

INTERC ULTUR ALISM

A breakdown of thinking and
practice: lessons from the field

The Baring Foundation

brap

making equality work for **everyone**

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EXECU TIVE SUMM ARY

Executive summary

Between 2008 and 2010 the Baring Foundation funded the Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs). The awards showcased practical projects promoting interculturalism. In 2011, the Foundation commissioned brap to extract and disseminate what the three-year process has revealed about intercultural dialogue – its meaning, its benefits, and how grassroots organisations can promote it.

This research report is therefore part of a wider series of activities brap is conducting to disseminate best practice in the promotion of interculturalism.

1.1 What is interculturalism?

'Interculturalism' is a hugely contested term. Based on an analysis of the current social, economic, and policy environment, and feedback from participants engaged in intercultural training (see appendix 3), we would suggest the following as a useful draft definition:

Interculturalism is the recognition that culture is important and of equal value to all people. It recognises that forcing people to subscribe to one set of values can create tension between individuals and groups. It understands that human beings are multi-dimensional in nature and that cultural fusion has been, and will continue to be a by-product of human interaction. It requires negotiation to accommodate our expression of culture in the public domain, using the principles of human rights to shape shared entitlements.

1.2 Methodology

In addition to preliminary interviews with prominent academics, theoreticians, and policy makers familiar with intercultural thinking and practice, primary research was conducted with organisations that were winners of, commended in, or shortlisted for an Award for Bridging Cultures. The 22 organisations interviewed for this project are listed in Appendix 2.

2.1 Key elements of intercultural practice

Activities taken to promote interculturalism can be said to fall into three broad categories:

Activities intending to weaken cultural boundaries

Activities to question how 'fixed' concepts such as culture, ethnicity and religion are, either by explicitly unravelling those concepts (for example, by demonstrating how 'race' is not a biological construct, but a social one), or by sharing information to challenge people's pre-conceptions about minority groups that are 'othered'. Typically, this involved highlighting normally overlooked historical narratives (such as the role of migrants in building the NHS or the contribution of Muslim soldiers to the war effort in the 1940s). Other projects aim to help people to see commonalities between different groups, often through the use of the arts.

Activities to develop the skills necessary to live with and benefit from 'diversity'

Activities with this aim included: (i) activities to help people develop greater confidence in their own identity and culture (so they can then engage in dialogue with others about their own and others' cultures); (ii) activities to respond to the formation of negative attitudes and stereotypes that perpetuate inequality and prevent cross-community interaction and mutual understanding; (iii) activities to respond to and avoid conflict through facilitated dialogue; and (iv) activities intending to help people with 'marginalised' voices engage more effectively in civic dialogue through skills development.

The creation of spaces 'of' and 'for' intercultural dialogue

Activities to create the right kind of environment where intercultural dialogue can take place. Spaces 'for' intercultural dialogue aim to deliberately bring people from 'different' backgrounds together for the express purpose of encouraging interaction (examples include multicultural feasts or cross-community football matches). Spaces 'of' intercultural dialogue are spaces where anybody can come along to interact with others in ways which may or may not result in intercultural dialogue. Instead they exist entirely to encourage the everyday interactions between people which lead to the development of mutual understanding and acceptance.

In addition to these three types of activity, it is possible to discern certain practices which promote effective implementation:

Strong facilitation: helping people feel willing to engage in dialogue and share their feelings on sensitive and emotive issues; letting people identify for themselves what they have learnt through intercultural dialogue and supporting people to do this and respond to the consequences of this in their lives when needed.

Responding to the way prejudices, attitudes, and norms are created:

importance of working with young people and of education in helping people understand the negative and harmful effects of stereotypes. Good projects responded to the effects of 'peer pressure' and the role of family, friends and 'society' in perpetuating negative attitudes and preventing effective dialogue.

Using art, music and other forms of creativity to promote dialogue:

given the identity-focused and (at times) emotive and personal nature of intercultural dialogue it is perhaps unsurprising that artistic and creative methods that encourage self-expression were used to help people express themselves, build confidence and promote dialogue.

Dialogue methods: strong focus on the type of physical environment that encourages dialogue (e.g. 'neutral spaces') and the type of 'rules' of conduct that enable effective dialogue on issues of culture (e.g., conflict mediation techniques, using 'pause' and 'time out' to allow people to say when issues are difficult or uncomfortable).

Energy and engagement: importance of trust-building activities to get people on board and contribute to discussion. Strong

emphasis on the need to make intercultural dialogue activities not 'too heavy' and fun and to not 'blame' people if they get things about equality, diversity, and culture 'wrong' (as has sometimes been the tendency in the past).

2.2 Key elements of intercultural thinking

The way practitioners 'think' about community relations, equality, and human rights has a significant effect on the way they deliver and judge the impact of intercultural activities. As such, it is possible to draw out some of the theory and principles underlying the intercultural work identified above:

Equal status

Intercultural dialogue must take the form of a dialogue between equals. This means people have equal opportunities to contribute, and that their views are listened to and considered seriously. It also requires a presumption on the part of participants that they will be entering into the relationship on an equal status. This can be achieved through the use of ground rules, facilitation that deals effectively with overbearing participants, and the consideration of external factors such as the choice of venue, how accessible it is, and so on.

Common goals

Intercultural dialogue works best when individuals are engaged in a common project. The goal may arise naturally and apply to everyone by virtue of shared experiences or circumstances, or it may be a goal devised by a facilitator. Naturally

occurring goals might be social issues such as rising unemployment, educational exclusion, or a shared experience of, say, gang culture. Goals devised by a facilitator are most commonly seen in youth club or community group settings where organisers instigate a project or group activity.

Individuals, not representatives

Intercultural dialogue is most efficacious when it is clear people are brought together as individuals, not as representatives of this or that community. A significant feature of intercultural dialogue is that it brings people together to relax and engage with each other in a friendly way. If people are brought together as 'representatives' of a particular community there is a danger they will conform to this role and cultural boundaries and other inhibitions will be perpetuated and reinforced rather than overcome.

Values and frameworks

Intercultural dialogue works best when it is conducted within a clear, principled framework. Some of the projects considered in this report subscribed to the principles of equality, the universality of human rights, respect, and tolerance, and therefore mediated discussion with reference to those values. This allows potentially contentious issues – such as reconciling some religious attitudes to homosexuality – to be dealt with objectively and relatively clearly.

However, notwithstanding one or two notable exceptions, it is clear the imposition of a 'values' framework through which issues could be discussed and debated worried a lot of organisations undertaking work in this area. In large part this was due to the lack of availability of a common set of

values that it was felt all people from all backgrounds could subscribe to.

Central role of dialogue

Interculturalism recognises that the way we talk about and discuss issues of identity and culture are important because this can help to transform and change social relations. Multicultural approaches to dialogue have tended to favour the 'celebration' of difference and have consequently discouraged discussion that critiques cultural practices, values or 'boundaries'. This has led to the conservation of those boundaries and maintenance of power relationships that some people may wish to challenge in order to improve their lives or change their personal circumstances. Intercultural dialogue focuses on the freedom of people to discuss and challenge their own and others' cultural views and actions.

Culture is important

A key difference between the multicultural and intercultural positions is that multiculturalism, in seeking to avoid the dominance or superiority of one culture over another, avoids discussion of culture. Interculturalism says that it is permissible – indeed important – to discuss the impact of 'culture' on people's ability to exercise their freedoms. Interculturalism does not suggest that one culture is better than another but it does recognise that culture – in addition to other factors, such as racism, structural inequality and discrimination – does influence social outcomes. An intercultural approach enables us to examine what it is about 'culture' that should be discussed as a route to improving social conditions.

Shared humanity – the role of culture in preventing and enabling collective action

Interculturalism suggests there is a space to include discussion of culture and identity in social and political action in a way that is meaningful. Culture is seen as an important part of our *shared* humanity and not as something that is out-of-bounds and never to be discussed. It is in discussions about our shared humanity – the commonalities we share – that people will be better able to come together and develop social action against threats to freedom we all face (such as global economic crises or global warming).

2.3 The benefits of interculturalism

There are particular problems with understanding the impact of intercultural practice. In particular:

- lack of evidence about impact of intercultural practice
- difficulties in comparing the impact of 'intercultural' projects to what impact would have looked like if, for example, a 'multicultural' approach had been taken (as no direct comparison was available)
- differences in opinion amongst practitioners about what 'interculturalism' means, what it should look like in practical implementation, and what an 'effective' outcome would look like

That said, using the Baring Foundation's working definition of interculturalism as a guide, benefits and impact from the projects were discernible:

- Activities to share 'hidden histories' of different groups can result in development of more 'socially constructive ideas, attitudes and views' which led to an 'openness' conducive to further cross-community interaction.
- Activities to help people see commonalities with others can raise confidence amongst minority groups to engage with others and encourages a sense of shared humanity. However, the long term impact of this type of activity is not clear.
- Activities to help people feel more secure in their own identity can help them feel their heritage is valued and as a result can make them more confident in interacting with other communities on issues of culture. However, those activities on their own do not necessarily result in subsequent interaction that is based on intercultural principles and breaks down cultural barriers.
- Activities to tackle negative attitudes and stereotypes can significantly increase children's ability to recognise exclusion, and help children develop a greater understanding of how being excluded might make someone feel. They can also help develop greater cultural awareness and knowledge of different faiths which can be useful skills for intercultural dialogue.
- Activities to impart conflict management skills helped people to engage in genuine and in-depth discussion of values and ideals, and it helped them to recognise when conflict is arising within the context of a one-to-one situation. Well-facilitated dialogue helped participants to feel more comfortable or be more ready to challenge

and question people from 'other' cultures about their attitudes and beliefs. However, there was less evidence of conflicts being resolved conclusively. A number of organisations claimed that it was enough that views had been aired and people felt enough trust in each other to ask challenging questions.

- Activities to support traditionally marginalised groups to engage in civic dialogue can increase their confidence and capability to engage in discussions about things like decisions about public services. This type of activity can also increase interaction between traditionally marginalised groups and others.
- Creating spaces 'of' and 'for' intercultural dialogue can have different kinds of impact dependent on factors like the length of time people are brought together for (longer more impact). Also the extent to which people are encouraged to meaningfully engage on an issue can affect impact (projects that brought people together to share meals or play sport did not report the same long-term effects as projects which brought people together to solve a problem or work together on a particular campaign).

3.1 Promoting interculturalism within the current climate

Approaches to engagement and public policy based on a particular conception of identity politics remain very much to the fore. Within these conceptualisations groups are encouraged to identify issues that affect 'their' group and attempt to secure resources or influence for their group on that basis.

Problems with this (broadly speaking) 'multicultural' model have been apparent for a number of years now. In particular, this approach separates rather than combines; it celebrates difference rather than asserts collective experience. In doing so it makes it hard for people to develop creative and pragmatic relationships or alliances with other groups that could help them address common issues of inequality and discrimination. Multiculturalism as an approach to community relations and equality actively discourages discussions about whether that type of identity politics is working or not. It encourages us to recognise our interdependence only in so far as we all have a role to play in tolerating and respecting difference.

In addition, such an approach has the potential to alienate people from their own culture and identity if they do not 'fit' with a particular version of what they are supposed to be (if they don't 'think' as an 'African Caribbean' for instance).

While these drawbacks have been noted, they have also been tolerated. This is partly for want of a viable alternative that has currency. However, it is important not to underestimate the importance of a funding system that has allocated resources on the basis of group affiliation (be it ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and so on). As long as some 'interest' groups continue to use 'identity' as a primary lever of entitlement, there is a reason for *all* interest groups to do this.

Yet particular features of the current political and economic landscape will impact significantly on this model. In particular:

- it is increasingly clear that under the government's 'Big Society' philosophy few, if any, civil society organisations will be receiving resources to deliver services to 'their' communities, or to 'represent' or 'empower' particular groups or to advocate and lobby on the equality issues that affect them
- the Government has also announced in its latest Equality Strategy (and more recently in its proposed Immigration Strategy) that it plans to move away from 'identity' based approaches to equality, partly because of the problems associated with 'putting people into boxes'
- historically, there is evidence to suggest that in times of great economic and social crisis excluded groups can and *do* come together in collective action. In the 1980s, for example, it was not uncommon for Asian people to use the term 'Black' in an all-encompassing political sense

These are some of the openings through which interculturalism might step. However, in order to progress the thinking and practice of interculturalism it is necessary to undertake further work to fill certain gaps in our current understanding of its benefits and features. Key areas for development include:

- (a) **Activities that capture the value of cultural freedom, and the value of cultural change**
Many of the ABC projects we spoke to recognised that seeing culture as 'fixed' and static can be damaging for people when it puts them into a 'box' that they don't always want to be in. When people can choose how they want to think about and enact their culture, when they can question and sometimes challenge 'cultural boundaries'

ascribed to them, this can be called 'cultural freedom'. However, we found through our research relatively little evidence that demonstrated the direct effect enjoying cultural freedom can have on people's lives. If one of the big advantages of interculturalism is that it is more likely to promote cultural freedom then we need to better capture examples of its effect. One example might be the ways in which cultural freedom can help to address gender inequality in communities and help young women choose to pursue educational opportunities despite pressure from peers not to.

(b) **Considering the implications of interculturalism for the design of public services**

Clearly, much of the practice we encountered through the ABC awards was focused primarily on dialogue. However, there is potential to apply intercultural principles to design of public services. This could be either through the use of intercultural dialogue to identify common issues of exclusion faced by a range of different people from different cultural backgrounds and this could feed into service design. Or it could be through the design of services using a particular 'mind-set' that avoids putting service users into 'boxes' based on their identity that are not of their own choosing.

(c) **Considering the implications of interculturalism for voluntary and community sector work**

There are areas of voluntary and community sector practice which might significantly benefit from greater adherence to intercultural principles. One example

might be using intercultural approaches to help communities reflect on the effectiveness of 'representation' and 'community leaders' to speak on behalf of particular groups (e.g. by supporting people to recognise the diversity of views and approaches within particular 'cultural' groups). There are real opportunities for intercultural dialogue to help reinvigorate approaches to community engagement. It could help to involve excluded people that weren't previously able to get involved because they didn't 'fit' in a particular box. Another example would be using intercultural approaches to help single-identity organisations engage with services users and think about the 'reach' and equality of their services. For example, are VCOs making assumptions about what 'their' community need when actually views and needs within the community may differ significantly?

(d) **Using interculturalism to motivate and support collective action**

One of the most powerful things about intercultural dialogue is that it can offer glimpses of our shared humanity. This can encourage us to support each other and to fight on behalf of each other to ensure all are treated equally and with humanity. A number of ABC projects showed this to great effect, where different groups came together as a result of dialogue to improve the lives of the whole community. Intercultural dialogue offers us the tools to examine our differences and our similarities (such as the way people are excluded in society). This is a prime platform to launch collective action to address key structural and mainstream causes of inequality that affect a number of groups.

(e) Interculturalism is about 'white' people too (and not just race and faith)

Traditional community cohesion activities have aimed to get people from different backgrounds interacting. The specific characteristic on which people were judged to be different was often race or faith. However, ABC projects have shown people do not always identify these characteristics as defining qualities of themselves. Interculturalism proposes a more inclusive approach to community relations and dialogue. Although the focus is on culture, it allows for discussion of a wide range of factors that influence and shape people's views about that culture linked to ethnicity or faith (e.g. disability, sexual orientation, age, etc). It also has the potential to allow for discussion of 'culture', norms, and practices that can surround belonging to other particular groups (e.g. sexual orientation, gender, disability).

