

# Feasibility study into Capacity Building Muslim Groups in Tower Hamlets and Hackney

A report by Faith In The Future for Barnardo's CANDL

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# Introduction: Feasibility Study into Muslim groups

## Background

The Government's policies on community regeneration recognise that faith is a vital access point into marginalised communities, particularly urban communities with a high proportion of black and minority ethnic groups. It is heartening for faith groups to receive recognition for their work and encouragement for its development in this way.

This acknowledgment has deep significance for the Muslim Community of Britain. In the past Christian groups have been part of the very fabric of British life. The Government's sentiment on the role of faith in regeneration paves the way for other faith groups to define, through negotiation, their existence in civil society. How one *enables* the participation of faith groups is therefore key. Capacity building faith groups effectively may in turn increase a sense of well-being and stake holding in wider society. Together, faith groups can help to foster the growth of a spiritual space in modern Britain.

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The Muslim community in Britain is expanding its initiative in community work for the benefit of itself and others. This development is of increased importance as statistics show that deprivation indices amongst those ethnicities which are traditionally from Muslim backgrounds, e.g. Bangladeshi/Pakistani, are high. In response to this, there are a number of initiatives coming from Muslim groups themselves, aimed at providing community based solutions for many of these problems. Yet, the level of capacity of groups from the Muslim community to address these problems is still unknown. There is very little information available on what kinds of facilities are being offered by these groups and at what levels and whether there is a need for capacity building work within this area.

In the Government's 'Compact on Good Practice' on BME organisations, it was recognised that the BME sector included faith groups. This implies that much of the research into 'capacity building' projects, within the BME voluntary sector, which finds that it can often be ineffective and delivered by individuals with no knowledge of the sector, may also be applicable to different faith groups.

Additionally, as Muslim groups can represent and serve some of the most excluded communities in our country, there is an even more pressing need to ensure they are able to utilise all their resources to maximise the benefit of their services.

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It is difficult to define Muslims by race. The largest share of Muslims in Hackney come from Turkey & the Gujarat in India and a smaller share come from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Somalia. In contrast, the largest group of Muslims in Tower Hamlets are from Bangladesh and a smaller share from

Somalia, Morocco and Algeria. Thus any assessment of the level of demand for development/capacity building work amongst Muslim groups has to take account of this diversity.

Our experience informs us that the best way to approach any proposed initiative is through consultation with the community itself. However, for this consultation to be effective and wide ranging its methodology has to have an inbuilt understanding of the sensibilities and needs of the group.

The conducting of this research will ensure that any capacity building service which is born out of it, actively seeks to involve Muslim groups themselves, with the key distinction from other capacity/development programmes being that involvement is on the community's own terms, without requiring them to compromise their cultural or religious integrity.

This involvement means celebrating rather than apologising for the diversity which exists in different communities and their approaches to community work. The fear of assimilation or losing parts of their valued heritage, which is of great concern to many faith groups, can thus be overcome.

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## Forging new partnerships

CANDL's (Church and Neighbourhood Development in London) expertise lies in supporting church groups of all denominations in their community work. Barnardo's vision, which succinctly encapsulates CANDL's own, is expressed as... 'that the lives of all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination.'

The practical realisation of this vision is carried out by CANDL as a capacity building umbrella organisation that offers advice and information, training, consultancy, help with fundraising, evaluation, team building, recruiting or supporting volunteers and community profiling to church based community groups.

CANDL has been exploring ways to address the needs of communities from other backgrounds in the multi-ethnic and multi faith boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets. CANDL approached FITF to enlist its expertise in accessing Muslim groups sensitively. FITF's proposal on the feasibility study into capacity building Muslim Groups received approval from the project steering group which consisted of Muslims and Christians.

The feasibility study was carried out in order to find out the level of demand, need and potential for the development of a capacity building programme for Muslim groups. If such a need existed then FITF's role was to assess the best way in which such initiative could be delivered which would maximise its effectiveness.

This feasibility study represents a partnership between Barnardo's CANDL and FITF. By undertaking this study FITF has been able to reach some of the most unknown and excluded communities in London. Interviews with these groups have provided access to large numbers of individuals, which may be ignored by other studies into BME groups.

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# Methodology

## Identifying Parameters

### What is a Muslim group?

For the purposes of this study, we have allowed organisations to self – define themselves without imposing any criteria or judgements upon them. For example, a group may be run by people who are Muslims and even serve Muslims, but may not identify with Islamic values or self-define itself as a faith based organisation. In approaching organisations we were concerned to allow them to decide what their ethos was, rather than prejudging them ourselves and thus unnecessarily excluding groups.

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### Identifying Needs

We investigated:

- To what extent there was a demand for development/capacity building work amongst Muslim groups
  - to what extent groups would like to influence the shape and direction of any such programme
  - What would be the nature of their preferred service provider
  - What kind of relationship they envisaged having with that provider
  - What kind of assistance would they most require, how often and to what extent
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### Research Tools

#### Interviews

The research is based on face-to-face interviews using open ended questions to encourage participants to express their ideas and aspirations as freely as possible. Issues focussed on were:

- What kind of community or children’s work was being done by Muslim groups or organisations in Tower Hamlets and Hackney?
- Were they aware of funding possibilities in Tower Hamlets or Hackney? Did they think Muslim groups had a good idea of what funding is available to them and how to access it?
- How much potential did they think there was within the Muslim community for the provision of community services or children’s work? Did they think this potential was being utilised? If so, how, and if not, why not?
- Did they know of any existing agencies that offer help to groups doing this kind of work?
- Did they think groups would like hands on help in
  - Clarifying their vision
  - Planning their work
  - Developing their fundraising
  - Training volunteers and management committee members

