

## **Mapping of UK faith networks**

The role of faith networks in service delivery and advocacy for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers

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'The best of this country is represented by the generosity, kindness, solidarity and decency that Britain has at many times shown those fleeing persecution.'

Faith leaders' letter to Theresa May  
September 2016

*Photo © Church of Scotland*



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Migration Exchange works to ensure accuracy and depth in debates on national identity, integration, and immigration, to promote an effective and humane immigration system that treats people with dignity, and to encourage a thriving society where all people, including immigrants, are treated fairly and can prosper, creating economic, social and cultural benefits.

Previous mapping and consultation with migrant and refugee organisations and independent funders highlighted a desire to understand more about the nature and role of faith networks active in providing direct support to migrants and refugees, and engaging in advocacy efforts for fair and humane migration and protection systems. Conversations highlighted the relative weakness of the connection between faith networks and the core migrant and refugee sector.

To help to address this, the following mapping and reflection exercise was commissioned by Migration Exchange to inform those involved in seeking positive change for communities, migrants and refugees (funders, service providers and advocacy groups) about the role and capacity of key faith networks in supporting refugees and

migrants, and in seeking positive change to migration and protection policy.

The project aimed to:

- **Summarise key features of current engagement** and leadership from faith communities on issues of refugee protection, migrant rights and integration.
- **Identify leading voices** from within the faith sector, both those leading work with refugees and migrants, and those who speak with authority and influence on these issues.
- **Identify key national level institutions and networks** used to mobilise support, practical action, or advocacy for positive change.
- **Identify opportunities** to strengthen existing networks, address gaps or increase coordination for greater impact.

This report summarises findings and suggests ways in which coordination could be improved in order to achieve greater impact for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and to build welcoming communities for all.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology was designed to maximise the participation of leaders from across the faith sector, primarily in England and Wales, with limited input from Scotland and Northern Ireland. Leaders and practitioners from a wide variety of actors were interviewed, including:

- Worship institutions (churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.), both networks and individual institutions
- Faith based NGOs, e.g. Christian Aid, Islamic Relief
- Faith based media, think tanks, e.g. Theos, Premier
- Faith based charities; including large, national organisations and smaller, locally focused charities
- Faith networks; both single-religion and interfaith
- Non-faith organisations which have a significant faith component or which work closely with faith institutions, e.g. City of Sanctuary and Citizens UK
- Non-faith networks which include faith institutions, e.g. Stoke-on-Trent and Sheffield refugee networks
- Core migrant and refugee sector including Refugee Action, Refugee Council, IOM and UNHCR

Over 150 leaders and practitioners were interviewed once or more over a period of seven months between August 2016 and April 2017. Research was limited by a lack of evident engagement from minority religions and a lack of networks in some regions of the UK.

**Table 1: Research methodology**

Method	Description	Rationale
<b>Interviews</b> with leaders and volunteers from faith and non-faith migrant and refugee focused institutions and networks	Interviews focused on the role of faith based actors, their current partnerships with non-faith actors and potential for growth	Key informants – current faith based actors and their non-faith partners, and non-faith leaders who see potential in collaboration
<b>Focus groups</b> with faith leaders	Focus groups with key leaders from all major religions and regions of England and Wales	Enable leaders to discuss strengths and weaknesses of their sector, and what is needed to achieve more
<b>Focussed discussions</b> with key leaders in faith and core migrant and refugee sectors	Specific focus on what is needed to increase collaboration and impact	Discussions needed to focus on recommendations and next steps
<b>Roundtable</b> on emerging findings	Roundtable with key faith leaders to discuss findings	Obtain faith leaders' perspective on key findings

## 2 MAPPING

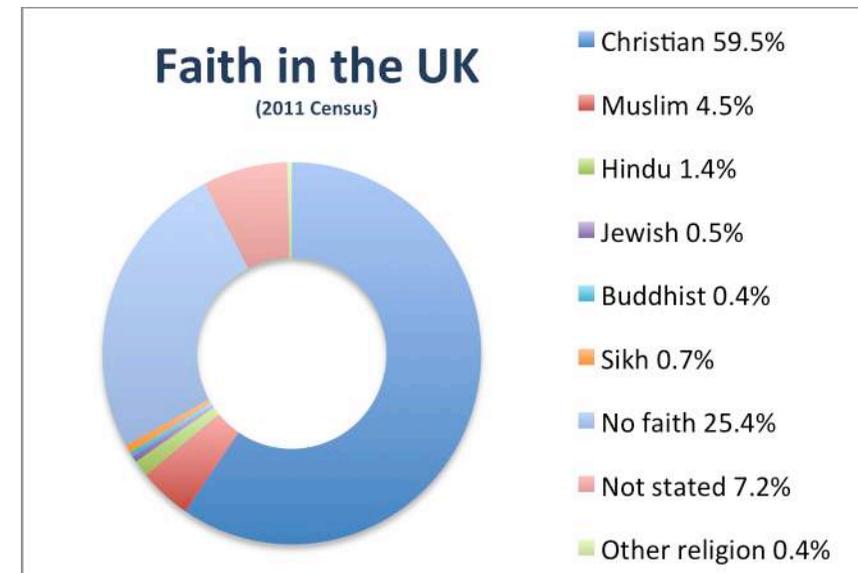
### 2.1 FAITH IN THE UK

**Faith communities make up a significant part of the UK population and contribute a great deal to local communities.** Faith communities can be classed as civil society institutions; focused on their own communities and worship activities, but in most cases also focused on creating social good through action corporately and individually, and in some cases through advocacy or lobbying. Occasionally they can be directed towards a specific, national goal – the Jubilee 2000 debt campaign is a good example. Most of their social activity is undocumented – the children’s clubs, youth groups, visits to the elderly and night shelters.

The monetary value of faith based volunteering was estimated at £3 billion in 2015, without taking into account the use of buildings or reduction in costs to councils or business.<sup>1</sup> Volunteers are active in providing support to refugees and migrants, however given their size and reach it seems likely that their potential to offer practical support, and to speak out on issues of justice related to migration, asylum and refugee support, could be substantially expanded.

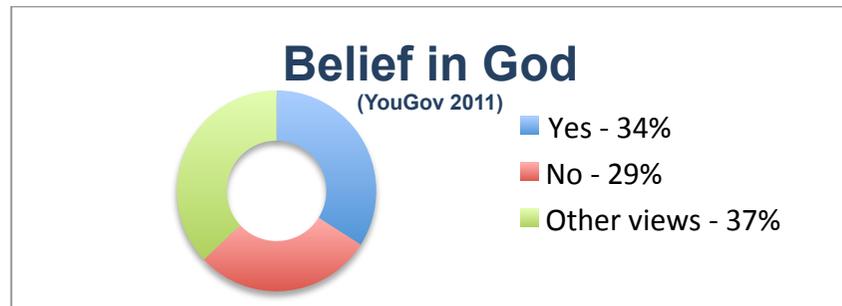
<sup>1</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/05/20/church-groups-community-social-contribution-tories\\_n\\_7321288.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/05/20/church-groups-community-social-contribution-tories_n_7321288.html)

**Faith remains a central part of many people’s lives.** 34% of people believe in God. 35% describe themselves as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ religious. 66% of people claim to pray at least once a month. 41% attend a place of worship fairly often. 11% report attendance at a place of worship at least once a month – 7 million people.<sup>2</sup> They are present in practically every community, have members from every age group and ethnic background, have access to resources including funding and infrastructure, and have the ability to influence millions of people each week.



