

Faith Communities and the Development Agenda

Faith Communities and the Development Agenda was a study completed by Revd Professor Richard Bonney and Mr Asaf Hussain from the Centre for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism, Leicester University. The findings of the research were presented to DFID in January 2001 in the form of a report, of which the main body is attached. The report and its recommendations represent the opinions of the consultants, and should not be viewed as DFID policy.

The main findings of the report are below.



Centre for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism

Report Prepared for the Department for International Development

Faith Communities and the Development Agenda

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I Executive Summary

The Terms of Reference / Scope of Work of the Consultancy are set out in Appendix 1. The [White Paper on International Development](#) sets out a vision for increasing public awareness of, and support for, international development issues, within the UK. Churches and Faiths are described by the Department for International Development (DFID) as one of the priority areas for [Building Support for Development: Raising public awareness and understanding of international development issues](#)  (Strategy Paper, April 1999). Policy forums including different faiths are mentioned in Chapter 8 ('Building support for development') of DFID's [Departmental Report 2000](#) . Faiths have a strong tradition of concern with development issues, often arising from a moral requirement, and this provides a solid base for awareness raising work. DFID is keen to both support and promote awareness raising activities, thereby building on this base and adding value to work already being done.

The overall objective of the consultancy project was to review and record the work already being done to promote awareness of development issues within the different faith groups, so that an assessment could be made on how DFID might move forward with each group and more generally on inter-faith activities.

The consultants were also asked to review and record the current level of awareness raising activity among the different faith communities within the UK, including those activities currently being carried out in partnership with DFID. The aim was to present DFID with a clear picture of the foundations of these activities, their scope and quantity, their capacity to mobilize / engage interest and action, and their impact on public attitudes.

Finally, the consultants were asked to identify opportunities for more effective work, as well as ways in which DFID could promote or support activities which raise awareness of international development issues, especially in relation to those faith groups with whom DFID is not currently working. This, it was considered, would include identifying suitable individuals who are interested in carrying out such work, and who may also be interested in developing inter-faith activities.

The purpose of the consultancy was for the Centre for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism, University of Leicester, to draft a report on the current awareness of development issues among different faith groups in the UK. Particular attention was to be paid to public awareness of the 2015 targets for poverty reduction in the third world and the capacity of faith communities to organize themselves as potential partners with DFID. A final strand of the consultancy was to assess, where possible, the effectiveness of existing partnerships between DFID and non-governmental organizations involved with public awareness and understanding of development issues.

In carrying out the project, the Consultants

- 1) interviewed 30 representatives of the different faith communities, basing the interviews on a common questionnaire (Appendix 3);
- 2) assessed the scale of activities and effectiveness of the UK-based NGOs drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities, including contacting 54 NGOs by means of a questionnaire (Appendix 7);
- 3) made a series of recommendations which are given in summary form in section II and in detailed form in section VI.

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II Summary Recommendations

- A neutral, ‘common front’, towards the Development Agenda should be sought to distance DFID from accusations of acting from a ‘party political’ agenda which would restrict the appeal to the public.
- There is a high degree of motivation within the separate faith traditions towards addressing poverty which is potentially available to support the Development Agenda.
- Efforts should be made to tap this resource of highly motivated potential support within the faith communities.
- Closer networks with selected places of worship (churches, temples, mosques, gurdwaras, etc.) need to be established, based on the extent of their influence within the faith community.
- Closer networks with cultural associations need to be established, based on the extent of their influence within their community and outside.
- Summary literature relevant to the different faith traditions and cultures, and in some cases translated into other languages, is necessary to make the Development Agenda understood and elicit support.
- Closer links should be developed with youth networks and women’s groups in order to broaden the basis of support.

- Prioritising relations with UK-based NGOs drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities has the benefit of promoting an inclusive approach with peoples of developing countries at the 'grass roots' level. The faith communities suggest that their links with the countries concerned should be developed.
- In seeking to enhance co-operation between UK-based NGOs drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities, there is a triple objective of dialogue, networking and the sharing of good practice.
- This triple objective can only be achieved by the establishment of an intermediary group of specialists (Faith Communities Development Issues Awareness Group) which will provide the necessary new network to establish a more sophisticated and more effective relationship with the faith communities.
- In some cases, relatively new UK-based NGOs drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities may have difficulty in surmounting the £250,000 per annum lower level for a Partnership Programme Agreement, but through co-operation with other groups this higher level of activity may be achievable.
- The proposed new intermediary body should become the chief mechanism for raising awareness within the faith communities of the development agenda. In order to achieve this end, it would need to have a budget for publicity purposes and for holding meetings and presentations on development issues.
- The proposed new intermediary body should have powers to call for proposals for funding from within the faith communities, both for awareness raising schemes and also for development partnerships within the third world and to comment on the viability of the proposals, including prioritisation of such proposals, to DFID, within an overall cash target set each year by DFID for the two schemes. The schemes would be publicized within the faith communities by the specialists on the proposed new body.

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III Introduction

Question: Can you give me your reasons for engaging in such work?

Response: A desire to fight for global justice.

Extract from one of the interviews.

'My argument [is] for a significant obligation to help alleviate world poverty, not a relentless, overburdening one. But you may ask how much is "significant"? My answer will seem like no answer:

there is no percentage of wealth or amount of time to be pulled out of a magic moral box. Caring is an unquantifiable dimension to moral responsibility. But if we have a proper appreciation of the facts of world poverty, of our global moral identities, of the moral seriousness of responding to extreme suffering, of what quality of life really consists in, and of the duty of caring as much as we can consistent with our quality of life, then we will care as we ought.'

Nigel Dower, 'World Poverty' in the *Blackwell Companion to Ethics*.

'It is particularly important to strengthen the voices of civil society in developing countries. The Voices of the Poor consultation showed that poor people placed their greatest trust in churches and faith groups. But other groups - human rights and women's organisations, trade unions, NGOs and co-operatives - could also play a stronger role in giving poor people a greater voice.'

Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor, White Paper on International Development, Dec. 2000, para. 361 at p. 103.

The attitude of the main world faiths to the ethical issues relating to world poverty

In considering this general question, the Consultants were aware that there could be no easy assumption that the ethical position of the main world religions with regard to the alleviation of poverty were identical since they arise from different spiritual, theological and philosophical origins. An interrogation of some of the literature on the subject, which is summarized in Appendix 2, reveals that in spite of these differences in the faiths, both in terms of their 'world view' and geographical place of origin, the areas of divergence between them were not as great as might have been expected. For example, at the outset of the investigation the Consultants considered that the extent to which Hinduism could extend the almsgiving ethos to the broader contemporary issues of poverty required examination; but it became clear from the comments from those interviewed that a feature of modern Hindu thinking is an awareness of, and sensitivity to, wider humanitarian issues. This is at variance with the assumptions in some of the existing literature and the prevalence of the caste system in India.