- Drafting necessary policies and procedures etc?
  - What level of assistance did their particular group require? Was it more advisory or actual hands on help from staff?
  - Did they envisage using any capacity/ development work organisation frequently and building a long-term relationship, or were they more interested in short-term help for one off projects/goals?
  - How important might it be that this help is given by people who share an Islamic perspective?
  - Did they know of any Muslim organisations who could offer this help if they were given the resources?
  - Would a partnership with Barnardos CANDL Project be of positive benefit in any proposed service development?
  - If so, what role should Barnardos CANDL Project take in such a partnership?
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### **Focus Groups**

In addition to these interviews 2 focus groups were conducted where representatives from a number of Muslim groups were brought together to discuss their ideas about the shape of any proposed service delivery in this area. The aim of using focus groups as a research tool, was to achieve some kind of consensus within diverse groups on the kind of service they required, if any. This added additional value to our interview information and enabled us to draw further conclusions.

20 groups were interviewed for the purposes of this study, 13 in Tower Hamlets and 7 in Hackney. We were able to gain access to a cross section of Muslim groups within these areas, with organisations with the dominant ethnic groupings in each area, Turkish, Bangladeshi, Somali and Indian/Pakistani being represented. We focused on Mosque based groups who engaged in community work and groups specifically for women. Mosques and women's groups in particular are difficult to gain access to, but paradoxically may be the most in need of capacity building precisely because of this.

The researcher carrying out the study observed that most of the groups interviewed felt a sense of trust and security in speaking to her because she was a Muslim. She was taken almost like a counsellor, with groups expressing their pride in being able to serve the Muslim community; but also discussing their problems and even asking for immediate help. The focus group meetings also helped to enable co-ordination and co-operation between different groups.

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## Groups and their services

Altogether 20 groups were interviewed, 13 in Tower Hamlets and 7 in Hackney.

(Please see appendix 1 for interview questionnaire.)

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Questions 1 to 4 of the questionnaire sought to find out the level of services these groups were providing and to which sections of the community. Their organisational vision and aspirations were recorded. Please see appendix 2 for the groups' Aims.

## Findings

The results showed the level of contribution these organisations were already making in civic life, which included;

- Mental Health Counselling
- Childcare
- Children's educational projects
- Welfare advice
- Family conflict mediation
- Material assistance to those in need
- Advocacy on behalf of women
- Network of social relationships and social support
- Motivation for higher education and further professional development
- Health and fitness activities
- Adult education classes
- Parenting support
- Combating drug abuse among teenagers

## Snapshots

*'East London Mosque serves 60,000 Muslims living in the neighbourhood. It is used as a place of worship as well as a place where the disadvantaged, materially poor and vulnerable seek help. Presently the mosque is planning an extension to serve more people who are demanding the service but are not able to access it due to lack of space.'*

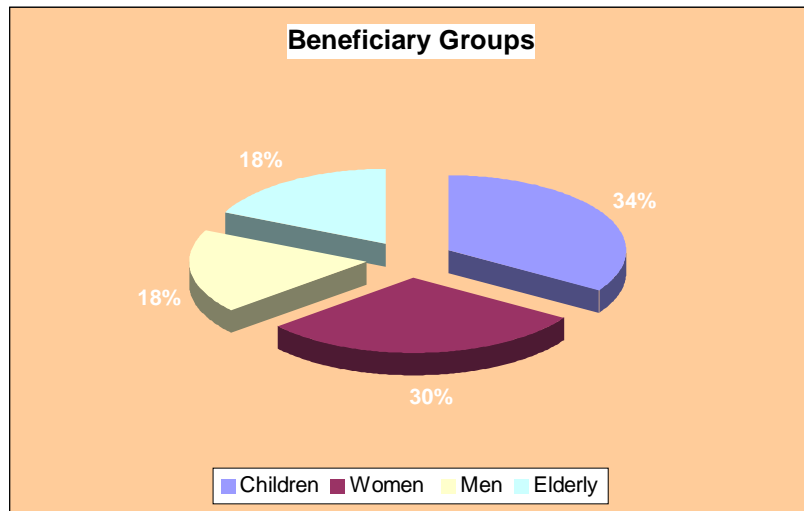
*In Hackney **AWAS** is a women's group, who serve Asian women from various faith groups from the Asian subcontinent. Their beneficiaries feel 'a sense of security and trust when accessing their service.'*

The study revealed that Mosques, Muslim community organisations and voluntary projects play a significant role in their localities. They contribute to community development on a daily basis, through providing services to the local communities and involving local people including the youth and elderly. They tackle many issues facing the community such as poverty, family breakdown, unemployment and issues related to children.

These groups are a valuable resource for tackling social exclusion. They also have unique ways to encourage people to be involved in their communities, as social care is a very important part of the work of for faith groups.

