

Strategic Outlook

2018–21



**The
Faith
& Belief
Forum**

Formerly 3FF
(Three Faiths Forum)

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Executive Summary

This three-year plan sets out the trajectory for the next phase of development of the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF). It is a guiding document for staff and trustees who have all been consulted widely in its evolution, along with key stakeholders. The content reflects our ambition to make a significant contribution to strengthening relations between people of different faiths and beliefs. This at a time when there is both a need to celebrate the creativity and social cohesion that is generated by such strength, and to work on the factors that threaten to undermine it.

OUR CONTEXT AND OUR APPROACH

Our **vision** is a connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures have strong, productive and lasting relations. We believe the future belongs to people of all beliefs, that religious intolerance has no place in society and that diversity adds value.

Our **mission** is to promote and build meaningful and resilient relationships between people of all faiths and non-religious beliefs, through education, encounter, and social action opportunities. We consider ourselves to be an areligious, apolitical organisation which has inclusivity and integrity at its core.

Over the past 20 years, we have gradually evolved from an organisation engaging with religious leaders within Christianity, Islam and Judaism, to one building relations between all faiths and beliefs, and with a strong youth focus. Operating at this grassroots level enables us to effect positive and long-lasting change, and it provides our stakeholders and supporters with a clear and evidence-based sense that they are delivering impact. This echoes the sentiments of one of our founders, Sir Sigmund Sternberg, and our continued partnership with the Sir Sigmund Sternberg Charitable Foundation (SSCF).

We now adopt an approach that emphasises understanding the varied ways in which we live our faiths and beliefs. We celebrate the creativity and innovation that comes from working across different faiths and non-religious beliefs and draw attention to issues that block and undermine such opportunity. This approach has brought us significant success over the past 10 years. We have received awards for our work in schools and universities, and more recently for our internship and volunteering programme. We currently reach over 15,000 people a year in the UK through our programmes, providing a solid base from which to grow further over the next period of development.

In addition to establishing robust programmes, we have strengthened our management and governance systems over the last few years, increasing our funding base and preparing for expansion in 2018–2021.

Our rapidly-changing **context** provides renewed opportunities for people of different faiths and beliefs to learn, connect and celebrate together to improve society. However, there are also a persistent, interconnected and complex array of ‘dividers’ that threaten to undermine this unity and creativity. The UK is facing increasing demographic change, rising social and economic inequality, and increasing hate crime. Social divisions along faith and cultural lines, heightened by the 2016 EU Referendum, are exacerbated by a lack of **political voice and leadership opportunities for younger people**. Furthermore, public attitudes towards faith and belief are significantly shaped by a **rapidly evolving media landscape**, one that increases stereotyping and division, whilst also presenting new ways of engaging and connecting.

The above factors and trends influence how we behave towards each other and affect the extent to which we can harness the creativity across different faiths and beliefs needed to tackle them. These factors can be considered alongside an increasingly complex picture of faith and belief in the UK, with an increase in both religious diversity and non-religious belief. In this context, we need greater understanding of who we are, of each other’s faiths and beliefs and the **intersection between faith, belief and other aspects of our identity** such as race, gender, sexuality and class. Greater understanding can help us develop a sense of community, a ‘we’ that is more aligned to tackling the factors that divide.

Our work is designed to address our challenging context according to a robust **theory of change**.

Through our work in schools, universities, communities and online, we (1) create safe spaces for encountering and understanding lived faith, belief and identity; and we (2) foster leadership and influence that harnesses the potential residing in difference.

These outputs lead to (1) connectivity and exchange between people of different faiths, beliefs and identities, and between those with different levels of access to power; (2) resilience to divisive narratives based on trust in ‘the other’; and (3) practical action that has positive leverage on the wider context.

These outcomes lead to three impacts: (1) socio-economic and political inclusion that fosters trust and confidence between communities of difference; (2) informed handling of fast paced demographic change that encourages connectivity across difference rather than separation; and (3) public understanding of the lived experience of both religious and non-religious beliefs which reduces community tension.

These impacts in turn bring about our vision:
A connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures have strong, productive and lasting relations.

OUR GOALS

Over the next three years, we will make a significant contribution to our vision by implementing three interconnected and strategic goals.

We will equip more learners with the skills and tools they need to handle and influence relations between different faiths and beliefs. We will develop hubs in London, the Midlands and the North of England. This expansion will build our capacity to engage 10% of schools in each region through the delivery of programmes such as our School Workshops, School Linking, and Amplify programmes, and through expanding our online resources. A large proportion of the schools we will work with are likely to be faith schools. We will double the number of universities participating in our ParliaMentors programme from 9 to 20, building on current participation in London, the Midlands and the North of England. Our engagement with Higher Education will include the offer of full training packages and the delivery of modules as part of lecturer training courses.

We will generate stronger community-based movement aimed at strengthening faith relations and social cohesion in communities, with youth at the forefront. As our work with schools and universities develops, we will establish connectors and platforms that enable students and young adults to increase their influence on the communities they work and live within. We will work with young leaders to implement and sustain their ideas, for example through the annual Interfaith Summit, and we will connect them with those who can amplify their vision, including community organisations, parents and employers. This will build on our track record of working with and through the arts, and on our broader network of interfaith organisations and activists that we will continue to award at our annual evening of Faith Recognition and Celebration.

We will project the voices of those we support and the impact of our partnership with them. We will strengthen our external relations, publishing the impact and significance of work in our field and sustaining engagement with stakeholders who share our approach and values. We will provide a platform for those involved to demonstrate what works, what still needs to be done, and what further support is required. This will include evidencing how our partnerships impact the context in which we work. We will refresh our branding and website to enhance our communications and will establish strategic partnerships with organisations and individuals well-placed to promote our mission.

STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANISATION

To meet our goals, the infrastructure of the organisation will need to develop. We will build our **capacity for working ‘in the right places’**. Key to both where and how we work is greater capacity to engage in contexts beyond Greater London. Understanding these contexts and becoming more context driven is a key feature of this plan. We aim to establish regional teams in the Midlands, the North and in other locations where our approach is needed most, including in more rural, mono-cultural settings.

We must also consider where we work in geographic regions outside the UK. We have a well-established project in Israel that engages with health care professionals to improve the quality of patient care and build trust between individuals from various faith and ethnic communities. Finding ways to strengthen and broaden our work in this region remains crucial given the prominence of the Middle East to many faith communities in the UK. We plan to strengthen our work in Israel over the timeframe of this plan, increasing the number of hospitals we work with and building on this to broaden our programming in the region with due regard to political sensitivities. We will also continue to explore opportunities to engage with partners in wider Europe. This is particularly important given the consequences of the referendum on membership of the EU and the challenges this already poses for relations between people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures.

We will increase our **capacity to raise funds and support** by diversifying our funding base and drawing in more resources. We anticipate that to deliver our goals effectively we will need to significantly increase our expenditure. We will expand our funding base to new partnerships with trusts and foundations, governmental and inter-governmental organisations, corporate businesses, and individual donors. In doing so, we will harness the support and networks of our board, patrons and champions.

Our capacity building will also include **strengthening the coherence of our delivery**.

We are a values-led organisation. Our core values are that everybody should get fair treatment, that there should be equity in opportunity to grow and develop, and to express our whole selves. Everybody should have the opportunity to be included in decision making, both by being heard and by having their interests looked after, and that all should behave sensitively and with mutual respect. Our organisation is made up of people who have the urge to make a difference in today's world, so that lived reality is more in line with our values than is the case today, and we accompany that urge with the insight to act.

Over the coming years we will work hard to uphold our values, developing the necessary policies and guidance to help us. We will develop a programming framework that articulates our approach; improve our capacity to collect and analyse data from our activities; and ‘practice what we preach’, building on our reputation as a leader in the third sector when it comes to what we offer our staff, volunteers and interns. We will develop an effective People Strategy and we will improve the diversity of our staff team.

The combination of context, goals and capacity, combine to present a visionary but realistic strategy that will create a step change in our organisation's ability to make a positive difference to relations between people of different faiths and beliefs.

Introduction

The Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF), formerly the Three Faiths Forum (3FF), was founded in 1997. Over the last 10 years, we have established programmes which have engaged over 100,000 people. Our work has been mainly in the UK, but also in the Middle East and Europe. This plan aims to significantly increase our reach by 2021.

Our approach to exploring the personal nature of faith and belief counters inaccurate generalisations which can lead to stereotyping and prejudice. We have developed methodologies that have enabled this exploration of 'lived faith' to be adopted in schools, universities, and in community spaces.

Creating the environment in which this exploration can happen effectively and safely is at the centre of what we do. The next phase of our development will take us into new environments and will require us to further refine and develop our methodologies.

We believe that connectivity and understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs is blocked primarily by issues associated with power and social exclusion, not so much by diversity and differences in belief. Indeed, encountering the diversity of faith and belief can be a way of generating the creativity we need to tackle exclusion and power.

We plan to reach more schools and universities, aiming to connect with 10% of all schools and higher education institutions in the UK by 2021. We will help establish a wide variety of community-based initiatives, building a movement targeting areas of high deprivation and working with the included to address the needs of the excluded. And we will amplify our voice and the voices of those we work with, reaching new audiences through varied media platforms.

To do this we will need broader partnerships. Central to our work will be our growing network of volunteers and alumni who will help take our messages and approaches into workplaces and public spaces. Launching our new plan and new brand to a wider range of financial supporters will help us secure the resources we need.

This plan then seeks to guide F&BF's leadership team and Board through a significant period in our own development and critically, through a time of near unprecedented external political, economic and societal change within the UK, Europe and the wider world. It aims to navigate our journey for a period of three years from April 2018 to March 2021, building from a preparation period in 2017-2018.

VISION

Our vision is a connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures have strong, productive and lasting relations. We believe the future belongs to people of all beliefs, that religious intolerance has no place in society and that diversity adds value.

MISSION

Our mission is to promote and build meaningful and resilient relationships between people of all faiths and non-religious beliefs, through education, encounter, and social action opportunities.

WHO WE ARE

We consider ourselves to be an areligious, apolitical organisation which has inclusivity and integrity at its core. We are connectors of people and organisations of different faiths and non-religious beliefs. We attempt to be completely transparent in all our dealings and feel that this is a cornerstone of the trust beneficiaries and stakeholders have in us. We work hard to be an empathetic and compassionate organisation, with a belief that every individual has the right to be treated as they would want to be. We are committed to working in a professional and ethical manner towards a fairer and confidently diverse society.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Over the past 20 years, we have gradually evolved from an organisation engaging with religious leaders within Christianity, Islam and Judaism, to one building relations between all faiths and beliefs, and with a strong youth focus. This evolution reflects the changing context within which we work.

Taking into account significant regional variations, continued demographic change, and the observation that the group which is most isolated by neighbourhood is the White British population,¹ the picture of faith, belief and identity in the UK today is one of increasing complexity and diversity.

