in the North East, and Faithnet Southwest¹⁵ found that 165,000 people were supported by faith groups in the South West through 4762 activities.

¹⁰ *Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment*, NWDA, 2005

¹¹ *Faith in Wales: Counting for Communities*, Gweini, 2008

¹² *Neighbourhood Renewal in London: the Role of Faith Communities*, Greater London Enterprise and London Churches Group, 2002

¹³ *Count Us In*, SEARCH, 2000

¹⁴ *Faith in the North East: Social Action by Faith Communities in the Region*, K Smith, Churches Regional Commission in the North East, 2004

¹⁵ *Faith in Action*, Faithnet Southwest, 2006

Other studies have highlighted the particular characteristics of faith-based social action. The Faith-based Regeneration Network¹⁶ found that faith-based organisations range from the very small, informal and heavily dependent on volunteers to very large charities providing services both to specific groups and wider society. At the same time, most of this social action takes place through projects and associations attached to local worshipping communities. Many of these are not established as charities and operate within existing religious frameworks, such as a diocese or equivalent structure. Some faith-based social action is distinctive because of its pioneering work with groups that other agencies have found difficult to address.

2.2 The National Policy Agenda

As part of the increasing focus in recent years on Third Sector delivery of public services and community development, the role of faith groups has become more prominent in national public policy and service delivery agendas. Initially, attention largely focused on community governance agendas, as highlighted by reports such as the 2004 Home Office report¹⁷, which set out recommendations for engagement between government and faith communities in England. More recently, in reports by the Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG)¹⁸ and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion¹⁹, faith groups have come to be seen as important partners in relation to community development agendas, and in particular to the emerging integration and cohesion agendas.

The CLG *Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side: A Framework for Partnership in Our Multi-Faith Society* report²⁰ sets out a framework for partnership in the UK's multi-faith society and seeks to develop local opportunities for face-to-face dialogue that supports a greater understanding of shared values as well as an appreciation of the distinctiveness of different faiths. It is also intended as a framework for side-by-side collaborative social action where people can come together and share skills and resources and work alongside each other in contributing to local neighbourhood improvement and community development.

Faith groups have not limited their action to inter-faith dialogue and cohesion issues but have long played an important role in broader community development agendas such as regeneration, economic development and neighbourhood renewal programmes. As previous NWDA research found, they are active deliverers of social care in communities; they often provide services across areas such as child welfare, crime prevention, mental health, refugee support; and some are involved in environmental initiatives and regeneration activities. In addition, faith groups are well placed to respond to emergencies,

¹⁶ *Faith-Based Social Action and the Inter-Faith Framework*, A Dinham, R Chapman & S Miller, Faith-Based Regeneration Network, 2008

¹⁷ *Working Together: Cooperation Between Government and Faith Communities*, Home Office, 2004

¹⁸ *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's Strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion*, CLG, 2005

¹⁹ *Our Shared Future*, Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2008

²⁰ *Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side: A Framework for Partnership in Our Multi-Faith Society*, CLG, 2008

as was shown during the foot and mouth outbreaks of 2000 and when there was flooding in Carlisle in 2005²¹.

2.3 Faith and Social Capital

“Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together.”²²

In his book, *Bowling Alone*²³, Putnam highlighted faith groups as organisations that make a significant contribution to social capital, both because they are socially rooted and are based on shared values. UK research has shown that faith groups have resources of importance to community development in the form of members' skills and human capital, the mobilisation of volunteers and 'in kind' contributions in the form of staff and venues. More recent studies – such as *Faith as Social Capital: Connecting and Dividing?*²⁴ – have also highlighted the development of social capital in faith organisations.

As a concept, social capital is of interest across a range of public policy agendas. It is not without its critics who question whether it can fully explain social relations and social benefits or adequately address how and where capital is developed, or how the benefits of social capital may be employed by groups or individuals. Nevertheless there are indicators for the development of social capital – as stated in a World Bank report²⁵ – that can usefully be deployed:

- **Levels and types of social networks:** Being developed within a project, including the depth and, crucially, the breadth of the new interactions that people develop through participating in an organisation or project
- **The nature of decision making and collective action:** Including both practical experiences and perceptions of scope to participate in, and influence, decision making within a group, across groups and with public decision makers
- **Levels of trust that are fostered by groups:** In part, through the process of collective action, communication and development of social networks, that promotes the development of consensus and solidarity within and beyond the project/organisation.
- **Social inclusion and diversity:** Relating to the scope for projects to bring a diversity of people together outside of what may be their own personal family contexts.
- **Information and communication:** The level and quality of information flows within an organisation and the impact of flows of information within and between groups, both bottom up, top down and horizontally, as well as between different organisations, including public bodies.

²¹ *Case Study: Carlisle Floods, 8 January 2005*, Cabinet Office

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/response/recovery_guidance/case_studies/y2_carlisle.aspx

²² *The Initiative on Defining, Monitoring and Measuring Social Capital*, World Bank, 1998

²³ *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, R Putnam, 2000

²⁴ *Faith as Social Capital: Connecting and Dividing?*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006

²⁵ *Measuring the Dimensions of Social Capital*, World Bank, 2008

There are different types of social capital²⁶:

- **Bonding social capital:** Describes closer connections between people and is characterised by strong bonds, such as among family members or close friends. It is good for “getting by” in life and bonding capital is more important to health in childhood and old age. Strong bonding capital can also serve to be an exclusionary dynamic.
- **Bridging social capital:** Describes more distant connections between people and is characterised by weaker, but more cross-cutting ties, such as with business associates, acquaintances, friends of friends; it is good for “getting ahead” in life, such as with job opportunities.
- **Linking social capital:** Describes connections with people in positions of power and is characterised by relations between those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power; it is good for accessing support from formal institutions²⁷. (It is different from bonding and bridging in that it is concerned with relations between people who are not on an equal footing.)

Putnam²⁸ notes that “bonding and bridging capital are not either/or categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but more or less dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital”. Currently, policy makers are interested in them particularly in relation to concerns around social segregation and polarised religious identities. However, whilst ethnic or religious groupings are often cited as examples of bonding capital, focusing exclusively on one dimension fails to capture the full picture of social capital in many organisations. For example, any one faith group may include people from different ethnic backgrounds, different age groups, different social backgrounds.

It is also important to note that, although the idea of social capital is sometimes used as though it is always a positive feature, it is a value neutral term and the social benefit always needs to be assessed.

The Commission on Urban Life and Faith put forward the concept of Faithful Capital²⁹, which seeks to recognise and emphasise the dimension of moral empowerment and commitment to individual and collective transformation that is often inherent in faith-based groups. Associated concepts are: religious capital – the pragmatic, more quantifiable outputs of religious organisations; and spiritual capital – the ethics and ethos that motivate and energise faith groups and underpin religious capital. All of these are trying to reflect the reality of the experience and motivations of faith groups in a way that is relevant to public policy.

²⁶ *Measuring Social Capital in The United Kingdom*, R Harper & M Kelly, Office for National Statistics, 2003

²⁷ Linking social capital grew out of a World Bank agenda looking at sustainable development in developing societies where it was considered important for those working in agencies and institutions to engage local communities to facilitate access to information and resources. (*The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes*, M Woolcock, ISUMA Canadian Journal of Policy Research, 2001)

²⁸ *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, R Putnam, 2000

²⁹ *Faithful Cities: A Call for Celebration, Vision and Justice*, Commission on Urban Life and Faith, Church House Publishing, 2006

2.4 Potential Still Overlooked?

“Strong community-based organisations are a key starting point for any disadvantaged community. In many cases faith groups... will be the strongest around and yet their potential may be overlooked by funders and others engaged in programmes of community development. There can be a tendency not to see beyond the ‘faith’ label to the community role of these groups.”³⁰

Although the contribution and value of faith groups has been recognised and acknowledged by a number of government departments and agencies, this is not universally the case.

There are a number of inhibiting factors:

- Public bodies may be concerned about the motivations and values of faith groups; about potential proselytising or views that are out of line with public policy
- Even where public bodies are linking with faith groups, it may be in a very limited way, confined to particular topics instead of recognising the full breadth of their activities
- Faith groups may fear either collusion with agendas they do not fully support or being overwhelmed or forced to compromise their standards if they enter into partnership or contractual relationships
- The lack of ability of both sides to communicate with one another properly; they may use different vocabularies to express their aims and objectives; they may value different sorts of skills; they may have different ways of measuring success.

There is still some way to go both in developing a fuller understanding of the actual and potential contribution of faith groups and establishing a better footing for their role in civil society.

³⁰ Report of the Policy Action Team on Community Self-help, Home Office, 1999

3. METHODOLOGY

A number of considerations informed the approach to the research. The study needed to take account of the diversity of faith groups in the UK, their different interests, ways of working and resources. The research was also designed to recognise the varied contexts across the Northwest region: urban and rural, inner city, outer estate and suburban, major conurbations and smaller towns.

