

Contributing to Intercultural and Inclusive Youth Work in a Diverse & Multi-Faith Northern Ireland

# Reach Out Enrich **Within**

## Guidelines





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We want our society to be inclusive but diverse, embracing people from all faiths and traditions. Our society is enriched by difference.

**Junior Ministers at the Executive Office**

Alistair Ross and Megan Fearon

**Reach Out Enrich Within**

Guidelines for Contributing to Intercultural and Inclusive Youth Work in a Diverse and Multi-Faith Northern Ireland

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\*For Main Faith Backgrounds



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## 1. Foreword

It is impossible to envisage what our society will look like in 50 years time. But it is easier to imagine by exploring the hearts, minds and values of young people; for it is the youth of today who will shape and be our future.

That is why working with, educating and learning from our young people is important and why the Northern Ireland Executive is providing the significant priority and focus it does on young people and their development.

Youth work is important in shaping the values of young people; raising their aspirations and helping them understand how their lives are interdependent. It helps them to value others equally and celebrate our cultural diversity. It also helps young people achieve and fulfil their potential while encouraging others to do the same.

People involved in business, community work, politics, youth work and many other professions and trades are all working towards building a better future.

Many of the programmes forming our Together: Building a United Community strategy support and encourage young people to play their full part in our society and reach their full potential. As part of the development of the programme, we have engaged extensively with young people to ensure that they are directly involved in the design process. These young people have consistently stepped forward to take an active role in developing programmes designed for them.

We want our society to be inclusive but diverse, embracing people from all faiths and traditions. Our society is enriched by difference.

We encourage all youth providers to use the guidelines and **Reach Out to Enrich Within** for the benefit of young people they work with and for our society as a whole.

These guidelines are a valuable, practical addition to the toolkits available to youth workers for working within an increasingly diverse and intercultural community.



ALASTAIR ROSS  
Junior Minister



MEGAN FEARON  
Junior Minister






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**Junior Ministers at the Executive Office**  
Alistair Ross and Megan Fearon





There is always the opportunity to do youth work better and more inclusively, listening to the needs of others and being considerate.



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## 2. Introduction

Reach Out to Enrich Within – for the personal development of young people as well as benefits to your organisation and the local community.

**These guidelines are a practical support for youth workers who want their organisation to get more involved in intercultural provision.**

Youth Work values diversity and difference, recognising that alternative perspectives and beliefs enrich the experience of all involved. Intercultural youth work further enriches this experience, and highlights the importance of respecting diversity.

The guidelines are not intended to provide all the answers.

They are not about everyone agreeing or finding a universal truth in how to do youth work with young people from different faith and cultural backgrounds. Nor are the guidelines about promoting particular faiths as part of youth work.


There is always the opportunity to do youth work better and more inclusively, listening to the needs of others and being considerate.

There are common needs, common aims and common threads of compassion between people of all faiths, cultures and beliefs.

**Reach Out to Enrich Within** – for the personal development of young people as well as benefits to your organisation and the local community.

The principles set out in this document are at the core of good youth work; indeed they are fundamental to it. We all need to stretch ourselves because it is in the interests of the personal, educational and social needs of the children and young people we work with, as citizens, as future parents and as leaders of their communities and this society.



A low-angle photograph looking up at a dense forest canopy. Sunlight streams through the leaves, creating a dramatic starburst effect in the center. The trees are tall and slender, with thick trunks. The ground is covered in green grass and dappled sunlight.

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**We value the work of youth leaders in sowing and growing shared values and a sense of purpose in our young people.**



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### 3. Statement By The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum

We, as members of various faith communities in Northern Ireland, understand that all religions, sincerely practised, share the same essential aims - to cultivate compassion, to promote peace and to support understanding between the peoples' of the world.

We recognise that youth work is critical to the achievement of these things.

We recognise the altruism of youth, their acute sense of justice, their eagerness to learn about the world, and their desire to contribute to the construction of a better society.

We see within young people their latent capacity and motivation to transform the world by realising their potential and living up to their responsibilities.

We value the work of youth leaders in sowing and growing shared values and a sense of purpose in our young people.

We commend these guidelines as a contribution to youth work in Northern Ireland.

In doing so, we hope they contribute to the growth of a new intercultural Northern Ireland where people of all faiths and none can feel a real sense of belonging in this place we all call home.



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#### 4. Youth Work - Setting Foundations

There is so much excellent youth work happening all over Northern Ireland. It happens across all communities in just about every city, town, village and hamlet. Much of it involves hours of voluntary effort by people who want to see the best for the young people and their organisations.

Some of the youth provision is linked to various faiths, some is provided by uniformed organisations, and some is provided by public agencies. Some of it is community based and some focuses on activities.

Statistics suggest that over two thirds of registered youth groups and volunteer leaders are faith or church based, and that faith based youth work includes good practice in community relations work. However, it is suggested that it can struggle with making inter-community and inter-faith work as relevant as it should be due to a predominance of single identity participants. Yet, it is also suggested there is clear evidence that faith based youth groups contribute to the social capital in local communities

including through work on citizenship, leadership, volunteering, building trust and social cohesion.

At its core good youth work has a desire to help in the educational, social and personal development of young people, to help them reach their potential; through the young people it wants to positively impact on society and local communities both now and in the future.

For many years youth providers have often adhered to three core values – equity, diversity and interdependence. These values, while nearly 20 years old, still provide a meaningful basis for youth work.





## Equity

A commitment at all levels within society to ensuring equality of access to resources, structures and decision-making processes and to the adoption of actions to secure and maintain these objectives.



## Diversity

Seen in the ever-changing variety of community and individuals experiences. Respect for diversity affirms the value which can be derived from the existence, recognition, understanding and tolerance of difference.



## Interdependence

Recognition by different interest or identity groupings of their obligations and commitments to others and of the inter-connectedness of individual/ community experiences and ambitions leading to the development of a society which is at once cohesive and diverse.

**These guidelines are not about diluting, interfering in, or forcing change in existing provision or the core values.**

It may be these represent just small steps to be more inclusive and more considerate. We are all responsible for enhancing a sense of belonging within wider society just as we are at a local level or within a youth club.

Reaching Out to Enrich Within is not new. Many youth organisations have been doing it for years, bridging community divides, dealing with identity and reaching out to newly arrived citizens.

In 21st century intercultural Northern Ireland we need to keep reaching out to people of other faiths and to do it better and better.

**It will enrich us all within; and enrich within the organisations we serve.**

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## 5. What is Interculturalism?

