

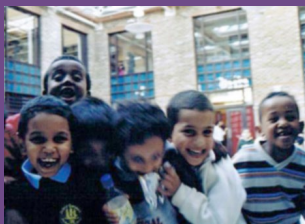
How does it benefit society?

- forms a part of a wider voluntary and community sector which is recognised as necessary to meet social and community needs
- helps to build skills and confidence for participation in society
- provides culturally accepted services that communities trust and use
- is locally rooted, and through the presence of faith groups in neighbourhoods is about local people working with local people to develop local solutions together
- assists in bringing the voices of the most marginalised groups into the public arena
- frequently offers innovative and creative responses to social problems
- provides resources, such as buildings and volunteers to communities
- builds structures and processes that last over time and that can respond to community needs
- helps build social cohesion; groups which otherwise can be isolated work with others in the community



The Zoroastrian Centre in Harrow provides much needed space for a wide variety of local community activity, often free of charge.

Black Boys Can is a church led education programme that began by supporting bright boys to reach their potential and now works with young people and their families regardless of race and gender.



The Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in west London runs supplementary school classes taught by volunteer teachers.

Founded in the 1960s, the Gujarat Hindu Society's community centre in Preston has established



itself as one of the major community organisations in the borough, and worked in partnership with various local authorities to provide services for older

people, to train leaders and support youth work, and has set up a Gujarat Health Users Forum.



The services of the Sikh led Guru Ram Das Project include the provision of yoga classes, meditation, healthcare and counselling.

How do I find out more?

Go to the FbRN UK website www.fbrn.org.uk for more case studies, information, practical worksheets and links to other relevant organisations.

This leaflet has been prepared by the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK

FbRN

What is Faith Based Social Action?

“ Faith congregations and organisations are rooted in their communities, reaching and caring for vulnerable groups and individuals and helping them build a better future.

Stuart Etherington, NCVO Chief Executive

Faith based social action happens when people of faith work together, often with others outside their faith community, in order to achieve real and positive change within their local community, or in wider society.

It springs from the application of spiritual principles, for the betterment of society and the improvement of people's lives.

FbRN UK is the leading national multi faith network for community development, regeneration and social action

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Faith based social action takes many forms

including:

- work with families and children
- work with the elderly
- education and training
- skills development and employment
- community cafes and drop-in centres
- work with the homeless and other vulnerable and marginalised groups
- prison chaplaincy and helping the rehabilitation of ex-offenders
- health issues
- debt and financial counselling
- music and arts projects
- anti-racism and work with refugees and asylum seekers.

In addition, many faith based groups are involved in local governance such as Local Strategic Partnerships, or campaigning on matters of social justice.



Jewish volunteers painting a mural in an inner city school playground as part of Mitzvah Day when they give their time to make a real difference.



The London Buddhist Centre runs retreats and drop-in sessions for East London carers to help them reduce stress.

Who does it and why?

Faith based social action springs from a value base emanating from respective spiritual and religious traditions. These values of respect for other people, the value of human life and the need to help others, lead to positive social action.

Most often this is expressed in the provision of services, support and practical help to communities, and campaigns for improvements in the life of the poorest in society.

One of its characteristics is that it aims to change individuals and communities to become more engaged in the life and improvement of society.



The Jain community meet to work on their role in the Brent Cross and Cricklewood regeneration scheme.



Faith-based community work in Bedford (under the auspices of All Saints Church in partnership with Jamia Masjid Gulshane Baghdad and Guru Nanak Gurdwara) engages children and adults via sports, arts and local heritage. The aims are to foster social cohesion, to help individuals reach their potential, and to have fun!

What does faith based social action look like?

Faith based organisations and charities have a long history of social action, particularly in the most deprived areas. Often, a faith based organisation will act as a catalyst highlighting a difficulty, pioneering an approach and then bringing others together to act on it. The history of education and health care in the UK is full of such examples.

It is an enduring commitment, faith based groups are rooted in the majority of neighbourhoods across the country and are committed to long term support in communities.

Social action can take place in a variety of settings, single faith settings, such as the provision of supplementary schooling for a group of children in danger of underachieving; settings that are open to all, but mainly used by a single faith, such as a community meal; and also in projects and programmes that are used by the wider community.

Often it is done in partnership with other groups in the community, such as tenant associations, and may include public sector partners.

Some faith based organisations, concentrate on a single issue, others act as community anchor organisations across a range of local needs, or offer much needed space as a community resource.



The Swindon Young People's Empowerment Programme was started in January 2001, by Bahá'í's of Swindon, in order to

work with young people on anti-social behaviour, uncontrollable anger, bullying, depression, fear of failure and poor school attendance. Its main aim is to develop a healthy human spirit in children and young people, and adults who work with them, which means developing one's full and positive potential as a human being.