3.1 Research Methods

The programme of research combined a literature review of relevant research from both the UK and overseas with case studies of 12 projects. The case study sample was not intended to be numerically representative of the profile of social action from across the region but to illustrate the diversity and breadth of activity to be found in the Northwest. Table 3.1.1 shows the variables taken into account in the selection.

Table 3.1.1 Criteria for selecting the case study projects	
Field	Description
Religion	This included the range of Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Islamic, Jewish and inter-faith projects that could be found throughout the Northwest. The religious pluralism of the region was an important feature to capture and highlight how social action is undertaken across religions and how it is developed.
Geographical location	Projects were selected from across the Northwest sub-regions – Cumbria, Cheshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside – as well as across urban and rural, inner-city, new town and suburban contexts.
Organisational type	Ranging from places of worship linked to church or diocese, grass roots voluntary groups who may not be linked to broader organisational structures, through to established charitable organisations with permanent staffing.
Project type	Project types ranged from inter-faith and community development, through to mental health services and social care.
Funding profile	Including projects receiving significant funds from public bodies, such as the NWDA and local authorities or other diverse funding streams. Other initiatives were underpinned by internal organisational support through to largely self-funded groups.
User profile	The profile of users participating or accessing services, including women and youth projects as well as other marginalised groups.

Apart from time and resource constraints, other factors limited the selection of projects. The study did not cover all expressions of faith communities' social action and civil involvement. In particular, it was not possible to include an example from the Black Majority Churches due to the timing of the research and their capacity to participate. Brief consultations were conducted with key contacts from the Black Majority Churches in the Northwest in order to gauge and feed their experiences into the findings of this report.

The assessment of individual projects was carried out through a combination of research processes including:

- Documentary review
- Semi-structured interviews with: management committee members; staff; volunteers; representatives of partner organisations; and beneficiaries
- Focus groups with beneficiaries.

In developing the interview schedules for this research the indicators for cohesion, integration and inter-faith working outlined in *Face to Face and Side by Side*³¹ was taken into account.

3.2 Evaluation Framework

Table 3.2.1 shows how the qualitative case study data, generated through the questionnaires and fieldwork, was analysed against a number of evaluation themes.

Table 3.2.1 Evaluation themes	
Theme	Sub headings
Organisational development and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of project development and delivery • Development of relationships with public bodies and broader public policy agendas • Sustainability and transferability • Evaluation of project achievements and outputs
Development of social capital and its role in improving outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social capital indicators • Assessment of bonding, bridging and linking capital
Assessment of faith additionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth and depth of social action • Levels of motivation and mobilisation • Range of functions and activities
Assessment of inter-faith working against the headings of <i>Face to Face and Side by Side</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of inter-faith interaction and social action • Opportunities for learning to build understanding • Links to cohesion agenda

3.3 Project Sample

Table 3.3.1 shows:
The projects selected for the study
Where they are located
Which faiths are represented
Their aims and objectives, partners
The policy areas they directly or indirectly address.

³¹ *Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side: A Framework for Partnership in Our Multi-Faith Society*, CLG, 2008

Table 3.3.1 Projects Selected

Project name	Location	Religion	Aims & Objectives	Relationship with Local Authorities/External Bodies	Policy Agendas*
Building Bridges Burnley (BBB)	Burnley	Inter-faith	Develop better understanding and awareness between different faith groups through celebrating diversity and the promotion of social cohesion	Represented on Burnley Community Network, Local Strategic Partnership, Burnley Borough Council, Lancashire Council of Mosques *For more information about Policy Agendas, see section 4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community cohesion Community empowerment Migration & integration Social inclusion Preventing violent extremism Inter-faith
The Catholic Children's Society (CCS): Halton Your Space Project	Halton	Christian: Catholic	Working in partnership with a charity in the context of Halton's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategic Partnership to meet the mental health needs of children and young people	Halton Borough Council, local mental health professionals (CAMHS), EMHW, Halton Emotional Literacy in Education Network, Third Sector Partnership, local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social inclusion Every Child Matters Community empowerment
Cumbria Reducing Offending Partnership Trust (CROPT)	Cumbria	Christian: Ecumenical (all denominations)	Providing a range of support for offenders in the community after they have either left custody or left Probation Service supervision. Cooperation between Probation, Youth Offending, prison services, Churches and the voluntary sector to reduce re-offending (and offending) by offenders engaging in the development of employment skills to reduce the potential of re-offending and equip offenders with the skills required for employment when released	Church of England, Churches Together in Cumbria and Cumbria Methodist District provide on-going support. CARTAS, Carlisle City Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime reduction Employment Social inclusion
ExChange Blackburn	Blackburn	Christian: Anglican/Muslim	To promote community cohesion through education, outreach, and inter-faith activity	LSP, Blackburn with Darwen Inter-Faith Forum, Lancashire Forum of Faiths, Holocaust Memorial Trust, Bradford Churches for Diversity and Dialogue, Women's Voice, Lancashire Council of Mosques, Youth Action, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Fire Service, Discover Mosques Group, Blackburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-faith Community cohesion Preventing violent extremism Integration Community empowerment

Faiths4Change (F4C)	Liverpool/ Regional	Christian: Anglican/ Multi-faith	Supports people of faith and goodwill to work in partnership to: create environmental projects that sustainably transform neighbourhoods; raise awareness of climate change issues; build relationships; and enable people to gain or develop skills	College and other Further Education colleges and schools, Charity Commission, USPG (Anglicans in World Mission), Building Bridges Burnley, Building Bridges Pendle, Helping Hands Worldwide, Diocese of Blackburn, Board of Education, Lambeth Palace Inter-Faith Group, Christian-Muslim Forum, BBC Radio 4 Religion and Ethics, churches and mosques Lancashire-wide, Fusion Awards, Asian Image, Royal Commonwealth Society, Hyndburn Borough Council	
Gujarat Hindu Society (GHS)	Preston	Hindu	To maintain and promote the Hindu cultural heritage to enrich the lives of people in the Hindu and wider community and to cater for and service the needs of the local community through a range of activities	NWDA, NHS, Lancashire Council of Mosques, Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Science, Environment Agency, Merseytravel and Jobcentre Plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regeneration ● Environmental improvement ● Skills & training ● Community empowerment ● Social justice & climate change issues ● Community cohesion ● Health & wellbeing
				NWF, Lancashire BME Pact, Preston Faith Forum, Lancashire Forum of Faith, Hindu Forum of Britain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community empowerment ● Social inclusion ● Advisory services ● Educational curricula ● Healthcare

Manchester Jewish Museum	Manchester	Jewish	Educational project giving children, young people and adults the opportunity to learn about Jewish culture and the social history of the Jewish community in Manchester	Manchester City Council, North Manchester Regeneration Team, Manchester College, Association of Independent Museums, Northwest Museums & Libraries Association, Northwest Multi-Faith Tourism Association, Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service, Learning Outside the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational curricula • Community cohesion • Regeneration
Markazi Jamia Masjid Khizra: Al Hilali Community Project	Cheetham Hill, Manchester	Muslim	To cater for the needs of the Muslim community and build bridges of understanding and mutual respect across faith communities	School governing bodies, NCCR, British Red Cross, BBC Children in Need, CRE, Pakistani Community Association, Islamic Society of Britain, SEDI, user/community donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community empowerment • Social inclusion • Advisory services • Educational curricula
Oaks House	Skelmersdale	Christian: Anglican	To establish a new church in one of the poorest communities of Skelmersdale by showing the love of Jesus through word or social action	Surestart Children's Centres and Skelmersdale school governing bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community empowerment • Social inclusion • Advisory services • Employment/Life Long Learning • Healthcare • Educational curricula
Rainbow Haven	Manchester	United Reformed Church	To promote community cohesion and inclusive ways of working to ensure that communities and individuals at risk of social exclusion are provided with support and access to services and activities	NHS, Social Services, Salford PCT, Manchester City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration & integration • Community empowerment • Social inclusion • Advisory services • Employment/Life Long Learning • Healthcare • Educational curricula

Sikh Community Centre (SCC)	Liverpool	Sikh	To fulfil the religious and cultural needs of the Sikh community in Liverpool and wider community	Liverpool City Council, Merseyside Council, Merseyside Council of Faiths, Northwest Forum of Faiths, Merseyside Police, local schools, prisons, hospitals, Liverpool Anglican Cathedral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration & integration • Community empowerment • Social inclusion • Advisory services • Employment/Life Long Learning • Healthcare • Educational curricula
St Luke's: The Art Project	Manchester	Church of England	To manage a successful artist in residence scheme and to improve opportunities for local people (primarily from the Manchester area), particularly those who experience mental or emotional distress, to participate in the arts	NHS, Manchester Mental Health Commissioning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts & widening participation • Social inclusion • Employment • Community empowerment • Mental healthcare

4. CASE STUDIES

This section describes the projects selected as case studies. The section:

- Indicates the immense scope and diversity of the case studies
- Looks at how the case studies came into being
- Looks at how far the case studies reflect priorities common to mainstream agencies and other voluntary sector organisations.

