



Religious Engagement Training for Foreign Policy Professionals

A British Council, Bridging Voices-funded roundtable

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St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

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Contact Us

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Project History

In early 2014, Josh Cass and 3FF piloted a piece of training called Religious Literacy Training for Foreign Policy Professionals. This training had come about because both Josh Cass and Stephen Shashoua had recognised separately from each other that there was a place for a piece of training which took the 3FF approach into the policy landscape. At the same time, colleagues at 3FF and World Faith had been talking about how it might be possible to share their experiences and approaches to religious engagement with new and wider audiences. It therefore made sense for the two organisations, in association with Josh Cass, to submit an application to the Bridging Voices Fund.

That application was successful and the project partners are now ready to share a re-worked version of that early training with invited audiences.

Much has changed from that early version of the training, however the essence remains the same – and that is the need to create spaces to critically engage with the various challenges and discourses that exist in relation to religion and international affairs.

We would like to thank all those who are attending this round table from giving up their time to be with us, and also would like to thank all those who have been consulted along the way. Finally, the delivery team would like to thank the British Council, and in particular Melissa Wear and Tim Rivera for all their support and enthusiasm for the project.

About the Project Partners

3FF

Established in 1997, 3FF is one of the UK's leading interfaith organisations, engaging with over 10,000 people each year. 3FF has been recognised by a range of international organisations, including the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, for the creative approach that it takes to creating innovative engagement programmes.

World Faith

World Faith is a global development agency active in 14 countries. World Faith's mission is to make a significant and measurable contribution to ending religious violence and global poverty, specifically focused on early childhood education, women's empowerment, and public health. To date, World Faith has mobilized over 4,000 volunteers in 150,000 hours of service, directly impacting the lives of over 200,000 people.

Project Partners Biographies

Josh Cass

Josh Cass is an independent project consultant who has worked on interfaith/intercultural projects in the UK and internationally for the last ten years. He is an Associate at 3FF and has provided consultative support to a range of organisations including: St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, the Encompass Trust, Foundation for Peace and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation. Josh is the Director of Fodip, the Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine, a small UK-based dialogue organisation which facilitates dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims on the ongoing Israel/Palestine conflict.

Tamanda Walker

Tamanda oversees 3FF's training opportunities as well as managing UK-based and international partnership programmes. With a background in developing educational resources within the youth justice sector, Tamanda has since delivered and developed training within the commercial retail sector. She has experience in developing and managing online learning platforms for national training programmes and is in the process of completing an MSc in 'Education, Power and Social Change' at Birkbeck, University of London. Her dissertation is focussed on workplace learning around religion and controversial issues.

Frank Fredericks

Frank Fredericks is the founder of World Faith, a global movement of interfaith youth tackling global poverty. In 2006, he founded World Faith, which has expanded to 14 countries and mobilized 4,000 volunteers in over 150,000 hours of service. As a writer, Frank has contributed to the Huffington Post, Washington Post, and Sojourners. Frank has been interviewed on Good Morning America, NPR, and New York Magazine. He has been recognized as a Global Shaper by the World Economic Forum, and is an alumnus of the IFYC Fellowship, Soliya Fellowship, AMENDS at Stanford, Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship, and YouthActionNet Fellowship.

Stephen Shashoua

As Director of the London based 3FF (Three Faiths Forum), Stephen Shashoua, together with his dynamic team, innovate, design, and deliver a wide portfolio of award-winning social cohesion programmes to encourage interaction and learning between people of different faiths and beliefs. Having joined in 2004, Stephen has led the development of 3ff since 2008 into one of the UK's largest and most delivery orientated interfaith and inter-cultural organisations. Stephen oversees 3FF's outreach, both nationally and internationally. With a background in education and lifetime of understanding cultures, Stephen continues to work towards solutions to tensions between communities and promote interaction, cooperation and learning through his work on the ground, as well as through his writing and lecturing.

Having moved to the UK from Canada in 2003, Stephen was named one of 40 Jews under 40 making a positive difference to the British Jewish community. He is an Ariane de Rothschild Foundation Fellow, is a UNAOC Global Expert, is currently a Visiting Research Fellow attached to the Department of Professional and Community Education at Goldsmiths University of London, is part of the ROI Community, and a Co-Founder of Iraq in Common.

Participant Biographies

Sughra Ahmed is Programmes Manager at the Woolf Institute in the Centre for Policy and Public Education, where she has responsibility for the design and delivery of research and training on issues such as faith, belief, communities, and integration. Previously, she worked as Research Fellow in the Policy Research Centre where she explored the migratory and settlement experiences of first generation Muslim women and men in the UK, and worked with a number of organisations to consider the issues young people face whilst growing up in the UK and the impact of this on wider British communities. She has published a number of papers and key reports: *Seen and Not Heard: Voices of Young British Muslims* (2009) and *British by Dissent* (2014). She is a Trustee of the Inter Faith Network UK and President of the Islamic Society of Britain.