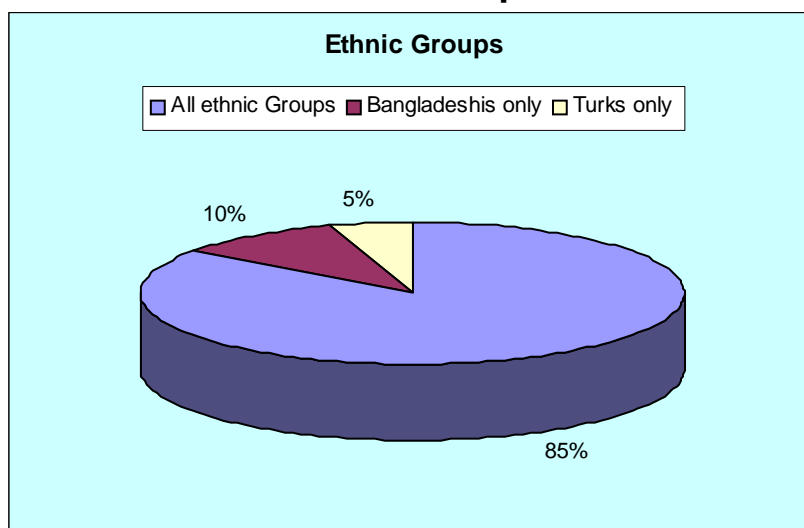
Fitting in with Barnardo's priorities, most of the organisations we interviewed provided services to women and children. Below is a breakdown of the types of beneficiaries served by the groups in this study.

### Beneficiary Groups



Most of the groups provided services to all ethnic groups. Only three groups provided services specifically to their own ethnic group. The *Globe Town Bengali Women's Group* provides services to Bangladeshi women only and *Sulemaneye mosque* provide services to Turkish community only. This is due to the local area and their beneficiaries reflect the ethnic composition of the local area. The diagram below shows this breakdown:

### Ethnic Groups



## **Summary**

Faith based organisations clearly play an extremely valuable role in supporting their communities in a number of important ways and are able to access the most deprived communities using faith as a resource. Statistics show that deprivation indices amongst ethnicities from Muslim backgrounds are high.<sup>1</sup> These organisations should be able to turn to a capacity building organisation that they can trust and feel they ‘do not have to hide their faith,’ when they need help. Their services should be improved and developed.

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<sup>1</sup> Farnell, R, Faith communities, regeneration and social exclusion, p. 5, 2001

## Funding

Questions 5 to 6 were on funding ascertaining group's access to information and their level of knowledge and skills.

Only **30%** of groups were funded. The sources of this funding included the local council, private trusts, SRB, and neighbourhood renewal funds. The groups that are not funded are running on members' goodwill offerings. The Muslim groups that are membership funded are committed to serving local people, they serve hard to reach and socially excluded groups. Their work would expand had they received adequate funding.

	No. Of Org.
Funded	6
Not funded	14

## Awareness of (further) funding possibilities

	No. of Org.
Aware of (further) funding possibilities	13
Not aware of funding possibilities	7

Just over half of the groups within this study were aware of further funding possibilities for their work, however only six of the organisations were funded. Therefore, although there was awareness that funding opportunities did exist amongst this number, they were not being accessed. Seven of the groups participating were not aware of any funding assistance they could potentially access. Although 65% were aware of funding and the funded groups were aware of further funding they did not have the confidence to apply.

The 14 that are not funded expressed several reasons they could not access funding. These can be summarised as follows:

- a) As small organisations are run mostly by volunteers they have lack of manpower and resources hence have little time to be involved with outside bodies.
- b) Prominent feelings of discrimination because of being from a religious background.

*'We feel that funders will not fund us if they knew we are a faith group, in particular because we are a Muslim faith group.'*

- c) Language and cultural terms: most of the groups cannot translate their work to the 'technicality of funders' language.'

- d) Not aware of funding possibilities.
- e) Acquiring funding may dilute the groups' original work and will have to work around funders criteria.
- f) Extra work, e.g. paper work, 'Too much administrative work for little amount of money.'
- g) Perception that their work is not valued within wider society
- h) Religious and moral restrictions such as not being able to apply to certain funders such as from the lottery funds / banks

As the voluntary sector becomes increasingly competitive it becomes even more important that applications are of the highest standard. Muslim organisations often face additional obstacles in comparison to their mainstream counterparts as stated above.

## **Summary**

The focus groups revealed that organisational sustainability was a major concern for many of the groups involved. Much of the uncertainty in the groups' work revolved around funding. Also funding constraints were linked to the inability of groups to expand their services on a level required by beneficiary need.

Mainstream organisations do not face many of the additional barriers identified by the groups' so it is vitally important that help is available to overcome these. Most of the groups' services are funded through members' fees. They could flourish if they were funded for the community work they carry out on a voluntary basis. The proposed capacity building programme could provide training and hands on help as well as having an updated list of funders suitable for faith groups. This would boost their confidence to apply for funding.

## Capacity

Questions 7 to 10 explored the possible type (s) of organisations that can deliver the required capacity assistance to these organisations from their perspective. There are a few capacity building organisations in existence in Tower Hamlets and Hackney however, they arose from a BME need factor. Hence, these questions were key to finding out the current use and possible future use of such a capacity scheme.

In response to whether a capacity building organisation for Muslim groups is a good idea **all of the organisations expressed the need for such a project, with 100% answering 'Yes'**.

*'A very important project, which is much needed by the Muslim organisations'.*

*'Yes it would work as a good capacity building initiative for smaller organisations and would be a common body, which we can turn to for help assistance.'*

*I think this is an excellent idea. Yes, as Mosques need skills to provide services to community, there is so much potential there*

## Staffing

Just over half the groups interviewed had paid staff, with less than half relying solely on volunteers



## Understanding Jargon & Mainstream assistance

We asked groups what they understood by the phrase 'capacity building'. This question was aimed at finding out the existent level of knowledge of some of the jargon used within the voluntary sector.

