

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

The National Youth Agency

Youth
&
Policy

with the support of

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Towards a National Strategy for Muslim Youth Work

Report of the National Conference – December 2005



M.G. Khan

Youth work in British Muslim Communities

It can be argued, using the example of the effect of mass unemployment in the 1980s on individuals and communities, that every trauma leaves a lasting legacy that shapes policy. One cannot help but think that the emphasis on getting young people on the learning or training ladder and the emphasis on lifelong learning has this as a determinant.

Where other community responses (particularly Black and Minority Ethnic) have arisen, these have often been on the back of events. Developing strategies and responses to communities on the basis of 7/7 or some civil unrest can have its disadvantages with the danger of processes of representation isolating more people than they involve. For Muslim young people their faith identity has increasingly become a positive and yet a very painful terrain to negotiate. In relation to youth work, there is an existing suspicion of faith based youth work; of confessional approaches that create little space for a critical relationship between the young person, their religion, society etc. In the case of young Muslims and Muslim youth workers doing youth work in this context, this becomes a difficult exercise to explain. Often the identities of the young people need to be secured, comforted or understood whilst under a sustained level of hostility, before they can be critiqued and challenged again by young people or youth workers. By the outside this comforting/consolidation or support process can be viewed as indoctrination, manipulation of funding or worse.

The subtle dichotomies involved in work with young people in general are revealed in its practice. These are key insights that can inform organisational aims, forms and locations. However, the Muslim organisational infrastructure is still developing and taking shape. The emergence of each new organisation should be welcomed and not just questioned. The demand from participants for some organisational entity means that more development is required. But what is meant by the idea of an infrastructure? Is it the number of organisations, the quality of relationships, the

management of information or is it all of these? Considering the number and different types of organisational entities that sustain young people's and children's services, the Muslim organisational response is but embryonic and what is there is stretched and criticised simply because so little in this terrain exists and what does exist cannot deliver on all the agendas that are faced by Muslim communities.

A representational dialogue with Muslim communities is a cost effective approach on the part of local authorities and other agencies. However, the level of investment in the development of and further investment in specialist support services needs to emerge alongside this exercise for the myriad of needs that are to be met. The opportunity to develop the capacity and the variety of the organisational field to connect individuals to communities and communities with each other is missed as new and emerging organisations are sidelined from funding and development opportunities and their relationship with the mainstream radicalised. The role of youth work as a relational exercise that highlights relational tensions is unique and this conference has contributed to this dimension by identifying, bringing together, valuing and giving legitimacy to a wide variety of contributors who may not have a religion in common but who have expertise, experience and a desire to contribute on issues related to youth work with young Muslims.

Summary of National Conference December 2005

(For the case of convenience in this report the term Muslim youth work will mean both work with Muslim young people and/or developing Muslim approaches in youth work).

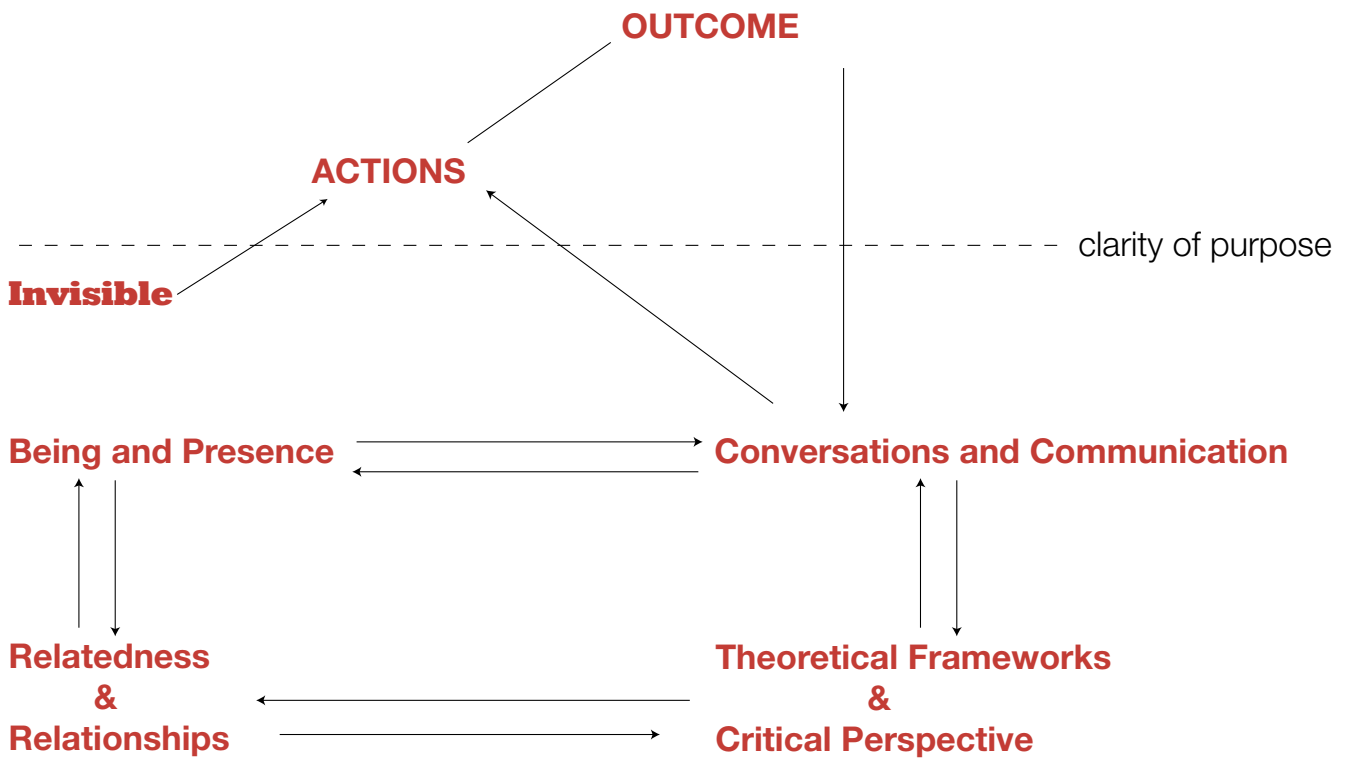
The National Conference on Muslim Youth Work initiated a unique discussion with striking perspectives that challenged all that attended. Two thirds of the audience of over 250 people were Muslims. Those who attended included young people and adults across the age spectrum.

