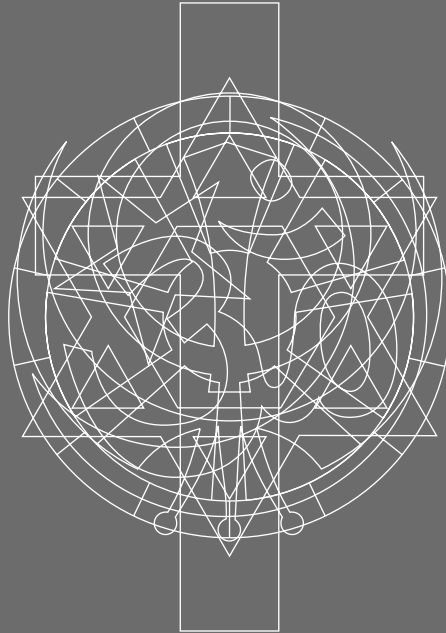


Regenerating London: Faith communities and social action



A report by the London Churches Group for Social Action
and Greater London Enterprise

Foreword

It has long been acknowledged that faith communities organise a large number of activities throughout London that bring great benefits to their local communities. It does not take much searching to find examples of good work organised by religious institutions. Common examples of this work include soup runs, youth clubs and support groups for disadvantaged people. There are also many high profile organisations, with a religious foundation, that play a major role in the charity work that takes place in London. These faith-based charities are leaders in tackling many issues facing the capital such as homelessness, poverty and unemployment.

The advent of Local Strategic Partnerships has created a chance for London's boroughs to strengthen relationships with faith communities and involve them in designing regeneration policy. To capitalise on this opportunity, details of the scope and exact nature of the work carried out by faith communities and faith-based organisations was needed. Although there has always been a general awareness of this work, there have been few facts and figures to back this up. This has been especially true of work carried out by individual worship centres. What was needed was to address this lack of information and document the projects being run by faith communities in London.

For this reason Greater London Enterprise was pleased to be approached by London Church Leaders with the proposal that a joint survey be produced that would, for the first time, provide some hard evidence of the social

action and regeneration activities of faith communities in London.

Initially the research concentrated on the 20 London boroughs eligible for the government's Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. The first report, produced in May 2002, showed that a large amount of work is being carried out by faith organisations in these boroughs. The aim of this new report is to document the work being done by faith communities in all of the London boroughs, and to give a more complete picture of the work of faith communities in London.

The combined results of the first and second stages of the research clearly show that there is a large amount of activity in all of the London boroughs. Faith communities quite obviously continue to play a very significant role in their localities throughout London, and could potentially be a very powerful partner for local government. The creation of Local Strategic Partnerships has created an ideal opportunity for faith communities to work effectively with London's boroughs and be brought into the mainstream of regeneration.

Councillor Dame Sally Powell
Chair, Greater London Enterprise

Contents

Introduction and summary	page 4
Research findings	page 9
Faith communities and regeneration: an overview	page 19
Faith communities and Local Strategic Partnerships	page 23
Case studies: faith community projects in London	page 26
Afterword	page 32
Appendix 1	page 34
Appendix 2	page 38
Acknowledgements	page 46
Bibliography	page 47

Introduction and summary

“Our service to others is our service to God”.

These words, taken from the web site of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which is celebrating its 350th anniversary this year, sum up why people of faith so often play a valuable role in their communities, serving the needy, the isolated, the vulnerable, contributing to the regeneration of their neighbourhoods. The Friends indeed have a particularly outstanding record of demonstrating faith in social action, a notable example out of many being Elizabeth Fry, whose face appears on the newly-designed £5 note. She started her famous (but at the time shocking) prison ministry visiting women prisoners in the degradation of early nineteenth century Newgate Prison in the City of London. Her work not only supplied material needs and brought comfort to many suffering individuals but her campaigning brought major reforms in British prisons and she later travelled throughout Europe reforming prisons, hospitals and mental asylums. The Friends still lead in social action where others are reluctant to tread, most recently by helping to pioneer in this country Circles of Support and Accountability. These groups of volunteers befriend sex offenders as their prison terms end, help them to rehabilitate, find accommodation and jobs and change their ways.

Faith communities in London play a valuable role in their local neighbourhoods, providing support often to those excluded communities who are most difficult to reach. The objective of the survey reported here was to identify every worshipping community in London, and

through the use of questionnaires to gather information about their social action and regeneration activities.

This survey provides some hard facts about what faith groups are doing to support their communities. As Anna King writes in *Clearway*, the Newsletter of the Urban Forum, March 2002: “We are awash with consultation exercises showing lists of needs, but less energy has been spent on describing the strengths, potential and resources...”. This survey aims to demonstrate the valuable role which faith groups play in supporting their communities and the gap which would be left if they were not there.

Background and Objectives

The context of this survey is the growing recognition over the past ten years by public authorities of the contribution of faith communities to their neighbourhoods, and in particular their potential as partners to help achieve neighbourhood renewal. Case studies and descriptive studies are over-represented in the literature on faith communities and social action compared with statistical data. While these studies have produced much valuable material giving policy advice, guidelines and examples of good practice they have had to concentrate on the quality of faith community activity because there has been little quantitative information available on the scale of faith community social action projects. This survey seeks to provide this information for London.

The initiative for the survey came from the Greater London Churches Regeneration Partnership, a group engaged in supporting church regeneration initiatives, working under the umbrella of the London Churches Group for Social Action (which itself represents church leaders and their senior social responsibility officers of all denominations across London).

The Partnership approached Greater London Enterprise (GLE) with a proposal to identify through a mapping exercise the extent and nature of church-organised social action in London. With GLE sponsorship the project was extended to include all faith communities.

GLE were particularly interested in the emerging role of Local Strategic Partnerships within the twenty London boroughs included by the government in their Neighbourhood Renewal programme, and the first phase of the research focused on those boroughs. Results were published in May 2002 as *Neighbourhood renewal in London: the role of faith communities*. These authorities are required to establish Local Strategic Partnerships to bring together all elements of local communities to prepare a community strategy for renewal, and government has encouraged the involvement of faith communities in LSPs, in part because of their contact with the most excluded and difficult to reach groups. The research has now been extended to cover all 32 London boroughs and the Corporation of London.

The ambitious objective was to identify every worshipping community - church, temple, synagogue, mosque, gurdwara - and gather information about their social action activities (excluding congregational activity to support the religious life of the community, such as prayer groups and religious education). Information was gathered through questionnaires, which were also sent to a range of faith-based social action organisations. A mailing list was compiled - the largest

of its kind gathered in London - which covers the great majority of established worshipping congregations in the capital. In all, 3298 congregation leaders and faith-based organisations received questionnaires.

Summary of Results

The results show that a very large number of projects are funded and run today by faith communities, often still aimed at the most vulnerable members of society, particularly those who may not receive support from other sources.

The activities of faith-based groups benefit very large numbers of people: with less than one third of questionnaires returned almost 120,000 beneficiaries have been clearly identified.

Not only do very large numbers of people benefit from the support of faith based projects, but these projects are also fairly substantial employers, offering paid employment to some 3,000 people who help deliver this work. Crucially, they also benefit from the support of 13,500 volunteers, without whom the projects could not be delivered.

The overall response rate to mailings was just under 30%. The survey identified more than 2000 projects being organised by the 1,016 respondents. 70% of those responding had buildings available for use by the local community. Some 120,000 people in London benefited from these projects.

If the information from respondents is a predictor of overall faith-organised social action in the London boroughs, then the survey would suggest that faith communities could be running more than 7,000 projects in London, employing 10,000 staff and involving over 45,000 volunteers. 2,200 buildings would be available for community use. These activities would be serving some

390,000 people. On this basis there can be no doubt that faith communities are a very significant resource for neighbourhood renewal in the capital.

The wider contribution of faith communities

This survey concentrates on what worshipping communities and faith-based organisations do as organisations in the social action field. But faith communities as organisations and people of faith as individuals contribute a good deal more than this to their neighbourhoods, as the example of Elizabeth Fry, quoted at the start of this chapter, illustrates.

The central purpose of faith communities is to practise their faith - to worship, to learn, to teach and to try to live according to their faith's teaching. Social action is a fundamental part of the practice of many faiths because the requirement to serve people in need is central to the teaching of most faiths.

As Stewart Worden points out in his excellent report on *The Church in Croydon's Community* (page 75), where faith groups do not have the resources (buildings, person power, finances) to organise projects they may still fulfill a vital role of mutual support and a sense of belonging for their own congregations, which otherwise might not be present elsewhere in the community for this particular group of people. They are helping to build and sustain stable communities, making a positive contribution to the wider community, and this support is particularly important for immigrant and minority communities.

This survey does not include the contribution that faith groups make to the values of society and which individuals make to the community in all sorts of ways and through many different channels. Faith communities are often impelled by their beliefs and their experiences to challenge the causes of the problems their social action seeks to alleviate, such as unjust structures

at the core of society. Faith communities have been at the heart of campaigns against slavery, child labour, poverty, apartheid, racism, land mines, debt and unjust global trade.

In another sense, too, focusing on faith-related social action underestimates a substantial amount of investment which faith communities provide through other networks. This is particularly true of the long-established churches.