The main conclusion that emerged was that, notwithstanding all the differences between the world's religions in terms of the origins of their faith and the ways in which they had arrived at their *current* ethical position, there was agreement that the issue of alleviating world poverty was an overriding *humanitarian* concern to which the particular interests of the faith tradition had to be, to a degree, subordinated. In other words, as has recently been observed in the humanitarian relief following earthquakes, faiths and cultures which frequently find it difficult to overcome their traditions of hostility may nevertheless be able to co-operate within a broader humanitarian programme, particularly when a pressing need can be demonstrated.

One of the other important conclusions was that those interviewed recognized that aid in time of disaster was insufficient and no solution to the problem of endemic world poverty. The issue then arises as to how the alleviation of a more long-standing and intractable problem can arouse a similar degree of pressing urgency in the public mind.

Methodology

The emphasis in the report is a qualitative rather than a quantitative one: 30 interviews have been carried out (25 of the interviews are transcribed in full in Appendix 4 of the report). The Consultants stopped at this number, because in their judgement the responses were beginning to become repetitive and the general outline of the conclusions had become clear. Apart from London and Leicester, a number of other cities, including Manchester, Glasgow and Bradford, have been visited and interviews held there or, in one case, a completed questionnaire received. The timing of interviews has frequently had to be in anti-social hours because the members of the faith communities have full-time paid secular employment and are only available in the evenings. Interviews were held in English, Punjabi and Urdu as appropriate, and sometimes in a mix of languages. Interviews were recorded and in virtually all cases fully transcribed; the interviews have been translated into English where necessary.

The methodology for the investigation is reflected in the questionnaire which is reproduced in Appendix 3. This provides a focus for the person being interviewed to reflect fully on the issues and clarify any distinctive features of his/her own faith tradition. Apart from the questionnaire itself, we believe that the originality of the report lies in the evidence provided by those interviewed. Members of the faith communities have been invited to speak freely on the theme of their relationship with the issues of poverty reduction and the more general Development Agenda.

In large measure the report has written itself, in the sense that for the first time the voice of different faith communities is heard, expressed in its own words from different representative figures: this constitutes Appendix 4 of the report, the largest section by some way. If a constructive relationship with the faith communities is to be built up on the alleviation of world poverty, it is essential that this takes a 'bottom up' approach, in which the views and experiences of the faith traditions themselves are taken seriously. A 'top down' approach, for example if DFID were to pronounce on what the faith communities 'should be doing' is unlikely to achieve a positive response.

What is needed is constructive dialogue and interaction and the Consultants specifically asked those interviewed whether a forum, a Faith Communities Development issues Awareness Group, was or was not a desirable development. The response was a positive one. This proposal, and its implications, is discussed more fully in the recommendations of the report.

Confidentiality

The list of persons interviewed forms a separate appendix to the text of the final report (Appendix 5). A number of actual or potential collaborators of DFID made it clear that they were more willing to speak freely if the interview was not directly attributed. Some of the reasons for this are implied in the more negative comments in the conclusions of this report, but the Consultants note with regret that there is a degree of suspicion about the motives underlying government policy and a readiness to suspect that there is some hidden objective of promoting the trade of the 'first world' at the expense of the 'third world'. The proposed Faith Communities Development issues Awareness Group as a neutral intermediary between DFID and the faith communities themselves would help to remove such suspicion.

Can the sample interviewed be considered representative?

In a standard quantitative survey of public opinion on an issue, there would need to be a weighting of the sample interviewed to ensure the correct balance between gender, age and class. In a specialized qualitative survey of a particular group in terms of their opinions on a specific issue, and any judgement as to whether knowledge is or is not widely disseminated in the group, the desirable balance between gender, age and class cannot be secured.

Just who can, or who cannot, speak for, or be considered representative of a particular faith tradition is a difficult area. The structure of the Church of England is reasonably well known example of a particular, hierarchical model of organization. It has a hierarchy of Archbishops' Council, a Synod representing clergy and laity (at General, Diocesan, and Deanery Synod levels), diocesan bishops and parish priests. The communications infrastructure is quite advanced since there is a national Church of England website, while dioceses have their own websites and IT officers. Many parish clergy or their offices are now on e-mail.

A quite different model, with a degree of hierarchy but no comparable model of organization, is provided by the Muslim community. While there are national and regional federations, the extent to which they represent the Muslim communities is contested. In practice, each Imam in his Mosque and each Mosque council is a separate organizational entity. In both the Church of England hierarchical model and the Muslim model of limited hierarchy there are problems about the degree to which anyone individual or group may be considered 'representative' of others; but they are necessarily different problems because the structures are quite different. The view was expressed by one of the Hindus interviewed that 'the Christians and Jews have [an established] infrastructure. But the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims do not have this infrastructure.'

The Consultants took the view that the most appropriate way forward was to seek to balance the experience of those interviewed and also to maintain a balance between the faith communities. Thus, some of those interviewed had responsibility for a principal place of worship for their faith tradition, with a very significant number in their worshipping community. Any comments which they made about how many people in their community were aware of specific development issues, while necessarily anecdotal, would at least be based on an awareness of views expressed by the broad spectrum of opinion among their numerous worshippers. There was recognition that invariably such persons who were interviewed were male and of mature years. Rather younger 'ministerial' figures in various faith traditions were also interviewed, but again with only one exception (Reformed Judaism) these were also male. Voluntary or paid workers involved in faith community's charitable endeavours were not necessarily likely to be male, but in practice all those interviewed were.

The Consultants have corrected this bias by contacting interviewing a number of females from different faith traditions and contacting specifically female organizations involved with work in the Third World. The Mothers' Union Literacy and Development Programme, based on a largely female Christian membership with over 80 per cent of the members of the Mothers' Union in developing countries, is an example of a programme organized by women to meet women's needs (it is estimated that over 70 per cent of the world's illiterates are women and girls).

The Consultants have also been in contact with organizations such as One World Week, which seek to

bridge the gap between younger and more senior citizens; and organizations, such as the World Development Movement, which work with a range of partners, including activists in the Third World, other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and groups throughout the world concerned with poverty and justice issues. Faith-based organizations working to alleviate poverty in the Third World, such as Christian Aid, CAFOD, UKJAID and Muslim Aid, have also been contacted, either at the highest levels or through experienced workers or former workers for the organizations concerned.

Finally, 54 NGOs were sent a separate questionnaire to ascertain the robustness of their internal procedures of project evaluation, accounting and auditing (Appendix 7), to which 21 replies were received (38%: Appendix 8).

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IV Objective of the Consultancy

Objective 1 What is the current level of awareness within the Faith Communities?

This question is answered by considering:

- the attitudes of the faith community towards aid;
- levels of awareness towards the development agenda; and
- external influences on the faith community, if any.