Indeed, 'the last twenty-five years have witnessed some of the most significant shifts in religious belief and practice since the Reformation, as traditional forms of religious authority, and uniformity of doctrine and practice, have given way to a much wider and more diverse range of religious and non-religious commitments'²

In response, we have developed programmes which engage with this complexity, building on our strong legacy of building relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews. We now adopt an approach that emphasises understanding the varied ways in which we live our faiths and beliefs. We celebrate the creativity and innovation that comes from working across different faiths and non-religious beliefs and draw attention to issues that block and undermine such opportunity.

1 Catney, G. (2013). "Has neighbourhood residential mixing increased?" University of Manchester/JRF: <https://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/research/briefings/dynamics-of-diversity/>

2 Charles Clarke & Linda Woodhead (2015). "A new settlement: religion & belief in schools", Westminster Faith Debates: <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>

This approach has brought us significant success over the past 10 years. We have received awards for our work in schools and universities, and more recently for our internship and volunteering programme. We currently reach over 15,000 people a year in the UK through our programmes, providing a solid base from which to grow further over the next period of development.

In addition to establishing robust programmes, we have strengthened our management and governance systems over the last few years. The introduction of a Development and Fundraising Manager has provided the leadership we need to drive more aggressive fundraising. We have increased salaries to be more in line with the average in our sector, making us a more attractive employer.

We have changed our name from the Three Faiths Forum to **the Faith & Belief Forum**, communicating the organisation we are rather than the organisation we were. We have established our first 'out of London' team in the West Midlands, underlining our aspiration to become a truly national organisation. We have registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), enabling us to better manage risk and liability. We have expanded our board of trustees, including the recent addition of a Treasurer, improving governance and oversight.

We are fortunate to have the continued support of the Sir Sigmund Sternberg Charitable Foundation (SSCF) that both brought us into existence and sustains us. The last two years has witnessed a healthy exchange of ideas about the future direction of the organisation and we are looking forward to strengthening this relationship further as we implement this plan.

As part of the process to develop this plan, we have undertaken a formal desk-based competitor analysis of three organisations with comparable values and operating models. From this review, we have been able to identify and isolate our Unique Selling Proposition: as an organisation with a strong belief that our value lies in working at a grassroots level. In this way, we address the misperceptions and challenges that can emerge within communities where people of different faiths and non-religious beliefs are living.

Operating at this grassroots level enables us to effect positive and long-lasting change, and it provides our stakeholders and supporters with a clear and evidence-based sense that they are delivering impact. This echoes the sentiments of one of our founders, Sir Sigmund Sternberg, who underlined the importance of grassroots dialogue during an address in our founding year of 1997:

‘Combating Islamophobia is only a part but an important part of what we in the Three Faiths Forum intend to do. Attitudes cannot be changed by edict, by orders, by laws. They can be changed only by education, by familiarity, by dialogue. They can be changed only in an atmosphere, generated within the grassroots, where there is a willingness to listen to other voices. That is what we are all about.’ Sir Sigmund Sternberg, KCSG, GCFO, JP

Equally, our grassroots focus gives resonance to the views that we express to policy-makers, enabling us to effect change within government, the media and public at large. The shift that we will seek to deliver over the lifetime of this plan is measured and manageable, driven by identified need and not by funders' priorities. It focusses on our talents and expertise in the UK while building on our existing relationships elsewhere in the world. The plan supports our ongoing understanding about how we might expand our national and international influence in the future.

CONTEXT

The ‘diverse range of religious and non-religious commitments’ referred to above provides new opportunities for people of different faiths and beliefs to learn, connect and celebrate together to improve society. Such collaboration and dialogue opens-up opportunities and enriches understanding and creativity. The ‘Great Get Together’ in 2017, initiated by Brendon Cox after the murder of his wife, MP Jo Cox, is a recent example of people from different faiths and beliefs giving legitimacy to Jo Cox’s view that ‘there is more that unites us than divides us.’³ However, there is a persistent, interconnected and complex array of ‘dividers’ that threaten to undermine this unity and creativity.

Inequality, hate crime and demographic change

Antisemitism, Islamophobia and hate crime against minority faith groups is on the rise, with significant spikes following terrorist attacks such as those in Manchester and London in 2017.⁴ Indeed, whilst faith-based groups have come together in the aftermath of these tragedies to express solidarity and unity, many, particularly Muslims, increasingly fear for their safety. There are no simple answers to why such hate persists. However, inequality is a factor that cannot be ignored. Inequality has been rising markedly since the 1980s. Although absolute poverty is in decline globally, the relative poverty rate in high income countries such as the UK has continued to rise in recent years.⁵

The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London in 2017 proved a lightning rod for those suffering the impacts of social injustice.⁶ Furthermore, the result of the 2016 EU referendum in the UK was indicative of feelings of anxiety and anger as immigration became closely linked to economic insecurities deepened by the austerity measures of recent governments.⁷ In addition, rising house prices in inner-city boroughs such as London’s are pushing residents into outer, less diverse boroughs, increasing further the pace of demographic change in some regions. Inequality and a sense of unfairness, perceived or real, undermines people’s willingness to share with others, particularly those who belong to pre-existing ‘out groups’ such as ethnic and religious minorities. Given these factors, we must deepen understanding of different faiths and beliefs, particularly in schools and colleges, in a way that helps learners develop the knowledge and skills they need to tackle the issues threatening to divide.