One example, from the Church of England Diocese of London, of one Christian denomination's resources, commitment and contacts in one London Borough (Hackney), helps demonstrate the scale of this investment:

- It is estimated that each year £2.1 million is deployed by the Church of England to support the full range of its work in Hackney. This figure would be considerably higher if account were taken of the financial resources committed to schools in Hackney
- The borough has 23 parishes, with a total of 2,244 people from Hackney on Church electoral rolls
- There are 32 stipendiary (paid) clergy, six non-stipendiary and 15 Sisters of Margaret - all available for ministry to Hackney people
- There are eight Church of England primary schools and one secondary school in Hackney, supported by special advisers
- There are eight substantial church related community projects, employing a total of 31 staff. Each year these bring £750,000 in grants into Hackney
- It is estimated that each week these projects are involved in 1200 separate contacts with Hackney people; and these contacts are often with the poorest and most marginalised people in the borough.

Alongside these activities, through the Hackney Churches Winter Night Shelter initiative, over the last four years seven churches in Hackney, of all denominations, have opened their church halls for overnight accommodation for more than 1000 homeless people; and have provided hot evening meals for a further 1000+. At least 250 Hackney people were involved in volunteering.

Conclusions

A core objective of this project has been to demonstrate that faith communities are a valuable resource for tackling social exclusion in London and that they have a role to play with local authorities in neighbourhood renewal. The survey provides hard evidence of the major contribution that faith communities make to the support of local communities.

We should not however underestimate the struggle involved for a faith group in getting a project off the ground. This report is about London but what follows is a classic example taken from Coventry and reported in the September 2002 issue of *Pilgrim Post*, the bulletin of Churches Together in England. It is quoted with permission, italics added.

“The Coventry Refugee Centre was established nearly three years ago by Revd Christine Perry, now its chair, and three other concerned people. They were already working with the asylum seeker/refugee community but knew that resources would be considerably overstretched when the government’s dispersal policy took effect. *Having failed to engage the statutory bodies they went ahead with no funding, no premises, but with a lot of trust and prayer.*

“From the beginning local churches were supportive. They used premises in St Peter’s community centre for four months until they were shut for redevelopment.

That gave them time to gain a firm footing and to move to a lock-up shop, having managed to secure individual donations to pay the core costs. *The centre has continually struggled for funds, but has kept going with donations from individuals, small sums from some local churches and a very generous donation from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham. ...At first all the workers - over a hundred now - were volunteers*, though a government grant has now been secured to employ an administrator and a volunteer co-coordinator. In the last few months they have collaborated with Whitefriars Housing, who run the Coventry council housing stock, so that there are now more employed staff working to enable those granted permission to remain in the UK to access services and establish themselves in the community. *Many of the volunteers, employees and managing trustees are Christians or other people of faith.*” The experience of the Centre reflects the experience of faith groups across London.

Faith communities provide a valuable resource for the social regeneration of London, and making contact with these communities and their work is important for the successful delivery of neighbourhood renewal. Interest in involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships with local councils seems to be strong among the faith communities. These communities offer opportunities for government to be more effective in their regeneration work. Given the levels of funding and support needed for community projects, co-operation between local councils and faith organisations would benefit both local people and the organisations themselves.

There is an important task for local authorities in helping to unlock the potential of faith communities by employing staff to reach out and make the links. This would enable local authorities and faith groups to play a more effective role at the heart of their communities, and could help to share the burden placed on government

and local councils to take sole responsibility for and to resource all community projects.

The survey is intended also to be a resource for local authorities and faith communities seeking advice on good practice, support and networks. The contact list for the survey is available¹ for local authorities to use to compile directories of local faith communities as recommended (page 29) in *Faith and Community - a good practice guide for local authorities*, recently published by the Local Government Association. The survey is intended also to be a resource for those seeking to develop advice on good practice and to provide support for faith communities seeking to organise projects².

1 Subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act

2 The survey is intended also as a resource for the Evangelical Alliance, who are compiling a database of church social action in London.

Research findings

Methodology

The research is based on a self-completion questionnaire¹ mailed to faith-based organisations in London. For the first tranche of the research, which was published in May 2002, questionnaires were mailed to 2232 faith-based organisations in the 20 London boroughs eligible for neighbourhood renewal funding. To complete the research, in the period June to August 2002, 1066 questionnaires were despatched to organisations in the remaining 13 London local authorities, as well as to three faith groups across London not included in the first tranche: Zoroastrians, Baha'is & Jains. In addition, the Evangelical Alliance (EA) sent questionnaires out to a further 343 EA Organisations and 179 African and Caribbean EA members. While the EA questionnaire varied slightly from those despatched to other contacts, follow-up telephone calls ensured that respondents were asked the full range of questions.

The mailing list was compiled from a variety of sources. The main source was lists from religious organisations, but the Derby University directory Religions in the UK, Yellow Pages directories and lists from previous surveys were also used. Duplications were removed from the lists.

While no such list can be exhaustive, there is no reason to believe that there are any substantial gaps in the mailing. Indeed, it is safe to say that the project has resulted in the most comprehensive list of London congregations and faith-based social action projects yet compiled.

Completed questionnaires were sent back to GLE for processing.

Response Rates

In the first phase of the research, a total of 520 questionnaires was returned in response to the first mailing and, after a second mailing to those who had not responded, an overall response rate of 30% was achieved with in total 667 valid questionnaires returned.

In Phase 2, 280 questionnaires plus 258 EA and ACEA questionnaires were returned. Questionnaires were then sifted to remove duplication and returns from non-London boroughs, and late responses from the first phase received since the publication of the first report added. All responses were then analysed by borough in receipt of neighbourhood renewal funding (NRF boroughs) and non-NRF boroughs. All of the analysis in this report is based on the returned questionnaires, and has not been weighted to be proportionately representative of the relative sizes of the different faith organisations, their representation by borough, or of the questionnaires sent out initially.

The response rate to the second phase broadly followed the same pattern as the first phase. The response from the Muslim community was higher than in phase one, but still lagged behind the others along with the Hindu community.

The response rates when broken down by denomination and borough show some significant

variations. Broadly speaking, response rates were relatively high from more established Christian groups such as the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. Other faiths were well represented with the exception of the Hindu and Muslim communities. This may reflect smaller resources for administrative activities.

Response rates from the 20 NRF boroughs in the survey ranged from a high of more than 36% in Croydon and 38% in Greenwich to a low of 21% in Lewisham, with an average response rate of just under 30%. The low response rate in Newham (20%) is probably due to a large address list from a previous survey containing many temporary addresses.

Response rates in the 13 non NRF authorities showed a greater variation, ranging from 40% in Havering and Bexley to 19% in Redbridge.

The current role and contribution of faith organisations in the community

The wide-ranging contribution which faith-based organisations make to their communities is indicated by the widely diverse projects listed below. These aim to provide support to people facing specific difficulties as well as strengthening the links and support systems within the communities they serve.

This community role has traditionally been one of the more important contributions which faith based organisations provide.

2151 specific projects were cited by congregations and faith-based organisations covered by the survey². Of these, 1234 were based in NRF boroughs and 917 in the other London authorities.

These covered a wide range of activities include those offering help in the following areas:

- Education and Training - including a wide range of classes and study groups. About a quarter of the 137

projects cater for children and teenagers to help with school work or provide extra tuition through Saturday Schools, study groups etc. Other projects in this category include classes for adults in English as a second language, and specialised classes in languages such as Tamil and Hindi, and IT classes. This category excludes state-sector church schools.

- Homelessness and deprivation. Most of these 152 projects are aimed specifically at homeless people, largely providing practical help such as offering shelter and food, but also help with issues such as seeking employment and housing. A few of these projects are aimed at alleviating poverty in general by providing assistance with housing and food.
- Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs and smoking) and support networks (215 projects)
- Advice and counselling in several areas, which includes legal advice, help in accessing employment or generally somewhere to get a range of information. Counselling ranges from specific issues such as mental illness, bereavement or divorce to a more general “someone to talk to” (96 projects).

In addition, faith organisations offer a programme of community support with projects in the following areas:

- family support such as after school care and support for teenage parents (138 projects)
- projects for disabled people (21 projects)
- local issues such as community development and crime prevention (52 projects)
- drama and the arts (98 projects)
- health and sport (99 projects)
- racism, justice, equality, inter-faith co-operation (25 projects)

