







September 2005



Faith in the East of England



A research study on the vital role played by faith communities in the social, economic and spiritual life of a region. Undertaken by the East of England Faiths Council and the University of Cambridge



East of England Faiths Council

Mark Argent, Jenny Kartupelis, Sarah Geary, Revd Canon Robin Hewetson, Anne Littlefair

Cambridge Housing and Planning Research — University of Cambridge

Dr Roland Lovatt, Professor Christine Whitehead, Fiona Lyall-Grant, Aoife Ni Luanaigh



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Faith in the East of England

The roles of faith communities in the region

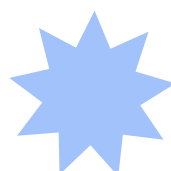
East of England Faiths Council:

Jenny Kartupelis, Mark Argent,
Sarah Geary, Revd Canon Robin Hewetson and Anne Littlefair



Cambridge Housing and Planning Research — University of Cambridge:

Roland Lovatt, Christine Whitehead, Fiona Lyall-Grant and Aoife Ni Luanaigh



Contents

Foreword	1
Chapter 1: <i>Introduction</i>	3
1.1 Overview	3
1.2 Research summary	4
1.3 Summary of the findings	7
1.4 Structure of the report	9
Chapter 2: <i>Composition of the faith communities in the East of England</i>	11
2.1 The 2001 Census	11
2.2 Measuring the size of the worshipping communities	11
2.3 Geographical distribution of places of worship	12
2.4 Age of worshipping communities	13
2.5 Faith communities' engagement with civic life	14
2.6 Chapter summary	15
Chapter 3: <i>What are they doing?</i>	17
3.1 Scope and nature of the activities taking place	17
3.2 Types of activity taking place	20
3.3 Beneficiaries	21
3.4 Choosing and starting projects	22
3.5 Rejecting and ending projects	23
3.6 Chapter summary	23
Chapter 4: <i>The secular viewpoint</i>	25
4.1 The secular perspective	25
4.2 Perceived advantages of working with faith groups	25
4.3 Perceived disadvantages of working with faith groups	27
4.4 Who will secular partners work with?	28
4.5 Faith of the secular partner	29
4.6 Chapter summary	29
Chapter 5: <i>What next?</i>	
— <i>The potential to extend and improve faith-based community activity</i>	31
5.1 Key issues	31
5.2 Barriers and opportunities	34
5.3 Support for faith groups involved in community activity	35
5.4 Partnerships within the public and voluntary sector	35
5.5 Chapter summary	36
Chapter 6: <i>Conclusions</i>	37
6.1 Summary of key findings	37
6.2 Recommendations for the future	38
6.3 The East of England Faiths Council	39
Bibliography	43

List of Figures

Figure 1	Faiths of the regional and national population from the 2001 Census	11
Figure 2	Willingness to share worship space with people of other faiths	13
Figure 3	Percentage distributions by age range	13
Figure 4	Percentages of respondents raising issues of local concern	14
Figure 5	Percentages of worshipping communities working with different groups	21

Appendices

Appendix 1	The Research Method — Quantitative Analysis	45
Appendix 2	Sample Postal Questionnaire	48
Appendix 3	Postal Questionnaire Cover Letter	53
Appendix 4	Faith Community Representative Interview Questionnaire	55
Appendix 5	Secular Representative Interview Questionnaire	59

Foreword

Every day in our region, as throughout our country, people of faith are giving their time, skills, premises and money to ensure that others are supported, advised, cared for and educated in ways that would not otherwise happen.

Every week in our region some 180,000 people enjoy a greater level of well-being, make new friends, learn new skills, discover new talents, find new opportunities or become more of a part of our society through a project organised by a faith group.

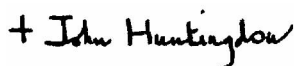
Every year in our region, volunteers from worshipping communities give freely £30 million worth of their time to others, acting where they see the most need, drawing in the vulnerable and the marginalised.

As faith leaders, we are both proud of and humbled by the sheer scale of this service, offered by people whose beliefs inspire them to value all human life and to work towards the well-being and fulfilment of all.



The East of England Faiths Council was established to represent the major faith traditions in our engagement with regional bodies, and to contribute to the development of our six counties. We do commend this report to all who are engaged in the broad issues of community development and look forward to expanding on its central themes. It is our hope and prayer that the Council will continue to grow on a foundation of mutual trust, such that it can develop practical ways of supporting the type of work and partnership which this research highlights.



The Revd. Paul Hills



The Rt. Revd. Dr John Inge

Zafar Khan

Ellis Weinberger

Co-chairs of the East of England Faiths Council

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The research

Faith in the East of England is a research project undertaken by the East of England Faiths Council (EEFC) in conjunction with the University of Cambridge. It was commissioned by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA).

It provides information on the contribution of the faith communities to the life of the region in social and economic terms, and uses this as a foundation to suggest areas of opportunity to extend this contribution. In this report “faith communities” are also described as “worshipping communities” and “faith groups”.

Most of the English regions have been the subject of research on faith-based regeneration, and in each case the findings (including those of *Faith in Action*, the report produced by the East of England Faiths Council in 2003) have been consistent with a high degree of commitment to the community on the part of all faiths.

The region

The East of England is one of the largest and most diverse regions in the United Kingdom and comprises the six counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The region has a significant rural landscape and is home to about one-fifth of England’s market towns. It has a growing population of just under 5.5 million, which has grown by over 11 percent from 1982 to 2002.

The East of England has one of the strongest and fastest-growing economies in the UK. It is commonly assumed to be affluent because it lacks major conurbations or post-industrial areas experiencing intense deprivation and poverty. However, despite this image, there are as many households living in poverty in the region as are found in other parts of the country. Pockets of deprivation exist in some rural, coastal and urban areas. Structural changes including the loss of an estimated 60,000 jobs in agriculture, the closure of important industries and the decline of seaside towns have all contributed to this situation.

A Shared Vision: the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the East of England was published in 2004. It was informed by an extensive consultation process with regional and national partners and sets the long-term vision for sustainable economic development in the East of England.

The RES contains a series of eight strategic goals, which together will drive the East of England towards its vision of being a leading economy, founded on its world class knowledge base and the creativity and enter-

prise of its people, in order to improve the quality of life of all who live and work there.

The East of England Faiths Council

Early in 2002, the Church Leaders of the region invited leaders of other faiths to meet with them and explore ways of working together in relation to regional governance and development. That initial meeting developed first into the East of England Faiths Leadership Conference and subsequently into the current Faiths Council.

EEFC is the nominating body for faiths representation on the Regional Assembly and enables the collective voice of the faith communities to be heard at regional level. Its membership is drawn from the nine major faith traditions in membership of the Interfaith Network UK: Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jain, Jewish, Sikh and Zoroastrian.

1.2 Research summary

Background

Goal five of the Regional Economic Strategy relates to the need for social inclusion and broad participation in the regional economy and in particular supporting those who are disadvantaged to achieve their potential.

The Investing in Communities (IiC) programme is EEDA's response to this challenge. It aims to ensure that everyone can achieve their full potential and contribute to, and benefit from, sustainable economic growth in the East of England.

IiC will achieve this by tackling deprivation and inequality by bringing about better co-ordination and long-term strategic delivery of public and private sector investment. The programme is founded on a long-term strategic approach to tackling social exclusion. It is not about short-term fixes to problems, but lasting improvements to the way services are delivered. IiC will ensure investment for tackling deprivation and inequality is effective, by basing it on a firm understanding of community needs and evidence.

This research forms a part of a strong evidence base, which will be used across the region to influence the decisions public agencies make. It provides a comprehensive picture of faith-based regeneration activity in the region and its economic significance. This is a vital first step in ensuring that faith communities in the East of England can realise their full potential and focuses upon a number of key aims:

- a) As a first step, map the following for faith communities in selected areas (not the whole region):
- location;
 - faith adherence;
 - ownership and/or use of buildings;
 - main contact(s).
- b) Assess the following for faith communities in the selected areas:
- impacts (economic, social cohesion, social capital, race relations, crime reduction);
 - nature of social and community activities (including those which may not be thought of in this way by their providers);
 - perception of these activities by various audiences;
 - numbers of people involved (including employees, volunteers and recipients);
 - partners with whom faith communities are working;
 - opportunities for, and constraints on additional activities;
 - barriers to full participation, and how these could be overcome e.g. by leadership training.
- c) Gain a comprehensive understanding of the economic and social contribution made to the region by faith-based communities, and the reasons why public bodies should work in partnership with them.
- d) Produce basic guidelines for faith-based social action, in particular addressing how public funding can be leveraged and optimised through appropriate contracts, thereby making such action sustainable.
- e) Provide a foundation of understanding for future effective engagement, action, and contribution to strategic decision-making; and gain an understanding of how there can be an extrapolation to the whole region.

Methodology

A multi-agency steering group was recruited to oversee the running of the project. This included representatives from EEFC, EEDA, the University of Cambridge and the Judge Institute of Management Studies.

In focusing upon the key questions set out in the “background” section, the research followed a set strategy:

- selection of five key case study areas within the region on which to focus the research;
- identification insofar as possible of all faith communities in five case study areas in the region (representing approximately 10 percent of the region’s population);

- a postal survey of all faith communities identified in the five locations, to attain a large amount of data with which to answer all five key questions quantitatively;
- interviews with a cross-section of faith community representatives from three of the case study areas, to provide qualitative input on experiences, opinions, expectations and strategies;
- interviews with representatives from a cross-section of secular organisations in three of the case study areas, to provide qualitative input from a non-faiths perspective.

Identification of targets and the postal survey

Existing work already carried out by the East of England Faiths Council was collated and reviewed in order to gather items for a postal questionnaire. Five case study areas were chosen to give a spread of population and social environments, namely Harlow, King's Lynn, Mid-Suffolk, Peterborough and Southend-on-Sea. Places of worship in the five selected study areas and named leaders were identified using local directories, Derby University Directory, assistance from the Interfaith Network UK, sub-regional faiths councils, and EEFC contacts.

The postal survey of worshipping communities was based upon a four-page questionnaire, containing 37 questions (see Appendix 2). This was sent with a cover letter and stamped addressed envelope to all 248 identified communities in the five case study areas.

Key question areas focused upon: general attributes of faith communities (membership, premises, volunteers, age); various aspects of social and community activities undertaken; social groups worked with; relationships with the public sector; funding arrangements; willingness to work with other faiths groups and secular bodies; and local social and economic conditions. There was a response rate of just over 50 percent to the postal questionnaire, from a broadly representative sample of different faiths communities from the different case study areas targeted.