3 Tim Wyatt (13 June 2017), “‘More in common than divides’ is theme of gatherings this weekend, in memory of Jo Cox”, *Church Times*: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/16-june/news/uk/more-in-common-than-divides-is-theme-of-gatherings-next-weekend-in-memory-of-jo-cox>

4 Home Office (2017). Hate Crime England and Wales 2016-17 – Statistical Bulletin.

5 UK data is collected annually on social inequality and poverty. See *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2017>

6 Jonathan Derbyshire (3 October 2017), “How the Grenfell fire reveals the depth of London’s social divide”, *Financial Times*, <https://www.ft.com/content/6047d75e-971f-11e7-8c5c-c8d8fa6961bb>

7 The Independent (2016). ‘Hate Crime Surges by 42% in England and Wales since Brexit Result’: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/brexit-hate-crime-racism-stats-spike-police-england-wales-eu-referendum-a7126706.html>

Lack of political voice and leadership opportunities for younger people

The result of the 2017 General Election highlighted an increase in turnout amongst 18 to 24-year olds – from 43% of this age group in 2015 to 58% in 2017.⁸ Commentators point to this being the result of more effective use of social media by political parties, particularly Labour, to engage younger voters. Some point to the need and opportunity for a politics which is more suited to the modern political world - to engage younger people through new approaches to politics. It may well be the case, particularly when considering opportunities for younger people, that 'Britain is not disengaged from politics, (it is more that) the current political model is entirely unsuited to the modern political world' (Matthew Flinders, Professor of Parliamentary Governance at the University of Sheffield).⁹ Our emphasis on young people and on our ParliaMentors programme is a direct response to this trend. Citizen and community involvement in society needs to continue to be a key element of government policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion, modernise services and renew democratic institutions. Equipping people from diverse faiths and beliefs for community involvement, particularly amongst the 18–24 age group, strengthens the opportunity for effective citizen participation.

Rapidly changing media

Attitudes towards faith and belief is significantly shaped by a rapidly evolving media landscape, one that also offers new ways of engaging all people, and particularly young people. The average weekly internet use in the UK has more than doubled in the last 10 years and 86% of people now have access to the internet anywhere.¹⁰ Facebook has 2.2 billion users worldwide (in 2005, it had 5 million).¹¹ Although the rise of digital media provides an opportunity to improve the quality of information and reporting about faith and belief, it also reinforces prejudices, and spreads falsehoods and conspiracy theories about different religious groups online. The success of this plan will depend in large part

on our ability to engage effectively with this changing media landscape, to communicate our impact and amplify the effective voices of those we work with.

Conditions and Identities

The conditions described above influence how we behave towards each other (Figure 1). Our sense of safety and fairness, the quality of leadership, and our responses to demographic change and media coverage – all influence the quality of relations between people of different faiths and beliefs. These factors affect the extent to which we can harness the creativity across different faiths and beliefs needed to tackle the pressing challenges facing our societies today.

In addition to the factors which can divide us, we also must grapple with the complexity of our own multiple identities (Figure 2). The nature of religious and non-religious belief and identity is increasingly complex. It is clear from a number of surveys and studies that the amount of people in the UK identifying as nonreligious is increasing. Some data suggests this is now over half the population. At the same time, within some faith communities there is an increase in religious commitment, underlining the importance of understanding dynamics within, as well as between, faith groups.

To understand the changing landscape of faith and belief, we believe that our society needs a deeper appreciation of our multiple identities. We are people from different faiths and beliefs, as well as different ages, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities and classes. Understanding who we are, each other's faiths and beliefs and the intersection between this and other aspects of our identity, will help us develop a stronger sense of community, a 'we' that is more aligned to tackling those factors which can divide. This better understanding is essential for shaping the communities and services that can meet our needs, and for celebrating the richness of who we are as human beings.

8 John Burn-Murdoch (20 June 2017). "Youth turnout at general election highest in 25 years, data show", *Financial Times*: <https://www.ft.com/content/6734cdde-550b-11e7-9fed-c19e2700005f>

9 Josephine Lethbridge (10 September 2013), "British social attitudes report finds trust is in freefall", *The Conversation*: <http://theconversation.com/british-social-attitudes-report-finds-trust-is-in-freefall-17962>

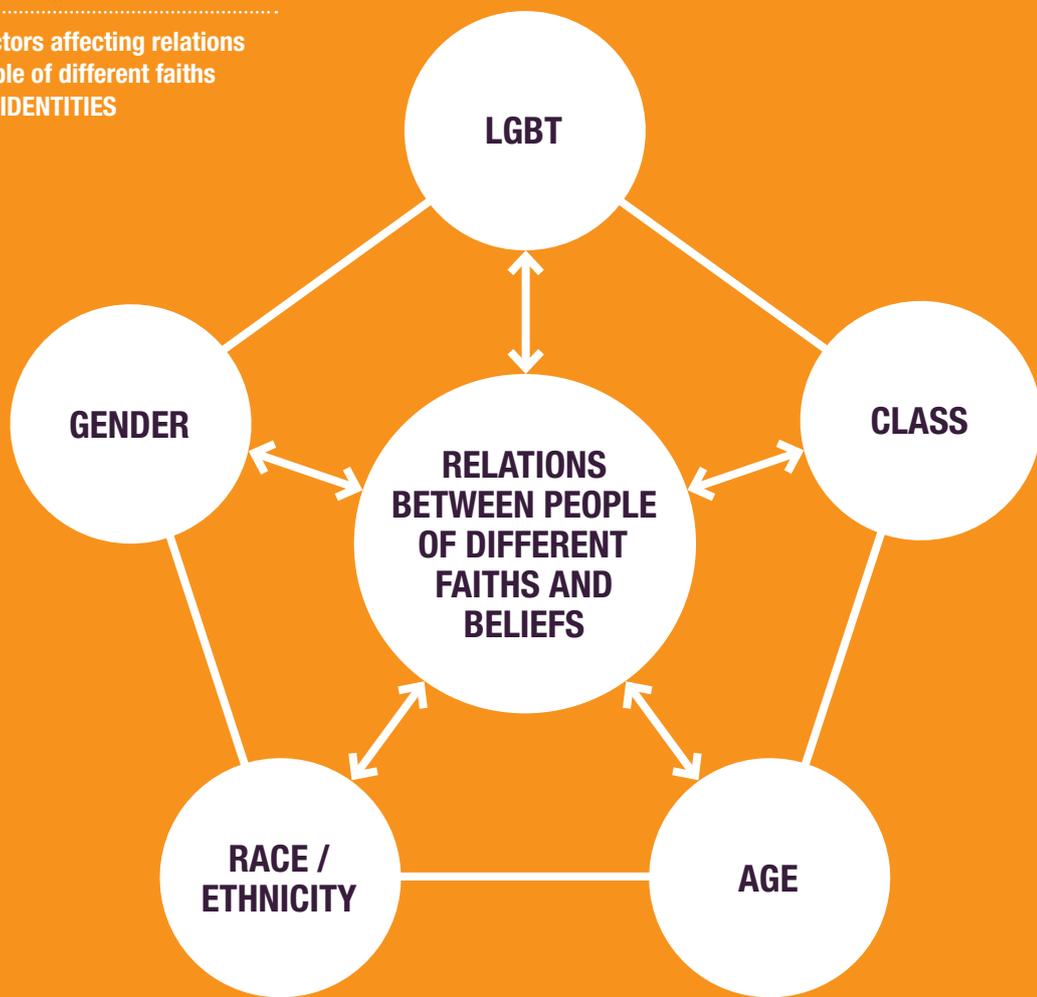
10 ONS (2017). "Internet access – households and individuals: 2017", Office for National Statistics: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2017>