Bahá'í Faith Community

a) The attitudes of the faith community towards aid. The community has the concept of huququ'llah ('the right of God'), which is akin to a tithe on wealth amounting to 19% of net income after expenses. This is paid centrally for the purposes of the faith and its charitable activities. As a small and persecuted community, Bahá'ís have had to develop a strong instinct for survival. They have distinctive views on the unity of all the peoples and religions of the earth. They seek to end all forms of economic and chattel slavery, as well as to abolish extremes of wealth and poverty.

b) Levels of awareness towards the development agenda. Though numerically a small community, they have a relatively sophisticated awareness of issues relating to poverty (for example, on the need for access to basic education and basic health care) and the campaign for debt relief.

c) External influences on the faith community, if any. In 1948 the Bahá'í International Community registered with the UN as an international non-governmental organization (NGO) and in 1970 was granted consultative status (now called 'special' consultative status) with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Consultative status with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) followed in 1976, and working relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) were established in 1989. Over the years, the Community has also worked closely with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Buddhist Faith Community

a) The attitudes of the faith community towards aid. Generosity (dana) is one of the ten perfections (paramis) of Buddhism. The faith community places special emphasis on self-help and debt avoidance to overcome economic difficulties. Unlike other faith communities, poverty is conceived as a human problem; there is less recognition of an unequal distribution of the world's wealth and resources than in some other faith traditions. 'Every child should have the opportunity to receive an education, but without assistance, many children will remain uneducated and, as adults, be unable to rise above poverty.'

b) Levels of awareness towards the development agenda. Knowledge of the Development Agenda and specific poverty reduction targets, and the campaign for debt relief, is slight. The emphasis is on the acquisition of skills to eradicate poverty, rather than on the modification of structural relationships between countries in the 'north' and 'south'.

c) External influences on the faith community, if any. Tibetan Buddhism in exile and Mahayana Buddhism in south east Asia, the 'progressive form', have clearly had external influences upon them; but Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka, the conservative form, does not show much external influence. There is little awareness of the development agenda, but considerable emphasis instead on the 'mushroom effect' of educational programmes: 'imagine the effect if just one of the programme's children goes on to become a professional or skilled person as a direct consequence of sponsorship. This one child, once an adult, will have a beneficial influence on his/her own family, and as a result, so will the extended family, and eventually the immediate local community in which that family resides. This is the mushroom effect. It is an extremely powerful way of achieving change.'

Christian Faith Community

a) The attitudes of the faith community towards aid. The early followers of Jesus repeated his teaching: 'If a man has enough to live on, and yet when he sees his brother in need shuts up his heart against him, how can it be said that the divine love dwells in him?' (1 John 3:17). Christians have cited Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer ('forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us': Luke 11:3) and the teaching of the Jubilee

in Leviticus 25:8–54 as persuasive arguments for a debt moratorium for poorer nations: this has underpinned the Jubilee 2000 campaign, which originated with a coalition of Christian churches and organizations. Christian Aid's campaign slogan, 'we believe in life before death' has been particularly effective, because it appeals to two Christian sensibilities: the concept of life after death and the concept that the 'kingdom of God' can, and should, be built on this earth.

b) Levels of awareness towards the development agenda. Though divided among many denominations, the Christian communities are at the forefront of awareness of the development agenda. They have the most significant campaigning and fund raising capabilities and there is considerable evidence from fieldwork abroad which is relayed back to the Christian churches. There are, however, certain distinctive features of the Christian viewpoint. One is that there is opposition to any 'party political' position in the projection of the development agenda; a second is expressed in the form of criticism of any suggestion of 'strings attached' to aid, particularly government 'strings': the recent White Paper issued by the Secretary of State removing any 'buy British strings' for third world aid should address this issue.

c) External influences on the faith community, if any. Media attention on humanitarian disasters in the third world, particularly conveyed via television, has had a significant impact on opinion. So too has the campaign for Jubilee 2000, which has led to peaceful demonstrations, special services and vigils as well as a much more extensive discussion of the technical issues of third world poverty and debt relief.

Hindu Faith Community

a) The attitudes of the faith community towards aid

In general terms, the Hindu community seeks to integrate the ancient and the modern in ways that promote human harmony. The projection of humanitarian aid focuses on the concept of Seva/Sewa, the ancient word for service, which is also used by other faiths. There is specific support for extending the programme of free basic education for all as the mechanism for raising the standard of living for the population, especially education for women. There is also support for basic healthcare for all. There is a widespread concern in the community that in the past grants have not been used for their proper purposes or reached their targeted recipients.

b) levels of awareness towards the development agenda

Except for one or two organisations which have had dealings with DFID, the Hindu community is not considered by its own faith representatives to be aware of the Development Agenda. There is general support for the objective of seeking to halve the number of the world's poor by 2015, but a mix of views as to whether this objective can be

achieved by that date. It is clear that there was little awareness of the Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt relief, although when members of the Hindu community were informed of this they supported its objectives.

c) external influences on the faith community, if any

There are close religious, cultural, academic and political links between the Hindu community in the UK and India and there are clear signs of a reawakening of Hindu consciousness. Many religious groups in India are active in Britain and have built some of the largest Hindu temples in the West such as the Swami Narayan temple at Neasden (London). It therefore follows that the main preoccupation of the community is with development aid for the Indian sub-Continent rather than other parts of the world.

Jain Faith Community

a) the attitudes of the faith community towards aid

The Jain community emphasises the quality of life, especially in the form of non-violence and the reverence for all life (Ahimsa). Poverty is seen as a negation of the quality of life. The emphasis of the community is on self-sufficiency, the promotion of human dignity and the development of core human values. Jains are committed to pluralism as a concept, and thus in principle are well placed to co-operate with other faith communities on development projects. One of the twelve vows undertaken by a Jain layperson (shravaka) is to limit his wealth, consuming the surplus in charity.

b) levels of awareness towards the development agenda

The level of awareness of the issues of poverty and the need for basic education is wide. Knowledge of specific poverty reduction targets, and the campaign for debt relief, is expanding.

c) external influences on the faith community, if any

There is a world-wide diaspora, which is not particularly numerous but influential. The chief external influence from India is from within their own faith community, which is a wealthy minority. There is a prominent Jain community within the United States in addition to those in Britain and Europe.

Jewish Faith Community

a) the attitudes of the faith community towards aid

Jews recall that they were strangers in the land of Egypt during famine; they therefore must remember the non-Jew in their own times: ‘it was to Egypt and to Joseph that his own family came to purchase grain when Egypt had bulging storehouse and they were without grain reserves in their own land’ (Rabbi Michael Robinson). There are numerous Jewish sources on hunger, poverty and economic justice. The Midrash Exodus Rabbah states: ‘There is nothing in the world more grievous than poverty — the most terrible of sufferings. Our teachers have said: if all the troubles of the world are assembled on one side and poverty is on the other, poverty would outweigh them all.’ The term for ‘charity’ in Hebrew (*tzedaka* or *zedekah*) significantly also means ‘justice’ or righteousness. The *Torah* contains two important commands relating to charity, firstly that ‘there shall be no needy among you’ (Deuteronomy 15:4), the other that ‘thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Leviticus 19:18; cf Deuteronomy 15:11: ‘thou shall surely open thy hand unto thy poor and needy brother in thy land’). Jewish sources emphasise the need to eliminate poverty, not to oppress the poor, to rehabilitate the poor, to give to the poor and to relieve poverty. In a recent issue of *Tzedek News* (Autumn 2000), Rabbi Naftali Brawer writes ‘on the merits of giving to the Third World’ and that it is ‘important for Jews to help the needy of any faith’. The Holy Days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are particularly associated with giving, but the emphasis is increasingly on active giving throughout the year, and for Jews to act as *lagoyim* (a light to the world) as well as accepting their responsibility to pursue *tikkun olam* (the repair of the world).