The conference attracted participants from nearly every major urban conurbation in Britain representing a wide variety of organisations – religious, voluntary, statutory, academic, governmental, security, faith based as well as individuals without organisational affiliations. A national focus was retained despite considerable interest from overseas – enquiries were received from North Africa, Middle East, Europe, Australia and North America. The feedback suggests that it provided an alternative to the events related agenda that has characterised much of the interaction between government agencies and the BME communities historically and the Muslim community currently. The conference sought to connect the contribution of youth work as a means of engagement/involvement with Muslim young people with critical thinking

and reflective practice.

A positive and challenging dialogue was built in to the conference programme to test existing boundaries of what can and cannot be discussed when critiquing Muslim youth work; whilst national responses to it were explored and challenged. This was aided by a non threatening, supportive and open atmosphere that allowed difficult and alternative perspectives to be presented and tackled. The following diagram aims to place the purpose, process and outcomes of the conference within a contextual frame that demonstrates what influences approach, action and outcome. This conference was an investment in what is felt but not often seen, the invisible dimension that is so crucial in authenticating participation

Visible



Conversations and Communication: There is a need to make space for conversations that engage the variety of perspectives and disciplines that can inform work with Muslim young people. It is equally important that these conversations have the means to be shared with a wider audience which can give them shape, practical form and provide feedback. Participants valued and related to the assertions being made but

needed empirical evidence to convince sceptical managers and organisations.

Relationships and Relatedness: Dialogue and relationships need to be based on a sense of relatedness between different parties. Youth work and the values that underpin it provide a relatedness that can provide a practical agenda that initiates and strengthens relationships.

Theoretical Frameworks and Critical Perspectives:

The feedback from the conference demonstrated a desire from practitioners for critical perspectives that can inform their approach and practice. Theoretical frameworks and the theorising of experience have informed the principles that influence youth work approaches and principles and which give youth work authenticity and credibility. There need to be similar exercises that can do the same in giving youth work authenticity and credibility as a learning form across different faith and belief systems.

Being and Presence: there is a need for presence (individual and organisational) to be felt and welcomed and located appropriately. Alongside this there need to be organisational entities that contribute to public policy and give it resonance in service forms.

The focus on actions and outcomes though necessary can take the focus away from the 'invisible' that makes action meaningful and ultimately provides the capacity and capability for action.

As practitioners, researchers or writers on young people the initiation of any organisational enterprise finds itself in what appears to be a tension between instinctive political imperatives and practical or process necessities. The practical necessities require conversations and relationships as well as theoretical underpinnings, to bring clarity, purpose and ownership to action. This is particularly important in the context of the Muslim community as this creates the capacity for understanding, ownership, integrity and authenticity in the relationships between:

- government agencies and organisations;
- youth workers/organisations and young people; and
- youth workers/organisations and the families/guardians of young people.

The focus on Muslim young people is leading to organisational proliferation which in turn leads to different responses to similar issues. For example, young people ring both the Muslim Shari'ah Council and the Muslim Youth Helpline on a similar concern such as relationships, but

two distinctly different approaches appear to be taken to the enquiry, both legitimate from their perspective. The more organisations there are the greater will be the need to define their aims and objectives, the distinctive nature of their work, the choices they offer to young people and to define the participation young people play in their direction.

It is increasingly evident that Muslim youth work is in a catch up exercise which requires pump priming. This includes the need to communicate the conversations taking place and to inform of the opportunities available. This communication is necessary and requires a mechanism. It is an issue for existing publication/information media both from the youth work and Muslim community. This could be attributed to a number of reasons.

- competing demands which means that alternative means have to be established;
- the capacity to understand the conversation is not present. Youth work does not comprehend the language that can give youth work meaning for the Muslim community and the Muslim community/professionals do not understand the language that gives youth work meaning to the youth work community;
- that Muslim youth work has found itself in an existing tension between faith based youth work and secular youth work;
- it is also possible that Islamophobia has victimised or aggravated Muslim experience or approach whilst creating fear of mistakes or lack of clarity on how to meet the expectations that communities and emerging organisations bring;
- due to the speed of change and development this gives little space for other stories.

It could be one of the above or any other reason why two respectable magazines (one Muslim and the other non Muslim) both of which had reporters present did not have a report on the conference in issues after the conference despite the presence of key thinkers, policy makers and religious leaders. This does leave a question mark as to how

Muslim youth work is informed and where critical perspectives and contemporary issues can be debated in the context of their impact on young people and the youth workers who work with young people.

The development of any new national Muslim youth work organisational entity has a number of potential existing options on where and how to place itself:

Secular: abstract Islam out and deal with the socio-economic consequences of young people's 'Muslimness', without seeing the relevance of the 'Muslimness'. This to a certain extent is happening at this moment through mainstream youth work. This is where there is a focus on 'roles' – for example employment and training and issues to do with their Muslim identity can be pushed onto the street for the attention of whoever is there.

Christian: different denominational youth work infrastructure, for example, Methodist Association of Youth Clubs, Anglican Diocesan youth work infrastructure, Catholic Youth Service, Fellowship of United Reformed Youth etc.

There are also historically large national voluntary organisations with strong Christian roots with continued commitment from churches such as YMCA, YWCA, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Scouts and Guides.

Jewish: for example, AJY Makor, existing outside of the denominational terrains of the faith: orthodox, liberal, reform community. It is therefore often able to recruit and work with young people from throughout the Jewish community.

There are also other successful youth work models in place such as YouthBank. This is an innovative national project with a grant-making role, run for young people by young people, providing training, guidance, networking opportunities and resources such as toolkits to establish local branches.

