

European Conference

The Impact of Cultural and Citizenship Education on Social Cohesion

3 - 5 December 2009, Vilnius, Lithuania

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Project Fact Sheet

Workshop 2

“Inclusion Through Participation: How Could Minorities Play a More Formative Role in Civil Society?”

	Section	Indications of content
1	Title of project	Young Muslim Leadership Network
2	Location (City/Country)	London and Birmingham, England
3	Main topics (select 5 max)	Alienation of young Muslims in Britain; Islam and its compatibility with democratic government; human rights and the prevention of terrorism in Britain; treatment of Islam and extremism in the media; peer education and the training of adults who work with young Muslims.
4	Practice-related keywords (5 max)	Enquiry groups; peer education; youth-led training; community cohesion.
5	Brief description of project (150 words)	The project has established three groups of Young Muslims, between 16 and 21, who will meet regularly over the course of a year to enquire into a number of issues relating to the compatibility of Islam with the British democratic way of life. They will address a number of issues surrounding the good deal of confusion or anger that seems to exist by interrogating experts and people in positions of influence and responsibility. These may include journalists, police officers, politicians, lawyers and other experts. As a result of their enquiries, they will be supported in developing a number of web-based communications addressed to their peers sharing their findings and enlarged insights. They will also be enabled to participate in the training of teachers and/or youth workers to improve the quality of work undertaken by professionals working in this inter-faith, inter-cultural context.
6	Objectives of project	The aims of the project are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen trust in, and understanding of, the British democratic structures and values as not incompatible with Islam; • Allow young Muslims to air their grievances and questions directly to those in positions of power and responsibility; • Enable members of the establishment to meet and dialogue with young Muslims in new ways in order to break down barriers based on age, culture, faith and lack of contact; • Develop resilience amongst young Muslims to the extremist narratives being promulgated by a small minority of Muslims; • Use peer education to communicate with young Muslims who are normally ‘hard to reach’, and youth-led training methods to improve the quality of teaching about these issues in schools and the youth sector.

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7	Impact of the project on education and social cohesion (250 words)	<p>The impact of the project is intended to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater social cohesion due to reduced alienation between young Muslims and members of the British majority; • Enhanced levels of understanding of, and trust in, British democratic structures and values and those who are involved in their development and operation; • Group members will feel more 'connected' as young British citizens to the structures and processes that underpin public life. They will feel more empowered to represent their views and opinions to those in positions of power and, in this way, will be more resilient to extremist 'voices' which suggest extremist violence is the correct Islamic response; • Educators who work with Islamic young people will benefit from the opportunity to dialogue directly with young leaders of the Islamic community.
8	Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Muslims between 16 and 21 years willing to engage in dialogue with members of mainstream society about issues of alienation and discrimination; • Young Muslims who would normally be 'hard to reach' and unwilling to listen to voices from the British mainstream; • Mainstream teachers and/or youth workers who would benefit from dialogue with Muslim young people – whose teaching and training will be enhanced as a result of this project.
9	Project methods/ Project format	<p>Three enquiry groups of young people have been set up. They will meet together for about a year to develop and pursue their enquiries. They are supported by Young adults, largely from the Muslim community in these enquiries. Towards the end of the "enquiry" stage, they will receive some media training and be supported in generating some media of their own to communicate their findings. They will also be enabled to take part in some training sessions with teachers and/or youth workers.</p>
10	Project Time scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2009 – September 2009: establishing the locations of the groups, identifying the steering group and youth group leaders. Developing strategies and support information. • October 2009 – August 2010 (the length of the academic year): the young people will meet about once a month to pursue their enquiries. • September 2010 – December 2010: Outreach stage – media creation, peer training and teacher education.
11	Project Initiator	<p>The Citizenship Foundation, London</p>
12	Resources involved (financial, human, others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for this project comes from the Department of Communities and Local Government, as part of its strategy to prevent violent extremism. • The project has a small administration team and a steering group of experts in inter-faith activities and education, and a group of group leaders, largely drawn from the Muslim community. • The project will draw on the expertise and experiences of a number of people in relevant positions of power or responsibility, who will be asked to support the work of the project, on a pro bono, expenses only basis.
13	Evaluation/Materials	<p>Evaluation instruments will be developed to try to determine the extent to which the project has been successful in changing attitudes, developing knowledge and addressing existing misconceptions. These will include questionnaires and interviews</p>

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		<p>at the beginning and towards the end of the project.</p> <p>Group leaders' views on the success of the project will be sought and on lessons to be learned for future activities of this kind.</p> <p>Teachers will be interviewed following their participation in the youth-led training activities.</p> <p>A report will be written for funders, for others working in this field and, probably, for the wider academic community working in areas of Citizenship education and community cohesion.</p>
14	Contact information	<p>Project director Don Rowe Senior adviser, Curriculum resources Citizenship Foundation 63 Gee Street London EC1V 3RS don.rowe@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk 0207566 4135</p> <p>Supported by Ruxandra Ratiu International Officer Citizenship Foundation 63 Gee Street London EC1V 3RS Ruxandra.ratiu@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk</p>