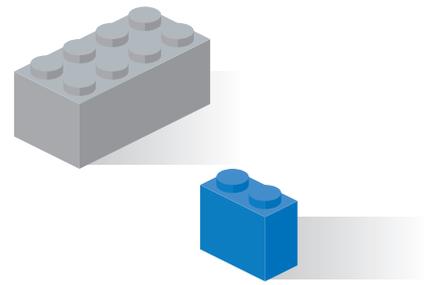
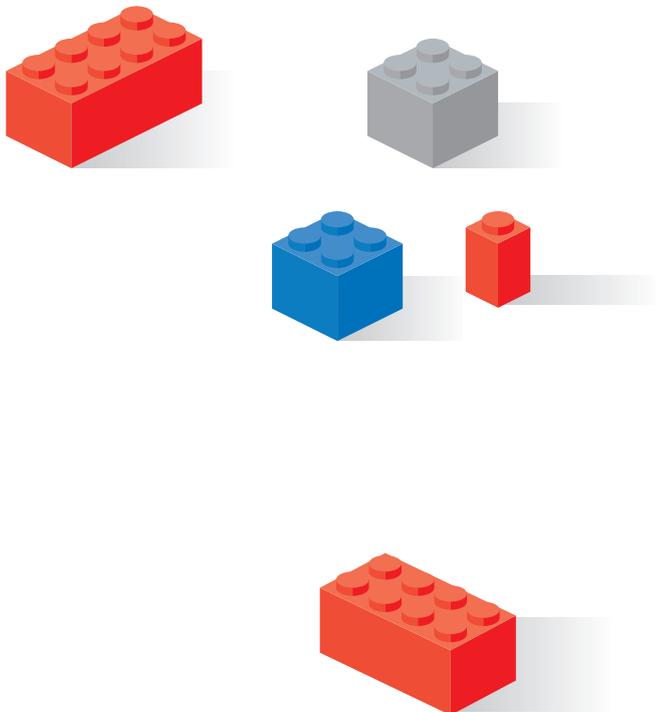


Trust Building Between Communities



Speaker Summary



Event Overview

Trust-building between communities

Trust, community cohesion and integration have been the focus of much media attention and political debate. The rhetoric of parallel lives, mistrust and segregation is often invoked, what is missing from the debate is clarity about what trust between communities looks like, the evidence about community cohesion and practical steps that can be taken to build trust.

The trust building between communities conference, organised by the [British Muslim Heritage Centre](#), [Runnymede Trust](#) and [Bridge Institute](#), aimed to better understand the evidence around barriers and best practice in trust building. Over 40 attendees, including community stakeholders, civil society organisations and local government officials, took part in the conference.

Key speakers were invited to present their responses to the following questions:

- What are the issues and barriers to trust building between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Britain today?
- What has been the experience, successful or otherwise, in trust building between communities - examples and best practice?

The seminar was split into two sessions and included short presentations by expert speakers, a panel Q&A and group discussion. Below is a brief overview of proceedings



Introduction by Adnan Saif
BMHC Chief Executive

Opened the day, explaining proceedings and emphasising the importance of the theme.

Panel 1

“What are the issues and barriers to trust building between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Britain today?”



Dr. Abdul Bari

Community Leader, Trustee of Muslim Aid and Director of Head2Heart

Dr. Bari shaped his presentation on the concept of trust, asking how it can be heightened and how it is undermined. His key points were:

- **Strengthening trust through:**
 - Meaningful interaction between communities and within communities.
 - Work for common good.
- **Challenges to trust include:**
 - Lack of religious knowledge.
 - Role of media: alienating Muslim community and misinformation i.e. external communities over-estimate number of Muslims.
 - Prevent - exacerbates alienation.
 - Lack of role models.
 - Breakdown in the relationship between Muslim institutions and government.
 - “Meaningful interactions” - era of declining trust in a hyper-market climate and technological advancement.



Sir Peter Fahy

CEO of Retrak and ex-Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police

Sir Peter Fahy challenged our perceptions of the threats we face in today’s society. He encouraged the audience to think critically about the dangers of terrorism as well as our response to overcoming terrorism. His key points were: He argued that we should not feel that terrorism is a different kind of threat to other crimes or challenges we face today. For example, Sepsis kills 44,000 people a year in Britain of which more than half of the cases are preventable. Sepsis, then, is a significantly bigger killer than terrorism.

We should understand disenfranchisement as something that affects different groups across society, not just Muslims. For example, young people, or young working class boys also feel marginalised and disenfranchised. Murder of Jo Cox highlights the complexities of terrorism. He states that it is important not to exceptionalise Muslim communities, rather think of how we can improve political engagement amongst all communities.

Our reaction to terrorism impacts political and geopolitical decision-making and has influenced draconian laws and rhetoric. He questions if our response is measured. Challenging negative views towards multiculturalism: Across greater Manchester, multiculturalism has in fact

worked. He cites the campaign We Stand Together - as an example - exemplifying how important civil society and community organisations are.

Role of the Media: The aim of terrorism is to spread fear, terror and division. The way in which media outlets broadcast information can lead to further spread of fear, terror and division. There is a need for a more measured approach.

Tackling Isolation in our communities: He argues isolation is not just a Muslim issue and that, in fact, some of the most isolated and alienated communities are white working class.



Farah Elahi

Research and Policy Analyst, Runnymede Trust

Farah critically analyses what we mean by trust before unpacking different “types” of trust. She sought to identify what level of trust is needed to ensure tolerance and cohesion. She then used existing research to challenge the narrative that Islam is a key barrier to trust and that a stronger relationship exists between socio-economic deprivation and low trust and therefore integration. Her key points were:

Unpacking trust: Trust is a complex phenomenon. Trust is layered. When we speak of trust we need to be clearer about what our expectations are. For example trust to do what or to trust in whom? What layers are necessary for a cohesive society, and what layers are we missing?