In addition, one does not necessarily need to be from a BME group to engage in intercultural dialogue for it to be relevant. This aspect of interculturalism is one worth promoting in the future. Multiculturalism and community cohesion have been seen overwhelmingly as concerned with BME people and minority faith groups. This has, albeit unintentionally, served to exclude large tranches of the population from dialogue about what is required to make the UK a more accommodating place to live for all. By increasing engagement of others the process becomes more inclusive and allows for a more informed discussion. It also encourages people from minority *and* majority groups to reflect on how their views about culture and the stereotypes they hold

can perpetuate disadvantage. For too long community relations has required only minority groups to reflect on this as though they were a problem to be fixed. Interculturalism helps to re-tip the balance.

(f) Debating and agreeing shared norms and a shared vision for society

Debate, conflict, and dissent were welcomed by many projects (within certain parameters). This allowed people to engage in safe and respectful dialogue about difference and ensure that cultural boundaries could be questioned and challenged. These were certainly, at times, edgy, dangerous and intensely productive conversations. However, we did not identify many examples of how people agreed on what aspects of people's cultural actions may need to 'change'; or to put it another way, what people may need to 'give up' for the greater good of society – to protect the rights and freedoms of all. Intercultural dialogue perhaps offers a route to identifying what some of those shared societal values, norms and standards of behaviour should be in a way people can engage in and sign up to. Yet, practical evidence of discussing which cultural practices are 'appropriate' in society and then agreeing shared norms and shared societal responsibility that people enact through their lives and actions remained elusive to us in our research. While there has been much academic work to identify how societal norms should be developed and agreed; we feel this is worth exploring further using intercultural thinking and practice to explore key 'taboo' subjects that involve culture, cause conflict, and require more dialogue.

(g) Being clearer about the anticipated outcomes of models of community relations

It must be acknowledged that one of the fundamental problems supporters of interculturalism face is that currently we lack an agreed framework which explains precisely what it is intended to achieve. Indeed, this is also the case with every other model of community relations that has preceded it: there is no consensus regarding the outcome. And in this vacuum, where the outcomes (let alone the 'successes') of multiculturalism or community cohesion or assimilationism have no generally agreed measure, it is difficult – perhaps even impossible – to sell the benefits of interculturalism as an alternative model. As such, a key step in the 'popularisation' of interculturalism is some form of comparison of different community relations approaches. This is attempted below.

3.2 A comparison framework for interculturalism

The table on the following pages considers the ways an 'intercultural' approach differs from other types of community relations models or other 'isms'. To do this, it takes a range of social policy and social theory issues that interest policy-makers, public service providers, and community groups and 're-imagines' what they might look like if an intercultural approach were applied.

approaches to...	Assimilation	Multiculturalism	Community cohesion	Interculturalism (?)
<p>service design</p>	<p>One-size-fits-all approach to services. Services are not seen to have to respond to particular cultural needs</p>	<p>Add-on services are provided to meet the specific cultural needs of marginalised groups. Public services are encouraged to increase their cultural knowledge. Specific services are provided for specific groups.</p>	<p>Some suggestion that services should be made more inclusive (not just for certain groups) and that translation into non-English languages should not always be the first option.</p>	<p>Dialogue helps to identify services are that promote the entitlements we all have as individuals, rather than the 'cultural needs' others assume we have as members of particular communities. Focus on mainstreaming equitable provision, rather than producing 'add-on' services.</p>
<p>public decision-making</p>	<p>Decisions are reached with reference to an established, fixed set of values which help comprise a national identity. For example, assimilationist models accept that publically displayed religious symbols – such as the burka – can be outlawed, or that citizenship can and should be tested against knowledge of a country's language, history, and institutions.</p>	<p>Decisions are judged by the extent to which they respect individual cultural attitudes or beliefs. Displays of religious symbols in the public sphere are permitted, legislation prohibiting discrimination against particular groups is enacted, and translation services are offered as a matter of course. While ostensibly all cultural customs must respect the law of the land, there is often uncertainty surrounding the tackling of culturally specific practices that infringe people's rights such as forced marriage.</p>	<p>No clear benchmark against which to judge decisions. As such, there is a great deal of uncertainty about how to resolve situations in which rights, beliefs, and cultural practices conflict (such as when freedom of expression is used to criticise religious practices or when deeply held beliefs prevent public sector workers performing certain duties). Some notion that 'British' values should be promoted in the public sphere, but this is not pursued to any great degree.</p>	<p>The cultural and moral dimensions of issues are considered and discussed to agree principles of fairness based on a sense of universal entitlement to key freedoms. Debate and conflict are seen as important in identifying and securing 'buy-in' for those universal entitlements. Room is created for open and honest discussion. Emphasis is placed on the shared responsibility we have in creating a fairer society.</p>

approaches to...	Assimilation	Multiculturalism	Community cohesion	Interculturalism (?)
<p>approaches to dialogue</p>	<p>No interest in how migrant communities interact with each other. Assumption that they will engage with the majority population.</p>	<p>The government engages with 'representatives' to find out what communities are thinking. Promoting interaction between communities is seen as less important than supporting particular single identity groups.</p>	<p>'Different' (ethnic) communities are encouraged to interact on the basis of overlapping interests. The government sees a role in supporting linking activities and projects that promote a shared sense of community (and therefore recognition of overlapping concerns).</p>	<p>Dialogue activities that enable people from the same and different cultures to critically discuss the role of culture in their lives in a way that can lead to positive change (protecting the rights and freedoms of a range of people).</p>
<p>funding for equality activities and community groups</p>	<p>Funding, if provided, is allocated to activities which help minority groups fit in (for example, English language provision, introduction to British culture/way-of-life classes).</p>	<p>Cultural entitlement equates to funding for activities or initiatives which promote, celebrate, or preserve cultural identity. As such, resources are allocated to 'single identity' groups.</p>	<p>Funding is provided for activities that encourage interaction. Some suggestion that funding should not be provided to 'single identity' projects without proper justification, but this causes widespread consternation.</p>	<p>Funding is provided that encourages dialogue which can help communities to identify common and different forms of exclusion and need across 'protected characteristics' and backgrounds.</p>

INTRO DUCTI ON...

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

The Baring Foundation is an independent grant maker which aims to tackle discrimination and disadvantage by strengthening the response of the voluntary sector. It has an endowment of over £60m and has distributed over £100m since inception over forty years ago.

The Foundation has three main grant programmes: Strengthening the Voluntary Sector; Arts; and International Development. However, from time to time, the Foundation undertakes work outside these main areas, and it was in this spirit that it decided to explore the concept of 'interculturalism'. In particular, the Foundation saw the potential to critique multicultural thinking using a concept which draws upon the principles of openness, dialogue, fairness, and equality.

The Baring Foundation defines interculturality as follows:

Interculturality is a dynamic process whereby people from different cultures interact to learn about and question their own and each other's cultures. Over time this may lead to cultural change. It recognises the inequalities at work in society and the need to overcome these. It is a process which requires mutual respect and acknowledges human rights.

Recognising a general gap in people's understanding of the term, the Foundation commissioned two different kinds of work.

The first was a series of papers exploring the theoretical framework underpinning intercultural thinking.¹ The second was an awards programme – the Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs) from 2008-10 – to showcase practical projects which promote interculturalism.

Malcolm James' second paper for the Foundation (2009) examined public policy and debate relating to interculturalism and reviewed the first round of successful nominations for the ABCs. He noted that some interpretations of interculturalism were still taking place in a broad 'community cohesion' framework drawing heavily on multiculturalism. For example, many discussions of interculturalism remained based on notions of a fixed 'identity' or 'culture' with limited possibilities for intercultural dialogue of a more transformative and progressive kind. The paper called for the development of intercultural practice that sees the world 'outside of the community cohesion box'.

At around the same time, discussions about intercultural dialogue were taking place at a European level, with the 'Year of Intercultural Dialogue' in 2008 and the Platform for Intercultural Europe stimulating debate. A recurrent theme in this debate was how the slightly nebulous term 'intercultural' could be translated into

¹ James, M (2008) *Interculturalism: Theory and practice*: Baring Foundation and (2009) *Interculturalism: Social policy and grassroots work*: Baring Foundation.

practical and tangible actions, measurements and outcomes. The Council of Europe is still pursuing work to develop indicators for intercultural dialogue (in the area of youth work, for example).²

In short, there is an appetite for approaches that can improve the 'currency' of intercultural dialogue – be that through encouragement of intercultural practice of a particular 'type' and focus, or by greater clarity regarding what intercultural practice looks like when it is working well, the forms it can take, the environment that will help intercultural work flourish, and the impact it can have.

One of the underlying aims of the ABCs was to begin to respond to this agenda. It is in this context that brap is extracting and disseminating what that three year process has revealed about intercultural dialogue – its meaning, its benefits, and how grassroots organisations can promote it. We will also share thoughts on where there might be gaps in thinking or practice and discuss how these could be filled in the future to improve the 'currency' of intercultural dialogue.

About this report

This research report is just one part of brap's work for the Foundation. It is intended to be read by policy makers, academics, and grassroots organisations – in fact, anyone and everyone with an interest in promoting meaningful interaction within communities. It will be followed by more practical guidance aimed specifically

² http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/Euromed/ICD/Report_ICD_Indicators___XprtmeetingMay2010.pdf

at frontline organisations, along with a training programme.³ brap will also be exploring the possibility of establishing a network of 'intercultural champions' to facilitate the exchange of views, ideas, and energy.

In an early talk on the topic of interculturalism, a Baring Foundation Trustee correctly noted: 'until now, society has been fascinated by what is different about people, not the same'.⁴

Interculturalism offers an alternative to this way of thinking and in this report we set out why.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this report is to explore what can be learnt about intercultural dialogue theory and practice based on the activities of organisations involved in the ABCs. In particular, it aims to expound interculturalism as a model for social relations. In this respect it will focus on three key areas:

- 'thinking': exploring how intercultural dialogue is distinct from previous community relations approaches
- 'doing': identifying the types of activities/projects which promote intercultural dialogue, but also the behaviours and features which make those activities successful

³ The training programme was delivered December 2011-January 2012

⁴ Ranjit Sondhi, meeting of the Core Costs Club, 14 February 2007

- ‘promoting’: exploring how the benefits of intercultural dialogue can be demonstrated or ‘sold’ to potential participants (e.g. members of the public, grassroots organisations, decision-makers, funders)

As already mentioned, this report is part of a wider programme of Baring Foundation-funded activities designed to promote interculturalism (e.g., Appendix 3 includes some reflections on practical intercultural development work conducted by brap with frontline groups). This particular research report aims to unite theory and practice by showing the practical application of a theoretical idea.

1.3 What interculturalism is and isn’t: the scope of this report

‘Intercultural dialogue’ and ‘interculturalism’ are contested terms with a range of different meanings. For the purposes of our research, we needed a definition as a starting point that would enable us to gather relevant evidence. We have used the Baring Foundation’s working definition to inform our work (as stated in 1.1 above). Given the nature of this research, we also wanted to reflect on that definition as the work progressed. Below we outline some additional considerations that have shaped our interpretation of what intercultural dialogue is.

We use ‘interculturalism’ to refer to a model of community relations – in contrast to other models or ‘isms’ such as multiculturalism, assimilationism, integrationism, and so on. We use the term ‘community’ in a broad sense to cover both ‘intra-community’ or ‘inter-community’ relations and also broader

social relations (e.g. relationships between members of the public and public policy-makers). For us, ‘intercultural dialogue’ is an approach that draws on the principles of interculturalism.

For many years, in continental Europe the term ‘interculturalism’ was used broadly as ‘race relations’ might be used here in the UK. Our interpretation of interculturalism differs inasmuch as it goes beyond ‘race relations’ to explore how *all* people can and should interact. ‘Culture’, for us, isn’t just about ‘race’ or faith.

Recently, ‘interculturalism’ has gained prominence as a theory of how civic spaces should be constructed to encourage and manage diversity. The work of organisations such as Comedia⁵ and the Council of Europe⁶ is at the forefront of this approach, and the implications for city planning and regeneration are already being taken up by local authorities in the UK and further abroad. Our approach has many points of contact with this way of thinking. Not only will this report have things to say about the activities of grassroots organisations but it will also address wider issues of service design, funding, and public policy.

Finally, it’s worth noting that ‘interculturalism’ is a term that also crops up in international relations, peace studies and – where the term originated – communication studies. This report does

⁵ See, for example, Wood et al (2006) *Cultural Diversity in Britain: A toolkit for cross-cultural co-operation*: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

⁶ See, for example, Wood, P (2009) *Intercultural Cities: Towards a model for intercultural integration*: Council of Europe Publishing

not engage with the formal theories of those disciplines in any great depth. The debates in those disciplines centre on the skills and cultural knowledge people need to understand other cultures and ‘cope’ with diversity.⁷ While we are interested in the competencies needed to live in a ‘diverse’ society we are more interested in the ideas and attitudes that will help create a society based on openness, fairness, and equality.

In section 5.2 we probe the current working definition of interculturalism and this we hope offers some further fruitful areas for discussion in reconsidering the parameters or ‘remit’ of the concept.

1.4 Structure of this report

Outlined below is the structure of this report.

Section 1

Sets out the context and scope of the report

Section 2

Explains the methodologies adopted and the projects and organisations that participated in the research

Section 3

This is the main ‘findings’ section. Learning from the research is described in detail in this section. Findings are organised in relation to the key ‘themes’ that characterised what practitioners were telling us. For each theme, details about what projects were ‘doing’ and the underlying ‘thinking’ are described separately where

possible, along with any information available about the impact projects may have had on people who were supported or involved.

Section 4

Offers our conclusions

Section 5

Considers the ‘where next?’ steps and offers suggestions for improving the currency of interculturalism as a policy concept

1.5 About brap

brap is a think fair tank, inspiring and leading change to make public, private and voluntary sector organisations fit for the needs of a more diverse society. brap offers tailored, progressive and common sense approaches to equalities training, consultancy and community engagement issues.

In the past, brap has conducted research for organisations including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Department for Communities and Local Government, Macmillan Cancer Support, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, JobCentre Plus, the Equality and Diversity Forum, and many others.

For more information about us, please visit www.brap.org.uk.

⁷ See, for example, UNESCO (2006) *UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education*: UNESCO

METH ODOLOGY

2. Methodology

Firstly, a short review of existing literature and policy was undertaken to understand more about existing interculturalism practice in the UK and beyond and to develop a strong primary research interview framework (creating prompts for interviewers to help them identify potential areas of effective intercultural thinking and practice).

Secondly, telephone and face-to-face interviews were conducted with prominent academics, theoreticians, and policy makers familiar with intercultural thinking and practice, including:

- Mike Hardy (Executive Director, Institute of Community Cohesion).
- Malcolm James (author and research consultant).

Aik Saath
Barton Hill Settlement
Belgrade Community and Education Company
Birmingham Libraries and Archives
Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery
Cheltenham Borough Council
Discover Children's Story Centre
Early Years - the Organisation for Young Children
FolesHillfield Vision Ltd
Limeside and Clarkwell Linking Project
London Borough of Southwark

This group represents about half the total number of organisations awarded, commended or shortlisted. Organisations were chosen to ensure a representative

- Ranjit Sondhi (Baring Foundation Trustee).
- Phil Wood (author and consultant to Council of Europe).

These interviews explored the distinctive features of interculturalism; principles which might underpin effective practice; real examples of best practice perhaps not covered by the Awards for Bridging Cultures; synergies with existing policy concerns; and barriers to the acceptance of intercultural thinking.

Thirdly, primary research was conducted with organisations that were winners of, commended in, or shortlisted for an Award for Bridging Cultures. The 22 organisations interviewed for this project were:

Peacemakers
St Peter's Youth
St Phillip's Centre (two different projects)
Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice Bureau
The Building the Bridge Programme
The Three Faiths Forum
Together for Peace
Valley Kids
West Kirk Community Project
Working with Men
World Jungle

sample based on: location, type of activity, and size/income of organisation.