11 Statista (2018). "Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide as of 4th quarter 2017", *Statista: The Statistics Portal*: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>

FIGURE 1: Factors affecting relations between people of different faiths and beliefs – CONDITIONS



FIGURE 2: Factors affecting relations between people of different faiths and beliefs – IDENTITIES



THEORY OF CHANGE

In our recent phase of strategic reflection we have clarified the logical thread leading from activities to positive outcomes. We aim to bring about positive change contributing to the organisation's vision of **a connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and identities have strong, productive and lasting relations**, through providing interventions in education, the workplace and community spaces. Our work responds to a robust social analysis identifying a nexus between socio-economic and political exclusion ('power(lessness)'), rapid demographic change, and deprivation (amongst other factors). Together these factors create and increase social tensions including along faith lines. F&BF seeks to reduce the effects of these conditions.

At the same time, F&BF promotes a belief in the positive impact of collaborative approaches amongst people of different faiths and beliefs – something which underpins its programmes. If such collaboration can focus on the issues that threaten to erode relations between people of different faiths and beliefs, then there are prospects for significant impact towards the organisation's vision.

We design interventions that aim, in the long term, to have a positive impact on the trends and dynamics outlined above, to move towards a society more in line with our values and vision. These interventions, from workshops in schools, to leadership training for university students and the social action of our interns and alumni, establish two conditions or outputs: (1) safe spaces for encountering and understanding lived faith, belief and identity; and (2) leadership and influence that harnesses the potential residing in difference.

These conditions enable the productive mediation of different faiths and beliefs through three outcomes: (1) connectivity and exchange between people of different faiths, beliefs and identities, and between those with different levels of access to power; (2) resilience to divisive narratives based on trust in 'the other'; and (3) practical action that has positive leverage on the wider context.

This mediation produces positive change resulting in three impacts: (1) socio-economic and political inclusion that fosters trust and confidence between communities of difference; (2) informed handling of fast paced demographic change that encourages connectivity across difference rather than separation; and (3) public understanding of the lived experience of both religious and non-religious faith and belief which reduces community tension.

These impacts in turn bring about our vision of a connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and identities have strong, productive and lasting relations.

INPUTS

Our activities connect people of different faiths and deepen understanding of different beliefs, through a mixture of learning and action orientated activities – for example, school linking, dialogue events, workshops, arts activities, social action and training.

OUTPUTS

Safe spaces for encountering and understanding lived faith, belief and identity

Leadership and influence that harnesses the potential residing in difference

OUTCOMES

Connectivity and exchange between people of different faiths, beliefs and identities

Resilience to divisive narratives based on trust in 'the other'

Practical action that has positive leverage on the wider context

IMPACTS

Socio-economic and political inclusion that fosters trust and confidence between communities of difference

Informed handling of fast paced demographic change that encourages connectivity across difference rather than separation

Public understanding of the lived experience of both religious and non-religious faith and belief which reduces community tension

VISION

A connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures have strong, productive and lasting relations

FIGURE 3: THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Goals

INTRODUCTION

We see a generational shift in attitudes as the catalyst for change towards a more connected and supportive society. We therefore put emphasis on education and working with young people, a receptive arena where we can frame interfaith encounters as an integral part of society and everyday life.

Our methodology and way of working has been crafted over the past decade. It is centred on creating spaces in which expressions of lived faith and belief can be shared, explored and applied to social action that tackles those issues that undermine our vision. We utilise different methods and mediums and we aim to apply our methodology in places where our analysis points to greatest need and opportunity.

We believe productive and lasting relations between people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures is most likely when there is (a) opportunity to explore and understand personal, lived expressions of faith and belief, and (b) leadership and influence that can bring together people of different faiths and beliefs to work for productive societal change.

Our key, interconnected, strategic goals are threefold:

1. To equip more learners with the skills and tools they need to handle and influence relations between different faiths and beliefs. We will develop hubs in London, the Midlands and the North of England. This expansion will build our capacity to engage 10% of schools in each region through the delivery of programmes such as our School Workshops, School Linking, and Amplify programmes, and through expanding our online resources. A large proportion of the schools we will work with are likely to be faith schools. We will double the number of universities participating in our ParliaMentors programme from 9 to 20, building on current participation in London, the Midlands and the North of England. Our engagement with Higher Education will include the offer of full training packages and the delivery of modules as part of lecturer training courses.