4.1 Providing Something Different

*'It is good all round for the community'*³²

*'It is appropriate that the NHS fund this, we are supporting their work with mental health patients. The project supports people's self esteem and provides opportunities for developing social networks. It's about creating a community.'*³³

All the projects in this research say that they were established as a direct response to some sort of perceived need. Very often, participants would see them not as projects, but rather an instinctive faithful response to local need.

In most cases, their development was taken forward by committed individuals who were not only able to draw on the support of organisational structures as well as volunteer support, but also have had the vision to recognise that working with secular partners could increase their effectiveness and impact.

The projects have arisen in various – not necessarily mutually exclusive – ways:

- **Filling a gap:** Where groups see a need that is not being met and develop some independent activity
- **Providing an alternative:** Where there is scope for services that complement what is being publicly provided but are tailored to meet specific cultural or other needs;
- **Breaking new ground:** Where projects are particularly innovative in responding to issues or in identifying opportunities for new and imaginative forms of activity.

Some projects that are centred on places of worship have also developed wider activities, sometimes addressing needs that are not met elsewhere or making specialist provision. Activities include: lunch clubs; educational support ranging from supplementary schooling for young people to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); IT training; job clubs; and advice and guidance on matters such as migration, housing and employment.

³² Oaks House school partner

³³ St Luke's Staff

As with the Christian churches, minority faith organisations play an important role in meeting the specific cultural requirements in the provision of services; reaching out to the wider community as well as catering for their own members. Examples include:

- Gujarat Hindu Society in Preston (Box 4.1.1)
- Khizra Mosque in Cheetham Hill, Manchester (Box 4.1.2)
- Liverpool Sikh Centre (Box 4.1.3)

Other projects, whilst linked with worship centres, are focusing on the needs of particular target groups:

- St Luke's: The Art Project works with people experiencing emotional or mental health problems and takes its lead from the needs they identify (Box 4.1.4)
- Oak House tries to support people at crisis moments in their lives; when they are struggling with debt, alcohol and drug abuse, unemployment and family breakdown (Box 4.1.5)

In other cases, organisations are developed for specific purposes which, as the examples in this study show, can vary widely:

- The Catholic Children's Society (CCS) is the welfare arm of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and, as such, provides a variety of children's services; the CCS project that is the case study here is a specialist service for children and young people who have suffered some loss and are grieving (Box 4.1.6)
- The Cumbria Reducing Offending Partnership Trust draws on the resources of local faith groups in its work towards reducing offending and re-offending (Box 4.1.7)
- Manchester Jewish Museum is an education project that gives opportunities for people to learn about Jewish history and culture (Box 4.1.8)
- Rainbow Haven in East Manchester provides a range of activities tailored to the needs of a community where individuals and groups may otherwise be excluded (Box 4.1.9)

Some projects are working specifically to promote good relations between local faith communities. Examples include:

- ExChange Blackburn (Box 4.1.10)
- Building Bridges Burnley (Box 4.1.11)
- Faiths4Change (Box 4.1.12)

Box 4.1.1 The Gujurat Hindu Society

The Gujurat Hindu Society (GHS) in Preston is the largest Hindu centre in the Northwest and the second largest centre in the UK. The GHS is the central hub for the Hindu community, offering a wide range of services to all sections of the Hindu and wider community and additionally attracts over 20,000 visitors per year. It aims to cater primarily for the Hindu community of Preston and more widely across Lancashire and the UK, but is open for use by all.

The centre provides a variety of services including: facilitating religious pilgrimages; supporting the unemployed in the Hindu community; Gujarati language teaching; and cultural education to maintain and promote the Hindu dharma and cultural heritage. The centre also hosts events such as the Health Mela and Hobbies Fair.

The services are delivered by five paid staff and over 50 volunteers, with significant levels funding being generated both internally – through donations, fundraising activities and the commercial arm of the centre – and externally – through sources such as the Millennium Commission and Community Fund. The GHS is on a number of strategic decision making bodies, including the Northwest Faiths Forum and Lancashire BME Pact, and is used by a range of public sector agencies and professionals for its conference and training facilities.

Box 4.1.2 Markazi Jamia Masjid Khizra: Al-Hilal Community Project

The Khizra Mosque, notably the first mosque in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester, was created to cater for the religious needs of and provide a range of culturally sensitive services for Muslims in the area. It draws on Islamic values and heritage to improve quality of life and enhance community cohesion.

The Al-Hilal Community Project based at the Khizra Mosque provides: a number of educational and recreational activities for boys and girls; an English circle for women attended by Pakistani, French, German, Turkish women; services for the elderly; and cookery classes.

The Khizra Mosque also ran a project for young people called Apna Khana, which was an 18-month project about healthy eating and was attended by 50 children. In addition, the Khizra Mosque acts as a Muslim Advice Centre providing benefits advice, tax advice and form filling services.

The services are delivered by 17 paid staff and around 55 volunteers. The majority of the funding for Khizra Mosque is secured through user and Muslim community donations and the UK Islamic Mission. The city council has also significantly contributed to the funding of the Al-Hilal Community Project. The Khizra Mosque engages with the Pakistani Community Association, the Islamic Society of Britain and the Social Enterprise Development Initiative.

Box 4.1.3 The Sikh Community Centre

The Sikh Community Centre (SCC) was created to fulfil the religious and cultural needs of the Sikh community in Liverpool and the surrounding area. It is the only Sikh temple in Liverpool and can accommodate 500 people for an event, while 80-100 attend Sunday worship regularly. It provides opportunities for learning and understanding Sikhism through dialogue, discussion and social interaction.

As with other Gurdwaras, congregation without inequality and social barriers is a key mission; which is symbolised most explicitly through the Langar (free open meal). Health classes, elderly care, classes for children to learn the Punjabi language and Gurmukhi script are also provided. The SCC supports new arrivals in the city such as overseas students to settle and find accommodation. It has also participated in inter-faith group, lead by Canon Michael Wolfe from the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.

The centre has a Granthi who is the only paid staff member and specifically appointed to deliver the religious services at the centre. It is wholly run by a large number of volunteers devoting their time and energy to operating the centre. Funding for the centre's activities is almost completely derived from donations from the community. The centre used to receive funding from Liverpool City Council for four years to run a luncheon club for the elderly but this was cut last year.

It has ties with Liverpool City Council, participates in the Merseyside Council of Faiths and has a member on the Northwest Forum of Faiths. It has developed a rapport with local schools, the police and local churches and is in discussion with the NHS to develop and deliver a health awareness campaign.

Box 4.1.4 St Luke's: The Art Project

St Luke's: The Art Project is a project working with people experiencing mental health problems through participation in the arts. The project is based at St Luke the Physician Church and Neighbourhood Centre in Manchester, and is one of a number of activities and services provided at the Centre.

The Art Project is open to adults living in the Manchester area who want to make art, and is particularly aimed at those who experience mental or emotional distress including psychiatric illness. There is an open-door policy and individuals can turn up and get involved immediately. Referrals are also encouraged from statutory and voluntary mental health projects and services. There is a women-only day at the Centre, when activities – including The Art Project – are open only to women beneficiaries.

The Art Project is not yet working with young people due to insufficient capacity, and capacity issues have also impacted on the project's ability to work with people who have severe mental illness or learning disabilities. The project tries to address this by inviting support workers to accompany such beneficiaries to the project.

Services are delivered by four paid staff with a part-time coordinator and three sessional

staff. The project has good internal links with the Methodist Church, the Local Strategic Partnership and the Greater Manchester Arts and Health Network. St Luke's also has good ties with social services, the Primary Care Mental Health Team and a range of local organisations, such as Wai Yin and Robi Outreach. Funding has been received from the Manchester Mental Health Joint Commissioning Team, Arts Council England, the Community Foundation and the Neighbourhood Centre.

Box 4.1.5 Oak House

Oak House was set up in 2005 as part of a missionary project by the Anglican Church to establish a new church in one of the poorest communities of Skelmersdale. The Mission of Oaks is to increase the numbers of Oak House's members spending time in personal prayer and bible study, leading worshipful and empowered lives. Oak House attempts to bring people together to help and support one another in life's struggles – such as addictions, bereavement and family breakdown – and to seek spiritual support in dealing with these difficulties. These experiences are initiated and nurtured in people's homes and through the ministry of Oak House.

Oak House run a range of social activities for children, young people and adults, including: a knitting group; weekly drop ins with free lunch; craft activities; and Friday night socials. It has recently started a debt advice service, and holds assemblies for children in the local school, as well as breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday activities.