Semi-structured interviews explored (but were not limited to) the following areas:

- understanding of interculturalism (including reasons why this approach was adopted)
- the nature of the service provided
- how the project promoted or addressed:
 - interaction and communication
 - issues of inequality
 - human rights
 - critical reflection on issues of (self) identity
 - the identification of commonalities with others
- how impact was identified
- barriers and success factors (including obstacles to the acceptance of intercultural thinking)

These interviews were supplemented with a call for evidence to a range of public and voluntary sector organisations asking for additional examples of intercultural practice.

It is worth noting that this was not an 'evaluation' as such of the ABCs. Our starting point wasn't 'whether or not' these projects represented progressive interculturalism and we did not make a judgment on this. Instead, the focus was on what could be *learnt* from the Awards process.

While some activities may not have focused wholly on what our working definition of interculturalism suggests they should have done (such as 'questioning' culture or recognising the need to overcome inequality and uphold human rights, for example), our focus was on the *constituent elements* of different projects and what could be learnt from these to help inform effective and progressive intercultural thinking and

practice in the future. When we spotted areas where thinking or practice could be developed in more detail to help fulfil some of the wider aspirations for interculturalism we recorded these too.

THE F INDIN GS SEC TION

3. Features of intercultural dialogue

This section outlines the learning extracted during the research process. Findings are organised in relation to the key ‘themes’ that characterise what practitioners were telling us. For each theme, details about what projects were ‘doing’ and the underlying ‘thinking’ are described separately where possible, along with any information available about the impact projects may have had on people who were supported or involved.

A shorter digest of the findings is included in Section 4.

3.1 Questioning cultural boundaries

Getting people to question their own and other people’s identities was an important outcome for many of the projects we interviewed. For some projects, this was a useful offshoot of encouraging interaction generally. Other projects purposefully undertook specific activities to question cultural boundaries (asking, for example, what it means to be ‘Asian’ or ‘Muslim’ in the UK today). These activities can be described as (a) activities which question how ‘fixed’ social categories are, and (b) activities that help people see commonalities with others.

(i) Questioning how ‘fixed’ established social categories are

Some organisations, such as Aik Saath, are explicitly teaching (young) people about how concepts such as ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are socially, rather than biologically,

constructed. A particularly memorable activity explains the structure of the human cell using a VHS cassette, the tape standing in for DNA. Young people are asked to mark on the tape the extent to which they think all people are the same – the lesson being that all humans share 99% of the same genetic code. The Rewind project (not interviewed as part of this research) also focuses on similar issues.

However, such explicit exploration of biological concepts is not common. Much more common is the use of alternative narratives and histories that are designed to ‘shock’ or ‘surprise’ participants into changing their perception of a particular group or community through the acquisition of new knowledge or information.

Given the concern of the past decade regarding the radicalisation of Muslim youths and the subsequent availability of Prevent funding,⁸ it is perhaps unsurprising that many projects of this type have focused on challenging narratives connected with the Muslim community. The Bristol-based Building the Bridge Programme, for example, ‘celebrated’ prominent Muslims in the city – including an Iraqi film maker, a Jordanian civil engineer, and two White converts (a police officer and a GP) – in a photographic exhibition and booklet. Another project, Connected Histories, used museums, archival material, and a visit to a

⁸ The Prevent strategy was launched in 2007 as part of a wider government plan to counter terrorism. The Prevent strand aimed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

local cemetery to raise awareness of the role Muslim soldiers played in the Second World War.

This 'hidden histories' approach was also widely used in training courses. For example, facilitators at the St Phillip's Centre use the UK's long history of immigration to question the notion of 'Britishness', or highlight the complex history of British institutions and the role of migrants in British society through the history of Irish and African-Caribbean workers who – in some cases literally – built the NHS.

Such activities share the view that certain social categories are the result of partial or dominant historical narratives and seek to challenge these.

Doing projects like this well

Some key points arise about good practice in delivering projects well:

- Exposing people to new concepts about their own and other people's cultures can be a challenging process and hard for people to absorb and digest. Successful projects tended to incorporate an interactive element that enabled people to engage with information and material in different ways. They also incorporated different ways for participants to record their changes in feelings and views. For example, young people involved in the Connected Histories project produced 'hoodies' printed with quotes that reflected the feelings they experienced while delving into archival records. Young people were also taken to the Imperial War Museum to explore the contribution of the Caribbean community to

the war effort. Film cameras were used to record their comments and thoughts as they went through the museum, which resulted in a powerful three-minute documentary.

- Exposure to new ideas about culture can affect people in different ways. Culture can be an emotive subject and is often linked closely to people's identity and sense of self. Some people will 'rebel' and question the point of learning about these new ideas. Successful projects had thought about how to respond to this. For example, one project suggested participants would be operating with an incomplete understanding of their own situation if they didn't know how or why their grandparents migrated to a different country. This project also emphasised that culture and tradition stem from the past: not understanding history means not understanding what 'Britain' or 'British culture' *really* means.
- It is important that projects are able to field an experienced community worker/facilitator who can deal with the disagreement and conflict that can sometimes arise from discussions of this type.
- Taking time to think about how the project is promoted to different audiences is also important because people have different interests and motivations for engaging in discussions about their own and other people's cultures. As the co-ordinator of Connected Histories explained:

If you're working to get people to be open to absorbing other stories you have to balance that picture. If you're working with Muslims groups I don't think it would work if you said, 'British values are this; this is British history.' You have to say, 'this is how Muslims figure in that history.' If you're working with a White working class group

you can't just say, 'these are Muslims and this is what Muslims have done for you.' You have to say, 'look at the way the indigenous and Muslim communities have worked together in the past', using strong examples. You need to let them people have a place in that story.

Thinking: the unique elements of interculturalism

Given the landscape of community relations discourse over the last ten years, it is perhaps unsurprising that a number of projects chose to explore and challenge the concept of 'Britishness', making explicit reference to the historical hybridity of Britain's population, and questioning dominant narratives that suppress the interconnectedness between 'British' and 'Muslim'. Activities of this sort aim not only to encourage a common narrative that everyone is part of, but also to remind people that notions such as 'Britishness' or 'Blackness' are inherently unstable and a thin basis on which to form firm judgements.

Impact

The impact of such 'hidden histories' activities is hard to measure, however. In some projects the 'hidden history' element was merely one part of a wider range of activities and so attributing impact to this rather than some other element is difficult. Anecdotally, however, responses from some interviewees suggested that 'hidden histories' are memorable aspects of training and constitute the nuggets of information most likely to be remembered in evaluations. One interviewee working on a project which focused solely on promoting lesser known historical narratives reported that participants had developed more

"socially constructive ideas, attitudes and views" which he felt had led to an openness conducive to further cross-community interaction. There is little evidence to corroborate this view, however, as such an outcome was not an explicit or intended outcome for the vast majority of projects.

(ii) Helping people see commonalities with others

The Awards for Bridging Cultures commended Coventry's Belgrade Theatre Community and Education Company for its project in which young people interviewed recently arrived migrants and then created performance pieces which retold the stories they had heard. In doing this, many of the participants had to grapple with the connections between the seemingly disparate experiences of the migrants and their own personal lives. For example, one 14 year-old participant interviewed a Zimbabwean woman who was married at a young age into an abusive relationship. In writing and acting this story, the participant had to draw upon and reflect feelings of isolation, loneliness, and despair from her own life.

In a separate project, the Community and Education Company worked with young people to retell stories from the Bible and Quran. In doing so, participants were made aware of the shared heritage of both religions – how the story of Mary and Jesus is central to both, for example. Connecting Stories – a project delivered by the Discover Children's Story Centre – similarly explored the connections between stories from different communities, asking people to share the tales they remembered from childhood (or which they were now telling

their own children). Focusing on different communities within Newham, particular themes – such as food, notions of home, and family – quickly emerged as central to all cultures. The recurrence of these themes was communicated to people through community events – for example, a big feast was organised to celebrate the preponderance of food-related stories.

While many projects used the arts to encourage people to connect with the commonalities between cultures, others used different kinds of exercises. A Birmingham Museums project working with under-11s at risk of becoming involved with gangs used discussions of role models to bring out common aspirations and values. Not only did young people tend to share the same heroes – the boxer Amir Khan or footballer Ronaldo – they also tended to admire those individuals for the same reasons – their tenacity, dedication, and work ethic.

Doing projects like this well

Some key points arise about good practice in delivering projects well:

- It's useful to think outside of the 'race' and faith box. Not all differences will derive from religious or ethnic tensions – the Guns, Gangs, and Knives project described above dealt with rivalries based on geography (in this case, living in different postcode areas).
- Conducting projects within a neutral space (such as a theatre or museum) is particularly important. Participants shouldn't feel they are entering 'other' people's spaces.
- Arts activities are excellent ways to encourage empathy. Acting and writing both actively encourage the adoption of another person's point of view. Telling one's own story or another person's story well requires an understanding of the aspects of personal experience which will resonate with and engage audiences effectively.
- It is most powerful when people can identify commonalities between groups for themselves. In some cases it is useful to point these out directly as the project progresses. For example, participants in the Guns, Gangs, and Knives project took part in role-plays which explored emotional responses to bullying. At different stages of the project, facilitators drew out how participants all liked the same footballers, all admired hard work, all reacted the same way to teasing, and so on. The involvement of skilled facilitators who are able to articulate these commonalities is particularly important.
- When asking people to share the kind of information that would reveal an underlying cross-cultural commonality, all the projects discussed above had to invest time in building up trust between participants and employed community workers with excellent interpersonal skills.

Thinking: the unique elements of interculturalism

While traditional multicultural practice foregrounds differences and suggests that these differences be 'respected', the activities outlined above aim to foreground commonalities. Moreover, many arts-based projects seek to go beyond merely bringing commonalities to light and encourage participants to actively engage with them in

order to improve the social conditions of participants and others in society (e.g. through collective social action). The importance of creative media in developing people's capacity to empathise with others is central here. As the lead for the Koruso! project put it: "the stuff that works best is the stuff that emphasises commonalities of the human condition...In minor ways we are different and in major ways the same – doing projects based on that philosophy stands the test of time."

Impact

There is evidence – both anecdotal and formal – that suggests that projects which help people see their commonalities with others raise confidence, promote engagement with others, and encourage a sense of shared humanity. Evaluations of the Connecting Stories project include comments such as:

All cultures, I think, and all religions have some values in common – against stealing, against lying, against backbiting – and stories convey this sense of what's good or bad...I told the story of the goat and the kids, and then I found it's a story in other cultures too – so people will know we come from another country but we are not so different.

Less clear, however, is the long-term impact of such interventions. One interviewee explained that the factors which encourage cross-community conflict – in particular peer prejudices – are so pervasive that one-off, short-term projects may not be able to address these completely.

3.2 Imparting the skills necessary to live with and benefit from 'diversity'

Many organisations said they felt that different communities were coming into contact to a degree not seen in the past.⁹ They noted, however, that people need particular skills in order to interact peacefully and fruitfully with 'other' communities. Three areas of skills development in particular were singled out:

- helping people to feel more secure in their own identity
- tackling negative attitudes and perceptions
- developing conflict resolution skills

(i) Making people more secure in their own identity

Some organisations talked about a need to make people feel at ease with their own identities before embarking on work that connected them with other cultures. In particular, experience suggests that marginalised or minority groups need to be confident with their own voices and to understand their own cultures before they can engage with others on an equal basis.

Some organisations, such as Aik Saath, incorporate activities within their training programmes that are specifically designed

⁹ This was attributed to a greater turnover of newer migratory communities, and second- and third-generation migrants exercising greater freedom of movement. The perception was relayed anecdotally or as a vague impression. For a more robust overview see Wood et al (2006) op cit who provide a local authority 'isolation index' which shows the likelihood that an individual will live next door to someone from a different ethnic background.

to encourage people to reflect on and foreground their own identity (as a precursor to more outward looking activities). For example, teachers working with newly arrived West African migrants in Slough noticed that those pupils were particularly reticent whenever discussions about 'home' or 'belonging' arose. To address this Aik Saath devised a programme of support which began by exploring the factors that make up identity and who we are – such as hobbies, interests, family life, and so on – and then moved on to explore what aspects of community life allowed the promotion of those factors. Drawing on the traditional West African art form of kente cloth – a hand-woven cloth that represents a family or society's culture and history – pupils then produced a giant kente cloth map of the UK that wove in aspects of their own identity.

Some organisations – particularly those providing arts activities – deliberately target their work at young people at risk and particular BME communities (depending on the demography of their surrounding area). The focus of these projects tends to be on helping individuals articulate and communicate their response to a chosen theme or topic – such as 'community' or 'home' – and using this to help participants talk about their own identity and culture. Establishing a space dedicated to hearing people's stories like this does a lot to convince individuals that their views matter and builds their confidence to talk to others about their opinions.

Doing projects like this well

Some key points arise about good practice in delivering projects well:

- With performance-based projects it is important for participants to have an opportunity to present their final product to an audience. This lends legitimacy to their views and experiences; the presence of an audience that wants to hear their story is a powerful confidence-booster and helps people to embed new thinking and ideas about culture.
- Intercultural work – such as myth-busting, conflict resolution, bridge-building – can change an individual's worldview, and this – at least in the short-term – can be disorientating, especially for young people. It is important to build positive associations with intercultural work, and making people feel confident in their own identities is one way of doing this.

Thinking: the unique elements of interculturalism

The activities outlined above aimed to make people feel more secure in their own identities as a precursor to learning about other cultures, customs, and traditions. This can reassure people that engaging in intercultural exchange does not mean 'losing' their own heritage.

Many of the activities also had an element of confidence-building and development of communication skills in addition to the focus on individual culture. When asked about the impact of these activities, a number of practitioners talked about how the project improved participants' public speaking, encouraged people to think about how to impart information to peers, and led people to believe that their voices and views are valued. This is not separate to the idea of improved community relations. Practitioners we interviewed suggested that confident

individuals who are secure in their own sense of culture and identity will be less receptive to the root causes of conflict – envy and fear of the ‘other’ – and will also be open to others.

Impact

Invariably, the activities undertaken were conducted as part of wider cohesion-related programmes of support. As such, organisations tended not to measure the impact of confidence-raising activities separately. However, there is a wealth of anecdotal evidence from interviews and project evaluations that such activities make people feel their heritage is valued and that this security gives them more confidence to interact with other communities.

An important question, however, is the extent to which such activities encourage subsequent interaction that is substantive, meaningful, and which genuinely breaks down cultural barriers. There is little evidence that this is the case. Indeed, the responses from some participants suggest that the confidence instilled by such activities may lead them to engage in interaction primarily as ‘advocates’ of their own heritage and culture rather than as a means of exploring and learning from other cultures. In other words, undertaken on their own, such activities do not necessarily guarantee meaningful intercultural dialogue will take place.

(ii) Tackling negative attitudes and perceptions

Some organisations are actively trying to tackle discrimination and stereotyping by providing young people with a knowledge and understanding of different cultures. The

Early Years Media Initiative, for example, builds a rapport with under-fives through the use of five one-minute cartoons which are shown on national television in Northern Ireland. The cartoons feature characters young children can easily identify with and explore issues to do with sectarian, ethnic, and disability-related discrimination and bullying. The cartoons are backed-up with resources practitioners can use. For example, each cartoon character has an associated puppet and in the past teachers have used these puppets to talk about the Chinese New Year or prejudices surrounding Travellers.

Each of the cartoons in the Early Years Media Initiative deals with a specific case of exclusion or bullying. The emotional attachment children form with the characters enables teachers in the classroom and other practitioners to explain what discrimination ‘looks like’ – why some words, such as ‘gypsy’, can be hurtful or discriminatory, for example – and to explore these feelings in greater depth.