2. To generate stronger community-based movement aimed at strengthening faith relations and social cohesion in communities, with youth at the forefront. As our work with schools and universities develops, we will establish connectors and platforms that enable students and young adults to increase their influence on the communities they work and live within. We will work with young leaders to implement and sustain their ideas, for example through the annual Interfaith Summit, and we will connect them with those who can amplify their vision, including community organisations, parents and employers. This will build on our track record of working with artists, and on our broader network of interfaith organisations and activists that we will award at our annual evening of Faith Recognition and Celebration.

3. To project the voices of those we support and the impact of our partnership with them. We will strengthen our external relations, publishing the impact and significance of work in our field and sustaining engagement with stakeholders who share our approach and values. This will include evidencing how our partnerships impact the context in which we work. We will refresh our branding and website to enhance our communications and will establish strategic partnerships with organisations and individuals well-placed to enhance our mission.

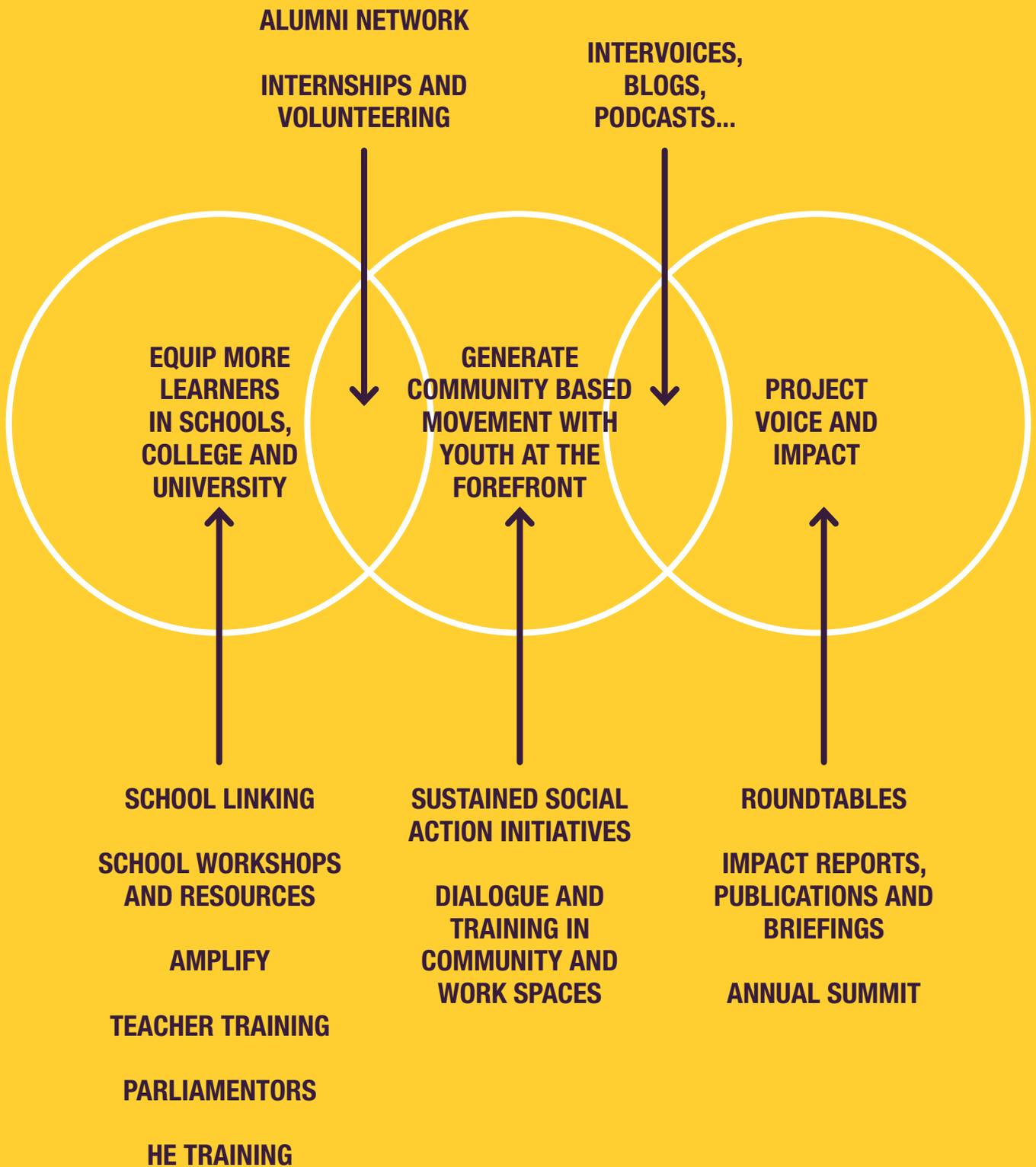


FIGURE 4: GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

GOAL 1

To equip more learners with the skills and tools they need to handle and influence relations between different faiths and beliefs

Introduction

There are approximately 20,000 state funded schools in England and Wales. Of these, about 7,000 are identified as faith based, with the largest number of these being Church of England (68%) and Catholic (30%).¹² However, there are a significant number of faith schools of other denominations. At the time of the 2011 census, there were 42 Jewish schools, 12 Muslim schools, 3 Sikh, and 1 Hindu school. In addition to these state funded schools, there is an increasing number of independent faith schools and academies. In 2012 there were 911 independent faith schools, of which 139 were Muslim, 49 Jewish, 116 Roman Catholic, 268 Church of England, 301 Other Christian, and 3 Multifaith.¹³ In 2016/17, we ran approximately 300 workshops in 100 schools, with our biggest growth area being the West Midlands. We engage mostly but not exclusively with faith schools. There are 109 universities and institutes of higher education in England and Wales.¹⁴ We currently work with nine – Birmingham City University, Coventry University, Nottingham Trent University, Salford University, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Queen Mary University of London, University of Birmingham, University of Manchester and University of Nottingham.

