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# Empowering Muslim Women: Case Studies



# Ministerial Foreword

Women have always had an essential role at the heart of communities and wider society. As local leaders, they make their communities stronger. And history gives many examples of those who have enriched wider economic and civic life as businesswomen, doctors, educators, or politicians.

There are at least 800,000 Muslim women living in Britain today. They have a unique viewpoint on the challenges faced by the communities they live in – whether that is the threat of violent extremism, anti-social behaviour, or young people feeling isolated and disengaged. They are also uniquely placed to solve these problems, challenging unacceptable behaviour and supporting those in need.

Unfortunately, all too often their voice goes unheard. Some don't have the confidence or skills to speak up in forums dominated by men. Others face practical barriers, such as finding suitable childcare to balance family life with other roles. And wider public debate often reverts to stereotypes and preconceptions. We pay too much attention to Muslim women's appearance – with perennial debate about headscarves and veils – and too little to what they say and do.

This must change. We have to get better at listening to Muslim women, valuing their contribution to this country's economic, cultural and civic life, and opening the door for more to get involved.

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Nationally, I have invited a group of exciting, energetic women from a wide spectrum of communities and traditions to advise government on how we can do this. As ambassadors and role models, they are going to make a difference by showing just what women can achieve.

But real change cannot just be about national debate. It means making a practical difference at a local level too.

This document gives examples of the encouraging work that is already going on across the country. Women are finding their voice, supporting each other, improving their skills, starting businesses, and learning to be leaders. I hope that these inspiring stories will encourage many more people and groups to get involved and many more local authorities to think creatively about how they can support them.

Muslim women confident, empowered, proud of what they can do for their communities and for society: it is already a reality for many. By working together, we can make it a reality for many more.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hazel Blears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Hazel Blears**

*Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government*

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# Introduction

Government consultations with Muslim women have highlighted their feeling that community attitudes and infrastructures did not allow for them to be consulted, heard or engaged on key issues such as decision-making in how services are delivered or the leadership of women in tackling the threat of violent extremism. The negative portrayal of Muslim women in the media, the lack of positive role models and the low levels of economic participation and civic engagement are seen as some of the barriers to full and active participation.

Muslim women play a positive and important role in society and represent an untapped potential in the part they can play in preventing violent extremism in communities. Resilient and strong communities can only exist where women are playing a full and active part. It is clear that many underlying barriers need to be addressed if women are to play a full leadership role.

In April 2007, the Government committed in its *Preventing Violent Extremism Action Plan* to the publication of a document on effective initiatives to strengthen the role that Muslim women play in their communities.

This booklet provides a snapshot of some of the good work that is taking place across the country to empower Muslim women to play a more active role in both their own communities and in wider society. These case studies are just some of the projects we have visited or been made aware of in the last year that are involved in empowering women.

The projects fall into a number of categories reflecting the routes through which they seek to empower Muslim women: *economic participation, education, civic participation and arts, culture and sports*. In addition, a number of projects are underway to directly support women in playing a pro-active role in *preventing violent extremism*. In some cases they provide spaces for women to meet and build social networks; others help women return to employment and education in a faith and culturally sensitive way; and some use arts and culture as a powerful means of challenging the taboos and stereotypes that exist about the role of Muslim women in both their own communities and wider society.

The case studies detailed are but a drop in the ocean of the good practice, currently being carried out by women across the country, from which other individuals, community organisations and local authorities can draw. Many of the projects are led and run by women for women and demonstrate the impact and change that women can make when they take a leadership role in addressing the issues that affect their lives.

The size, reach and sources of funding of the projects varies. This reflects their diversity and the different ways in which those who have a goal of achieving empowerment for Muslim women can achieve their targets.

The projects vary from those operating within and alongside statutory services to small community-led, self-funded initiatives. Some have received support from the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund via local authorities, whilst others have succeeded in obtaining funding from central government and other non-governmental sources.

The women involved as providers and users in the projects showcased in this booklet are a testament to the strength and resilience Muslim women demonstrate in overcoming the barriers they face.

This document forms part of the Government's ongoing commitment to support the empowerment of Muslim women. The Department for Communities and Local Government will work closely with the National Muslim Women's Advisory Group and the wider Muslim community to ensure Muslim women have the skills, voice, opportunities and access they need to help build strong and resilient communities.

# economic participation

I have spent all of my life in the North West working in both the statutory and voluntary sector, with a particular focus on working with young people and communities facing multiple levels of deprivation both socially and economically. This experience inspired me to become an active volunteer for the Prince's Trust, providing advice and guidance on grass root BME issues.

I am adamant about making a difference and I believe that the contribution and role of British Muslim women in the wider society is vital to community cohesion, integration and wider social issues.

Samina Kauser –  
Director, Pendle Community Network





## Economic participation

Economic participation lifts people out of poverty, can bring confidence, independence, social interaction and improved quality of life. Financial security benefits not just the individual but the entire family. The skills and status that employment brings can also provide the foundation for civic and political involvement. Increasing economic activity benefits society as a whole.

Although there are significant differences between different groups, Muslims in general, are much more likely to be economically inactive than the general population, and in particular Muslim women have very high rates of economic inactivity. Almost two thirds of Muslim women are economically inactive (66%), compared with about a quarter of all women (26%)<sup>1</sup>.

The reasons for the economic inactivity of Muslim women can be quite varied. They can be outside the labour market if they are studying full time, retired, looking after children or other family members, or because they lack formal qualifications, are not proficient in English, or are unable to find suitable/affordable childcare. Whatever the reason, there should be a framework in place to enable them to make positive choices.

There are many government initiatives in place committed to breaking down the barriers to employment and ensuring fair access for all. There are also women's groups who are working with their local communities to overcome some of these barriers. They are working with women to provide the language skills, training and confidence they need to enter employment.

Local community organisations can tackle specific problems. They have an understanding of local issues and the solutions that will work best.

The case studies in this section show some of the ways these barriers have been overcome:

- **Aurat Enterprise** has provided Muslim women with a safe space in which to learn, paying particular attention to their specific needs. From here they can progress onto further education or employment,
- through activities designed to provide women with the specific skills required to increase their employability, the **United Multicultural Centre** has been able to increase the number of Muslim women entering employment,
- **Community Cleaning Services** is a social enterprise which supports its employees in gaining self-esteem and confidence through job-specific training and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes leading to employment and financial security.

<sup>1</sup>Labour Force Survey 2006 and DWP 2007.