b) levels of awareness towards the development agenda

Knowledge of the development agenda and the poverty reduction targets for 2015 is not particularly widespread within the community, but there is an active development education programme. One of those interviewed stated: ‘The Jewish faith has religious and historical sources that guide our approaches to poverty. The Jewish community in the UK has only relatively recently turned to consider responses to overseas development and poverty among non-Jewish communities. [My organisation] is encouraging a dialogue and debate on these issues in order to raise awareness of the issues and to fashion a communal understanding and response.’

c) external influences on the faith community, if any

As a result of recent dialogue and debate (including the organization of conferences and presentations at conferences), there is evidence that the Jewish communities in the UK are in the process of acquiring greater awareness of development issues than is the case in some other faith communities. If a war breaks out in the Middle East, or if there is a sudden Jewish emigration from an oppressive state, then the community is likely to be preoccupied with other issues. There is more evidence of concern with emergency appeals than with the longer-term process of poverty reduction targets. Financial support for Jewish communities abroad is at a considerably higher level than for non-Jews abroad.

Muslim Faith Community

a) the attitudes of the faith community towards aid

In terms of the perceptions of those interviewed, the Muslim communities are relatively aware of the Development Agenda. On the other hand, charity or almsgiving (zakāt) is the third of the five pillars of Islam, and involves an obligatory annual payment of at least 1/40th or 2.5% of one's wealth, that is accumulated wealth and assets, not just income. Islamic charities appeal to the communities throughout the year ('the best deed in the eyes of Allah is the continuous one, even if it is small'), but particularly in the month of Ramadan, emphasising the obligatory nature of zakāt and that contributions from individuals 'make the difference' within the Islamic spirit.

b) levels of awareness towards the development agenda

The size of the Muslim NGOs demonstrates that there is generous giving by the communities even though the awareness of specific poverty reduction targets is slight. There is general support for free basic education for all and for basic healthcare for all. Some of the Muslims interviewed expressed concern about the inequalities of wealth distribution between countries in the 'north' and the 'south', but knowledge of the specific debt relief issue was not particularly advanced.

c) external influences on the faith community, if any

There is a perception (perhaps somewhat exaggerated) among Muslims that countries in the Islamic world are particularly affected by conflicts and calamities and that a disproportionate amount of the world's poor are to be found there. This perception, plus a sense of media isolation in the west (the media is considered to be overwhelmingly negative to Islam), serves to heighten the identity of a worldwide Muslim community, in spite of its many differences and divisions.

Sikh Faith Community

a) the attitudes of the faith community towards aid

The Sikh tradition of Langar (the free kitchen) in every Gurdwara creates an early consciousness of giving among all Sikhs, and the Sikh sharing of food amounts to a strong statement against poverty. Sikhs have remained committed to the principle that religious boundaries are irrelevant to God ('All are the same, none is separate; a single form, a single creation'). Thus the relief of poverty is in principle capable of being extended to all communities and traditions and there is evidence, for example in Bosnia, that this has principle has been extended in practice to cover Muslims. For example, one aid group seeks to inspire a proactive spirit within the community by 'fostering avenues for selfless service

and human resource development to combat social ills including illiteracy, poverty, hunger, poor health and hygiene, inequality and oppression, attempting to foster avenues of service (seva) for the community, [and by] sponsoring a fund specifically for the current refugee crisis in Kosovo’.

b) levels of awareness towards the development agenda

Those Sikhs interviewed did not consider their community to be particularly well informed about the Development Agenda or the specific poverty reduction targets for 2015. Nor was there any detailed knowledge of the campaign for debt relief.

c) external influences on the faith community

The tercentenary of the foundation of the Khalsa (1699/1999) has given an additional impetus to Sikh identity within the diaspora in the UK and a number of aid agencies have been formed: ‘If the Sikh community can help those in need at this time, then we will be able to actually put in action part of the mission of the Khalsa and actually contribute to what the Khalsa represents.’ One aid group is working towards a global movement for a culture of peace and non-violence (the Manifesto 2000 campaign) and has recently entered into an international partnership agreement with UNESCO.

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Objective 2 Current Development Activities of the Faith Communities and Non-Governmental Organisations operating from within Faith Communities

‘A powerful international campaign — involving church and other faith groups and NGOs — led the call for more generous debt relief focused on poverty reduction. And this helped lead to agreement on an enhanced [Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC)] in 1999, that would deliver faster, deeper and wider debt relief. The focus of the HIPC initiative was widened at this time from assisting countries to improve their economic position to ensure that the debt relief process benefited the poor.’

Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor, White Paper on International Development, Dec. 2000, para. 297 at p. 89.)

Note: an asterisk indicates that details of the organisation are given in Appendix 9.

Bahá’í Faith Community

In the UK, individual Bahá’ís support relevant charities and NGOs; there are also a number of development projects being run by Bahá’ís in the UK; and the Bahá’í Agency for Social

and Economic Development (based in the UK) channels money from DFID to Bahá'í-inspired projects overseas.

Associations of Baha'í women and local and national level are working on gender-related projects. An example of a project that has been supported by the Bahá'í world-wide community is the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women, Indore, India, which was established in 1985 to help raise the standard of living of rural and tribal women living in small communities in the districts around Indore. During the first few years of operation, it focused primarily on developing income-generating skills such as producing small mats, incense-sticks, dry leaf cups, candles, chalk-sticks and handloom weaving. The organic growth of the Institute has enabled it to develop a comprehensive curriculum that empowers women with the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives and the lives of their families, and the communities in which they live.

The Bahá'í Agency for Social and Economic Development* (BASED-UK) was set up in 1993 to raise the quality of life of people all over the world through actions to relieve poverty and advance education. In order to further these objectives, BASED-UK either funds projects directly or by approaching other organizations to sponsor, in part or in whole, projects identified through a process of grass-roots consultation. BASED-UK then collaborates with grass-roots organizations in the implementation of projects which meet its criteria. SAT (Spanish for 'System of Tutorial Learning') is a rural non-formal-education and development project in Honduras. This project is part-funded by DFID, which took the decision in May 1997 to provide a grant of £221,000 (under its Joint Funding Scheme programme for non-government organizations) to help finance this programme. The project is being managed by the Bahá'í Agency for Social and Economic Development of the United Kingdom (BASED-UK), and implemented by the Bayan Association for Indigenous Social and Economic Development in Honduras. The DFID grant is for a little under half of the total project cost. There is also a second, much smaller, project (the Tierra Santa Orphanage, a home for 120 abandoned girls). The level of income for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK (£0.84 million, which includes all activities and not just the work of BASED-UK) is given in Appendix 6.

