



3FF

THREE FAITHS FORUM

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Research for 3FF, the Three Faiths Forum

3FF, one of the leading interfaith and intercultural organisations in the UK, works to bring together people of all backgrounds to explore questions of faith, belief and identity. Each year over 15,000 people take part in programmes which promote understanding and build trust. The organisation has won many awards for its work and continues to grow and innovate; in 2015 we were the Mayor of Camden's Charity of the Year and we were also nominated for a prestigious National Diversity Award.

Founded in 1997 as the Three Faiths Forum, 3FF was originally a forum for dialogue between faith leaders from the Abrahamic faiths. Over the years the organisations work has changed and developed. In 2004 3FF created a Schools Programme and in 2007 a University Programme; these enabled young people and students to meet with, and learn from, people of different faiths and beliefs. In 2009, 3FF launched the Urban Dialogues project, an arts-based project which began 3FF's on-going exploration of questions relating to faith and identity through the Arts. 3FF is committed to broadening opportunities for public engagement with its work and for taking a progressive approach to the development and dissemination of its methodologies across its four programmatic strands.

Schools

For many of the young people with whom we work, uncertainty over how to begin a conversation with someone from a different background, and lack of opportunities to engage across lines of difference, are some of the main barriers to interfaith and intercultural interaction. Our Schools workshops were developed with young people in mind to help them build the skills needed to overcome these barriers. Last year nearly 7000 students across the UK took part in 3FF school workshops. Our Schools team also facilitates links between schools; this sustained, year-long programme enables an ongoing series of encounters between students from different backgrounds. The programme also provides training and support to teachers and senior school leaders.

ParliaMentors

Now in its ninth year, 3FF's award-winning leadership and mentoring programme, ParliaMentors, has an alumni network of over 300 young people. ParliaMentors brings together teams of university students from different faith and belief backgrounds to create social change while being mentored by MPs. As well as providing participants with unique opportunities to observe and get involved with the political process, ParliaMentors also connects students of different beliefs and backgrounds who might not otherwise have met. The networks participants build, in addition to the leadership skills and development opportunities the programme offers, continue to enable their career paths.

Training

Drawing upon expertise in facilitating dialogue and enabling conversations about challenging and sensitive issues, 3FF's Training programme offers training to organisations internationally. This training is tailored to the audience, including third sector bodies, central and local government, Higher Education facilities, and private companies. The aim is equip people with the skills to talk meaningfully and productively about faith and belief.

Founders: Sir Sigmund Sternberg KC*SG JP, Sheikh Dr M A Zaki Badawi KBE, Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke DD MA MPhil

Patrons: HE Cardinal Francis Arinze, The Rt Hon John Bercow MP, HRH Dom Duarte Duke of Bragança, Lord Carey of Clifton, Professor David Ford, Lord Hameed of Hampstead CBE DL, The Rt Hon Baroness Hayman, The Bishop of London, Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet, Mr George Mallinckrodt KBE, Mr Trevor Pears CMG, Dr Klaus Schwab KCMG, Baroness Scotland of Asthal PC QC

Advisors: Imam Maulana Shahid Raza OBE, Rabbi Prof David Rosen CBE KCSG



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Arts and Culture

Through the arts, people can come to understand themselves and those around them better, presenting new perspectives and building relationships which transcend cultural boundaries. This programme strand supports a range of activities including: the Urban Dialogues exhibition featuring artists and performers of many different cultures who explore themes and create collaborative installations; the Mixed Up Chorus, a multi-faith, multi-cultural choir performing music from all traditions; Female Voices, a series of events which bring together women of all backgrounds to enjoy the arts in a shared and diverse space to share and learn together, and the Salons Series, a process which convenes artists, academics and community activities on topical themes. Each project attracts diverse audiences, and act as a springboard to dialogue and relationship-building.

The need for effective and innovative work which explores challenging questions relating to faith, belief and identity has never been higher. Rising anxieties about the role and place of religion in society, fuelled in part by simplistic and reactionary media reporting, heightened security concerns, including relating to the Prevent agenda and concerns about radicalisation, as well as the negatively resonating effect of social media, are all challenges to effective community engagement, in particular, to interfaith engagement. These tensions are being played out in schools and have a strong and negative impact on young people. Furthermore, education professionals are often anxious about opening spaces within which young people might discuss and air opinions which could be perceived as being controversial or indeed illegal.

In this context, 3FF now seeks the support of a PhD candidate interested in exploring the impact of the organisation's work. This is in part to enable 3FF to articulate more completely the impact of its work more broadly, and in part to add to the limited literature which exists on interfaith work in general. We are interested in projects that will take us further in addressing 3FF's priorities, including -

Values and Beliefs

2016 marks the twentieth anniversary of Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* thesis. To what extent does that thesis translate into the work of 3FF? What are the limits of the thesis in this context? Is there anything which can be taken from that debate and applied to the work of the organisation?

Cross-Context Applicability:

3FF is a thought leader in the so called interfaith world. But what is interfaith work and to what extent are the methods and approaches pioneered by the organisation transferable to other contexts, most noticeably, the peace-building context? Are there parallels which can be drawn? Are these useful to explore? What is the potential impact on the work of the organisation?

Measuring Social Impact:

Operating across a range of contextual settings (organisations, communities, policy, geographies) what does it mean for 3FF to talk about impact? How can the organisation create systematic change when working in a climate of centralised public policy? What does it mean to create change when the policy context changes so rapidly, especially in relation to questions of religion?

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