This project also offers training workshops for practitioners and parents. Parents, for example, are asked to reflect on their first experiences of discrimination and how this made them feel. Central to this is the creation of a safe space where people can reflect on and challenge their own thinking, prejudices, and attitudes.

The establishment of a safe space where people can discuss issues of equality and discrimination is an important element of intercultural work. Many organisations recognise that a lot of young people have questions about key equality-related topics

which often go unheard or unaddressed. Probably as a consequence of the security and terrorism fears of the past decade, many of these questions – and therefore many projects – relate to religion and its relationship with extremism and human rights. In response, organisations such as the Three Faiths Forum and the St Phillip's Centre provide workshops in which pupils and students can discuss particular religions' approaches to key topics such as sexuality, women's rights, tolerance, and violence and extremism. Common to all of this work is an emphasis on discussion and debate. Facilitators aim to mediate a conversation within a framework of respect as much as they try to impart knowledge and correct misconceptions.

Doing projects like this well

Some key points arise about good practice in delivering projects well:

- Working with young people is particularly important. The Early Years Media Initiative was backed by a strong evidence base which showed that children as young as three can develop racist or sectarian attitudes and by six can hold strong racist views.
- Wherever possible it is important that work with young people is supplemented with equivalent training and support for adults, particularly parents and teachers. The training provided by the Early Years Media Initiative works with adults to show how their own cultural identity has developed and how negative attitudes and perceptions are unconsciously absorbed by children.
- It is important that training and support starts from where participants are – i.e. it begins from participants' baseline understanding of the issues and avoids the temptation to do too much too soon.
- Peer-led training can have significant benefits – in some projects young people were able to impart messages with a passion, enthusiasm, and familiarity that helped make them more credible to other young people. Other organisations, however, highlighted the importance of having skilled facilitators who are able to handle conflict and dissent confidently – skills that young people may not have had time to develop.
- It is important that materials and information about minority groups does not reinforce stereotypes or portray them as 'victims'. In an Early Years Media Initiative cartoon dealing with bullying, for example, a Nigerian character helps another child who is the victim of bullying. Moreover, it is the child being bullied who ultimately has the competence and confidence to help the other characters change their attitudes.
- Nearly all the projects reported that it was not uncommon for parents to question why their children were undergoing training of this sort, with many arguing that children are 'too young' to develop prejudiced or discriminatory views. It is important, therefore, to be able to cite evidence that shows that people absorb the ideas, views and prejudices of their culture from a very early age.
- Practitioners should not 'blame' or 'punish', but support people to explore why they are saying particular things or acting in particular ways. For example one interviewee said:

I was going to resident groups and people were bad mouthing black neighbours and I was saying 'no you can't say that'. But I realised we need to help them to change their language: they need support.

Another noted:

There's no point me saying 'EDL/BNP are bad'. People would say 'you're bound to say that'. We try to create a space where people feel they can unravel what these causes stand for and whether this is necessarily conducive to the type of society we want to create.

- Gradual shifts are often required. People need to go through particular steps themselves in order to embrace new ideas and behaviours. It is important not to bypass those steps as this can lead to people not being signed up to change. The Early Years Media Initiative described the need to help people explore how they 'feel' about particular issues. This then leads to better 'understanding' and finally to 'changed behaviours'. The Learning to Advise project identified the need to "explore our personal beliefs and thinking and what shapes this – alongside how we must act as professionals and how we must provide services."

Thinking: the unique elements of interculturalism

The projects described above all attempt to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions through the provision of information. Intercultural activities appear to differ from traditional approaches in this area in four crucial respects:

- First, information or data about people's customs and practices or 'correct'

terminology is seen as the start, *not the end*, of the learning process. Organisations were at pains to point out that such information is a platform upon which to build a more considered understanding of a different culture.

- Second, learning about different cultures requires the active identification of their underlying values, principles and norms (as exemplified in their attitudes to women, homosexuality, authority, family, conflict, and so on). In all the projects discussed above participants were encouraged to grapple with the implications of these norms and work out how they sat with their existing ideas and values.
- Third, the provision of a body of 'cultural knowledge' is less important than participation in an open discussion in which questions can be asked and views debated within a framework of respect and tolerance. Such discussions must be facilitated by someone with a sound grasp of the cultures under discussion.
- Fourth, if information about different cultures or communities is being presented, it is important that people from those cultures are not portrayed in a patronising or condescending manner.

The pedagogical methodologies employed during these activities also reflect a particular attitude to conflict which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Impact

Some of the projects employed extremely robust methods to evaluate impact. The Early Years Media Initiative, for example,

was independently evaluated by researchers at the Centre for Effective Education and was found (a) to significantly increase children's ability to recognise exclusion, and (b) help children develop a greater understanding of how being excluded might make someone feel.¹⁰ Other projects, such as the Three Faiths Forum, were able to point to greater cultural awareness and knowledge of different faiths.

(iii) Using dialogue to avoid and resolve conflict

Most organisations working to prevent conflict argued that many of the roots of conflict lie in structural causes such as the persistence of deprivation, the manner in which funding is allocated, and the historic isolation (or 'segregation') of some communities.¹¹ However, the further consequences of some of these factors – mistrust of a caricatured 'other', or jealousy or resentment arising from the allocation of public resources – could, it was argued, be tackled through dialogue.

Practitioners identified a number of 'dialogue techniques' which allow people to engage in dialogue without stoking up the animosity which can lead to conflict. For example, the Three Faiths Forum provides young people with a methodological framework with which to question other people about their religion in a sensitive manner. The ASKeR framework prompts

individuals to think about the assumptions underpinning their inquiries, their intention in asking particular questions, and whether particular words or phrases are open to misinterpretation. This shares a lot with good mediation techniques that help people to become more aware of their 'interests' and 'positions' when engaging in dialogue. The Three Faiths Forum also promotes the use of the 'oops/ouch' tool, which encourages young people to say 'ouch' when a question or statement hurts them and 'oops' when something comes out wrong or they are unsure of phrasing. The tools appear very popular, with young people 'self-regulating' their conversations both inside the classroom and out.

Together for Peace referred to the importance of using other dialogue methods such as open space, world café and appreciative inquiry. These are useful because they are designed to maximise respectful interaction and decision-making amongst diverse groups. They help with the development of 'non-judgmental' environments for people to get things 'off their chest'. This is a first step to then working with those involved to open up opportunities for dialogue with people they see as 'the problem'.

Other projects identified facilitation approaches that, over time can help participants develop the skills to engage in meaningful discussion. For example, the FolesHillfields Vision Project, a community organisation working in a disadvantaged area of Coventry, occasionally holds meetings or debates about potentially contentious topics. Facilitators make people aware when they are simply attaching

¹⁰ Connolly, P, Miller, S and Eakin, A (2010) *A Cluster Randomised Trial Evaluation of the Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference Programme*: Centre for Effective Education, Queen's University Belfast

¹¹ This is discussed in more detail in section 5.

blame to a particular community, for example, or employ features such as timed listening to 'force' individuals to listen to other people's point of view.

Finally, some organisations highlighted the importance of asking the 'right' questions with those involved in potential conflict to ensure support is designed to meet their needs and interests. Aik Saath, for example, asks participants to identify all the different communities they're part of (local, national, interest-based, religious, and so on). The organisation then works with participants to apply this framework to identify the extent to which different communities are cohesive, where problems might lie, what factors may prevent certain communities feeling as if they belong, and so on. This is a useful approach that allows people to talk with some degree of objectivity about the conflict they see in society. A programme of support is then developed in response to specific concerns individuals raise.

Doing projects like this well

Some key points arise about good practice in delivering projects well:

- Projects talked about the importance of having a range of 'tools' to encourage effective dialogue. They also stressed the importance of practising dialogue over time to build skills and confidence. The establishment of a 'safe space' in which debate is encouraged was seen as central to this. For the practitioners we spoke to, a safe space is one where:
 - people's right to speak is respected. This does not mean that what they actually say has to go unchallenged
- people are proactively welcomed and made to feel comfortable. This is especially the case for people who may have reservations about discussing their own and others' cultures
- people are guided to genuinely discuss issues, rather than attribute blame to particular groups
- rules – that is, the normal conventions and etiquette of discussion – are set out clearly from the start
- Conflict is not seen negatively; rather, it is seen as an essential step in helping people from different backgrounds learn about each other in a less than superficial way. However, it is important to have trained facilitators who can channel the conflict and disagreement productively.
- Where conflict arises, people should try to tackle the issues head on and trained facilitators are important here. Conflict, however, may not be direct confrontation: it may be people holding back from engaging with others. Again, there need to be facilitators on hand who can help disengaged participants re-engage and become effectively involved.
- People should be given a chance to resolve their own conflicts and by sharing information and supporting dialogue projects can play a role in this. For example, a lot of conflict will revolve around local issues – competition for resources, for example. It is important to place these local issues within a global context: how the media perpetuates stereotypes, the impact of global capitalism, and so on.

Thinking: the unique elements of interculturalism

The approach of intercultural dialogue to issues of conflict allows for discussion and critique of cultural 'taboos' and cultural boundaries in a way traditional multicultural approaches perhaps don't. Intercultural dialogue explicitly recognises and encourages conflict (within a framework of shared respect) in order to identify similarities and differences between groups. By contrast, some versions of community cohesion seek almost to 'engineer' harmony by bypassing this conflict and debate and encouraging sign-up to shared values.

Impact

Many organisations were able to provide examples of how imparting conflict management skills promoted important cohesion-related outcomes such as the practice of effective communication strategies, the genuine and in-depth discussion of values and ideals, and the capacity to recognise when conflict is arising within the context of a one-to-one situation.

Evidencing genuine, attitudinal change is obviously much harder. However, many organisations reported that people felt more comfortable or were more ready to challenge and question people from 'other' cultures about their attitudes and beliefs. These exchanges rarely resulted in the conflict being resolved conclusively; instead, organisations claimed that it was enough that views had been aired and people felt enough trust in each other to ask challenging questions.

(iv) Helping marginalised groups engage in civic dialogue

Some projects work specifically with marginalised groups to impart the skills necessary to engage more in public life. For example, Cheltenham Borough Council's Community Ambassadors Programme¹² provides a ten-week training programme to give members of traditionally marginalised communities the skills to get involved in decision-making and policy. Similarly, Stoke-on-Trent Citizens' Advice Bureau runs a training programme for newly arrived asylum seekers which aims to equip them with the skills to support people phoning the Bureau. As such, the programme covers material common to normal Adviser training – an understanding of equality, an overview of the historic changes Stoke has undergone socially and economically – although additional literacy courses are provided in recognition of a specific skills gap in this area.

Doing projects like this well

Some key points arise about good practice in delivering projects well:

- Training programmes of this sort tend to have three key elements: confidence building (which can be achieved through exposure to meetings and debates); learning about meeting protocols (communication, understanding minutes); and learning about local government (the structure of local authorities, the role of different agencies). There is an opportunity to add some variety into the training programme by inviting different public

¹² Now called CHAMPS (Cheltenham Ambassadors for People and Services)

service agencies to talk about their organisation's functions

- Successful programmes responded to different levels of English language competence.
- Confidence-building is key: it is important that participants are able to ask questions (both in training and subsequently). A large part of their role is to bring their perspectives to bear on the decision-making process, so it is important they are confident that their voices count.
- In building people up to act as ambassadors for an organisation, it is important not to confer upon them the status of 'community representative'.
- Projects of this sort offer obvious opportunities for marginalised groups to provide information about public service access, experience and improvement. They can also help with 'myth-busting' and awareness-raising about issues marginalised groups face. Stoke-on-Trent Citizen's Advice Bureau, for example, supported asylum seekers to engage with young people in schools to de-fuse misconceptions and prejudices. Cheltenham Borough Council devised a play, based on genuine stories, showing the negative experiences marginalised groups can have when accessing public services. The audience was encouraged to offer suggestions on how the interaction could be improved, after which the scenes were replayed showing the more positive outcome that can be achieved.

Thinking: the unique elements of interculturalism

Traditional 'multicultural' approaches to community engagement and involvement tend to either see minority communities as passive users of services or utilise 'community representative' approaches that often place disproportionate emphasis on people's cultural 'background' as a means of establishing their credibility or 'authenticity' when engaging in civic dialogue. By placing an emphasis on skills and knowledge of individuals, some of the projects we spoke to are moving beyond these conventional approaches.

It is possible to discern from the projects outlined above a curriculum that develops the skills required to engage in wider civic discourse. Central to this is literacy and English language provision, then confidence in engaging in the decision-making process, understanding the structure of public services, and appreciating the etiquettes associated with civic dialogue.

Impact

An important element of the above projects is the confidence and capability they give people from traditionally marginalised groups to participate more fully in society. Stoke-on-Trent CAB's Learning to Advise project, for example, resulted in asylum seekers becoming effective and integral members of the CAB team. As the project co-ordinator put it: "when they first started it was hard to imagine that one day 'those' people would form a normal part of the staff base at the CAB, that people who were initially 'strangers' are now colleagues who have a joke and share cups of tea before starting a day's work."

3.3 Spaces ‘of’ and spaces ‘for’ intercultural dialogue

Encouraging interaction between people from different backgrounds is a central feature of intercultural exchange. This section outlines how organisations facilitate this exchange. In his overview of intercultural theory, James¹³ makes a distinction between spaces *for* interculturalism and spaces *of* interculturalism. Spaces for interculturalism exist to encourage dialogue between people from different cultures. Spaces of interculturalism don’t foreground culture at all: they exist entirely to encourage everyday interactions between people and this may lead to the development of mutual understanding and acceptance.

Creating neutral spaces ‘of’ interculturalism

A key characteristic of projects that aim to create ‘neutral spaces’ is that they are often established within ‘diverse’ communities with a history of conflict or separation.

St Peter’s Youth is typical in providing a range of sports-related activities such as martial arts, rock climbing, and football. Other projects of this type are more in the mould of traditional community or youth groups, with activities including litter-picks (the St Phillip’s Centre Youth Hub) or murder mystery parties (FolesHillfields Vision Project). In addition, some initiatives such as the Barton Hill Settlement aim to make public spaces accessible to a wider

range of people through the use of ambassador or guardian-type figures. In the case of Barton Hill these figures, called Play Rangers, use games and activities to encourage children to play outdoors. Their presence reduces children’s fear of bullying and alleviates parents’ concern about outside play.

An additional twist on this type of project are attempts to actively bring together conflicting communities, but in a manner which does not foreground or refer to the aspect of identity at the root of the conflict (be it ethnicity, geographical location, or some other factor). The grassroots work conducted by Peacemakers typifies this approach. Separately, communities were provided with the skills to address particular problems such as educational exclusion or excessive littering and graffiti. Once the communities had developed a track record of delivering in those areas, they were brought together to address the problem in a different area of the city or to share expertise and best practice.

Creating spaces ‘for’ intercultural dialogue

Projects that ‘target’ particular groups and bring them together used activities including ‘multicultural feasts’, interfaith celebration events, street festivals that bring together performers from different cultures, and football matches between particular groups.

Some projects bring people together on identity-based lines but conduct activities that focus on a third party. For example, the Southwark Interfaith Choir (amongst other things) sings South African freedom hymns, while the St Phillip’s Centre brings together members of the city’s disparate Jewish

¹³ James, M (2008) *Interculturalism: Theory and practice*: Baring Foundation and (2009) *Interculturalism: Social policy and grassroots work*: Baring Foundation.

communities to raise funds for women affected by domestic violence. In this way, participants are encouraged to put aside their own differences and focus on understanding the experiences – and, importantly, helping to address the problems – of others.