	No. of Org.
Know	6
Do not know	14

The majority of participants weren't sure about the phrase or gave incorrect answers. However, all participants were agreed on the need for assistance in the organisations. They did not however identify with the jargon.

This was significant for us in assessing the likelihood of these groups accessing existing capacity building networks within the BME/voluntary sector. When asked if they knew of any help available currently nearly all of the groups were unable to identify any capacity building networks, which indicates that although the faith sector comes under the remit of voluntary /BME capacity building networks, groups are not accessing these.

One group did identify the Consortium of Bangladeshi Associations as having assisted them, but the group felt it had to approach the Consortium as a Bengali group; rather than in the way it identified itself, which was as a faith group. A number of groups that FITF had assisted in the past identified FITF - but no one could point to a systematic capacity building programme they could access.

## Under Utilised Potential

Many of the organisations we spoke to were extremely committed and enthusiastic about their work. They were operating at different levels, but the focus groups revealed that the majority felt they had a great deal of potential to do more. This was common to both smaller and larger groups. There was a level of frustration at not being able to meet demand and it was felt that if the groups were helped in some way they could benefit many people. Apart from daily delivery, many of the groups had wider visions of the role they could potentially play within their respective fields.

### **Snapshots:**

*'No we're definitely not fulfilling our potential, we serve around 60 people, we have 6 volunteers. In the future we hope to recruit a coordinator who will be able to run our advisory and counselling service effectively. We did not manage to access funds due to several reasons; we need to access a capacity building organisation that could help us although we are a faith group.'*

**Hajar Women's Forum**

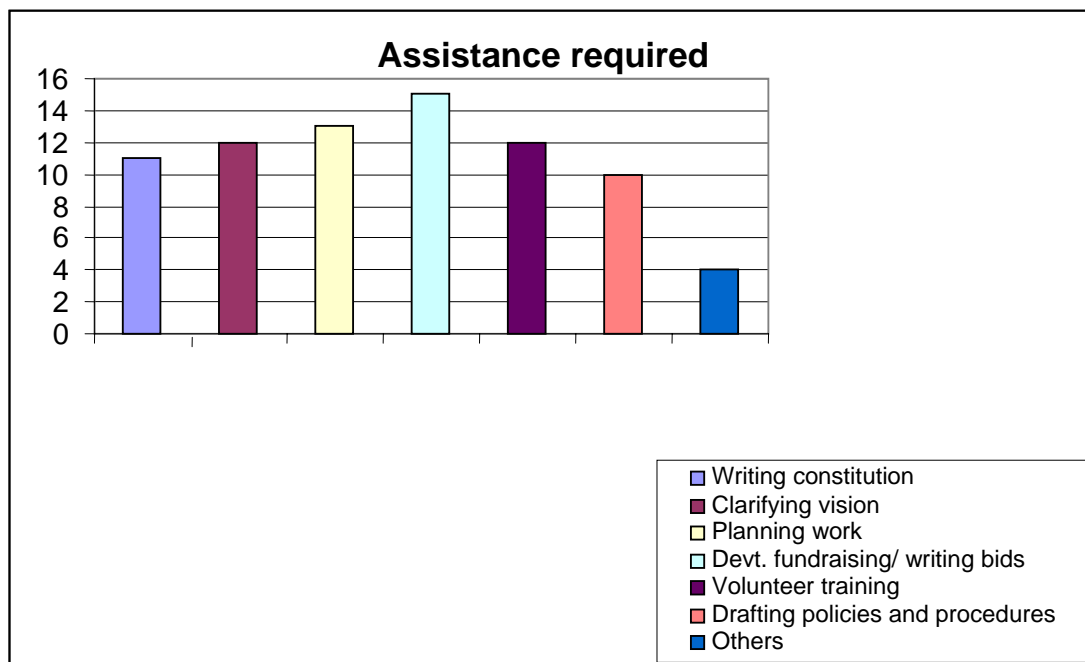
*'Not fulfilling our potential, we want to have a full time worker in the future; we do not have a venue we use the Mosque. We do not have a constitution; we cater for around 50-60 working women. We aim to make women aware of their rights, feel confident to ask for prayer facility at work and we hope to promote an awareness of Muslim women in the work sphere e.g. sensitivities such as Muslim women refusing to shake hands with men due to religious restrictions. Women also come to us with religious discrimination at work, there was an incident in a hospital, a lady did not want to take her scarf off when she had an operation, while she was unconscious the nurses mocked her by taking her scarf off and were laughing at her, a Muslim nurse witnessed this situation and came to PWL to ask for help. We want to be able to give advice to women regarding employment and general rights in this way.'*

**Professional Women's Link**

*'We are not fulfilling our potential, we need manpower, we're not registered, we are lacking in resources. We have a long waiting list of children who want to join us, we cannot cater for all. We need help accessing funding. In the future we want to be an independent nursery, register, meet Ofsted needs, have a suitable venue, need necessary policy and procedures and become independent in the future'.*