<sup>2</sup> <https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-you-gov-survey-religion.html>

**Minority faiths are small but significant:** 4.5% of the population are Muslim, 1.4% Hindu, 0.7% Sikh, 0.5% Jewish, 0.4% Buddhist, 0.4% are members of other religions. Only 25.4% of the population in 2011 claimed to have no religion. Christianity is probably over-reported due to 'Church of England' being the default for many even if they would also claim to not believe in God. Mainstream churches (Anglican, Methodist, Catholic) are largely in decline while Orthodox, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches are growing.<sup>3</sup>



**There is significant variation across the country and between ages and religions.**

- There is significant variation between the four nations of the UK. Most Muslims for example live in England.
- London has the highest religious attendance of any England/Wales region, the North East the least.
- 10% of young people are members of religions other than Christianity, compared to 3% of pensioners.
- Church attendance varies greatly – it has more women than men, almost half those of black ethnic origin, 1 in 4 pensioners, 1 in 5 ABs, but only 1 in 10 young people.
- There are 3 million Muslims in the UK. 2.3 million are Sunni. The remainder are Shia or Ahmadiyya. There are c.1,750 registered mosques. c.930,000 attend mosque each week.<sup>1</sup>
- 8.3% of the population of England and Wales is Catholic – 3.8 million people.<sup>1</sup>
- Both the Anglican and Catholic Churches had c.1.4 million active members in 2013.<sup>1</sup>
- There are 280,000 Jews in the UK, 3 in 5 of whom live in Greater London. Approximately half of the Jews in the UK attend synagogue.<sup>1</sup>
- There are 420,000 Sikhs in the UK and 817,000 Hindus.

**Given their size and reach it seems likely that faith communities could form a powerful part of any coalition** which seeks to meet the needs of migrants and refugees, which seeks to shift popular and government opinion, and which seeks to create a new understanding and acceptance of migration, integration and multiculturalism.

<sup>3</sup> <https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html>,  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/03\\_04\\_07\\_tearfundchurch.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/03_04_07_tearfundchurch.pdf)

## 2.2 FAITH ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

Leaders and volunteers from nine different types of organisations were interviewed for this mapping – worship institutions, faith based NGOs, media, think tanks, charities and networks, non-faith organisations with a significant faith component or engagement, non-faith networks which include faith institutions, and core migrant and refugee sector organisations which currently work or wish to work with the faith sector. Focus groups were held with leaders and volunteers from a range of organisations to discuss ways to improve collaboration and impact. The table below summarises the key activities of the various organisations, their strengths and limitations, and summarises key opportunities.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Limitations</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Worship institutions</b> (churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.)	<p>Practical support: advice surgeries, night shelters, drop ins, housing, food, friendship, legal advice, cash handouts, hosting other services.</p> <p>Integration: English language, employment support, CV training.</p> <p>Advocacy: On behalf of individuals to the Home Office; on wider issues when linked to charities or NGOs.</p>	<p>Worship institutions support thousands of people across the country.</p> <p>They are strongest in practical support. Advocacy and integration projects are less common but are growing in number and effectiveness.</p> <p>There is variation in focus; e.g. many Catholic communities are focused on Eastern Europeans; Sikhs are focused on Afghan Sikhs.</p>	<p>Some lack understanding of advocacy and/or wish to avoid being seen as politically motivated.</p> <p>An over focus on direct support without a broader strategy can lead to service user dependency and be counter productive.</p>	<p>Strong practical support experience to build on.</p> <p>Growing keenness to develop advocacy, in part a response to an evidently worsening situation for refugees and asylum seekers and changed political dynamics.</p>

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Limitations</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Faith based NGOs</b> , e.g. Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, World Jewish Relief, Khalsa Aid	Some are active in the UK (e.g. World Jewish Relief run an effective employment support programme in six cities) but many only work directly outside the UK.  Many are active in advocacy and in some cases provide a lead to others (e.g. Christian Aid and the Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD) help supporter churches to advocate).	Where they are practically active in the UK they are highly effective.  They provide a unique advocacy voice and can mobilise large numbers of letter-writers and MP surgery conversations. They are respected in the NGO community and by the government.	Many large NGOs are still adjusting to the fact that the migration issue has cut across previously defined boundaries between developed and developing countries.	Faith based NGOs have significant expertise and access to broader faith networks, who often look to them for leadership on issues of social justice and poverty.
<b>Faith based media</b>	Build support for advocacy campaigns, develop public support.  Influence national media; stories can be picked up from faith based media by national media.	They have rarely shown significant interest in supporting advocacy on specific issues but could be encouraged to do so in future.	Their reach is less than national secular media.	Together they have significant reach to groups likely to be motivated to want to help migrants and refugees.
<b>Faith based think tanks</b> , e.g. Theos	Policy development, discussion fora, advocacy, influence debate.	They can be influential within their sphere of influence and can influence parliament, for example through MPs and Lords who share their faith.	Often limited scope to disseminate findings.	They often produce excellent research which could be used to support advocacy initiatives.

Institution	Activities	Impact	Limitations	Opportunities
<b>Faith based charities</b> , both national and local, (Children's Society, Refugee Support Network, Housing Justice etc.)	Many faith based charities focus on specific issues such as housing, refugee children, education, the right to remain, persecution or legal status.	Many are highly effective at meeting needs and creating innovative models to address problems and create change. E.g. Refugee Support Network's mentoring model; Sheffield Assist's drama groups and conversation clubs that support refugees' mental health.	Many lack capacity, funding, or an ability to promote their work or develop partnerships with similar organisations elsewhere in the country.	There are many excellent charities which could be invested in, linked with other faith and non-faith based charities, and given the means to share their progress and learning.
<b>Faith based networks</b> – single religion and multi-faith	Networks such as the Churches Refugee Network, Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, Muslim Charities Forum, Near Neighbours and Restore Birmingham enable faith actors to collaborate. They share learning and collaborate on campaigns and advocacy. Networks such as the Inter Faith Network share information and learning among members.	These networks are important information sharing fora and enable faith leaders, organisations and charities to plan collective practical work and advocacy. Most have no administration support or leadership structure. Others, such as Near Neighbours, have resources and are backed by a charity.	They can be isolated within one faith stream and/or geographical area.	If better networked and resourced they could allow more joined up thinking and action from the faith based sector. They are building blocks for further collaboration with the core migrant and refugee sector.