Buddhist Faith Community

The aim of the Rahula Trust* is to help young and disadvantaged children in developing countries throughout the world with financial assistance for educational needs from primary school to university level. The website of the organization states: 'inevitably, despite its small beginnings this is an ambitious project. Initially the London Buddhist Vihara will start with a programme that will focus on children in Sri Lanka. Having proved successful, the Programme will then expand to other underdeveloped countries. In many developing nations, the cost of school fees places a very heavy and sometimes impossible burden on poorer families. Sponsorship will immediately change a child's education for the better. By paying for school fees, private tuition or buying uniforms and books, child sponsorship can enable a

child to attend school and prepare effectively for examinations. Education is seen as one path to success.’ There are no current indications of the size of the project.

More financial details are available for Aid for India,* a charity which exists ‘to collect donations for the relief of poverty, advancement of the Buddhist religion and other charitable purposes anywhere in the world, [but] specifically in India’. Its income is stated as £0.03 million in the financial information given in Appendix 6.

Christian Faith Community

The Christian relief agencies, which are often among the oldest NGOs operating in the UK (for example, Christian Aid* was founded in 1945), are by far the biggest in the field at the moment and they also offer the most detail in terms of their financial affairs. It is evident that the Christian relief agencies include some of the largest charities operating in the UK. The listing provided by Charities Direct suggests the following comparison in terms of expenditure: Christian Aid (£46.9 million expenditure, 42nd in the top 100 UK Charities by expenditure); Tearfund* (£32.4 million expenditure, 73rd in the top 100 UK Charities by expenditure). In terms of annual income, Christian Aid receives £48.6 million, Tearfund £35 million, and CAFOD* £25.8 million: see the figures in Appendix 6. *Christian Aid* is ‘the official relief and development agency of 40 British and Irish churches and works where the need is greatest in more than 60 countries worldwide, supporting the poorest communities in their struggle to achieve a better life.’ The purpose of Tearfund is ‘to serve Jesus Christ by enabling those who share evangelical Christian beliefs to bring good news to the poor’: it works in the areas of development; healthcare; urban renewal; conflict and justice; environment and agriculture; education and training.

Two of the largest Christian charities, Christian Aid and CAFOD, have co-operated well in the Jubilee 2000 campaign, the significance of which is alluded to in paragraph 297 of *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor*, White Paper on International Development, December 2000. Together with the Mothers’ Union* and Tearfund, Christian Aid and CAFOD produced an eight-page booklet offering ideas and materials for Christians to reflect on the debt campaign at the time of the G8 summit in July 2000. It seems that Christian Aid and CAFOD, with SCIAF and Traidcraft, have an ongoing campaigning profile for ‘working together with the poor in developing countries’ (the theme of their Christmas card campaign, 2000). The Mothers’ Union has an important literacy project, directed particularly towards the needs of women in Africa. There is a plethora of Christian organizations on a smaller scale, many of which offer particular skills or have area specialisms. The issue is how well the smaller charitable organizations can co-operate together and follow the lead set by the larger ones. A number of these organizations are listed in the BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development) Directory. Some of these have been sent an additional questionnaire (Appendix 7) and those which responded are listed in Appendix 8.

Hindu Faith Community

In the UK, Sewa International* is a service project of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), a registered charity, the purpose of which is stated as 'to advance the Hindu religion and to educate the public in the Hindu ideals and way of life'. The principal role of Sewa International is to organize relief for those suffering from the severe drought in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. In addition, it supports the work of Devi Ahalyabai Smarack Samti, a charitable Trust in memory of Ahalyabai Holkar of Indore, known for its religious and philanthropic works. It is based in Nagpur and run by women for the welfare of girls of the weaker sections of the Hindu Society. The Samti runs a Girls Hostel (Vanavasi Kanya Chhatravas) to train young girls selected from seven North East States of Bharat who are educated in various schools in Nagpur.

Also of importance is the India Development and Relief Fund, which is a tax-exempt organization under the U.S. Internal revenue Code Section 501 (c)(3) (tax exempt code 52-1555563). It aims to support the grassroots and non-government organizations (NGOs) involved in serving the most disadvantaged, impoverished, illiterate, poor and needy people. IDRf was founded in 1978 by Dr. Vinod Prakash, a World Bank economist from 1971 to 1981. The organization has so far distributed over \$800,000 to grassroots and charitable organizations in India. It has links with the Indian community in the UK.

A number of the larger Hindu temples have their own networks and trusts for fundraising for relief in the Indian subcontinent. They are reluctant to provide details of their income and annual accounts; further research and contact building would be needed to ascertain their size and effectiveness.

Salt of the Earth,* is of no declared faith position, but works with low caste Harijans, who are primarily Hindus (but some of whom have converted to other faiths). Because the caste system has not always allowed aid to flow evenly to all social groups, it is important to note this organization, which works 'with the poorest of the poor amongst the low caste Harijans, snake catchers, gypsies and salt pan workers'. It is from this last group that the charity gets its name and it is these people that get the benefit of most of the money the charity raises. The saltpan workers suffer from the saline environment in which they live and work in on the coastal strip around the port of Tuticorin on the south east coast of Tamil Nadu. It is the policy of the charity that all donations received go direct to SCAD (Social Change and Development) without any deductions. A wide range of activities are funded including education, health care, community projects, water and income generation schemes. The aim is to increase the quality of life of families whose income can be as low as £150 per year. Through its team of over 200 full and part time staff SCAD works to help and to empower the poor in 150 villages with a total population in excess of 125,000 people. A local person in each village is recruited and trained to work part time for SCAD and these representatives are supported by full-time professional field and administration staff.

Jain Faith Community

There are two known Jain organizations working in the relevant area. The first, is called Ahimsa,* the Sanskrit term for non-violence and reverence for life. The second is called Ahimsa for Quality Of Life (AQL).* Its initial target is to support three projects in India: welfare for the economically disadvantaged (helping the Saraks lift themselves from poverty in Eastern Bihar; partner: Shri Akhil Bharatiya Sarak Sangathan); rehabilitation of the physically handicapped (by providing free prosthesis and social support; partner: Bhagwan Mahavir Viklan Sahayak Samiti); and rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped (by education, vocation training and prevention; partner: VD Indian Society for Mentally Retarded). There are no current indications of the level of financial support for these two organizations.

Jewish Faith Community

The two principal Jewish NGOs working in the field of world poverty relief and development education are UKJAid* and Tzedek.* UKJAID has 7 Trustees and deals with about 6 new projects a year and others which are ongoing; this number is expected increase over time. The main geographical areas of support are Zambia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, and Tibet in exile. In the year ending December 1999, total income was £480,000, with income from DFID amounting to £170,000 (35% of total income). Grants are made available to all.