## AURAT ENTERPRISE

### Learning as a first step to employment and further education

#### Purpose

**Aurat Enterprise** was set up to empower and encourage BME women to engage in learning as the first step to employment or further education. The project is being delivered by the Economic Development, Diversity and Equalities Unit of Slough Borough Council. Aurat Enterprise has worked with 720 women to date, the majority of whom have been Muslim reflecting the demography of the area.

Aurat Enterprise aims to offer tailored community courses to meet BME women's needs, inspire women to assess their personal situation and assist women in taking steps to change their lives.

#### Activities

**Aurat Enterprise** runs six activities catering to the needs of Muslim women in communities:

- A **regular newsletter** to keep the women in touch with community news is distributed to over 600 women. The mailing list is used by Aurat Enterprise and other providers seeking to engage specifically with Muslim women.
- **Information Advice and Guidance** sessions provide impartial employment, skills and enterprise advice to women aged 18 and over.
- **The Employment & Enterprise Centre** works in partnership with Job Centre Plus and Terminal 5 of Heathrow Airport to offer guidance to young people to improve skills and access employment.

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#### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*  
Slough Borough Council

*Project Name:*  
**Aurat Enterprise**

*Target Audience:*  
BME Women – 16+

*Legal Status:*  
Local Government

*Funding Source(s):*  
European Social Fund, Berkshire; Learning Skills Council

*Local Authority:*  
Slough Borough Council:  
Economic Development  
Diversity and Equalities

*Start Date:* 2004



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- **Opening Doors** provides vocational tasters, skills workshops and careers coaching to support women to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 and above to break through barriers that prevent them from pursuing education.
- The **Lone Parent Projects** provide job clubs, forums and training which have actively supported 38 lone parents into sustainable employment over a period of two years.
- **Enterprise Link** employs a community business advisor to work with women to build their confidence to set-up their own business. One-to-one business advice, interactive workshops to support business plan writing and assertiveness training are just some of the practical support offered.

Nearly 50 per cent of the women who have attended Aurat Enterprise's projects have progressed to adult learning. Courses to build basic skills are offered to new migrants or women whose first language is not English, including ESOL, IT, confidence building and business start-up courses. To overcome some of the practical barriers Muslim women experience in pursuing education, Aurat Enterprise offers a mini-bus service and crèche facilities.

Since Aurat Enterprise works in partnership with many local organisations it is well connected within the community. They have established a good rapport with local women who feel comfortable coming to them to take their first steps to empowerment.

Some of the local partners working with Aurat Enterprise include:

- Community Multi Services (CMS), a recruitment agency providing BME women access to employment run by three Muslim women as a social enterprise.
- SAWIN Resource Centre, the only resource centre in East Berkshire for women of Asian origin and their children escaping domestic violence to ensure that disadvantaged women can access and sustain training, education and employment opportunities.

Working with a range of community partners extends the reach and impact of projects as well as access to services and support for clients from different backgrounds and experiences.

## UNITED MULTICULTURAL CENTRE

### Bringing together communities to tackle barriers to unemployment

#### Purpose

**United Multicultural Centre (UMCC)** opened its doors to young Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women 25 years ago, giving them the opportunity to acquire skills to gain employment and providing them with a social hub to exchange views and experiences. Ninety per cent of the centre's clientele are Muslim, reflecting the demography of the local area. UMCC deliver training to women of all ages and backgrounds.

#### Activities

The **Women's Voices** project engages women in regeneration and public life across South Yorkshire enabling them to build their skills and knowledge. A number of workshops and visits get women involved in the decision-making processes on all major regeneration issues, e.g. housing, environment, education and employment. Courses are also delivered, in management, leadership skills and citizenship, to women not previously involved in community learning. This enhances their ability to engage effectively in consultations.

#### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*

**United Multicultural Centre**

*Project Names:* Women Voices, Narrowing the Gap, Transitional Labour Market Programme, Jobs Brokerage Programme

*Target Audience:* BME women

*Legal Status:* Limited Company (not for profit) and Registered Charity

*Funding Source(s):* Voluntary and Community Sector Training Consortium, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Adult Community Learning

*Local Authority:* Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

*Start Date:* 1982

*Further Information:*  
[www.umcc.org.uk](http://www.umcc.org.uk)

By working in partnership with the private sector access to employment opportunities is increased through practical hands on support with interviews and job searches.

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UMCC is one of five partners in a regional Invest to Save Budget project, **Narrowing the Gap** run by QED-UK. Set up in 2005 to improve the economic activity of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women and men in Yorkshire it provides support with job searches, training and preparation of curriculum vitae, applications and interviews. The Invest to Save Budget funding will finish in 2008 when the partnership will take full responsibility for the project.

I have always been involved in work that provides fairness and opportunities for everyone regardless of class, sex, race, educational background. During my childhood I saw people being treated badly because they were different to the majority and this injustice concerned me and I always vowed to fight against it.

I became a teacher so I could influence young people to achieve their potential and not let any form of discrimination become a hindrance in their lives. For 14 years I have worked for QED-UK, an organisation that has been at the forefront of community development at the local, regional and national levels and have ensured that employment opportunities are fairly accessible to Black Minority and Ethnic people. Over the years I have been appointed on a number of mainstream public bodies and have directly influenced over 1,000 senior managers from private and public companies about their perceptions of Muslim communities.

**Adeeba Malik MBE – Deputy Chief Executive, QED-UK**



## COMMUNITY CLEANING SERVICES

### Tackling social exclusion

#### Purpose

**Community Cleaning Services (CCS)** was set up by Shamim Hossain as a social enterprise to tackle the social and economic exclusion of Muslim women in Tower Hamlets.

Shamim felt isolated when she arrived in the UK 20 years ago because she lacked the language skills necessary to integrate into society. Several years later, after graduating from university, she set up CCS to address the plight of Muslim women who are socially excluded because they cannot speak English.

#### Activities

CCS employs 'hard to reach' women, such as lone parents, disabled women and women who cannot speak English. They are given training to become professional cleaners, health and safety training and time off from work to attend ESOL classes. The women also have staff away days and network with other women's groups to encourage social integration.

CCS secured eight office cleaning contracts with clients who understand and support the ethos of the company. CCS now employs 12 Bangladeshi Muslim women who would not normally be in employment. They work flexibly to provide them with time for classes.

Having been in operation for just two years, the company now has an annual turnover of £40,000. The surplus is reinvested back into the company to provide the same opportunities to other women.

A social enterprise which invests its profits in the community has a wider impact than just the benefit of employment for its staff. Providing and supporting opportunities for learning and development tackles wider social and economic exclusion.