Interviews with representatives from faith communities

Thirty-six faith community representatives were selected for interview on the basis of the widest cross-section of different faiths available in the case study areas of Kings Lynn, Harlow and Peterborough. Detailed questions were asked which focused upon understandings of the role of faith communities, their social and community activities, organisational structures, relationships with other organisations and experiences relating to community work and service provision. A copy of the questionnaire for faith community representatives is included in Appendix 4.

Interviews with representatives from secular organisations

Twenty-two interviews were conducted with a range of secular partners which covered the case study areas of Kings Lynn, Harlow and

Peterborough. These focused upon experiences of the work of faith communities and of opportunities for working with them. The interviews were based upon a pre-designed secular questionnaire (see Appendix 5) and allowed for the gathering of a good deal of qualitative information from a non-faiths perspective. Interviewees were selected from a wide range of secular partners including:

- District Councils, County Councils, Unitary Authorities (including community development, library services, adult education and children’s work);
- Connexions;
- Councils for Voluntary Services;
- Refugee Council;
- Higher Education;
- Race Equality and Ethnic Minorities bodies;
- Immigration service;
- Children’s protection;
- National Health Service.

1.3 Summary of the findings

The study estimates that there are over 630,000 active members of worshipping communities in the region, which has a population of 5,388,000. There are places of worship all across the region. The largest are used by thousands of people each week, while the smallest see fewer than 20. Some people live very close to their place of worship while others, particularly among the smaller faith traditions, travel long distances to participate.

Social involvement is widely seen as very important to people’s faith and an enormous range of activities supported by worshipping communities are taking place every day, from the “traditional” to the more innovative. Reaching beyond the worshipping community is important — 20% of respondents work with homeless people, 32% undertake food distribution, and there is also assistance provided to those abusing alcohol (16%) and drugs (11%). Twenty-six per cent of faith groups are involved in community liaison of various types.

The interest of faith communities in promoting both formal and informal learning is endorsed by the findings of this study, with over 30% of respondents running projects designed for unemployed adults, and 22% for people seeking to improve their skills. This is significant within the regional agenda, specifically for skills improvement.

Almost every section of society — whether or not they form part of a worshipping community, of any faith or none — benefits from the presence and work of faith groups within their community. Major beneficiary groups are children (86% of respondents had child-focused services) and the elderly (82%). Families under stress, one-parent families,

single people and others who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable are well represented among beneficiaries. This targeting also reflects an anti-discrimination agenda amongst many faith groups.

Reaching out to the widest possible group of people is important. Eighty percent of those questioned did not limit any of their services to their own worshipping group, and only 2% limited all their projects in this way. On average, every responding faith community supported 70 people from outside its immediate membership — a total of 6,275 people benefiting from the total group surveyed. Projected across the region, this would indicate that nearly 180,000 people are actively benefiting from the presence of faith groups every week.

The importance of volunteers to the regional economy is underlined by this study. Using population statistics, it places a notional value on faith community volunteer hours of £582,000 a week (based on the national minimum wage) or £30,300,000 per annum.

Of the faith respondents, 73% said they would be willing to work in partnership with secular bodies, and 50% are already working with other faith and secular groups, ranging from local schools through charities to Local Authorities and LEAs.

This research also shows that whilst most faith communities welcome new members, this is not their main motivation. Fewer than 5% of the respondents cited this as the main motivator for engaging with their wider community, while over 50% said it was not the main reason, although they would welcome new worshippers.

Many faith groups would like to become even more socially active, and, amongst respondents, each group had started on average two new projects over the last five years. There was little evidence of faith groups using the indices of multiple deprivation which often form a key part of government thinking. Instead they respond to the needs they see. This can lead to differences over funding decisions, but means that faith groups, embedded in the community, see things from a different perspective. They can often spot and respond to areas of need before these become obvious to public bodies.

Volunteering is shown to be key to the success of projects, although new activities may draw in new people. There may be an opportunity to “grow” the number of suitable volunteers through training courses, provided by faith bodies and by secular partners.

In examining partnership working, 14 of the 22 interviewees from secular bodies felt that worshipping communities provided a good or excellent way of reaching ethnic minorities — which could help them to further develop their social and community work. Many secular organisations said that worshipping communities worked with and supported many hard to reach groups, were not held back by often restrictive legislation, and helped in the spiritual development of many individuals.

Many projects rely on the “host” faith community not only for space and volunteers but also for funding. However, only one third of those

questioned said that they would not seek public funding because their own resources were adequate. The study examines where problems with public funding arise when restrictions relating to this run contrary to the religious motivation underpinning the social activity.

This report concludes by considering opportunities for the future: for approaches that will assist in overcoming barriers and extending faith communities' work; for the public bodies to work even more productively with faith partners; and for the EEFC to play a role opening up these opportunities.

1.4 Structure of the report

In focusing upon the five key questions set out in this introduction, the following chapters of this report are arranged as follows:

- Chapter 2 considers the composition of the faith communities in the East of England, commencing with a review of census data and moving on to consider size, membership attributes, geographical distribution, premises status and engagement with civic life.
- Chapter 3 examines current social and community activities of faith communities, considering what is taking place, how activities are supported, who benefits and why social and community projects start and finish.
- Chapter 4 considers the secular viewpoint, focusing upon advantages and disadvantages of working with faith groups, selection of project partners and faith concerns relating to secular representatives.
- Chapter 5 discusses the potential to extend and improve the activities of faith communities — focusing upon the role of volunteers, funding, and barriers and opportunities for partnership with secular bodies.
- Chapter 6 concludes the report by considering the key findings and developing a number of recommendations for the future.

2. Composition of the faith communities in the East of England

2.1 The 2001 Census

For the first time the 2001 Census asked a question about what the respondent considered their faith to be. However, not everyone who self-identified as being of a particular faith will necessarily have a connection with a worshipping community. The figures therefore need to be seen as indicative of beliefs rather than activities.

Seventy-five percent of the region's population self-identified as being of named faiths on the 2001 Census, and around 11.7% are members of worshipping communities (see Chapter 4). Figure 1 below provides comparisons between census results of percentages of people identifying as being of different faiths in the East of England region and nationally.

Figure 1 — Faiths of the regional and national population from the 2001 Census

Faith	Regional Percentage	National Percentage
Christian	72.1	71.6
Muslim	1.5	2.7
Hindu	0.6	1.0
Jewish	0.6	0.5
Sikh	0.3	0.6
Buddhist	0.2	0.3
Other	0.3	0.3
Not stated	7.7	7.3
None	16.7	15.5

Answering this question was not compulsory, and the “religion not stated” group consists of all those who chose not to answer the question. Assumptions can therefore not be made about the faith composition of this group.

2.2 Measuring the size of the worshipping communities

The size of communities from whom a response to the postal survey was received varied considerably, although analysis of the data shows that the average membership was 222. Analysis of research data indicates that there are approximately 633,000 people in the region who belong to a worshipping community. This represents 11.7% of the population of the region.

Nationally there are estimated to be 8.2 million active adult members of religious organisations (DTI, 2001¹). This equates to 13.7 percent of the total population of the UK. Estimates by the North East Churches Regional Commission for the North East of England suggest membership of faith communities to be at around 10 percent of the total population for that region (Smith,K,2004). Such estimates imply that active membership of faith communities in the East of England region (estimated at 11.7 percent) is likely to be similar to some other regions and to the UK as a whole.

2.3 Geographical distribution of places of worship

Sixty-four percent of respondents said that 50% or more members of their worshipping communities lived within a mile of their place of worship. Even so, this means that a substantial minority of people do have to travel beyond walking distance to their place of worship. For new worshipping communities there can be a struggle to raise the money to provide a new building. Conversely, well-established faith groups can be affected when social patterns change, as it is not easy to move a place of worship.

The research found that having their own premises had a positive impact on the range and number of social and community projects that worshipping communities could carry out. On average, worshipping communities with premises are able to provide 11 different social and community programmes, compared to seven for those without their own premises.

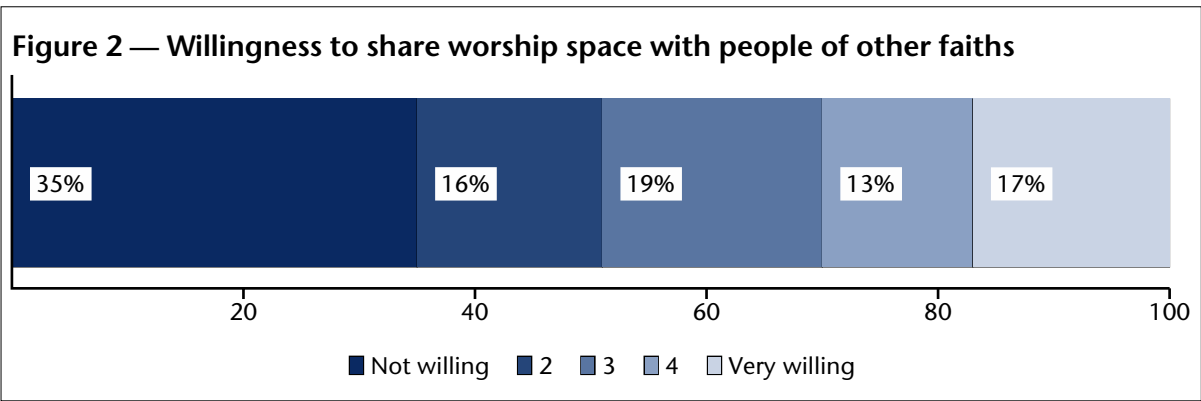
In terms of the present availability of worship space for faith communities, the research found that:

- 87% had their own premises;
- 45% provide worship space for other groups within the same faith;
- 9% provide worship space for groups from other faiths;
- 74% provide community rooms/meeting space for the use of others;
- 76% offered space at a reduced rate (or free) to their own members.

Attitudes to the sharing of worship space for the purposes of worship vary widely. Respondents were asked to provide an indication as to their level of willingness to share, on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 represented “not willing” and 5 represented “very willing”). Responses to this question are illustrated in figure 2.

The issue of provision of appropriate worship facilities in the new housing developments proposed for the region needs to be viewed in the light of these findings, which suggest that secular bodies need to engage early with faith groups to agree the best way forward for each new development, as each will have its unique requirements and solutions.

¹ www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/religria.pdf



2.4 Age of worshipping communities

The research found that members of worshipping communities were substantially drawn from the 40 to 64 age range:

Figure 3 — Percentage distributions by age range

Age range	Percent in faith communities	Percent in region
0 to 39	12	52
40 to 64	75	32
65 plus	13	16

Figure 3 shows that members of worshipping communities in the East of England region tend to be of above average age for the region. The results suggest that this is because worshipping communities have relatively few members in the 0–39 age range, rather than having high numbers of members who are over 65 years old. In fact, the percentages of members of worshipping communities aged over 65 are lower than their level of representation within the regional population as a whole.

