

Identity, Empowerment and Change, Handout 22

Projects Requesting Support

(Please note: These projects are all imaginary, though based on projects that do exist.)

Community centre in Averton

The Averton Islamic Educational Trust is setting up a centre for use by all charities and community groups. It will have prayer rooms for men and women, and host a prayer meeting on Fridays, but it will not be a mosque. It will provide training courses in such things as IT, English lessons, and will be a space for youth outreach work and conferences. The centre's director says: 'We want to bring people together. It's a model centre and a lot of people will benefit, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. We would like to be the first with this model centre, to come up with something new and unique. We hope this will spread to other places in the country'. The Trust was formed three years ago when Muslims who had been living in the city for many years saw it as their duty to help new arrivals integrate and settle. It has about 100 members, from more than 15 different nationalities.

Aid for Gaza

The Aid for Gaza Charity provides humanitarian assistance. Nearly 70 per cent of the 1.5 million people in Gaza live on less than £165 a month, while food accounts for 60 per cent of household expenditure. Food and fuel prices have doubled in the past seven months. Gaza remains under strict economic sanctions which have cut off food and fuel supplies. The consequent electrical power cuts and destruction of the already weakened economy has brought further suffering to all of Gaza's inhabitants. The closure of borders and inability of Gaza's sick and infirm to travel for medical care has caused numerous lives to be lost. Aid for Gaza's projects include orphan sponsorships, olive tree plantations, support for hospitals and clinics, medical equipment, and food distribution networks.

Muslims and Christians Together

Growing up in a faith community in Britain is both a joy and a challenge. Many young Christians and Muslims find themselves torn between the culture and values of their faith and that of the wider society. For some young people growing up is a time when they live very much within their faith community and meet few people of other faiths. For others school or college life is a place of diversity where meeting people of other faiths is a daily occurrence. For both groups there comes a time when they move out of their familiar surroundings and find themselves meeting people different to themselves. Equipping young people to live out their faith in the society they find themselves living in is important for both our faiths. This increasingly requires that we help young people express their faith amongst peers of different faiths.

Expressing thoughts and opinions

The Young British Citizens Project will run a workshop to be attended by a diverse range of young people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The workshop will give them an opportunity to discuss the issues that are facing them whether it's gun/gang crime, the war on terror or global warming. The participants will then split into three groups relating to whether their issues are on a local, national or international scale and then they will make a ten minute film, documenting how they go about tackling that specific issue. The process will not only give them the chance to learn skills like film making, editing, sound and broadcasting, but will also give them the chance to speak up in confidence about their concerns.

Education for women

More than 125 million children around the world do not have the chance of going to school, and 80 million of these are girls. There are 900 million illiterate adults worldwide, and most of these are women. Education is the key to development and prosperity. It strengthens individuals, families and communities. The Education for Women charity seeks to ensure access to education, even in the most difficult circumstances and for the most vulnerable groups, refugees, women, orphans and children from poor families. They are working at the local level to improve the quality and accessibility of education and skills training

Advice and warnings for decision makers

Poor people are often powerless to influence decisions taken by their own governments, let alone to make their voices heard by decision makers across the other side of the world. This is why Fairness International seeks to make governments and influential business people aware of the impact of their decisions on the poor we are seeking to help. Over the past year, they have tried to raise awareness and influence opinion on events in Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Disaster relief

Following the recent massive earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale, more than 70 per cent of the inhabitants of the coastal villages are reported dead and according to the Asian Development Bank 44 per cent of the people in the province of Aceh have lost their livelihoods. At least 126,000 people died and 37,000 are missing. People have lost their loved ones and also all their earthly possessions. They have been reduced from being poor to destitute. It will take many years to restore normality, mentally and materially. The Emergency Aid Trust has set up relief centres, a medical centre and new housing, and it is working with other charities and with the government to provide relief and rescue work in the affected areas, and to rebuild people's livelihoods.

Source: adapted from material issued in 2007–09 by a range of UK charities