#### FACT FILE

*Project Name:*  
Community Cleaning Services

*Target Audience:*  
Muslim women in Tower Hamlets who are not in employment

*Legal Status:*  
Social Enterprise - Registered Company (not for profit)

*Funding Source(s):*  
Bromley-by-Bow Centre start-up grant

*Local Authority:*  
Tower Hamlets

*Start Date:* 2005

# education

A decorative floral pattern in a lighter shade of blue, featuring swirling lines and leaf-like shapes, is positioned behind the word 'education'.

I believe you need to know yourself; a thorough knowledge of your subject area and a passionate belief that you can make a real difference; you need to be focussed and have a plan in order to arrive at your destination, you will need to cultivate networks and connections too.

Naheed Arshad-Mather –  
Chair, Yorkshire & Humber Regional Panel





## Education

Education is a key asset when seeking employment, but it also has a far wider role to play in personal development. It provides information – and the tools to access information – about the world. It gives individuals confidence to form balanced judgments and the confidence to challenge those of others. It is necessary even for day-to-day social interaction.

In 2004<sup>2</sup> almost a third (31%) of Muslims of working age in Great Britain had no qualifications – the highest proportion for any religious group. Amongst Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, who make up 70 per cent of Muslims in the UK, 40 per cent of women of working age have no formal qualifications at all, compared to 17 per cent of White women.<sup>3</sup> For many, language is a basic barrier to further education.

The projects in this section showcase a few of the ways in which communities and local authorities are working together to provide resources such as English classes, basic numeracy and literacy skills and more advanced classes and qualifications. The projects highlight the importance of making learning easily accessible, taking into account other responsibilities and priorities adults may have that are barriers to learning.

- The **Southwark Muslim Women's Association** offers educational programmes in an environment that Muslim women find conducive to learning and provides on-site crèche facilities to meet the childcare needs of mothers. In many cases the women progress to undertake additional educational courses.
- The **Muath Welfare Trust** has provided a faith and culturally sensitive environment for Muslim women to attain accredited qualifications by meeting the local demand for single sex provision, resulting in increased employment and confidence.
- The **Day Service for Asian Women** with learning disabilities reports significant improvements in the behaviour and the self-esteem of the women who access its services and increased participation in other forums.

<sup>2</sup>Labour Force Survey 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Labour Force Survey 2004.



# SOUTHWARK MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Providing Muslim women of Southwark with skills, confidence and qualifications

## Purpose

Najma Shah established the **Southwark Muslim Women's Association (SMWA)** in 1979, to meet the educational needs of Muslim women and provide them with a safe space to meet, discuss and address the issues they face in their daily lives. SMWA is now a successful centre providing Muslim women with access to certified learning programmes. Most of the women who use the centre are new arrivals in the UK who feel isolated and can sometimes have concerns about wider community reactions towards them.

## Activities

The centre provides accredited courses for women to start, or return to, their education. ESOL courses are often the first introduction to the SMWA and learners usually progress onto other courses. These include IT, Foundation in Fashion, Introduction to Childcare and Pre-Practice Teaching Assistant training.

An onsite crèche enables women to return to education knowing their children are being looked after and are safe. The women accessing SMWA's services usually involve their elder children in the social programmes provided by the centre,

## FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*  
Southwark Muslim Women's Association

*Target Audience:*  
Muslim women of all ages and nationalities

*Legal Status:*  
Registered Charity

*Funding Source(s):*  
Southwark Council,  
Learning and Skills Council

*Local Authority:*  
Southwark Council

*Start Date:* 1979

*Further Information:*  
[www.smwa.org.uk](http://www.smwa.org.uk)

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for example the after school club, which is fully fitted with computers and access to the internet. This work is supported by a Saturday supplementary school project which encourages and supports young people to make positive contributions to their local community.

Over 500 women complete learning programmes with SMWA each year and in the last academic year, they achieved a 100 per cent pass rate.

Providing services sensitive to the needs and responsibilities of childcare overcomes a potential barrier faced by women to pursuing education and employment.



## MUATH TRUST

### Qualifications, skills and confidence to gain employment

#### Purpose

The **Muath Trust** provides a safe, faith and culturally sensitive environment for Muslim women to pursue further and higher education. Research conducted by the Trust found that women from Asian, African and Arab communities are held back by poor language skills, educational under-achievement and lack of appropriate child care provision: these factors are addressed by the services offered by the Muath Trust.

#### Activities

The Muath Trust has just finished a £5.2 million redevelopment to improve facilities at the Bordesley Centre for Further and Higher Education. An onsite crèche facility allows women to pursue their education with the knowledge that their children are cared for in a safe environment.

#### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*

**Muath Trust**

*Target Audience:*

Open to all, although majority of recipients are Muslim women

*Legal Status:*

Registered Charity

*Funding Source(s):*

City College, Learning and Skills Council

*Local Authority:*

Birmingham City Council

*Start Date:* 1993

*Further Information:*

[www.muathtrust.org](http://www.muathtrust.org)

Recognising the need for faith and culturally sensitive education provision increases the access to opportunities to pursue further education for women.

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In partnership with Birmingham City College and Birmingham University, the Muath Trust offers GCSEs, A-levels, a foundation degree in Islamic Studies, as well as ICT, ESOL and language courses. The Muath Trust also delivers evening courses, religious education classes and a youth programme to the wider community.

After completing their courses, students are supported in obtaining employment through the close links that the Muath Trust has developed with Job Centre Plus and Connexions.

In the last academic year, 500 women enrolled at the centre which, in partnership with Birmingham City College, offers a vast array of courses and opportunities for women at all stages of their life and career.

Being a Muslim woman in the UK today can be very frustrating. When I hear Muslim men telling me that it takes time to introduce changes, like having equal access to mosques, I remind them that fourteen hundred years ago we were given those rights and now we've waited long enough. In the UK even the younger generation have found that education is not, of itself, the ticket they thought it was. Much more needs to be done to challenge the media stereotype of a Muslim woman and provide a platform for those who have been empowered by their faith and not constrained by it.

**Parvin Ali OBE – CEO, FATIMA Women's Network**



## DAY SERVICE FOR ASIAN WOMEN

Educational opportunities for Asian women with learning disabilities from all faiths and none

### Purpose

The **Day Service for Asian Women (DSAW)** was established in 1991 as a dedicated day provision for women with learning disabilities from Asian communities of all faiths and none. Prior to DSAW being set up, services for all adults with learning disabilities within the London Borough of Waltham Forest were provided at a mixed-gender day centre.

### FACT FILE

*Project Name:*  
Day Service for Asian Women

*Target Audience:*  
Asian Women with learning disabilities

*Legal Status:*  
Social Services

*Funding Source(s):*  
London Borough of Waltham Forest

*Local Authority:*  
London Borough of Waltham Forest

*Start Date:* 1991

DSAW employs female staff with an understanding of Asian culture to work with women and their families. Their dedication to their work is evident by the low staff turnover. DSAW is the only women-only provision in the UK for women with learning disabilities. The majority of the current service users are Muslim.