It is clear that youth work is sustained by a myriad of organisations in a variety of guises: academic, policy and delivery. In the Muslim organisational context the anxiety in the

appearance of new organisations in its realm manifests a high level of vulnerability. This can be due to uncertainties surrounding funding, or the perceived capacity at the officer/ministerial level to deal with more than 'one' voice. This inability may then be interpreted as disorganisation or lack of political maturity. It can be that official bodies intimate/demand the need for a single voice whilst being able to facilitate a wide variety of voices from the Christian and secular communities. This can have the following consequences:

- damaging the intra denominational relationships that exist in the Muslim community;
- narrowing the 'institutional dialogue' excluding voices that then seek other means of expression, especially young people;
- using existing faith based organisational models to visualise a Muslim model. Muslim youth work does not necessarily mean a mosque or an Imam or denominational location or blessing. Viewing Muslim youth work through Christian youth work can be distorting;
- can be understood as hypocritical in a society that values diversity as a survival mechanism, whilst restricting the possibility of this diversity through an emphasis on single voices; and
- it is Islamophobic to think of the Muslim community as one homogenous entity. This then makes extremist opinion appear typical of the wider Muslim community.

The conference has created an opportunity for more effective work to be done with young British Muslims to achieve the government's Every Child Matters outcomes. Youth work's distinctive contribution to this is to be found in the process that creates deep relationships through meaningful conversations that enable cognitive shifts in young people's thinking and lifestyles. Instinctively Muslim young people recognise that their faith is a determining factor in their sense of wellbeing and their socio-economic standing in society. Their instincts are borne out by statistics. There does, however, need to be distinction between social and economic intervention.

Why a National 'Muslim Youth Work' Response is Necessary?

- About half the British Muslim population is under 18.
- The British Muslim population is disproportionately represented in the most deprived areas in major urban conurbations.
- A significant number of the current generation of British Muslim adults can not be seen to have achieved the five Every Child Matters outcomes during their growth to 18. The services addressing the needs of young Muslims are often weak (see, for example, Middlesbrough Ofsted, 2004).
- The development of community organisations and facilities by the Muslim communities is still at an early stage, and progress is hampered by economic and social exclusion and existing funding commitments.
- Youth work learning programmes in the voluntary and statutory sector typical of British youth work rarely engage with the development of youth workers based in the Muslim community and working with Muslim young people.
- Muslim youth workers and Muslim youth work has been a reactive and receiving exercise that has had little chance to present its own voice and distinctive shape. Rather it has been framed by a succession of policy responses which it has hosted. These often have made it and the policy look 'inauthentic' and in the process having both its integrity and the values Muslim organisations and youth workers bring to the work questioned.
- Youth work has become a 'condom' that can provide 'safe' entry into the lives of young people using temporary relationships that satisfy an immediate policy demand. The experiences and the voices of the youth worker and the young person are left behind. The move from consultation to collaboration needs to be made more often.
- Directly engaging with youth worker

experiences moves policy and strategy closer to understanding the initiatives and innovation required.

- Developing a distinctive response in a committed funding field for new thinking and emerging organisations at a local level is extremely difficult. For example, Birmingham Youth Service, with the largest proportion of its funding nationally given to the voluntary sector, has not reviewed its voluntary grant programme for two decades. By devolving so much of this responsibility locally via Children's Trusts, innovation has been made more difficult as it would challenge existing practice and existing 'sensitive' funding relationships.
- Muslim young people receive disproportionate attention in connection with the criminal justice system and have come to see themselves as being viewed as the enemy within rather than just as young people. Muslim youth work needs to emerge as a learning, experiential and challenging exercise framed by them being young people and not only in terms of community safety and security.
- A young person centred approach is critical in a climate of 'fear' where organisations are refusing to support programmes that have the label 'Muslim' attached to it. This is narrowing the development of a distinctive, creative and positive Muslim voice and curricula. This also inadvertently feeds a narrower version of Islam to ensure the appeasement of the mythical mainstream.

The Muslim Youth Work 'Offer'

- Muslim youth work can enable young people to have a sense of self worth that takes on board the faith dimension of their identity.
- Young men and women need to be taken seriously in the Muslim community; the youth work process can enable this. This is particularly so in the current policy agenda where young people need to be seen to be taking an active part in the projects and initiatives put forward for funding. Muslim organisations can be seen as being put in

a situation of disadvantage by policy due to the state of youth work in this community. There is a mismatch between what is required and what exists.

- Youth participation can contribute to addressing the gendered nature of the representational sphere.
- It can provide interventions in a crucial influencing space outside home, mosque and school.
- It can bring into play existing curricula in culturally appropriate ways but also develop new positive curricula that can inform identity and belonging.
- It can introduce new models of understanding work with young people and the purposes that influence it.
- Muslim youth work can form relationships with young people that are accepting and well informed about the faith dimension of their lives.
- It can assist young Muslims constantly faced with negative images of their faith to challenge this in a constructive way. For example, the arts, creating spaces for their voices to be heard.
- It can develop new relationships with the Muslim world and influence agendas on issues of justice and minorities as members of the European community.
- Youth workers from a Muslim faith perspective in senior positions with local authorities are few and far between and are often stretched and ghettoised. The conference and any emerging organisational entity provides an opportunity to be heard outside the constraints of organisational hierarchies and community representational discourses.
- A Muslim youth work response can critique investment in the 'relationships' being invested in and cultivated with, for example, family, training, environment etc.
- Development of theoretical frameworks are needed that authenticate a Muslim

perspective/approach in work with young people.

- A national response can be more effective in pump priming local action. This is especially so in investing in new voices, ways of working etc where existing funding is committed.