This region is becoming increasingly diverse; more so than in anyone's living memory.

The number of people living in Northern Ireland born outside the UK and Ireland has trebled in the last decade from just over 27,000 in 2001 to 81,000 in 2011. More than 50,000 people in Northern Ireland speak a language other than English or Irish as their main language. Over 90 languages are used as a main language in Northern Ireland.

That diversity has enriched society in social, economic and cultural ways. More than 30% of doctors and 40% of nurses were born outside Northern Ireland. Migration to Northern Ireland has made a net contribution to the local economy of more than £1.2 billion in recent years. Some of the brightest festivals such as the Belfast

Mela, Chinese New year and Holi originated with minority ethnic communities and minority faiths. Also, in recent years hundreds of asylum seekers have arrived in Northern Ireland from Syria, China, Somalia, Sudan and other countries reflecting a myriad of backgrounds and faiths.

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Of course, those additions to the traditional make-up of this society present challenges.

In particular:

- Are many people from different faith backgrounds expected to be assimilated into the predominant culture and ethos of the society that they join?
- Or are they expected to stand separate from others in society reflecting a multi-cultural Northern Ireland that doesn't join up; people living parallel lives that rarely touch?
- Or, can a way forward be found that helps people from all backgrounds integrate into a new Northern Ireland; a welcoming, equal and intercultural home for all, without the need for the assimilation and dilution of the culture, values, traditions and faiths of those relatively new to Northern Ireland and those who are not?

Interculturalism is a challenge for youth organisations and those working in the youth work profession, just as it is for all other aspects of living and belonging.

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**Interculturalism recognises and values difference. Indeed, it encourages difference. But it does so while encouraging a common sense of belonging to this very diverse place, its institutions, its shared humanity and its various youth provision.**





## Do you wonder how you might explain what interculturalism means?

### Here is one suggestion:

Ask your young people what people ate in this part of the world 200 years ago? Was it mainly potatoes and meat such as beef or lamb? What would a traditional dish from here have looked like? Maybe it would have been Irish stew made from potatoes, carrots and lamb.

Ask them what people here eat now? It certainly still includes potatoes, stew, fish and chips. But it also includes Asian food, Chinese and Indian cuisine, Japanese food, tapas from Spain and pizza from Italy, burritos and salsa from Mexico or hamburgers which probably started in the USA.

A multicultural youth provision would mean at a banquet we all come together and eat our own food type. So people who have always lived here would eat stew, people from the USA would eat hamburgers, people from China would eat Chinese food and people from Mexico would eat burritos and salsa.

But everyone may be looking at each other thinking I'd quite like to taste what they have.

In intercultural youth provision everyone would eat the food that they would like to eat. No one will be confined just to their own food. We will share and it will become a normal part of youth provision that any of those food stuffs represents who we are. But the culture and uniqueness of the different foods will be preserved.

That enriches what we are able to eat. There is so much more flavour and variety. The foods have different ingredients, different flavours and different textures. **That is OK.**

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**We learn from each other. We are equal.**



## 6 Main Faiths and Beliefs Explained

In Northern Ireland there are many different faiths and many people of no faith.

All of those different faiths have much more in common than they have which is different. There are common values and principles, common threads of compassion about how to treat other people.

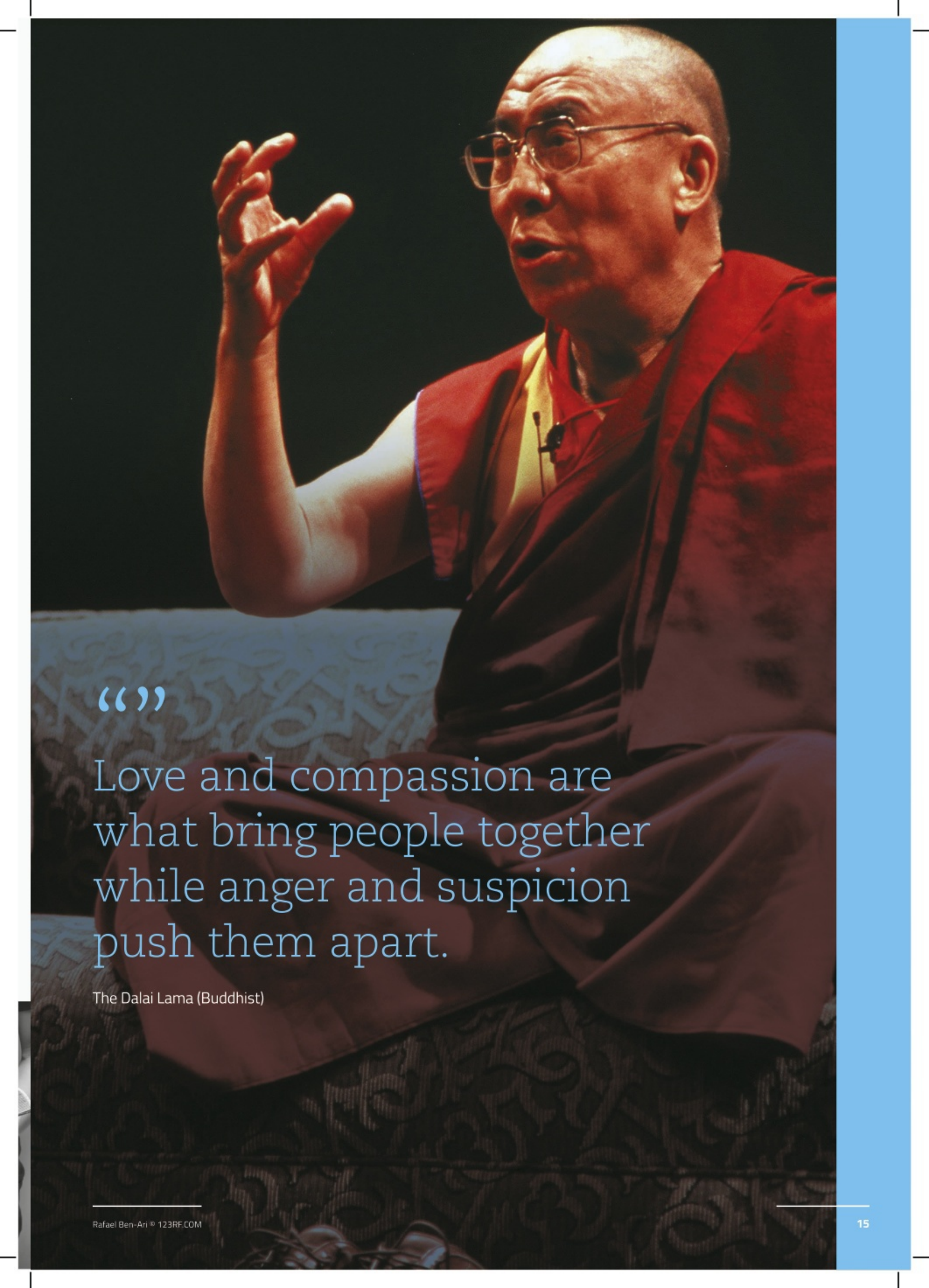
Baha'is want to treat followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship, Sikhs teach humility to all the world, Christians want you to love your neighbours as yourself, Hindus want there to be peace unto you and to all religions, Humanists seek tolerance and respect, Muslims want people to know each other not despise each other, Jews want people to do what is good, act justly and love mercy, while His Holiness the Dalai Lama (Buddhist) says that "love and compassion are what bring people together while anger and suspicion push them apart".