Mike Battcock worked in development for 25 years. He started working in civil society organisations in Asia, Africa and Latin America: from spice processing in Sri Lanka and small business training in Bangladesh to honey processing in Zimbabwe and women's empowerment in Sudan. He joined DFID's newly formed Civil Society Unit in 2000 and worked on the Civil Society Challenge Fund and the faith stocktake. Since then he has worked in various departments including Aid effectiveness and Research and evidence where he led on the Religions and development research Programme. He returned to the Civil Society Department in 2010 where he leads on work with faith groups and with the Faith Working Group which produced the Faith Partnership Principles.

Sue Breeze is the Head of Equality & Non-Discrimination Team, Human Rights & Democracy Department at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. She is a career diplomat, who began her career by learning Mandarin and with a posting to China. Her most recent posting was as the UK's Deputy Ambassador to Venezuela. Her career has included time as Assistant Private Secretary to four Ministers for Europe and work on a wide range of bilateral and multilateral policy desks in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. She currently heads up a team responsible for the UK's work to promote and protect freedom of religion or belief as well as a broad spread of other equalities issues such as women's rights and child rights. She works closely with the UK Envoy on Post-Holocaust Issues to ensure that the UK plays a leading role in Holocaust education, research and remembrance internationally, and works actively to tackle anti-Semitism.

Chloe Hamborg is Head of Political Section at the British Embassy in Khartoum, prior to which she was Head of the Horn of Africa team in the FCO before heading out to Jordan to learn Arabic. She has a particular interest in engagement with religious groups having undertaken her undergraduate degree in Theology and Religious Studies at Cambridge University, and she is hoping to undertake projects in Sudan to increase the Embassy's engagement with religious groups.

Professor Mike Hardy joined Coventry University in 2011 to lead and transform the University's work in social and community cohesion. He has, most recently taken strategic responsibility for Coventry University's work in Human Security and now leads the new University Research Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations. Mike's work focuses on human security; his particular current interest is in intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, and the consequences for domestic communities of state foreign policies. From 1995-2011, Mike was a senior leader with the British Council responsible for the Council's global programme for Intercultural Dialogue, youth engagement and global strategic partnerships. With Developed Vetting, he was a part of HMG's Overseas PREVENT.

Mike was awarded the OBE in 2001 for his work in the Middle East, and was appointed as Companion of Honour of St Michael and St George (CMG) in the Queen's Birthday Honours June 2010 for his work internationally in Intercultural Dialogue.

Mike is privileged to be a trustee of 3FF and he is a life fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

Jan Henningsson, born 1950, studied linguistics, Russian, Arabic and the History of Religion. 1999-2002 he taught at the Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad, and at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Chennai, where he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate. 2002-2008 he served as Director of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, a diplomatic mission, dedicated to Euro-Arab dialogue. He is now Senior Advisor at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Division for the Middle East and North Africa, responsible for Intercultural/Interfaith Dialogues, relations with the OIC and other Islamic networks and institutions. He is Sweden's Focal Point in the UN Alliance of Civilizations.

Tom Hoare is a Research Associate at Wilton Park, an Executive Agency of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He came to Wilton Park directly from a short term placement at NATO Headquarters Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia. Prior to moving into foreign policy he worked and studied in the history field, gaining a BA at The University of Nottingham, an Advanced Undergraduate Diploma from Oxford University, and spending several years at Cardiff's city museum in a research and project capacity. Tom obtained his MSc in International Relations at The University of Bristol.

Dilwar Hussain is Chair of New Horizons in British Islam, a charity that works for reform and contextualisation of Muslim thought and practice. He is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University. His research interests include: social policy, Muslim identity and Islamic reform in the modern world. Dilwar blogs at: www.dilwar.org. Dilwar is a Trustee of the Three Faiths Forum (3FF) the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Islamic Society of Britain. He was Head of the Policy Research Centre, at the Islamic Foundation (2007-2013), a Commissioner at the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (2006-2007) and served on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Life and Faith (2005 – 2006).

Dr Justine Huxley is the Director of St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. She is passionate about bringing diverse peoples together in new ways in order to co-create a peaceful future for all. She has developed a range of training programmes, including, Effective Collaboration, Co-creation and emergence design and Conflict Resilience and Conflict Coaching. She has published a number of resources including *The Spectrum*, a guide to building inter-religious relationships, and *What's your story: Narrative and Story-based techniques for community building*. St Ethelburga's delivers a range of projects which largely focus on questions of community reconciliation and relationship building. Justine blogs at, <https://www.stethelburgas.org/blog/justine-huxley>.