The Conference Helped in the Following Ways

- The experience of the British Muslim communities took priority in what can often be a 'charged' international discussion.
- The dramatic and horrific events which capture the public imagination, but which do not reflect the mainstream experience, took second place to thinking about the strategic issues for British Muslim young people.
- The successes and difficulties in working with young Muslims in the UK over the last 20 years were reviewed and analysed.
- The youth work focus attracted participants from nearly every major urban conurbation in Britain, representing a wide variety of organisations – religious, voluntary, statutory, academic, governmental, security and faith based.
- It set an example of a positive and challenging dialogue so that existing boundaries of what can and cannot be said in critiquing Muslim youth work can be expanded.
- It modelled the complexity of ingredients that would be needed to contribute to the development and informing of youth work interventions. It drew on theology, education, social care, sociology and psychology. Youth work joins in these debates to respond to the needs of young people. The complexity includes the way Muslim, Jewish, Christian, secular and other organisations can work together sharing good practice and finding common themes.
- It showed real engagement, moving beyond the politics of representation. The participants came with particular

experiences, expertise or interest in furthering good practice rather than representing an organisation or a community. There was a genuine interest and desire in wanting to know and contribute more to developing appropriate responses to the lives of Muslim young people. **There are people out there who can make things happen.**

Outcomes to Date

- A dedicated issue of *Youth and Policy* on Muslim youth work – publishing papers presented at the conference.
- Bringing together key thinkers from a variety of perspectives to inform youth work.
- Commitment of two books from The NYA on Muslim youth work and issues pertinent to it.
- A commitment from The NYA to the development of a web resource that can inform and support youth work with young Muslims.
- An invitation from the British Council to begin to explore how youth work can be understood in majority Muslim countries.
- The development of a national youth only response/agenda on Muslim youth work at the Conversations and Actions conference.
- To bring together a variety of youth work practitioners from other faith perspectives such as Jewish and Christian youth organisations to share youth work practice.
- Development of use of Islamic scripture in non formal educational contexts.
- A follow up conference that can maintain the conversation and momentum to foster action within four months of the national conference.
- Meeting on 2 March with the DfES minister Beverley Hughes to present these recommendations and seeking a further meeting following the outcomes of the Conversations and Actions conference.
- A commitment from the DfES to continue to invest in this conversation/initiative.

Recommendations

1. Youth work as a professional approach can provide a meaningful point of engagement between different faith and belief communities. Opportunities identified need to be supported in order for a practical exchange that moves inter faith beyond dialogue to inter faith action.
 2. An investment in the development of Muslim youth work training approaches. Establishment of a qualifying course and training modules on Muslim youth work.
 3. A means to continue the conversation so valued at the conference that feeds the interdisciplinary nature of the response required to develop Muslim youth work approaches. A possible action in relation to this can be including this remit in the new *Vibes and Voices* magazine from The NYA, which replaces *Shabaab*.
 4. Development of a mechanism that can inform of best practice, opportunity and expertise across the country such as the development of a website, Standing Conference, continuation of individual enquiry groups.
 5. Creating a platform that enables a relationship between Muslim youth workers or youth workers who work with Muslims and the DfES. This space needs to have representatives of other government agencies to ensure a holistic response that makes best use of time and resources. This is a serious issue in an embryonic organisational landscape that is stretched very thinly just by the number of different agencies it has to negotiate with.
 6. Establish a Standards Fund, or its equivalent, to initiate and critique innovative and challenging development of new youth work approaches to work with Muslim young people. This needs to identify clearly the relationships in which the youth work is investing.
 7. A frequent demand has been the establishment of an organisation. This will require financial support to conceptualise and then to activate.
 8. Development of mechanisms that access existing curricula and work opportunities for Muslim youth workers that workers can nationally apply for. International youth work is particularly important in relation to the local/global context Muslim young people in Britain operate in. A targeted number of exchanges, which youth workers with Muslim young people can apply for, is one immediate response that requires no new funding.
 9. The need to develop our understanding of non formal education in majority Muslim countries for sharing of experience and intervention styles in the non formal education/organisational sphere.
 10. In the arts field Muslims are still at a point at which they are justifying their right to use this medium eg Islam and the arts road show. The connection between the arts and youth work in expressing relationships is a powerful one and one that can be developed. Emerging organisations need to be provided with the capacity to develop this approach.
 11. A training offer. Investment in theoretical paradigms that can inform curricula and identify interventions being made and the learning being derived. Training in Muslim approaches to youth work and theoretical frameworks that can inform youth work delivered nationally.
 12. Development of existing youth work practice and the introduction of new resources for youth workers working with young people.
- These recommendations will be further developed amongst others at the conference on 29 March 2006. This conference will seek to ensure that the boundaries of conversation continue to be tested. It will look in depth at a number of themes:
- * Young people's enquiry group.
 - * Arts and culture.
 - * International youth work.
 - * Mind, body and spirit.
 - * Girls' work.
 - * Theoretical frameworks.
 - * Infrastructure.
 - * Staff training and development.

Appendices

- 1 The National Conference content December 2005
- 2 Raw data from the way forward questionnaire. All of the data from the feedback received is being provided in the coming pages for the purpose of transparency.

Appendix 1

National Conference on Muslim Youth Work – 5 December 2005

This is the first national conference on Muslim Youth Work and is organised by the University of Birmingham in conjunction with *Youth and Policy* journal and The National Youth Agency.

The conference brings together youth work practitioners, policy makers and academics, with others who have a concern/interest in Muslim young people. There is a raging debate that has been further fuelled by the events of 7 July. This debate is about young Muslims, their allegiances, their alliances and where they seek authority. How this debate is then translated into positive service interventions is the focus of this conference.

Conference Programme

The conference will run from 9.30am till 5.45pm.

Speaker themes:

- Explaining Youth Work.
- Qur'anic Notions of Childhood and Youth.
- Are the principles of informal education universal?
- Who are British Muslim Youth?
- Members of a community and/or citizens of a nation – the politics of representation and their impact on young people.

Conference Speakers

Sheikha Halima Krausen

Based in Hamburg, Germany, Halima was a founding member of the Inter-Religious Dialogue Circle at the Department of Theology at Hamburg University. She was a founding member and is a lecturer at the Initiative for Islamic Studies, Hamburg and is part of a team producing a German translation of the Qur'an with commentary notes. She is also a team member of the Standing Conference on Jewish, Christian, Muslim Dialogue.

Tony Jeffs

Tony Jeffs works in the Community and Youth Studies Unit, University of Durham. Amongst his many publications are *Young People and the Youth Service* (1979); *Youth Work* (1988 with Mark Smith); *Henry Morris* (1999) *Informal Education* (1999 with Mark Smith); and *Essays in the History of Youth Work* (2001) and *Architects of Change: Studies in the history of community and youth work* (2004) (both edited with Ruth Gilchrist and Jean Spence). Tony Jeffs founded and continues to be an editor of *Youth and Policy*.