Chart1 Response rates by Faith

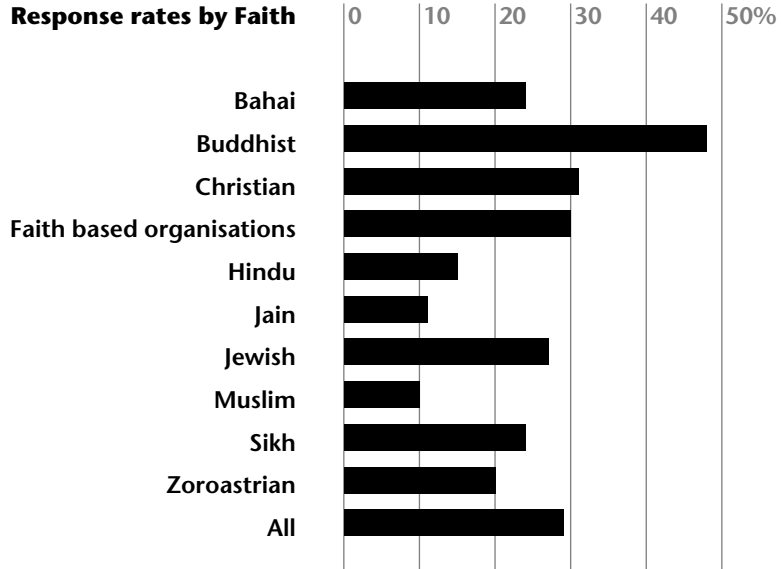


Chart2 Response rates by Christian Denominations

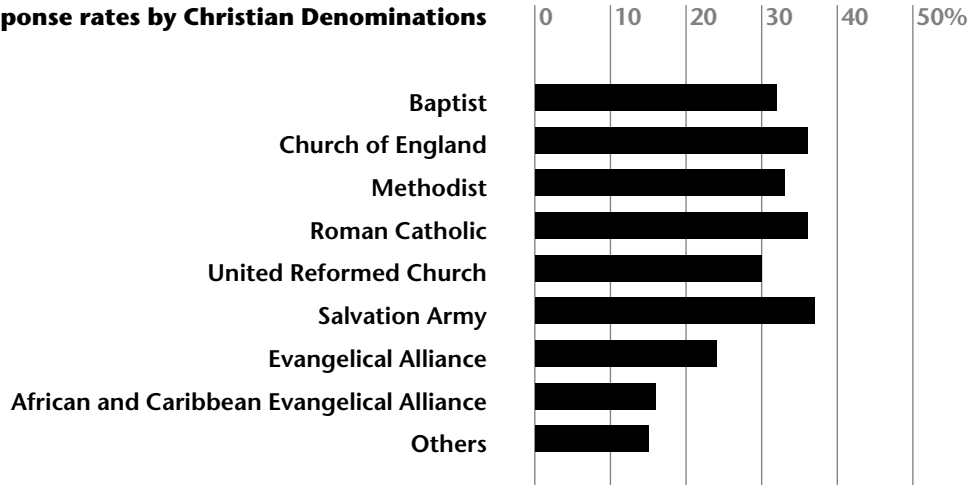
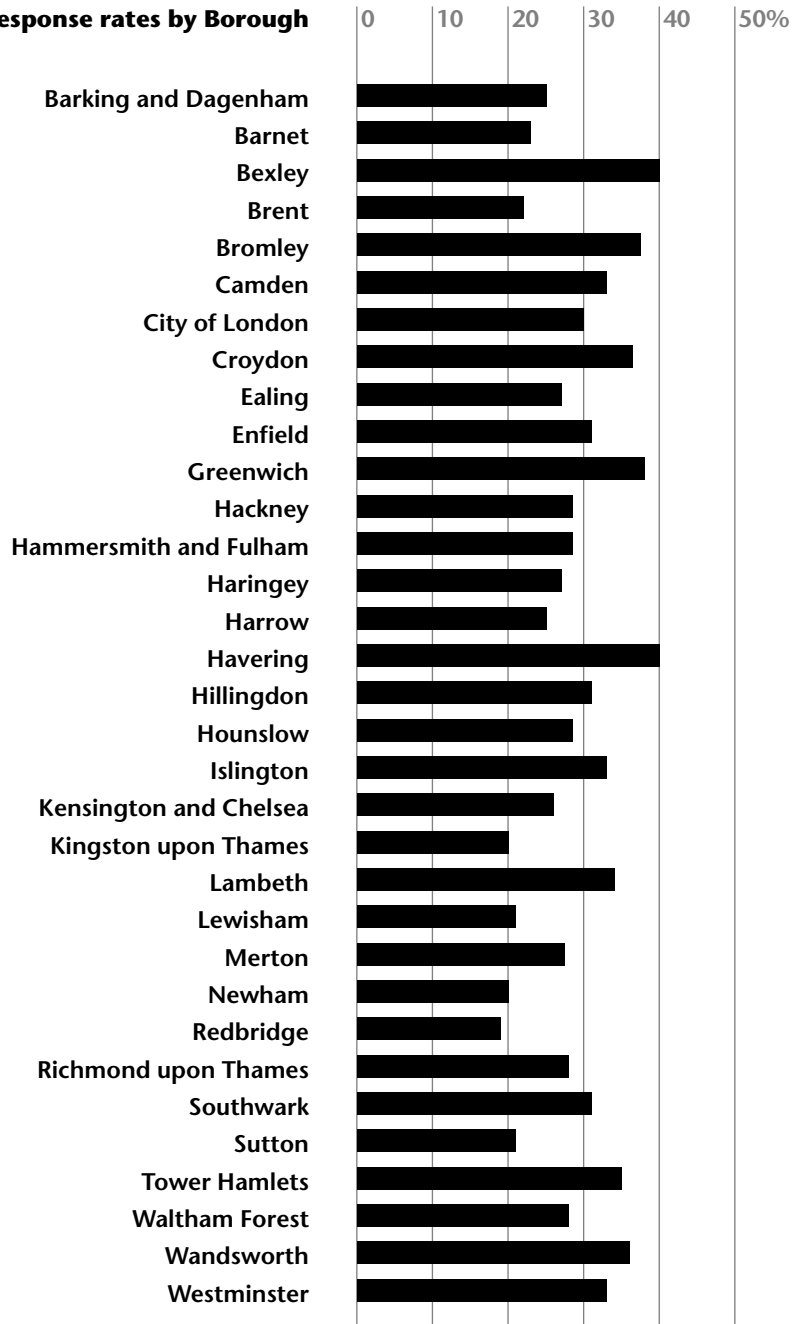


Table 1 Response rates

Faith	Number of Returns	Send out	Response Rate
Bahai	7	29	24%
Buddhist	18	38	47%
Christian			
7th Day Adventist	1	20	5%
Baptist	89	289	31%
Church of England	301	831	36%
Evangelical	50	213	23%
Methodist	74	224	33%
Other	54	346	16%
Pentecostal	26	50	52%
Roman Catholic	147	405	36%
Salvation Army	22	59	37%
United Reform Church	52	175	30%
Christian Total	816	2612	31%
Faith Based Organisations	55	186	30%
Hindu	15	101	15%
Jain	2	18	11%
Jewish	30	112	27%
Muslim	16	160	10%
Sikh	9	37	24%
Zoroastrian	1	5	20%
Total	1016	3298	30%

Chart3 Response rates by Borough



Faith communities also offer a wide network of social support, in the form of youth clubs and playgroups, lunch clubs and coffee mornings (779 projects)

The research identified some variation in the types of projects being organised in the NRF and non-NRF boroughs.

- A higher percentage of the projects in NRF boroughs were concerned with homelessness and deprivation than in the non-NRF boroughs. 10% of all projects in the 20 NRF boroughs compared with 4% in the others.
- There were more projects for refugees in the NRF boroughs. Refugee projects make up 3% of all projects in the NRF boroughs, as opposed to 1% in the non-NRF boroughs.
- Youth Clubs and Playgroups were proportionately more important in non-NRF boroughs, making up 35% of the total, while in the NRF projects youth clubs and playgroups accounted for 27% of all projects.

Types and numbers of people currently receiving support

It is clear that faith organisations currently play an important role in their communities, assisting a wide variety of people across a diverse area of issues. Projects run by faith organisations are often those that offer help to some of the most marginalised and vulnerable members of society. These include refugees, minority ethnic and religious groups, substance abusers, the young, the elderly and families under stress.

Currently 2151 social regeneration and community support projects are run by the 1016 faith organisations that responded to this survey. These projects offer support to an estimated total of more than 119,263 people. While it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about the total numbers of projects and beneficiaries on

the basis of these figures, it is worth noting that these relate to only 30% of the faith groups mailed for the survey.

Around a third of projects have between 31 and 100 people using them, with one quarter being accessed by 11 to 20 people and another quarter by 21 to 30 people. The largest projects are aimed at people who are homeless, seeking advice and counselling, or education support. 44 projects were specifically aimed at refugees, 3048 of whom benefited from faith group activities.

Current level of resources

Many of the religious organisations taking part in this survey have buildings which can be used by the local community. 13% actually have a purpose built community centre, and a further 57% have rooms that are rented by community groups. Christian religious organisations are much more likely to have these facilities than other religious groups.

Religious organisations in non-NRF Boroughs were more likely to have rooms used or rented by community groups. A higher proportion of these were purpose built community centres.

Overall in London only 18% of projects received some level of public funding.

In neighbourhood renewal boroughs, the average was slightly higher at about one in five, whereas in non NRF boroughs it drops to 11%. Projects for disabled people, and those tackling substance abuse, are more likely to receive public funding. The rest are presumably funded by the church, the congregation through various fund raising efforts, and by charitable trusts.

Volunteers are therefore a valuable resource. Just over half of the projects in neighbourhood renewal areas are wholly dependent on the efforts of volunteers, benefiting from the services of just over 9,000 volunteers.