Francois Jay graduated from HEC Paris and then spent 15 years in the private sector, mainly in Africa, before serving as advisor to French members of cabinet (international cooperation then immigration/diaspora relationships). He then joined the French agency for international development (AFD) and has been responsible for religious issues since 2011. His geographic main places of expertise are Africa and the Mediterranean, and he focusses mainly on the Abrahamic religions.

Christopher Layden is currently Desk Officer for Abolition of the Death Penalty in the FCO, Human Rights and Democracy Department. His work involves some contact with different religious groups. He has experience of diplomatic Posts in Tehran, Rome and Dusseldorf. He has also spent part of his career working for Catholic charities in the field of migration and refugees.

Jane Lindsay graduated with a First Class Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Degree from the University of Cambridge in 2005, before joining the UK Civil Service via the prestigious graduate development 'Fast Stream' programme. She developed her government career in a variety of corporate and policy development positions, most recently acting as senior policy adviser in security and counter terrorism policy to the National Security Council.

In 2010, Jane took a career break from this post to complete her PhD at the University of Leeds. Funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, her thesis explores the relationship between religion and foreign policy. It draws on a comparison of UK and US approaches and structures and seeks to inform and influence UK policy by providing a number of specific recommendations for Government. Upon completion of this work, she will return to the Cabinet Office to resume her Government career.

Jørgen S. Nielsen was Professor of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen until June 2013 and, now retired, teaches part-time at the University of Birmingham, UK. He holds degrees in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies from London and a PhD in Arab history from the American University of Beirut. He has previously held academic positions in Beirut and Birmingham. From 2005 till 2007 was Director of the Danish Institute in Damascus and Cultural Counselor at the Danish Embassy. Has been a visiting professor at the universities of Copenhagen and Utrecht and a consultant to the Council of Europe and to the EU Presidency on religious minorities. Founding Trustee and Board member of the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, Sofia (since 1991), and member of the Arab Group on Christian-Muslim Dialogue (since 2001).

Research has been focused on the situation of Muslims in Europe and mutual perceptions between Europe and the Arab world with a focus on religion. He is the Executive Editor of the Journal of Muslims in Europe and Annotated Legal Documents on Islam in Europe.

Nigel Parker has worked as a legal adviser at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office since 1988 advising on Public International Law, EU and English law. He has a special interest in the relationship between law, religion and foreign policy and has attended conferences at Ditchley Park on Religion and Multiculturalism in Foreign Policy and at Wilton Park on Freedom of Religion and Belief. He has also contributed to Westminster Faith Debates and attended the FCO training course on Religion and Foreign Policy. He will be leaving the FCO at the end of February 2015 to pursue his interest in this area.

Mark Segal is the Head of Profession for Conflict in the UK Department for International Development. In this position Mark is responsible for the recruitment and professional development of DFID's cadre of conflict advisors, and provides thought leadership on conflict issues across the organisation. Mark has worked for DFID since 2001, in a variety of Conflict Advisor roles including in Nepal, in the Conflict, Security and Humanitarian Dept working peacebuilding and statebuilding policy, and working as a secondment for External Action Service of the EU.

Jonathan Smith works at the intersection of faith and social action in multicultural societies. He managed a multi-year project on developing best practice in good campus relations at seven UK universities. He taught for four years at universities in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories, where he supported student groups engaged in interfaith dialogue and non-violent action for peace and justice. He holds MA degrees in Applied Linguistics and in International Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame and a BA in Biblical Studies. He has conducted research and written on interfaith solidarity in South Africa and Christian-Muslim relations in the Middle East.

Claire Sneed has promoted conflict prevention, conflict-sensitive transition, and development in countries impacted by violence, instability and failed governance for over 15 years, through work with international NGOs, multi-national organizations, the U.S. State Department and with the U.K. government's Stabilisation Unit (SU). Since 2007, Claire has served the U.S. State Department as a Conflict Specialist.

As the U.S. Advisor to the UK Stabilisation Unit, she provides substantive advisory support to both U.S. and UK governments, having led substantial efforts to support UK efforts in Pakistan, and for CSO in Turkey, where she was the Team Lead for \$100 million program in Syria.

Claire conceptualised the first Stabilisation Leaders Forum, a working group of stabilisation leaders from the governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and the US, which now convenes regularly to share information and problem-solve on global crises of shared concern.

She holds an honours B.A. in International Relations and French Language and Literature from Randolph-Macon College in Virginia, USA, and has earned certificate degrees in French Language and Civilisation from the Sorbonne in Paris, and in security studies from the George Marshall Centre in Garmisch, Germany. Claire holds an M.A. degree in International Law and Development Economics from the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy at Tufts University in Massachusetts, USA.