Tariq Ramadan

Professor Tariq Ramadan is a visiting fellow at St Anthony's College, Oxford. He holds an MA in Philosophy and French literature and PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Geneva. In Cairo, Egypt he received one-on-one intensive training in classic Islamic scholarship from Al-Azhar University scholars. Tariq Ramadan taught Islamic Studies and Philosophy as a professor at Freiburg University in Switzerland for many years. He held the post of Professor of Islamic Studies in the Classic Department and Luce Professor of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding at Kroc Institute in 2004 at the University of Notre Dame in the United States.

Bobby Sayyid

Dr Bobby Sayyid is a University Research Fellow in Postcolonialism and ethnicity in the School of Sociology at the University of Leeds. He has just finished co-editing a book called *A Postcolonial People*. His research interests include: Post-structuralist political thought, Islamism and eurocentrism, globalisation and diasporas, race and ethnicity, Islamic movements and politics. His previous publications include *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism & the Emergence of Islamism*, Zed Books (2002 2nd edition).

Tom Wylie

Tom Wylie became Chief Executive of The National Youth Agency in 1996 from a post as Assistant Director of Inspection for the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). He was born and educated in Belfast where he was a teacher and youth worker. Moving to England in 1970, he worked for the Scout Association and the National Youth Bureau. He became one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education in 1979 and managed the Inspectorate's Divisions responsible for youth and community work, for educational disadvantage and for curriculum. His HMI publications included *Access and Achievement in Urban Education* and he has also written various youth work texts. He has served on various governmental and EU advisory groups; the board of the Prince's Trust – Action and committees of the Economic and Social Research Council and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

RT Hon Beverley Hughes MP

Minister for Children, Young People and Families

Beverley Hughes was elected Labour MP for Stretford and Urmston in 1997. From June 1997 she served as a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee until her appointment as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Hilary Armstrong, Minister of State for Local Government and Housing, in July 1998.

Workshops

Presenters

Paper/Title

Rabia Malik	<i>Creating Spaces for Being Whole for Muslim Young People</i>
David Gustave/A. Marwan Alam	<i>The Re-racialisation of Muslim Young People / Getting off the Multicultural Merry Go Round – Taboos and Totems</i>
MG Khan	<i>A Muslim Theoretical Framework for Youth Work</i>
Taniya Hussain	<i>Working Islamically with Young People or Muslim Youth Work?</i>
Bishop Roger Sainsbury	<i>Is there any Common Ground Between Christian and Muslim Youth Work?</i>
Imran Mogra/Abdullah Maynard	<i>Intervention for transformation – activities for Muslim young people / Islamic Development Through Youth Work</i>
Mohammed Dhalech	<i>Towards a Muslim Youth Work National Infrastructure</i>
Tansin Benn & Aisha Ahmed	<i>Women's Islamic Games (Teheran): International Sporting Opportunities for Muslim Women</i>
Derick Wilson	<i>Youth Work in Conflict Situations – Northern Ireland</i>
Shelley Marsh	<i>Role of Youth Work in the Construction of Jewish Youth Identity & The Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange</i>
Gill Cressey	<i>Muslim Girls Work – The Ultimate Separatist Cage?</i>
Karima Laachir	<i>French Muslim Youth and the Banlieues of Rage?</i>
Sadek Hamid	<i>Models of Muslim Youth Work between Reform and Empowerment.</i>
Tahir Abbas	<i>British South Asian Identities after 7/7</i>
Sunduss al-Hassani	<i>Impact of Policy on the Development of British Muslim Youth Identities</i>

Appendix 2 – Raw data from the way forward questionnaire

Setting a future agenda

1 What would you like this conference to take forward as action?

- a. To lobby government not to see youth, in particularly Muslim youth, as a problem that needs a solution
 - b. Look for greater common ground for all youth regardless of faith
 - c. Find ways of including faith on the agenda – but not as a series of Do's and Don't but from an individual's perspective 'spiritually' 'otherness' thereby creating divides 42
-
- a. To establish whether or not Muslim Youth Work is required
 - b. Possible structures
 - c. The suitability of the service
 - d. How soon are we likely to see the service
 - e. Will there be one focussed service 41
-
- a. Allow YP to fix agendas for themselves
 - b. To respect and acknowledge differences in faith whilst strengthening communities
 - c. Developing work around humanity and citizenship
 - d. Y Muslim women work should be high on the agenda in my experience 40
-
- a. Write up reports in *Youth & Policy*
 - b. Engage with government or part of policy development 39
-
- a. Alienation of Muslim YP needs to be addressed
 - b. Lack of leadership at grass roots and nationally
 - c. Producing a strategy which acknowledges a diversity to approach
 - d. Responsibilities of other agencies to play a part – not just youth services 'young people's conference' 38
-
- a. Relevant speakers
 - b. Young people led
 - c. Form ideas/decisions as a group
 - d. A framework 35
-
- a. A strategic approach to exploring and delivering Muslim Youth Work
 - b. For this approach to be responsive to young people and attractive
 - c. For this to include recognition of good practice and national website
 - d. For this to include sustainable policies ie Including training and development
 - e. For this to include counselling and welfare through a national network and increased training 34
-
- a. Training of youth worker
 - b. Islamic counselling
 - c. Young R teach more speeches
 - d. Bobby Sayid to do more 33
-
- a. Young people lead focus
 - b. Down to earth workshops
 - c. Not talking down to participants
 - d. Aim it at a practitioner level not academic
 - e. Relevant language/no jargon 32
-
- a. More dialogues with other faiths