Institution	Activities	Impact	Limitations	Opportunities
<p><b>Non-faith organisations or networks</b> which work closely with the faith sector, e.g. Citizens UK, City of Sanctuary</p>	<p>Citizens UK and City of Sanctuary accomplish much of their work with faith institutions and people of faith.</p> <p>Citizens UK organises faith and non-faith institutions to achieve common goals; the needs of migrants and refugees is a significant focus area.</p> <p>City of Sanctuary creates places of welcome across the country for refugees and asylum seekers, often in faith institutions; many of their volunteers are people of faith.</p>	<p>Citizens UK have achieved consistent success in enabling faith institutions to become active in campaigning, and in winning policy change for refugees and asylum seekers.</p> <p>City of Sanctuary have 85 centres across the UK where they welcome and support refugees and asylum seekers. Much of this work is hosted in and with faith institutions.</p>	<p>Not all faith groups wish to use Citizens’ model of campaigning and lobbying.</p> <p>These collaborative, broad based (secular and multi-faith) models are effective but currently rare in the UK.</p>	<p>Both Citizens UK and City of Sanctuary provide models of how the advantages of faith institutions (numbers, infrastructure, regional spread, goodwill) can be used to broad effect and in a way that opens participation to people beyond the faith sector.</p>
<p><b>Regional refugee / asylum / migration networks</b> which include faith institutions</p>	<p>A minority of regions have strong networks which enable coordination and collaboration among the majority of organisations working with refugees and migrants. Stoke-on-Trent and Sheffield are two of the strongest examples; both have overlapping semi-formal and</p>	<p>One major impact of these networks is a sense of goodwill – the council officers know the faith leaders, the charity volunteers and staff, the refugee leaders, the ESOL providers, etc. This generates a sense of trust,</p>	<p>These networks are often strong because of a small number of committed volunteers and staff who have given time to migrant and</p>	<p>There is great strength to these networks.</p> <p>There is potential for them to be supported, resourced, and replicated across</p>

	<p>informal fora which enable charities, faith organisations, the council, Citizens Advice and other actors to share information and collaborate, and where necessary to campaign for change at a local or national level.</p>	<p>and means that problems can often be resolved quickly and amicably.</p> <p>This does not resolve problems of lack of funds, housing, education provision, etc., but does mean that these are seen as shared problems.</p>	<p>refugee issues for years. They are vulnerable to key leaders retiring or moving on. They have been built ad hoc rather than to a template or formula.</p>	<p>the country where willing leaders and institutions exist.</p>
<p><b>Core migrant and refugee sector</b>, e.g. Refugee Council, Refugee Action, British Red Cross, UNHCR, IOM</p>	<p>The core sector is linked to the faith sector at national and grassroots level to a limited extent.</p> <p>Nationally there have been collaborations with NGOs including CAFOD, Christian Aid and the Jesuit Refugee Service, and with leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury and Chief Rabbi e.g. in advocacy. Links are not well developed.</p> <p>At a grassroots level they are often on multi-agency forums, use volunteers from, and can partner with faith institutions.</p>	<p>The core sector values the contribution of the faith sector but recognises that</p> <p>a) it does not know the fullness of the faith sector’s expertise and contribution, and</p> <p>b) it does not have the capacity to coordinate the faith sector (nor has it been invited to do so), or to offer training to all faith institutions in refugee and asylum law, campaigning or integration.</p>	<p>The lack of strong links between the faith and core sectors means that both sides miss opportunities to learn from the experience and expertise of the other, volunteers are not best used, innovative projects are not scaled up, and assumptions are not challenged or resolved.</p>	<p>Regular meetings of core and faith leaders at regional and national level to enable sharing of work and plans.</p> <p>A network of organisers could bring significant benefits in relationship and network building – and better coordinated projects – in a short time.</p>

## 2.3 TYPES OF ACTIVITY

### SERVICE DELIVERY/REFUGEE PROTECTION

Faith institutions lead a wide range of service delivery programmes serving refugees and asylum seekers. They provide far less practical assistance for other migrants unless evidently destitute. This is sometimes due to a deliberate focus on one group (e.g. Syrian refugees) rather than others. For many it results from a need to prioritise people in the most desperate need.

Small organisations such as East European Resource Centre (EERC) and Migrants Organise work with broader migrant communities. Neither has strong links with faith institutions.

Migrants Organise develop leadership and open up spaces for relational, organised participation of migrants and refugees in public life. EERC provides advice, information and advocacy for East European migrants on immigration, family law, social policy and employment, as well as skills training, e.g. ESOL and employment support.

There is little wider support for East European migrants. The Poles are the most organised nationality but even they have little support. There are c.200 Polish Catholic churches; either new churches or pre-existing churches with Polish priests. In many areas they are the only Polish

(and East European) institution, yet they are rarely active in helping people integrate or navigate life in the UK.

Most faith responses are a response to local need. This is the area where faith institutions are at their strongest – practical service projects are often faith institutions' default response to need. They respond to the needs of asylum seekers, refugees and destitute migrants just as they would the needs of non-migrant homeless, elderly or poorer community members. Many projects are outstanding in their scope, commitment, quality and innovation, and have a marked impact on people's lives, providing for emotional, physical and integration needs.

In some parts of the country more isolated leaders and institutions find it difficult to go beyond the basics. In some instances this is due to a lack of resources, in others it is due to a lack of support and ideas for project activities which could help people in need.

### EXISTING SERVICE DELIVERY

**Housing.** Faith institutions provide housing for significant numbers of people who would otherwise be destitute. E.g. Boaz Trust in Manchester provides housing for c. 70 destitute asylum seekers and refugees. Short term accommodation, an 'Airbnb for refugees', is offered by Refugees Welcome in Northern Ireland.

**Legal support.** Faith institutions host legal advice provided by others (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Refugee Action) which complies with legal regulations. Some offer support themselves in compliance with standards and regulations. Very few have OISC qualified advisers.

**Community sponsorship.** Faith institutions form the majority of organisations taking part in the Home Office pilot programme of community sponsorship for Syrian refugees. The Methodists, Salvation Army, Oasis and Caritas Salford, East London Mosque and Cardiff Mosque are among the first organisations to take resettled Syrian families.

**Night shelters.** Many faith-based organisations run or are involved in night shelters throughout the winter. While not exclusively for asylum seekers or refugees they often form a significant proportion of users.

**Drop ins.** Some provide a basic space to meet and get warm. A minority provide significant services including cash handouts, legal support, employment mentoring, free bicycles and help finding accommodation.

**Minority faiths.** There is comparatively little activity from minority faiths. Khalsa Aid, a Sikh charity, works with refugees in the Middle East and Europe. The Afghan Sikh community have helped Afghan refugees in the UK. The Sikh Welfare and Awareness Team have provided legal advice to people from India who have overstayed their UK visa. Leaders have signed joint letters to government.

**ESOL.** Some organisations run English language classes.

**Healthcare.** There is little bespoke healthcare provision. Hillsong church in London runs a mobile health care service which serves refugees and asylum seekers. Others partner with organisations such as Doctors of the World, making their buildings available for health care.

**Collaboration with local authorities.** Faith institutions have different experiences of working with local authorities. Some are able to work closely together, for example providing council approved ESOL, employment training or housing. In other areas faith institutions do not feel trusted or welcomed. This can be due to prior experience; faith institutions which have worked with local authorities on other issues are more likely to collaborate on migrant and refugee issues.