### Activities

Women attend mainstream adult education classes in IT, English, Maths and some have progressed on to other courses. The service assesses the needs of the women individually and provides each with a person-centred plan. The aim is to let the women lead an independent life, as far as possible, by providing them with a wide variety of different opportunities to participate in civic life.

Women from DSAW are accessing employment through initiatives such as social enterprises. Employment is usually offered on a part-time/training basis or as a volunteering opportunity. This allows the women to earn some money as well as increasing their life skills and confidence.

The service also offers a wide range of activities across the Redbridge and Waltham Forest partnership, including education, IT classes, independent living skills, art and crafts. The women sell their artwork at local events. This has raised their presence in the community thus boosting their confidence, enhancing their skills base and increasing their economic activity.

Culturally sensitive responses to the needs of service users can open access to opportunities for learning.

# civic participation

The Muslim female identity may have been reduced to an article of clothing, but inspirational Muslim women are continually challenging the stereotypes which exist about them. The fact that Muslim women are advancing women's rights and fighting to be heard by policy makers and their communities while striking a balance between family and work despite facing numerous barriers is clearly a testament to the great capacity that Muslim women have.

Shaista Gohir – Executive Director,  
Muslim Women's Network UK





## Civic Participation

Civic engagement covers a wide range of activities, from volunteering to acting as a local councillor or being a school governor. Muslim women are particularly under-represented in civic life, facing similar barriers to other forms of participation.

Volunteering is low amongst Muslim women.<sup>4</sup>

- In 2005, 18% of Muslim women were regular (at least once a month) formal volunteers, compared with 31% of women overall. Meanwhile, 31% of Muslim women participated in regular informal volunteering (compared with 41% of women overall).

Muslim women have a critical role to play in developing strong, active and empowered communities in which they are able to support themselves, define the problems they face and tackle them in partnership with service providers and communities. Activities include contacting a local councillor or MP, attending a public rally or demonstration or taking part in a local consultation process.

Recent government consultations have highlighted that women from Muslim backgrounds do not feel they have a voice in their communities nor are able to influence local or national public policy or services, and that they want to engage in decision-making that impacts on the lives of their families.

Civic engagement touches on all aspects of community life, providing the widest range of ways in which citizens can be involved in issues that affect their day-to-day lives. The case studies in this section show some of the ways that local communities are taking the initiative, encouraging women to get involved in their local schools, councils and other arenas:

- The **FATIMA Women's Network** has improved the ability of Muslim women's groups to network and contribute to the development of policy. Using the skills acquired from undergoing training on funding, financial management and policy development they have been involved in helping to improve facilities at local schools.
- The **Shaah iyo Sheeko Women's Group** has addressed the isolation that women were feeling and given them confidence to participate in elections, become school governors and volunteer in schools. It has provided them with a voice and equipped them with the skills and knowledge to confidently engage in community life.
- Over 10 years, the **An-Nisa Slough Women's Group** has grown from an organisation of 20 volunteers to a membership of 600. The group has built links with the local council and other statutory bodies and service providers to ensure the needs of Muslim women in Slough are met and to advise on a range of community issues including preventing violent extremism.

<sup>4</sup>Home Office Citizenship Survey 2005.

## FATIMA WOMEN'S NETWORK

### Supporting the social and economic empowerment of women and their families

#### Purpose

Forum for Advocacy, Training and Information in a Multicultural Arena (FATIMA) Women's Network is an infrastructure organisation that works with BME women's organisations across the East Midlands to build capacity and develop sustainability through personal development, leadership skills, training, advocacy, research and employment and business support. FATIMA's approach has been to develop links and work in partnership with a wide range of organisations and government agencies such as the army, police and schools.

FATIMA works with women of all ages and ethnic groups but a significant number are young Muslims of Somali, Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin who are not accessing other community provision. Out of the 2,000 members, more than 60 per cent are Muslim. Extensive work has been done with Muslim women and families, Muslim women's groups and young people to address issues of employability and reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour.

#### Activities

The organisation provides a diverse range of activities to support the needs of the women they support. Regionally, Muslim women's groups have accessed training on funding, policy development, financial management and public sector procurement through consortia development. Muslim women have used these skills to organise events themselves at their local schools to raise money for charity or school funds.

#### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*  
**FATIMA Women's Network**

*Target Audience:*  
'Hard to reach' Muslim women

*Legal Status:*  
Social Enterprise

*Funding Source(s):*  
Office of the Third Sector's Improving Reach, Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

*Local Authority:*  
Leicester City Council

*Start Date:* 2002

*Further Information:*  
[www.fatima-network.com](http://www.fatima-network.com)

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On a local level, young Muslim girls, from 14 years upwards, meet regularly to organise social activities such as fashion shows and outings. They have also set up a youth group to hold regular sessions linked to personal development, leadership skills, employability and social networking.

Working with local women from hard to reach communities to give access to training and employment opportunities using links with regional and national partners.

I have spent most of my life involved in voluntary work supporting local communities and building civic engagement. In 1989 at the age of 14, I visited the Berlin Wall when it had just come down and the Auschwitz Jewish Memorial Camp in Poland. The trip had a hugely profound impact on me and I pledged to dedicate my life promoting equality, tolerance and human rights. As a British Muslim woman I believe that I have the freedom to be an ambassador for my country and to serve all its communities. I am committed to helping those whose voices through oppression and inequality have become silent or unheard.

**Sabin Malik – Principal Community Cohesion Officer,  
London Borough of Hounslow**

# SHAAH IYO SHEEKO WOMEN'S GROUP

## Breaking isolation through volunteering

### Purpose

In response to a request from women in Barnet and Harrow after the 7/7 bombings, Somali Family Support Group (SFSG) set-up 'Shaah iyo Sheeko' (tea and chat) to meet weekly for 12 months. The Shaah iyo Sheeko Women's Group comprises Muslim women from various backgrounds (Somali, Eritrean, Lebanese, Iraqi, Saudi, Afghan, Ethiopian, Libyan, Sudanese, and English) that share similar faith needs. The aim is to provide a culturally sensitive environment in which women can develop their skills, share learning and understand the significance of volunteering.