- b. More anecdotes from youth workers who work within Muslim young people
 - c. Less Kashmiri bigotry – it simply further divides the Muslim community
 - d. A follow up conference
 - e. Regular updates 31
- a. Infrastructure
 - b. Collate and establish practice
 - c. Practical support to all youth workers 29
- a. More specific young people issues
 - b. Some exchange in youth activities or youth progress
 - c. Prof Tariq Ramadan Sayed to have extended slots 28
- a. Identify good practice examples to share
 - b. Hold regular conferences to facilitate this
 - c. The conferences to facilitate common approaches to working with Muslim young people
 - d. Professor Tariq Ramadan's speech was excellent and very much in the spirit of community, cohesion – a basic programme of Islamic studies based on his approach to leading young people would be really useful 27
- a. Strategies for Youth Work in Further Education
 - b. Network of Colleges sharing good practice
 - c. Curriculum to match cultural diversity in Education
 - d. Identify core participants to drive agenda forward
 - e. Continue with conference theme on yearly basis BUT WITH the involvement of Muslim Youth not just as guides? 26
- a. Work with the Govt in developing sensitive and equal opps policies
 - c. The debate of never ending immigrants to be discussed further and reach a national understanding
 - d. Muslim youth have same issues and needs as other YP hence employ any means to educate and emphasise YP 25
- a. Dialogue with Government
 - b. Positive stories in the media re YP
 - c. Multi-faith youth workers forum
 - d. Publication of speakers input and small groups for YP to be able to find their work 24
- a. Organise a National Muslim Umbrella organisation
 - b. Produce a report inclusive of all speech given by speakers
 - c. Dialogue with Government for better understanding of Muslim Young People 23
- a. Annual conference
 - b. Publication 22
- a. Muslim identity and how it fits into Govt agenda
 - b. How to address issues of anti oppressive practice within faith based youth work 21
- a. To promote more debates and discussions
 - b. To create any weighting document that can be shared with the workers who weren't present at the conference 20
- a. Recognising the value of the Muslim community
 - b. Understanding the need of the Muslim youth in context of the whole community (Muslims)
 - c. Allowing and making resources available Muslim youth can customise their services rather than standardising your services and imposing Muslim youth to use items or questioning why

- they are not accessing mainstream services 19
- a. More about integration, and the obstacles it faces
- b. Give people like Professor Ramadan more time to speak next time 18
- a. University level learning for youth work including explicit discussion of Islam
- b. Publications of effective intermediate agencies
- c. Ask for targeted DfES funding to develop work for the coming generation of young people 17
- a. Practical workshop – more interaction
- b. Workshops by youth workers in field 16
- a. Promoting dialogue b/w Govt
- b. Tackling Islamophobia and Racism, exploring values among youth work, youth justice systems
- c. Exploring demon of youth leading to more youth persecution in justice system
- d. Exploring Muslim identity
What are core values / principles 15
- a. Putting the important insights of the conference into practice
- b. Helping workers and managers and community leaders develop the tools needed for the practical work 14
- a. Role of Imams & Madrassahs in UK
- b. Entry into H Education from Muslim communities 12
- a. Use the delegate list to create an ongoing network
- b. Create opportunities for the inter-faith dialogue
- c. Create opportunities for dialogue with other youth workers 11
- a. Develop a working toolkit
- b. To address local political agendas
- c. How do we create open pathways of trust between Muslim and non-Muslim groups
- d. To anchor principles to funding opportunities and pathway leaders 10
- a. Gain trust between everyone
- b. Break down barriers preventing good youth work 9
- a. Giving youth voices
- b. Opportunities to learn national culture
- c. Dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims 8
- a. To retain willing participants as founding members of a National Association of Muslim Youth
- b. To work towards the formation of branches countrywide
- c. Appeal to the organisers and speakers to be Patrons of the new Association
- d. Draw up a programme of action in consultation with members
- e. Ensure women are well represented in all committees to be formed 7
- a. Contact list of people so people can liaise etc. 6
- a. Disseminate reciprocal knowledge in order to promote understanding
- b. Promote the involvement of the public sector in Muslim youth related issues 5
- a. Funding needs

- b. Providing Muslim young people to channel their anger
- c. Develop awareness of the need on govt level
- d. Training/skills 4

- a. Muslim youth work framework
- b. Dialogue with Muslim youth
- c. Discourse with politicians around their policies and therefore the creation of marginalising young Muslim people
- d. Discussion around the role of Govt in the creation of definition – an institutionally unrealistic understanding of Muslim Youth
- e. Addressing the social ie – crime, drugs, alcohol etc. 3

- a. How Every Child Matters and Youth Matters impacts
- b. That the conference reports back to delegates or organisations about what happens next – A summary, perhaps an expectation from our organisations to take this work forward in appropriate ways 2

- a. Feedback of developments to attendees
- b. Working more in conjunction with Youth Matters progress 1

Setting a future agenda

2 Are there any issues which you think were important which were not addressed effectively in the conference?

- Youth Matters Paper – Why Is Connexions not working? ie a backdrop to need for new paper (although this is not directly connected to Muslim Youth Work) 1

- Involve / Look at the full range of agencies that work with young people – ie Connexions etc. 2

- – Roles and responsibilities of community groups, religious elders and institutions 3
 - How we can address the social issues facing our Muslim youth 3

- I think we all know we need to work with Muslim y p to channel their anger on global situation but the problem is this – how to engage with them, how to convince them to come to youth clubs 4

- The way the young generation of Muslims build their identity was not sufficiently explored 5

- The issues of oppression faced by Muslim girls and how youth workers can contribute / support (but I didn't attend Gill's workshop!) 6

- – Publications
 - The documentation of problems confronting Muslims and what has been done so far 7

- How to practically engage in multi 'faith' sector working:- ways in which to introduce services through common goals 10

- – Inter-faith dialogue
 - Dialogue wit secular youth workers 11

- South Asian Muslim Identities – more time!
Perhaps fewer morning speakers to allow longer papers and thus examination of issues 12