Photo © Solidarity with Refugees

## ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCING

The faith sector is a largely untapped advocacy resource. It has millions of members and thousands of leaders, a proportion of whom could be motivated to advocate for fair policies on refugee protection and migration, including the status of EU migrants post Brexit.

Historically many faith leaders have been reluctant to be involved in issues which can be deemed to be political, however there is a growing awareness that advocacy and campaigns are needed to supplement practical support. Many leaders have recognised the limit of their ability to help and the consequent need for policy change, and have expressed a desire to develop skills and networks.

Many faith NGOs and charities are experienced in advocacy and could provide training and leadership. The Children's Society advocates on behalf of child refugees and asylum seekers. The Jewish Council For Racial Equality (JCORE), World Jewish Relief and Rene Cassin advocate on detention, asylum and integration. Organisations including Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) and Christian Aid have produced faith based policy responses to migration and refugee policy.

A minority have organised supporters and members to take part in advocacy campaigns. CAFOD, Jesuit

Refugee Service and CSAN are among those who have developed groups of supporters who are encouraged to support advocacy campaigns. Others have worked with coordinating organisations such as Citizens UK, which has enabled them to take part in and lead advocacy projects.

Existing relationships with government vary at national and local level. The Church of England and Catholic Bishops Conference have access to supportive MPs and Lords, including the Church of England Bishops in the Lords, and can gain access to government. In some parts of the country faith institutions feel shut out and mistrusted by local government; in most cases relationships are better where faith organisations have worked with councils over an extended period.

Many faith leaders recognise that they could achieve more were they better organised. One church leader said that 'there is so much in the Bible about refugees and people moving – a campaign towards the church to get us to do something could make a huge difference.' There is a need for training and support for leaders and institution members, and for networks to develop and implement effective advocacy campaigns.

## COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

There is a lack of focused integration work involving existing and new communities, whether by government, secular or faith based organisations.

A small number of faith based organisations run integration programmes. In Birmingham, Restore UK run a befriending project.<sup>4</sup> Caritas Westminster runs an integration project.<sup>5</sup> Glasgow Interfaith runs a weekend club to help newcomers integrate and understand Scottish culture.<sup>6</sup> Some organisations help refugees to find employment; e.g. World Jewish Relief help refugees to translate their qualifications to the UK and find work.<sup>7</sup>

Overall however there is far less integration work than service delivery or advocacy. The vast majority of the integration work which does exist focuses exclusively on refugees; very little work exists which includes bridges to pre-existing communities or migrants more generally.

Some worship institutions now include large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees. A recent church report

noted that while their presence is welcome it 'brings challenges, particularly the practical and spiritual support of those seeking asylum, and balancing the needs of new believers with those of existing congregations'.<sup>8</sup> However willing they are, helping people navigate the legal system is time-consuming for clergy, takes them away from other work and is in most cases not their skill set.

The Challenge, Hope Not Hate and Delitelabs are among a small group of organisations seeking to develop integration models. The Challenge helps young people to understand and connect with others. Hope not Hate challenges the politics of hate and extremism. Delitelabs helps migrant and refugee entrepreneurs to develop businesses. They have the potential to develop systematic engagement with the faith sector.

There is a general consensus that more integration work is needed for the sake of all communities, including people who have migrated, refugees and asylum seekers and existing populations. Faith institutions, with access to leaders, volunteers, buildings and other resources are well placed to provide some of this work.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.restore-uk.org/what-we-do/befriending/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://rcdow.org.uk/caritas/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://interfaithglasgow.org/current-projects/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.thejlc.org/2016/02/world-jewish-relief-launches-employment-programme-for-uk-refugees/>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/30-june/news/uk/new-presence-and-engagement-report-highlights-challenges-for-clergy-in-multi-religious-areas>

## 2.4 NETWORKS

Networks are one of the most constructive ways for organisations working with refugees and migrants to collaborate. Currently there are well developed networks in some faith streams and in some regions. There are few effective networks which include multiple faiths or which provide a bridge between faith and non-faith actors.

Existing faith based and shared networks do a lot to help faith actors achieve their goals, but:

- They are often siloed within a faith stream or geographic area.
- They are not universal – for example some areas have strong regional networks while in other areas there is little opportunity for collaboration.
- There are no broad based national networks that bring together faith and secular actors from different regions to share innovative ideas, provide training or support, or develop national advocacy campaigns.
- There is little shared work at national leadership level.

### FAITH BASED

Most faith networks are faith-specific; a minority are multi-faith. The most active focus on a specific area of activity or policy (e.g. housing, detention) or a regional area (e.g. Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees). Examples

include the Churches Refugee Network, Churches and Christian NGOs refugee working group, Refugee Children's Consortium and Muslim Charities Forum.

Most existing networks are focused, meet regularly and provide direction and support to group members. They tend not to be well networked outside of their own spheres, either faith stream or region. There is a need for greater collaboration and best practice sharing.

### REGIONAL or CITY BASED

A few regions have active, well-led networks that enable faith and civil society actors to share resources to meet needs in their area and to work with (or advocate towards) local authorities. Networks in Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent are standout examples. In many other areas networks are less well developed if they exist at all. This is a major impediment to joined up work. There are no developed links between these city or regional networks.

### NATIONAL

Existing national networks tend to be focused on a specific group of actors (e.g. Churches/NGO Refugee Network) or issue (e.g. Detention Forum). There are no national networks of migrant and refugee organisations

that enable all types of actors to share experience, goals or learning, or to develop joint advocacy campaigns.

### ORGANISATION-LED

Organisations including Citizens UK, No Accommodation Network (NACCOM), the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI) Refugees & Forced Migration Hub, and Solidarity with Refugees have built networks which include faith actors. By focusing on specific issues or campaigns they have

been able to build broad-based networks and use their combined numbers and reach to achieve clear outcomes.

### NEEDED DEVELOPMENTS

The sector would benefit from national service delivery, advocacy and integration networks, and from strong regional networks in areas currently without one.



Photo © Mike Buckley

## 2.5 LEADING VOICES

Faith leaders are influential within and beyond their own communities. They are among the most trusted public leaders.<sup>9</sup> Their public statements on refugee policy have gained front page attention.<sup>10</sup> Over 200 faith leaders signed a letter to Theresa May in late 2016,<sup>11</sup> and while their demands have to this point not been met the fact that they are trusted and consistent voices is likely to influence public opinion and could in future have a more marked impact on government policy.

There are many committed faith leaders working on refugee issues. Each of the major faiths has leaders committed to refugee issues at national and local level, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Pagan, Baha'i and Zoroastrian.

Their influence varies and in some cases has not been fully developed. Few have immediate access to government or national media but some, such as Rowan Williams and Jonathan Sacks, do. Their support and moral leadership could contribute to alliances around shared goals.