Chart 4 Project areas

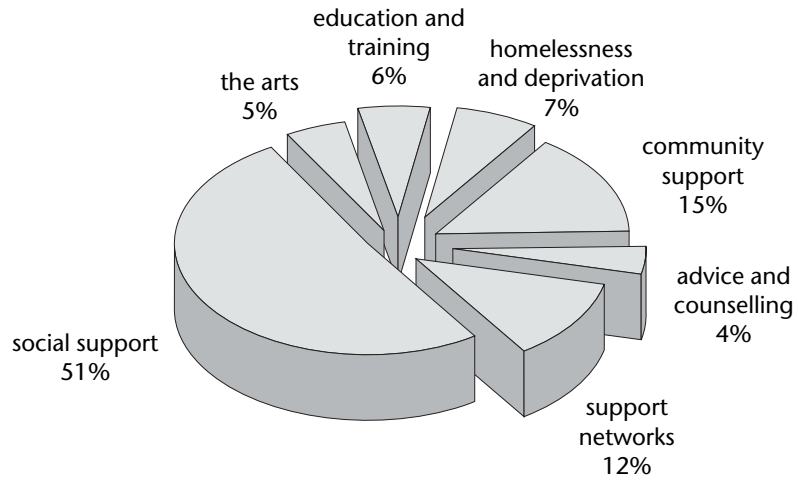


Chart 5 Users of projects

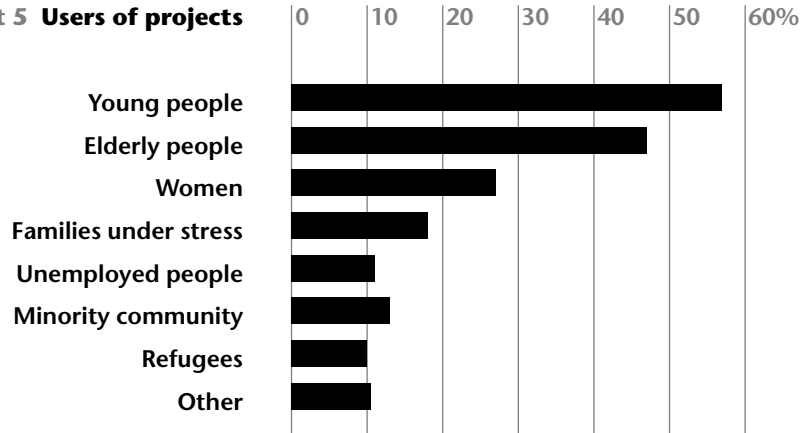
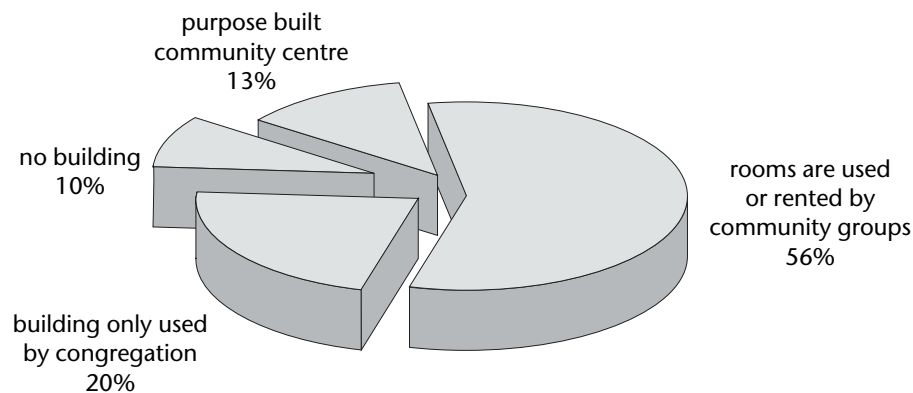


Table 2 Numbers of users

Type of project	Number of users	Distribution
Advice and counselling	9077	8%
Arts and music	16154	14%
Disabled	590	0.5%
Education and training	6655	6%
Family support	5119	4%
Health and sport	3946	3%
Homelessness and deprivation	21228	18%
Local issues	4331	4%
Lunch clubs and coffee mornings	4837	4%
Refugees	3048	3%
Social events	8050	7%
Substance abuse	1079	1%
Support network	6299	5%
Uniformed	3461	3%
Wider issues	2657	2%
Youth clubs and playgroups	22732	19%
Total	119263	100%

Chart 6 Use of buildings



4532 volunteers are involved in projects in the non-NRF boroughs making a total of over 13,500 volunteers London wide.

Projects more likely to employ paid staff as well as using volunteers are homelessness and deprivation projects, refugee projects and education activities. In the available sample, projects related to substance abuse and disability are also more likely to employ staff, but the sample size is too small for us to draw solid conclusions. 20% of projects employ one person, and 22% employ between two and five paid staff, with homeless, education and substance abuse projects more likely to employ more than 21 staff. In total, more than 3000 staff members are employed in supporting the projects.

The relevance to faith organisations of forming strategic partnerships with local councils

Most faith organisations (three out of four) that returned their questionnaires felt that there was relevance in forming strategic partnerships with local councils, and as many as a third felt that it was highly relevant for their organisation.

There is, perhaps understandably, slightly less enthusiasm for working with LSPs in boroughs where LSPs are not required by government, with 72% feeling that LSPs were relevant to their organisation as opposed to 78% in the NRF boroughs.

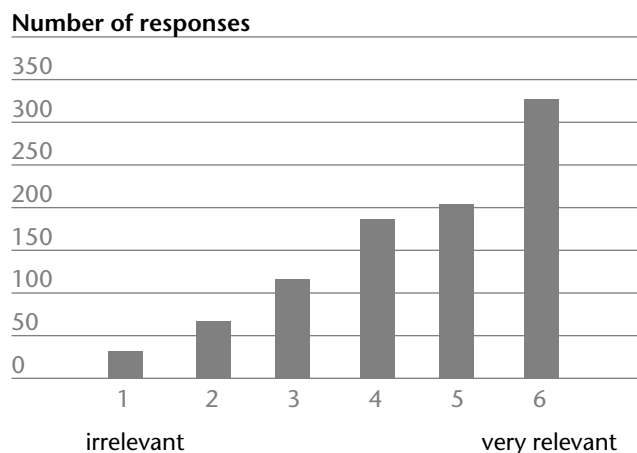
This feeling was fairly consistent across the different boroughs, as well as across the various faiths represented, although there was some small differentiation. Indications are directional rather than statistically based, as the sample sub-segments do not allow for statistical scrutiny by subgroup.

However, the idea of strategic partnerships with local councils seemed to appeal particularly to those faith organisations based in Islington, Lewisham, Newham,

Table 3 Number of volunteers

Type of project	Number of volunteers
Advice and counselling	524
The arts	418
Support for the disabled	106
Education and training	548
Family support	792
Health and sport	291
Homelessness and deprivation	3162
Local issues	538
Lunch clubs and coffee mornings	753
Refugee projects	217
Social events	945
Substance abuse	196
Support network	1231
Uniformed organisations	538
Wider issues	239
Youth clubs and playgroups	3008
Total	13506

Chart 7 Relevance of LSP cooperation



Southwark and Tower Hamlets, and slightly less than average to those in Enfield, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Sutton.

General conclusions

Faith based organisations clearly play an extremely valuable role in supporting their communities in a number of important ways. Many of the projects they fund and run are aimed at the most vulnerable members of society, particularly those that may not receive support from other sources.

The activities of faith-based groups benefit very large numbers of people: with less than one third of questionnaires returned almost 120,000 beneficiaries have been clearly identified.

Not only do very large numbers of people benefit from the support of faith based organisation projects, but they are fairly substantial employers, offering paid employment to some 3000 people who help deliver this work. They are fortunate enough to benefit from the support of 13,500 volunteers, without whom it would seem the projects could not be delivered.

Interest in strategic partnerships with local councils seems to be strong. Given the levels of funding and support needed for community projects, the opportunity for co-operation between local councils and faith organisations could be advantageous to both the public and to the organisations themselves. This could create a greater role for faith based organisations at the heart of their communities, and could help to share the burden placed on councils to take responsibility for and resource all community projects on their own.

1 A copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 1

2 Congregational activities such as religious education, prayer groups etc were specifically excluded from the survey

Faith communities and regeneration: an overview

The developing neighbourhood renewal agenda

There is increasingly an onus on local authorities to develop their role as community leaders, modernise their practices, improve the delivery of services and develop a more citizen-focused way of relating to their local communities. Many of these changes have an impact on the way councils relate to local people, and this is clearly seen in regeneration activities. Government programmes such as the Inner City Task Forces, City Action teams, the Single Regeneration Budget and the Education, Employment and Health Action Zones have all encouraged the development of partnerships between the local authority and other sectors including local voluntary and community groups. This approach is being developed further in new approaches to neighbourhood renewal.

The Government's Neighbourhood Renewal agenda places communities at the heart of the renewal process, and has established Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) as the key mechanism for bringing together the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to provide a strategic framework within which partners can work together. Guidelines for LSPs include the specific recommendation that faith communities with other groups be given a seat at the table.

The proposal for the active inclusion of faith communities in this way is a welcome recognition of their specific contribution. It is important that faith communities find transparent and open methods for the

appointment of LSP representatives, to ensure that the views of the wider faith sector are represented in discussions. In so doing it is possible that in the long term there will be growth in mutual understanding and new partnerships between different religious communities.

The emerging role of faith communities

Across the London boroughs there have been many examples of regeneration programmes entering into a partnership with representatives of local faith communities. In the main this has been focused on the Christian community, reflecting the reality of the presence of many church buildings from across the various denominations.

These buildings are often the only building in a neighbourhood that is available for wide community use. As this survey shows, the use of church buildings as a focus for work with every age group is reflected in the many projects that are being given space, from mother and toddler groups, exercise classes to regular luncheon clubs for the over 60s.

That church buildings are used in this way reflects the commitment of the Churches to serving the wider community. In many cases the projects are the result of local fund raising, and charitable support from the many and various Trust Funds. Only a small minority of projects have received public funding but since the development of government policy towards a more local

approach to regeneration initiatives, local Christian communities have sought financial support for developing appropriate projects.

The importance of this source of funding cannot be over-estimated. A local faith community that is committed to serving local people can often make good use of government funds to serve hard to reach and socially excluded groups.

Developing the role of faith communities in regeneration

It must be recognised that there are those both inside local government or regeneration agencies as well as in faith communities who will question their role in social regeneration.

Within local government the fear may arise from the belief that faith groups will seek to use the funding for the purposes of evangelism or proselytising. Equally the church and faith community participants may feel that they are not called to work with community needs: it is their task to spread the word of faith not to be working to alleviate social exclusion.

Faith communities have to face up to the challenge of using places of worship for wider social initiatives that impose certain restrictions. The contract that will be entered into to deliver services may include clauses that are difficult for faith communities to accept. It may be, for example, that a faith-based organisation would prefer to employ staff who share the faith tradition of the project, yet such an approach can raise serious questions about equal opportunities policies.