Interviews indicated that the reasons for relatively low membership from people aged 0–39 were linked to family, college and work commitments — rather than any assumed “lack of faith”. Hence it cannot be assumed that worshipping communities are getting older. Rather, it is more the case that members of worshipping communities tend to be drawn from specific age ranges. It also needs to be stressed that people in the lower age ranges who are not active members of worshipping communities may well be involved in other ways. For example, it is very common for children to be supported by faith communities, either through many of their social and community programmes, such as after-school clubs, parent and toddler groups and youth clubs, or through the provision of buildings for young people’s organisations, such as Scouts and Guides.

Analysis of research data suggests that where worshipping communities have higher proportions of volunteers under the age of 60 (more than 50 percent), they are more likely to launch new social and community programmes (based upon numbers of new programmes begun over the last

five years). This implies that worshipping communities with younger over-all membership tend to be more active in wider society.

2.5 Faith communities' engagement with civic life

Respondents were asked how important social/community involvement was to the practice of their faith. On a scale of 1 (not very important) to 5 (very important), 91% gave an answer of 3 or above (important), and 48.5% said it was very important.

The questionnaire also explored the extent to which faith communities felt they could affect local or national life. On a scale of 1 (a little) to 5 (a lot), 87% gave an answer of 1, 2 or 3, suggesting that they felt they could only have marginal input in influencing decisions affecting their local communities. There was no question that attempted to discover whether respondents felt this to be a problem — but taken together with the answer above about the importance of community involvement, this may be an issue that needs attention.

During interviews, faith community representatives were asked how the members of their faith communities compared to their wider local communities in economic terms. The aim of this question was to provide one measure of how representative members of faith communities were in terms of the communities in which they were active. The great majority of interviewees (73 percent) felt that members of their faith group were economically typical of their local communities, with only 21 percent suggesting that their members were economically advantaged.

Awareness of social needs in the areas in which worshipping communities are based can often be very high. This may be linked to the experiences of carrying out social and community projects in the past, the everyday experiences of individual members, basic research, knowledge of specific individuals or as a result of contact with other groups. Figure 4 illustrates both the range of issues raised by respondents in their own localities and the percentages of respondents raising such issues:

Figure 4 — Percentages of respondents raising issues of local concern

Issue	Percentage of respondents raising issue
Youth problems or lack of youth provision	37
Drugs/alcohol	26
Single parents/broken families	24
General poverty (e.g. unemployment, debt)	23
Needs of elderly or physically handicapped	14
Individual isolation	14
Refugee/asylum seeker support	12
Mental health	10
Homelessness	8
Physical environment	8
Crime/fear of crime	4

This awareness could be an important source of information for local and regional government. Analysis of social and community programmes commenced by respondent faith communities raising the above issues suggests that in many cases they have launched social and community programmes which specifically target these concerns.

Another question asked interviewees whether they had heard of their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and their Sub-regional Economic Partnership (SREP). Interviews suggested that there was often confusion over what these partnerships were and what they represented. However, some faith groups were involved in emergency planning at the local level (13% of respondents said that their faith group was involved in this).

Interfaith groups and meetings were seen as being important to a large number of respondents in worshipping communities, with 33 percent of people belonging to worshipping communities being members of interfaith groups in the region. 80 percent of respondent worshipping communities were also members of local, regional and national faith networks. Interviews suggested that such networks are seen as being important in the development of joint or centrally managed social and community projects, in allowing for mutual support between worshipping communities and in providing a single strong voice for the purposes of communication with other organisations.

2.6 Chapter summary

Seventy five per cent of the region's population self-identified as being of named faiths on the 2001 Census, and around 11.7% are members of worshipping communities. There are approximately 633,000 people in the region who belong to a worshipping community. At present, members of worshipping communities are mainly drawn from the 40 to 64 age range. There is no evidence that worshipping communities are getting older.

Ninety one percent of respondents stated that social/community involvement was important to their religion/faith. Further, many worshipping communities are involved in interfaith groups and most are members of local, regional and national faith networks.

3. What are they doing?

3.1 Scope and nature of the activities taking place

The first thing to note is that the answers found by this report (as with the previous report, *Faith in Action*, EEFC 2003) illustrate the considerable importance and value of worshipping communities in providing activities, services and projects which are of benefit to the region.

Analysis of the research data estimates that just under 5,000 new social and community projects have been launched by faith communities in the region in the last five years, covering a huge range of different positive activities which benefit wider society. These new projects, as well as existing ones, are supported by the work of an estimated 49,000 volunteers (representing £30,300,000 worth of input per annum). The weekly contribution of volunteers represents approximately 120,000 hours, having a projected value of at least £582,000 (based upon minimum wage rates). The calculation methodology is given in Appendix 1.

Many faith communities also employ people to work on their social and community projects. These are often specialist staff who are responsible for the management and running of a range of projects — and may be involved in supporting the work of volunteers and in maximising the potential of many positive community activities.

Before considering in more detail the impact of a faith group on the life of its constituents and wider community, we look at the nature, range and beneficiaries of the activities offered — firstly commencing with a set of cameo examples of the activities of some faith communities.

Cameo 1: The Harlow Muslim Women's Support Group

The Harlow Muslim Women's Support Group was set up by Rukhshanda Ali in 2000 for Muslim women who needed support and encouragement in going out and socialising with the rest of the community. It started with five women, but now has over 25 members, who meet twice a week — once socially, and once for classes.

Learning sessions provide enough time to complete courses in areas ranging from computing and IT to cookery. There are also English classes, religious talks, and presentations from guest speakers. Regular trips to nearby Asian markets enable members who do not drive or have a car to purchase Halal meat and groceries.

"My group does activities that give the members new skills and hobbies that they can enjoy with other people as well. Most of women needed a lot of convincing to come out of their houses and meet others in a similar situation. Some were suffering from depression because they never went out and socialised, and were referred to the group by their GP." says Rukhshanda Ali.

Cameo 2: Christ Church, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough

Christ Church in Orton Goldhay is a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. It was set up in 1999 by the merger of two small churches, one Church of England and the other United Reformed. After this merger it became possible to build a church and community centre in Orton Goldhay, an area that was built by Peterborough Development Corporation in the 1970s. Previously the churches had met in a school and this was not available to them during the week, so there was a limit on the activities the church could organise for the community.

The church and community centre opened in 2000 and has quickly established itself as a community venue for activities organised by the church and in partnership with other groups. The former include children and young people's activities both on Sunday and during the week, and also a Lunch Club and Coffee Morning aimed at older folk. The other groups are quite diverse but many come under the Sure Start umbrella serving the needs of young mothers (and fathers) and pre-school children.

All those who use the building for any activity benefit, and the wider community also benefits because these activities exist. The partnership working is important because they are only a small church and do not have the resources, human or financial, to be able to organise a wide variety of events ourselves, but do have the buildings which other organisations wanting to serve the community do not enjoy.

Revd Ian Pullinger (Minister, Christ Church in Orton Goldhay) said:

"As a Christian Church we believe there is something we have to offer the community beyond the physical asset of a building or the facilities we can provide in it. This is a relationship with Jesus Christ. If people come into our building and ask about our faith, or worship, or how we understand God, we will always be ready to give an answer. There may be special occasions, such as Christmas, when we invite friends from other groups to join us.

As we look to the future we are aware of many needs in the community that are not being met. These relate to parenting, teenagers, asylum seekers, older people, and those who have received or are receiving treatment for mental health problems. We would like to be able to offer more than we do at present, if only we had the resources to do so."

Cameo 3: Norfolk & Fenland Muslims

Norfolk & Fenland Muslims is a community organisation set up over two years ago, and committed to representing the issues of Muslims in the area.

When it started, the group aimed to engage, question and be critical, including about themselves. They aim to promote awareness, tolerance and understanding, bringing people in society close as they learn more about each other. They go into schools, give lectures and seminars, and hold workshops and exhibitions.

Sohale Rahman (Norfolk and Fenland Muslims) said:

"It is really amazing to see the thirst people have for information.

Many sections of society benefit from this work, from statutory bodies such as the Norfolk Constabulary, who have been very positive about it, to small local groups. Not only the Police, but also the Local Authority and the Norwich & Norfolk Racial Equality Council believe that what we do promotes community cohesion and safety, and reduces hate crime.

The group is also particularly pleased to have built up good relationships with our Christian and Jewish neighbours. One special moment for us was to be invited for a supper by one of Norwich's Jewish community groups. It was wonderful, friendly and we discussed our common points — for example, on Israel. When humanity champions over political propaganda and the thread of truth can emerge from the veil of darkness, it is a truly memorable occasion. Long may it continue."

Cameo 4: netCUDA

netCUDA was formed in 1999 to set up credit unions as part of the Chelmsford Diocese Social Responsibility programme. It is also supported by Brentwood Diocese and Christian denominations across the region.

netCUDA's aim is to give everyone a level playing field in the area of financial services, by providing services that are tailored to those people who are normally excluded from mainstream finance — the poorest often pay the most for credit, and may be limited to "doorstep lenders" who charge interest rates of up to 1500%. netCUDA has developed a model to offer a "one stop shop" for community financial services including access to money, advice and education — uniquely this model provides universal access to services based on a new IT system that gives members internet banking too.

Alison Davies of netCUDA said:

"The pilot for this model is Essex Savers net Credit Union Ltd. a county-wide organisation that netCUDA is now working to replicate throughout the region, which has suffered from the withdrawal of local banking and Post Offices, and yet where there are relatively few credit unions. Unfortunately we are seriously hampered in this by lack of continued funding. However, we persevere in faith!"

3.2 Types of activity taking place

Health support services

The “traditional” provision of visiting sick people in hospital and at home figured strongly with about 80% of respondents offering this. Over half also offered to help with transport for the sick and infirm. However, health advice is also given by 11% of respondents.

Social support services

A number of communities provide counselling and advice, with bereavement counselling, offered by 60% of them, being significantly the most common. Other forms of advice e.g. housing, independent living with disabilities, citizenship and advocacy — perhaps because perceived as more specialist or less generally required — are less common (each being given on average by some 10% of groups). Thirty per cent of respondents offer counselling for young people, and 44% offer other forms of counselling.

A variety of outreach services also figure in these responses: 20% work with homeless people, 32% undertake food distribution, and there is also assistance provided to those abusing alcohol (16%) and drugs (11%).