Together for Peace is engaged in direct brokerage between different groups and organisations. The organisation is able to connect individuals and groups who may want to work together. Its focus is on helping to create the ‘critical yeast’ required to engage people in collective social action. Recently, for example, it brought together a member of the Jewish community who wanted to stimulate interfaith dialogue with Muslim individuals interested in the same issues. Together, the parties have established an interfaith sports project.

Some projects took more active steps than others to directly engage people from different groups in intercultural dialogue. Some relied on ‘contact’ and hoped that people would discuss issues. Some encouraged and supported people to discuss relatively safe and non-controversial issues. Others encouraged and supported people to discuss more ‘edgy’ and controversial issues.

Doing projects like this well

Some key points arise about good practice in delivering projects well:

- Most projects – particularly those working with conflicting communities – conducted some preliminary work before bringing people together. For example:

- Limeside and Clarkwell Linking Project started facilitated discussions, then moved on to a one-off meal, before finally organising football matches between the two housing estates
- the Barton Hill Settlement started with door-knocks to find out what people are interested in, built up some momentum and interest, and then gradually introduced new projects and activities
- Peacemakers got people interested in a particular issue and up-skilled them so they felt they had something to share
- Spaces of interculturalism unite people around common interests (identified through consultation or involving potential beneficiaries in designing or managing the project).
- There are sometimes problems with communities ‘self-policing’ those individuals who want to engage in intercultural exchange. Young people in particular sometimes come under pressure from their peers not to ‘sell out’ their culture, and pressure from their parents to uphold the traditions and values of their heritage. In response, the most successful projects:
 - focus constantly on the ‘moral’ or ‘human’ value of the project. They challenge young people to think about the kind of society they wish to create and the kind of people they wish to be
 - try to get parents on board with the project’s aims and activities
- The venue in which interaction takes place is important. There are benefits of neutral, non-aligned spaces (alleviating fears and concerns about stepping into other people’s territory). However, there are also benefits in making people more familiar with public

spaces which they perceive as normally occupied or used by communities that are 'different' to them.

- Actively welcoming people who attend, being warm and friendly, being aware of body language and tone of voice, using humour appropriately – all takes on a slightly different meaning when applied to encouraging intercultural dialogue. Practitioners emphasised the importance of this in helping people to 'open up' to new ideas.

Thinking: the unique elements of interculturalism

A large number of the practitioners interviewed as part of this research did not necessarily see their project as specifically 'intercultural'. Some referred to their work as community cohesion focused, others did not ascribe any particular 'label'. It's worth noting then that practitioners weren't necessarily choosing to create spaces either 'of' or 'for' intercultural dialogue. Yet using these different terms can be helpful, particularly in considering how different approaches shape the nature of intercultural dialogue that happens and the outcomes of that dialogue.

In their descriptions of their projects, some practitioners felt that spaces 'of' intercultural dialogue can be as important and useful as spaces 'for' intercultural dialogue. This is because people are just as likely to engage in that dialogue in mundane, everyday spaces (at the park, or in the nursery) as they are in an environment that has been created specifically *for* the purpose of intercultural dialogue. Other practitioners were clearly more in favour of creating

spaces for intercultural dialogue because less is left to chance and conditions can be set to maximise the focus on intercultural issues.

Different approaches seem appropriate in different situations. For example, it may be important to build trust between groups before issues of culture are discussed at all. That said, a strong theme that emerged from interviews was that creating 'contact' between people from different cultures does not necessarily automatically result in intercultural dialogue. Some of the other approaches described above would be required to help this to happen. As one respondent put it: "it's not enough to go round to somebody's house and eat curry."

Impact

The extent to which projects working in this field effected long-term, sustainable change appears to be dependent on two factors. Firstly, the length of time people are brought together for. Projects that only brought people together for specific, one-off events tended to find the impact of such interactions limited. In many respects this is unsurprising; indeed, project organisers themselves often pointed out that attitudinal change doesn't happen overnight.

The second factor appears to be the extent to which people are encouraged to engage meaningfully on an issue or topic. Projects which brought people together to share meals or engage in sporting activities did not report the same long-term effect on cohesion as those projects which brought people together to solve a problem (or organise an event, or lobby local councillors etc). Our research was unable to uncover

formal evidence of attitudinal change (research on indicators of cohesion, for example), so much of this analysis is based on project organisers' perception of how people 'get on' with each other. Nevertheless, most projects said they have anecdotal evidence in this regard.

CONC LUSIO NS

(nearly there...)

4. Conclusions

In this section we analyse and draw together lessons from the awarded projects and do this under three headings: 'intercultural practice'; 'intercultural thinking'; and 'benefits of interculturalism'. The final section identifies where we believe more may need to be done to develop intercultural thinking and practice to improve its 'currency' as a model of community relations in the current climate.

4.1 Intercultural practice

A key challenge in drawing out good intercultural practice is that very few projects felt they were explicitly delivering 'intercultural' projects. Many referred to them as 'community cohesion' projects for instance. Also much of the practice we identified would be equally relevant to many other types of community-based projects – the need to manage projects well, for example, or to treat project participants as individuals and respond to individual needs. While 'good management' factors such as these clearly helped the best ABC projects achieve success the focus of this section is not on the generic but specifically on what aids or delivers effective intercultural practice.

However, both the *types* of activities awarded projects undertook and *effective approaches to implementing them* are significant.

As regards *types* of activity, from the examples of ABC awarded projects we spoke to, a definably 'intercultural' project

could be said to include one or more of the following types of activities:

- **Weakening cultural boundaries:** activities to question how 'fixed' concepts such as culture, ethnicity and religion are. Either by explicitly unravelling those concepts (e.g. 'race' is not a biological construct it is a social one), or by sharing information to challenge people's pre-conceptions about minority groups that are 'othered' and helping people to see commonalities between different groups.
- **Developing skills to live with and benefit from 'diversity':** activities to help people to be more confident about their own identity and culture so that they can then engage in dialogue with others about their own and others' cultures. Activities to respond to the formation of negative attitudes and stereotypes that perpetuate inequality and prevent cross-community interaction and mutual understanding. Also activities to respond to and avoid conflict through facilitated dialogue and to help people with 'marginalised' voices engage more effectively in civic dialogue.
- **Creating spaces 'of' and 'for' intercultural dialogue:** activities to create the right kind of environment where intercultural dialogue can take place. Either by actively targeting people from different cultures and bringing them together to specifically engage in intercultural dialogue through activities like sharing food (spaces 'for'), or by creating spaces where anybody can come along to interact with others in ways which may or may not result in intercultural dialogue.

It is important to note, however, that we found that undertaking one of these activities on its own will not necessarily result in intercultural dialogue. For example, helping people to feel more confident in their own culture and identity or helping them to engage with public policy-makers will not necessarily mean they are engaging in 'intercultural' dialogue. However, when a number of the activities listed above are combined, they do have the potential to deliver on the Baring Foundation's working definition of interculturality (see section 1.1).

As regards effective implementation, some key themes include:

- **Strong facilitation:** helping people feel willing to engage in dialogue and share their feelings on sensitive and emotive issues; letting people identify for themselves what they have learnt through intercultural dialogue and supporting people to do this and respond to the consequences of this in their lives when needed.
- **Responding to the way prejudices, attitudes, and norms are created:** importance of working with young people and of education in helping people understand the negative and harmful effects of stereotypes. Good projects responded to the effects of 'peer pressure' and the role of family, friends and 'society' in perpetuating negative attitudes and preventing effective dialogue.
- **Using art, music and other forms of creativity to promote dialogue:** given the identity-focused and (at times) emotive and personal nature of intercultural dialogue it is perhaps unsurprising that artistic and

creative methods that encourage self-expression were used to help people express themselves, build confidence and promote dialogue.

- **Dialogue methods:** strong focus on the type of physical environment that encourages dialogue (e.g. 'neutral spaces') and the type of 'rules' of conduct that enable effective dialogue on issues of culture (e.g., conflict mediation techniques, using 'pause' and 'time out' to allow people to say when issues are difficult or uncomfortable).
- **Energy and engagement:** importance of trust-building activities to get people on board and contribute to discussion. Strong emphasis on the need to make intercultural dialogue activities not 'too heavy' and fun and to not 'blame' people if they get things about equality, diversity, and culture 'wrong' (as has sometimes been the tendency in the past).

4.2 Intercultural thinking

Clearly there will be some crossover with aspects of intercultural 'practice' here, but we believe there is merit in drawing out some of the theory and principles underlying interculturalism. This is because the way practitioners 'think' about community relations, equality, and human rights has a significant effect on the way they deliver and judge the impact of intercultural activities.

This section summarises the thinking behind successful projects we interviewed. Some of these key principles are reflected

in previous literature on the subject.¹⁴ Other key principles practitioners identified were less well covered in the literature and more focus is placed on these in the summary below.

Equal status

Intercultural dialogue must take the form of a dialogue between equals. This means people have equal opportunities to contribute, and that their views are listened to and considered seriously. It also requires a presumption on the part of participants that they will be entering into the relationship on an equal status. This can be achieved through the use of ground rules, facilitation that deals effectively with overbearing participants, and the consideration of external factors such as the choice of venue, how accessible it is, and so on.

However, there are other factors outside the control of facilitators that affect the degree to which people are able to interact as equals. This may be the pervasiveness of prejudices within society, levels of historical disadvantage, a language skills deficit, or the capacity to engage in public discourse. Obviously, dialogue has a role in combatting some of these factors, but additional work to tackle structural inequality and disadvantage is also necessary if this principle is to be realised.¹⁵

¹⁴ Some of the principles are very similar to the factors Allport identified as the pillars to effective, prejudice-reducing interaction in *The Nature of Prejudice* (1979).

¹⁵ A point made strongly in Sondhi and Murray's chapter 'Socio-political influences on cross-cultural encounters: notes towards a framework for the analysis of context' in Knapp, K et al (eds) (1987)

Common goals

Intercultural dialogue works best when individuals are engaged in a common project. The goal may arise naturally and apply to everyone by virtue of shared experiences or circumstances, or it may be a goal devised by a facilitator. Naturally occurring goals might be social issues such as rising unemployment, educational exclusion, or a shared experience of, say, gang culture. Goals devised by a facilitator are most commonly seen in youth club or community group settings where organisers instigate a project or group activity. In such cases, the extent to which people sign up to the project depends on things like the credibility of the facilitator, the trust participants have in him/her, and the extent to which the nature of the project aligns with their reasons for attending (for example, how much fun it is).

Obviously, there are deep-rooted issues that prevent people from seeing their shared stake in common issues and which prevent them from acting in concert even if they do. Intercultural dialogue works best when preparatory work is conducted to overcome some of these barriers. However, a serious attempt to overcome barriers should also explore the root causes (social, structural, economic, political, etc) of such attitudes – the competition encouraged by the way resources are allocated, for example, or the perpetuation of identity-based ways of thinking in public policy disputes.

Individuals, not representatives

Intercultural dialogue is most efficacious when it is clear people are brought together as individuals, not as representatives of this or that community. A significant feature of intercultural dialogue is that it brings people together to relax and engage with each other in a friendly way. If people are brought together as 'representatives' of a particular community there is a danger they will conform to this role and cultural boundaries and other inhibitions will be perpetuated and reinforced rather than overcome.

Values and frameworks

Intercultural dialogue works best when it is conducted within a clear, principled framework. Some of the projects considered in this report subscribed to the principles of equality, the universality of human rights, respect, and tolerance, and therefore mediated discussion with reference to those values. This allows potentially contentious issues – such as reconciling some religious attitudes to homosexuality – to be dealt with objectively and relatively clearly. Central to this are strong facilitation skills and the ability to find values and principles that everyone can subscribe to.

However, notwithstanding one or two notable exceptions, it is clear the imposition of a 'values' framework through which issues could be discussed and debated worried a lot of organisations undertaking work in this area. In large part this was due to the lack of availability of a common set of values that it was felt all people from all backgrounds could subscribe to. Some projects felt that in order for intercultural dialogue to flourish it is necessary for us as a society to identify those things we value

most and against which difficult choices and decisions can be made (e.g. which cultural practices are 'appropriate' or not in society).¹⁶

Central role of dialogue

Although this may seem fairly straightforward, interculturalism recognises that the way we talk about and discuss issues of identity and culture are important because this can help to transform and change social relations. Conversely, multicultural approaches to dialogue have tended to favour the 'celebration' of difference and have consequently discouraged discussion that critiques cultural practices, values or 'boundaries'. This has led to the conservation of those boundaries and a maintenance of power relationships that some people may wish to challenge in order to improve their lives or change their personal circumstances. Intercultural dialogue focuses on the freedom of people to discuss and challenge their own and others' cultural views and actions. This is important because cultural actions cannot be completely 'unconditional' – we are all interdependent – and cultural actions are contingent on the ability of all to exercise their rights and freedoms in society.

Culture is important

Cultural factors affect people's perception and behaviour and are an integral part of how we relate to individuals and groups. At face value, intercultural and multicultural approaches share a focus on 'culture'. But

¹⁶ Explored further in other literature such as Messick, D (1995) *Equality, Fairness and Social Conflict* in 'Social Justice Research' Vol. 8 No. 2 1995

acknowledging the importance of culture to social relations and social outcomes has, according to some commentators, become problematical. Scheffer, for example, maintains that multiculturalism “attributes no explicatory value to culture”.¹⁷ All cultures are deemed equal and so can’t be used to explain disparities between ethnic groups in terms of crime, employment, and so on. As such, “multiculturalism is happy to discuss anything else [for example, class] as long as cultures are spared criticism”.

A key difference, then, between the multicultural and intercultural positions is that multiculturalism, in seeking to avoid the dominance or superiority of one culture over another, avoids discussion of culture. Interculturalism says that it is permissible – indeed important – to discuss the impact of ‘culture’ on people’s ability to exercise their freedoms. Interculturalism does not suggest that one culture is better than another but it does recognise that culture – in addition to other factors, such as racism, structural inequality and discrimination – does influence social outcomes. An intercultural approach enables us to examine what it is about ‘culture’ that should be discussed as a route to improving social conditions.

Using culture as a ‘route’ to improving social conditions is not new of course. Norman Tebbit advocated his ‘cricket test’; more recently the historian David Starkey claimed that ‘black culture’ had become the default for young people and that young ‘whites’ had become ‘blacks’. In both cases, the primary motivation was cultural superiority –

the replacing of a problematical ‘bad’ culture with a beneficial ‘good’ (and, of course, ‘white’ or ‘British’). These examples do serve to illustrate why a debate that admits of culture as a key ingredient needs careful, informed, sensitive support and in many cases facilitation.

[Shared humanity – the role of culture in preventing and enabling collective action](#)

For some social activists discussing issues of culture and identity is not ‘hard-edged’ enough. It is too woolly and a distraction from more pressing issues of income inequality and class struggle. Perhaps this is partly because we haven’t yet found a way to demonstrate the role that culture and identity can play in helping and preventing effective social action. Gary Younge suggests that the way we have approached identity and culture, particularly the advent of ‘identity politics’ (and the lack of collective action this entails) has disempowered and disconnected the Left from meaningful political engagement on social equality: “liberals occasionally pay lip service to an agenda of social equality they no longer believe in.”¹⁸ He feels that those on the Right have always been opposed to the idea that identity has anything to do with politics at all as we are all individually and wholly responsible for our own futures.

Interculturalism suggests there is a space to include discussion of culture and identity in social and political action in a way that is more meaningful. Culture is seen as an important part of our *shared* humanity and not as something that is out-of-bounds and

¹⁷ Scheffer, P (2011) *Immigrant Nations*: Polity Press

¹⁸ Younge, G (2010) *Who are We – and Should it Matter in the 21st Century?*: Viking

never to be discussed. It is in discussions about our shared humanity – the commonalities we share – that people will be better able to come together and develop social action against threats to freedom we all face (such as global economic crises or global warming).