All faiths demonstrate compassion towards each other regardless of background or belief. No faith, sincerely practised, promotes the exclusion of others. The inclusion of others is a principle of youth work; just as it is of all faiths.

The summary below highlights the beliefs of the main faith traditions that are organised and practised in Northern Ireland.





A photograph of the Dalai Lama, a Buddhist leader, speaking. He is wearing glasses and a red robe, gesturing with his right hand. The background is dark, and he is seated on a patterned surface.

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Love and compassion are  
what bring people together  
while anger and suspicion  
push them apart.

The Dalai Lama (Buddhist)





# Christianity and the Christian Community

**Christianity is one of the largest religions in the world and it is the biggest faith background in Northern Ireland. Christians believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.**

Christians base their faith on His teaching and example. The holy book of Christians is the Bible which has an

Old Testament (recording the story of the people of Israel before Jesus) and a New Testament (the story of Jesus and the early Christian church). There are many major denominations including Presbyterian, Catholic, Methodist, Anglican or Church of Ireland, Baptist, Free Presbyterian and several others. The various Christian denominations often cooperate in ecumenical relationships, although some Christian faiths do not endorse or practice ecumenism.

Many Christian-based organisations have been involved in cross community peace building work for decades. The main day of worship is usually Sunday. Major festivals are at Easter (death and resurrection of Jesus) and Christmas (birth of Jesus). There are no dietary restrictions on most Christians, although some abstain from alcohol.

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# Islam and the Muslim Community

**Islam is one of the largest religions in the world. There are several thousand Muslims in Northern Ireland. Muslims live by a religious code of values and behaviours around culture, morals, family, relationships, food and dress. Islam focusses on what unites people and Muslims may often see themselves as one nation regardless of identity.**

The Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) lived around the sixth century CE (which Christians define as AD) and is the messenger of Allah. Islam submits to Allah, which means the one and true God. The Muslim holy book is the Qur'an. It also contains the life stories of Abraham, Moses and Jesus who is recognised as a major Prophet although not regarded by Muslims as the Son of God. While the Mosque is the place of worship, any clean place can be used.

The main day of worship is a Friday. The major festival is Ramadan celebrating the revelation of the Qur'an to Mohammed. During Ramadan Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. Eid is also important – the festival marking the end of Ramadan. Muslims will not consume meat or by-products derived from pigs. Muslims will eat Halal food which refers to the means of slaughter of animals. Alcohol is forbidden.

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# Judaism and the Jewish Community

**The ethos of the Jewish religion is based on the Torah. There is One Creator of the world, God, to whom the Jewish people worship, give thanks and praise.**

The Torah is the Bible, Genesis through to Deuteronomy then the books of The Prophets and The Book of Writings. In all there are 24 Books of the Bible or The Tanach as it is known in Hebrew. The life cycle for a Jewish person centres around the Shabbat (Sabbath) the seventh day of the week and the Jewish festivals such as New Year & The Day of Atonement, Sukkot (Tabernacles) & Pesach (Passover) to name a few. The Jewish people have a strict code of dietary laws that are set down in the Torah. This is called Kosher. Within these laws there needs to be a strict separation of meat foods and utensils and dairy ones.

There are certain rites of passage within Judaism such as Bar-Mitzvah or Bat-Mitzvah to mark the coming of age for a boy or girl. Marriage is important as the Jewish line is continued on through the maternal line. The language of the Torah is Hebrew and is considered to be a holy language. It is also the language of the majority of Jewish prayers. Worship is from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday.

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# Hinduism and the Hindu Community

**There is a vibrant Hindu community in Northern Ireland and there is a dedicated Indian Community Centre in Belfast. There are a number of Hindu temples. Hinduism is the oldest living religion.**

It is based on the Vedas scriptures and there are many philosophical schools. Hindus believe in one Supreme

God but that God can be manifest in many different forms. Therefore there are a number of deities including Lord Krishna, Lord Shiva and Lord Rama. There are a number of sacred books, the most famous of which is the Bhagavad Gita (the Song of God). Worship includes prayers, incense burning and mantra chanting. There are a number of festivals including the Holi Festival of Colours and the Diwali festival of lights. Hindus believe all living things are spiritual by nature and therefore Hindus lead a life of non-violence.

Hindus do not eat meat or fish and many do not eat eggs. Vegetarian and vegan dietary requirements are therefore important. Some Hindus will eat meat but not beef. Pork is avoided. Alcohol is forbidden.

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# Sikhism and the Sikh Community

**Sikhism is around 500 years old. Founded by Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Sikhs believe that God's truth lies within all religions. The holy book is the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs have an individual relationship with one God and believe salvation can be found through good deeds as well as God's grace.**

The word Sikh means a pupil or disciple. Sikhs pray many times a day and five symbols may impact on dress and appearance: hair is not cut and must be kept clean and protected, a comb is carried for securing the hair, a miniature sword is carried to symbolically defend truth and justice, shorts are worn by men as a symbol of chastity, and a bracelet is worn on the right wrist to indicate oneness with God. Turbans are worn. Sikh festivals or Melas often coincide with Hindu festivals. The central festival is Vaisakhi, a celebration of harvest and of Guru Gobind Singh's creation of the Khalsa, the pure brotherhood of Sikhs.

Sikhism forbids smoking and consuming alcohol. Devout Sikhs will not eat any animal product or by-product but many Sikhs do eat meat. Ritually slaughtered meat such as Halal is forbidden. The cow is sacred therefore Sikhs do not eat beef. Pork is avoided.