### Activities

The project delivers a comprehensive citizenship course, which focuses on building the women's awareness of:

- the education system, Parent Teacher Associations and how to use them effectively to support their children's learning
- political process and democratic institutions including local councils, Parliament and European Parliament
- police and community consultative groups and how to engage effectively with them; and,

### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*

**Somali Family Support Group**

*Project Name:*

**Shaah iyo Sheeko Women's Group**

*Target Audience:*

Muslim women that are not usually engaged

*Legal Status:*

Voluntary Organisation

*Funding Source(s):*

Mainly self-funded; part-funded by the Home Office Purposeful Activity Fund for Asylum Seekers

*Local Authority:*

Barnet and Harrow Councils

*Start Date:* 2005

*Further Information:*

[www.sfsg.org](http://www.sfsg.org)

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- the voluntary sector and how to increase self-confidence, skills and experience through volunteering.

In addition, the women can also attend classes in dressmaking, craft, cooking and healthy eating and English language skills.

At least 30 women attend the project weekly and an annual women-only conference attracts on average 130 women.

Working with local women to promote greater civic engagement and volunteering by raising the awareness of processes and institutions for engagement.



## AN-NISA SLOUGH MUSLIM WOMEN'S GROUP

A local women's group started for women by women

### Purpose

**An-Nisa** aims to provide a focal point for Muslim women and their children in Slough and the surrounding areas.

The group was set up in response to the need for a mother and toddler group. With the help of advice from Slough Council and Slough Council for Voluntary Service, the group set up as a registered charity with a constitution and a management committee. The group has grown from an initial list of 20 to 600 volunteers.

An-Nisa recognises that Muslim women living and bringing families up in the UK need to look within their own communities and tackle some of the issues head on. From a small organisation of volunteers all working from home with no experience, An-Nisa now works closely with the local council and others to advise on a number of issues affecting wider communities.

### Activities

An-Nisa runs a number of projects and activities to support women and children including a weekly drop in group for women and children and annual summer outings. The drop in group takes regular referrals from social workers or from health visitors who have Muslim clients who may for whatever reason, have become isolated and need support.

An-Nisa worked with the local authority to provide female only swimming on a weekly basis. Engagement with the local authority led to the training of eight female lifeguards to staff the female only swimming classes, this initiative won the local Mayor's award for Sporting achievement.

An-Nisa is also working with Slough Borough Council on the steering group for the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder projects, looking at ways it can work with others in the town on the Preventing Extremism agenda.

### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*  
An-Nisa Slough Muslim Women's Group

*Project Name:*  
Friend 2 Friend

*Target Audience:*  
Membership of 600 local women and their children

*Legal Status:*  
Registered Charity

*Funding Source(s):*  
Private donations, localised funding and Connecting Communities Plus

*Local Authority:*  
Slough Borough Council

*Start Date:* 1997

Working collaboratively with statutory services to ensure mainstream service provision is appropriate for the needs of Muslim women.

# arts, culture and sports

The potential to lead change for the better is vast; to improve the lives of our children, inspire our youth to become leaders of tomorrow, educate women and men from all races, financially empower individuals and communities, challenge anything that excludes or marginalises, to heal and nurture our souls and inspire our spirit.

Muslim Women can instigate this change; to balance, multi-task, and tackle the challenges facing us today. Having created positive change with my first business 'ArRum', I believe it is time for Muslim women to step forward, overcome fears and barriers and contribute to building a healthier society.

Reedah El-Saie – Barrister





## Arts, Culture and Sports

The arts can be used to convey messages in powerful and innovative ways. Drama workshops and musical performances are effective tools in conveying messages to wide audiences as well as being a means of self-expression, identity exploration and giving artists a voice.

Arts and culture can be used to challenge sensitive issues in a positive and non-confrontational manner, using stories to tackle issues around extremism and racial intolerance, for example.

Participation in arts and culture is also fun and energising, breaking down many barriers as there is no right or wrong way to express yourself as an artist. Getting involved in arts and culture can provide a means of self-expression, building a strong sense of confidence and identity. Sporting activities can bring together communities and people across all age groups, creating positive contacts which break down stereotypes.

This section looks at projects that are using arts and sports to engage and empower Muslim women, often breaking down many myths and stereotypes about the role and identity of Muslim women;

- **Ulfah Arts'** work has seen an increase in the self-esteem and confidence in the women participating in performances and their economic participation by being paid for performances. There has also been an increase in the number of Muslim women participating in workshops and attending performances.
- **Heartstone's Descendents of all the Worlds** project enables participants with limited English language skills to participate as photo editors and curators for a nationwide photo documentary exhibition, providing an exceptional opportunity to learn new skills whilst improving language skills. Women involved in the project have reduced their isolation and engaged with the majority community, resulting in increased self esteem and confidence.
- The **Muslim Women's Sport Foundation** has developed keen, young Muslim women interested in sports into professional, competitive sportswomen who compete at a national and international level.



## ULFAH ARTS

Ulfah Arts is a pioneering arts organisation specialising in linking faith and the arts

### **Purpose**

Naz Koser founded **Ulfah Arts** in 2004 to promote the understanding and appreciation of the arts among Muslim women. She was motivated by the scarcity of opportunities for Muslim women to participate in the arts and felt that they were missing out on the opportunity to explore the benefits that art brings to people's lives.

Muslim women were, in general, reluctant to get involved in the arts because they felt it compromised their religious and cultural beliefs. Naz felt that by providing a safe women-only environment they could explore their artistic talent, discover their creative ability and consequently understand themselves better.

### **Activities**

Ulfah Arts initially faced resistance from both the Muslim community and the arts world. There was a lack of understanding of the need for such a specialised service. However, Al Hijrah School in Birmingham provided Naz with the opportunity to trial her ideas and provided access to its community. The positive response to the project led to an increased demand from Muslim women. This encouraged Naz to secure funding from the Innovative Action programme of Advantage West Midlands who provided support and a small grant to set up Ulfah Arts.

### **FACT FILE**

*Organisation Name:*

**Ulfah Arts**

*Target Audience:*

Muslim women of all ages

*Legal Status:*

Company Ltd by Guarantee  
(not for profit)

*Funding Source(s):*

Advantage West Midlands,  
Arts Council England,  
Birmingham City Council

*Local Authority:*

Birmingham City Council

*Start Date:* 2004

*Further Information:*

[www.ulfaharts.co.uk](http://www.ulfaharts.co.uk)

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The **Ulfah Collective** is the first practising Muslim female band and is one of Ulfah Arts' most high profile projects. The group performs universal themes in Nasheeds (Islamic songs), gospel, hymns and rap. Its notable achievements to date include performing live at the Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace 2006 and sharing a stage with Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees at Wembley Arena.