The services are delivered by five paid staff and 15-20 volunteers with funding from the Anglican Church, Lloyds TSB and additional smaller grants for youth and children's workers salaries.

Oak House is not involved with the local authority or other public bodies at a strategic level, but has established some external partnerships and links. Both Sure Start Children's Centres and Skelmersdale Food Initiative are involved in Oaks House activities. The workers and volunteers are heavily involved in both local primary schools and a member of the management committee has links with the community centre.

Box 4.1.6 The Catholic Children's Society: Halton Your Space Project

The Catholic Children's Society (CCS) was founded in 1889 as part of the Catholic Children's Rescue Movement, with the purpose of placing children with adoptive families to ensure a safe home and welcoming spaces for them to thrive. It is the social welfare agency of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and now works in partnership with a range of organisations to cater for the needs of children and young people experiencing loss and grief.

The Halton Your Space Project, set up in Runcorn and Widnes in July 2008, was created to cater for the mental health needs of children and young people in the borough who may be experiencing significant change or losses and consequently manage to cope with their new reality. The project also provides a counselling and grief education programme and family support to children aged 5-19 who are affected by significant change or loss.

The CCS is primarily funded by Halton Borough Council and works in partnership with lead contractors Kings Cross Project, which is a Methodist foundation, to deliver the Halton Your Space Project with a core team of two people and others provided by partner organisations. The CCS also has relationships with a wide range of external partners such as Halton's Local Strategic Partnership and Halton's Emotional Literacy in Education Network.

Box 4.1.7 Cumbria Reducing Offending Partnership Trust

Cumbria Reducing Offending Partnership Trust (CROPT) was created by representatives of the Probation, Youth Offending and Prison Services who, in cooperation with the churches and the voluntary sector, identified a need to reduce offending and re-offending in Cumbria.

The organisations share a commitment towards working to prevent the social exclusion of offenders by drawing on the resources of local faith groups and organisations to deliver a number of projects. The projects tend to focus on improving the employability of offenders thus equipping them with the skills required for re-immersion in to society once released. The projects are delivered by for paid staff and over 45 volunteers.

The Seagull Project, a newspaper written by offenders serving custodial sentences at HMP Haverigg, was developed by the Ruskin Foundation in partnership with the CROPT to enhance offender employment skills and opportunities, thereby reducing the risk of re-offending.

Representatives of faith organisations have also begun to develop a project with CROPT aimed at informing Cumbria faith groups of the needs of offenders and ex-offenders with a view to increasing the pool of volunteers available to organisations working with offenders across the county. All CROPT projects are partnerships with a range of organisations, both faith and voluntary groups, and have ties with a number of Christian denominational churches and public bodies.

Box 4.1.8 Manchester Jewish Museum

The Manchester Jewish Museum is based in a Grade 2 listed building which was a former Spanish/Portuguese (sephardi) synagogue in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester It is an educational project giving children, young people and adults the opportunity to learn about Jewish culture and the social history of the Jewish community in Manchester. The museum is also engaged with the diverse communities in its locality through projects, such as Hats off to Cheetham Hill, an exhibition of headgear involving Sikhs, Muslims and Rastafarians.

The Manchester Jewish Museum is looking to set up a National Centre for Tolerance that will be conjoined to the existing museum site and will provide a secular space for groups and people from all faiths and backgrounds to meet, view exhibits and use the museum's resources. The museum intends to develop an approved Tolerance Curriculum in collaboration with the Manchester College to be used within the Social Cohesion and Citizenship components of the National Curriculum and to supplement the faith

component of religious education training in schools.

The museum employs six staff and has 73 volunteers, including a voluntary Volunteer Coordinator and relies primarily on its own income generated from school and individual visits. It also runs two major fundraising drives each year, at Passover and the Jewish New Year, and has secured a variety of grants for specific exhibitions and one off projects. The museum has a close relationship with Manchester City Council, local and national elected representatives.

The North Manchester Regeneration Team regards the museum as a key partner in delivering community cohesion and regeneration within Cheetham Hill. For this and other work, the museum has received significant funding and support from Manchester City Council, the North Manchester Regeneration Team, Manchester College, Association of Independent Museums and the Northwest Museums and Libraries Association.

Box 4.1.9 Rainbow Haven

Rainbow Haven was established in 2004 and is a community based-project of the East Manchester Community Association. Its aim is to facilitate and sustain community cohesion and inclusive ways of working to ensure that communities and individuals at risk of social exclusion are provided with support and access to services.

The project is open to all and is particularly well used by refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers. Activities provided include educational and skills training for local people as well as arts and recreational activities for children and young people.

Rainbow Haven has three paid staff and around 8-12 volunteers and has received funding from a number of sources including: Marim Refugee Support Agency, United Reformed Church, Manchester Metropolitan University, British Red Cross, Home Office and New Deal for Communities.

Box 4.1.10 The ExChange Project

The ExChange project, located in Blackburn Cathedral, was founded in 2005 with a view to promoting community cohesion through education, outreach and inter-faith activity. The project runs a programme of public dialogues, exhibitions and workshops in the Cathedral along with an extensive outreach programme in schools, colleges, mosques and churches specifically targeting women and young people with activities designed to develop leadership potential. The project has produced a number of exhibitions such as the Anne Frank exhibition and delivered talks by a former guard and prisoner at Guantanamo Bay that attracted diverse audiences.

The initiatives are delivered by three paid staff and a large number of volunteers. The project has received funding from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, Blackburn Diocese and the NWDA, Clarke Trust, Booths, Cooperative Movement, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Westminster Abbey, Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund, Blackburn College, Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, Board of Education, Diocese of Blackburn. ExChange works closely with Lancashire Police, Lancashire Fire Service,

Blackburn College, schools and non-statutory organisations including the Blackburn with Darwen Inter-faith Forum and the Lancashire Forum of Faiths.

Box 4.1.11 Building Bridges Burnley

Building Bridges Burnley (BBB) is an inter-faith organisation, created after the 2001 disturbances, to enhance awareness and understanding between different faith groups. It advocates diversity and promotes social cohesion through inter-faith activities. Situated in an area with a significant population of an Asian heritage – mostly of the Islamic faith – and a high proportion of young people, BBB effectively incorporates statutory authorities and voluntary agencies in its work.

The Masjid-e-Ibrahim Mosque in which BBB is based is the first in the Northwest to facilitate a Christian/Muslim partnership, with non-Muslims having open access to its premises. BBB is a company limited by guarantee, and incorporates the Bridge Project for young people, based in a nearby Anglican Church.

A meal sharing initiative has taken place when 26 families of different faiths shared food as a way of nurturing interaction and discussion. Other initiatives include: “Diversity Days” at schools celebrating diversity in Burnley; women-only seminars on a range of issues; preventing violent extremism seminars; and discussions about societal breakdown.

The projects are delivered by a staff of eight people and over 20 volunteers. BBB receives funding from a range of organisations notably; Burnley Borough Council’s Single Regeneration Budget, East Lancashire Together, Methodist Church, Burnley Community Network, Islamic Relief, Accent, Community Development Fund and Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund. It has extensive ties with the voluntary and statutory sectors and the Lancashire Council of Mosques.

Box 4.1.12 Faiths4Change

Originally developed in response to the vision of the Bishop of Liverpool, Faiths4Change (F4C) is an organisation of people working in partnership for the social, economic and spiritual transformation of neighbourhood environments in Liverpool, Manchester, Preston & Burnley. F4C has evolved from a pilot project in Merseyside called Operation Eden, that enabled volunteers from faith communities in Liverpool to work in partnership with other local residents to create small scale environmental projects that transformed Merseyside communities.

F4C provides funding and capacity building support to faith organisations across the Northwest to undertake environmental projects in deprived communities. The organisers, participants and partners share common ground in their commitment to serving communities and caring for the earth. Resident volunteers actively ensure that neighbourhoods thrive with local people engaging in solutions alongside statutory partners and the voluntary sector. F4C offers free support to people of faith and other local residents to work together, supported by partners from all sectors.

A large number of projects have been developed with F4C including: two events as part of

Warrington Disabilities Week creating bird boxes and an eco stall; Holy Trinity Wavertree project planting seeds and making up hanging baskets and pots; and St Hugh's School and Community Garden regeneration. F4C works closely with Myerscough College and training partners such as Local Authorities and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, to ensure the training provided is of a high standard.

The projects are delivered by six paid staff and approximately 200 volunteers and receive funding from the NWDA, Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority, Environment Agency, Northwest Together We Can, the BBC and Lancashire County Council. In addition, F4C has a Development Fund which provides small grants to enable partnership projects to take place. It has ties with the Lancashire Council of Mosques, the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Science, the National Health Service, and many schools.