A second organization is Tzedek (Jewish Action for a Just World), which aims to provide direct support to the developing world working towards the relief and elimination of poverty regardless of race or religion. Secondly, it seeks to educate people, particularly in the Jewish community, as to the causes and effects of poverty and the Jewish obligation to respond. In addition Tzedek organises an Overseas Volunteer Programme in which Jewish volunteers work for up to eight weeks during the summer at development projects in Africa and Asia. Tzedek is now supporting nine development projects in Africa and Asia. In India, it is supporting the construction of a school in the Himalayas; in Calcutta it is sponsoring street children through an income-generating training programme; in Tamil Nadu, start-up finance is provided for women's self-help micro-credit schemes. In Bangladesh Tzedek is supporting a womens' vocational training programme. In Zimbabwe, until the recent disorders, Tzedek was sponsoring a vocational training scheme for unemployed squatter camp dwellers and equipping a pre-school. In Ghana it is supporting the construction and development of a rural community centre. This is an extensive range of activities, given a relatively low level of income (some £60,000 a year); it depends significantly on volunteer support.

Two other organizations are preoccupied with exclusively Jewish concerns. These are the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief (also known as World Jewish Relief), the objectives of which consist in assisting 'Jewish refugees in the UK and... the communities outside the UK in their social, religious, cultural and developmental needs' and Jewish Care,

which works exclusively within the UK for ‘vulnerable people in the Jewish community’. The size of these two organizations (£4.2 million and £34.7 million in income respectively) suggests something of the scale of activity, which Jewish organizations concerned with the relief of poverty world-wide might attain over time.

Muslim Faith Community

There are three main organizations (Muslim Aid, Muslim Hands and Islamic Relief), each of which is well regarded. The organizations have an annual income respectively of c. £1.5 million, c £1.6 million and c. £3.2 million. Islamic Relief seeks to promote sustainable economic and social development by working with local communities through relief and development programmes, including orphan support. Its core geographical areas are Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bangladesh, Chechnya, Gaza Strip, Mali, India, Pakistan and Sudan, where it claims strong links with the local communities. The organization is considered to be run efficiently and to have credibility within the Sunni Muslim community as a whole. The Charities Direct website provides the following information on the income of the organizations mentioned above, which differs from the figures given from Muslim sources (the difference may arise from a different date for the information): according to this data, Islamic Relief is the largest of the three organizations, with an annual income of £3.77 million; Muslim Aid is the second, with an annual income of £2.37 million; while Muslim Hands has an income of £0.43 million.

Sikh Faith Community

All Gurdwaras have their own networks and trusts for fundraising for relief in the Punjab / Panjab. There is no definitive list of Sikh charities working in the area of poverty relief and development in the third world. The Guru Amar Dass Mission (UK) has been operating since the early 1970s in the UK and several other countries of Sikh settlement. The primary role of this organisation is to initiate, as well as to assist, primary health care projects in the rural areas of Punjab. Although the mission specialises in funding of eye camps, it also makes donations to charitable hospitals and trusts, especially those that cater for mental illness and leprosy sufferers.

Two recently registered charities, Khalsa Aid* and the Sikh Welfare and Research Trust (SWRT)* registered respectively in April and November 2000, are involved in the area of the relief of poverty, but information on them is difficult to obtain. Though not yet registered, FATEH (Fellowship Of Activists To Embrace Humanity) is easier to find out about since it operates its own website. It seeks to inspire active humanitarianism and transcend national boundaries and, in its early stages of development, has been active in Kosovo, Bosnia, Orissa and Punjab. Its programme called KartaKare is a response to the Sikh community’s outrage over the physical, social, emotional and spiritual consequences of trauma. Psychological treatment, clinical counselling and rehabilitation are the three main areas in which assistance is provided. Links are being sought with other organizations so as

the Child Education Volunteer Association, Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council, Joti Saroop Trust and Horizons. FATEH has also an Orissa project fund.

Relative size of the Non-Governmental Organizations operating from within Faith Communities

There is reason to suppose that the administrative costs of the Non-Governmental Organizations within the various faith communities are relatively high as a proportion of expenditure and income because they are in the early years of operation, and that they will remain so until they reach a higher level of activity. Some of the Non-Governmental Organizations within various faith communities are of such recent origin that precise statistics are difficult to obtain: they are not listed in any directory such as the Charities Direct website, the Charity Commissioners registration website, or the BOND directory, since they are of relatively recent origins. However, there is evidence that some have grown rapidly in the short period of their existence.

With these important caveats, the most reliable source has been found to be the Charities Direct website (www.charitiesdirect.com), which distinguishes between: A) International Development Assistance Organizations; B) International Disaster and Relief Organizations; and C) International Welfare: General. Accepting this somewhat arbitrary distinction, in the category of International Development Assistance Organizations, CAFOD is listed as fourth by expenditure (£21 million); the Catholic Institute for International Relations is listed as eleventh (£3.58 million) and SCIAF is listed as thirteenth (£2.16 million). In the category of International Disaster and Relief Organizations, Tear Fund is listed as third by expenditure (£29.3 million), Christian Outreach is listed as twelfth (£1.75 million), Muslim Aid as fourteenth (£1.08 million), and Muslim Hands as seventeenth (£0.18 million). Christian Aid dominates the list of expenditure by organization in the category of International Welfare: General (£40.9 million), with the St Vincent de Paul Society third (£4.03 million), Islamic Relief fourth (£2.15 million) and Link Romania fifth (£1.79 million).

Using the BOND directory of NGOs, and identifying those working in the area of international development and awareness raising, 54 NGOs were sent a separate questionnaire to ascertain the robustness of their internal procedures of project evaluation, accounting and auditing (Appendix 7), to which 21 replies were received (38%: Appendix 8). The replies were satisfactory and demonstrated a strong commitment to efficient and transparent procedures even in those NGOs which were relatively new or operating on a relatively small scale.

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Objective 3. What more can be done?

‘...such that an assessment can be made on how DFID might move forward with each group and on inter-

faith activities...’

Note: an asterisk indicates that details of the organization are given in Appendix 9.

Bahá’í Faith Community

The Baha’í Agency for Social and Economic Development (based in the UK) is directed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the UK,* which maintains its own website. The community will focus on social and economic development for five years from April 2001. Given the impressive international recognition of the movement, the website for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the UK could carry more explicit information on the development aid provided by this community, both in the UK and worldwide.

Buddhist Faith Community

Buddhist aid agencies appear to concentrate on the education aspects of development. This is an acceptable objective, given the primacy which many commentators give to lack of education, especially among women, as a factor in endemic poverty. However, there is a relative lack of information about the groups and enhanced information is required to assist them in their task of fundraising. The Rahula Trust* has a website, which is important for enhancing public awareness within the Buddhist community.

Christian Faith Community

The larger agencies are well organized and have good links with the faith community. Christian groups have been longer in the field than any other aid organizations from the other faith communities. They have more practical experience in fund-raising; their affairs are better documented and more open and accountable than those of some other groups. There is a need for their expertise to be made available to advise other groups (while recognizing the separate identities of other faith communities). There is a considerable gap between the scale of activities of the large groups (Christian Aid,* CAFOD,* Tear Fund)* and the plethora of smaller groups committed to certain types of aid or awareness raising. It would be desirable for these smaller groups to co-operate within an umbrella organization for reasons of greater efficiency and to prevent overlap and duplication of effort.