- Bridging from theory to practice, but what's the next step? 14
- – Demonisation and criminalisation of youth by Govt
 - Exploration what is Muslim Youth 15
- Actual issues in workshops 16
- Not today: Well done 17
- Not everything was covered according to what I was expecting, especially in the workshops 18
- The conference was very useful and all speakers were very knowledgeable. However, I would like to re-think the ways in which the policy was standardised (Muslim Youth). Islam is faith and in it there are different ethnicity which has different cultural approach 19
- The issues discussed were very pertinent but should have left a bit more time for the workshops 20
- Felt that issues were raised but not enough time to discuss issues, workshops did not give enough time to discuss ideas – only to pose questions 21
- Mosques as community centres 22
- Definitions – ie Muslim/Islam etc. 24
- Inter Muslim and Muslim Youth conflicts – geopolitical and social status, identities – are Muslims now being described separately from the other Minority Ethnic Communities? 25
- – How to address a sense of apathy amongst Muslim youth work?
 - Funding issues in further education to address positive action in Muslim Youth work 26
- – Individual young person identity
 - Some examples of good positive work done in other parts of UK 28
- I think we should be less keen to promote pigeonholing of Muslims 30
- Young people's perspective 32
- The concept of the Muslim ID 33
- Excellent day – though would have liked examples of good practice at strategic level 34
- I found the conference too academic, not enough interactive time during workshops to look at strategies for way forward. The whole day was disappointing 35
- Appropriately addressed issues, but agenda for future could have been taken better 36
- Practical approaches in youth work 37
- How non-Muslim workers can engage with Muslim young people. The significant issue for Muslim young people is 'alienation' important as other social factors such as deprivation etc are 38
- Youth work training for those working with Muslims 39

- General YW agenda as against faith based (eg Issues on sexuality, gender, contraception) 40

All topics touched upon were important – but the conference didn't allow for in depth exploration of the many complex issues raised

Setting a future agenda

3 What would put you in a position to take forward some of the actions in your community or place of work?

- a. Forming a working group
 - b. Literature sent to me
 - c. Further conferences
 - d. Further training 1
-
- a. More discussion, analysis through local/national forums
 - b. Some guidance or feedback from Muslim young people and their parents
 - c. Be clear where we are going with this – recognising that the agenda may change
 - d. What support there is available to take actions forward 2
-
- a. Funding good work, consultation and evaluation
 - b. Funding a working group
 - c. Some feedback from today's session and the workshops we couldn't attend
 - d. How do we get Imams / Mosques to take responsibility for YW allowing Islam and integration 3
-
- a. Working in partnership
 - b. Providing provision for Muslim young people
 - c. I think we need to develop community awareness 4
-
- a. Disseminate research results 5
-
- a. Connecting up with others in region 6
-
- a. Hold every participant to start something wherever they come from
 - b. The formation of an association of youth workers
 - c. Encourage not only healthy competition but also collaboration
 - d. Involvement of the media in this endeavour because the media shapes the minds 7
-
- a. Giving voice
 - b. Giving speech
 - c. Youth as present now and not just future! 8
-
- a. I am in a position to take action
 - b. I am looking for routes of engagement
 - c. I have the ability to fund to build capacity 10
-
- a. Database of contacts from the conference 11
-
- a. Certainly an entry into H.Education eg Teaching profession 12
-
- a. Workforce development through work of The NYA in partnership
 - b. Quality improvement
 - c. Research and innovation 14

- a. More funding for groups work
- b. More funding from YJB / home office at Muslims
- c. More research / funding to tackle gang crime
- d. More training for staff to explore Islam phobic & basic Islamic principles
- e. Look at street work among youth away from mosque/Muslim organisers 15
- a. Yes at the University of Teesside
- b. Developmental groups by religion? 17

- a. According to Professor S Sayyid we have to save our young members of community from radicalisation, that is the type of task that I am willing to put on the top of agenda 18

- a. Education and information
- b. Employment within youths 19

- a. Tariq Ramadan's speech!!! 22

- a. Government recognition of the volume of faith based youth work
- b. Promoting the volume of faith based youth work in local authorities 23

- a. More info to help with dialogue with colleagues
- b. More opportunities for reflective practise 24

- a. Use spirituality as a tool to get through to the Muslim YP 25

- a. Support and guidance
- b. Partnership approach to youth work
- c. Learning mentors to be made mandatory in further education 26

- a. A clear sense of direction to which Muslim youth workers subscribe 27

- a. A joint approach that can also seek to address funding issues or circulate that advice is available
- b. Producing reports and literature from the national debate which can be used as justification for local action 27

- a. Islamic counselling
- b. Mentoring
- c. Type of topics included in training 28

- a. Commitment
- b. Belief it's my Muslim duty to do so 30

- a. More open dialogue with young people
- b. Bring issues to the forefront
- c. Courses on cultural and self-awareness
- d. More input from the mosques 31

- a. Enjoyed Tariq Ramadan's and Bobby's presentation
- b. Enjoyed comedy act 32

- a. For Islamic counselling places to be funded long term
- b. For Islamic counselling courses to be supported to deliver to Imams
- c. To work in partnership with diverse organisations including statutory orgs and national government 34

- a. Firm ideas
- b. Network of workers / young people that meet on a regular basis to share practice and ideas
- c. Working document to carry on the work
- d. Regional meetings
- e. To be informed 35
- a. Education at grassroots on the ideas of Prof Tariq Ramadan 37

- a. A conference for young people
- b. The conference is called 'Muslim Youth Work' but continued to highlight 'racial' identities such as highlighting difference between Pakistan and Kashmir, doesn't do much for a unified response
- c. Workshops delivered too much like 'lecturers' very little interactions and two way process to open debate 38

- a. Training 39

- a. Literature on all workshops conducted
- b. Stats and figures of YP in different communities and the work being done with these
- c. Good practice resources for Muslim youth work 40

- a. Training on how to approach this type of work
- b. Increased awareness on issues surrounding Muslim youth 41

- a. Support to enable 'risk' taking that leads to positive outcomes
- b. Greater dialogue with experts who have had the opportunity to synthesise the information and make sense of the situation
- c. Opportunity to share good practice – across the field of youth work and other areas
- d. Avoid focus or exclusivity of Muslim youth to the exclusion of other relevant and interested parties 42

Setting a future agenda

4 What type of future events could be organised to take forward the dialogue and the thinking opened up by the conference?