4.2 Organisational Characteristics

Volunteers

One of the distinctive characteristics of the projects was the importance of volunteers. Faiths4Change (F4C) has six paid staff but all of its projects are created and delivered by volunteers. Over 1,000 volunteers have been engaged since 2004. Manchester Jewish Museum has seven paid staff and 73 volunteers; Gujarat Hindu Society (GHS) with five staff has 70 volunteers. Cumbria Reducing Offending Partnership Trust (CROPT) has four part-time paid staff and 45 volunteers – and is now developing a project aimed at informing the Cumbria faith groups about the needs of offenders and ex-offenders with a view to enlarging the pool of volunteers available to organisations working with offenders across the county. Liverpool Sikh Community Centre has only one paid priest and volunteers undertake all the cleaning and maintenance of the building, the cooking and serving of food in the Langar and the running of all other centre activities. All the other projects had up to 20 volunteers.

*'We are always wearing two hats, we all muck in with the day-to-day work of the centre'*³⁴

Wider Institutional Structures

Another distinctive characteristic is how individual projects are able to make use of their wider institutional structures, which enables them to call on contacts at a city-wide, regional or even national level and give them access to information and expertise that might not otherwise be available. F4C, for instance, has office costs, human resources support and line management for the Director supplied free by the Diocese of Liverpool, with office space for projects provided free in other faith-owned buildings in Manchester, Burnley and Preston. Other examples are: how the UK Islamic Mission contributes funding to the Khizra Mosque; that while Cumbria Methodist District is the main sponsor of a project being developed by CROPT, it is also supported by Carlisle Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility and the Mothers' Union.

³⁴ Exchange staff member

Rainbow Haven exemplifies both these potential advantages of local standing and institutional backing. The history of its parent body, the East Manchester Community Association (EMCA), goes back to the 1980s when the local churches were actively involved in local community activities funded by the Manpower Services Commission. EMCA evolved to respond to changing needs in East Manchester, tackling issues such as parenting and substance abuse and putting on a variety of activities – including training for local people and arts and recreational activities for children and young people.

Rainbow Haven was set up in 2004 as an outpost of EMCA. Operating from facilities rented from St Paul and St John's Youth Clubs, its focus has been on community cohesion and inclusive ways of working to ensure that communities and individuals at risk of social exclusion are provided with support and access to services and activities.

Lack of Hierarchy

“To me what Catholic Children’s Society has that others might not is a big heart and an awful lot of passion, you can hear it and you can feel it.”³⁵

Even though there are paid posts, the organisations were not hierarchical. This encouraged high levels of participant commitment and ownership, underpinned by an ethic of collective endeavour and good communication. All these ingredients enabled greater responsiveness to emerging needs.

Charismatic Individuals

The importance of leadership is recognised by all projects. Often projects had been driven forward by charismatic individuals.

“It is absolutely amazing what the Catholic Children’s Society do. Whoever you speak to in Runcorn they know her. I have so much respect for hershe will go down as a legend in Runcorn”³⁶

The projects have also served as important incubators for community empowerment and leadership, often with local people developing into new roles and responsibilities. For example, the Catholic Children’s Society (CCS) staff train people from schools as Companions, who can deliver a grief education programme to children in the schools.

Management Boards

Management boards are also important sources of skills for projects, bringing crucial knowledge, including knowledge of public structures and organisations, as well as professional experience that contributes to the effective management of projects. Projects acknowledged, however, that this is an area that requires more consideration and

³⁵ Catholic Caring Services staff member

³⁶ CCS beneficiary

development. Whilst many were notable for their diversity, including ethnic, gender, and professional and social backgrounds, they were in the main still predominantly male led.

Some also reported issues around generation gaps, particularly in migrant led organisations that reported challenges around handing over to British-born generations with different personal and community outlooks and developing professional careers. ExChange Blackburn is an example of this issue being addressed – it has an extensive outreach programme in schools, colleges mosques and churches specifically targeting women and young people with activities designed to develop their leadership potential.

Community Leadership

Another dimension of some projects is their community leadership role, which is often far greater than their size or scope would suggest. This is partly because of the impact made by their high levels of volunteer activity and the opportunities they create for local participation. Sometimes – as with ExChange Blackburn and Building Bridges Burnley – it is also because they are well positioned to take the initiative on issues that raise apprehensions in wider society.

Blackburn Cathedral developed links with a range of local community groups and public organisations, through its ‘core role’ and through its place at the heart of a town centre regeneration scheme and outreach work. It sees itself as a critical friend to Blackburn with Darwen Council and has influenced the approach to community relations by promoting the idea of a combined community festival instead of two separate ones, a Mela and the Blackburn Festival, which tended to be ethnically segregated. ExChange took the proposal to the Council after discussing the idea in different networks and with contacts in the local community and media.

Khizra Mosque and Oak House have provided opportunities for participants and local communities to address issues of joint concern and acted as a vehicle for empowerment for otherwise marginalised communities.

“If an issue is affecting the community then we will hold meetings with all sorts of personal networks and extended networks to other organisations too. Colleges, schools, council, other religious organisations all are included in these efforts or whosoever is needed”³⁷

“It is enthusiasm that gets people involved and rubs off when they witness it. We are trying to create a sense of community and stability which the community out there has lost. Role models are not here, maybe because of addiction or family problems”³⁸

³⁷ Khizra Mosque staff member

³⁸ Oak House staff member

High Trust Levels

As with other third sector organisations, a characteristic of all the projects included was a high level of trust and support from the users and beneficiaries both for the organisations and the individuals running them. Trust and confidence was facilitated and nurtured around shared faith identities. These characteristic have helped many of the projects to address challenging social issues as their credibility is recognised in the particular and broader communities that they serve.

“She is not from housing, social service or the police and she is not a priest either. It also helps that she is a woman. There are a lot of single parent families here – they open up to her”³⁹

“It’s a dream service and [I] wish everyone had a service like this. It’s a pleasure to have a service like [GHS] and be able to work with committed and motivated people who get things done”⁴⁰

Enduring Commitment

The first characteristic is that they have frequently grown out of longstanding local presence; they are firmly rooted in their locality and spring from an intimate, on the ground knowledge of local needs. Their length of time in the area and enduring commitment to it can give them the necessary credibility; they begin from a position of being trusted – for example, the CCS has been present in Runcorn since the new town was established 30 years ago.

4.3 Sharing Public Policy Priorities

“Gujarat Hindu Society has worked hard to establish itself and works hard to support communities, so on an informal basis it ticks a lot of boxes.”⁴¹

“We have effectively been doing Every Child Matters for years”⁴²

“The project is seen as credible. It delivers what it says and is realistic about what can be done. Many agencies want to contribute by way of sending volunteers, donations etc and some refer clients here”⁴³

The examples of how faith communities contribute to social and economic wellbeing, which were assessed as part of this exercise, address a wide range of policy agendas that go far beyond traditional community leadership activities. They also encompass a much wider range of mainstream activity than the diversity and social cohesion issues that public institutions tend to associate with faith organisations, including activities that address very specific public policy agendas (Box 4.3), as well as more general issues and agendas that concern faith organisations.

³⁹ CCS external partner

⁴⁰ GHS external partner

⁴¹ GHS external partner

⁴² CCS management staff

⁴³ Rainbow Haven external partner

Box 4.3 Policy areas

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts & widening participation• Community Cohesion• Community empowerment• Contributing to educational curricula• Crime Reduction• Employment• Environmental awareness and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every Child Matters• Healthcare and healthy lifestyles• Life Long Learning• Migration & integration• Preventing violent extremism• Regeneration• Social inclusion
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Whilst the projects address many areas of interest to public policy, these initiatives were not necessarily developed as a direct response to national agendas, and in most cases preceded them. One of the key findings of the NWDA's original survey⁴⁴ was that faith communities are strongest where social need is highest.

This study underlines this message because the projects are needs-led, focusing on the areas and groups that are the most marginalised. For example, Oak House was started in part of Skelmersdale specifically because of the level of deprivation on the estate. ExChange has started a charity called "Woman's Voice" targeted at 16-25 year olds to encourage the participation of Muslim women in a number of institutions.

So although meeting public policy and funding imperatives is not their primary motivation, most projects recognise that, in practice, their work contributes to broader public agendas. This is especially the case for those organisations which have developed working relationships with public bodies as part of their service delivery functions and for many of the integration and cohesion projects where local social contexts reflect the prominent national debates about integration and cohesion.

Building Bridges Burnley (BBB) has been undertaking work connected to the preventing violent extremism agenda. A delegation of 10 members visited Brussels for three days in April 2008 to meet colleagues in the European Parliament to exchange thoughts on preventing violent extremism and to attend an Imams' Forum to share experiences of practical initiatives taken across Europe. Links with "Mediation Northern Ireland" led to a joint seminar being arranged on preventing violent extremism.