<sup>9</sup> IPSOS/MORI in 2015 found that 67% of people trust clergy, compared to 21% who trust politicians.  
[https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3685/Politicians-are-still-trusted-less-than-estate-agents-journalists-and-bankers.aspx#gallery\[m\]/1/](https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3685/Politicians-are-still-trusted-less-than-estate-agents-journalists-and-bankers.aspx#gallery[m]/1/)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/12/rowan-williams-200-faith-leaders-open-letter-revise-refugee-policy>

<sup>11</sup> <http://interfaithrefugeeinitiative.org/>

At a local level their involvement depends on the choice of the individual church, mosque, synagogue or similar institution's leadership. There are rare examples of leaders making refugees and asylum seekers their main focus, such as Sanctus in Stoke on Trent.

Most faith institutions are not centrally led – hence a national leader can rarely require member institutions to work on migration or refugee issues. As a result while leaders are important they are not a shortcut or a substitute for grassroots networks.

There is no definitive list of leading voices. The 200 plus signatories of the September 2016 policy letter are on <http://interfaithrefugeeinitiative.org/>.

There is the potential for faith leaders to be more involved. Given they have other responsibilities for most this will come when they are invited to contribute to specific outcomes or projects. The successes of Citizens UK and City of Sanctuary have come because they have proactively built networks of leaders and organisations, including faith leaders and institutions.

## 2.6 OTHER ACTORS

A number of other actors, faith based and secular, could be useful partners for organisations active on these issues, including the core sector, the faith based sector, and independent funders.

### REFUGEE/MIGRATION STARTUPS

Many small charities and NGOs started up following the 2015 rise in refugees crossing Europe. Some of these (e.g. Help Refugees, Solidarity with Refugees, Calais Action) have successfully mobilised volunteers, gained public awareness and met tangible needs within the UK and further afield. Some advocate on behalf of specific groups including child refugees. Others focus on integration and facilitating access to employment.

### ORGANISATIONS USING TECH

Some organisations use technology to solve migrant and refugee needs. Many are UK based but work internationally. For example, Techfugees seeks to mobilise the international tech community to supply a pool of solutions and talent to NGOs working with refugees, and to refugees themselves. Some are creating databases of projects which aim to help migrants, and of their needs. Some use tech to help migrants find local support, e.g. Prosper Community and Needlist.

## THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Academics working alone and jointly with practitioners are seeking to develop policy proposals, research and advocacy programmes. The JLI Refugees & Forced Migration Hub <sup>12</sup> has significant input from Catholic academics and Islamic practitioners.

## BRITISH HUMANISTS

British Humanists' 'Faith to Faithless' project <sup>13</sup> helps refugees persecuted because they have left their faith for atheism. The International Humanist Union's Human Rights Defence Fund helps atheists claim asylum on that basis. The APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief helps asylum seekers and refugees have the opportunity to seek asylum regardless of their former or chosen belief system or faith. Due to shared concerns humanists often work closely with the faith sector.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://refugee.jliflc.com/refugees-forced-migration-hub/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://humanism.org.uk/2017/01/16/bha-announces-faith-to-faithless-integration-and-new-support-services-for-apostates/>



## 3. ANALYSIS

### CURRENT FAITH BASED SUPPORT

Faith institutions and leaders do a huge amount of work with refugees and migrants. They are strongest in direct support and are generally less active in integration work between communities, and in advocacy.

The exceptions are faith based INGOs which have advocacy as part of their remit, and advocacy/campaign focused networks or umbrella organisations such as Citizens UK which give faith institutions a rationale for campaigning, a toolkit to help them to do it and a neutral space within which to operate with others.

Advocacy is problematic for some leaders of worship institutions who can be concerned at taking part in activities which could be seen to be politically motivated.

Despite this there is an opportunity to encourage more faith institutions and leaders to support efforts for fair and welcoming policies for refugees and migrants. Most faiths encourage believers to 'welcome the stranger' and 'love their neighbour as themselves'. Some of the most well known parables or founding stories encourage care for the stranger – the Good Samaritan, the Book of Ruth,

Muhammad's 'you cannot be a real believer unless you want for your brother what you want for yourself'.<sup>14</sup>

Many believers are inherently ill at ease with policies that harm people in genuine need, even if many are wary of high immigration (and will include asylum seekers/refugees in that total). While there may be a tension between fears over immigration and a theology of welcome, the latter provides an opportunity to win support from people of faith in the 'anxious middle'; people who inherently want to help the vulnerable but have concerns over immigration and open borders.<sup>15</sup>

Overall, while there is a great deal of excellent work it remains geographically uneven, can lack regional or national coordination and is often not linked to wider networks (to enable learning, replication or reflection). Much innovative and effective work is not well documented or publicised. Much work is dependent on a small number of committed volunteers or leaders, and there is often no plan to ensure projects' continuation beyond their retirement. While there is much to celebrate there is also the potential for far more to be achieved.

<sup>14</sup> [https://jsr.shanti.virginia.edu/back-issues/vol-10-no-1-august-2011-people-and-places/the-quranic-perspective-on-immigrants/#\\_ftn9](https://jsr.shanti.virginia.edu/back-issues/vol-10-no-1-august-2011-people-and-places/the-quranic-perspective-on-immigrants/#_ftn9)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.britishfuture.org/articles/refugees-poll-shows-a-humane-but-anxious-nation/>

## WHAT MORE DO FAITH INSTITUTIONS WANT TO DO, AND WHAT PREVENTS THEM FROM DOING IT?

Many faith leaders and institutions want to do more to meet the immediate needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and to help them to integrate into British society. Many are most concerned with safety and welcome – they want the UK to be a welcoming, open country and one which prioritises for the safety of people in need rather than one which rejects them.

Many are struggling to keep up with demand in the face of rising numbers and cuts in wider provision, whether government or council services, or independent services which were formerly government funded. In Sheffield for example the Northern Refugee Centre had its funding cut and closed in 2016; this has had a knock on effect across the city as faith and civil society organisations have tried to replace lost services. Existing services are even more overstretched as a result. Some feel limited by a lack access to support, project ideas and training.

In some parts of the country actors are limited by the fact that core staff and volunteers are ageing or dwindling in number, but are not being replaced by younger people or newcomers.

More could be done to support people with lived experience of being a refugee or seeking asylum to become leaders, staff or lead volunteers of projects. This could provide a rich source of workers and volunteers. City of Sanctuary is a rare instance of making this work.

There is a general lack of experience in integration and advocacy, and a lack of opportunity to learn needed skills. Many leaders understandably take issue locally with reduced council provision rather than challenge central government, which in many cases has forced the council's hand by cutting the funding which previously paid for the services in question.

No faith institution or network, and no member of the core sector, has provided a national or regional training programme to enable faith leaders to learn best practice in direct support, advocacy or integration. Examples of training support from Refugee Action and City of Sanctuary are welcome and could be scaled up.

In most cases faith leaders were trained to lead faith institutions, not charities or community projects. Many are willing to do what they can but lack the expertise of community organisers, project managers and advocacy advisers. Most are willing and keen to help but need outside support and guidance.

## WHAT INFLUENCES FAITH INSTITUTIONS TO WORK WITH THE GROUPS THEY WORK WITH RATHER THAN OTHERS?

Most faith institutions work with whoever turns up at their drop ins or asks for help. Faith leaders and institutions are loyal to place in ways that most other actors are not and hence tend to respond to the need in front of them. However anecdotally when it comes to more substantial support it appears that faith leaders and institutions are more open to working with refugees than asylum seekers or other migrants.