The tension in both the public authorities and within the faith communities should not be underestimated. The need for a common and shared understanding of what is being proposed is important to ensure clarity on the use of public funds. The faith community may find

it difficult to accept that the delivery of particular targets is a key part of the funding package, which can sometimes be seen as countering the more relaxed approach of a faith group which is used to working in response to pastoral need that is seen to be immeasurable.

If local faith communities can overcome these potential difficulties and can reach an understanding with the local authority or regeneration agency, the potential for creative partnerships is not only realistic: it can bring innovative service and projects to local neighbourhoods.

The development of the neighbourhood renewal agenda offers new opportunities for faith communities to play an effective role in social regeneration. It can provide:

“an unparalleled opportunity for faith communities to engage in community development initiatives and provide social care” (Shaftsbury/DETR)¹

*“Engagement with local faith communities also needs to be placed in the context of the increasing religious diversity of the UK. Its larger towns and cities are home to significant communities of many of the world’s great religions. This can be viewed in two ways. It is sometimes seen as a threat, linked to deep anxiety about migration and immigration and spilling over into overt racism. Hostility to difference of religion is accompanied by unwillingness to accept the status quo or to find common ground in shared citizenship or in values that might be shared.”*²

An important element in this process is the need for the faith communities to give serious consideration to why they should be involved, to ensure that commitments meet their theological understanding. The first and most fundamental reason is that service is a key element of most faith-based traditions.

Equally important is a commitment to combating social exclusion and inequality, issues that often underpin the decision to initiate a programme in a local area. The challenge to faith communities is to recognise that in seeking to alleviate the problems that are associated with these social needs they are doing so from an understanding based on religious belief.

A key issue in tackling social exclusion is the need for an informed local perspective and understanding, and representatives of faith communities are often in close daily contact with local people, and therefore aware of local issues and needs. Whilst local residents may not attend the places of worship, regular close contact and the building of relationships can inform regeneration activities appropriate to the needs of a locality. In taking this idea forward it is important that the faith group is in regular contact with those it is seeking to work with and alongside, avoiding an approach that may seem patronising or paternalistic.

The organisation of projects can gain much from the fact that faith groups are a permanent part of the local infrastructure. Many places of worship will have been used historically as a community building and resource as well as being a place for worship. The development of work within a place of worship can be built on the reasonable assurance that there will be continuity and that the building will not be taken over for other uses. A more sustainable approach to local social regeneration can therefore be achieved.

The counter side to this perspective is the reality that many government programmes suffer from short-term commitment. The sheer number of regeneration initiatives since the mid 1980s proves this point. This can be confusing to both the agency seeking to deliver a service and to the local community who may have come to expect a project to continue into the future.

It is important that those involved in the planning of projects are aware of these limitations and are prepared to fight for continuity of funding and be prepared to identify other types of support.

The delivery of projects also demands that the faith representatives who are involved in the setting and delivery of targets are offered support and training to ensure that there is good practice in the management of staff and volunteers. The need for understanding of charity law, contractual arrangements with the commissioning agencies and other key issues, points to the continuous need for support for local faith community leaders, both clergy and others for whom this is not their main area of responsibility.

The Churches and other faith groups that are prepared to enter into this area of work can make an important contribution to the life of local neighbourhoods. They can become significant players in what has been described as the stakeholder society. In so doing they are able to contribute to the wider debate on the most appropriate services for local communities and on the values that underpin the public debate.

In the report *Inter Faith Co-operation, Local government and the Regions: Councils of Faith for the 21st Century*³ Angela Sarkis states the following;

“Faith groups, and in particular faith groups which are in direct contact with the alienated and disadvantaged groups in society, have much to contribute in helping to create well thought through policies and in being prepared to swim against the tide when necessary. And we need to say these things, as faith groups, as brothers and sisters, with united voices.”

It is important when considering the possibility of developing new projects that will serve the local community and neighbourhood that local groups are not

dazzled by the possibility of finding sources of funding. All too often in the debate within the not-for-profit or voluntary sector that includes the faith communities the goal of external funding can become more important than the work they are seeking to develop. The specific needs of a local community must take priority and developments be based on recognised social need.

In planning new work the importance of understanding the neighbourhood, with projects based on local evidence, cannot be overestimated. These stand a better chance of survival when compared to those that reflect what might be described as being based on a particular individual's personal vision.

It is also important that the evidence gained through projects is used to challenge policy makers who see short-term goals as being sufficient. The needs of local neighbourhoods are not turned around in a short period. Faith community leaders should be willing to use their status to deliver forthright views on the need for sustainability and long term funding.

The statistics in this report offer a snapshot of what is happening across the London boroughs. As the report makes clear the information gathered does not cover the whole picture of faith community initiatives, this said we have clear evidence of a diverse and exciting picture of faith communities contributing to local neighbourhood renewal and regeneration.

1 Community Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal -Towards a Baptist Response. Phil Jump 2001

2 Faith and Community: a good practice guide for local authorities: Local Government Association 2002

3 Inter Faith Network/DETR

Faith communities and Local Strategic Partnerships

The Government's Neighbourhood Renewal agenda is a far-reaching programme aimed at reversing decline in the 88 most deprived local authority districts in the country: 20 of these are in London. The agenda places communities at the heart of the renewal process, and has established Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) as the key mechanism for bringing together the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to provide a strategic framework within which partners can work together.

Guidelines for LSPs include the specific recommendation that faith communities, with other community and voluntary sector representatives, be given a seat at the table. While this presents both a challenge and an opportunity for faith communities, it is equally important local authorities take seriously the important contribution that can be made by the wider community including faith organisations.

The *'Accreditation Guidance for Local Strategic Partnerships'* makes a very clear statement on the contribution that can be made by members from the community sector:

"Meaningful community engagement takes time, and needs to be designed in dialogue with local people. In the first instance, many LSPs will want to build on and extend existing community networks. They should also work to engage sections of the community that may be harder to reach, (such as young and old people, refugee groups, faith groups, travellers and BME communities)."

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

If faith communities are to contribute to the development of LSPs it is important that their representatives and leaders recognise the need for an understanding of local issues and concerns, working wherever possible in dialogue with colleagues from the other faith groups.

In London, the Ecumenical Borough Deans Network (representative senior clergy from all the Christian denominations) is an important starting point for a dialogue between the Christian community and the local authority and community sector. Links need to be established between this and other faith community leaders. There is a model for this in the borough of Merton where regular meetings of the borough deans involve other faith community leaders. A key element in this is the need to change from the traditional inter-faith model based on seeking to understand theological ideas to the sharing of information and ideas on issues of public policy.

The development of this model could be based around the role of LSPs outlined in the Accreditation guidance notes:

"LSPs should strengthen the connection with and between public sector agencies, local government, the voluntary and community sectors, businesses and local residents. Joint working is needed to find ways to

- *Improve all public services; renew deprived areas; develop strong, sustainable economies and healthy, safe communities;*

- *Focus service delivery from the outset on the needs and aspirations of local people - including those who are traditionally excluded;*
- *Find ways to encourage people to be constructively involved in their communities; and*
- *Ensure sustainable development in the local area and contribute to the regional sustainable development agenda."*

Issues facing faith communities

It is clear that, while the involvement of faith communities in LSPs demands an improved understanding of public policy, the above are not issues that will necessarily be on the agenda of a worshipping community or their leaders. Yet the fact that so many places of worship and worshipping communities are actively involved in their local neighbourhoods suggests that it is only a case of making connections - or joining up thinking.

In taking this work forward it is important that all those involved are aware of the difficulties to be faced, none of which is insurmountable but which do require attention. In research aimed at identifying the most appropriate means of involving faith communities in LSPs¹, Ann Wright identified the following issues in the borough of Croydon:

" Difficulties to be overcome –

- *Many faith communities are small themselves and run entirely by the work of volunteers - many of whom are already hard-pressed and have little time or energy to be involved in wider issues.*
- *Some Croydon-based faith communities serve a membership that is much wider than the borough - and many of the key players may not live in Croydon.*
- *Some barriers perceived in being part of a partnership - may dilute what is seen as the group's primary work; may*

have religious grounds for not taking part – eg objections to use of lottery money, fear of compromise.

- *May also need to 'build capacity' within faith communities to enable them to play a full role".*

Identifying representatives for LSPs

In Croydon the Strategic Partnership grew out of the work of an existing body *The Croydon Partnership*, whose main focus was the economic development of the borough and which drew its membership from public authorities, the business community and the voluntary sector.

The local community sector, working through Croydon Voluntary Action, nominated five representatives to sit on the LSP. The exception was the faith community representative, who was identified outside of the Community Sector meeting, with the intention that this would be an interim arrangement until a formal structure could be put in place to identify a representative from the faith communities.

The issue of how to identify a representative when no formal nomination process is in place is no doubt the same across all London boroughs.

Equally the chosen individual will be seen to be a part of the community sector, and it is important that they are able to contribute to the debate from an informed standpoint. To be effective this requires substantial investment of time, and this may create difficulties that are reflected in Ann Wright's research of how faith community leaders can find time to contribute to the LSP.

Existing involvement of faith communities in LSPs

In some boroughs faith communities have been invited to take at least one seat on the LSP, and in Newham the figure is three representatives. In Lewisham a local

Church of England priest sits on the LSP in his own right to represent his local neighbourhood. In Hackney, there are three faith representatives on the LSP: a Muslim, a Jew and a Christian, the latter elected by church representatives.