12 Angela Harrison (3 December 2011), "Catholic faith schools in academy switch", BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-15985615>.

13 See (2010) 'Maintained Faith Schools', UK Government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maintained-faith-schools>; also see <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Downloads>

14 Universities UK (25 August 2016), "Higher education in facts and figures 2016": <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Pages/facts-and-figures-2016.aspx>

School workshops and resources

These workshops introduce pupils to speakers of different faiths and beliefs and teach them how to ask questions in an appropriately sensitive way. Over the coming three years, we plan to reach 10% of all schools in England and Wales with our workshops and resources. This will be achieved through not only doubling the number of workshops we deliver, but by marketing a wider range of online resources to teachers. The effective marketing of resources will go hand in hand with the raising of our profile and voice (Goal 3) and will also help to widen our reach to urban and rural schools beyond London.

School linking

Linking brings together a school with pupils identified with predominantly one religious faith with a school with pupils of another faith to explore curriculum subjects together. This programme is more resource intensive and, therefore, less elastic than our workshops and resources.

Nevertheless, we engaged over 40 schools in our linking programme in 2016/17 and aim to expand this over the coming three years. Most of our linking is in London and our priority will be to increase the number of links out of London. We aim to have 200 schools engaged in our linking programme by 2021, covering London, the Midlands and the North.

Amplify

It has been challenging to develop an offer to 16 to 18-year olds due to pressure of exams on this age group. However, in 2016/17 we successfully piloted 'Amplify' with one sixth form. Amplify is a modular programme that supports students in developing and communicating manifestos conveying views and ideas on societal issues through an interfaith lens. This programme acts as a pre-runner to ParliaMentors (PMs), with PMs alumni involved in delivering certain aspects of Amplify. We aim to establish the Amplify programme within 15 FE colleges/sixth forms by 2021.

ParliaMentors

We have been running our award-winning PMs programme for 10 years now, engaging nine Universities and 50 students each year. The social action projects developed as part of this youth leadership programme are increasingly significant and act as a link to Goal 2 below, facilitated by the PMs Alumni. Over the coming three years, we aim to increase the number of universities and students involved in the programme, creating a step change in the volume and impact of the political engagement and social action generated by these young leaders.

University and teacher training

One way of reaching more students is through teacher training and over the next three years, we will target teacher training colleges with our modules on exploring faiths and beliefs and handling controversial issues in the classroom. In addition, we will offer a full training package to universities that enable students and staff to handle interfaith issues on campus. By 2021 we aim to engage with 20% (approximately 21) of HE institutions.

GOAL 2

To generate stronger community-based movement, with youth at the forefront

Introduction

Having developed as a grassroots organisation, we are well-placed to contribute to movement building. It is important that those we support through learning and education programmes are also supported in their efforts to apply that learning and education to their ongoing social action and their employment. This goal aims to do just that, working with our growing alumni of ParliaMentors, teachers and volunteers to influence change at community, workplace and policy levels. The success of the alumni-led Interfaith Summit over the past three years points to a deficit in youth-led interfaith social action. Furthermore, employers' awareness and attention to 'religion or belief' as a protected characteristic covered by the Equalities Act falls behind other aspects of identity such as gender, sexuality and disability. This goal aims to help change this situation, advancing social inclusion through community-based movements aimed at creating deeper understanding of the diversity of faith and belief beyond the education sector and applying this understanding to social action.

Alumni networks

Our networks comprise approximately 400 young leaders who have completed ParliaMentors over the past decade, plus those who have engaged with our internship programme and worked with us as volunteers. We support these alumni to continue their social action and enhance their careers in political and civic life. Over the next three years, we will work to project the voices and ideas of our alumni through strategic collaboration with business, government and civil society partners. By 2021, we will be supporting over 20 sustained social action initiatives amongst our alumni, making a significant contribution to interfaith relations and social inclusion in communities.

Celebrating interfaith

Over the next three years, we will establish several major public events that celebrate the interfaith movement and provide forums for the more excluded in society to engage with the more included. The Interfaith Summit, coordinated by the PMs alumni, is now in its third year, attracting 400 people during interfaith week each November. Over the next three years, we will work with the PMs alumni to build the profile of this event, increasing its reach. In addition, we will continue to work in partnership with the Greater London Lieutenancy in convening an annual Faith Recognition & Celebration Event, showcasing the work of less recognised faith communities and those working with them for social inclusion.

Our local community

We are Camden's main interfaith organisation, with links to the Council (Charity of the Year in 2014), the Board of Deputies of British Jews (in Kentish Town), and various places of worship and local community groups. Our interns also run fundraising events in the borough. Over the next three years, we will build on our local interfaith networks to make more of a difference to interfaith relations and social inclusion in Camden. We will encourage greater faith awareness and collaboration amongst Camden based organisations, applying our programmes to the local needs of our own neighbourhood.

Volunteering and work

Our internships and speaker volunteer programme have been awarded by the Jewish Volunteering Network and set a standard for nurturing the leaders of tomorrow. They provide quality volunteering opportunities in the charitable sector. Over the coming three years we plan to give advice and input to other organisations in the charitable sector on how to benefit from interfaith volunteering and faith awareness. By 2021, we will have established more than ten strategic partnerships with other organisations in the charitable sector, influencing the ways they engage with faith and encouraging more inclusive approaches.