**Mother & Toddlers Group – Tower Hamlets**

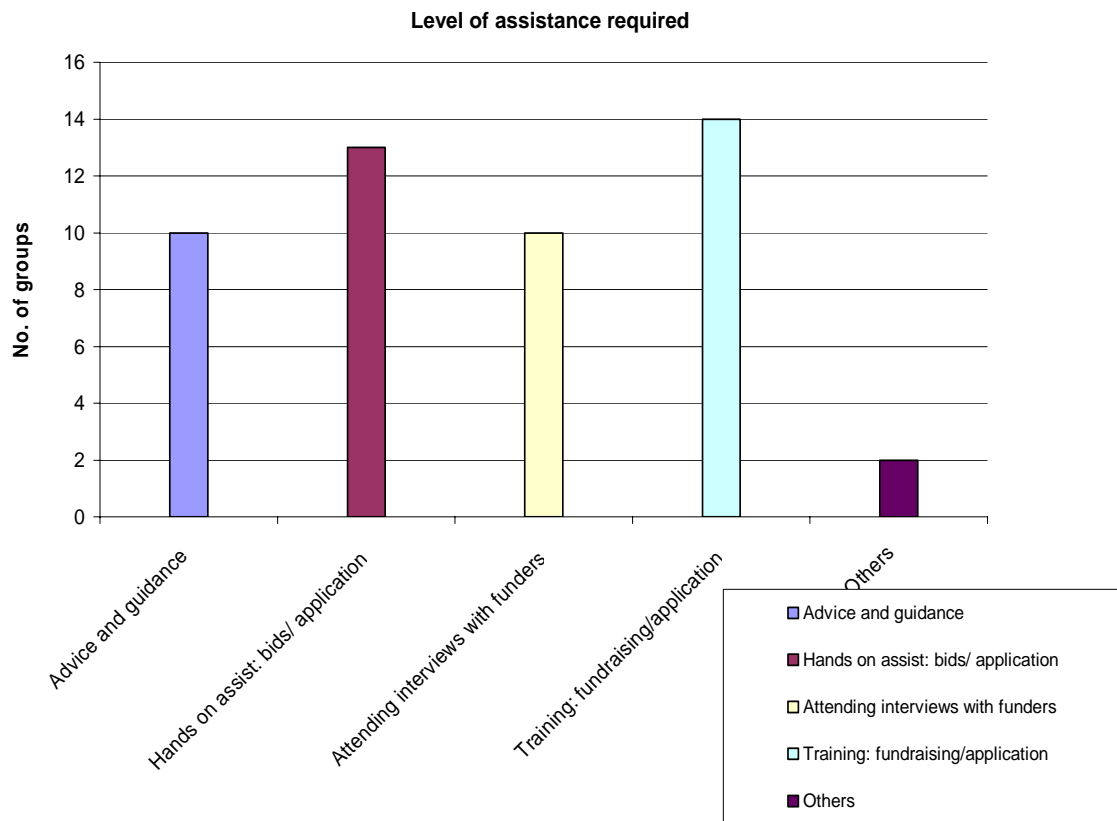
## **Nature of Assistance Required by Organisations**



There is a high demand for assistance, particularly in the areas of developing fund raising and planning future work. Funding was raised as a main issue,

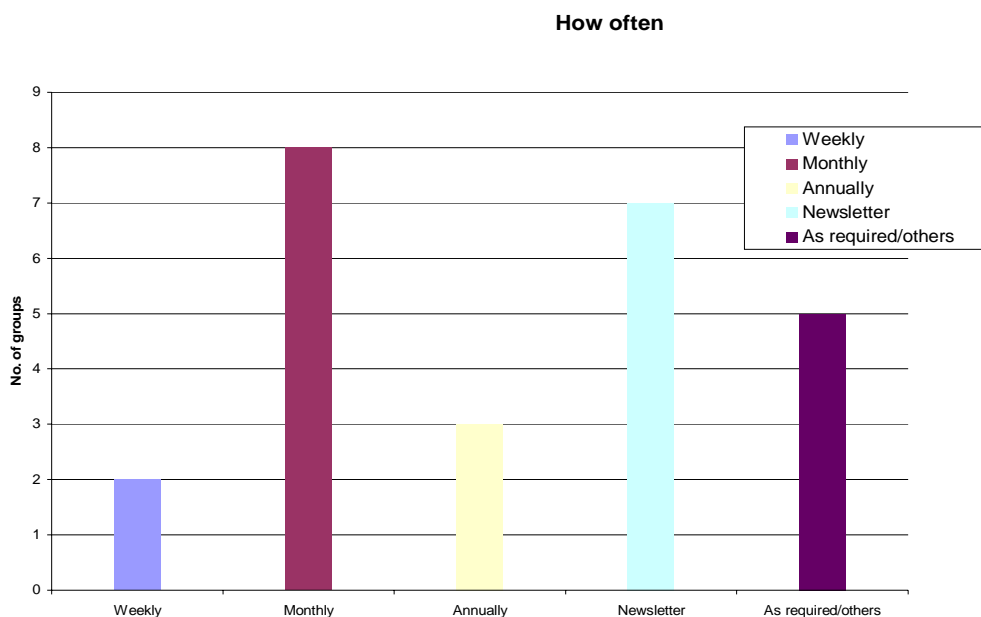
however most organisations pointed to more than one area in which they required assistance.

*‘We do not know about fund raising application forms, we need a body set up to help access funders’*



Assistance was requested in the forms of hands on help for specific goals, as well as general advice and support. Training was seen as important to the organisations, to prevent reliance on any particular body, and to encourage independence. Some groups requested a trustworthy organisation to attend interviews with funders and act as representatives on their behalf.

*‘We need to learn about ‘writing budget plans, knowing the size of the organisation and how to bid. If bidding for large amounts, we need charity registration.’*



The response to how often assistance may be required was varied, and usually depended on the size and establishment of the group, with more established groups needing help less regularly, and smaller groups requesting more regular assistance.