Hindu Faith Community

There is a growing sense of Hindu awareness, both in the Indian sub-Continent and also in the communities in the UK. The stated objectives of the registered charity Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), are ‘to advance the Hindu religion and to educate the public in the Hindu ideals and way of life’; Sewa International (UK)* is a service project of this charity. The role of Salt of the Earth/SCAD* in working with the low caste Harijans

continues to be important because of the traditional discrimination which this group has suffered.

Jain Faith Community

The two Jain aid agencies in the UK, Ahimsa,* and Ahimsa for Quality Of Life (AQL),* are both charities of recent foundation (1998 and 2000): enhanced information is required to assist them in their task of fundraising. They do not have websites, which are crucial for enhancing public awareness within their own community.

Jewish Faith Community

The two principal agencies, UKJAid* and Tzedek*, work together on projects but have a somewhat different emphasis in their programmes: UKJAid has a full-time worker and seeks partnerships with international organizations; Tzedek has a high level of volunteer support and works primarily at smaller volunteer projects backed by private donations. Both produce newsletters, but do not at present have their own websites. The Jewish Emergency Aid Coalition (JEAC) is an umbrella organization created to mobilize aid when required to respond to humanitarian disasters.

Muslim Faith Community

The growing Muslim self-consciousness since 1979 is well attested, and the three main Muslim aid organizations are already well positioned to expand their area and range of operations. In terms of the size of operations, the Muslim organizations are second only to the Christian agencies, but are of much more recent origin. The main groups (Islamic Relief,* Muslim Hands,* and Muslim Aid*) operate their own websites and publish their financial information in the Charities Direct directory.


Sikh Faith Community

Given the recent origin of some Sikh NGOs, much more information needs to be made available about the new organizations to assist them in their task of fundraising. Only one group as yet has a website for enhancing public awareness.

Towards a multi-faith response

There is an overwhelming need for a multi-faith response towards the development agenda for practical reasons such as to encourage dialogue, networking and the sharing of good practice. Dialogue is necessary to create conditions of good relations between faith communities and their agencies which may otherwise operate entirely within their own parameters and take little account of the general objectives of the Development Agenda. Networking is critical, because without this there can be no exchange of information or enhancement of DFID's objectives within the different faith communities. The sharing of good practice

is vital because some agencies (e.g. Christian Aid) have more than fifty years' experience in creating an organization. Recently founded groups can learn from this experience without having to reinvent procedures that have already been tried and tested elsewhere. Some of these procedures would include:

1. the primacy of accountability, that is an openness about the group's objectives and purposes (within this, it is desirable to separate out the humanitarian work of the faith community, while not losing its religious motivation);
2. the need for the disclosure of accounts (some groups refused to disclose information to the consultancy, yet such information is normally disclosed by the majority);
3. the need for good accounting mechanisms in the UK and abroad: the work of the International Records Management Trust (www.irmt.org)  is particularly relevant here;
4. the importance of creating a website, communicating with the faith community by email, and circulating a regular newsletter to disclose information and encourage fundraising as well as networking.

This triple objective of dialogue, networking and the sharing of good practice can only be achieved by the establishment of an intermediary group of specialists which will provide the necessary new network to establish a more sophisticated and more effective relationship with the faith communities. The purpose of the group would be to ensure that DFID is able to mobilize the enthusiasm of faith communities without itself having to gain the expertise in dealing with multiple bilateral relationships, each of which requires detailed knowledge of the issues and capabilities of the faith community in question. The proposed group would be

- more effective than the present set of informal arrangements;
- distance DFID from any accusation of acting from a 'party political' agenda; and
- better capable of operating within a robust, yet co-operative, relationship with DFID (smaller NGOs are less capable than e.g. Christian Aid of commenting that the recent White Paper 'misses the point' because they are nervous of losing funding from DFID).

The intermediary body, not DFID, would be the one dealing directly with the faith communities on a multi-faith basis. The specialists would provide detailed knowledge of the issues and capabilities of the faith communities; if a previously unknown or untested group presented itself as a potential partner, it would make enquiries on behalf of DFID. Clearly the Faith Communities Development Issues Awareness Group would need precise terms of reference and an informed personnel. The Centre for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism, which conducted the research for this consultancy, would be willing to give advice over the establishment of such a body and provide an informed yet neutral chairmanship / convenorship.

Those interviewed by the Consultants have made suggestions about the way in which interaction with DFID, and awareness raising within their own communities, could be improved. The Consultants are of the opinion that the proposed new intermediary body should become the chief mechanism for securing these objectives. In order to achieve this end, it would need to have a budget for publicity purposes and for holding meetings and presentations on development issues. This would enable, for example, an annual conference to be held at a neutral, academic, venue. It would be desirable to liaise with an NGO such as Southern Voices, which is a network of 'Southerners' settled, or temporarily resident, in the UK. Its work is concerned with development awareness raising, so much of it takes place in the 'North'. Its primary concern is to correct the misinformation and prejudiced understanding of the 'South' that generally exists in the 'Northern' world at most sectors, levels and institutions. It has close links and connections with networks and individuals in the 'South' who inform its work and try to make sure that there is a plurality of perspectives.

The Consultants are of the view that, for the reasons suggested above, the new intermediary body should have powers to call for proposals for funding from within the faith communities, both for awareness raising schemes and also for development partnerships within the third world and to comment on the viability of the proposals, including prioritisation of such proposals, to DFID, within an overall cash target set each year by DFID for the two schemes. This would give the new body a purpose for meeting greater than simply talking about the issues. DFID itself would benefit, since there would be a larger number of applications for funding would be secured than at present. The schemes would be publicized within the faith communities by the specialists on the proposed new body.

There is the additional possibility that groups could collaborate and thus overcome the £250,000 barrier within the Partnership Programme Agreement scheme (PPAs). PPAs are agreements between DFID and influential non-governmental organisations in UK which set out at a strategic level how the two partners will work together to promote poverty elimination and sustainable development. Strategic funding is provided, linked to jointly agreed strategic objectives. At present, some groups have received good appraisals from DFID, but fall under the £250,000 per annum lower level for a Partnership Programme Agreement. Clearly, relatively new UK-based NGOs drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities would have difficulty of surmounting the £250,000 per annum lower level, but through co-operation with other groups this higher level of activity might be possible.

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V Conclusions

From the evidence of the interviews held, it seems clear that there is:

5.1) enthusiasm within the faith communities for the 2015 targets for poverty reduction, although there is a relative lack of awareness that these targets have been set. There were some who questioned the realism of the targets, but none questioned the objectives as such.

For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 1 in Appendix 4.

5.2) a wish on the part of faith communities contacted to help in so far as they can. For more detailed comments, see the responses to questions 2, 6, 7 and 8 in Appendix 4.

5.3) a willingness to use their own networks to spread information and awareness. For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 16 in Appendix 4.