All of the projects included in the study have tried to develop partnerships with public bodies and participate on local and regional forums as an integral aspect of their work. For their part, their partners in local authorities or other public bodies clearly judge them on the service they give irrespective of their faith identity because this is seen as the most constructive approach.

*"The way I look at it, they are a third sector organisation like any other group. It is a level playing field; faith doesn't come into it. They never bring it into it and it is not mentioned in the contract. They are just there to achieve outcomes."*⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Faith in England's Northwest*, NWDA, 2003

⁴⁵ CCS Partner organisation

“Many would not know that this is a faith organisation. It is a service that people need and the faith identity is not an issue”⁴⁶

Interviewees in the case studies indicated that part of the effectiveness of the projects was what they could do to complement other services. This might be in terms of: the nature of their provision; sensitivity to local needs; or the ability to mobilise additional resources or reach wider constituencies.

This is clearly also recognised by partners and funders – for example, it was NWDA funding of almost £1.5 million that underpinned Operation Eden in Liverpool and its extension across the region as Faiths4Change three years later. Similarly, it was NWDA funding that enabled the appointment of a Muslim woman to the post of Dialogue Development Officer in Blackburn Cathedral; the first such post in an Anglican Cathedral.

The NWDA, Heritage Lottery Fund, European Regional Development Fund and Manchester City Council have all contributed to the Manchester Jewish Museum. Rainbow Haven has had funding from New Deal for Communities and the Home Office as well as Oxfam, Marim and the United Reformed Church. St Luke’s receives a grant of £33,000 per annum from Manchester Mental Health Joint Commissioning Team.

Statutory agencies appreciate the value of faith-based organisations in other ways. The Catholic Children’s Society (CCS) has working relationships with the local authority, GPs and health visitors, schools and police, all of whom refer cases to the CCS. The Probation Service, Youth Offending and Prison Services were all instrumental in creating CROPT. The Gujarat Hindu Society has regularly worked with the local primary care trust and social services to improve information and advice for the local community.

The work of BBB with the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service influenced the latter’s mainstream activity. BBB worked with Mosques, community leaders and the fire service after some young boys from ethnic minority backgrounds had been attacking fire fighters. BBB helped to dispel myths surrounding fire fighters and show the importance of their work. As a result, Burnley Fire Station and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service received a Diversity Service Delivery Award.

Some projects have also become involved in their localities in a strategic role. The Director of CCS has developed relationships with statutory organisations – partly to raise the Society’s profile and develop opportunities for partnership working – and has gone on to become the Third Sector representative on Halton’s Local Strategic Partnership. He also now sits on the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Board and is involved in the Halton Emotional Literacy in Education Network.

⁴⁶ Rainbow Haven staff

Manchester Jewish Museum is working with Manchester College to produce approved 'Tolerance' materials to be used in the National Curriculum and it is developing a National Centre for Tolerance in partnership with Manchester City Council based on the Tools for Tolerance programme run by the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, America. This will be a secular centre to challenge racism, confront bigotry and promote understanding of different cultures and religions. The steering group for the Centre includes people from other faiths and community groups.

4.4 Evaluating Outcomes

*'We do evaluation but not in the way that you suggest'*⁴⁷

*'The range of work and support provided by the centre is not fully understood. Some external organisations don't necessarily understand the full role and essence of the work that we do here. They can focus on the parts relevant to them and don't always see the full picture'*⁴⁸

*'Sometimes you get suspicions when you are a faith group. We need to be very clear about the reasons why the money is being given and what it is going to be spent on'*⁴⁹

Just as in the voluntary sector as a whole, faith groups give varying amounts of attention to evaluation. Organisations which were delivering services linked to strategic policy objectives or reliant on public funding all saw evaluation as important. For example, the evaluation undertaken by the Catholic Children's Society (CCS) is an essential dimension of its relationship with statutory partners.

In addition to compiling the required monitoring data, CCS records the number of children and young people who move down a level in their mental health support needs as a result of going through the programme. This can demonstrate the value of the project in supporting the Every Child Matters outcomes by reducing the number of children and young people that have to be referred to psychiatric services.

Assessment processes in other groups related to their own internal organisational goals, both for the organisation as a whole and for specific projects. Whilst public bodies necessarily need to quantify outputs and outcomes, these projects were more interested in qualitative evaluation, not just because of the resource demands made by the monitoring requirements of statutory funders, but because they feel that numbers alone cannot capture what they are trying to achieve. However, whilst the "human touch" can be the one thing that service users most value, it can sometimes fail to register in the system of outputs and outcomes required by funders.

⁴⁷ Oak House management

⁴⁸ GHS staff member

⁴⁹ CROPT Methodist District partner and volunteer

4.5 Factors that Help or Hinder Sustainability

Helping

Whilst achieving long-term viability is a challenge for any third sector organisation, faith groups have some advantages. Some have been helped by being part of a wider institution, such as a diocese, which can influence the initial development of projects and continue to subsidise project management posts as well as giving resources in kind, often in the form of facilities.

“We all went a little bit further because we all love this place.”⁵⁰

“Staff choose to do this work, they work too many hours for little money and show dedication and commitment.”⁵¹

All have high levels of volunteer commitment, which often spans the entire organisation, from management to delivery of activities – energising the work and shaping the character of projects.

Where the wider faith structures are less developed, there can be greater uncertainty around the sustainability of a project and its necessary resourcing. This is often the case for community faith centres and places of worship that are in the earlier stages of their development. For example, Building Bridges Burnley, based in a local Mosque, faces uncertain funding.

Hinder

The main risks to sustainability are funding and burnout.

“All management committee members are volunteers and most are employed elsewhere, their work here is additional and there is a limit to how much they can take on”⁵²

Burnout is the flip side of reliance on massive commitment to the work of volunteers and paid staff alike; it needs to be managed because it can lead to exhaustion and over-exposure.

A number of projects experienced difficulty of securing the core funding essential to running the projects and which can help towards strategic organisational development. Rainbow Haven in particular had no secured funding for the future and St Luke’s was similarly concerned about future survival due to a lack of secure funding.

“The majority of voluntary organisations are diverted from their cause because they are always worried about survival. This can make them switch in totally different directions.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Jewish Museum staff member

⁵¹ St Luke’s: The Arts Project staff member

⁵² GHS management member

‘We are digging our own grave, we are getting drawn into lots of difficult areas’⁵⁴

All of the minority faith centres have relied heavily for their development on direct donations from their local community. Although they have sometimes been able to draw on national fundraising through faith networks and broader communities, this varies. Some have recently developed secured funding from public bodies after considerable efforts to develop working relationships with them and become more knowledgeable about potential funding avenues.

Building links required developing new skills and greater capacity. This has been particularly challenging for new communities but, having made the investment, should lead to a more sustainable future. Many of the projects, however, still managed impressive achievements despite their scant resources.

‘A lot is achieved through very little resources’⁵⁵

4.6 Emerging Themes

Although the case studies illustrate the range of faith projects in the Northwest, a number of key themes emerge across the different projects.

- **Responding to some sort of need:** Either formally or informally – and their ability to do so is underpinned by: their longstanding presence in the area; their particular local knowledge; and their capacity to tap into wider networks and resources.
- **Emphasis on human flourishing:** Through supporting individual wellbeing, promoting neighbourliness and encouraging involvement in community and civic life - encompassing bonding, bridging and linking social capital.
- **Exemplifying the importance of committed individuals:** In these cases, inspired by their faith to work actively in paid and unpaid positions, especially in areas of greatest social and economic need and with people who often slip through the net of mainstream services.
- **Demonstrating the potential for constructive relationships:** With public agencies as both partners and service deliverers.

The next chapter goes on to evaluate these stories and look at them in relation to wider indicators of social benefit.

⁵³ F4C partner project member

⁵⁴ ExChange project member

⁵⁵ Rainbow Haven staff member

5. WHAT DO THE STORIES TELL US?

The previous chapter described projects used in the case studies and ended by drawing out some emerging themes. This section goes on to look more closely at the case study findings in relation to:

- Developing social capital
- Face-to-Face Side-by-side building blocks

5.1 Developing Social Capital?

One aspect of the evaluation was to assess the contribution that faith groups make to the development of bonding, bridging and linking capital⁵⁶. Although social capital is a contested term and should not be taken as a universally beneficial phenomenon, the faith projects in this study exhibited many of the features that are indicators of social capital. They are strengthening social relationships within and between groups, building trust and solidarity and promoting shared activity.

‘Because people are listened to and they are mixing with others and feel part of others they [develop confidence] express their own ideas and are learning new skills. All this helps to increase self esteem and confidence and some people feel empowered to take their work further – but mostly it is a sense of coming together and doing something which in a sense they can’t “get it wrong” and are positively encouraged.’⁵⁷

A shared faith identity and shared values underpin many of the groups running these projects. Places of worship, particularly those for minority faiths, are important hubs and they have extended into community development roles by providing spaces for people to come together and by developing new services and activities. As long as this is not done in an isolationist way, strengthening identity by this means is likely to promote the sort of confidence that allows individuals and groups to be more open to others.