### **Nature of Service**

We also consulted groups regarding overall running of the proposed service and whether partnership with Barnardo’s CANDL be of positive benefit.

Most of the groups expressed that they preferred a strong Muslim presence in running such organisation while others said it is better to have the organisation run completely by Muslims.

	No. of org.
Managed by CANDL	0
Partnership with CANDL	4
Managed by Muslims only	16

We have categorised below some of the reasons given for these responses:

### **Cultural and religious sensitivity**

*‘A Muslim organisation will be able to understand our needs, sensitivities, problems and goals.’*

*'No they will not understand our needs like a Muslim group would. I think if a Muslim group like CANDL run the project they will have sensitive and cultural understanding of the Muslim groups.'*

*'If Muslims it would be ideal as non-Muslims might not be aware of cultural needs of the target group, e.g. we only want to be visited by women.'*

*'No, the organisation should definitely be run by Muslims although we could have a mixture of both CANDL members and Muslim members but predominantly should consist of Muslims as Muslims understand Muslims better.'*

*In order to understand and deal with cultural-sensitive and community issues efficiently it is a great benefit for the organisation to be run by Muslims as this will give them the extra benefit of understanding and have cultural awareness of the people they are providing the service to.'*

*'Better run by Muslims otherwise cultural and religious barriers exist.'*

### **Major decision-making**

Control of major decision-making was also an issue raised through the research.

*'Priority should be given to Muslims to manage it'.*

*'Although there could be a mixture of CANDL staff and Muslims, but predominantly Muslims should make major decisions'.*

*'I think it is important to have a strong Muslim presence in the management of the work simply because I have seen in regeneration strong partners abusing the weaker partners; there isn't a level playing field in operation.'*

### **Commitment, trust and support**

Trust was a central theme discussed in the focus groups. Many older participants referred to negative experiences with Christian missionary organisations in their countries of origin. Groups were strongly averse to the possibility of such work and expressed reticence in giving information about themselves and their communities for use in an attempt to understand Muslims in order to engage in missionary work, or to bring about more state control of their activities.

*If run by Muslims it would be tailor-made. There would be security, trust and genuine interest'.*

*'We want to know why they are interested in working with Muslims, we should be careful. They could be doing underground missionary work.'*

## Summary

At the focus groups participants were asked to further explore the possibility of partnership with CANDL. The advantages of partnership with CANDL were seen as:

- **Expertise/Model:** It was felt that CANDL was a good model to follow and a lot could be learnt from CANDL's expertise within the field.
- **Common ground:** There was seen to be a great deal of common ground between the Christian and Muslim traditions, which could be used in work of this nature. It was felt that the initiating of this study was a positive step in working towards common goals.
- **Share information:** It was felt that a capacity building programme could increase the share of information to service providers from both communities. Muslim groups could benefit from the CANDL experience in this way.
- **Links and dialogue:** A capacity building programme could provide links between the two communities and increase opportunities for further dialogue. It could also benefit from the links CANDL had established within the field to improve good practice.

Disadvantages: Participants voiced concern on the following issues:

- **Ownership:** It was widely agreed CANDL would not understand the Muslim groups' sensitivities and needs. It was therefore felt that decision making within the capacity building initiative should lie with the community itself
- **Fear of missionary work / increased state control:** many participants voiced this concern. Questions were raised as to the motives of the programme. Many groups felt that if there was too strong a non-Muslim presence this would deter themselves and others from accessing the service and would reduce confidence in it.
- **Democratic structures and accountability:** Following on from the issue of the ownership of the capacity building programme, many groups expressed a desire to participate more fully in the setting up, running and overseeing of the capacity building work. It was felt that a high level of user involvement where appropriate would add value to the capacity building programme and increase trust in it.

## **Common themes**

The focus groups enabled groups to discuss issues raised by the questionnaires in more depth. A number of common themes emerged which were shared across Tower Hamlets and Hackney.

- **Mosques/Mosque based groups who engage in community work**

The exact role of the mosque within the Muslim community was open to discussion within Muslim groups themselves, with some mosques staying with their main function of providing places of worship to the community whilst others beginning to play a more active role in community work as well. We wanted to consider whether, amongst those we interviewed, the reason some mosques did not get involved was either a lack of capacity to do so, or a reluctance to be diverted from their main function as places of prayer.

We found that the Mosques we interviewed had started to accept the challenge of not only using their premises for a place of worship but also for responding to wider social needs. Although it was accepted that not all mosques would follow this trend, our findings revealed that the willingness for participation of mosques to engage with wider community needs had increased. However, although there was willingness, this was not always matched by a corresponding ability to meet these needs, and this was an area in which it was felt there was much need for capacity building work. The Mosque was recognised as a platform with great future potential in its ability to reach out to people and provide them with much needed services.

- **Groups specifically for women**

There was a great deal of emphasis in the focus groups on the quality of services available to Muslim women. It was agreed by the focus groups that one of the most effective ways women were accessed in the Muslim community was through women's organisations themselves who possessed expertise in working with this group. All groups both in Hackney and in Tower Hamlets stressed the importance of enhancing services available to Muslim women. The groups who worked with women only emphasised the fact that the women that came to them were unlikely to access other more mainstream services because of a lack of trust and confidence. It was agreed amongst all participants that the most effective way to tackle many of the issues faced by women in the community was to improve the services available to them which they are more likely to access – in effect to improve the community's capacity to bring about acceptable solutions to its own problems. The need for capacity building organisations that were engaged in this task was seen as paramount by all groups.

