

“Face-To-Face and Side-By-Side”: A Framework For Inter Faith Dialogue and Social Action

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

You are welcome to use this form to record any comments or observations you would like to make in response to the consultation document. You can access a copy of the consultation document here: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/interfaithdialogue>

Please note that use of this form is not obligatory – responses are welcome in any format. Responses to this consultation will be used by Government and key partners to develop the framework and to inform plans for implementation. If you do not wish your response to be shared with non-Government partners in this way please make this clear in your response.

Please send your responses by email to: interfaith@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:

Towards a framework for inter faith dialogue and social action
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This consultation closes on 7th March 2008.

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1. STRUCTURES WHICH FACILITATE INTERACTION AND SOCIAL ACTION

Question 1: Is the balance of structures to facilitate inter faith dialogue and social action at national, regional and local level right?

- **At National and Regional level the balance is right, though experiences need to be shared.**
- **Need for more local level dialogue with people at grass roots rather than simply at church/faith leader level – neighbourhood dialogue**

Question 2: What more is needed at national, regional and local levels to facilitate inter faith interaction and social action?

- **Longer term commitment and not short term (especially funding). There is considerable concern about short term funding. Whilst the work may be appreciated by the local authority it may not have the funding to offer security for the future**
- **Inter faith work should be mainstreamed**
- **Facilitate involvement of volunteers in regional, national conferences**
- **Long term commitment required to develop and support structures in the voluntary and community sector**
- **Need for locally based co-ordinator for the above, funded by central/local govt – able to produce good quality material for local media.**

Question 3: Are different approaches required at national, regional and local levels? What might these consist of? What role or roles do you envisage government, faith communities, faith and non-faith based organisations, inter faith organisations and wider civil society playing?

2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING WHICH BUILD UNDERSTANDING

Question 4: Are there appropriate opportunities in your community and your local area to learn about different faiths and beliefs?

- **Schools through SACRE**
- **Local Inter faith conferences**
- **But these are limited in scope – does not reach man in the street**
- **Additional inter-faith discussions in schools/colleges**
- **Encourage schools to open up to local communities to show displays/plays/singing/dance/pictures/exhibitions for families to come in for education/resource evenings**

Question 5: How do we improve opportunities for learning about different religions and beliefs and build on existing best practice?

- **Trust demonstrated in public**
- **Find key people willing to be open and make themselves vulnerable**
- **Train emerging leaders to have different attitudes**
- **Older community members may be suspicious and not accept change**
- **Local media have a role to play**
- **Additional funding and support for multi-faith chaplaincies in schools and colleges. (could be shared/partnership resource)**

Question 6: How best can different faith communities work together whilst retaining their distinctiveness?

- **This is the essence of our work**
- **Acknowledging and celebrating distinctiveness**
- **Facilitator to work with places of worship to look at possibilities of inter-faith worship or sharing/focus on similarities.**

Question 7: How can the lessons learned and experienced gained from inter faith dialogue and social action help to build relationships with people from different communities more widely?

- **Media – responsibility is joint**
- **Publicise within faith communities**
- **Local council publicity**
- **Train leaders to welcome visitors in places of worship**

Question 8: What role or roles do you envisage government, faith communities, faith and non-faith based organisations, inter faith organisations and wider civil society playing in building understanding about different beliefs and practices?

- **As above**

3. SHARED SPACES FOR INTERACTION AND SOCIAL ACTION

Question 9: What spaces are being used by faith communities for inter faith dialogue and social action?

- **Faith communities making rooms available for inter faith dialogue**
- **Creating of shared spaces**
- **Attempt made to work for Trade Justice**

Question 10: What barriers are there to sharing spaces?

- **Names of buildings / community centre can be a barrier**
- **Physical access – especially older buildings**
- **Understanding of religious protocols**
- **Costs**

Question 11: What role or roles do you envisage government, faith communities, faith and non-faith based organisations, inter faith organisations and wider civil society playing to create shared spaces?

- **Financial assistance**
- **Centrally situated information exchange (possible @ Town Hall, Shopping precinct) about faiths represented in the local community.**

4. CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS TO BRIDGE AND LINK

Question 12: Access to funding, leadership skills, and misconceptions about the role of faith in public life have all been recognised as issues which can limit the ability of faith communities to bridge and link. Are there other barriers in your community or local area which need to be overcome? Who needs to take action, and what do they need to do?

- **Joint action**
- **Skills to effect change**

Question 13: To what extent does inter faith social action in your local area enable you to work side by side with people who have no religious belief? How might social action involving faith communities and wider civil society be increased and strengthened?

- **Establish social action already taking place and join in**
- **Recognise opportunities**
- **Target and invite people of different faiths / non faiths to engage in joint action**

Question 14: What role or roles do you envisage government, faith communities, faith and non-faith based organisations, inter faith organisations and wider civil society playing to increase the level and scope of inter faith social action?

- **Local government / District Assemblies to provide support to projects and technical advice**
- **Local businesses could provide resources**

Question 15: How are you promoting and encouraging inter faith activity and sharing best practice? What are the best ways of encouraging more people to take part? What role might Government play to champion this?

THE CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO INTER FAITH ACTIVITY EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Question 16: How might the barriers experienced by women be overcome?

- **Separate culture from faith**
- **Give it time**

Question 17: What role or roles do you envisage government, faith communities, faith and non-faith based organisations, inter faith organisations and wider civil society in overcoming these?

Question 18: How might the barriers experienced by young people be overcome?

- **Understanding needs**
- **Make an effort to meet them**

Question 19: What role or roles do you envisage government, faith communities, faith and non-faith based organisations, inter faith organisations and wider civil society in overcoming these?

- **Give them opportunities with responsibilities**
- **Young people, in particular, need good quality knowledge and information about other faiths, local people to be identified as willing to go into colleges/local businesses to offer information/advise**

Question 20: What can successful existing approaches tell us about the key building blocks needed for inter faith dialogue and social action?

Please include any others comments you