4.3 Benefits of interculturalism

The previous section identified some of the challenges involved in understanding the impact of intercultural practice. These can be summarised as:

- lack of evidence about impact of intercultural practice
- difficulties in comparing the impact of 'intercultural' projects to what impact would have looked like if, for example, a 'multicultural' approach had been taken (as no direct comparison was available)
- differences in opinion amongst practitioners about what 'interculturalism' means, what it should look like in practical implementation, and what an 'effective' outcome would look like

That said, using the Baring Foundation's working definition of interculturalism as a guide, benefits and impact from the projects were discernible – as, in some cases, were the limitations of such work. To summarise, so far in this report we have discussed the following:

- Activities to share 'hidden histories' of different groups can result in development of more 'socially constructive ideas, attitudes and views' which led to an

'openness' conducive to further cross-community interaction.

- Activities to help people see commonalities with others can raise confidence amongst minority groups to engage with others and encourages a sense of shared humanity. However, the long term impact of this type of activity is not clear.
- Activities to help people feel more secure in their own identity can help them feel their heritage is valued and as a result can make them more confident in interacting with other communities on issues of culture. However, those activities on their own do not necessarily result in subsequent interaction that is based on intercultural principles and breaks down cultural barriers.
- Activities to tackle negative attitudes and stereotypes can significantly increase children's ability to recognise exclusion, and help children develop a greater understanding of how being excluded might make someone feel. They can also help develop greater cultural awareness and knowledge of different faiths which can be useful skills for intercultural dialogue.
- Activities to impart conflict management skills helped people to engage in genuine and in-depth discussion of values and ideals, and it helped them to recognise when conflict is arising within the context of a one-to-one situation. Well-facilitated dialogue helped participants to feel more comfortable or be more ready to challenge and question people from 'other' cultures about their attitudes and beliefs. However, there was less evidence of conflicts being resolved conclusively. A number of

organisations claimed that it was enough that views had been aired and people felt enough trust in each other to ask challenging questions.

The final section of this report considers these problems.

- Activities to support traditionally marginalised groups to engage in civic dialogue can increase their confidence and capability to engage in discussions about things like decisions about public services. This type of activity can also increase interaction between traditionally marginalised groups and others.
- Creating spaces 'of' and 'for' intercultural dialogue can have different kinds of impact dependent on factors like the length of time people are brought together for (longer more impact). Also the extent to which people are encouraged to meaningfully engage on an issue can affect impact (projects that brought people together to share meals or play sport did not report the same long-term effects as projects which brought people together to solve a problem or work together on a particular campaign).

However, without a comparison to other projects or organisations adopting, say, an 'integrationist' approach or a 'multiculturalist' approach to the same issues it is hard to demonstrate definitively that intercultural approaches deliver 'benefits' that are consistently over and above other approaches to community relations.

Developing intercultural thinking and perhaps more importantly capturing and articulating its particular benefits more clearly are prerequisites if interculturalism is to gain wider currency.

**WHEN
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5. Where next?

Is interculturalism as currently theorised and practised (by awarded projects) delivering on its full potential as a model of community relations and does it respond to some of the key issues we are facing in the current economic, social, and political climate? If not, what might new areas of development be? How can the 'currency' of interculturalism be improved in the UK?

As an equality and human rights charity brap is excited by interculturalism. We think it has much potential and could be used to directly address some of the most important challenges Britain faces as we move deeper into the twenty-first century. These are important questions for brap too as we plan to undertake work that can help build skills for interculturalism in the future.

In this section we first outline some of the recent changes in the UK which will affect the degree to which interculturalism as a model of community relations is viewed as valuable and worth pursuing. Second, we outline some key aspects of interculturalism which we feel are particularly worth developing and 'promoting' as part of a drive to ramp-up its popular, mainstream currency.

5.1 The current climate

Public sector cuts, sluggish economic growth, and unemployment are part of the furniture in 2012. These are pervasive issues that affect all of us, irrespective of the sector, trade or profession in which we are engaged. Many recognise that the most

vulnerable and excluded are being hit hardest by public sector cuts. Yet the tools being used to engage those groups and to ask them about the issues that affect them and to lobby on their behalf remain the same. They remain largely informed by an approach to identity politics that was honed in the 1970s. Groups are encouraged to identify issues that affect 'their' group and attempt to secure resources or influence for their group on that basis.

Even when organisations (equality practitioners, community groups, civil society organisations) recognise that their actions revolve around 'identity politics' many still feel compelled to pursue this line – partly for want of a viable alternative that has currency, and partly because inequality has not gone away and they also see that their specific client group or community has a pressing need for support. And as long as some 'interest' groups continue to use 'identity' as a primary lever of entitlement, there is a reason for *all* interest groups to do this. If they don't they may miss out. Even when groups acknowledge that such tactics are unlikely to address the extent of inequality they face, they would rather secure these minimal gains than enable another group to receive them. Like a strange game of 'chicken' where all groups involved sense they may be heading for collision, neither is open or willing to back down or 'let go' of their claim in the interest of wider society (be that claim for resources, to engage in particular cultural practices or for the enjoyment of particular rights).

Multiculturalism as an approach to community relations and equality actively discouraged discussions about whether that type of identity politics was working or not. It encouraged us to recognise our interdependence only in so far as we all have a role to play in tolerating and respecting difference. And because multiculturalism emphasises difference and not shared oppression or disadvantage, it does not help us engage in collective social action to address inequalities that affect a range of vulnerable groups. It also alienated people from their own culture and identity if they did not 'fit' with a particular version of what they are supposed to be (if they didn't 'think' as an 'African Caribbean' for instance).

In the multicultural model it is very hard to engage in the type of discussion that will help people challenge and move beyond the particular cultural boundaries that are ascribed to them or which they choose to adopt. It separates rather than combines; it celebrates difference rather than asserts collective experience. It makes it hard to help people develop creative and pragmatic relationships or alliances with other groups that could help them address common issues of inequality and discrimination. It also makes it harder to engage in the kind of reasoned and rational discussion which would result in the proportionate and reasonable use of resources to address inequalities.

Over the last ten years people have recognised some of these drawbacks to multiculturalism. Yet they have been tolerated, perhaps partly because funding was available for different groups and there

were opportunities (sometimes with significant resources) for different interest groups to put their views across. For example, funding was available for race equality councils, for BME voluntary sector networks, and for initiatives to support particular minority groups in different areas of public service provision.

But the current economic, social and political environment is dramatically different and despite the problems this brings, it also offers new opportunities to break out of this cycle.

It is increasingly clear that under the Government's 'Big Society' philosophy few, if any, civil society organisations will be receiving resources to deliver services to 'their' communities, or to 'represent' or 'empower' particular groups or to advocate and lobby on the equality issues that affect them. People are instead being encouraged to volunteer their time and to find the resources they need from sources other than the state (whether these be philanthropic organisations, corporate donors, or the individual 'micro-donor').

The Government has also announced in its latest Equality Strategy that it plans to move away from 'identity' based approaches to equality, partly because of the problems associated with 'putting people into boxes'. Coupled with the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 which equalises protection for people with eight different types of protected characteristics, there is potential for the development of new approaches to implementing equality that recognise and respond to *common, shared* issues of inequality. Public authorities across the

country will face new challenges, for example, when they choose and prioritise their equality objectives in 2012. New ways of thinking about equality and new ways of supporting community relations will be required when difficult decisions have to be made regarding support for one particular 'community' or one particular aspect of public services.

Historically, there is also evidence to suggest that in times of great economic and social crisis excluded groups can and *do* come together in collective action – skin colour, religion, ethnic origin, and 'identity' submerged in a greater, common cause. In the 1980s, for example, it was not uncommon for Asian people to describe themselves as 'black' – this was 'black' as a 'political' term and a conscious combining of different sections of society to fight for race equality and indeed other types of equality. In 2011, with recent public sector strikes and large scale demonstrations, we may be starting to see a return to some of these trends of collective action.

This is one of the openings through which interculturalism might step. Interculturalism could help people from different communities and from different backgrounds talk about their differences and similarities in productive ways that can contribute to social change. It could help the government develop a vision of equality that is not led by 'identity'. It could also help public authorities as they struggle to balance their books and meet competing demands for resources, services and other public goods.

Yet there is of course no guarantee this will happen during this recession. We may have lost our ability to join together across communities and across different 'equality groups' in pursuit of social change. Crises can also intensify rather than break down barriers between communities; the collective action they promote (or give 'permission' for) can be oppressive and destructive, rather than progressive and beneficial. One only has to look at the way that public and political critiques of multiculturalism have been used opportunistically by far-right groups to foment division and stir up hatred in poor White working class communities. Or, indeed, the widespread riots in English cities during August 2011.

But there is certainly potential for interculturalism to put itself forward as a useful model for community relations that could help government and communities respond to the challenges we face. And while there are changes to public policy (not least in the government's approach to equality) that would make interculturalism much more relevant, we have to be realistic: it will be those who support interculturalism who will have to do the heavy lifting if this new thinking is to secure wider currency and a clear place on the public policy agenda.

5.2 How could intercultural thinking and practice be promoted?

We do not believe intercultural dialogue will (or should) be a substitute for work to address structural inequality or to promote and protect human rights. But it could help

to inform the actions that are taken to do that and to help respond to some of the inevitable difficulties and fall-out we will face as pressure on resources increases and vulnerable groups need support more.

Yet to do that we need to imagine the application of interculturalism in different settings such as in the design of public services, or in deciding allocation of funding to particular cultural groups. We also need to consider how intercultural dialogue might inform decisions that are made to promote and support action on equality and human rights.

The Baring Foundation's current working definition of interculturalism states:

Interculturality is a dynamic process whereby people from different cultures interact to learn about and question their own and each other's cultures. Over time this may lead to cultural change. It recognises the inequalities at work in society and the need to overcome these. It is a process which requires mutual respect and acknowledges human rights.

We feel that in order to progress the thinking and practice of interculturalism it is necessary to probe this definition further. In particular it is important to identify what that 'cultural change' might look like, how this might help in responding to inequality in society, and how it might contribute to promoting and protecting human rights. While this might take the remit of interculturalism beyond simply 'recognising' the need to overcome inequalities and 'acknowledging' human rights, this may be necessary if it is to have staying power and

is able to demonstrate its relevance in responding to some of the challenges we are facing in society.

Key areas for development could include:

(a) **Activities that capture the value of cultural freedom, and the value of cultural change**

Many of the ABC projects we spoke to recognised that seeing culture as 'fixed' and static can be damaging for people when it puts them into a 'box' that they don't always want to be in. This is sometimes called 'cultural conservatism'. Projects demonstrated that cultural and identity is more flexible than that and is shaped by a number of different things (e.g. gender, preferences and experiences). When people can choose how they want to think about and enact their culture, when they can question and sometimes challenge 'cultural boundaries' ascribed to them, this can be called 'cultural freedom'. However, we found through our research relatively little evidence that demonstrated the direct effect enjoying cultural freedom can have on people's lives. If one of the big advantages of interculturalism is that it is more likely to promote cultural freedom then we need to better capture examples of its effect. One example might be the ways in which cultural freedom can help to address gender inequality in communities and help young women choose to pursue educational opportunities despite pressure from peers not to. Another may be how cultural freedom can help people to speak out about injustices they see others perpetuating in their community (such as the poor treatment of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people). Over the long term it will be important to record how relatively minor actions and different

patterns of behaviour like this contribute to broader cultural and social change.

(b) Considering the implications of interculturalism for the design of public services

There are a number of examples of public service design which have been influenced directly by multicultural thinking. For example, aspects of specialist services and policies for particular cultural groups based on their ethnicity (like African Caribbean achievement plans for improving school performance). Clearly, much of the practice we encountered through the ABC awards was focused primarily on dialogue. However, there is potential to apply intercultural principles to design of public services. This could be either through the use of intercultural dialogue to identify common issues of exclusion faced by a range of different people from different cultural backgrounds and this could feed into service design. Or it could be through the design of services using a particular 'mind-set' that avoids putting service users into 'boxes' based on their identity that are not of their own choosing.

We are under no illusions as to how much of an uphill struggle this would be. Most importantly it would need to go hand in hand with work to address discrimination. Until the people that deliver those services are supported to understand why and how they discriminate there is a risk that any re-design of public services would not have a significant effect. Excluded groups would continue to experience services in the same way.

(c) Considering the implications of interculturalism for voluntary and community sector work

The ABC awards focused mainly on the activities of VCOs and there are rich examples of that work described in this report. Yet there are areas of VCS practice that are not covered in much detail and which when applied 'intercultural' could reap significant benefits for VCOs and those they work with. One example would be using intercultural approaches to help communities reflect on the effectiveness of 'representation' and 'community leaders' to speak on behalf of particular groups (e.g. by supporting people to recognise the diversity of views and approaches within particular 'cultural' groups). There are real opportunities for intercultural dialogue to help reinvigorate approaches to community engagement. It could help to involve excluded people that weren't previously able to get involved because they didn't 'fit' in a particular box. Another example would be using intercultural approaches to help VCOs that support particular 'identity groups' to engage with services users and think about the 'reach' and equality of their services. For example, are VCOs making assumptions about what 'their' community need when actually views and needs within the community may differ significantly? Intercultural dialogue could support this process of consultation, learning and improvement.

(d) Using interculturalism to motivate and support collective action

One of the most powerful things about intercultural dialogue is that it can offer glimpses of our shared humanity. This can encourage us to support each other and to

fight on behalf of each other to ensure all are treated equally and with humanity. A number of ABC projects showed this to great effect, where different groups came together as a result of dialogue to improve the lives of the whole community. As described in 5.1 above, we think more could be made of this as a way to break down some of the barriers that characterise the 'identity politics' of equality-focused lobbying and campaigning in the UK in particular. Intercultural dialogue offers us the tools to examine our differences and our similarities (such as the way people are excluded in society). This is a prime platform to launch collective action to address key structural and mainstream causes of inequality that affect a number of groups. When combined with a strong commitment to human rights principles, this type of 'pan-equality' action can be intensely inclusive and motivating for those involved.

(e) Interculturalism is about 'white' people too (and not just race and faith)

Traditional community cohesion activities have aimed to get people from different backgrounds interacting. The specific characteristic on which people were judged to be different was often race or faith. However, as the above ABC projects have shown people do not always identify these characteristics as defining qualities of themselves. At the same time, 'solitarist approaches' – which assume it is possible to understand people through one aspect of their identity – have come under increasing

criticism, as Sen and others have argued to great effect.¹⁹

Interculturalism proposes a more inclusive approach to community relations and dialogue. Although the focus is on culture, it allows for discussion of a wide range of factors that influence and shape people's views about that culture linked to ethnicity or faith (e.g. disability, sexual orientation, age, etc). It also has the potential to allow for discussion of 'culture', norms, and practices that can surround belonging to other particular groups (e.g. sexual orientation, gender, disability). One does not necessarily need to be from a BME group to engage in intercultural dialogue for it to be relevant. This aspect of interculturalism is one worth promoting in the future. We think it will help to improve its 'currency' in the UK because multiculturalism and community cohesion have been seen overwhelmingly as concerned with BME people and minority faith groups. This has, albeit unintentionally, served to exclude large tranches of the population from dialogue about what is required to make the UK a more accommodating place to live for all. By increasing engagement of others the process becomes more inclusive and allows for a more informed discussion. It also encourages people from minority *and* majority groups to reflect on how their views about culture and the stereotypes they hold can perpetuate disadvantage. For too long community relations has required only minority groups to reflect on this as though

¹⁹ Sen A (2007) *Identity and Violence: The illusion of destiny*. Penguin. James (2008) section 4.2 op cit also provides a useful summary of relevant texts

they were a problem to be fixed.
Interculturalism helps to re-tip the balance.