Twenty six per cent of faith groups are involved in community liaison of various types: 18% have anti-racist projects, 12% have crime prevention projects and 11% run environmental groups.

Families are supported in numerous ways, with older and young people attending many of the groups noted below. Additionally, one third of faith communities provide specific parenting support, and a similar number (31%) childcare services.

Educational services

A small but significant number of groups provide adult education (language classes: 7%; literacy: 6%; IT: 6%). Previous research (*Faith in Action*, 2003) and interviews undertaken within this study suggest that where this type of education is provided it can have a marked effect on people’s life chances.

Rather more groups offer out-of-school support for children (19%) and school liaison (34%).

Community and leisure

The range and number of community and leisure activities provided by faith communities is remarkable, although perhaps not surprising; indeed we may be familiar with this provision because it has come to form part of the fabric of our society. From art classes to youth groups, activities for which faith groups provide accommodation, facilities and people not only

benefit individuals but also provide vital support systems for social cohesion.

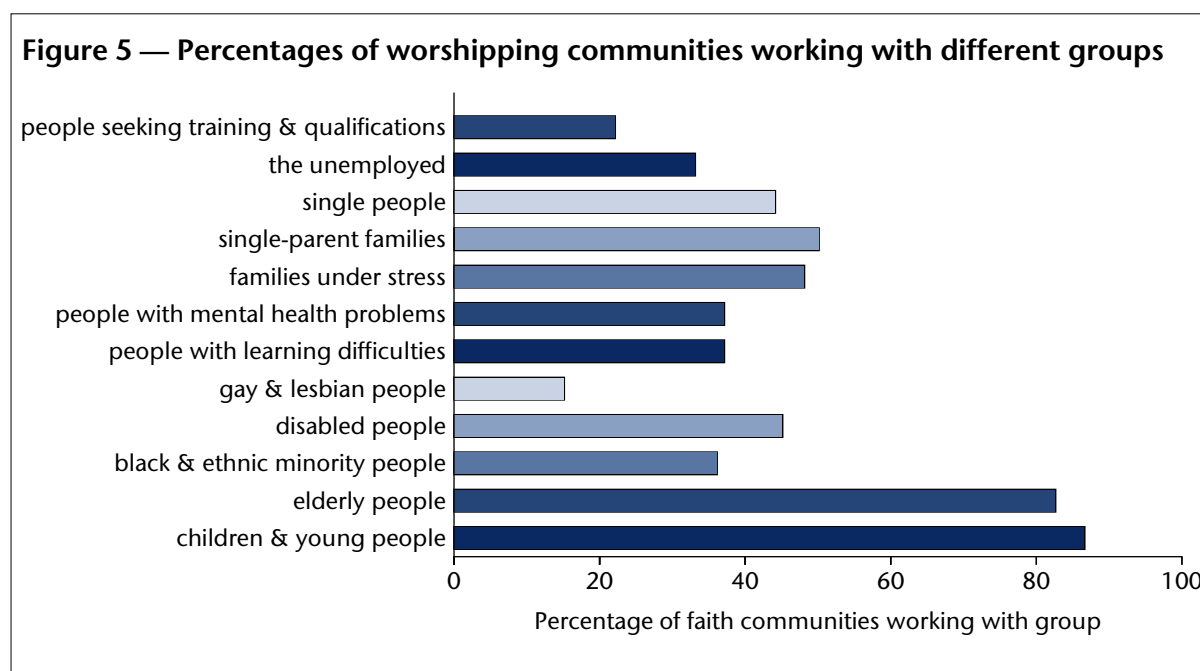
3.3 Beneficiaries

Almost every section of society benefits from the presence and work of faith groups within their community. The total number of people directly benefiting from social and community projects in the five geographical areas investigated is approximately 17,000 per week. Analysis of responses suggests that an average of 70 people outside each worshipping community are supported by it in a typical week. This research estimates that over 175,000 people in the East of England are supported by the social and community activities of worshipping communities in a typical week. Figure 5 shows the different groups with whom worshipping communities work.

The main groups with whom faith communities work are children (86% of respondent groups had child-focused services) and the elderly (82%). Families under stress, one-parent families, single people and others who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable are also well represented.

Targeting of projects also reflects an anti-discrimination agenda amongst many faith groups, which is emphasised by the fact that other key beneficiaries of projects are people from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and to a lesser extent from gay and lesbian groups. The results show that the activities of many faith communities are aimed at reducing most forms of discrimination.

The interest of faith communities in promoting both formal and informal learning is endorsed by the statistics, with over 30% of respondents running projects designed for unemployed adults, and 22% for people seeking to improve their skills. This is significant within the regional agenda for skills improvement.



3.4 Choosing and starting projects

It would seem that many faith groups are not only socially active, but are keen to become more so. Respondents were not only asked what type of projects they were running, but also what they would like to instigate. In virtually every category and type of activity, at least 3% of respondents would like to start offering services or to do more, and in some areas e.g. counselling, crime prevention, drug and alcohol abuse, parenting and out-of-school support, there was particular enthusiasm, with over 15% of respondents saying they would like to offer these.

It may be valuable to look in more detail at how these aspirations fit with the public sector prioritisation of need, and how they could be supported to develop sustainable work in these areas.

Similarly, there was a desire to offer more support to particular target groups, namely families, black and minority ethnic groups, adult learners, and those seeking employment. The desire to extend child and elderly services was much less, perhaps because these groups are already receiving high levels of support from faith communities.

This interest in extending their community activities is being followed through by many faith groups. Amongst respondents, on average the number of new projects started was two per respondent group over the last five years. Projections suggest that over five thousand new social and community projects have been launched by worshipping communities in the region in the last five years.

The correlation between numbers of volunteers and numbers of new projects was investigated, and it could be seen that communities with fewer than 10 volunteers had on average launched far fewer new projects. However, it must be borne in mind that the scale of new projects was not covered by this question, so although only one may have been launched, it could have been large-scale. Also, projects may draw in more volunteers — suggesting that volunteer numbers may be influenced by the number and nature of projects, rather than the other way round.

The ways in which worshipping communities decide on new projects varies, but normally the members are involved at some stage (even if the final decision is made by a leader or small group e.g. council of representatives). This appears to be the case across all the different faiths reviewed. Thirteen respondents cited a “church council”, others spoke of “church boards” or “elders”.

Numerous respondents who gave more detail on this point also stressed response to need as a factor in choosing activities (“we look at needs”, “they arise from need” and so on) and also spoke of consultation with the wider community (“brainstorming meetings with people from the local community”, “monthly community meeting”, “research into what is happening locally”).

It is clear that very few projects are the result of an individual whim or preoccupation, although they may be proposed or driven by an enthusiastic individual who “captures the imagination” of the congregation.

3.5 Rejecting and ending projects

There are a number of reasons why projects might not get off the ground. The most-cited was “lack of volunteers” (36%), followed by “lack of money” (26%), “lack of paid staff” (15%) and “lack of demand” (8%). Only two people spoke of “differences of opinion within the worshipping community”, suggesting that activities are generally well thought through internally before being floated, but then meet resource or external constraints. Only four people mentioned a problem with premises or accommodation.

The role played by volunteers is clearly crucial, and this is explored in more detail in the following two chapters. It is also interesting to note that the numbers of volunteers within a worshipping community, rather than the total size of the community, seems critical in starting and sustaining projects. In terms of resources, funding is also critical, and this is considered further in Chapter 5.

Once activities have started, the reasons for them ceasing show an even more marked bias to the importance of volunteers to the success of a project. Out of 49 respondents who had ended a social programme in the last five years, 20 (41%) said this had been due to lack of volunteers. The next most common reason for cessation was “no longer needed” (26%), followed by “lack of money” (17%), and “lack of paid staff” (9%). Other reasons cited included accommodation/premises and a change in legislation.

Clearly, if projects are to thrive, identifying, encouraging and supporting volunteers is essential, although other factors must also be addressed — these are explored in the following chapters.

3.6 Chapter summary

Faith communities in the region have launched 5,000 new social and community projects in the last 5 years, supported by 49,000 volunteers (representing £30,300,000 of volunteer input per annum).

Projects include health support services, social support services, education and community and leisure services. Many projects aim to support specific groups (such as children and families), whilst others reflect an anti-discrimination agenda. Over 175,000 people in the East of England are supported by faith community projects every week.

Findings suggest that whilst many faith communities would like to increase their range of social and community projects, a lack of volunteers and available finance can represent limiting factors.

4. The secular viewpoint

4.1 The secular perspective

The relationships of faith communities with secular organisations is important from a number of perspectives. Secular organisations may work in direct partnership with faith communities in delivering social and community programmes, they may provide funding and other support, and they may also have regulatory roles. Interviews with secular bodies therefore played an important part in the research for this report. The selection of interviewees and secular organisations for interview was also important – they needed to have some real or potential link to the types of social and community programmes in which faith communities are involved. Therefore, the research focused upon interviews with relevant representatives from secular organisations such as local authorities, health authorities, the police, Community Voluntary Services, drug advice agencies, Connexions, educational organisations (such as colleges), children’s organisations and race equality and refugee organisations.

4.2 Perceived advantages of working with faith groups

Interviewees identified several broad groups of advantages, relating to community, service-delivery, reaching BME groups and chaplaincy.

Community

All respondents from the 22 secular bodies made positive comments about the value of working with faith groups in reaching parts of the community which would otherwise be less accessible. The following perceptions were voiced:

- Faith groups provide a way of accessing hard-to-reach parts of the community. For some this is specifically a matter of reaching ethnic minorities.
- Leaders in faith groups were seen as respected figures in the wider community, able to exercise a beneficial influence especially at times of inter-racial tension and promote social cohesion.
- People who face serious issues of poverty, exclusion and isolation may attend worship, when in other ways they are highly excluded. Reaching these people through their place of worship can therefore be very effective.
- Worshipping communities are effective at taking the initiative and setting up community programmes which engage with marginalised people.

- Race equality work has tended to concentrate on ethnicity, but faith can also be a factor in discrimination. Working with faith groups is a way of addressing this.

Service delivery

All respondents saw the positive potential for many different faith groups as service providers. Eleven directly referred to the positive work of faith groups as effective in getting services to beneficiaries. The following perceptions were voiced:

- Faith groups may have fewer legislative restrictions than statutory bodies, and can therefore work in a different way.
- Faith groups are very client-focused: they often react more quickly and efficiently than government agencies, and have a clear understanding of community needs.
- They are good at helping people find ways to practise their faith, which can be supportive of those who are marginalised.
- They are well-connected to other organisations.
- They can fill a gap in social provision.
- They contain many highly skilled and experienced people who are motivated by compassion.
- They motivate people to attend meetings (e.g. on drug awareness).
- Faith groups are good at bringing out the common humanity behind apparent divisions.