In other boroughs there seems to be a reluctance to take into membership anyone from the faith community. The reason for this reluctance may be a lack of understanding of the specific contribution that can be made by a well-informed individual from the sector. There may be a residual belief that faith communities are not appropriate groups to be involved in local policy making, perhaps based on an assumption that they exist only to promote their religious and theological ideas. Including faith community leaders in civic engagement invitation lists is a useful way of bringing faith leaders into the network of council members and others within a borough.

One way of addressing the issue of a faith community representative being able to speak for a range of faiths may be to establish a means of bringing together representatives of all the religious groups in a borough regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern such as crime and disorder, health, economic development or regeneration and renewal. Such meetings would seek to draw out the different perspectives of the communities and brief the LSP representatives on issues that will be on the agenda of the full partnership. In developing this model there would be clarity and transparency of opportunity to open up a dialogue with those whose task it is to develop and deliver the policies on these issues.

In seeking to develop models for partnership, it is important to recognise the difficulties that will need to be faced in finding common ground and seeking to join up thinking. Hillary Russell in *'Local Strategic Partnerships - Lessons from New Commitment to*

Regeneration' (Published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 2001) writes:

"Partners themselves may have to go through the ground-clearing and learning processes necessary to 'grow their own' strategy, as Brent subsequently attempted. Although more protracted the slower pace allows time to work through disagreements and overcoming barriers, and is more likely to build relationships, produce greater ownership and generate a more promising strategy."

It is important that this element of any development is taken into consideration. The development of new relationships takes time and energy, and the fact that all who are going to be involved have busy schedules must be taken into account. It will take time to build up both the new networks and the trust that will underpin the establishment of the new structures.

In addition a number of London boroughs are appointing officers with a specific responsibility for working with faith communities. Through these appointments a specialist role is being developed that will play an important role in ensuring that linkages are made. It is also important that these advisers meet together to share good practice and to ensure that information crosses borough boundaries.

Case Studies:

Faith Community Regeneration Projects in London

This report offers a snapshot of the contribution that different faith communities are making to local area regeneration and social action. The wide range of work identified, from parents' and toddlers' groups through to luncheon clubs for the elderly, points to the importance of faith communities in contributing to community well being.

It is clear that not all of the projects are specifically related to regeneration programmes. Many would take place with or without the increased interest of local or national government. It is nonetheless important to recognise that these activities contribute to their communities, and that the foundations of social action are to be found in projects that have existed for many years.

The history of faith communities demonstrates their commitment to offering care and support to the poor and the excluded. Indeed, the foundations of the welfare state are to be found in the many religious institutions that offered the first hospitals and caring services.

Until the 19th Century this was in the main a Christian contribution to local communities, but by the middle of the 19th Century Britain had become a home for many Jews fleeing the pogroms of Eastern Europe. In the East End of London buildings still stand which housed the soup kitchens and centres for the distribution of food and clothing which the Jewish community established to support the most needy. Through these caring services the lives of many families were made

easier as they struggled to establish themselves as a part of the community.

Projects that seek to serve local communities often have their origins in this model of social care for people who were, in their time, a part of the socially excluded. Through these services people were helped to become established members of the community and the link between building stable communities and regeneration both for individuals and the wider community affirmed.

In the following case studies, examples of faith community based regeneration projects show the potential for the development of partnerships. For some, the use of regeneration funding has been a key element of their development.

United Synagogue – Responsibility in Action

'To be a Jew is to be alert to the poverty, the suffering, the loneliness of others' (*From Renewal to Responsibility* by the Chief Rabbi, Professor Jonathan Sacks)

The United Synagogue Responsibility in Action Project, now known as **US Social Action** aims to strengthen and develop the Jewish tradition of service to the community. One key aspect of the project is to mobilise young Jews to volunteer their time and expertise in a variety of ways. The volunteers work in areas of Jewish deprivation in London targeting those synagogue communities unable to provide programmes and resources to ameliorate this deprivation. e.g. they deliver gifts at Purim* to isolated individuals, organise the distribution of Passover food parcels for those who require additional support and care, in particularly elderly residents. This has been done effectively in the London Borough of Hackney.

Young volunteers have helped in cleaning and marking unmarked graves in Jewish closed cemeteries. This connected them to their history and

gave them a sense of continuity. The information they gleaned, once recorded, was used to purchase permanent markings for these graves.

However, the Chief Rabbi said in his book *From Renewal to Responsibility* 'No Jew who has lived Judaism can be without a social conscience. To be a Jew is to accept responsibility'. Therefore, the United Synagogue is also working within the non-Jewish world. Several of their synagogue communities are involved in collecting food and clothes for some hostels for the homeless under the aegis of the Salvation Army and the charity Shelter. Northwood Community in the London Borough of Hillingdon is one such community taking part. Rabbi Brawer of Northwood says that the programme encouraged his members to become involved with the important commandments between man and his fellow man and this in turn gave them tremendous spiritual value.

Contact has been established with Habitat for Humanity to offer volunteers for their Southwark project and United Synagogue are also highlighting the

Youth Section of the Council of Christians & Jews that promotes events that encourage dialogue between young people of different faith backgrounds.

*(Purim is the most joyous festival commemorating the courage of Queen Esther and her role in saving the Jewish Nation at the time of the Persian Empire, celebrating the solidarity of the Jewish People by sending and delivering food gifts and giving charity to the poor.)

The Valley Park Healthy Living Centre Project

The Valley Park and Cherry Trees Estates are two adjoining areas of housing in the borough of Croydon, built in the mid 1990s. Valley Park units are housing association-owned social housing, while Cherry Trees is owner occupied. The estates were built without provision for community facilities although Croydon Health Authority opened a Primary Medical Care Centre in a temporary building in a car park.

It is widely recognised that there are issues of mental distress and low self-esteem among the residents of the Valley Park Estate. In addition there are a number of lone parents. To meet these needs a Healthy Living Centre was developed on land between the two estates, funded by £360K from the Single Regeneration Budget, £100k from Sure Start and £100k from other statutory sources. Agreement was reached later on funding for an ITC element within the Centre. The Croydon Healthy Living Centre Network was also successful in a bid to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) for a network of Healthy Living Centres

across the borough.

The contribution of the local church to this work began in 1999, when church members undertook a community survey which identified the need for community facilities, in part to be met by the new Centre, and the need for a community shop offering basic goods. The research led to the setting up of a Valley Park residents association to work with the existing association on the Cherry Trees Estate. The local church supported the association, and contributed to social activities including summer activities for children.

With SRB funding a community shop opened in November 2001. Any profits made by the shop will eventually be ploughed back into the community. The proposed Healthy Living Centre is due to open in the summer of 2003, with the local Church of England Parish Church as a member of the management committee. New Opportunities funding has been used to appoint a worker to build links with residents, working closely with the curate of the parish church and the staff

of the health centre to develop community activities and networks.

The project is an example of a partnership that has developed between the local authority, the health authority, local residents and the local church, all of whom have played a role in taking the project forward.

The East London Mosque¹

The provision of social welfare services has been one of the more visible expressions of Islamic social action in many Muslim countries and here in the UK. At the core of Islamic social action are values of social justice and equality, and the development of the East London mosque is exemplary of this. Historically, the mosque has been the centre of Muslim community life, the place where the materially poor and vulnerable seek help and those who have sufficient are expected to help and share. The East London mosque is the oldest and biggest mosque in London, established in 1910. The present building was built in 1985 and serves about 60,000 Muslims living in the neighbourhood.

The mosque runs various community welfare activities. The imams provide a range of advisory services to people and answer questions on various religious and social issues. Volunteers at the mosque also help people by writing letters, filling in forms, serving as interpreters, and giving advice on housing, immigration, education and other issues. Other services include

drug education and counselling, a marriage guidance service, a visiting service for the sick and elderly in their homes and in hospital, a bookshop and library service, adult education classes, classes for young people in Arabic, Bengali and Somali and a supplementary school.

The mosque also acts as a venue for social functions, with halls and kitchen facilities to meet community demands on occasions such as marriages, aqiqah (naming ceremony), iftar (breaking of the fast) and Eid parties, seminars and symposiums.

The mosque organises monthly open days for non-Muslims with stalls, workshops and cultural exhibitions, and open days on awareness of Islam and discussions are arranged to create an awareness of Islam among the general public and local schools, contributing towards the building of a truly multi-cultural and multi-faith society.

The women's section of the East London Mosque has established Women's Relief, an independent voluntary organisation providing practical advice, support and

information on issues such as domestic and social problems, family and cultural issues, health stress and depression, personal safety and education and employment.

Space constraints have prompted the mosque management committee to develop plans to extend the mosque to meet ever-increasing community demands. When the extension is completed 10,000 people will be able to offer their prayers in a congregation. The new building will provide easy access for disabled people, including wheelchair users. The forecourt will allow worshippers to congregate within the site on leaving and arriving, thereby reducing disruption to vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the road on which the mosque is based.

Services and facilities will include a roof garden, a large community hall, a seminar theatre, a resource centre for non-Muslims and new Muslims, an emergency hostel, social housing units and a base for socialisation within the community. There are also plans to establish a boys' school, girls' school and a madrasa (religious seminary).

TOC H East London Family Project

TOC H is a Christian charity founded immediately after the First World War, which since the 1920s has sought to promote projects that serve local communities, with the key principle of supporting young people and organising opportunities for personal development and growth. Whilst rooted in Christian principles it has also worked with people of other faiths.

The East London Family Project shows how resources can be brought together within the Christian community and directed into work with people from other faiths - in this particular context, Bengali Muslim women who share the project with other East Enders.

The aim of the project is outlined in a report of October 2001:

Our aim is to facilitate the provision of services that will consider the needs of the local community. To achieve this we network with local agencies and training providers.