Since its inception, Ulfah Arts has supported and developed over 200 artists, 80 per cent of which are Muslim women. It has engaged an audience of over 30,000 and involved over 200 people in its projects, again the majority of whom have been Muslim women of all ages. Ulfah Arts continues to pioneer opportunities for Muslim women to perform and explore their artistic talents in an environment that does not compromise their cultural or religious values. The women are provided with the necessary skills and training in a nurturing environment that builds their artistic and performance confidence.

Creating safe spaces for women to pursue their artistic talents provides a powerful platform to challenge prejudice and stereotypes about the roles and expectations of women.



## DESCENDANTS OF ALL WORLDS

### Challenging prejudice and intolerance

#### Purpose

**Heartstone** aims to increase understanding between young people aged eight to 18 of all classes, creeds and colours to challenge prejudice and intolerance. Heartstone has adopted a unique approach of listening to the concerns of young people and responding by producing a range of story resources which help them discuss debate and understand topical and social issues. Heartstone helps community organisations, youth bodies, schools and interested individuals to set up Heartstone projects. The approach of the projects can be adapted to reflect regional differences and urban or rural concerns.

#### Activities

The **Descendants of All Worlds** is a photo documentary project being carried out in partnership with Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre in Camden. The underlying philosophy to all 'Descendants of

#### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*  
Heartstone

*Project Name:*  
**Descendants of all Worlds**

*Target Audience:*  
Hard to reach Bangladeshi Muslim women

*Legal Status:*  
Not for Profit Voluntary Organisation

*Funding Source(s):*  
Pathfinder Fund, Transport for London, private organisations

*Local Authority:*  
Tower Hamlets

*Start Date:* 2007

*Further Information:*  
[www.heartstone.co.uk](http://www.heartstone.co.uk)

As Muslim women, we seemingly present a paradox to mainstream communities as well as our own. Many of the assumptions about who we are and what we can be are framed by notions of our subservience to 'archaic' customs and traditions that limit our potential and growth. These assumptions don't reflect an eclectic and powerful reality of Muslim women bringing about progress and positive change. My experience of Muslim women has provided me with profound insights to enable my own professional progress and personal growth.

**Rokhsana Fiaz – Director, The Change Institute**

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All Worlds' stories are that they are told truthfully and honestly, with no manipulation or staging, to reflect the narrative that is unfolding and not a preconceived idea. As such, they are a powerful representation of the overwhelming similarities of the human experience, regardless of nationality, culture, race or background and inevitably challenge many commonly held stereotypes.

The project is working with 20 Bangladeshi Muslim women who are receiving training in photo editing, photo journalism, an introduction to organising a photo documentary assignment, the role of picture researcher and an introduction to organising a launch presentation.

The women have participated in the design and layout of their first photo exhibition at Whitechapel Station, titled 'Chandra's London'. This photo exhibition is being distributed across London through funding from Arts & Business to one hundred locations in nine London boroughs.

The women involved in the project have been highly engaged in a project which presents and challenges stereotypes.

Training and active participation develops skills and confidence whilst giving women an alternative voice using the power of images to decide what they want to say about themselves.

## THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S SPORT FOUNDATION

Supporting Muslim women to participate in sports at a professional level

### Purpose

The **Muslim Women's Sport Foundation (MWSF)** was established with the initial aim of organising and training the British Muslim women's team to compete at the International Islamic Women's Games. This was the first time that a non-Muslim country had been invited to compete at the event. The founders of the MWSF used this opportunity to fulfil the ambitions of talented Muslim sportswomen who wanted to compete at an elite level, but were unable to do so due to the lack of faith sensitive opportunities. The faith sensitive games are thus providing the opportunity for Muslim women to train for the event, where they can excel further in their chosen sport.

The MWSF seeks to increase the participation of British Muslim women in sports by increasing awareness and working with British sporting authorities and the Government to ensure appropriate facilities and resources are available; to offer support in coaching and competitive opportunities in sport; and, to provide equal opportunities for all.

### Activities

MWSF have provided structured training sessions in female only environments with fully qualified professional female coaches, with a particular focus on futsal (a form of indoor five-a-side football), basketball and badminton.

Current training sessions are held in London and Birmingham and there is a growing membership of young Muslim women. Most of those who attend are between the ages of 18 to 30 and include both students and professionals. The MWSF hope to increase the range of sports that they deliver and the number of locations where training is held.

Teams have been sent on two occasions to represent Britain at the International Islamic Women's Games in 2001 and 2005 and teams are now training for the games in 2009. In 2007 the MWSF futsal team participated in the Football Association's Umbro Fives Tournament and won the fair play award at the National Futsal Championship.

Working with national and international sporting bodies to ensure the needs of Muslim women are understood and met to provide professional sporting opportunities for Muslim women.

### FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*  
The Muslim Women's Sport Foundation

*Target Audience:*  
Young Muslim Women

*Legal Status:*  
Not-for-profit voluntary organisation

*Funding Source(s):*  
Football Foundation, Sport Relief, private donations

*Local Authority:*  
London Borough of Harrow

*Start Date:* 2001

*Further Information:*  
[www.mwsf.org.uk](http://www.mwsf.org.uk)

# preventing violent extremism

Women throughout history have been both the vehicles and drivers of positive change and Muslim women have been no exception. All women, whether Muslim or not, have similar aspirations and expectations as their male counterparts. The public perception, that Muslim women are oppressed and unequal needs to be challenged and addressed both within the Muslim and wider communities.

Shahda Khan – Principal Community  
Cohesion Officer, Middlesbrough Council





## Preventing Violent Extremism

The threat of violent extremism is real and sustained. There have been 16 plots primarily targeting the UK since 2000. The Security Services and Police are contending with over 200 groupings or networks, totalling around 2,000 individuals.

Muslim women have a key role to play in challenging prejudice and stereotypes both within their own communities and in wider society. They possess a largely untapped potential to challenge the attitudes that can foster violent extremist ideas. Muslim women are at the heart of communities undertaking a multitude of roles. Resilient communities cannot be built and sustained without their active participation.

There are a number of projects taking place across the UK which aim to give Muslim women a stronger voice, increased confidence and the knowledge to challenge and tackle violent extremism.

- **Sizanani Africa** has delivered the **Muslim Women's Community Leadership Training Project**. This included assertiveness and confidence building and how to identify and address signs of violent extremism, enabling them to share their skills and empower other women to do the same and engage with young people to discuss ways to build a cohesive community.
- The **Hounslow Leadership Training** has empowered Muslim women with the skills and confidence to tackle extremist ideologies by promoting shared values, citizenship and challenging the misconceptions around the position of women in Islam.
- The **Muslimah** project was set up when Muslim women felt they needed to play a bigger role in the response to counter-terrorism raids in High Wycombe. Through a tailored programme that draws on principles rooted in the Islamic faith, it has empowered Muslim women to become more active as citizens, to promote an inclusive message to younger generations and challenge the cultural barriers which prevent Muslim women from having a voice in issues affecting their lives.