Reaching BME groups

Responses to the question about the extent to which interviewees see working with faith-based organisations as a way of reaching ethnic minorities indicates that this is an important factor. Eight interviewees noted that faith communities were an excellent way of reaching ethnic minority groups. However, this perceived advantage does need to be treated with some caution, as when secular bodies use “faith communities” to mean something very similar to “black and minority ethnic communities”, confusion can occur.

Chaplaincy

Several respondents referred to the value of chaplains, who operate in institutions such as schools, prisons, and hospitals. For example, chaplains in higher education were seen as important because education is about the whole person, so the educational process includes their spiritual development. Chaplains also help because some of the challenges students face are not directly educational.

4.3 Perceived disadvantages of working with faith groups

The majority of respondents said that there were no, or very few, problems in working with faith communities, giving the impression that this was generally a positive experience. Where disadvantages were raised, these were (in order of frequency mentioned):

- “narrowness” of faiths groups’ approach to projects;
- differences in core values between faith groups and the aims of the secular organisations;
- issues of faith groups seeking converts;
- faiths groups could occasionally discriminate against specific groups of people;
- concerns that they might inadvertently offend people of faith;
- some had very limited resources;
- underfunding of faith group projects;
- problems in developing mutual trust.

Some of these disadvantages are addressed in more detail below.

Narrowness

Secular interviewees voiced the following concerns:

- Faith groups may comprise a narrow portion of the community, for example in the case of those congregations comprising mainly people over the age of 50.
- Faith groups may be focussed on particular areas and lack appreciation of wider issues e.g. child protection.
- Some faith groups seem reluctant to see themselves as part of the voluntary sector, and tend to take part in Voluntary and Community sector matters only when they are seeking money.

Funding

Among those who had been directly involved in decisions about accepting or rejecting applications from faith-based groups for funding, comments on reasons for rejection of funding included:

- concerns that a project is essentially recruiting for that faith;
- poor quality assurance/badly prepared applications;
- applications that did not fit the relevant guidelines;
- proposed outcomes which appeared only to benefit people within the faith community;
- the geographical boundaries of faith groups often differ from those used by local authorities: there can be problems when money is allocated to a specific physical area, but the proposed project’s boundaries extend beyond this.

Discrimination issues

Secular respondents expressed a fear that working with some faith groups could make others feel excluded. They also voiced concern about inadvertently giving offence when dealing with people of faith e.g. through ignorance of customs.

Issues over conversion

Secular partners had concerns that people of faith may seek to convert others during the course of social and community work. Specific comments included:

- “It’s perfectly natural for people to want to share their faith, but a secular partner has to be careful not to seem to be sucked into supporting attempts to convert people.”
- “There are sometimes problems, especially with newly-arrived immigrants, of faith groups being very hospitable, but applying strong pressure to convert.”
- “There’s a worry that community projects are simply cover for conversion attempts.”

This perspective does not fit with the approach taken by the great majority of faith communities, given responses to the postal survey and in interviews. However, it may well be the case that secular representatives have had experience of this when working with specific individual members of faiths communities. It is also possible that this is a perception, based upon expectation.

4.4 Who will secular partners work with?

All respondents suggested that they would consider working with faith groups to promote social and community projects. When asked how they choose which faith groups to work with, the overwhelming response (16 out of the 20 who responded to the question) was that they sought to work with all, and tried very hard to avoid choosing partners in a way that could seem discriminatory. The four respondents who stated that they would not work with anyone referred to the need to work with organisations which did not exclude any particular groups in wider society from their social and community activities.

For the most part secular organisations seem to have avoided tensions between different religious groups. Successful partnership working was widely seen as involving a good mutual understanding, shared objectives, and the building of social cohesion, with secular partners keen to be seen as approachable.

There was a range of views as to the actual limits on partnership working. Many spoke in terms of there being no limits, or, more realistically “the only limits are our inhibitions”.

4.5 Faith of the secular partner

At the end of the interview, the respondent was asked what their faith was, although an answer was not obligatory, and interviewers were asked to be sensitive. The objective was to test the preconception that people in secular organisations find it difficult to deal with faith groups, because they themselves do not relate to the concept of faith.

The smallness of the sample means that it is not possible to draw any certain conclusions on this issue, or indeed on the balance of faiths among interviewees, but the responses suggest that a number of representatives of secular bodies are also people of faith. Also, some of those who described themselves as being of no faith nevertheless showed a high degree of awareness of matters of faith.

4.6 Chapter summary

Most secular organisations interviewed had positive experiences of working with faiths communities. Many interviewees felt that faith groups often provided ways of accessing hard-to-reach parts of the wider community, exercised a beneficial influence at times of tension, promoted social cohesion, helped support disadvantaged members of society. It was also felt that worshipping communities were effective at taking the initiative and setting up community programmes, because they contain many skilled and experienced people and have fewer legislative restrictions than statutory bodies.

Most secular interviewees noted that they were prepared to work with almost any partner in delivering a social and community programme, providing the social and community programme was open to all and the partner faith community was aiming to deliver the agreed service.

5. What next? — The potential to extend and improve faith-based community activity

5.1 Key issues

The core activity of worshipping communities is spiritual. Religiously motivated social engagement flows from this, and reflects an agenda profoundly influenced by people's faith. But there are also practical limits to do with all aspects of resourcing which limit the social engagement of worshipping communities.

As already identified, there are a number of issues which affect the success and sustainability of a project, although it should be noted that not all projects end because they have “failed” — a significant number were ceased because no longer needed, which may be an indicator of success. Additionally, faith groups are not “output-driven” in terms of aiming for “successful projects”, but motivated by the desire to help individuals, and move into those areas where the need is greatest.

However, the key requirements would seem to be: volunteering resources (time and suitability); funding; paid staff; and premises/facilities (in that order).

Volunteering

The major factor which appears to affect the range of social and community programmes offered by faith communities most significantly is the number of volunteers available. Where large numbers of volunteers are available the data show that there will usually be more social and community activity. Of course, it may also be the case that greater numbers of projects draw in more volunteers — although the research does not provide any evidence to support such a hypothesis.

The main issue with volunteers is commitment and where their commitment lies. Since they are usually (although not exclusively) involved in volunteer work as a result of being part of their worshipping community, any activity would require some link to this community. Usually this link is seen as being the charitable emphasis of their particular religion. Hence, it is likely that funding would be seen as a way to extend any such work, rather than change the nature of what the volunteers hope to achieve.

As the motivation for most volunteers stems from their beliefs, it is unlikely that specific programmes to stimulate volunteering would be necessary or have great impact. However, suitable experience and knowl-

edge on the part of volunteers is another matter. There was much evidence from interviews that volunteers can and do take training courses, some through their local councils.

Interviews highlighted a vast range of community working skills held by many members of worshipping communities. Members of such communities commonly included teachers, social workers and health sector workers. Ranges of skills held included community working, childcare, outreach working, working with the homeless and disadvantaged, working with minority groups, healthcare and youth work. However, in many cases the evidence for such skills was based on subjective understanding of the question — rather than known qualifications.

One worshipping community representative noted that they had already made extensive use of existing training programmes provided by external sources. An example of transport training provision was given.

Funding

Insofar as funding is concerned, it is notable that a significant number of projects rely on their supporting congregation not only for voluntary time and use of premises, but also for the money to provide e.g. materials and refreshments. However, 25 percent of respondents noted that they had received public sector funding for social and community projects at some point in the past.

Thirty-five interviewees noted that all or some of their current work was funded from within their own organisation (out of a total of 37 who answered the question concerning sources of funding) — usually by their worshipping community members (although occasionally by a larger “parent” organisation). Twenty-five interviewees noted that all of their projects were self-funded. Other sources of funding referred to included: the local authority (8), Ofsted (1), Single Regeneration Budget (1), European Funding (1), National Lottery (1), Chinese Churches abroad (1) and other funding from Saudi Arabia (1).

It is well-known that most (if not all) worshipping communities hold regular collections for their activities (both local and national) — usually during religious services. It is also common for worshipping communities to hold fundraising events for various causes. Some interviewees directly referred to this being the case, but those that didn’t might also be expected to draw some or all of their revenue from this source.

When respondents were asked about accessing public money, however, only about one-third gave their reason for not seeking public money as being the possession of already adequate funding. Twenty per cent did not think that faith-based projects would be eligible, and a similar number were deterred by the complexity of the application process. Others cited a variety of reasons, including no wish for public assistance. Only one respondent raised the issue of lottery-based funding as unacceptable, although it is quite possible others would share this concern.

Given the potential for even greater benefit to society from faith-based work, the study explored the question “What makes faith communities most likely to succeed in accessing public money (or prevents them from accessing it)?”

The following key points were stressed by interviewees from both the faith and secular groups:

- Public sector funding is for non-religious activity. Therefore, for any project to gain funding it must be non-religious and non-exclusive in nature. A number of bids for funding have been turned down because projects were deemed to focus on religion, or because they were exclusive to a particular group.
- Applications for funding need to be well prepared (a lot of paperwork). This causes problems for some worshipping communities. Some worshipping communities have given up applying for funding because of the paperwork — whilst others have been successful. There is a question-mark over whether some worshipping communities have better skills in this area of applying for project funding — clearly this would make a difference to the level of success achieved.
- All applications for funding (and projects) have to fit within fairly rigid time-frames set by the public sector. This means that worshipping communities have to adapt their projects to these to be successful. Some funding takes a lot longer to get and apply for than other types of funding. Those worshipping communities which adapt to this tend to be more successful.

A number of faith community representatives interviewed noted that they did not want public funding if it had strings attached. The three key issues raised above are major stumbling blocks for a number of worshipping communities to accessing public funding.

Suggestions of ways in which working with the public sector could be made easier included the provision of more information on what funding is available and how it can be applied for, better communication from the public sector, cross-sector work placements, public forums where issues could be raised openly and the payment of expenses when worshipping communities became involved with the public sector.

The interviews with worshipping community representatives and representatives from secular bodies have shown that there are tensions between the aims and objectives of the different groups. This applied to some extent with all the different religious representatives interviewed. Typical replies included:

- “Locally, no. Nationally, yes. We want Christians to be employed in Christian work — we want some control over our own work.”