We aim to empower women and young people in this community. To offer those who join us the opportunity to voice their opinions in the centre.

A share in the decision making processes and a chance to show their otherwise hidden skills/talents and learn new ones. Gaining awareness of all aspects of community living and the real issues that affect their lives and that of their families. Enabling them to make informed choices.

The programmes that the centre offers include ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), craft classes, a garden project, a parent and toddler group, parenting skills classes, health and fitness, massage courses and laptop computer courses.

The importance of a project like this is that it brings together residents of the area to share in the mix of activities described above. The potential for the users to gain a shared understanding of different cultures will help underpin a community that crosses racial divides. A key part of the sessions that are offered is the ability to offer culturally sensitive opportunities for learning. It also offers the opportunity for women to prepare themselves for employment.

The funding of the project reflects the reality of work rooted in the

community/voluntary sector, with support from the business community, the single regeneration budget, the local authority and any other agency or trust that will offer support.

The examples outlined in these four case studies point to the importance of projects that are rooted in their neighbourhood. Many such projects exist across the London boroughs, representing a substantial contribution to social capital and the building of stable communities.

The majority of projects are based in places of worship and are planned and managed locally, but some projects are part of a wider network, supported and developed by organisations with a commitment to offering services to local communities and faith groups. The work of TOC H in East London described above is an example of a partnership between a national organisation and local people.

The main faith group in this area of work for historical reasons is Christian, with the Salvation Army as a well-known example with its history of ministry to the excluded. Many well established organisations are increasingly directing their resources into supporting locally based regeneration initiatives; the Shaftesbury Society, for example, offers a support unit for the development of church based projects.

PECAN in Peckham is an example of a local project making a major contribution to training the unemployed with appropriate work skills. Rooted in its local area, it is able to respond to local need and to gain the respect and understanding of both the residents and the statutory agencies that fund its programmes.

The OASIS Trust, set up to serve homeless young

people, has moved into promoting support for churches that want to serve their local neighbourhood. Through its 'Faith Works' campaign it is promoting a dialogue with both national and local government on models of good practice and partnership.

A new initiative with a national brief running programmes in London is 'The Employment Forum' who through the Millennium Volunteers have placed 238 young people into voluntary work, in London and other cities. These have included 130 young Muslims, 20 Hindus, 60 Christian. The group has included seven unemployed young people from Hackney, six of whom found jobs at least in part thanks to the programme. In April 2002 the Forum held the first National Black Empowerment Conference in Croydon's Fairfield Halls, with over 200 participants from the black majority churches.

All of these organisations are involved in opening up new opportunities for local neighbourhood renewal. Partnership is the key to new projects and the potential for effective cross sector working is clear from the many examples that can be found across London.

¹ This information was taken, with permission, from Transforming Faith into Action: Rumman Ahmed, The Shaftesbury Society, 2001

Afterword

The 1985 'Faith in the City' report¹ used two key words – 'collaborating' and 'contributing' – to describe the role they hoped the church would play in our cities. This 2002 report *Regenerating London: Faith communities and social action* is an excellent example of the churches ecumenically in London, through the London Churches Group for Social Action, collaborating with a key organisation in our city, Greater London Enterprise, in doing the work to produce a report that shows very clearly the extent to which, not only churches, but all faith communities contribute to the renewal of our neighbourhoods and the welfare of all our citizens. While the recent Government White Paper² recognised that "faith communities can command valuable resources and social capital in terms of networks, buildings, voluntary activity and leadership skills" the extent of their contribution in assisting to deliver an urban renaissance is often not recognised.

I was fascinated that while the Souvenir Programme³ prepared for the Queen's Jubilee Visit to East London told an important story of remarkable neighbourhood renewal in our eight East London boroughs, no mention was made of the important contribution of faith communities to this renewal. However, at the official reception for Her Majesty The Queen at West Ham Football Ground many of the invited guests were representing a rich variety of East London faith community projects that had contributed in a whole

range of ways to the regeneration of East London at a grass roots level.

This important report with its statistical evidence of the major contribution of faith communities should enable us to engage with greater confidence at neighbourhood, borough and city level while, at the same time, encourage government at every level to take the contribution of faith communities more seriously.

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sachs in his widely acclaimed book *The Dignity of Difference*⁴ comments on the "unexpected phenomena of the resurgence of religion in our globalised world". This report backs up his comment from the perspective of the global city of London and is a challenge to our faith communities not to misuse this resurgence of religion to encourage ghettoisation and division but instead to collaborate with each other at every level to promote community cohesion and the welfare of all our citizens. A recent discussion paper on 'Urban Renaissance'⁵, produced by the Urban Bishops' Panel of the Church of England, describes a "faith that is concerned with the welfare of people, community, sustainability and justice". My hope would be that, in the future, such a faith would enable us "wherever possible to work ecumenically and across faith boundaries in our community projects".⁶

Personally, I would like to thank Greater London Enterprise for their enthusiasm and financial support for the production of this report, the researchers and writers from the London Churches Group and GLE,

and particularly the large number of clergy and faith leaders who took time to fill in the survey forms. I believe the outcome of this piece of work could be very significant for government and faith communities at a local and national level. My hope would be that it would be widely discussed, particularly ecumenically and at borough level.

Bishop Roger Sainsbury

Chairman, London Churches Group for Social Action

References:

- 1 **Faith in the City** p77 (Church House Publishing) 1985
- 2 **Our Towns and Cities: The Future** p38 (DETR) 2000
- 3 **Her Majesty the Queen's Golden Jubilee** (Souvenir Programme) 2002
- 4 **The Dignity of Difference** p36, Jonathan Sachs (Continuum) 2002
- 5 **The Urban Renaissance and the Church of England** p27
(The Archbishops' Council) 2002
- 6 **Faith and Welfare**, Roger Sainsbury (Church of England Newspaper) 18 May 2001

- 2) Please indicate if your organisation organises, runs or manages any projects or activities in these **areas of social concern**: (Please do not include mainly religious activities such as prayer groups or religious education, or any totally independent organisations operating from your premises.)

	Yes	No
Arts and music		
Education		
Housing and homelessness		
Racism		
Crime prevention		
Substance abuse		
Environment		
Youth work		
Health and fitness		
Employability and training		
Social Enterprises or community businesses		
Other (please specify)		

Please could you give a brief description of the activities you have indicated which you are not listing as projects in question 4.

- 3) Please indicate if your organisation organises, runs or manages any projects specifically designed for these **social groups**: (Please do not include mainly religious activities such as prayer groups or religious education, or any totally independent organisations operating from your premises.)

	Yes	No
Elderly people		
Teenagers		
Children/ infants		
Unemployed people		
Women		
People from a particular Minority Ethnic Community		
People from refugee communities		
Families under stress		
Other (please specify)		

- 4) As part of our project, we are keen to build up a database of significant faith-based initiatives throughout London. Please could you provide a list of the projects you organise (as mentioned above) for in or with the community? Please send a list if it is more convenient.

This would include projects aimed at the local community (e.g. lunch clubs, playgroups etc), but exclude congregational activities (e.g. Sunday Schools, Prayer or meditation groups, Qu'ran Classes).

Name of Project	Issue Tackled	Who is the project aimed at?	Contact Details (e.g. leader, address, tel. no.)	Number of Paid Staff		Receiving Public Funding?	Number of volunteers	Number of users per week/month/year <i>(Please delete as appropriate)</i>
				Full Time	Part Time			

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

5) Do you have a building that is used by the local community for purposes other than worship?

(Please circle the most appropriate)

- | | |
|--|---|
| Yes, we have a building that is a purpose built community centre | A |
| Yes, we have rooms that are used/rented by community groups | B |
| No, we have a building but it is only used by our worshipping congregation | C |
| No, we do not have a building of our own | D |

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 2

Response rates (includes all responses)

Response rates by Borough

<i>Borough</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Send out</i>	<i>Response rate</i>
Barking & Dagenham	14	55	25%
Barnet	27	119	23%
Bexley	29	73	40%
Brent	29	130	22%
Bromley	45	118	38%
Camden	33	101	33%
City of London	10	33	30%
Croydon	60	165	36%
Ealing	35	128	27%
Enfield	27	86	31%
Greenwich	35	93	38%
Hackney	26	90	29%
Hammersmith & Fulham	19	65	29%
Haringey	36	134	27%
Harrow	21	85	25%
Havering	21	53	40%
Hillingdon	19	61	31%
Hounslow	22	75	29%
Islington	31	94	33%
Kensington & Chelsea	19	73	26%
Kingston-upon-Thames	10	49	20%
Lambeth	58	171	34%
Lewisham	14	67	21%
Merton	18	66	27%
Newham	42	210	20%
Redbridge	22	115	19%
Richmond-upon-Thames	19	67	28%
Southwark	59	190	31%
Sutton	13	62	21%

Tower Hamlets	39	112	35%
Waltham Forest	31	109	28%
Wandsworth	45	125	36%
Westminster	41	124	33%
Unclassified	47		
Total	1016	3298	29%

Response rates by Faith

<i>Religion/Denomination</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Send out</i>	<i>Response rate</i>
Bahai	7	29	24%
Buddhist	18	38	47%
Christian			
7th Day Adventist	1	20	5%
Baptist	89	289	31%
Church of England	301	831	36%
Evangelical	50	213	23%
Methodist	74	224	33%
Pentecostal	26	50	52%
Roman Catholic	147	405	36%
Salvation Army	22	59	37%
URC	52	175	30%
Other	54	346	16%
Faith Based Organisations	55	186	30%
Hindu	15	101	15%
Jain	2	18	11%
Jewish	30	112	27%
Muslim	16	160	10%
Sikh	9	37	24%
Zoroastrian	1	5	20%
Unclassified	47		
Total	1016	3298	30%