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# Baha'i and the Baha'i Community

**Baha'i is a relatively new world religion, just 200 years old. There is a vibrant Baha'i community in Northern Ireland and Baha'i Spiritual Assemblies in five towns.**

Baha'is believe in the essential unity of the great world religions and that God has revealed himself through

a series of interventions including Abraham, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna and Muhammed. Baha'is believe in equality between genders, elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, universal education and the unity of humanity. Baha'i has no clergy as such but daily prayer is required – a short prayer said in private is required each day.

There are a number of holy days in a year and one period of fasting for 19 days immediately before the Spring equinox which is usually around the 21st March. Sacred text includes the writings of Báb and Bahá'u'lláh including the Most Holy Book. The texts of other religions are also considered sacred texts by Baha'is. There are no dietary requirements. Alcohol is forbidden.

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# Buddhism and the Buddhist Community

**Buddhism is largely based on the teachings of Buddha or the awakened one. He was an enlightened teacher that helped people end suffering to attain the highest happiness or nirvana.**

There are two major branches of Buddhism: Mahayana including Zen and Tibetan Buddhism (Dalai Lama is the head monk); and Theravada. But there are also

many more denominations. Both main branches are represented in Northern Ireland. There is no personal relationship with God. The way to enlightenment is through morality, meditation and wisdom. Buddhists can pray at a temple or at home; often they will use mantras or short prayers.

There are a number of festivals the most important of which is Wesak (Buddha Day) which falls in May or early June. Denominations will differ on dietary rules but generally diet is vegetarian or vegan. Alcohol is forbidden.

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# Humanism and the Humanist Community

**Humanist thought has been around for at least 2,500 years. There are examples of humanist thinking in ancient China, India, and Greece. Humanism is a philosophy or an approach to life that represents a way of trying to understand ourselves and our world from a non-religious perspective.**

Humanists trust evidence and scientific method when it comes to understanding how the universe works and reject the idea of the supernatural: they are therefore either atheist (they don't believe in a god or gods) or agnostic (they believe we can never know whether a god or gods exist). They believe our morality evolved naturally and they make their ethical decisions based on reason, empathy, and a concern for the wellbeing of human beings and other animals. They believe that, in the absence of any evidence of an afterlife or any discernible purpose to the universe, human beings can and should act to give their own lives meaning by seeking happiness in this life and helping others to do the same.

Humanists do not have any particular rituals or practices they must perform; however, many take the opportunity to recognise and celebrate landmarks in people's lives, and humanist celebrants conduct naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals for the non-religious.

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## 7 Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some of the questions that many youth workers ask. These may help as you journey toward ensuring your youth provision is as open to other cultures as possible.

**The secret is to start, no matter how small the initial step:**

### What if I get things wrong or make a major mistake?

People are wary of starting on intercultural work because they are frightened to make mistakes or because they are unsure where it will lead.

Making mistakes is part of trying something new, and any mistakes will be forgiven if genuinely done. They are also unlikely to be major and will be part of a learning curve for you. If in doubt ask – no one will think lesser of you and usually people from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) backgrounds will be delighted to talk to you about issues and your understanding of them.

Starting to work interculturally may not lead to major change for your organisation, the programme content or how you work. It will, however, enrich it. You will be surprised at how positive the experience will be for you and the young people you work with.

### What terms should I use?

Different people will feel comfortable using different language. You may want to refer to people recently arrived as newcomers, new communities, newly arrived. More generically you want to use terms like BME background or cultural and ethnic minority background (that specifically includes the Travelling community). Many people from BME backgrounds have been in Northern Ireland for decades or were born here.

However, don't get overly concerned about terminologies. You are unlikely to cause offence. It is better to keep language simple and straightforward, however, which is why it may be best to keep to the term BME community or cultural and ethnic minority background. The people concerned may have a preferred description of their identity which could also refer to a mixed ethnicity such as African-Irish or Polish-Irish. Ask them.



## What terminology is right and what's the difference between migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees?

A migrant worker has come to work here and is subject to the same laws and regulations as everyone else.

An asylum seeker has come here to escape persecution in their home country.

A refugee will have been granted asylum.

## Assumptions to avoid?

Remember also that we are talking about peoples' ethnic and cultural background which does not define them in political outlook, faith or spiritual terms. People arriving, for example, as asylum seekers may have a variety of faith backgrounds, various political outlooks and different views on social issues.

For example, not all Arabs are Muslim and not all Muslims are Arabs, not all Hindus are from India and not all Indians are Hindus. All countries have a number of different faiths living in them and all faiths have adherents in all parts of the world. So, not all people from Northern Ireland or Ireland are Protestant or Catholic and not all Protestants or Catholics are from Ireland, North or South.

## What key things do I consider if organising an intercultural event?

If you are organising an intercultural event – first of all well done and don't be put off organising it even if some mistakes are made. You may want to talk to people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds beforehand – a list of contacts is supplied at the back of this booklet.

Also at the back of the booklet is a table that makes recommendations around food, drink, symbols and venues. You should attempt to provide Halal or Kosher options (many butchers and caterers do so now), but at the very least make sure there is a significant vegetarian and fruit option. Some faiths will not eat root vegetables or pre-prepared or processed fruit, so a fruit bowl with whole fruit is universally acceptable. Avoid pork and beef.

Make sure different food options are clearly labelled. Avoid alcohol.

If events are in venues that are attached to particular organisations or faiths, people will understand if there are symbols present that reflect faiths other than their own. No offence is likely to be taken or caused. However, it is always important to be mindful of symbols.

Rather than say a prayer during the event, it may be more helpful to ask people to take a few moments for quiet reflection. Most faiths will reflect in this way but some may not call it praying.



## How do I inform people from different ethnic backgrounds about our provision?

You may want to do an audit of your local area to understand the make-up of the area and compare it to the profile of people attending your youth organisation. If it doesn't match maybe you should ask why? You may want to review your recruitment practice and ask questions on your registration form that helps you understand the background of people attending your organisation.

There is a list of organisations at the back of these guidelines that may help to link you with local groups that work with people from different cultural and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Meeting young people and parents from cultural and minority ethnic backgrounds is also important – speaking to people directly. Apart from asking young people themselves, you also should engage with parents directly asking about how to publicise your organisations, gain recruits, and demonstrate that you have a welcoming and safe environment. This reassurance may be important.

It may be useful to review the imagery in your literature or at your venue to ensure it reflects your openness to intercultural work and diversity.