# MUSLIM WOMEN'S COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROJECT

Empowering women to become peer mentors for women and young people

## Purpose

Sizanani Africa aims to build the capacity of young people from marginalised communities to achieve integration through economic independence and social well-being.

The majority of service users are from central and West Africa and are new arrivals in the UK who feel isolated and marginalised as English is not their mother tongue. The befriending and outreach services that Sizanani Africa offers are drawing many young people from isolation into expanding social networks. In addition, coaching and workshops to help individuals gain employment are also provided.

## Activities

The **Muslim Women's Community Leadership Training Project**, being delivered with the support of the London Civic Forum and the London Criminal Justice Board, aims to increase the confidence of Muslim women from the African, African-Caribbean and Asian community. These women will go on to participate in leadership roles, representation and support for those at risk of extremist behaviour in their communities. The project provides three sets of six one-day training workshops to 60 Muslim women in advocacy, presentation skills, assertiveness, confidence building, identifying signs of hate and conflict resolution skills certified by Searchlight.

## FACT FILE

*Organisation Name:*  
Sizanani Africa

*Project Name:*  
**Muslim Women's  
Community Leadership  
Training Project**

*Target Audience:*  
Young Muslims aged 15 - 25

*Legal Status:*  
Registered Charity

*Funding Source(s):*  
Preventing Violent Extremism:  
Community Leadership Fund

*Local Authority:*  
London Borough of Redbridge

*Start Date:* 2000

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The women then use these skills to act as peer mentors to other Muslim women in how to identify and address signs of extremism. They also hold monthly consultations with young people from their communities to discuss how to make their communities more cohesive and to promote integration using positive reinforcement strategies. The confidence building and assertiveness skills acquired from the course enables the women to initiate dialogue within their communities about preventing violent extremism.

By empowering Muslim women in identifying and tackling signs of extremism they can support those that are vulnerable and use their knowledge to support other women in their community to do the same.



## HOUNSLOW LEADERSHIP TRAINING

### Capacity building in the Muslim community through the development of women

#### **Purpose**

In 2007, the London Borough of Hounslow delivered **leadership training** for Muslim women through funding from the West London Alliance Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund. The aim of the course was to empower Muslim women to be at the forefront of counteracting extremist ideologies amongst young Muslims. Muslim women can play a huge contribution in addressing specific social issues in the Muslim community such as lack of choices for women, forced marriage, honour killings and the participation of women in mosques and public life.

#### **Activities**

A two-day leadership training programme was held in December 2007 for 40 local Muslim women drawn mainly from the voluntary sector. The course was designed to:

- provide an insight into Muslim women's roles and contribution to public life in Britain
- promote citizenship, "shared values" and the responsibility to engage and build good relations with all communities in Britain; and
- explore issues and misconceptions about the position of Muslim women in Islam and address how they can articulate strong messages about suicide bombings, jihad and democracy.

#### **FACT FILE**

*Organisation Name:*  
London Borough of Hounslow

*Project Name:*  
**Hounslow Leadership Training**

*Target Audience:*  
Muslim women over 16 years of age

*Legal Status:*  
Local authority

*Funding Source(s):*  
Preventing Extremism Pathfinder Fund

*Local Authority:*  
London Borough of Hounslow

*Start Date:* 2004

*Further Information:*  
[www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)

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The course covered personal development, goal setting and developing a positive mental attitude.

The leadership training focused on the evolving role of Muslim women within their own communities and in wider society aiding their understanding of their role in the prevention of extremism. For example, during workshops lead by the Association of Chief Police Officers some of the difficulties the police face when undertaking counter-terrorism measures and how to deal with Muslim communities' sensibilities were discussed.

The training was well received by participants. Based on feedback, further work will be carried out to develop the programme to include training on public relations and media, public speaking and political participation. Impact assessments will be conducted with participants to measure the effect of training on mobilising and progressing Muslim women's civic participation in the medium term.

By strengthening the leadership skills of women, they are empowered to work in wider society to proactively support communities in tackling violent extremism.



## THE MUSLIMAH – MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Empowering, enlightening and encouraging Muslim women and girls to actively participate in society

Some British Muslim women continue to break the myths and stereotypes that have long been held about them regarding their identity and their position in society, culture and religion, however we do not always hear about those successes and positive role models. The community and voluntary sector and some key individuals take on the challenge to work at a grass roots level to motivate, encourage and build the confidence of Muslim women and their families. More coordinated work needs to be undertaken to assist Muslim women to realise the potential of their own capability and contribution they can make in British society.

**Zulekha Dala - Team Leader, Mental Health Development Team,  
East Lancashire Primary Care Trust**

### **Purpose**

In August 2006, searches were carried out on three homes in High Wycombe by counter-terrorism officers of the Metropolitan Police Service. The response to the searches from the local residents was predominantly led by the male leaders of the community. Many women expressed the desire to get involved but felt they lacked the skills, experience and confidence to participate in this agenda.

The **Muslimah** project was designed as a way of empowering Muslim women and girls to participate on issues that affect them. The programme explores the role that women play in the context of the family, the community and society in general. It examines the needs of a cross-section of Muslim women, from secondary school age upwards and a range of educational and professional backgrounds and none.

### **FACT FILE**

*Project Name:*

**The Muslimah – Make a Difference**

*Target Audience:*

Muslim women and girls

*Legal Status:*

Faith Associates – Registered Company

*Funding Source(s):*

Pathfinder Fund

*Local Authority:*

Wycombe District Council

*Start Date:* July 2007

*Further Information:*

[www.faithassociates.co.uk](http://www.faithassociates.co.uk)

**Activities**

Four different workshops will consider the Islamic historical context which supports and encourages women and girls to play a full part in every sphere of life. This is achieved by a combination of the following activities:

- Looking at historical and modern-day Muslim women who are inspirational role models, identification of the key attributes of such women and a close look at how such women have made a significant difference
- Use of case studies and examples to show how Muslim women are making real positive changes in their lives by exercising those rights through interaction in local communities and wider society
- Sensitive use of role plays, case studies and interactive sessions to build confidence and communication skills in the participants in an environment that they are comfortable in and which allows full, frank and open discussions
- Using drama based workshops to explore the issues of all forms of extremism and more particularly violent extremism – in an environment which encourages all views to be aired, challenged, nurtured and developed
- Raising awareness of the leading role Muslim women and girls can play in tackling radicalisation and extremism and encouraging interaction in schools, colleges, mosques and local councils
- Providing information and professional guidance on taking up key roles in society such as school governors, councillors, journalists, politics and providing basic skills to pursue these.