- “We would rather have a totally free hand than be tied to some restrictions linked to funding with an agency looking over our shoulder checking things. We heard recently that there have been moves to actually take money away from faith based organisations — a town centre faith-supported project to support homeless people is in danger of having its funding withdrawn — and being closed down because the government will not finance anything that is faith based.”
- “Secular bodies find it hard to understand that people of faith must be true to their faith, and not confuse this with a fear of religious people trying to convert others. For example, if a Muslim refers to ‘Allah Willing’ this is seen as natural and acceptable, but when he was invited to speak at a school assembly he was told he must not mention Jesus.”
- “Volunteers are church members and not council workers — government often forgets that.”
- “Not really — but might be a problem where a council is dominated by people of another faith — e.g. Getting upset by a Salvation Army street collection.”
- “No compromise over beliefs. There was an anticipation that this would be required by the public sector.”
- “Equal opportunities. Timescales and agendas. Church has ageless agenda, but public sector is time-specific.”
- “They see the church as a bit like social services — maybe the motivations are different in some ways.”

On the issue of doing things differently to access funding, answers suggest a certain amount of confusion over what “doing things differently” involves. Most interviewees were prepared to change elements of their social and community activities to access funding — although there was one case where public sector funding was not wanted. Ironically, in that particular case, it transpired that the majority of those actively involved in the worshipping community’s activities were former public sector employees.

5.2 Barriers and opportunities

The public sector looks for partnership with faith groups because they offer different approaches and channels of communication; therefore that difference is generally an advantage, and needs to be valued rather than challenged by secular partners.

Improved mutual trust and understanding are vital to breaking down barriers to the full effectiveness of partnership working, and to a realistic understanding of the limitations.

5.3 Support for faith groups involved in community activity

This study has identified numerous ways in which faith groups contribute to the life and well-being of the region.

People of faith would see the main purpose of bringing together a worshipping community to be self-evident — for most, this is the facilitation of worship, prayer and praise in their own faith tradition, and the enhancement of the spiritual life of its members through such worship. In a study such as this, which has concentrated its attention on the social and economic benefits of faith communities, it is essential to recognise and validate the primary importance of their spiritual life before considering how their beneficial social impact can be supported.

It is also essential to acknowledge that faith is not a minority interest or lifestyle choice, but an integral part of the infrastructure of our society, with both the most recent census and the Home Office Citizenship Survey of 2001 finding four out of five people expressing a religious affiliation.

5.4 Partnerships within the public and voluntary sector

“We are increasingly conscious of the importance of effective co-operation with the faith communities... and the growing record of partnership between public agencies and faith communities in the delivery of services.” [Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, foreword to *Working Together*, Home Office, 2004]

Chapter 4 considered the perceptions and interests of a range of secular bodies working with, or wishing to partner in some way with faith groups.

Seventy-three per cent of faiths respondents said they would like to work in partnership with secular bodies, and 50% are already working with other faith and secular groups, ranging from local schools through charities (e.g. NSPCC, Drinksense) to Local Authorities and LEAs. However, although secular bodies have a real interest in working with faiths (with the reservations noted above), only 31% of worshipping communities had applied for public funding for their social projects at any time. Of these, 81% had been successful at least once, and 18 projects for which funding had been sought had been rejected.

Partnerships between different faith communities in order to deliver social and community programmes have often been successful and many faith community representatives felt that such partnerships could be very positive. Over 80 percent of respondents stated that they would be willing to work with other worshipping communities to deliver social and community programmes.

Of course, applications for public funding from a variety of groups, not just faiths, do get rejected, and it may be for valid reasons such as overall lack of money. However, some people have been told by public bodies that it is counter to their policy to fund religious groups, even when the purposes are social rather than religious, and this situation needs further examination, as it would not appear to reflect government policy.

5.5 Chapter summary

Whilst the core activity of worshipping communities is spiritual, religiously motivated social engagement flows from this. It is important to stress that this is the way motivation works for most volunteers from worshipping communities. Volunteers do engage in relevant training courses for their social and community activities and many have extensive skills in relevant areas.

A majority of worshipping communities responding to questions on funding noted that their projects were self-funded, although 25 percent had received some public sector funding for their social and community projects. Seventy-three percent of respondents to the study stated that they would like to work with the public sector on social and community projects and 80 percent said that they would be willing to work with other worshipping communities on social and community projects.

The findings considered in this chapter suggest that most worshipping communities are keen to help others from within and outside their faiths. At present they are involved in a wide range of social and community projects, but many want to do more and are willing to be flexible on the sorts of social and community projects they work on and who they work with, in order to deliver positive outcomes.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Summary of key findings

This study has identified numerous ways in which faith groups contribute to the life and well-being of the region. It has highlighted the following:

The prevalence, distribution and nature of worshipping communities

Seventy-five per cent of the region's population self-identified as being of named faiths on the 2001 Census, and around 11.7% of the population are members of worshipping communities. There are approximately 633,000 people in the region who belong to a worshipping community. At present, members of worshipping communities are mainly drawn from the 40 to 64 age range, but there is no evidence that worshipping communities are getting older. Ninety-one percent of respondents stated that social/community involvement was important to their religion/faith. Further, many worshipping communities are involved in inter-faith groups and most are members of local, regional and national faith networks.

The range of faith-based activities taking place, and the groups which benefit from them

Faith communities in the region have launched 5,000 new social and community projects in the last 5 years, supported by 49,000 volunteers (representing £30,300,000 of volunteer input per annum). Projects include health support services, social support services, education and community and leisure services.

The impact of these activities on the social and economic capital of the region

Many faith community projects aim to support specific groups (such as children and families), whilst others reflect an anti-discrimination agenda. Over 175,000 people in the East of England are supported by faith community projects every week. Findings suggest that whilst many faith communities would like to increase their range of social and community projects, a lack of volunteers and available finance can represent limiting factors.

The advantages of, and constraints on working with secular partners

Most secular organisations interviewed had positive experiences of working with faiths communities. Many secular interviewees felt that faith groups often provided ways of accessing hard-to-reach parts of the wider community, exercised a beneficial influence at times of tension, promoted social cohesion, helped support disadvantaged members of society. It was also felt that worshipping communities were effective at taking the initiative and setting up community programmes, because

they contain many skilled and experienced people and have fewer legislative restrictions than statutory bodies.

Most secular interviewees noted that they were prepared to work with almost any partner in delivering a social and community programme, providing the social and community programme was open to all and the partner faith community was aiming to deliver the agreed service. These positive experiences and expectations of secular representatives relating to faith communities were mirrored by the vast majority of faith interviewees, regarding their willingness to work with secular partners.

The opportunities for extending and improving faith-based community activity, and the barriers that must be addressed

Whilst the core activity of worshipping communities is spiritual, religiously motivated social engagement flows from this. It is important to stress that this is the way motivation works for most volunteers from worshipping communities. Volunteers do engage in relevant training courses for their social and community activities and many have extensive skills in relevant areas. A majority of worshipping communities responding to questions on funding noted that their projects were self-funded, although 25 percent had received some public sector funding for their social and community projects. Seventy-three percent of respondents to the study stated that they would like to work with the public sector on social and community projects and 80 percent said that they would be willing to work with other worshipping communities on social and community projects.

The findings of this report suggest that most worshipping communities are keen to help others from within and outside their faiths. At present they are involved in a wide range of social and community projects, but many want to do more and are willing to be flexible on the sorts of social and community projects they work on and who they work with, in order to deliver positive outcomes.

6.2 Recommendations for the future

Issues arising from the research

The research shows that the following actions and changes could be valuable in helping worshipping communities to realise their full potential in contributing to the life of the region:

- Insofar as possible, map all the worshipping communities in the region, so that two-way communication is maximised.
- Facilitate local and regional government in accessing the knowledge of local social needs residing with faith communities.
- Provide guidance to local authorities (and perhaps private developers) on locating and working with faith groups on planning issues.

- Improve understanding on the part of secular bodies as to where the strengths of faith groups lie.
- Improve understanding on the part of faith groups as to the constraints guiding the work of public bodies.
- Diminish concerns on the part of secular partners that there is a “mystique” about working with faith groups (“training” may not be the best way forward as it suggests there is a lot to learn and understand — “working together” may be more effective).
- Create ready opportunities for secular officers and faith groups to work together to build mutual understanding through projects and work placements.
- Ensure programmes for volunteer training and mentoring are well signposted and accessible.
- Workshops for faith groups on making applications (especially form-filling and adapting projects to geographical or timescale demands).
- Workshops or straightforward guidelines for secular partners on government policy in relation to the funding and supporting faith-based activities.

6.3 The East of England Faiths Council

The role of the East of England Faiths Council

It is clear from this and other research that faith groups which engage with their local communities by offering services are in general very open to the idea of working with and through others, and we therefore believe that EEFC has a key role to play in supporting them.

The ways in which it should be doing this are indicated by the findings of the research. EEFC is well placed to pick up the need to build mutual understanding; act as a processor and conduit of information; and establish regional mechanisms and projects designed to support the work of worshipping communities at local level.

If EEFC is able to build its capacity, this research indicates that in order to facilitate the above actions and changes, it should consider becoming more active in the following areas:

Mapping the faith groups within the region

In order to carry out the research, EEFC mapped faith groups in the five areas. Its experience in doing this suggests that the region as a whole would take approximately 175 hours (mainly of desk research) to map completely. If such an exercise could be funded, it would provide a good foundation for the other proposed activities.

Raising awareness of the value of partnering with public and voluntary bodies

The value of this to both sides was raised in *Faith in Action* [EEFC, 2003], and has been borne out by this study. However, there are still misconceptions on both sides, and lost opportunities. The need for partnership will only become more pressing with the envisaged growth of the region

Both worshipping community interviewees and interviewees from secular bodies referred to intercommunication problems between worshipping communities and secular bodies. It was common for there to be negative impressions on each side. These were often justified by past experiences of misunderstandings over issues, unclear roles and clashes over aims.

Some worshipping communities do receive public sector funding for specific projects, and sometimes these have spun-out into initiatives which are independent of the worshipping communities themselves. Potential clashes can, however, still exist. In one case it was feared that a homeless project might be forced to close, because it had strong links to the specific faith group which originally developed it. There is widespread concern that public sector funded initiatives have to become atheistic.

EEFC is well placed to assist in reducing these tensions, and would like to develop a work plan to do so that could include, for instance, seminars, mentoring and work placements.

Gathering information on social need and applying this at regional level

There is evidence in this research of a high level of awareness of local needs on the part of faith communities, who are uniquely placed both to understand and meet it. We do not see that this information is currently being garnered in any consistent manner.