(f) **Debating and agreeing shared norms and a shared vision for society**

In some of the ABC projects discussed above debate, conflict, and dissent were welcomed within certain parameters and this allowed people to engage in safe and respectful dialogue about difference and ensure that cultural boundaries could be questioned and challenged. These were certainly, at times, edgy, dangerous and intensely productive conversations. However, we did not identify many examples of how people agreed on what aspects of people's cultural actions may need to 'change'; or to put it another way, what people may need to 'give up' for the greater good of society – to protect the rights and freedoms of all.

Community cohesion could be said to have encouraged the 'imposition' of common values without sufficient attention to the conflict and dialogue required to identify those values. Intercultural dialogue on the other hand offers us a route to identifying what some of those shared societal values, norms and standards of behaviour should be in a way people can engage in and sign up to. Yet, practical evidence of discussing which cultural practices are 'appropriate' in society and then agreeing shared norms and shared societal responsibility that people enact through their lives and actions remained elusive to us in our research. There has been much academic work to identify how societal norms should be

developed and agreed.²⁰ However, we feel this is worth exploring further using intercultural dialogue to explore key 'taboo' subjects that involve culture, cause conflict, and require more dialogue (e.g. wearing of religious dress in different situations).

(g) **Being clearer about the anticipated outcomes of models of community relations**

It must be acknowledged that one of the fundamental problems supporters of interculturalism face is that currently we lack an agreed framework which explains precisely what it is intended to achieve. Indeed, this is also the case with every other model of community relations that has preceded it: there is no consensus regarding the outcome. And in this vacuum, where the outcomes (let alone the 'successes') of multiculturalism or community cohesion or assimilationism have no generally agreed measure, it is difficult – perhaps even impossible – to sell the benefits of interculturalism as an alternative model.

As a key step in the 'popularisation' of interculturalism, some form of comparison of approaches is required.

In this spirit the rest of this section outlines two ways in which interculturalism could be compared to other approaches to community relations.

Firstly, in figure 1 below, we consider the ways an 'intercultural' approach differs from other types of community relations models

²⁰ See, for example, Habermas, J (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*: Beacon Press

or other 'isms'. To do this we have taken a range of social policy and social theory issues that interest policy-makers, public service providers and community groups and 're-imagined' what they might look like if an intercultural approach were applied. We examine how different models of community relations would respond to issues of:

- difference
- funding
- service design
- public decision-making
- approaches to dialogue
- culture and identity

Figure 1: A comparison framework for interculturalism

approaches to...	Assimilation	Multiculturalism	Community cohesion	Interculturalism (?)
difference	Differences aren't important – new arrivals to the country should 'fit in' with the 'native' culture	Cultural difference should be respected and tolerated. We are all entitled to be different.	Cultural difference can cause conflict and parallel lives, we should help people from different backgrounds to get on better	Differences can be discussed, critiqued and challenged. It is through exploring difference that we learn to value difference and identify commonalities and shared humanity.
funding for equality activities and community groups	Funding, if provided, is allocated to activities which help minority groups fit in (for example, English language provision, introduction to British culture/way-of-life classes).	Cultural entitlement equates to funding for activities or initiatives which promote, celebrate, or preserve cultural identity. As such, resources are allocated to 'single identity' groups.	Funding is provided for activities that encourage interaction. Some suggestion that funding should not be provided to 'single identity' projects without proper justification, but this causes widespread consternation.	Funding is provided that encourages dialogue which can help communities to identify common and different forms of exclusion and need across 'protected characteristics' and backgrounds. Decisions about which equality interventions should be funded are also based on the results of that type of interaction.
service design	One-size-fits-all approach to services. Services are not seen to have to respond to particular cultural needs	Add-on services are provided to meet the specific cultural needs of marginalised groups. Public services are encouraged to increase their cultural knowledge. Specific services are provided for specific groups.	Some suggestion that services should be made more inclusive (not just for certain groups) and that translation into non-English languages should not always be the first option.	Dialogue helps to identify services are that promote the entitlements we all have as individuals, rather than the 'cultural needs' others assume we have as members of particular communities. Focus on mainstreaming equitable provision, rather than producing 'add-on' services.

approaches to...	Assimilation	Multiculturalism	Community cohesion	Interculturalism (?)
public decision-making	<p>Decisions are reached with reference to an established, fixed set of values which help comprise a national identity. For example, assimilationist models accept that publically displayed religious symbols – such as the burka – can be outlawed, or that citizenship can and should be tested against knowledge of a country’s language, history, and institutions.</p>	<p>Decisions are judged by the extent to which they respect individual cultural attitudes or beliefs. Displays of religious symbols in the public sphere are permitted, legislation prohibiting discrimination against particular groups is enacted, and translation services are offered as a matter of course. While ostensibly all cultural customs must respect the law of the land, there is often uncertainty surrounding the tackling of culturally specific practices that infringe people’s rights such as forced marriage.</p>	<p>No clear benchmark against which to judge decisions. As such, there is a great deal of uncertainty about how to resolve situations in which rights, beliefs, and cultural practices conflict (such as when freedom of expression is used to criticise religious practices or when deeply held beliefs prevent public sector workers performing certain duties). Some notion that ‘British’ values should be promoted in the public sphere, but this is not pursued to any great degree.</p>	<p>The cultural and moral dimensions of issues are considered and discussed to agree principles of fairness based on a sense of universal entitlement to key freedoms. Debate and conflict are seen as important in identifying and securing ‘buy-in’ for those universal entitlements. Room is created for open and honest discussion. Emphasis is placed on the shared responsibility we have in creating a fairer society.</p>
approaches to dialogue	<p>No interest in how migrant communities interact with each other. Assumption that they will engage with the majority population.</p>	<p>The government engages with ‘representatives’ to find out what communities are thinking. Promoting interaction between communities is seen as less important than supporting particular single identity groups.</p>	<p>‘Different’ (ethnic) communities are encouraged to interact on the basis of overlapping interests. The government sees a role in supporting linking activities and projects that promote a shared sense of community (and therefore recognition of overlapping concerns).</p>	<p>Dialogue activities that enable people from the same and different cultures to critically discuss the role of culture in their lives in a way that can lead to positive change (protecting the rights and freedoms of a range of people).</p>

approaches to...	Assimilation	Multiculturalism	Community cohesion	Interculturalism (?)
culture and identity	The only culture that is important is that of the 'native' country.	Culture and identity is fixed, static and should be preserved and conserved, never to be challenged.	Culture is mainly fixed but people across cultures do share some commonalities. People can be brought together on issues of shared interest, but challenging cultural practices is still not done.	Culture is fluid and dynamic and people have the opportunity to exercise cultural freedom as they see fit. By enacting cultural freedom people recognise they may also be challenged.

Following Figure 1, we now provide a fictional case study that hopefully demonstrates in more detail how an intercultural approach could differ from a multicultural approach when used to promote dialogue and social change around contentious issues that involve culture. This particular case study focuses on forced marriage. It is based on what we have learnt from existing projects and literature and where we see potential for future practical application of key intercultural principles and concepts.

A case study

Southside CVS is a community organisation that empowers and champions the voice of local people in public decision making. It has been approached by a group of South Asian women looking for support to set up their own organisation that will raise awareness about the fact that 'forced marriage' is illegal and that women can speak out about it. They would also like to raise awareness about the damaging effect it can have upon women, their families, and society at large. The group is unsure whether the organisation would be taken seriously and are keen to get advice from Southside CVS about what they should do and how they should position themselves. They would also like Southside CVS to champion their work and to host a meeting between them and leaders at the local mosque to have an open debate.

Over the page, we describe two approaches that the development worker at South Side CVS could take to this, using two quite different approaches to community relations.

5.3 A final word

In this report we have outlined a number of the ways in which the ABC awards have enacted effective intercultural thinking and practice. In this final section we have also shared ideas about how we think intercultural thinking and practice could be extended and promoted to improve its 'currency' and potential impact in modern Britain. We are keen to pursue this further through our work on behalf of the Baring Foundation to improve intercultural skills and knowledge in the UK.

This research has also thrown into stark relief a number of the wider societal challenges which we, as a country, continue to shy away from. Intercultural dialogue can help to show how generations of people have been misinformed about who they are, who others are and what we need to do to live together well in society. This practice of misinformation has not always happened on purpose, but it has always served the interests of the powerful in society and we will face an uphill - but no less important - struggle in convincing both them and the most powerless and vulnerable that all of us have something to gain by using intercultural dialogue to make society both better and fairer.

Multicultural approach

I know that some people don't want to enter into arranged marriages and that sometimes they are 'forced' to marry. But that is their culture. I'm not sure it's ok to challenge that practice. Yes forced marriage is illegal, but if our CVS supports the work of this group it'd be like we're attacking that community's religion. I don't want us to get involved in that. I think we can help the group to set themselves up, but I think we may have to leave it at that. The funny thing is I know that people can be really badly affected by this practice and it's not fair, but I don't want to say that out loud. This is a 'hot potato' politically and we can't be seen to get it wrong. I'll make sure that the Muslim representative on our voluntary sector assembly has a chance to respond to this and he can make a decision on what to do next in terms of whether or not to host the debate.



The group received support from the development worker to set up their group. The group remains largely off people's radar in the city. The Muslim representative felt offended by some of the messages the group were trying to convey. He felt that a meeting like that would be counter-productive and would give Islam a bad name. He suggested that the group send their views on that subject to him and he will feed them in as and when to inform the work of the voluntary sector assembly. The Muslim representative's view of culture was respected and tolerated.

Intercultural approach

It's ok to encourage people to reflect on the differences between religion and culture and the way that culture can influence their life decisions. It's also ok for people to consider and pursue alternatives. Thinking critically about cultural practices when it perpetuates inequality and infringes human rights is acceptable. People should have the freedom to choose. It's the responsibility of all of us to promote dialogue that encourages this so people can make the rights choices for themselves. I'd like to help them to set up this meeting, but it's going to require ground work to build trust with those involved and it's going to require me to understand more about how different people view forced marriage and how this relates to their culture and identity. I'll talk to people first about this and then decide what type of support the group might need to get this meeting up and running.



The group received support from the development worker to set up their group. The development worker also set in chain a series of events that contributed to more open discussion about these issues in the city. He held a private meeting with members of the local mosque to discuss the potential for having an open debate about these issues. There were a number of different views expressed in the meeting (some felt that challenging what particular families are doing can be tantamount to challenging the religion as a whole). Yet after three hours, most people felt that forced marriage is a 'cultural' practice rather than a religious one and that if members of the community are acting illegally, awareness should be raised about this. The development worker developed a good understanding of the type of facilitation techniques and 'ground rules' that assist dialogue. The Mosque agreed to help organise the public meeting and the development worker's facilitation really helped to air a number of different (and sometimes) conflicting views about forced marriage. The Mosque is currently working with the women's group to provide support to people affected by forced marriage in the community.

APPE NDIC ES

(there's only three of them)

Appendix 1: Key terms

Awards for Bridging Cultures

The Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs) ran from 2008 to 2010. They were administered by the Institute of Community Cohesion and funded by the Baring Foundation. The aim of the awards was to showcase organisations working in the field of interculturality. Awards were made under three categories:

- smaller voluntary or community sector organisations
- larger voluntary or community sector organisations
- public or private organisations

In the first two categories, prizes were awarded to winners (in 2010 the prize was £10,000 and a camcorder); commended organisations (£5,000 and a camcorder); and shortlisted organisations (a camcorder). Winners in the public/private sector category did not receive financial rewards.

Over the course of three years, over 500 organisations applied for the awards. Approximately £150,000 in funding was administered to award recipients. The specific criteria for judging changed slightly over the three years, but in 2010 the judges looked at: a) the nature of interaction and resulting impact on interculturality; b) the benefit to participants engaged in the scheme; c) the benefits to different communities, including the wider community; d) costs of the scheme and value for money; e) sustainability; f) impact of the project in achieving its goals; and g) the potential of the scheme as a role model for other organisations.

Black and minority ethnic

In this report we use the term 'BME' as an abbreviation for 'Black and minority ethnic'. 'Black' refers to those non-White groups who have traditionally been discriminated against because of their ethnicity. 'Minority ethnic' refers to other groups who have traditionally been discriminated against because of their ethnicity or who represent a minority in society (e.g. White ethnic minorities).

Voluntary and community sector

At time of writing, the government uses the term 'civil society' to refer to people and organisations acting on their own initiative to improve the lives of others.²¹ It is intended to be more inclusive and empowering than 'third sector', the previous officially used term.

On the whole, this report will deal with the practice of charities, social enterprises, and local community groups (in addition to public sector organisations). Because this has a slightly smaller scope than 'civil society' we will use the term 'voluntary and community sector' to describe it.

²¹ See, for example, Nick Hurd's open letter to the sector, October 2011. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/3kzmyc3>

Appendix 2: Project descriptions

Below are thumbnail descriptions of organisations interviewed as part of the research. The aim of this section is to provide more information about the project(s) that was submitted for an Award for Bridging Cultures. It is not intended to be a comprehensive description of all the organisation's activities.

Aik Saath

Meaning 'Together as One', Aik Saath was established in response to gang violence between young people in Slough. Expanding the scope of its activities in recent years, the organisation now provides a range of peer-led training programmes on equality, human rights, and community cohesion. Aik Saath also provides a youth club for a variety of people, who come together to work on a range of projects and community-based activities.

The Barton Hill Settlement

The Barton Hill Settlement is a community resource centre, created to address community tensions in and around Barton Hill and the surrounding areas of East Bristol. The project has delivered a series of activities aimed at promoting understanding and interaction, including a photography project, cultural awareness training, and multicultural feasts. The Settlement also created 'Play Rangers' whose role was to encourage the shared use of local public spaces by a range of communities.

Belgrade Community and Education Company

Part of the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, the Community and Education Company seeks to give a voice to diverse communities through the use of theatre and other art forms. Young people attend sessions at the Company, building their skills in the dramatic arts before actually writing or acting in plays and performances. The Company often puts on festivals based on particular themes: in the year it entered the ABCs, the theme was 'immigration'. As such participants interviewed migrants from across the world and used these interviews to devise and write their own performance piece.

Birmingham Libraries and Archives

The Birmingham Libraries and Archives' Connected Histories project aimed to acquaint young people from different ethnicities and religions with the Muslim community's positive and constructive contribution to British history, in particular the role of Muslims during the Second World War. Amongst other things, participants were taken on visits to the Imperial War Museum and to local cemeteries to visit the graves of Muslim soldiers. As part of the process participants were asked to engage with the presented information through the production of collages and montages or by designing tops. The final products were used to form a public exhibition.

[Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery](#)

A pilot project based at Aston Hall Museum, the Guns, Gangs, and Knives project from Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery provided diversionary activities for children aged 9-12 who were at risk of becoming involved in gang culture. Aiming to overcome local, postcode-based rivalries, the project provided a space where young people could come together and engage in shared activities. The project also allowed participants to expand their cultural horizons through activities such as theatre trips and increased their familiarity with museum spaces.

[Cheltenham Borough Council](#)

The Community Ambassadors programme trains volunteers from diverse communities to provide two-way communication between their communities and local agencies. The Ambassadors also promote the benefits of volunteering. The network is designed to be a two-way information service, with authorities able to pass information through the representatives, who equally can pass information up from ground level.