You may want to explore open days and taster sessions, visit schools and places of worship and talk to BME support organisations.

## How do we deal with racism or sectarianism?

You should deal with any display of racism or sectarianism as you would an incidence of bullying. The rules of the organisation should be made clear at the start and enforced without exception. There should be no tolerance of racism or sectarianism.

## Who do we go to for help?

You will have your own regulations and policies within your organisation that will cover many of the issues you will encounter undertaking intercultural work.

In addition, there are a number of other specialist organisations that may provide assistance and many organisations working with and for people from different cultural and minority ethnic backgrounds. Details of some of those organisations are provided at the back of these guidelines.



## Are there different issues regarding clothing and symbols?

Different faiths have various tradition, cultural and faith reasons for wearing particular clothing and displaying symbols. This includes some Christian faiths wearing a cross of ash on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday; Hindus may wear a bindi mark on their forehead or a vermilion parting in their hair to mark a commitment to well-being and a long life; Hindus, Sikhs and Jains may use a tilak (colourful lines and marks on their foreheads) to represent their faith and culture.

Many faiths may wear particular clothing to represent aspects of their faith such as Sikhs wearing a turban, Christian faiths wearing a cross or Muslims and Hindus wearing clothing to demonstrate modesty.

They are complex areas with many different traditions, types of clothing and within particular faiths there may be different views about wearing appropriate clothing and symbols.


Mostly, people will be happy to explain the different traditions and their meaning, if asked.

## What do we do if there are things we don't anticipate or understand?

There almost certainly will be issues that you don't anticipate. We can't know all of the unknowns! Take advice, and approach those issues openly and honestly. When you have built trust with the young people and their parents it will be easier to deal with any issue or challenge.

Maintaining and building trust, of course, requires continued effort and ongoing openness and honesty.





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**The secret is to start to engage in the issues. Even the smallest of steps initially will be appreciated and will be a welcome and enriching addition to existing youth provision.**



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## 8 Key Considerations - Reminder Questions

Youth work adds such value to the education, personal and social development of children and young people so care should be taken to ensure that access to youth work and the delivery of it, should be as embracing of all young people as possible regardless of their background.

No youth worker or youth provider sets out to exclude or be unwelcoming. However, some may lack confidence in dealing with diversity or in welcoming young people from different backgrounds. Some may have a genuine “blind spot” to the needs of others because they have not adequate experience and some people may feel constrained by the nature of their particular provision.

The secret is to start to engage in the issues. Even the smallest of steps initially will be appreciated and will be a welcome and enriching addition to existing youth provision.

Mistakes will be made at times; but people will forgive mistakes so long as there is no intent to offend or embarrass.

These key considerations and questions are intended as a practical guide to help you think through some issues and outline simple actions that may really help your youth organisation be more inclusive and welcoming.

The key questions can be carried with you or filed in your work or event planner. They are available for you to download from [www.youthlink.org.uk/reachout](http://www.youthlink.org.uk/reachout). It provides space for you to write actions and ideas that you want to undertake as a result of answering the questions.





## Promotion and Planning Your Activities

Involving people from different backgrounds and faiths is an essential thing to do during planning and delivery of your youth activities. People and organisations from faith communities are generally appreciative of others taking time and making the effort to engage with them. Getting hints and advice about practical ways to plan your work and to deliver it in more inclusive ways, may be hugely beneficial. A list of contacts is included in these guidelines.

It may be very useful to engage with parents of people not yet engaged in youth activities with you. Building trust with parents is important, especially with parents relatively new to the local community.

In addition, it may be useful to engage with local schools where young people will have already made friendships that may not extend to attending youth organisations together.

You may run a youth organisation that draws on people from the local community to participate. Being aware of the make-up and background

of that local community will be useful to recruit participants, in planning your programme, and in agreeing practical things like when you meet and where.

You may want to review the promotional material used including leaflets or posters and any social media. Including people from different backgrounds and faiths in promotional literature is an important visual statement that all people are welcome to participate.

Remember to plan catering with care. Some faiths have strict particular requirements. Advice is provided elsewhere but you should always have vegetarian options and be mindful of food allergy needs.

When activities include prayer or other religious aspects consideration should be given to others. You should consult with others and carefully plan. Some prayers or hymns may be meaningful for some but inappropriate for others. It may be useful for people from different faiths to select a reading from their faith community – see the *Threads of Compassion* booklet produced by the Interfaith Forum NI for examples that could be used.



# What Does the Youth Organisation Say About You to Others?

An organisation sends many signals about itself in the environment, through its staff and volunteers and in its programme. Just as an organisation may want its participants to reflect the community around it, so too should staff and volunteers.

Many volunteers will be recruited from parents or guardians of participating young people, who should be provided with the opportunity to help out. Staff and volunteers should also expect the atmosphere and environment to support diversity and show openness to new ideas as well as providing a supportive environment for issues or concerns to be raised.

It is desirable to regularly review what visitors and participants experience when they arrive at the venue. It is also useful to carry out regular informal audits to embrace new ideas.

# Food, Drink, Venues

Being aware of the different catering requirements of people from different faith backgrounds is an important first step; and making an effort to meet those needs is appreciated by BME communities. The advice grid toward the end of this document provides some essential advice – you can take the advice grid out of these guidelines and carry it in your work plan or programme folder.

Food options should be clearly labelled. It is always a good idea to provide vegetarian and vegan options. It is important to be mindful of pork and beef restrictions of some faiths. It is advisable to avoid alcohol.

Halal (Muslim) and Kosher (Jewish) options are often available from caterers or butchers.

Youth providers are already aware of using venues that are safe and perceived to be safe – parents are very aware of those issues as well. It may be that parents of children and young people new to this region, or from BME communities, are particularly conscious of safety related issues.

Choosing venues for events is therefore important – an audit of the surrounding area and of the venue itself is always useful for all people involved. It may also be useful to audit symbols within venues.

People will understand if there are symbols of different faiths when using halls or buildings associated with a particular faith. It won't cause offence. However, be mindful that some faiths may wish to adapt the room at certain times such as during prayers to create an area where the focus will be on their faith alone and not others.

Therefore interculturalism doesn't aim at neutral or grey space. It does ask that all faiths have tolerance of each other and be generous to the needs of each other.



# Staff, Volunteers and the Environment

If you are aware of the make-up of the local community you will be aware of whether staff and volunteers are representative of those who you are looking to attract to take part in your youth organisation.