Survey responses

Question 1) - Relevance of LSP involvement

<i>LSP relevance</i>		<i>Percentage</i>			<i>No. of responses</i>		
		<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>
Irrelevant -	1	3%	4%	3%	35	26	9
	2	7%	6%	10%	69	40	29
	3	13%	12%	15%	120	77	43
	4	20%	18%	23%	188	119	69
	5	22%	23%	18%	203	151	52
Very relevant -	6	35%	37%	31%	328	238	90
(No response)		-	-	-	73	33	37
Total					1016	684	329
Irrelevant (1-3)		23%	22%	28%	224	143	81
Relevant (4-6)		77%	78%	72%	719	508	211

Question 2) - Area of work

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>			<i>No. of responses</i>		
	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>
Arts and music	32%	33%	29%	326	229	97
Education	35%	37%	31%	358	256	102
Housing and homelessness	18%	20%	14%	187	139	47
Racism	10%	11%	9%	102	74	28
Crime prevention	7%	8%	5%	72	57	15
Substance abuse	10%	11%	7%	98	76	22
Environment	8%	8%	9%	85	57	28
Youth work -Phase 2 only (non-NRF)	54%	-	54%	201	-	178
Health and fitness	17%	18%	16%	175	123	52
Employability and training	9%	11%	6%	96	75	21
Social enterprise	9%	10%	7%	89	67	22
Other	19%	21%	15%	193	143	50

Question 3) - Social Groups

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>			<i>No. of responses</i>		
	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>
Elderly people	48%	46%	52%	490	318	171
Young people -Phase 1 only	59%	59%	-	401	401	-
Teenagers - Phase 2 only	46%	-	46%	151	-	151
Children/Infants - Phase 2 only	61%	-	61%	201	-	201
Unemployed people	12%	14%	8%	119	93	26
Women	26%	26%	27%	269	180	88
Minority community	13%	15%	8%	131	106	25

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>			<i>No. of responses</i>		
	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>
Refugees	10%	12%	5%	99	80	18
Families under stress	18%	21%	12%	184	145	39
Other	10%	12%	6%	105	84	20

Question 5) - Buildings

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>			<i>No. of responses</i>		
	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>
A - purpose built community centre	13%	11%	19%	124	71	53
B - Rent out rooms to community groups	57%	55%	61%	538	367	171
C - Building only used by congregation	20%	22%	14%	188	148	40
D - No Building	10%	12%	6%	101	83	18
(No-response)	-	-	-	65	15	47
Total				1016	684	329

Question 4) - Projects

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Percentage</i>			<i>No. of responses</i>		
	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>NRF</i>	<i>Non-NRF</i>
Advice and counselling	4%	4%	4%	96	55	41
Arts and music	5%	5%	4%	98	61	37
Disabled	1%	1%	1%	21	12	9
Education and training	7%	7%	5%	137	90	47
Family support	6%	7%	6%	138	84	54
Health and sport	5%	4%	5%	99	54	45
Homelessness and deprivation	7%	10%	4%	152	117	35
Local issues	2%	3%	2%	52	36	16
Lunch clubs and coffee mornings	6%	6%	5%	122	74	48
Refugees	2%	3%	1%	44	32	12
Social events	10%	8%	13%	211	95	116
Substance abuse	1%	1%	1%	22	13	9
Support network	9%	9%	9%	193	111	82
Uniformed	4%	3%	4%	75	40	35
Wider issues	1%	1%	1%	25	16	9
Youth clubs and playgroups	30%	27%	35%	657	335	322
Total				2151	1224	917

Breakdown of projects

<i>Theme specific focus</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Breakdown of theme</i>
Advice and counselling		
Bereavement	17	18%
Depression	1	1%
Divorce	4	4%
Employment	6	6%
Legal Advice	5	5%
(Uncategorised)	63	66%
Total	96	100%
Arts and music		
Art	16	16%
Crafts	5	5%
Dance	12	12%
Drama	17	17%
Music	35	36%
(Uncategorised)	13	13%
Total	98	100%
Disabled		
Mentally ill	13	62%
Other	8	38%
Total	21	100%
Education and training		
EFL	7	5%
IT	11	8%
Language	17	12%
Schooling	37	27%
(Uncategorised)	65	48%
Total	137	100%
Family support		
After school	27	20%
Crisis pregnancy	8	6%
Holiday scheme	18	13%
Parenting	26	19%
Teenage parents	6	4%
(Uncategorised)	53	38%
Total	138	100%

Health and sport

Health	26	26%
Keep fit	37	37%
Martial arts	5	5%
Meditation	2	2%
Sport	24	24%
(Uncategorised)	5	5%
Total	99	100%

Homelessness and deprivation

Food	40	26%
Housing	10	7%
Shelter	18	12%
Basic provisions	8	5%
(Uncategorised)	76	50%
Total	152	100%

Local issues

Crime Prevention	2	4%
Environment	3	6%
Prostitution	1	2%
Shop	3	6%
(Uncategorised)	43	83%
Total	52	100%

Lunch clubs and coffee mornings

Coffee mornings	28	23%
Lunch club	94	77%
Total	122	100%

Refugees

Total	44	100%
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Social events

Total	211	100%
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Substance abuse

Alcoholism	10	45%
Drug abuse	6	27%
(Uncategorised)	6	28%
Total	22	100%

Support network

AIDS sufferers	2	1%
Housebound	2	1%
Prisoners	7	4%
Women	25	13%
(Uncategorised)	157	81%
Total	193	100%

Uniformed

Total	75
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Wider issues

Charity work	2	8%
Environment	1	4%
Inter-faith cooperation	6	24%
Peace and justice	2	8%
Race equality	1	4%
Racism	2	8%
Volunteer Work	3	12%
(Uncategorised)	8	32%
Total	25	100%

Youth clubs and playgroups

Playgroups	402	61%
Youth club	217	33%
(Uncategorised)	38	6%
Total	657	100%

Funding

	Percentage	Receiving funding
All	18%	317
NRF	21%	254
Non-NRF *	11%	63

* Figure does not include Evangelical Alliance results as the public funding question was not asked consistently.

Users

Number of users	Percentage			No. of respondents		
	All	NRF	Non-NRF	All	NRF	Non-NRF
1-5	1%	1%	1%	21	12	9
6-10	9%	8%	10%	142	82	60
11-20	26%	22%	29%	402	220	182
21-30	23%	21%	23%	355	211	144
31-100	32%	30%	32%	497	298	199
100-1000	8%	10%	4%	126	99	27
1000+	1%	1%	0.48%	9	6	3
(No response)				533	306	293
Total				2151	1234	917

Users numbers

Type of project	Number of users	Distribution
Advice and counselling	9077	8%
Arts and music	16154	14%
Disabled	590	0%
Education and training	6655	6%
Family support	5119	4%
Health and sport	3946	3%
Homelessness and deprivation	21228	18%
Local issues	4331	4%
Lunch clubs and coffee mornings	4837	4%
Refugees	3048	3%
Social events	8050	7%
Substance abuse	1079	1%
Support network	6299	5%
Uniformed	3461	3%
Wider issues	2657	2%
Youth clubs and playgroups	22732	19%
Total	119263	100%

Volunteers

<i>Number of volunteers</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Distribution</i>
1	101	5%
2-5	752	35%
6-10	407	19%
11-20	150	7%
21+	89	4%
No details	652	30%
Total	2151	100%

Staff

<i>Number of staff employed</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Distribution</i>
0	659	51%
1	256	20%
2-5	283	22%
6-10	75	6%
11-20	18	1%
21+	9	1%
No details	851	
Total	2151	

Projects by Faith

<i>Religion/ Denomination</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Distribution</i>
Bahai	9	0.42%
Buddhist	10	0.46%
Christian		
Baptist	207	10%
Church of England	677	31%
Evangelical	224	10%
Faith Based Organisations	30	1%
Methodist	167	8%
Other	164	8%
Pentecostal	188	9%
Roman Catholic	214	10%
Salvation Army	58	3%
URC	77	4%
(blank)	18	1%
Hindu	11	1%
Jain	3	0.14%
Jewish	63	3%
Muslim	25	1%
Sikh	6	0.28%
Total	2151	100%

Projects by Borough

	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Distribution</i>
Barking & Dagenham	55	3%
Barnet	68	3%
Bexley	84	4%
Brent	45	2%
Bromley	113	5%
Camden	26	1%
City of London	4	0.18 %
Croydon	147	7%
Ealing	66	3%
Enfield	35	2%
Greenwich	58	3%
Hackney	50	2%
Hammersmith & Fulham	18	1%
Haringey	56	3%
Harrow	58	3%
Havering	83	4%
Hillingdon	68	3%
Hounslow	56	3%
Islington	58	3%
Kensington & Chelsea	27	1%
Kingston-upon-Thames	37	2%
Lambeth	85	4%
Lewisham	41	2%
Merton	45	2%
Newham	116	5%
Redbridge	88	4%
Richmond-upon-Thames	58	3%
Several	41	2%
Southwark	121	6%
Sutton	29	1%
Tower Hamlets	62	3%
Waltham Forest	71	3%
Wandsworth	96	4%
Westminster	78	4%
(blank)	8	0.36%
Total	2151	100%

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Greater London Enterprise

28 Park Street

London SE1 9EQ

020 7403 0300

London Churches Group for Social Action

Central Hall Westminster

Storey's Gate

London SW1H 9NH

020 7222 0281

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