A youth conference – looking for common ground between all faiths, non faiths and better tolerance and understanding by understanding the contexts in which individuals operate. This could be regional and then national 42

A conference with other national organisations and to include local practitioners 41

Good practice guides/meetings/opinion poll 40

More small group discussion
Less formal setting in workshop 39

One for young people – they help organise and facilitate 38

Practical conference about practical activities to deal with youth issues 37

Dialogue should be carried forward for discussion about future agenda for action 36

A conference where young people take the lead and talk about their experiences and devise strategies for the way forward together 35

- Focused conferences on themes eg Developing Islamic education / principals based curriculum for Muslim young people to promote integration and community cohesion 27
- Celebrating diversity events embedded within enrichment programme
Progress reports on innovative Muslim Youth Groups 26
- Are Muslims really a threat to Europe or are they destroying themselves
Identity issue to be more refined 25
- More open sessions with main speakers to explore and push on issues raised 24
- Regional conferences including organisations / gov / y workers/ young people 24
- Annual conference to provide feedback 23
- Local workshops 22
- Further conference on Islamic youth work where some of the real issues can be discussed – not just raised and started round. Less formal ‘lecture style’ more discussion on time – would have been good having a practitioner as a speaker 21
- Regular local workshops (London)
Training for youth workers (non Muslim youth workers who work with Muslim young people) 20
- National and regional conference organising with both Islamic scholars and community leaders as well as other international agency 19
- There is more to be discussed – even the same titles 17
- Workshops on specific topics – eg the ‘in between organisations’ 14
- Regional consultation / seminar around sharing good practice 13
- 1 x day conferences such as this 12
- Practical workshops for practitioners to develop models of excellence 10
- Publishing as well more platforms which enable dialogue of this 8
- Different interpretations 6
- Workshops – open dialogue 4
- Challenging the roles of mosques, integrating youth work within that environment 3
- Looking at the local picture – what needs to happen in Birmingham, who are the agencies that can be involved 2
- The workshop as Christian / Muslim youth work discussion could easily be expanded more conferences 1

Setting a future agenda

- 5 Would you like to lead, facilitate or contribute with a view to you becoming involved in the organisation of related future events? Please circle Lead – facilitate – contribute**

– participate – none

Participate – As yet can't see how else to contribute but as this process evolves I may like to take a more proactive role 42

We would like to possibly facilitate an open discussion involving young people in Tower Hamlets 41

Participate and contribute for the time being 40

Contribute 39

Participate 38

Participate 37

Participate 36

Contribute – Islamic counselling – working group on training and devt. 35

Yes please! 30

Infrastructure development

Support / network youth workers 29

Facilitate – mobilising and organising a vibrant FE based youth work which links in with GE agenda 26

Contribute/participate 23

Contribute 22

Contribute/participate 21

Participate 20

Participate 19

Participate 18

Contribute – learn from the range of city based youth work in the UK 17

Contribute/participate 16

Facilitate any sort of event 14

Contribute / participate 13

Contribute/lead/facilitate Access to higher education, parallel movements for removal e.g. Nurai/Gilen movement from Turkey 12

Facilitate – contribute – participate 10

Participate 8

Any/all 6

Participate 5

Contribute/participate – interested in taking the issues raised further and looking to working towards Muslim youth work 3

Participate – If this is a means to something happening?
Influencing what Government does perhaps 2

Attend – possibly contribute if we @ Connexions create a working group

Setting a future agenda

6 Any other comments would be appreciated?

- Although there were some gaps in the workshop section to be filled, but over all it was very nice 18
- A very stimulating day – thank you 14
- Well organised conference! 12
- I would have liked workshops to have been less academic more interactive 10
- FANTASTIC Jazakhallah Khair 8
- Many thanks for having vision and taking initiative to the organisers 6
- More empirical evidence based on research results would have been appreciated 5
- A great deal of discourse, but where do we go from here? We have identified key issues, needs but how do we implement this, give y p a sense of belonging without the burden of being 3
- – Some of the workshops were rushed & didn't allow for much discussion/participation 2
 - It was nice to see Ulfah Arts – something different!
- It was an excellent venue, conference that inspired interesting and progressive discussion 42
- I am a strong believer of making good human beings and good citizens of myself and the people I work with 40
- A valuable conference 39
- Most of the workshop contents were already known to myself, the information is available on the internet (WKShop 2). I could have stayed at home and found this info for myself 38
- 'Speakers were excellent' Bobby Sayyid, Tariq R Z 38
- Jaza kum Allah Khanyer 37
- Congratulate the organisers for the hard labour in bringing together scholars / workers from all over UK 36
- Venue – was not ideal, parking was too far away
Food – hardly any choice for vegetarians
Facilitators – in some workshops were too academic, talking from paper and no discussion

Length of day – was too long / too many speakers

Professor Tariq Ramadan – speech was relevant 35

- Well done! Great conference. Enjoyed the diversity of speakers – a step forward!
Ulfah & Minias – great presentations, +ve! 34
- The conference was misleading it didn't deliver what it set out to do I felt like I was back at university with seminar style lectures. Very disappointed. I haven't come away with anything a very expensive networking event. Food was terrible. 32
- Thank you. This type of conference is much needed. May Allah bless your efforts. Amen 30
- – Very good speakers – a need for linkage to y w practice – fill the vacuum between theory and practice 29
 - Y w practice presentations would have been useful 29
- Weak workshops but overall very good speakers 28
- Where does positive role models, raising aspirations and empowerment end and losing cultural identity and awareness start? 26
 - Copies of papers and discussions on other workshops distributed via e-mail 26
- The workshops could have been made more realistic and relevant in the context of the youth work rather than how it should have been 25
- – Need a place where one can sit down to eat
 - Conference well organised – well thought out for all needs 24
- Well organised conference and should be made an annual event 23
- Discussion of role of Muslim youth leader identities and perceptions (eg. Issue of Hajib – are you not still a Muslim woman if you do not cover your hair?)
 - Would have enjoyed Prof T Ramadam earlier in the day to set context and raise issues 21


Thank you for an excellent and interesting conference to be part of. I loved all the speakers ... Some were brilliant. I hope you also enjoyed the event and that it achieved all you were hoping to achieve.

Towards a National Strategy for Muslim Youth Work

This paper reports on the first national conference on Muslim Youth Work, jointly organised by the University of Birmingham, *Youth and Policy* journal and The National Youth Agency, with the support of the Department for Education and Skills, in December 2005.

The conference brought together youth work practitioners, policy makers and academics, with others who have a concern or interest in Muslim young people. It outlines the outcomes of that conference to date and makes recommendations for taking the work forward.

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