In 2016 many faith institutions registered with the Home Office to take part in the community sponsorship pilot, but comparatively few are keen to house asylum seekers or destitute asylum seekers whose claims are in limbo, despite the larger numbers and arguably greater need involved. There is no clear answer to this, but anecdotally it appears that refugees are preferred because they have been vetted by government and verified as genuinely in need. There is also a sense that working with asylum seekers could be an open ended commitment, whereas refugees should be able to gain employment and integrate more easily.

Some leaders and volunteers believe that working with refugees is easier and more predictable. There is widespread confusion about what the government provides for both asylum seekers and refugees, and hence what remains to be provided by civil society. Faith leaders and institutions need to be educated about the nature of the problem, expected changes to government policy and their likely impacts, and what can or should be done both practically and in campaign terms to respond.

## WHAT ENGAGEMENT HAVE FAITH INSTITUTIONS HAD WITH THE CORE REFUGEE MIGRATION SECTOR? WHY?

Faith based INGOs work with the core sector as they would any other NGO or charity.

Links between other faith institutions and the core migrant and refugee sector are far less well developed at a national level, although there are links at local level.

There are a number of reasons for this:

- The core sector is national while most faith institutions are locally based and focused.
- The core sector is a group of professional organisations; faith institutions mostly work with volunteers and members. They may have comparable

- aims but work from different rationales and motivations. While the core sector does make use of volunteers they tend to be offering professional expertise (e.g. on legal issues).
- Some faith leaders believe that faith institutions are not welcome or wanted by the core sector and councils, or that they are mistrusted.
  - Some have had difficulty getting in contact with core sector organisations and with local council officers.
  - Some have been actively rebuffed by core sector organisations or councils, others have been ignored.
  - In contrast, some have had highly positive working relationships with councils and the core sector; in most cases more positive relationships have been built up over a period of years or decades.
  - Some faith leaders look to their own resources first and are reluctant to ask for external support.
  - A small minority of faith institutions see refugee/asylum work as evangelism or proselytisation and may not want external involvement.
  - Collaboration can be hard. Without core funding it is difficult for a faith institution to step up and lead. Cuts in funding for civil society organisations and council services can leave huge gaps in provision which faith institutions may not feel qualified or resourced to fill.

- Some fear mission creep and that they will lose their identity as worshipping communities if they work on migrant and refugee issues.
- Conversely, one core sector leader commented ‘We put a lot into the faith based sector but didn’t get much out, so we stopped trying’. The same person commented that churches always offer volunteers, which are often not needed.
- Local authority community development workers once matched need with resource, for example a core sector need and a faith based offer, but since most development workers have been made redundant no-one is doing that work.
- Collaboration is stronger between the faith sector and other civil society organisations at a local level.

In conclusion, while there is desire for greater collaboration from both faith institutions and the core sector the means to develop this engagement are often lacking. City of Sanctuary are developing a model of regional coordinators which may help develop links between different sectors. Refugee Action offer training and advice to local organisations, including faith groups, but this is not well known among faith actors. These examples could be built upon or scaled up to enable further collaboration.

## WHAT BENEFITS COULD RESULT FROM GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CORE AND FAITH SECTORS?

Greater collaboration between the core and faith sectors could result in better use of resources, the avoidance of duplication and gaps in provision. It could result in better projects by creating opportunities to learn from best practice in both sectors to the benefit of all actors. It could provide access to a large number of advocates (e.g. people who can write and speak to MPs and help to inform public opinion). Greater collaboration could lead to training for leaders and volunteers in safeguarding, best practice and public policy change.

Faith leaders and volunteers are keen to achieve more with and for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, however many do not see closer collaboration with the core sector as a route to achieving this. Generally, but not universally, there is high regard for the core sector but a view that its aims and practices are distinct from those of the faith sector. This is not deeply ingrained and could be overcome with offers of (and requests for) help and partnership.

One template to follow is that of Citizens UK, who have enabled large scale faith participation by developing a

clear model and by welcoming the faith sector's participation as the faith sector. Faith leaders and members tend to feel welcomed as equal partners on Citizens UK's campaigns, which encourages their participation.

It is often important to faith sector actors that they are able to speak with their own voice; hence CAFOD is able to build a network of letter writers and MP surgery visitors, however people who write for CAFOD may not give their time for a non-faith alternative.

Any interest that does exist for closer collaboration with the core migrant and refugee sector is based on outcomes; some leaders and organisations realise that they need to do more than service delivery if things are going to improve, and that they need to develop advocacy capability. The default however will be to do this within the faith sector rather than in partnership with others, unless viable options are presented to them.

For collaboration to increase leaders in both sectors will need to choose to engage more with the other. This is most likely to happen when attached to a tangible project or advocacy goal. Leaders on both sides could take the initiative, and should seek opportunities to do so.

## WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES THE FAITH SECTOR OFFER? WHAT GOOD IDEAS COULD BE SCALED UP?

Independent funders could consider supporting more proactive attempts to connect the work of the faith based sector with other efforts to achieve positive change. Some examples and suggestions offered by those interviewed for this mapping include:

### – **Document and scale up existing good practice**

There are some examples of excellent and innovative projects which could be documented, publicised and replicated. Examples include the employment and training project run by World Jewish Relief in six UK cities, the drop in and asylum support run by St Mark's in Stoke-on-Trent, and the wrap around support offered by West London Synagogue.

### – **Develop local leaders**

Strong networks and resulting outcomes in areas such as Stoke-on-Trent and Sheffield are dependent on committed, experienced local leaders. Even in areas where such leaders exist, some are close to retirement or covering two or three roles because of a lack of other options. Identification of template local leadership roles which cover the faith and civil society sectors,

recruitment, and provision of training and funding for these roles, could transform local provision and partnerships between faith, civil society and mainstream actors. One core sector leader commented, 'Without local leadership it's impossible...there's a leadership vacuum.'

### – **Develop regional networks**

Strong networks have significant benefits for refugee and asylum support and for organisations working in the sector. Effective existing networks could be loosely replicated, working with the faith sector and civil society.

### – **Develop national networks**

There is very little shared learning or collaboration between faith networks, or faith networks and civil society and the core sector, nationally. Networks made up of regional leaders and focused on advocacy, direct support and integration would enable learning, support and could create a platform for national advocacy campaigns. These networks could be connected to IMiX, the communications agency acting as a two-way link between organisations working on migration, integration and refugee issues in the UK and the media.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <http://global-dialogue.eu/migration-communications-hub/>

– **Create regional and national advocacy networks**

The creation of advocacy networks would make it easier for existing organisations and leaders in each faith stream to encourage members to lobby MPs, Lords and local government to do more to help asylum seekers and refugees. It may be possible to work with Citizens UK and others experienced in this field to develop regional and national networks and tools.

– **ESOL provision**

Map ESOL currently provided by faith institutions and others. Fund or encourage ESOL provision in areas where it is not currently available. Provide training to leaders and volunteer trainers.