[Discover Children's Story Centre](#)

The Discover Children's Centre delivers a range of projects aimed at sparking adults' and children's imaginations. Its three-year oral history project Connected Stories recorded, documented, and preserved culturally specific and traditional stories, songs, rhymes, and memories from Bengali, Roma, Somali, Albanian, and other communities in Newham, London. Connections between the different stories were highlighted through a series of activities including community feasts and exhibitions.

[Early Years - the Organisation for Young Children](#)

Based in Northern Ireland, Early Years – the Organisation for Young Children runs the Media Initiative. The Media Initiative aims to tackle discrimination and prejudice amongst young people through development programmes aimed at children, parents, and teachers. A central feature of the project are series of five one-minute cartoons which are shown on national television and which deal with themes such as sectarianism. The project is discussed in more depth on page 28.

[FolesHillfield Vision Project](#)

The FolesHillfield Vision Project aims to provide a space for residents of two Coventry neighbourhoods – Foleshill and Hillfields – to come together, interact, listen, and develop a greater understanding of their commonalities and shared interests. The project provides a variety of services to meet this aim, including working with schools to deliver a global citizenship programme; holding events such as Eid and Diwali parties; developing and supporting women's leadership; debates and talks; and a volunteer development programme.

[Limeside and Clarkwell Linking Project](#)

Beginning in 2008, this initiative was a fixed-term project that aimed to connect people in two ethnically disparate council estates in Oldham. Two housing associations, Contour Homes and First Choice Homes Oldham, began by hosting debates and talks between residents in Limeside

(predominantly White British) and Clarkwell (predominantly Bangladeshi). These debates attempted to raise philosophical questions about events happening in the news. The groups often found they shared fundamental assumptions and values, which organisers were able to use as a platform upon which to hold larger, more encompassing community events such as football matches and meals.

London Borough of Southwark

Launched in 2008 Koruso! the Southwark Interfaith Community Choir, was set up by the local council as a community cohesion project that would be inclusive of a range of faiths. Over the period of a year, Koruso! developed from a relatively small choir into a large (70 people) community choir singing a wide range of music with different influences (including South African freedom hymns).

Peacemakers

Running from the late nineties until well into the 21st century, Peacemakers was an Oldham-based project that attempted to tackle negative perceptions and stereotypes held by the city's 'segregated' communities. Its Mirrors of Extremism project was premised on the notion that engagement in both far-right and Islamic extremism had similar bases. As such, the project brought together both communities to benefit from mentoring activities (especially developing their awareness of radicalisation and extremism) and collaborating on resilience-building initiatives.

St Peter's Youth

Manchester-based St Peter's Youth provides free activities to local young people and families, including martial arts, rock climbing, and football. Its 'Grow your own' scheme provides local people with volunteering and training opportunities to help them gain experience and skills. A recent evaluation of the project showed that staff and volunteers feel that without the organisation, people from a range of cultures, backgrounds, religions, ages and genders would not have a reason to come together.

St Phillip's Centre

The St Phillip's Centre in Leicester was twice shortlisted for an Award for Bridging Culture, once in 2008 and then again in 2010.

The first nomination was for its activities around interfaith dialogue. This includes high-profile sporting events between clergy from different religions; joint action charitable work; interfaith community events; and training and support to help public services understand more about different faiths (be it their beliefs and practices or more complex issues such as the relationship between faith and sexuality).

The second nomination was for the Centre's youth engagement activities. Funded through Prevent, this series of activities brought young people of different faiths together to engage in activities such as environmental clean-ups, working with people with learning disabilities, helping the homeless, and fundraising to buy toys for children at the local hospital.

Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Run by Stoke-on-Trent CAB, the 'Learning to advise' programme equipped refugees and asylum seekers with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the CAB's volunteer adviser's training course. The access course includes background information on the local economic and social climate; growing tensions between some groups in the local community; the CAB structure and policies; and British culture and politics. Not only did the course empower asylum seekers and refugees, but their recruitment encouraged prospective clients from minority groups to use the service.

The Building the Bridge Programme

The Bristol-based Building the Bridge Programme, an inter-agency collaboration, aimed to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions of the Muslim community through the use of a photo exhibition and accompanying booklet. The project 'celebrated' prominent Muslims in the city – including an Iraqi film maker, a Jordanian civil engineer, and two White converts (a police officer and a GP) – showing the full involvement of Muslims in the life of Bristol. The project materials were promoted within schools, libraries, and other community outlets.

The Three Faiths Forum

The Three Faiths Forum runs a variety of interfaith and intercultural programmes, especially in schools. The organisation received particular recognition for Tools 4 Dialogue, a project that uses verses from religious texts as a springboard for discussion of pressing social issues. Facilitators use extracts from Jewish, Christian, and Islamic holy texts to stimulate a discussion which they attempt to mediate through a framework of tolerance, respect, and plurality.

Together for Peace

With a mission to promote peace through justice and respect, Together for Peace has delivered over 150 projects, from Planet Leeds (a city centre street festival which brings together performers from a range of cultures) to the Leeds Summit (a high-profile conference debating the big issues facing society). Never working alone on principle, Together for Peace aims to build networks and partnerships through its activities, bringing together individuals and organisations from different faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds..

Valley Kids

Valleys Kids is a community development charity whose mission is to celebrate the 'achievement of individuals, who through trying different activities and having different experiences, broaden their horizons and achieve their potential'. Their 'Ubuntu - Operation Zulu' project aimed to build a mutually supportive link between Valleys Kids and Langa Township in Cape Town, South Africa. Using the arts as a conduit, the organisation engaged with artists from Africa. The two parties shared and experienced each other's culture, which stimulated social interaction and helped tackle prejudice and racism.

West Kirk Community Project

The West Kirk Community Project is a small voluntary organisation in the Shankill area of Belfast. The Take 2 Men`s initiative has focused on moving men away from bigotry and politically motivated violence in an attempt to bring about reconciliation between two alienated communities. The initiative started by providing men with the opportunity to explore their history, cultural roots and identity. Now, participants also explore the background of a small number of other groups within the wider community in Belfast, such as Catholics, Nationalists, Republicans, Palestinians, Jews and so on.

Working with Men

The ID project, from award-winning charity Working with Men, aimed at reducing race-related violence by working with perpetrators and potential perpetrators. It was developed in response to a report that noted a build-up of tension between newly arrived Nigerian, Ghanaian, and East European communities in Thamesmead. Central to the project`s success was the ability of youth workers to build trust with young people and then devise activities that gradually brought them together. Youth workers also had to be skilled in getting young people to think about their prejudices and assumptions in a non-threatening, non-challenging manner.

World Jungle

World Jungle is a social enterprise which builds bridges between communities and cultures through music, arts, dance, play and education. Its Global Play project aimed to use the universal language of children`s play as a way of introducing children and play workers to other cultures. To achieve this, the organisation conducted a number of activities, including arranging for artists from countries such as Ghana and Jamaica to share games or art from their culture in play settings and parks, and teaching play workers from different settings traditional games from around the world.

Appendix 3: Intercultural practice development

1. Background

brap was commissioned by the Baring Foundation to extract learning about intercultural thinking and practice from the Awards for Bridging Culture (ABC). brap's review focused on three areas:

- Thinking: exploring how intercultural dialogue is distinct from previous approaches to community relations
- Doing: identifying the types of activities/projects which promote intercultural dialogue, but also the behaviours and features that make those activities successful
- Promoting: exploring how the benefits of intercultural dialogue can be demonstrated or 'sold' to potential participants

This short paper is about our efforts to promote intercultural practice through direct training and support for people working at the frontline with communities. In our original proposal to Barings, brap agreed we would try to engage a minimum of 40 people across the country in a process where they could gain a better understanding of what is distinct about intercultural practice, its benefits, and how they might apply it in their work. In the end, we engaged 59 people.

Using the findings from the research report 'Interculturalism, a breakdown of thinking and practice: lessons from the field', we developed a curriculum which would cover the required knowledge areas of intercultural practice.

The developed curriculum was submitted and awarded for accreditation through the awarding body the Institute of Leadership and Management. This awarding body was approached, because they don't have a fixed pre-requisite for the amount of time studied and the category of award offered. This meant that for a relatively short amount of study time (10 hours) we could offer the intercultural award at a relatively high level (level 4). This we considered to be appropriate given the ideas and content within the programme,

2. Promotion and course recruitment

After some consideration we decided against running a course in the capital and chose Manchester instead. The north of the country had been subject to the unrests of 2001 and as a consequence had a lot of investment in community cohesion activity: indeed, it still has a number of projects running against this delivery theme. We ran two one-day courses in Manchester, with a range of voluntary groups and those delivering on the frontline, including: *Great Places Housing Group*,

University of Huddersfield, Andrassy Design, Cultural Elevations, Pasha Associates, Oldham Race Equality Partnership, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, Centre for Good Relations, Hopwood Hall College, Youth on Solid Ground, Community Safety Unit - Rochdale MBC, Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Police (Rochdale), Rochdale MBC, Shamwari, Project Rochdale Borough Housing. The course also attracted a number of public sector organisations, especially those individuals who still had a community cohesion portfolio. There were a total of 20 participants.

Birmingham was the other location for the course. We ran three sessions here: a one-day pilot and then two further sessions. A total of 39 people participated across the three sessions. Again, the courses were quite mixed, although we did have less interest from grassroots organisations across the Birmingham cohorts, and more participation from public sector agencies.

3. The curriculum

The programme for the different days was fairly similar. Participants needed to understand what made interculturalism distinct from other community relations programmes. We wanted to put interculturalism in context by helping participants understand there were a number of ideologies that had shaped, and were continuing to shape, community relations.

We exposed participants to a timeline exercise, so that they could explore developments in community relations policies, journeying through integration, multiculturalism and community cohesion as theories of practice.

We wanted participants to reflect on their values (and subsequently) societal values, and how these had been shaped and formed. Many of us take our values very much for granted, not really questioning their origins, or how they 'sit' with us, our families, or the society in which we live.

We developed an exercise where a number of values were explored by participants and facilitated discussion that centred around themes such as: Are we born or made? Is culture inherited? Are values 'fixed'? Are some values incompatible/inappropriate in our society? Is it possible to arrive at shared values?

We wanted participants to understand intercultural practice and used a presentation to explain our findings from the research in more detail, including what made interculturalism distinct from other types of practice.

We also wanted participants to think through the application of interculturalism – both in the group setting and back in their own organisations. We used current social challenges as a means to explore existing policy and underlying beliefs, and then asked participants to use the principles of interculturalism to re-design policy.

There were a number of exercises introduced here, such as group work exploring topical policy and practice through an intercultural lens, short debates, and reflection on the skills required to 'make' intercultural practice successful.

Overall the programme was varied. We developed a number of exercises which could be used interchangeably to deliver the learning outcomes required of the course. Participant feedback tended to suggest these exercises were engaging and illuminating:

- *"Brilliant event"*
- *"Enjoyed the event" x2*
- *"Add bit more academic context"*
- *"Examples of how interculturalism worked, case studies"*
- *"Longer session" x4*
- *"Facilitation was excellent"*
- *"Content was so important and relevant"*
- *"Lovely Course"*
- *"One of the best organised courses I've been on"*
- *"Felt I got more out through discussion with others"*
- *"Would be nice if room was a little warmer" x2*
- *"Food was great"*
- *"Location and parking was great"*
- *"Warm Welcome"*
- *"No need to improve!!"*

4. Observations

- i. In general the Birmingham groups had very little background understanding of previous forms of community relations in practice. Many of them were newly exposed to the idea that there had been a journey of community relations practice in the UK. The Manchester groups were far more aware of the way in which political ideology had shaped community relations in the UK. This was reflected in the course expectations – many of the Birmingham cohort wanted to understand interculturalism, whereas many of the Manchester participants were actively seeking new ideologies to further their equality practice.
- ii. Many members of the Manchester groups had heard of interculturalism before. Because they had more awareness of community relations, many had come with some critique of previous practice, and were very open to new ideas.
- iii. Institutional memory about community relations appears to be lacking. This is especially worrying for those who have responsibilities for promoting equality/cohesion and yet have little understanding of what they are intended to achieve by the activities they are promoting. They are also unable to

evaluate the impact of previous activities – both in relation to how these were felt and experienced by communities and also by any unintended consequences that were generated as a result.

- iv. Multiculturalism is still a very dominant theory.
- v. Many (particularly the Manchester participants) had their reservations about community cohesion – and were sceptical of its results. They could see no lasting legacy to many projects based on the community cohesion agenda, especially when compared to the ideas behind interculturalism. For example, many thought community cohesion had not weakened cultural boundaries; it had not developed skills, such as questioning, challenging, listening; and it had not created more negotiation about shared space, shared resources, and our shared humanity.
- vi. What's all this for? Many felt that the ultimate destination of community cohesion had remained unanswered. What is it that community cohesion is trying to achieve? The aspiration of peace between and across communities, although worthy in its own right, appeared to be quite a low benchmark of success – given that challenges of inequality, prejudice and discrimination still persist.
- vii. Interculturalism: is it an opportunity or threat? Interculturalism cannot exist in a vacuum, and it became clear to some that implementation would present further challenges. In the main this was less to do with an understanding of how to apply it, and the skills required to do so, and more to do with the acceptability of this practice in the public domain. As long as 'others' judged good equality work through the prism of multiculturalism, how could any merits of interculturalism be exposed?
- viii. Participants noted that by focusing on 'culture', the title 'interculturalism' suggests it is referring to ethnicity and religion only. There is a danger that people won't recognise that interculturalism can also be used to engage other people and groups in dialogue. For example, groups with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010 (disabled people, LGB people, etc) also draw on particular cultures and sub-cultures to shape their identity and their place in relation to others in society. Sometimes challenging and questioning, this can bring about positive social change.
- ix. Generating practice and practical examples. The research report did not generate holistic examples of intercultural projects in their own right – but instead elements of intercultural practice. A chicken and egg situation begins to present itself: how do we generate intercultural practice if there are no clear examples or benefits, and if there are no clear examples or benefits, how do we persuade people to develop intercultural practice?
- x. Facilitation skills – one of the prerequisites to interculturalism is good facilitation skills. It was impossible, within the time of the course to 'test' and develop this in any way with participants.
- xi. Encouragement – despite the criticism of what has gone before, it was difficult to see how people would actively promote practice unless they had:

- i) more reflection time, followed by opportunities to discuss interculturalism further
- ii) the support of others, such as specialists in this area, for example, brap and RISE
- iii) some attention to how intercultural practice can help to meet the external requirements of regulation and inspection (for public sector bodies in particular).

5. Recommendations

- Further networking opportunities appear to be a good idea. Especially if these can also engage participants in feedback, debate and further learning. All participants liked the idea of keeping in touch with others – and ultimately the opportunity to share how others had sought to promote intercultural practice.
- To sponsor a demonstrator project of some type. Working directly with an organisation who is practically engaged in the implementation of interculturalism, helping them to become immersed in the practice and supporting them to navigate the challenges presented. This project would also need to be evaluated to help to identify the learning and to replicate the results.
- Finally, many participants disliked the working definition of interculturalism – they wanted it to match more congruently with the course content. From their feedback then, we offer a revised draft definition.

6. Revised definition

Interculturalism is the recognition that culture is important and of equal value to all people. It recognises that forcing people to subscribe to one set of values can create tension between individuals and groups. It understands that human beings are multi-dimensional in nature and that cultural fusion has been, and will continue to be a by-product of human interaction. It requires negotiation to accommodate our expression of culture in the public domain, using the principles of human rights to shape shared entitlements.

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brap is transforming the way we think and do equality. We support organisations, communities, and cities with meaningful approaches to learning, change, research, and engagement. We are a partner and friend to anyone who believes in the rights and potential of all human beings.

The logo for brap, consisting of the lowercase letters 'b', 'r', 'a', and 'p' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The letters are spaced out horizontally.

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