It may be other local groups, parents and guardians can help within your youth organisation. You will be aware of the legal requirements for anyone working with young people. Induction and training of youth workers and those in support of youth work should also incorporate learning on diversity, language and inclusion.

It is useful also to keep up a constant conversation with your staff and volunteers about their needs, perceived weaknesses or gaps in knowledge, uncertainties and desire for learning. Of course this may be two-way – learning about BME communities and other faiths, and learning by staff or volunteers from BME backgrounds about other faiths including the predominant faith.

Training and one-off sessions can be easily organised by a range of providers. The contact details of support organisations are attached toward the end of these guidelines. Again you can download the contact page within our resource pack from [www.youthlink.org.uk/reachout](http://www.youthlink.org.uk/reachout)

# Monitoring and Evaluation

Obviously you won't know whether you are achieving targets around inclusion and being representative of the local community until you understand the make-up of the local community or area from which you are seeking to recruit.

You may want to review your recruitment form, to ensure questions asked, adequately provide the information you need about those participating. You may need to reflect on the wording of some questions. Advice can be received.

At the end of your activities or programme you may also want to ask participants about whether they have enjoyed the overall programme, or what their favourite or least favourite parts were. It would be useful to compare the satisfaction ratings given by people from different backgrounds, not just by faith but also including other section 75 categories. Obviously having gathered this information you need to be prepared to ask why there was any disparity (if there was) and what you are going to do about issues identified for next time.

You may also want to consider an exit interview with any young people who left early or/and their parents. Getting to the heart of reasons why some young people left will help improve the programme for the next year.





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## 8. Reminder Questions

Here are a number of questions (referred to above) that you and your management committee, volunteers and staff may want to think about. They are self-explanatory.

You may not be able to do a lot of things differently to start with relating to each section. You may not need to do much differently. Doing a few things differently and better from an intercultural perspective is a good start. You can build on areas you wish to improve or change as time goes on.

A blank space has been left at each section to write in some ideas or commitments. Don't hesitate to download from [www.youthlink.org.uk/reachout](http://www.youthlink.org.uk/reachout), you can then photocopy and share.



## Top Considerations and Reminders

No.	Considerations	Reminders	Actions – What will you do/change?
1	Promotion, awareness and engagement	<p><b>A.</b> If relevant to your area, are you aware of the make-up of your area and whether particular communities are under-represented in your youth organisation?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Have you reviewed your promotional literature and resources to ensure they reflect the ambition of your organisation to be diverse, as relevant to the local community?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Have you engaged with people or organisations from different backgrounds that may help in constructively shaping materials, resources or outreach efforts?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Have you engaged with parents and with local schools?</p> <p><b>E.</b> Have you a method of gathering data from members or participants about their faith background?</p> <p><b>F.</b> Have you asked people from different backgrounds to get involved?</p> <p><b>G.</b> If people from minority communities are not involved, have you asked them why not and what would encourage them to get involved?</p> <p><b>H.</b> Are you sure that invitation lists for events have been reviewed and are representative and inclusive?</p>	
2	Communication tools	<p><b>A.</b> Have you reviewed communication tools such as social media, leaflets and posters to ensure they are representative of the diversity of your local community?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Is there a need to explore different language options for explaining your work and services?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Are you aware of good practice in promoting diversity by youth organisations elsewhere?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Are speakers or guests that you invite to the youth organisation representative and diverse?</p> <p><b>E.</b> Have you highlighted successes in diversity management?</p>	
3	Food, drink and culture	<p><b>A.</b> Are you aware of days of the week when people from different faiths pray and worship?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Are you aware of the festivals or fasting dates that may be relevant for people from different faiths?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Have you identified whether there are people from different faith backgrounds attending an event or activity to know about catering requirements?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Are you aware of various foods or drink restrictions and options that are relevant for people from different faiths?</p> <p><b>E.</b> Have you identified festivals or cultural events you would like to attend?</p> <p><b>F.</b> Is it relevant to provide a clean, quiet area for people of different faiths to use for reflection or prayer?</p>	
4	Venues and symbols	<p><b>A.</b> It is reasonable to have relevant symbols in a venue, but have you audited your venue to ensure there is nothing offensive or that would deter young people from other backgrounds and faiths to attend?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Is the location considered safe and welcoming by young people and their parents for people of different backgrounds and faiths?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Is the timing of the youth group as suitable as possible for young people of different backgrounds and faiths?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Could materials and content be more inclusive of young people from different backgrounds and faiths?</p> <p><b>E.</b> Do you need to undertake awareness sessions for you, staff, volunteers or young people about clothing and symbols worn by people from different faiths?</p>	



Top Considerations and Reminders			
No.	Considerations	Reminders	Actions – What will you do/change?
5	Youth workers, volunteers and staff	<p><b>A.</b> Is diversity a part of induction for youth workers, volunteers and committee members?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Are recruitment processes clear and inclusive?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Do staff and volunteers receive training on language, culture and diversity?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Does the youth organisation have a supportive environment for raising issues or concerns around diversity and inclusion?</p> <p><b>E.</b> Are there written procedures that everyone is aware of for raising issues or concerns around diversity and inclusion?</p> <p><b>F.</b> Do staff and volunteers know they have access to special leave, or are able to dress or express themselves in ways that are appropriate for people from different backgrounds and faiths?</p>	
6	Parental involvement	<p><b>A.</b> Are parents asked their views about programmes and delivery?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Do you give consideration and allow time to build relationships and trust with existing and potential future parents and families?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Is it convenient and accessible for parents from all backgrounds and faiths to input ideas and provide feedback?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Are there clear mechanisms by which parents can indicate they would like to be involved in activities and support as a volunteer, even on a one-off basis?</p>	
7	Aims and objectives of your organisation	<p><b>A.</b> Are diversity, inclusion and equality, values that are clear and visible within your organisation?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Does your organisation have policies on accessibility, inclusion, dignity?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Have you undertaken a diversity audit?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Does your youth organisation approach diversity as a core part of your planning?</p> <p><b>E.</b> Has your organisation developed indicators and targets for diversity?</p> <p><b>F.</b> Do your management committee, staff and volunteers come from diverse backgrounds?</p> <p><b>G.</b> Does your youth organisation have a champion for diversity?</p>	
8	Monitoring and evaluation	<p><b>A.</b> Do you assess rates of participation, including comparators to local community demographics if relevant?</p> <p><b>B.</b> Do you set targets with clear goals for minority inclusion and participation?</p> <p><b>C.</b> Do you assess satisfaction ratings by community demographics?</p> <p><b>D.</b> Do young people and parents from different backgrounds and faiths have similar satisfactory ratings?</p> <p><b>E.</b> Do you carry out exit interviews or feedback?</p>	