The Arts

Over the past few years we have developed a reputation for engaging with artists and the arts. This work has included the Urban Dialogues exhibitions, creative work aimed at expressing 'what women believe,' and the Mixed Up Chorus (MUC). MUC has now been established as an independent entity, giving us the space and capacity to develop a new partnership with the National Theatre. Over the next two years, we will work with the National Theatre to explore faith and belief through plays, together with a select group of young people. We will build on this and our track record to sustain a portfolio of partnerships with arts organisations.

GOAL 3

To project voice and impact

Introduction

To maximise our impact, we need to be better known to attract supporters and link up with other strategic partners. We will feed the results of our programmatic work into communications and campaigns through our hubs in London, the Midlands and the North. By communicating the longitudinal impact of our work through stories and studies, we draw attention to the importance of long term investment in education and movement building. We need to be more persuasive about the longer-term importance of our work in the face of shorter term policy responses by those addressing the connection between faith, belief and social cohesion.

Context briefings/reports

We will publish a series of briefings on the interface between faith, belief and societal issues such as hate crime, housing, media coverage, and exclusion due to gender, sexuality and ethnicity. This research will build on the internal papers we commissioned in 2016 and on the connections made with the Greater London Lieutenancy. By 2021, we will have published over 10 briefing papers on different issues. In addition, we will commission a survey of attitudes towards faith and belief in the UK, projecting a relatable and informed voice on the interfaith opportunities and challenges facing our society.

Interfaith Voices

We have begun to collect and post blogs and podcasts on our website articulating personal expressions on different issues from the perspective of different faiths and beliefs. This work has engaged a growing number of alumni and includes recent posts on attitudes towards Brexit one year on from the EU referendum, and on race and faith. We will continue to build this online activity series, providing a platform for those from our network to express and explore ideas.

Brand and media

Our website and digital media platforms will be essential to projecting our voice and message. Our renaming provides us with the opportunity to reflect on and implement a bold, new image and tone of voice which reflects the ambitions we have set for ourselves over this three-year period. During the first year of this plan, we will improve the appeal of our website and other media platforms. We plan to double our reach in three years by improving the quantity and quality of our content and by investing in boosting our posts. The planned BBC Radio 4 Appeal that will be broadcast in the summer of 2018 presents a launch pad. We will complement a strong social media presence with more reflective articles and opinion pieces in print and broadcast media.

Impact measurement

Our partnership with Coventry University offers great opportunity to improve our impact measurement. We are already working with a PhD student, exploring the impact of our schools linking programme. By 2021, this will have produced several tools for the ongoing measurement of this aspect of our work. We will complement this process with further refinement of our data collection and data analysis, identifying key performance indicators for each of our programmes and reporting regularly on these. During the next three years we will organise a major conference on faith, belief and education, showcasing the impact of the work we do and setting out our stall as a leader in interfaith and intercultural education.

Charter

We plan to launch our new name and refreshed image at a major event during the second half of 2018. This will include engaging current and new supporters in signing up to a charter for faith positive community. This charter will comprise a number of value statements that organisations can sign up to and commit to, whether they are a school, an arts organisation, a faith institution, a football club, or a private business. By signing up to these statements they will become engaged in co-creating a longer document that will set out the charter in more detail.

Connect and collaborate

We think together, work collaboratively with our teammates and support the work of other teams. We value diversity. We create and support opportunities that bring people together who wouldn't normally meet. We promote interfaith/intercultural activity, and we build community relations.

Communicate sensitively and effectively

We are honest and respectful. We demonstrate openness, empathy and curiosity when learning about others' experiences, opinions and expertise. We always consider a multiplicity of views, share ideas with others and give feedback constructively to support, inspire and motivate others. We aim to address tensions and to create safe spaces to discuss difficult issues.

Reflect and grow

We value ideas and innovation. We reflect on and learn from our experiences, seeking advice from others when relevant, to find opportunities to grow and improve. We find new ways of doing things and value new ideas towards achieving our aims.

Be focused and flexible

We ensure that our activities make an impact towards achieving our aims, following our organisational strategy, maintaining focus and avoiding distractions. We take personal responsibility and ownership over our work so we can make changes when appropriate to mitigate or solve problems and explore new opportunities

Conclusion

The next three years are predicted to be a time of social change and uncertainty in the UK and globally. Our rapidly-changing context provides renewed opportunities for people of different faiths and beliefs to learn, connect and celebrate together to improve society, as well as a set of 'dividers' that threaten to undermine social cohesion, equality and creativity. This time of pressing need presents an important opportunity to realise our vision of a connected and supportive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures have strong, productive and lasting relations.

This plan has described a strategy for realising our vision through three goals: (1) equipping more learners with the skills and tools they need to handle and influence relations between different faiths and beliefs; (2) generating stronger community-based movement aimed at strengthening faith relations and social cohesion in communities, with youth at the forefront; and (3) projecting the voices of those we support and the impact of our partnership with them. These goals can be achieved by building our capacity as an organisation. We will work 'in the right places' with the maximum need and opportunity. We will increase our capacity to raise funds and support by diversifying our funding base and drawing in more resources. We will strengthen the coherence of our delivery by supporting growth in staff and income whilst maintaining our values and the close 'family' culture we hold dear. By 2021, the expanded Faith & Belief Forum will stand at the forefront of a social movement demonstrating that the future belongs to people of all beliefs, that religious intolerance has no place in society and that diversity adds value.



**The
Faith
& Belief
Forum**

Formerly 3FF
(Three Faiths Forum)