EEFC could undertake this role, by establishing a method of contact, collection and collation. The application of the regular findings could then be through: analysis and presentation to local and regional governance and to the voluntary sector; support of projects (see below) to address specific needs; nurture of geographical and interest groupings within EEFC.

Managing and disseminating information for faith groups

Many faith communities did not want to be restricted in their activities by public sector funding limitations. There is a need to improve clarity and support concerning project funding restrictions and to make clear the great range of different funding sources available for different types of social and community programmes.

It is also clear from some of the interviews is that many worshipping communities are not aware of what training is available and what the cost of this might be. Further, there appears to be only limited information held on methods of training available and its content. This

suggests that there is a need to ensure worshipping communities are properly briefed on what support is available, its relevance to their activities, its cost and how to access and apply it.

Similarly, there is a need for groups “on the ground” to have easily-assimilated information on the effect of legislation and policy on their current and planned projects.

Another area in which EEFC could assist would be to hold a “library” of information on groups willing to share worship and/or community space, such that enquirers from other faith groups could be put in contact with them (an “open” database would not be appropriate).

A major area in which the Faiths Council could be involved if capacity were built is assistance with the co-ordination of emergency planning. Some groups such as the Anglican Dioceses already play a major role in response to incidents, and some faiths are very well prepared. However, of our respondents, only 14 (13%) said they were involved in emergency planning. There is a wealth of experience within the faith communities of the region which could be shared through training and the dissemination of information by the Council.

Support for projects

Ultimately, the research suggests that many of the social and community programmes provided by worshipping communities are additional to some of the services already provided by the public sector (after-school clubs and youth work being two particularly good examples). Rather than attempting to replace limited public sector services already in existence with ones provided by worshipping communities, it is likely that the greatest impact will come from seeking to expand and extend the wide-ranging (worshipping community) programmes already in place, via careful selection of the programmes and appropriate input of additional resources.

A key factor in the provision of social and community programmes is that most projects supported by worshipping communities are reliant almost exclusively on unpaid volunteers. A central reason for their involvement is their faith-based beliefs in supporting the wider community. Funding is important to the existence of worshipping community projects, but this usually comes from within worshipping communities. Worshipping communities and most of their projects are not reliant upon public sector funding. Attempts to extend the impact of worshipping community projects will need to take the rationale behind such projects into account.

EEFC is well placed to seek, via its membership, particular projects which could be expanded, better resourced and/or replicated, whilst understanding this rationale.

Leadership training

EEFC should consider instituting local seminars based on the Intercultural Leadership and Communication School (ILCS) pro-

gramme that runs in Bradford and Leicester. It is aimed at young adults who are “pre-influential” in their communities and are likely to become significant role models and influencers in their generation. These people are brought together from separated communities in specific cities where there have been or may be inter-community tensions whether for religious, ethnic or other reasons, and enabled to move beyond their stereotypes of the “other” to personal friendships.

The programme is based on a residential seminar and follow-on activity. It provides them with an initial set of skills to assist them in being influential in their communities; encourages participants to develop joint projects across their communities; and supports them in a continuing network both within their cities and between different cities.

The seminar is arranged by a “Local Organising Group” drawn from the community, and assisted by an “implementing partner” — a role which could be taken by EEFC. ILCS provides support and facilitation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 — The Research Method — Quantitative Analysis

The Research Method

The research was designed to target faiths communities in the localities of Harlow, King's Lynn, Mid-Suffolk, Peterborough and Southend-on-Sea. These represented approximately 10 percent of the population of the East of England Region — as well as representing a cross-section of different types of communities and ensuring broad geographical coverage. Peterborough was chosen because it was a large town in the north-west of the region with an ethnically and religiously diverse population. Harlow was selected because of its geographical location in the south west of the region and because it was felt to be representative of that part of the region. King's Lynn is a medium-sized town in the north of the region in the county of Norfolk. Southend-on-Sea is a seaside town in Essex and so ensures that there is representation from the south east of the region. Mid-Suffolk represents a rural area in the region, rather than an urban area, and thus ensures that the rural perspective was included in the study.

The postal survey was sent to all faiths communities in the target areas, which could be identified. Responses were coded into a spreadsheet, the contents of which were then analysed to answer a set of 57 questions — pertaining to the development of the report.

Preliminary analysis was carried out to ascertain representativeness of postal survey responses, based upon faith and geographical distribution. This found responses to be fairly evenly distributed on a geographical basis. However, the great majority of faith communities in the East of England are based upon Christianity and this means that responses from non-Christian faiths tended to only represent a relatively small proportion of the total. Whilst these responses represented the proportions of the different faith communities in the region as a whole, it is not necessarily the case that responses are representative of non-Christian faiths across the UK.

The following section provides a guide as to how survey responses were calculated

Calculation method — regional projected estimates for worshipping community membership, activities, volunteer numbers and social and community projects

Due to the large amount of analysis required during the latter stages of the research it was necessary to develop an efficient way of working out regional projections. Therefore, this was based upon the total population for all the areas studied as a percentage of the total regional population.

This showed that the population in the areas studied totalled 9.7 percent of the regional population.

In analysing results, the total useable responses to each question were added and an average figure generated in each case. This average was then multiplied by the total number of faith communities known to exist in the study areas, to produce a total figure.

The total estimated figure for the region was then calculated by multiplying the total figure for the answer to the question by 10.3 (9.7% as a multiplier to attain 100%). The formula used is set out below:

variables:

t = total number of responses to question

u = total of all response values

z = total population of region (5,388,000)

y = total population of study areas (522,000)

w = total number of faith communities in all areas studied

Formula used to project question answers to the region:

$$\frac{u}{t} \times w \times \frac{z}{y} = \text{projected answer to regional level}$$

Calculating the value of volunteer input

There has been a large amount of previous research into ways of calculating volunteer input, but this has tended to focus upon input on specific measurable projects. Indeed, the issue of how to value volunteer time, whilst becoming a more commonly debated subject, has no single correct answer. This is because of the types of volunteering and community action undertaken in different circumstances and also because it is often difficult to place a value on specific project outputs — which are usually necessary to place a realistic value on inputs.

The Institute for Volunteering Research (whose web address is: <http://www.ivr.org.uk>) has developed a system of measuring net volunteer value on projects (“VIVA” — The Volunteer Investment and Value Audit) which uses variables such as project outputs, cost of training, value of equivalent post which the volunteer is filling and other costs associated with volunteer management and support. Unfortunately, this type of approach, variations of which are commonly used to evaluate many types of projects, requires a good deal more information than was available for the large-scale research carried out in this programme. In fact, there is no way of placing a value on the outputs of all the social and community programmes undertaken by faiths communities in the East of England without considerable amounts of information and analysis, way beyond what could be pursued in this research.

One solution to the problem of providing some indication to the value of input into social and community programmes was to attempt to value volunteer time simply on the basis of total hours committed over a set

period of time. 102 out of the 248 faith communities surveyed were able to provide an indication of the numbers of hours volunteers committed to faith community projects in a typical week. These were projected up to the regional level via the method described in the previous section of this appendix. The problem with looking purely at volunteer hours, however, links to questions around how projects are managed, what the volunteers actually do on them and whether or not volunteers add much value. The qualitative work, via interviews with secular and faiths representatives, suggests that in the vast majority of cases it is volunteers from faiths communities who actually drive most elements of social and community projects in which faith communities are involved. Whilst this underlines the argument that volunteers are a major factor in all faith community programmes, it still does not provide enough detail to place a true value on volunteer input — in terms of comparing each volunteer's role which that of a full or part-time paid employee involved in similar work. Therefore, the research was limited to valuing volunteer input at the lower end of the cost spectrum — specifically at the national minimum wage (of £4.85).

The projected total of volunteer hours per week in the region was 120,057. This was then multiplied by the minimum wage rate of £4.85 per hour, to attain a total weekly value of volunteer time of £582,276. Because of the nature of many of the social and community projects undertaken by volunteers, which would (such as teaching, working with young people, helping the elderly and community outreach work) this is almost certainly an underestimate.

Appendix 2 — Sample Postal Questionnaire

Questions 27 and 28 asked whether people had heard of their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) or their Sub-Regional Economic Partnership (SREP). This was done by asking about the institutions by name. This meant that five different forms were used, with the content of these two questions altered to suit each locality.

The form here is the one used for Mid-Suffolk.

For Peterborough, question 28 was omitted, as the Greater Peterborough Partnership as both as the LSP and SREP.

For King's Lynn the questions referred to West Norfolk Local Strategic Partnership (Q.27, LSP) and Shaping the Future Partnership (Q.28, SREP).

For Harlow the questions referred to Harlow 2020 (Q.27, LSP) and Essex Prosperity Forum (Q.28, SREP).

For Southend the questions referred to Southend Together (Q.27, LSP) and Essex Prosperity Forum (Q.28, SREP).

The questionnaires were sent in two tranches, with return dates of 4 February 2005 and 11 April 2005.



Faith in the East of England Questionnaire

Mid-Suffolk

*Please complete this questionnaire and return it to us by
11 April 2005, in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.*

*If you are involved with more than one worshipping community, please answer these
questions in relation to the one with which you have the closest connection.*

All replies will be treated in confidence.

Thank you for your help.

1 What is your name and your position in your worshipping community

Please tell us about your worshipping community

2 What is the name of your worshipping community?

3 What is its faith tradition and/or denomination?

4 Approximately what proportion of your worshipping community live within 1 mile of your place of
worship?

5 Does your worshipping community have its own premises? yes no

If yes, do you make any of the following available:

Worship space for other groups within your own faith

Worship space for people of another faith

Community rooms / meeting space

Do you offer space at a reduced rate to members of your worshipping community? yes no

6 What is the approximate average age of your worshipping community?

These questions tell us about your worshipping community and the wider community

7 Approximately how many people are there in your worshipping community?

8 What social or community services does your worshipping community offer?
For each activity, please tick “yes”, “no”, or “would like to” to tell us what you do, don’t do, or would like to do.

	yes	no	would like to		yes	no	would like to
Health support services				Crime prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hospital visiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting of sick people at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational services			
Transport for the sick and infirm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social support services				Language classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Literacy classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for the homeless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	School liaison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for independent living by disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Out of school support for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial services (e.g. advice or credit unions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community and leisure activities			
Bereavement counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counselling for young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Music societies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Art classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sporting activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep fit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Liaison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interest/hobby groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Citizenship advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lunch clubs (e.g. for the elderly)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coffee mornings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parenting support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anti-racism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dances/discos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others (please specify)							

9 What groups do you work with? Please tick all that apply.

	yes	no	would like to		yes	no	would like to
Children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People with mental health difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Old people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Families under stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black and minority ethnic people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	One-parent families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay and lesbian people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with learning difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	People seeking to improve their skills or qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others (please specify)							

10 Approximately how many people from outside your worshipping community are supported by your social or community activities *each week*?