‘We felt honoured that people came to the mosque and so they felt a responsibility to come to the Cathedral in return. Imams encouraged people at Friday prayers to go to the Cathedral. This would have been a big no-no in the past’⁵⁸

‘We trust people at this centre because we have been coming here for a long time. You get himat (strength/ confidence) from knowing there is a safe place to get help from. But not just any organisation, this is the one we have come to trust, not all temples are the same’⁵⁹

Some projects exemplified key features of bonding capital in giving individuals extra resources for coping and strengthening social support around them. Beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds, often people with nowhere else to turn, form strong bonds with one another through the drop-in. The safe space and supportive networks provide an

⁵⁶ *Measuring Social Capital in The United Kingdom*, R Harper & M Kelly, Office for National Statistics, 2003

⁵⁷ St Luke’s management member

⁵⁸ ExChange external partner

⁵⁹ GHS service user

important platform for them to go on to access other services and opportunities.

“All social barriers are coming down whilst we are here. You wouldn’t normally see a little old lady talking to a Goth”⁶⁰

The purpose of some projects was to develop links between groups, organisations and communities through dialogue or shared activities. In many instances, such as Faiths4Change (F4C), these links were facilitated by a shared religious ethos and values, irrespective of faith differences.

In its community development projects throughout the region, F4C enables people of faith and goodwill to come together to foster collective action to sustainably transform community environments. The environment provides an ideal medium for bringing together people of all ages. Engagement encourages ownership and the physical benefits of action can be seen quickly, which in turn encourages increased engagement and activity.

“We’re not church goers but it didn’t really matter”⁶¹

Projects such as Burnley Community Farm supported Muslim, Christian and non-faith volunteers in delivering over 1,000 hours to joint food growing and sharing sessions with the wider community. In another project, young offenders work alongside people with learning disabilities. Other examples include Mosques developing community gardens that bring them into closer touch with other local residents and people coming together in the interests of preserving old churches.

F4C and the Jewish Museum are both active in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester, working with a variety of groups. F4C supported young Muslim men to link up with Age Concern, via the Islamic Council of Britain, to help older people clear up their gardens. The Jewish Museum has also worked with the Muslim and Sikh communities in the area, partly through active involvement in the Cheetham Hill Festival committee.

Linking capital was a key theme throughout all of the projects. The legitimacy of faith organisations, as well as their established organisational structures, facilitated the development of links with authorities and public bodies. Many of the community faith organisations felt a responsibility to develop links with public bodies as part of their community development function and in order to improve the quality of the services and advice that they were able to offer their users.

In return, it is evident that many public bodies are increasingly recognising the potential benefits of working with such organisations and centres due to their social reach and access to communities that might otherwise be considered hard to reach.

⁶⁰ F4C partner project

⁶¹ F4C workshop participant

“[The problem for public bodies] was hard to reach communities, we became their corridor. Public sector agencies can’t deliver services without the community and the community need better access to services”⁶²

“We are making a difference to mainstream services in a number of ways such as engaging people they are unable to reach and also referring people to them. Sometimes we are the first stop for people to identify and access other services and support.”⁶³

The development of linking capital is also dependent on organisational human capital and resource. In the case study projects, it is underpinned by high levels of bonding and bridging capital generated through their organisational development service cultures and networking and partnership efforts. They are often supported by wider organisational structures that encourage the development of such links as well as providing individuals with knowledge and experience of linking with public bodies, forums and consultative bodies.

The Gujarat Hindu Society (GHS) has formed links and partnership arrangements with many organisations that recognise their common interests. Lancashire County Council Social Services provide funding for transport and a community engagement officer. The Council funds youth activities and gives support for training CHS youth leaders and for its residential weekends for young people.

Housing advice is provided at GHS by Local Authority Housing and the primary care trust funds the health work through Lancashire Gujarat Health Users Forum. The GHS itself provides guidance and advice for individuals on employment, housing and immigration matters and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau deliver advice at GHS once a week. It has also linked up with faith forums, locally, regionally and nationally.

Building Bridges Burnley (BBB) is represented on a number of statutory and voluntary committees including Burnley Community Network and the Local Strategic Partnership. In addition to its work developing bridges between communities, BBB has developed links with a variety of statutory bodies and other publicly-funded organisations, including: Building Schools for the Future; Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre; Burnley Borough Council; CVS; Lancashire Council of Mosques; Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service; Lancashire Police; Lancashire County Council Social Services; local primary and secondary schools; and New Era Enterprises community support agency.

Developing partnerships with – and accessing the funding streams of – public bodies relies upon the social action and community work of faith groups. Worship or proselytising activities are precluded. Oak House was the only project included in this study making a direct connection between their activity and religious observance.

Although Oak House has been able to develop links with a local school which values their contribution to community development in a deprived area, and with some local

⁶² BBB management

⁶³ GHS staff member

organisations who recognise it as a useful partner for community outreach and communication, it reported more limited success in developing links and participation in other local area governance agendas and activities.

To sum up, it is useful to return to the indicators of social capital⁶⁴ as cited in 2.3:

- **Levels and types of social networks:** Being developed within a project, including the depth and, crucially, the breadth of the new interactions that people develop through participating in an organisation or project
- **The nature of decision making and collective action:** Including both practical experiences and perceptions of scope to participate in, and influence, decision making within a group, across groups and with public decision makers
- **Levels of trust that are fostered by groups:** In part, through the process of collective action, communication and development of social networks, that promotes the development of consensus and solidarity within and beyond the project/organisation.
- **Social inclusion and diversity:** Relating to the scope for projects to bring a diversity of people together outside of what may be their own personal family contexts.
- **Information and communication:** The level and quality of information flows within an organisation and the impact of flows of information within and between groups, both bottom up, top down and horizontally, as well as between different organisations, including public bodies.

5.2 Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side

The study sought to assess projects in relation to the building blocks cited by Community and Local Government's Face-to-Face Side-by-Side report⁶⁵:

- Structures which facilitate interaction
- Opportunities for learning which build understanding
- Shared spaces for interaction and social action
- Confidence and skills that bridge and link.

The case study projects all variously met the Face-to-Face Side-by-Side agenda by:

- Providing services for members of faith communities and people of no faith that can help them settle and feel secure in new surroundings and give them the confidence to mix with others
- Promoting shared activities that enable people to get to know one another across faiths
- Making premises available to other groups or local people as community meeting grounds.

Some projects, such as ExChange Blackburn, are explicitly designed as inter-faith initiatives to provide opportunities for people and groups to come together, often in response to specific local cohesion issues. These projects are based on inter-faith

⁶⁴ *Measuring the Dimensions of Social Capital*, World Bank, 2008

⁶⁵ *Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side: A Framework for Partnership in Our Multi-Faith Society*, CLG, 2008

principles and their programmes expressly focus on providing opportunities to develop understanding between groups.

These projects also act as a platform for recognising and articulating shared interests and identities so that they can provide community leadership on issues of cohesion. Building Bridges Burnley, for example, was set up to address inter-community tensions. It works as an inter-faith project based in the mosque focusing on promoting social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Other projects see inter-faith work as implicit in what they are doing. Even though it is not couched as such, their work may involve developing links between organisations and communities as part of a broader outreach agenda. They either provide or participate in shared spaces for inter-faith dialogue and in many instances undertake activities or work with other faith groups and communities.

About three quarters of the Manchester Jewish Museum's business comes from school visits, but it also has events for the ethnically and religiously diverse community in Cheetham Hill. The Khizra Mosque has a Muslim and Jewish Forum and a Muslim and Christian Forum. It also holds a Mosque open day, Eid Festival celebrations and an Islam Awareness Week, and its members visit other places of worship and host visits to the Mosque by people of different faiths.

Liverpool Sikh Community Centre's premises are used by Merseyside Police for courses and the Langar (free open meal) is open to all non-Sikh visitors. Many overseas students and people in need in the local community take advantage of it. Faiths4Change is very aware of the value of groups coming together around shared environmental concerns and actively seeks to promote combined working that contributes to integration and cohesion agendas.

Many of the projects included some strand of inter-faith working as part of their activities, largely because of the presence of diverse faith groups in the context in which they were working. For minority faith projects, whilst inter-faith working was not built into their management structures, all were aware of their role in facilitating inter-faith working and activities. They were often involved in some kind of forum or activity that opened up spaces for inter-faith dialogue, but also acted as centres for the practising of minority faiths. thus providing a secure faith base from which inter-faith interaction could be developed.