### ▪ **Young People**

There was also a high level of concern expressed in the focus groups about the low achievement of Muslim youth and their involvement in anti-social activities. It was felt that this was an area which would be of great importance in the future work of the groups themselves, and faith based work to assist the young was becoming a high priority. This was linked by many to the capacity building proposals, where it was felt that specialist assistance to develop this sphere further, and to supplement some of the work already happening, was of great importance.

## Summary of Findings

1. All groups welcomed the study without reservation and expressed enthusiasm about the idea of Capacity Building initiatives for Muslim Groups.
2. All groups felt that they were not operating to their full potential and could do a lot more with the right kind of help.
3. Many groups expressed feelings of inadequacy when dealing with mainstream bodies, but this was coupled with the desire to learn and implement new skills and practices.
4. Some groups expressed feelings of discrimination as they were Muslim faith based groups. They felt the level of this discrimination was higher than other faith groups because of a general atmosphere of suspicion specifically aimed at Muslims because of recent events. Others highlighted the fact that sometimes they themselves did not know how to 'market' themselves and were put off from accessing outside assistance because they felt they were seen primarily as a faith group.
5. Overall the level of assistance required was high. Help was required in most areas of work, with funding being a high priority as well as assistance in organisational planning. Groups varied in the levels of assistance required with better established groups needing less assistance, and smaller and newer groups requiring quite high levels of assistance. However, in parallel to this the need for training to increase long term independence was highlighted by most groups.
6. Many groups did not possess awareness of other capacity building initiatives they could turn to. However, the focus groups revealed that majority of the groups would not use external services anyway, as there was a lack of confidence in their provision.
7. Cultural and religious sensitivity was seen as paramount in any potential capacity building programme. This was highlighted particularly by groups working with women.
8. Ownership was a recurring theme within the discussions. Groups were concerned that ownership not be taken away from the Muslim community, and felt that any project should be user led and democratically accountable to its users.
9. There was widespread and intense unease at the possibility of capacity building programmes being used as subtle means to missionary work or increased state control. Participants agreed that if other groups also felt this it would inhibit them from accessing the programme. Participants felt that too close an association with a Christian organisation may produce this effect.

10. Women and Children were seen as the main areas of concern amongst the groups we interviewed. There was a great deal of emphasis on their social exclusion and deprivation, and these were seen as target groups for intervention. Mosques were also seen as having great potential to assist in this process, though at present it was felt that there was a great deal of work that could be done in this sphere.

## Conclusion

This study is the first of its kind into grass roots work community work carried out by Muslim Groups in Hackney and Tower Hamlets. The study presents a snapshot much of the types of work being undertaken in these areas. It is groundbreaking in that it also represents a partnership and sharing of good practice between the Christian and Muslim communities in this sphere.

This study revealed that the amount of unquantified progress that is being made by Muslim groups to influence and better their local environments is considerable. The value that this work represents to the wider regeneration agenda is also considerable, especially since much of the work has a strategic fit within wider social policy objectives such as empowering local communities to help themselves, raising levels of achievement, and better access to services amongst some of the most disadvantaged groups in inner-city London.

One of the problems that these groups face is recognition. This is a problem within the groups themselves, as they may not recognise that much of their work can be viewed as 'regeneration' and also from mainstream bodies whose mindset can reduce the input of faith communities within their society to narrowly defined 'religious' functions.

Connecting the line between the '*religious*' and '*regeneration*' poses challenges for all faith groups in Britain as well as the Government. The need to connect these two for the benefit of both was identified as a need in this study, which is one of the wider functions a potential Capacity Building programme could take on in partnership with other similar faith based capacity building initiatives such as CANDL.

### **Acknowledgements:**

Credit is due to CANDL for its initiating and supporting this study. Faith in the Future would also like to thank all the groups in this study for their participation and enthusiasm.

Appendix 1  
**Questionnaire:**

Feasibility Study into Community/Project Development work with  
Muslim Groups for Barnardos CANDL.

1. Name and address of organisation

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2. Aims and vision of the organisation

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3. Which community sectors are you providing services to?  
Age group/ Women/ Muslims/Ethnic groups/ others.

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4. What kind of activities/services are you providing?

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5. Are you being funded for the services you are providing?  
If yes, by whom?

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6. Are you aware of any other funding possibilities for the  
services you are providing?

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7. What do you understand by the concept of 'Capacity  
building'?

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8. CANDL (Church and neighbourhood Development in London) is a capacity building organisation, which helps Christian groups. Do you think a similar organisation, which helps Muslims groups is a good idea? If yes why? If not, why not?

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9. Would partnership with Barnardos CANDL Project be of positive benefit in any proposed service development?

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10. If so, should Barnardos CANDL Project take the lead role in such a partnership? If not why not?

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11. Would you like help with any of the following:

- Writing your organisations constitution
- Clarifying your organisations vision
  
- Planning your work
- Developing fundraising/ writing bids
- Volunteer training
  
- Drafting necessary policies and procedures
- Anything else.....

.....

12. If you did require assistance, what level would you require?

- General advice and guidance
- Hands on assistance with writing / filling up funding applications
- Attending interviews with funders
- Training: fundraising, financial management
- Anything else.

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13. Do you envisage this assistance being:

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Annually
- Assistance through a newsletter
- Others.....