[www.migrationni.org/dataeditoruploads/northernireland.pdf](http://www.migrationni.org/dataeditoruploads/northernireland.pdf)



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Build relationships and with it trust,  
with young people and parents



## 9 Do's and Don'ts



### DO'S

Ask people about their beliefs and positively explore that diversity

Build relationships and with it trust, with young people and parents

Check your youth meeting dates against the prayer and worship days for all faiths

Check significant functions or events with a calendar of faith celebrations to avoid clashes

Avoid times of fasting if you are organising an event that involves food

Ensure there is a good variety of food options when catering, helping everyone to enjoy the event consistent with their faith

Ensure there is induction and training for staff and volunteers

Focus on the needs of the young people as first and foremost



### DON'T'S

Generalise about people from different backgrounds and faiths about their identity or political outlook

Assume your youth organisation is accessible to all just because you have an open door policy

Be put off by concern for unknowns or language - you can get help

Organise events that may clash with major festivals, fastings or prayer days

Use symbols or materials that may be offensive to people from different backgrounds or faiths

Allow racism or sectarianism to go unchallenged

These guidelines ask you to **Reach Out** to **Enrich Within** - enrich the young people and enrich your own youth organisation.

Embracing interculturalism as a core value within your organisation may take some time; but the first steps, no matter how small, are critical and will open so many more enriching experiences for you, your staff and volunteers, and most important of all, for the young people.

It is a matter of good practice that you start to build in to the usual, every day business of your youth organisation, the habits and actions of interculturalism as normal and common. Openness, honesty and genuineness are key values and practices; building relationships and developing trust will provide an engine for doing more.

These guidelines have been deliberately written to be relatively short and practical. We hope that you carry them with you, or at least take them out and regularly use the advice grid, key questions and contact sections.

Good luck with your journey –  
we hope you enjoy it as much  
as many others have before you.





“”

Diversity is the one true  
thing we all have in common.  
Celebrate it every day.

Author Unknown





# Further Resources

## A. Further Resources, Contacts and Reference Points

It is desirable to include people from different backgrounds as you plan activities and recruit for your youth organisation. The contact details provided below will be a start. However, it cannot identify all faiths and beliefs as they are numerous and because all faith communities are in themselves complex and multi-faceted.

Minority Faiths and Inter Faith		Resources	
Name of Organisation	Website/E-mail	Name of Organisation	Website/E-mail
The Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum	<a href="http://www.niinterfaithforum.org">www.niinterfaithforum.org</a> <a href="mailto:ni.interfaith@gmail.com">ni.interfaith@gmail.com</a>	Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership - Statistics on BME and newly arrived communities	<a href="http://www.migrationni.org/dataeditoruploads/northernireland.pdf">www.migrationni.org/dataeditoruploads/northernireland.pdf</a>
Belfast Islamic Centre	<a href="http://www.belfastislamiccentre.org.uk/bic">www.belfastislamiccentre.org.uk/bic</a> <a href="mailto:anwar_maddy@yahoo.com">anwar_maddy@yahoo.com</a>	Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership - Support Organisation	<a href="http://www.migrationni.org/support-organisations">www.migrationni.org/support-organisations</a>
Hindu and Indian Community Centre	<a href="http://www.iccbelfast.com">www.iccbelfast.com</a> <a href="mailto:info@iccbelfast.org.uk">info@iccbelfast.org.uk</a>	Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership - Key information and legislation	<a href="http://www.migrationni.org/information-for-service-providers">www.migrationni.org/information-for-service-providers</a>
Irish Council of Churches	<a href="http://www.irishchurches.org">www.irishchurches.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@irishchurches.org">info@irishchurches.org</a>	EMBRACE guidelines - Christians working for interfaith understanding	<a href="http://www.embraceni.org/category/interfaith-understanding">www.embraceni.org/category/interfaith-understanding</a>
Buddhist communities	<a href="http://www.meditationbelfast.org">www.meditationbelfast.org</a> <a href="http://www.blackmountainzencentre.org">www.blackmountainzencentre.org</a>	Community Relations Council NI	<a href="http://www.community-relations.org.uk">www.community-relations.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:dmacbride@nicrc.org.uk">dmacbride@nicrc.org.uk</a>
Jewish community	<a href="http://www.belfastjewishcommunity.org.uk">www.belfastjewishcommunity.org.uk</a>	Inter Faith Network UK - Principles of building good relations	<a href="http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn">www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn</a>
Baha'i Association	<a href="http://www.bahai-belfast.org.uk">www.bahai-belfast.org.uk</a>	Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum - Detailed briefing notes on diet and events	<a href="http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/briefing-notes/94-catering-and-faith-based-dietary-practice/file">www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/briefing-notes/94-catering-and-faith-based-dietary-practice/file</a>
British Humanist Association	<a href="http://www.humanist.org.uk">www.humanist.org.uk</a>	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) - Summary of religions and practices	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/religions">www.bbc.co.uk/religions</a>
Largest Christian Denominations in Northern Ireland		Inter Faith Network UK - Principles of building good relations	<a href="http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn">www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn</a>
Name of Organisation	Website/E-mail	Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum - Detailed briefing notes on diet and events	<a href="http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/briefing-notes/94-catering-and-faith-based-dietary-practice/file">www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/briefing-notes/94-catering-and-faith-based-dietary-practice/file</a>
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	<a href="http://www.presbyterianireland.org">www.presbyterianireland.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@presbyterianireland.org">info@presbyterianireland.org</a>	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) - Summary of religions and practices	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/religions">www.bbc.co.uk/religions</a>
Catholic Church in Ireland	<a href="http://www.armagharchdiocese.org">www.armagharchdiocese.org</a> <a href="mailto:admin@aracoeli.com">admin@aracoeli.com</a>	Inter Faith Network UK - Principles of building good relations	<a href="http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn">www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn</a>
Church of Ireland	<a href="http://www.ireland.anglican.org">www.ireland.anglican.org</a> <a href="mailto:enquiries@ireland.anglican.org">enquiries@ireland.anglican.org</a>	Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum - Detailed briefing notes on diet and events	<a href="http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/briefing-notes/94-catering-and-faith-based-dietary-practice/file">www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/briefing-notes/94-catering-and-faith-based-dietary-practice/file</a>
Methodist Church in Ireland	<a href="http://www.irishmethodist.org">www.irishmethodist.org</a> <a href="mailto:secretary@irishmethodist.org">secretary@irishmethodist.org</a>	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) - Summary of religions and practices	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/religions">www.bbc.co.uk/religions</a>
Advice Providers and Information			
Name of Organisation	Website/E-mail		
Education Authority	<a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@eani.org.uk">info@eani.org.uk</a>		
Youth Link: NI	<a href="http://www.youthlink.org.uk">www.youthlink.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@youthlink.org.uk">info@youthlink.org.uk</a>		
Equality Commission NI	<a href="http://www.equalityni.org/home">www.equalityni.org/home</a> <a href="mailto:information@equalityni.org">information@equalityni.org</a>		
Human Rights Commission NI	<a href="http://www.nihrc.org">www.nihrc.org</a> <a href="mailto:information@nihrc.org">information@nihrc.org</a>		
Community Relations Council NI	<a href="http://www.community-relations.org.uk">www.community-relations.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:dmacbride@nicrc.org.uk">dmacbride@nicrc.org.uk</a>		