– **'Off the shelf' models**

Many faith leaders want to help refugees, asylum seekers and migrants but don't know where to begin. When faced with similar questions over local poverty the obvious solution is a Food Bank; it's a nationally recognised brand and model, and they are given help to set one up. Similar 'off the shelf' models for refugee/asylum work could include ESOL, English conversation classes, employment support, drop ins, advice surgeries. There is a need for such models to be developed and publicised.

– **Educating the faith sector**

There is a need to educate the faith sector about migrant and refugee issues. It would be useful to develop resources for faith leaders including draft sermons or their equivalents, '10 ways to help refugees' cards for institution foyers and other ideas. The Children's Society model of regional volunteer speakers could be replicated.

– **Business and employment**

Create business networks founded on business owners or trustees who are members of faith institutions to offer paid internships and appropriate jobs to refugees, recognising their prior work experience and qualifications from home countries. Work with training and academic institutions to help migrants obtain UK qualifications to match existing qualifications from home countries.

– **Create a community of practice**

Leaders and ideas are not joined up. The sector does not often have capacity to learn, reflect and adapt. In large part this is due to a lack of resources, funding and opportunities to connect. Were a community of practice created it should include faith and core sector leaders so that learning is shared and acted upon across sectors.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 FOR FAITH LEADERS

#### I. MAKE USE OF FAITH BASED MEDIA

Faith based media (radio, print and online) has a wide reach across the country but is rarely used by faith based organisations to find volunteers, to communicate its work or to build support for advocacy campaigns towards local or national government.

#### II. TRAIN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS TO LEAD PROJECTS AS STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

There are few examples of faith organisations seeing migrants, refugees or asylum seekers as active participants instead of recipients of help. Both projects and migrants would benefit from a system which allows them to move from recipient to participant, either as volunteer or staff member depending on their status, project needs and resources.

#### III. FAITH BASED NGOS AND CHARITIES COULD PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN THE SECTOR

Faith based charities and NGOs are looked to by local faith institutions for ideas, funding and leadership when

faced with local need, including in relation to migration. Some have responded and do provide leadership (e.g. CSAN, Church Urban Fund) but many could do more given focus and finance.

For some this will take a shift in thinking. For example, some NGOs have historically focused only on poverty overseas but, given that migration cuts across pre-existing boundaries, they may choose to work on migration within the UK. This could include advocacy and support to local actors, faith based and otherwise.

#### IV. JOIN EXISTING NETWORKS OR START NEW REGIONAL NETWORKS OF FAITH, CIVIL SOCIETY AND CORE SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

Seek support from other organisations working to help migrants of all kinds, and seek to offer support to smaller and less experienced organisations.

#### V. ENCOURAGE NATIONAL TAKE UP OF THIS ISSUE

Speak to national leaders and encourage them to make this a priority area for your network or organisation's campaigning and practical social action.

## 4.2 FOR THE CORE SECTOR

### VI. TRAIN FAITH LEADERS IN REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SUPPORT, INTEGRATION AND ADVOCACY

Build a network of faith leaders in each region and work with them to develop ways to collaborate on projects.

This could build on existing support provided by Refugee Action<sup>17</sup> or the regional hubs created by City of Sanctuary.<sup>18</sup> Grassroots actors such as Communities and Asylum-Seekers Together (CAST)<sup>19</sup> could help facilitate training, as could dioceses and their equivalents.

### VII. SHARE BEST PRACTICE

The core sector could share best practice in programme quality, standards, developing volunteering, safeguarding and other areas. While much excellent work is done by faith and civil society actors they are often not subject to the same funding pressures or legal requirements as the core sector, with the result that the core sector may have learned best practice in ways that the faith and civil society sectors will not have done.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/our-services/help-and-advice/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://cityofsanctuary.org/about/groups/groups/sanctuary-awards-and-becoming-a-city-of-sanctuary/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://castsouthend.wordpress.com/>

Funders may need to assist with capacity and funding for widespread best practice sharing to be practical.

### VIII. DEVELOP 'MIGRATION/REFUGEE/ASYLUM 101' FACTSHEETS, WEB PAGES OR TRAINING FOR FAITH LEADERS

Many faith leaders have little understanding of the causes of migration, the relative needs of asylum seekers and refugees, available government provision, how provision has changed in recent years and is likely to change in future, what their communities can do to help, and what more government should be asked to do. Simple resources could enable faith leaders to speak about these issues to members, and to create projects to meet local needs.

## 4.3 FOR ALL ACTORS

### IX. BUILD A TEMPLATE OF CITY/REGION NETWORKS TO REPLICATE

Existing networks in Stoke on Trent and Sheffield and elsewhere enable joined up work between councils, the core sector, civil society and the faith sector. While the available resources, leaders and institutions in each city and region will vary it should be possible to learn from existing examples to develop a template of roles, responsibilities and ways of working which could be replicated in cities and towns elsewhere.

Leadership is key, and leaders would need to be recruited in each area where a new network was to be set up. Leaders could be from the faith or secular sectors. New networks would need to have clearly defined roles and leadership, and be clear on what they were aiming to achieve and the limits of their capacity.

The template could be used to create comparable networks in parts of the country where opportunities to collaborate are lacking. To facilitate this funding may be needed, at least temporarily, for one or more community organisers. Focus should be on the top areas of dispersal and migrant concentration.

In the absence of networks a step towards this could be taken if funders could deliberately link the various projects they support and applications for funding they receive from a given area.

### X. DEVELOP INTEGRATION PROJECT TEMPLATES FOR USE BY THE CORE, FAITH AND CIVIL SOCIETY SECTORS

There are some outstanding examples of integration work across the UK and in comparable nations including the US, Canada, Germany and Australia. These examples could be documented, learned from, and presented as templates for use by the core, faith and civil society sectors. Currently in the UK examples of good integration work, particularly examples which bring together both existing and new communities, are rare. Existing centres of excellence (The Challenge, Hope Not Hate, Delitelabs) could be invited to help develop templates and project ideas.

IOM is conducting a mapping exercise of integration projects in the UK. This will highlight successful projects which could inform project templates. It would be helpful if templates could be designed for organisations with different skill sets and access to resources.

Faith based organisations should be part of attempts to improve integration work in the UK due to their focus on place and rootedness in local communities.

#### **XI. ESTABLISH NATIONAL NETWORKS FOR ADVOCACY, INTEGRATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY WHICH BRING TOGETHER CORE, CIVIL SOCIETY AND FAITH ACTORS**

National networks which share learning, need, ideas and opportunities in each of advocacy, integration and service delivery could enable a considerable increase in provision across all sectors and parts of the country. Ideally these would be built from key leaders in existing and newly created city / regional networks.

Networks would need a facilitator and a framework for action to avoid becoming mere information sharing. Ideally, they would be facilitated by people with a developmental skill set.

Facilitators would need to be housed somewhere for oversight and support. Recipient areas would need a clear sense of what they wished to change. Each network would need to define its intended, measurable change.

#### **XII. SUPPORT LONG TERM PLANNING AND CHANGE**

Many institutions focused on meeting immediate need have little awareness of or focus on the long term and or what they could do to prevent other migrants, refugees or asylum seekers getting into difficulty or facing significant need in the future. A shift of thinking would encourage a shift into integration and advocacy.