11 How many *paid* personnel does your worshipping community have (including clergy)? Please state whether they are employed on a full-time or part-time basis.

12 What is the average number of *volunteers* from your worshipping community involved in its social or community activities in a typical week?

13 Approximately how many hours of voluntary time do members of your worshipping community contribute to your social or community projects each week?

14 Approximately what proportion of your volunteers are over the age of 60?

15 Approximately how many new social or community programmes has your community begun in the last 5 years?

- 16 If you have explored the possibility of starting new social or community programmes in the last five years but decided not to proceed, what was the reason?
- lack of money?
 - lack of paid staff?
 - lack of volunteers?
 - lack of demand?
 - differences of opinion within your worshipping community?
 - Other (please specify)
- 17 If you have ended any of your social or community programmes in the last five years what was the reason?
- lack of money?
 - lack of paid staff?
 - lack of volunteers?
 - no longer needed?
 - differences of opinion within your worshipping community?
 - Other (please specify)
- 18 It is sometimes possible to obtain financial or other help by working in partnership with government bodies. In principle, is your worshipping community willing to do this? yes no
- 19 Have you received government money for any of your social or community projects?
(Government money includes local, regional, national and European money) yes no
- 20 Have you sought public money but been rejected? yes no
If yes, what was the reason?
- 21 Do you offer any social or community projects for which you've not sought public funding? yes no
If yes, what was the reason?
- We already had adequate funding.
 - We didn't think that faith-based projects were eligible.
 - We didn't think we would be eligible, for other reasons.
 - We were deterred by the complexity of the application process.
 - We didn't have people with the right qualifications to run the project.
 - Other (please specify)
- 22 Are any of your social or community events restricted to members of your worshipping community? None some all
- 23 How important is social or community involvement to your faith?
(on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means not important and 5 means important) 1 2 3 4 5
- 24 Are any of your social or community projects undertaken with other organisations? yes no
If yes, what partners have you worked with?
- 25 Would you be willing to run community projects jointly with:
- a secular body?
 - another worshipping community of your own faith?
 - a worshipping community of another faith?
- 26 Running community projects can lead people to convert to your faith. Which of the following most accurately describes your view of this:
- It's the main reason for these projects.
 - It's one among a number of important reasons for these projects.
 - We'd welcome new converts, but that's not the main reason for these projects.
 - We're aiming to meet a local need, not to make converts.

- 27 Have you heard of “Mid-Suffolk LSP” yes no
- 28 Have you heard of “Suffolk Development Agency” yes no
- 29 To what extent do you feel able to influence decisions affecting your local community?
(on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you can influence things
a little and 5 means you feel able to influence them a lot) 1 2 3 4 5
- 30 To what extent do you think that people in your worshipping community afraid of being the victims
of crime because of their faith? 1 2 3 4 5
1 = a little, 5 = a lot
- 31 Has your place of worship suffered criminal damage or vandalism in the last 5 years. yes no
If yes, how many times?
- 32 What, if any, social needs do you see in the area around where you worship?
.....
.....
.....
.....
- 33 If you were offered £40,000 to undertake one or more community projects what would you do?
.....
.....
.....
.....

These questions will help us shape the future of the East of England Faiths Council

- 34 Is your worshipping community part of a regional body yes no
If yes, how many counties does this body cover? 1 2 3 4 5 6 more than 6
What is this body called?
- 35 Are members of your worshipping community involved in a local interfaith group or faiths council? yes no
If yes, what is it called?
- 36 The East of England will see substantial new housing developments over the coming years. It has been
suggested that faiths provision in the new housing developments should include worship space
and/or community space to be used by all the main faiths. It would help the East of England Faiths
Council to know how you feel about this.
How willing would you be to share worship space with people of other faiths?
(on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means not willing and 5 means very willing) 1 2 3 4 5
How willing would you be to share community (i.e. non-worship) space with people of other faiths?
1 = not willing, 5 = very willing 1 2 3 4 5
- 37 Has your worshipping community been involved in planning for a response to local emergencies
(such as flooding)? yes no

Thank you very much for your help.

Appendix 3 — Postal Questionnaire Cover Letter



Dear Colleague,

The East of England Faiths Council, on behalf of the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), is undertaking research in Peterborough, King's Lynn and Harlow, looking at the impact of faith communities on their local community. On the basis of this, we will be drawing conclusions about the region as a whole. The East of England Faiths Council and EEDA will publish the findings of this research in the summer of 2005.

From the perspective of data protection, we confirm that the information on this questionnaire will only be used for this research project. As the research seeks to provide information relevant to the whole region, the analysis of the questionnaires which appears in the final report will be anonymous.

The research team recognise that the activities of faith communities are fundamentally motivated by spiritual concerns. In many faith communities, these spiritual concerns lead to a variety of social and community involvements. One aim of this research is to document, and therefore to acknowledge, the real value of the activities of the faith communities in the wider community.

EEDA is also very conscious that faith communities often experience difficulties in accessing public money for their social and community activities. Another aim of this research is to look at some of these obstacles, and find ways of making it easier for the public sector and faith communities to work in partnership. EEDA's own budget is modest: their hope is that, by funding this research, they will make it easier for faith communities to find funding from a wide range of other public sources.

As co-chairs of the East of England Faiths Council, we encourage you to take part by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it by 4 February 2005, in the enclosed SAE.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Hills Area Minister, Eastern Baptist Association	Zafar Khan Luton Council of Faiths	John Inge Bishop of Huntingdon	Ellis Weinberger Beth Shalom Reformed Synagogue
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Appendix 4 — Faith Community Representative Interview Questionnaire



Faith in the East of England **Interview questionnaire**

revised 14.ii.05

All replies will be treated in confidence.

- 1 Name of interviewer
- 2 Name of interviewee
- 3 Reference number
- 4 What distances do people travel to worship with you?
- 5 How many people would you see at worship at:
 - a) a major festival?
 - b) a time of year when attendance is at its lowest?
- 6 Approximately how many people worship with you during the course of a year?
What do you consider to be the size of your worshipping community?
- 7 How many people from within your worshipping community are supported by your social or community activities?
- 8 If there are people who end up coming to worship with you after initially becoming involved through your social or community activities, what number would you estimate per year?
- 9 What is the age profile of:
 - a) your worshipping community?
 - b) volunteers who do things in your social or community programmes?
 - c) and people who use those services?
- 10 *If they have put something that looks interesting on the "other" line to question 8 of the postal form, please ask about it.*
.....
.....
.....
.....

11 *If they have put something that looks interesting on the "other" line to question 9 of the postal form, please ask about it.*

.....
.....
.....
.....

12 On what time-scale do you plan your social or community projects?

.....

13 How do you go about deciding whether to start a new social or community project?

.....
.....
.....

14 How are your social or community projects funded?

.....
.....
.....

15 Relative to the rest of the region, do you see the local community (within a mile of your place of worship) as economically:

- advantaged disadvantaged about the same don't know

16 Relative to that local community, do you see the members of your worshipping community as economically:

- advantaged disadvantaged about the same

17 Do you see advantages in working with government or public sector bodies?

.....
.....
.....
.....

18 Do you see disadvantages in working with government or public sector bodies?

.....
.....
.....
.....

19 Are there things which could be done to make this easier?

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.....
.....
.....

20 Do you find that there is a tension between the expectations of government bodies or public sector bodies you might work with and the requirements of your faith?

.....

.....

.....

.....

21 Sometimes there are tensions between the priorities for faith communities and government bodies. To what extent would you be willing to do things differently in order to access public funding?
1 = not willing, 5 = very willing 1 2 3 4 5

.....

.....

.....

22 If there was an interesting-looking "other" answer to 20 (funding), please ask about it.

.....

.....

.....

.....

23 How many of the volunteers involved in your social or community programmes have any qualifications on social or community work, or received relevant training?

.....

24 If it could be provided, what sort of training would be useful for volunteers involved in your social or community projects?

.....

.....

25 Are there any stories of people who've derived particular benefit from your social or community programmes, such as people who have been able to re-enter employment after long period of unemployment, as a result of their experience of your worshipping community?

.....

.....

26 If questions 32 or 33 looked interesting, please ask for more information

.....

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.....

27 Some of the questionnaires went to the wrong location — two questions were peculiar o the locality. If the person you're interviewing received the wrong questionnaire, please ask:

(for Peterborough):	Have you heard of the Greater Peterborough Partnership?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
(for King's Lynn):	Have you heard of West Norfolk Local Strategic Partnership?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
	Have you heard of Shaping the Future Partnership?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
(for Harlow):	Have you heard of Harlow 2020?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
	Have you heard of Essex Prosperity Forum?	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 5 — Secular Representative Interview Questionnaire



Faith in the East of England

Interview questionnaire

— secular partners

All replies will be treated in confidence.

1 Date of interview Name of interviewer

2 Name of secular partner

3 Name of interviewee and position in organisation

We're seeking information on the experiences of secular partners in working with faith-based organisations.

4 What do you see as the main advantages of working with faith-based organisations?
.....
.....
.....

5 What do you see as the main disadvantages of working with faith-based organisations?
.....
.....
.....

6 Could you tell me about any memorable successes or failures?
.....
.....
.....

7 Have you had experiences of rejecting applications for support from faith-based organisations?
yes no

(If yes) Without going into details of specific cases, can you indicate some of the reasons:

- Didn't fit the guidelines for available funds
- Badly prepared applications
- The organisation didn't seem to understand my priorities
- We're reluctant to fund things which are only of benefit to people inside a faith community
- Other

.....

8 How do you decide which faith-based organisations you are willing (or keen) to work with?

.....
.....
.....

9 Are there problems arising from differences of priorities between your organisation and those of faith-based organisations?

.....
.....
.....

10 To what extent do you see working with faith-based organisations as a way of reaching ethnic minorities?

1 = not at all, 5 = it's the main reason

1 2 3 4 5

comments

.....

.....

11 What would constitute "successful" partnership working with a faith-based organisation?

.....

.....

.....

12 What would need to be done differently to make partnership working with faith-based organisations more successful (from your perspective)?

.....

.....

.....

13 What do you see as the limits to partnership working with faith-based organisations?

.....

.....

.....

14 Do you see yourself as being a person of faith?

yes no rather not say

If yes, which is your faith?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baha'i | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish | <input type="checkbox"/> Jain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu | <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoroastrian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No faith | | |

Other (please specify)