For social care organisations, faith identities were not significant in their work. Their underpinning principle was inclusion and they considered themselves largely non-denominational and open to all faiths. However, although none of their activity was labelled inter-faith work, they did contribute to forums and other settings that brought different faith groups together.

5.3 Added Value of Faith Groups

This study has looked at a number of examples of how faith communities contribute to social and economic wellbeing. It has only included projects that have a faith identity, whether overtly or through their organisational origins and backing. It has not attempted to undertake a comparative assessment with non faith-based projects. However, although these projects have many features in common with other voluntary sector groups, it is nevertheless possible to identify some important themes that are prominent in – though not necessarily exclusive to – faith organisations.

Social Capital

Most were characterised by high levels of social capital. Shared religious identities and values and an ethic of collective endeavour were key ingredients as well as being important drivers for the motivation, energy and commitment of many of the staff and volunteers. It was also apparent that people of faith feel they have something in common even across different religions and denominations and that this is a good basis for dialogue and shared action.

“Being faith groups has helped our joint working relationships. When you use certain words – it isn’t an issue with other faith groups and there have not been any issues over different values.”⁶⁶

High Trust Levels

“Faith group have more continuity in an area. Other projects came and went with funding, but the churches were still there.”⁶⁷

There was evidence that they had generated high levels of trust amongst users partly because of their approach and their “stickability” in the locality. Partners also valued their rootedness in the community and the on-the-spot knowledge that enables them to address both entrenched and emerging problems in a locally sensitive way.

⁶⁶ F4C project partner

⁶⁷ F4C Consultant

6. CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

6.1 Conclusions

This study has shown that faith organisations represent a powerful community resource with a deep reach into communities, particularly to the most marginalised groups.

Sometimes they have a very distinctive faith-related role, whereas other times they are credible care or education organisations that can stand alongside other voluntary sector service deliverers without their faith basis being any impediment to their engagement by the public sector as partners or contract holders.

Most are rooted in their local communities and provide a level of continuity and sustained support that is hard for other voluntary organisations to match. This can create a virtuous circle generating local trust, commitment and financial or in-kind resources.

Inevitably, faith groups share many of the organisational challenges that are common to other voluntary sector organisations in relation to capacity, resources, governance and management of volunteers.

Faith organisations can also face an additional challenge stemming from a lack of understanding about the extent of the work that faith groups do or from suspicions about their motives or faith values. Despite this, most of the projects described here demonstrate that it is possible to overcome any such discrimination. They are seen as credible and valued partners and have developed constructive and long lasting working relationships with public bodies.

6.2 Implications of the Research

The findings of this study pose a number of questions and present challenges for both public bodies and faith groups.

Messages for Public Bodies

The headline messages for public bodies are:

- Faith communities can contribute to your outcomes especially because of their roots in deprived areas
- Some faith groups are uniquely positioned to deliver some projects such as ones relating to inter-faith and social cohesion issues, while others deliver services in line with other Third Sector provision and need to be assessed solely in these terms
- Being inspired by faith does not translate into wanting to impose that faith on others; the motivation of faith community staff and volunteers can be a bonus in contributing to trust and sustainability, rather than an obstacle to be overcome.

If these key findings are accepted, then certain questions follow:

- Do you acknowledge faith groups as legitimate partners? If not, why not?
- Do you recognise the contribution made by faith groups to a wide range of public policy outcomes beyond compliance with equalities legislation? If so, are you making connections with ones in your area and making use of them?
- Are faith communities engaged in the process of developing your Sustainable Community Strategy or Local Area Agreement and are they involved in their delivery? Have you asked them how they could help?
- Are you including faith groups along with other stakeholders in consultations on public policy documents such as the Regional Strategy?

Messages for Faith Communities

The headline messages for faith organisations are:

- The credibility of faith projects rests considerably on them being in touch with and responsive to local needs, but they also gain strength from using their wider institutions for support
- Some faith groups are engaging well with statutory and other partners, where they have recognised and been able to articulate and demonstrate how their concerns overlap and made sure they understand where they might fit within local service provision
- Different faith groups have a lot in common and there is significant advantage to be gained from establishing links with other faith groups, whether through informal or working relationships or through inter-faith bodies.

If these key findings are accepted, then certain questions follow:

- How easy do you make it for statutory bodies to engage with you? Are you involved in your local ecumenical and inter-faith group? Are you participating in and learning from the wider Voluntary and Community Sector?
- How effective is your local inter-faith body in representing the range of faith traditions in your area? Do its members have sufficient seniority and influence to negotiate productively with statutory bodies?
- Have you moved out of a 'grants for worthy causes' mindset and do you know enough about the structures of governance locally, regionally and nationally to get involved and be an effective partner?

APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWEES

Faith Community/Project	Name	Position
Building Bridges Burnley (BBB)	Faz Patel	Public body beneficiary/partner
	Margaret Richardson	Youth Coordinator
	Kath Bill	Board member/volunteer
	Reverend Peter Hapgood Strickland	Vice Chair
	Hamid Quereshi	Faith Development Officer
	Mike Waite	Head of Community Cohesion
	Shahida Iqbal	Employee/volunteer
Faiths4Change (F4C)	Sher Ali	Trustee/Board member
	Annie Merry	Regional Director
	Sabir Hussain	Steering Group member/UKPHA
	Geoff Little	Brothers of Charity-partner/volunteers
Gujurat Hindu Society (GHS)	Don Thompson	F4C Evaluator
	Abhi Nandana	Centre Manager
	Ishwer Tailor	President (voluntary)
	Mr Chottalal Limbachia	Treasurer (voluntary)
	Surykant Mistry	Volunteer
Rainbow Haven	Kiran Banati	External Partner, Social Services
	Rev O Neil	Management Committee Chair
	Adam Dickson	Volunteer
St Luke's/The Arts Project	Chris Brown	Steering Group, involved with the social work placements, Practice Teacher
	Sysay Tedros	Project Coordinator
	Amanda Jones Said	Project Coordinator
	Alison Kershaw	Artist & Project Coordinator
	Peter Clark	Rector
Catholic Children's Society/Halton Your Space Project	Roger Howard	Centre Manager
	Tess Lomas	Project beneficiary
	Chris Dibble	Social Worker: support to St Luke's drop-in
	Ged Flynn	Director
	Leanne Jones	Your Space Project: Coordinator
Oak House	Sister Teresa West	Social Worker
	Elaine Roberts Smith	Commissioner at Halton Borough Council
	Christine Smith	head teacher of a school where the project is working
	Irene Hesketh	Pastoral Carer
	Janet Anderson	Community House Coordinator
	Lester Anderson	Young People's Worker
	Duncan Petty	Minister
Manchester Jewish Museum	Annette Nicholson	Bursar at local primary school
	Nicky	Beneficiaries
	Sue	Beneficiaries
	Vinny	Beneficiaries
Manchester Jewish Museum	Stuart Hilton	Director
	Don Rainger	Administrator
	Jeremy Michaelson	Education Officer
	Sandra O'Nions	PA to Director
	Alexandra Grime	Curator
	Avril	Volunteer
	Julie Connor	Manchester City Council, regeneration

	Melvin Flacks	Trustee
Markazi Jamia Masjid Khizra/Al Hilali Community Project	Paul Barnes	Khizra Mosque user
	Sikindar Mirza Nazim	UKIM North
	Qari Badruddin	Imam
	Kashif Hussain	Management
	Abdal Salam	Al Hilali Community Project: Manager
	Mrs Sundus Salam	Al Hilali Community Project/Khizra Mosque: Project Manager
ExChange Blackburn	Anjum Anwar	Dialogue Development Officer
	Chris Chivers	Canon
	Tom Stannard	Blackburn with Darwen Council: Director of Policy & Communications
	Nasrullah Anwar	Lancashire Council of Mosques: Director
	Ruby Hussain	Headteacher, Beardwood Humanities College
	Abdul Piracha	Volunteer
	Andrew Pratt	Lancashire Constabulary: Superintendent
	Right Reverend Nicholas Reade	Bishop of Blackburn
	Dave Bacon	Head of Learner Services, Blackburn College
	Val Edge	Blackburn Diocese: Under 18 Coordinator, Child Protection
Cumbria Reducing Offending Partnership Trust (CROPT)	Richard Rhodes	Cumbria Probation Board Chair, CROPT Principal Partner
	David Peacock	
	Elaine Miller	Project Worker, CROPT
	Ian Gibson Volunteer Coordinator	Volunteer Coordinator, CROPT
	Joan Wager	Cumbria Methodist District, CROPT Volunteer
	Clive Miles	Approved Premises Manager, Beneficiary
Sikh Community Centre	Ragbhir Singh	Beneficiary
	Narinder Singh	Beneficiary
	Jagwan Singh	Beneficiary
	Mrs Harsharan Kaur Misra	Volunteer
	Mrs Harjit Kaur	Management



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