5.4) a view that there needs to be clear summary, 'faith specific' documentation in clear and non-technical language, and above all the relevant languages, for particular faith communities. For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 20 in Appendix 4.

5.5) a need for a sponsoring group to act as the conduit for information to the faith communities. In the questionnaire we have called this a 'Faith Communities Development issues Awareness Group'. The purpose of such a group would be to attract specialists on poverty reduction issues from different faith communities. For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 18 in Appendix 4.

From the evidence of the interviews, it would seem the faith communities:

5.6) were largely unaware of the Jubilee 2000 campaign. Christians and Jews, who directly and indirectly affected by the campaign, thought it provided a useful model for mobilizing opinion. For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 3 in Appendix 4.

5.7) recognize the humanitarian imperative to assist the world's poor and not just the poor of their own faith community. For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 9 in Appendix 4.

5.8) are willing to co-operate with the development agenda and to share information with other faith communities. For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 25 in Appendix 4.

From the evidence of these interviews, it seems clear that there is:

5.9) a concern that the Jubilee 2000 campaign, the largest attempt to mobilize opinion in recent years, has not achieved its objectives. For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 3 in Appendix 4. What hope is there, therefore, for a more widespread, global, campaign for reducing poverty by 2015? The reaffirmation of debt reduction objectives and positive action is necessary to restore credibility in target setting. The UK Government has recently made a positive pronouncement via the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There is a need for publicity on this matter, and on the response of other governments, to demonstrate to the public at large that targets can be met.

5.10) a view expressed in some quarters about the objectivity or credibility of western governments in seeking global poverty reduction targets. Is there a hidden agenda behind the development agenda? For more detailed comments, see the responses to question 3 in Appendix 4. This speculation, tainted with suspicion, will be difficult to eradicate. The recent White Paper emphasising that there are to be 'no strings attached' with aid in the future (Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor, White Paper on International Development, Dec. 2000, para 320 at p. 94) will undoubtedly help to dissuade some sections of opinion in the faith communities that there is any hidden agenda involving 'western', 'first world' or even 'capitalist' economic interests.

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VI Detailed Recommendations

6.1) Efforts should be made to separate humanitarian issues from party ideologies or manifestos. A neutral, 'common front', towards the Development Agenda should be attained.

6.2) The awareness of development issues within the various faith communities must be enhanced. At present there is a low level of awareness of the Development Agenda; but there is a high degree of motivation within the separate faith traditions towards addressing poverty which is potentially available for supporting the Agenda.

6.3) Efforts should be made to tap this resource of highly motivated potential support. At present there is a missing link between DFID's programmes and the faith communities which needs to be addressed.

6.4) Closer networks with selected places of worship (churches, temples, mosques, gurdwaras, etc.) need to be established, based on the extent of their influence within the faith community.

6.5) Closer networks with cultural associations need to be established, based on the extent of their influence within their community and outside.

6.6) Summary literature relevant to the different faith traditions and cultures is necessary to make the Development Agenda understood and elicit support.

6.7) Such literature needs to include information not merely on objectives but also the extent to which the UK Government has succeeded in responding (e.g. debt relief for 41 countries announced in December 2000).

- 6.8) Some of this literature needs to be translated into the relevant Asian languages, which will facilitate the formation and effectiveness of awareness within certain faith communities.
- 6.9) The literature for each faith community needs to be kept separate, because each faith tradition's approach to the issue of poverty is somewhat different.
- 6.10) Asian communities retain close links with their countries of origin. The programme for development awareness can, in principle, appeal to people of all age groups and both males and females equally because of these close links.
- 6.11) Given the preponderance of the younger age groups within the demography of the Asian communities, it is essential to develop closer links with Asian youth networks. Temples, mosques, gurdwaras, etc. may be able to help in so far as they may have youth groups or youth schools which can learn about the development agenda.
- 6.12) Separate women's organizations, at national and local level, need to be incorporated within any strategy for awareness raising. Failure to do this might result in women not being properly incorporated into the strategy. 'Women's rights' issues are not identical with development issues but are clearly related to them, since an estimated 70% of the world's illiterates are women and girls.
- 6.13) Improved accounting, accountability and transparency are necessary to overcome reservations as to whether the 2015 targets, even if funded adequately by western governments, are achievable. There is a widely-held suspicion and scepticism of the efficiency and openness of the political leadership in many 'third world' countries.
- 6.14) Prioritising relations with NGOs has the benefit of promoting an inclusive approach with peoples of developing countries at the 'grass roots' level. The faith communities suggest that their links with the countries concerned should be developed.
- 6.15) A number of UK-based NGOs are drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities. There is considerable potential for co-operation between these NGOs; this should become an immediate policy objective.
- 6.16) In seeking to enhance co-operation between UK-based NGOs drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities, there is a triple objective of dialogue, networking and the sharing of good practice
- 6.17) This triple objective can only be achieved by the establishment of an intermediary group of specialists which will provide the necessary new network to establish a more sophisticated and more effective relationship with the faith communities.
- 6.18) Such an intermediary group of specialists under a neutral chairmanship (a suggested

name is Faith Communities Development Issues Awareness Group) would be a) more effective than the present set of informal arrangements; b) distance DFID from any accusation of acting from a 'party political' agenda; and c) better capable of operating within a robust, yet co-operative, relationship with DFID.

6.19) It is proposed that the intermediary body of specialists, not DFID, would be the group dealing directly with the faith communities on a multi-faith basis.

6.20) The intermediary body of specialists would provide detailed knowledge of the issues and capabilities of the faith communities; if a previously unknown or untested faith group or NGO presented itself as a potential partner, it would make enquiries on behalf of DFID.

6.21) At present, some groups have received good appraisals from DFID, but fall under the £250,000 per annum lower level for a Partnership Programme Agreement. Clearly, relatively new UK-based NGOs drawn from, or closely related to, the separate faith communities would have difficulty of surmounting the £250,000 per annum lower level, but through co-operation with other groups this higher level of activity might be possible.

6.22) The Faith Communities Development Issues Awareness Group will need precise terms of reference and an informed personnel. It is suggested that the terms of reference should include the avoidance of potential dangers such as (a) evangelism / proselytism being confused with humanitarian objectives; (b) political ideologies or sectarian divisions which might hinder the appeal of the NGO; and (c) an exclusivist attitude towards aid, namely aid channelled solely within the faith community and not aid for all those affected by poverty.

6.23) The proposed new intermediary body should become the chief mechanism for raising awareness within the faith communities of the development agenda. In order to achieve this end, it would need to have a budget for publicity purposes and for holding meetings and presentations on development issues. This would enable, for example, an annual conference to be held at a neutral venue.

6.24) The proposed new intermediary body should have powers to call for proposals for funding from within the faith communities, both for awareness raising schemes and also for development partnerships within the third world and to comment on the viability of the proposals, including prioritisation of such proposals, to DFID, within an overall cash target set each year by DFID for the two schemes. The schemes would be publicized within the faith communities by the specialists on the proposed new body.

6.25) The establishment of the new intermediary body follows naturally from the work in the field undertaken by the Centre for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism.

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