Sector institutions should be supported to focus on systemic interventions which challenge long term problems. For some this will require a shift in thinking. Challenges and opportunities will vary by region. The new metro mayors may provide an opportunity for more joined up work and for focused regional advocacy.

#### **XIII. INCLUDE THE SECTOR MORE EXPLICITLY IN IMiX**

Many faith institutions have little focus on communicating their work. One unintended consequence is that their work is not publicised and hence not available for others to learn from. Greater integration with IMiX could enable better dissemination of ideas and joined up advocacy.

#### **XIV. WORK WITH HOPE NOT HATE, THE CHALLENGE, EERC, MIGRANTS ORGANISE AND OTHERS TO CREATE PROJECTS WHICH FOCUS ON MIGRANTS**

Most current faith activity focuses on refugees and asylum seekers, yet faith communities could also be a valuable resource for migrants, including EU migrants, particularly when they newly arrive in the UK. More could be done to enable organisations already focused on migrants (e.g. The Challenge, East European Resource Centre, Migrants Organise) to develop, plan and build support for new project ideas.

#### **XV. CREATE 'OFF THE SHELF' PROJECT IDEAS**

Many faith institutions which want to be active in helping people locally in need start a food bank because it is a nationally recognised and supported project. One or more similar migrant/refugee focused projects which are easy to understand and replicate, and which are supported by a national institution akin to the Trussell Trust (which could be a core sector institution or one like Church Urban Fund / Near Neighbours) could spread quickly across the country.

Such projects would need to be created by people with a developmental skill set. The criticism of foodbanks is that while they meet immediate need they do nothing to

challenge the structures which cause people to be in poverty. A migrant/refugee equivalent would ideally meet need but also lead to long term change.

#### **XVI. CREATE A SYSTEM TO MATCH NEED WITH AVAILABLE PROVISION**

Local government community development officers once helped match need with provision. Since many of them have been made redundant due to lack of available funding this work is not being done. A network of organisers, city/regional networks or others should be enabled to fill this role, perhaps using resources from the tech community to do so.

Faith organisations and leaders are loyal to place and are by nature part of their local community. In many cases they know local communities far better than charities, local governments or other actors. They may therefore be a good source of development workers.

## APPENDIX A

### EXISTING NETWORKS

#### SECULAR and MULTI FAITH

NACCOM (No Accommodation Network) seeks to end destitution among asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with no recourse to public funds, primarily people whose asylum claims have failed yet they have not been removed.

Homeless Link, the membership charity for organisations working directly with homeless people in England, work to improve services and campaign for policy change that will end homelessness. They provide advice and training for churches and other community groups.

Citizens UK and the National Refugee Welcome Board aim to support government, local authorities and specialist providers to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020 and to bring more refugees to Britain. They enable civil society organisations to campaign on behalf of refugees.

Right to Remain works with groups supporting people to establish their right to remain with dignity, safety and humanity, and to challenge the immigration system.

The Detention Forum is a network of organisations working together to challenge the UK's use of detention. The Forum is of value in and of itself but also provides a template for networks on other issues.

Detention Action. Detention Action provides support and advice for migrants in detention.

Migrant Rights Network brings together migrant activists and support organizations, think tanks, academics, faith groups and public sector representatives to advocate for a rights-based approach towards migration.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees brings together faith groups across Scotland to work on behalf of and with refugees.

The Joint Learning Initiative Refugees & Forced Migration Hub is a collaboration between practitioners and academics and aims to collate and communicate evidence on the role of faith actors in responding to refugee and IDP needs, with a view to influencing policy and praxis.

Solidarity with Refugees led the Refugees Welcome marches in London in 2015 and 2016. They will develop further awareness raising and lobbying actions in future.

Interfaith. Interfaith networks including the Inter Faith Network, Interfaith Glasgow and Interfaith Scotland work to build good relations between the diverse religious and belief communities. They provide information and networking opportunities for organisations from all faiths and beliefs.

Brent Action for Refugees seeks to welcome refugees and to create a powerful broad-based movement, to change the narrative on Refugee Welcome for the better. It includes some faith actors such as Cricklewood Mosque.

## CHRISTIAN

Housing Justice work in housing and homelessness. They support night shelters, drop-ins and practical projects by providing advice and training for churches and other community groups.

JPIT aims to promote equality and justice by influencing those in power and by energising and supporting local congregations. It combines the Baptist Union, Methodist Church, Church of Scotland and United Reformed Church.

The Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) helps churches to promote an inclusive community through advocating for an adequate policy for migrants, refugees and minority groups at European and national level.

Churches Refugee Network (CRN) provides a collective and ecumenical voice on issues of asylum and immigration.

London Churches Refugee Network works with London's Churches and other community groups to help migrants gain the security for themselves and for their families.

For Refugees helps churches in community sponsorship.

The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network helps refugees to start a business and become self-sustaining.

Jubilee Plus aims to create a network of churches helping refugees and asylum seekers.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Churches Together in England (CTE), Churches Together in Wales

(CYTUN), and Action for Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) aim to enable unity and shared action between churches. CTBI runs a Churches and Christian NGO Working Group to support organisations working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

## MUSLIM

Muslim Charities Forum is an umbrella organisation for Muslim-led international NGOs, based in the UK. The charities work mostly internationally.

Mercy Mission UK is a Muslim community development organisation which incubates projects of civic benefit, including fostering and adoption for refugee children.

Penny Appeal encourages Muslim families to adopt or foster refugee and migrant children.

## JEWISH

Tzelem UK is the rabbinic call for economic and social justice. It seeks to continue the Jewish social activist tradition by taking action and providing a critique to the problems at the root of society, economy and treatment of the vulnerable.

JCORE works both inside and outside the Jewish community to provide a Jewish voice on race and asylum issues.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mike Buckley** is a consultant working with charities, politicians, think tanks, faith communities, funders and other actors on issues including migration, refugees, integration, and the rise of populism and extremism.

He has worked on refugee and migration research policy, advocacy and campaigns for organisations including Migration Exchange, British Red Cross, CAFOD, International Rescue Committee, the Jo Cox Foundation, the Methodist Church and Joint Public Issues Team. He has extensive networks in the migrant and refugee, faith, civil society, NGO, think tank, media and political sectors.

Mike is a former community organiser, Labour Party adviser and aid worker. He spent a decade working overseas in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa for INGOs. Since returning to the UK he has worked in community organising for Citizens UK, Movement for Change, on policy and campaigns for senior Labour MPs, and on issues related to migration and the sustaining of open, democratic societies for a range of actors.

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## MIGRATION EXCHANGE

This report was commissioned by **Migration Exchange**; the views are the author's own. Migration Exchange is an informal network of independent funders which aims to improve the lives of migrants and receiving communities in the UK by informing public debate on migration and creating welcoming communities. Migration Exchange is a programme of Global Dialogue, a registered charity (1122052) and limited company (5775827). For more information see [www.global-dialogue.eu](http://www.global-dialogue.eu)



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