14. Do you have a constitution?

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15. Are you run by volunteers or do you have paid staff?

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16. How many paid staff?

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17. Do you have any other questions or concerns?

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18. Your name and position in the organisation.

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## Appendix 2

### Aims and Vision of groups and services

#### 1. East London Mosque

##### Aims

To provide holistic service to Muslims in particular  
Provide religious, social and educational services  
Inform people about faith and culture  
To eliminate misunderstanding about Muslims

##### Service:

***Education, social welfare and worship***

#### 2. Professional Women's Link

##### Aims

The organisation aims to 'unite and utilise the potential in the growing number of professional Muslim women.'

To create a voice for working Muslim Women, and raise issues on their behalf

To create models of working practice where Muslims can have input in different professions such as teaching or nursing.

##### Service:

***Networking and support activities***

#### 3. Council of Mosques

##### Aims

To establish an umbrella organisation to advocate on behalf of all the mosques in TH, encourage social harmony within the diverse community.

##### Service:

***Information, a voice for grassroots communities in liaising with the local council and other non/government institutes, day to day affairs and issues, educating youth on drugs and youth disorder through Imams via a faith perspective.***

#### **4. Parenting Plus**

##### Aims

The organisation aims to provide a number of services to parents, community centres, schools and other institutions, which address issues related to parenting.

##### Service:

***Parenting classes, courses, seminars, one to one support, producing research and reports on relevant issues, providing consultancy support to institutions and organisations such as Sure Start***

#### **5. Madani Women's Association**

##### Aims

Empower ethnic minority women  
Raise literacy rate amongst women in Tower Hamlets  
Provide children, family with a play and learning environment.

##### Service:

***Children-Play, arts and craft, Language classes  
Women- English, Arabic, Bengali classes and coffee mornings.***

#### **6. Women's Relief**

##### Aims

To provide support and information to women through counselling, advice,  
Family trips, coffee mornings and others.

##### Service:

***Counselling and Advice surgery  
Employment, Health, Family, children and parents, trips etc.***

#### **7.Chubby Chuckles**

##### Aims

Teaching children  
Helping and developing them

##### Service:

***Nursery  
Supplementary school***

## **8. (Anonymous) Mothers and Toddlers Club**

### Aims

To provide quality learning through playing for pre-school children in a nursery surrounding

To train mothers with various aspects about their children e.g. Health and Safety, parenting, breastfeeding.

### Service:

***Nursery, seminars for parents on health and safety, parenting breastfeeding etc.***

## **9.Ebrahim Community College**

### Aims

Provide Islamic and Academic further education for sixth formers and adults. It endeavours to offer a curriculum framework that provides a seamless and balanced combination of Islamic sciences and mainstream qualification.

### Service:

***A-levels/GCSE's, Vocational courses, part time Arabic and Islamic studies courses, children's supplementary classes, library facility, conferences, seminars and discussion work shops.***

## **10.Globe Town Bengali Women's Group**

### Aims

Empowering socially and economically deprived women  
Develop skills, knowledge, and awareness of opportunities, build confidence.

### Service:

***Seminars on drugs, parenting and other family support work.***

## **11. AWAS**

### Aims

To empower Asian women to take control of their lives and to maximise the quality of their to day lives and that of their families where there are problems.

AWAS is committed to providing a client-centred service, responding to needs.

Service:

***To provide active advice, information, referrals and follow up support to mothers and their children  
To develop direct child focus support services  
To provide in depth counselling  
To provide ongoing befriending, mentoring and training  
To promote cultural awareness in the public and voluntary sectors so that there is broader understanding of Asian culture.***

**12. North London Muslim Community centre**

Aims

To relieve poverty  
To provide education  
To provide welfare information  
To empower the community

Service:

***Library, community advice, careers advice, UK on line computers, mental health, sure start under 4s, youth service, drug action project.***

**13. North London Mosque Trust**

Aims

To help needy Muslims around the area and UK  
To have prayer facility for Muslims  
Teach General Knowledge

Service:

***Prayer facility, welfare advice, seminars, supplementary school, Language classes, religious education.***

**14. Muslim Cultural society U.K**

Aims

Helping Mauritian people in London  
Work with other groups

Service:

***Seminars, Eid gathering, helping around 450 family groups***

### **15. Sulemaniye Mosque**

#### Aims

To help Turkish community and children

#### Service:

***Cultural centre, drop in, conferences, funeral service, marriage advice, circumcision.***

### **16. Azizia Mosque**

#### Aims

Education and Religious centre

#### Service:

***Weekend educational classes, seminars, conferences.***

### **17. Tawheed Education Trust**

#### Aims

Aim is to provide children with a high quality of Islamic and Academic education within an Islamic environment.

#### Service:

***Primary and secondary school for boys***

### **18. Anonymous**

#### Aims

Aims: to provide education for children in an Islamic environment

#### Service:

***Nursery, play group for 0-6 years.***

### **19. Hajar Womens Forum**

#### Aims:

Promote educational excellence for women, mentoring, empowering women, provide a place for women and children to come together, socialise with like-minded people who want to develop projects and themselves.

Service:

***Workshops for women and children: Health, Child development, Art, Calligraphy, Career advice.***

***Training: Effective management committee, Confidence building, Balancing roles and personal development.***

## **20. Zahra Foundation**

Aims:

Provide place for women to relax and relief stress

Service:

***Playgroup and language classes for children. Singing classes with tea/coffee evening for women.***

## Contact Details

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