The final element of the programme is a conference to bring all the elements of the programme together and highlight the success, satisfaction and impact of being active and informed members of one's family, local community and wider society.

By drawing upon faith and heritage, historic role models can inspire and empower Muslim women to make a difference.



# Further Information

## ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

### **Jobcentre Plus**

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/)

All jobseekers can visit their local **Jobcentre Plus Office** which helps individuals to look for work and get training to help them get ready for work. **Jobcentre Plus** also administers various benefits and allowances for individuals of working age who meet a particular criteria.

### **Connexions**

[www.connexions-direct.com/](http://www.connexions-direct.com/)

**Connexions** provides young people aged 13 to 19 across England with a range of advice and information to help in making choices and decisions, including learning, work, money and careers.

## EDUCATION

### **learndirect**

[www.learndirect.co.uk/](http://www.learndirect.co.uk/) or 0800 66 0800

**learndirect** offers a number of courses which are held in colleges and learning centres across England and Wales. Adults can improve their maths and English skills on free Skills for Life courses. English language courses are also available – called ESOL courses. Some of these courses attract a fee but adults receiving income-related benefits are usually exempt.

### **learndirect advice**

[www.learndirect-advice.co.uk](http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk/) or 0800 100 900

**learndirect** is also a national learning advice line, which is free and independent. **learndirect** advice is also available in community languages.

### **nextstep**

[www.nextstep.org.uk](http://www.nextstep.org.uk)

**nextstep** promotes learning and work to all adults aged 20 and over. They have information and advice services which are available throughout England.

### ***Our future. It's in our hands***

[www.inourhands.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.inourhands.lsc.gov.uk) or 0800 011 30 30

This is a new campaign led by the Learning and Skills Council in conjunction with the Government and the Sector Skills Development Agency which encourages young people and adults to improve their skills.

### **DirectGov**

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

The website includes a comprehensive section on education and learning, including an explanation on what the different levels of qualifications means, advice on choosing where to study and guidance on how to apply for financial support.



## CIVIC PARTICIPATION

### Public Appointments

[www.publicappts-vacs.gov.uk/](http://www.publicappts-vacs.gov.uk/)

A '**public appointment**' is an appointment to the board of a public body – a body set up by Government Ministers either to provide independent advice or to deliver some aspect of public service. Public bodies range from the Film Council to the Committee on the Safety of Medicines, from the National Consumer Council to the Teacher Training Agency.

Public bodies play a real part in shaping and influencing our society and make decisions that affect all our lives. The purpose of public appointments are to ensure that decisions are informed by people who can reflect the society we live in.

### Community Service Volunteers

[www.csv.org.uk/](http://www.csv.org.uk/)

**Community Service Volunteers** is a volunteering and training charity that helps individuals to find volunteering placements in their community and helps public and not-for-profit organisations to find volunteers to contribute to achieving their aims.

## ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORTS

### Arts Council England

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**Arts Council England** is a national development agency for the arts, distributing money from Government and the National Lottery. It aims to get more art to more people in more places by developing and promoting the arts across England.

### Arts & Business

[www.aandb.org.uk](http://www.aandb.org.uk)

**Arts & Business** help businesses and arts organisations come together to create partnerships to benefit themselves and the wider community. The aim of Arts & Business is to enable businesses to be more successful by engaging with the arts and to increase resources for the arts from businesses.

### Sport England

[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

**Sport England**, a Government agency, advises, invests and promotes community sport to create an active nation. There are nine **Sport England** regions which are responsible for providing regional advice and making regional investment decisions.



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## PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

### **Improvement and Development Agency**

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

The **Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)** works to improve local government in order to help councils to serve people and places better. Local government relies heavily on local involvement both by councillors, and by all residents as electors. The **IDeA** website provides information on how to become involved in local government including sections on councillor leadership and skills profiles.

### **Local Authorities**

[www.communities.gov.uk/communities/preventingextremism](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/preventingextremism)

**Local authorities** play a substantial role in funding a wide range of activities at a local level. Most funding sources will be listed on authority websites and local authorities will be happy to advise on the details of specific funds.

In particular, Hazel Blears announced £45 million to go directly to local partners for work on preventing violent extremism. Eligible local authorities will be made aware of the specific funding available to each of them in January 2008 and will be issued with a guidance note providing advice on the targeting of those resources. That guidance and the list of eligible authorities will be published online and will build on the 2007/08 Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund.

### **Preventing Violent Extremism: Community Leadership Fund**

[www.communities.gov.uk/communities/preventingextremism/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/preventingextremism/)

Communities and Local Government has been supporting national projects which build the resilience of communities to prevent violent extremism. Details of the Fund for 2008/09 will appear on the Department's website in February 2008.



# Sources of Support

## FUNDING AND FINANCE

All funding streams change over time and any precise information rapidly becomes out of date. This section highlights some sources of funding and information (local authorities, government, charitable trusts) and provides a starting point for finding further information.

### **The Association of Charitable Foundations**

[www.acf.org.uk](http://www.acf.org.uk)

The website of the leading membership association for grant-making charities in the UK lists useful information regarding various grant providing trusts and foundations.

### **Capacity Builders**

[www.capacitybuilders.org.uk](http://www.capacitybuilders.org.uk)

The sector-led agency delivers the ChangeUp programme, which aims to help develop the quality and availability of support services to front-line voluntary and community organisations.

### **Directgov**

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

The Government's website has some useful information for third sector organisations looking for funding, including where to look locally, and information about the Big Lottery Fund and Grantnet.

### **The Directory of Social Change**

[www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk)

The Directory of Social Change is an independent source of funding information for voluntary and community organisations. They publish comprehensive details of funders, including charitable trusts and foundations.

### **Future Builders**

[www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk](http://www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk)

The Government-backed fund provides loans, repaid through contracts with public bodies, to build organisational capacity and capability to increase the scale and scope of an organisation's public service delivery.

### **The Government Funding Portal**

[www.governmentfunding.org.uk](http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk)

The Office of the Third Sector publishes details of grant programmes on the Government Funding website. The online portal shows central government department grants available for third sector organisations, and allows you to register to receive regular email updates of new grant rounds.

### **The Office of the Third Sector**

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third\\_sector/about\\_us.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/about_us.aspx)

The website for the Office of the Third Sector is a good starting point for finding out information for funding and support for voluntary and community organisations including government funding, charitable trusts and foundations and social enterprise funding.

### **V**

[www.wearev.com](http://www.wearev.com)

The youth volunteering organisation runs a small grants programme for particular volunteering activities.