## B. Grid of Essential Day, Festival and Prayer Guide for Main Faith Backgrounds

### Main Religions

The table below provides some advice on some of the main faiths and their culture or practices. It is not comprehensive of all of the faiths or all of the practices. However, it does provide an initial practical overview and guide.

Faith	Prayer/ Worship Day	Festivals	Food Advice	Other
Baha'i	Daily prayer – no special needs.	Fasting sunrise to sunset for 19 days immediately before the Spring equinox which is usually around the 21st March.	No formal dietary requirements. Alcohol is forbidden.	Number of youth providers currently. Focus on respect for all faiths and help young people develop personal responsibility.
Buddhism	Several variants – no special needs.	Several festivals during the year.	Generally diet is vegetarian or vegan. Alcohol is forbidden.	Prayers can be at a temple or at home.
Christianity	Church services on a Sunday, especially in the morning.	A number of holiday periods especially Easter and Christmas.	No special dietary requirements. Some Christians avoid alcohol.	Significant youth provision already taking place in church halls including many uniformed and non-uniformed youth providers.
Hinduism	Daily prayer – no special needs.	Several festivals such as Diwali and Holi.	Hindus do not eat meat or fish and many do not eat eggs. Some Hindus do eat meat but not beef or pork. Alcohol is allowed.	Mela and Holi festivals attract significant crowds in Northern Ireland.
Islam	Mosque services on a Friday, especially 12–2pm.	Fasting during Ramadan. Number of other festivals.	Halal food preferable. No pork and ensure vegetarian or vegan options available. Clear labelling of food. Alcohol is forbidden.	Prayers five times per day. During an away day or camp try to ensure there is a clean, quiet area set aside for reflection or prayers.
Judaism	Friday evening at sunset until Saturday evening at sunset.	Several, such as Yom Kippur, which is also a day of fasting.	Kosher food preferable. No pork. Clear labelling of food. Don't mix dairy products with meat.	Prayers three times a day.
Sikhism	Usually a Sunday but there is no formal set day.	Several especially Diwali and the Festival of Lights.	Devout Sikhs will not eat meat though many Sikhs do. Vegetarian or vegan food is an important option. No beef as the cow is sacred. Avoid pork. Sikhs are not permitted to use Halal food. Alcohol is forbidden.	Some symbolic dress codes.

## C. Short Quiz

To introduce cultural minorities, the main faiths and BME communities in Northern Ireland

No.	Question	Options	Tick
1	Approximately how many languages are used in Northern Ireland as a person's main language	50	A
		70	B
		90	C
		110	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
2	What is a Jewish place of worship called?	Mosque	A
		Synagogue	B
		Church	C
		Temple	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
3	What religion do Muslims practice?	Christianity	A
		Judaism	B
		Sikhism	C
		Islam	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
4	Where did the first Sikhs to arrive in Northern Ireland mainly settle?	Derry/Londonderry	A
		Craigavon	B
		Newry	C
		Belfast	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
5	Which religion celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany?	Buddhism	A
		Hinduism	B
		Islam	C
		Christianity	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
6	What animal do Hindus believe is special?	Cow	A
		Pig	B
		Horse	C
		Snake	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
7	Baha'is fast for 19 days in which month?	December	A
		March	B
		June	C
		September	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
8	What is the main day of worship for a Muslim?	Thursday	A
		Friday	B
		Saturday	C
		Sunday	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
9	A Jewish religious leader is called a Rabbi. What does Rabbi mean?	Teacher	A
		Clever One	B
		Righteous	C
		Worker	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
10	Which of these is the oldest religion?	Christianity	A
		Islam	B
		Hinduism	C
		Baha'i	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
11	Which of these statements is <b>NOT</b> true?	Jewish people do not mix dairy products (like milk) and meat in the same meal	A
		Christianity is the oldest world religion	B
		Sikhs and Hindus will often celebrate at the same festivals	C
		The Dalai Lama is a Buddhist	D
No.	Question	Options	Tick
12	Which of these statements <b>IS</b> true?	All Arabs are Muslim	A
		All Irish people are Protestant or Catholic	B
		Christians wrote the Old Testament of the Bible	C
		The Qur'an recognises Jesus as a major Prophet	D



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## Answers

Question	Correct Answer
1	<b>C</b> – you may want to explore what languages they are and what faiths are associated with the people who speak these languages
2	<b>B</b> – you could ask where the Jewish synagogue in Belfast is. Has anyone visited a synagogue?
3	<b>D</b> – what do people know about Islam? Are the things talked about in the news true of Islam?
4	<b>A</b> – while there are Sikhs in all parts of Northern Ireland many settled in the North West. You might explore why that was?
5	<b>D</b> – you may talk about the meaning of the visit of the Wise Men to Jesus or about the central figures in other religions
6	<b>A</b> – you may explore why that is and what animals are regarded in particular ways by other faiths
7	<b>B</b> – you may want to explore why faiths fast and how difficult it is to fast
8	<b>B</b> – what are the worship days for other faiths and how might worshipping on those days affect peoples' lives?
9	<b>A</b> – you may discuss what are the qualities needed to be a good teacher and role model?
10	<b>C</b> – you may explore the age of other religions and the regions of the world in which they started
11	<b>B</b> – you may discuss when different faiths were founded and whether there is any linkages between them
12	<b>D</b> – you could ask whether people have visited a Mosque and discussed Islam with Muslims?

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