Role of institutions: Farah argued that prior to trust between communities we need to have trust in institutions to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role to be subject to public scrutiny. Trust between communities is better able to flourish in a just and fair society, or when citizens have faith in local and national institutions.

Challenge predominant narrative: Research from the citizenship survey 2009 highlights that Muslims have a positive association with their local area, a British identity and are the most likely to feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together. Additionally evidence from EMBES highlighted that Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups had the highest trust in politicians and police, and were the least dissatisfied with democracy. On the question of segregation, the Census 2011 highlighted that neighbourhood segregation decreased within most local authorities across England and Wales and for all ethnic minority groups.

The evidence points to larger gaps in trust when the data is broken down by Index of Multiple Deprivation, income or education gaps. Indicating that economic inequality is a more significant barrier to trust and cohesion than ethnicity or faith.

What builds trust: economic equality, greater transparency and accountability within institutions, continued and direct interactions between groups.

Panel 2

“What has been the experience, successful or otherwise, in trust building between communities - examples and best practice?”



Professor Miles Hewstone
Director, Oxford Centre for the Study of Intergroup Conflict, University of Oxford

Professor Miles Hewstone identified the ways we can promote trust in an intergroup context and discussed current findings of his experimental research on The Waterhead Academy. His key points were:

- **Research:** His research evaluates a real life experiment, which was based on contact theory. Looking at the quantity of contact, quality of contact and cross-group friendships of pupils .
- **Findings:** Over time the difference between ingroup and out group preferences reduced in the mixed school. They found that people’s expectations were worse than the reality, and the biggest positive effect was on those who had the lowest expectations. They also found that over time people had much more mixed social networks. There is, however, still further work to be done as it was discovered that lunchtime seating preferences were still highly segregated .

Ultimately he found that contact works, however, discrimination or negative encounters really undermines trust. Miles reiterated the importance of measuring impact and evaluating all interventions in to trust building.



Cllr Yasmine Dar
Manchester City Council

Councillor Yasmine Dar encouraged people to share a simple smile with the person next to them - she utilised this activity to show that barriers can be overcome through a multitude of ways - and sometimes at no fiscal expense. From a council perspective, Yasmine mentioned the ‘Our Manchester’ strategy focussing on our assets as a city including valuing the skills and talents of our workforce. Her key points were:

- **Break down barriers:** Universal mediums can act as powerful instruments to breaking down barriers, whether it be events and activities celebrating diversity and difference which include difficult dialogue, food and a simple smile.
- **Self-reliance:** It is important to take responsibility of community issues yourself and share commonalities and difference. As well as recognising we all have similar ideals - to be safe, to be happy.
- **Fostering understanding:** Value what everyone brings to the table. Also to stand up to injustice and be the collective power to end hate, racism and oppression.
- **Resources:** Maximise and utilise skills to overcome barriers to trust-building.



Esmat Jeraj
Secretariat for the Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life

Esmat spoke about the importance of meaningful relationships as well as the role of accountability in fostering trust. She gave the example of the work Citizens UK has been doing to co-ordinate broad based community organising to hold institutions accountable. Her key points were:

- **Need for understanding:** Relationships need to be nurtured. And people need to come together to listen and hear.
- **Risk and trust:** Trust requires a willingness to be vulnerable and a desire to understand better.
- **Joint action:** working together to tackle an issue, importance of civil society.
- **Economics and trust:** economic prosperity - belonging or being part of a wider economic network are essential to trust. But economic barriers can prevent participation.
- **Role of accountability:** accountability is key to trust. Citizens assembly is about broad based community organising, leading to relational and institutional change.



Dr. Zahid Parvez
Principal, Markfield Institute of Higher Education

Dr. Zahid Parvez spoke about his personal experiences with his neighbours and non-Muslim communities around building trust in the capacity of an everyday citizen. He highlighted the challenges and successes he faced and overcame, before highlighting the importance of regular communication and persistence. His key points were:

- **Trust building** is essential for a healthy and peaceful society. It is a glue that keeps people, families, communities and society together. It is essential for creating friendly, harmonious and cooperative environments where people can grow, and live and work together, feeling safe from harm, threats, disrespect, hatred, discrimination, prejudice, etc.
- **Regular communication** is required to build understanding and trust between communities.
- **People and the unknown:** People can be reluctant to open up to others and new things or ideas - and that is natural. Do not give up the first time but continue with persistence.
- **Commitment:** making an effort over a prolonged period of time is key to trust building- one must know when to take the initiative and when to be patient. Trust is a process .
- **Role of terror:** terrorist activities are breaking trust between communities, and Muslim community need to persist and must continue to find ways to connect with neighbours and other communities.
- **A responsible government approach** and responsible media reporting of sensitive issues can also contribute enormously in building trust between communities.

Roundtable Task

Drawing from the panel discussions and ensuing Q&A sessions, in their groups, the audience were tasked with designing an initial framework for a project/ activity or intervention centred on trust building. They were asked to briefly identify and outline:

- **Aims** effects or changes that you are trying to achieve
- **Objectives** practical activities that you will carry out to bring about identified change
- **Outcomes** changes or benefits that happen as a result of your activities. Inputs everything needed for project i.e. budget, costs, potential funders etc.
- **Target** Groups/ beneficiaries target-group (age cohort, faith-based, individuals or organisational) etc.
- **Monitoring** how will success be measured?

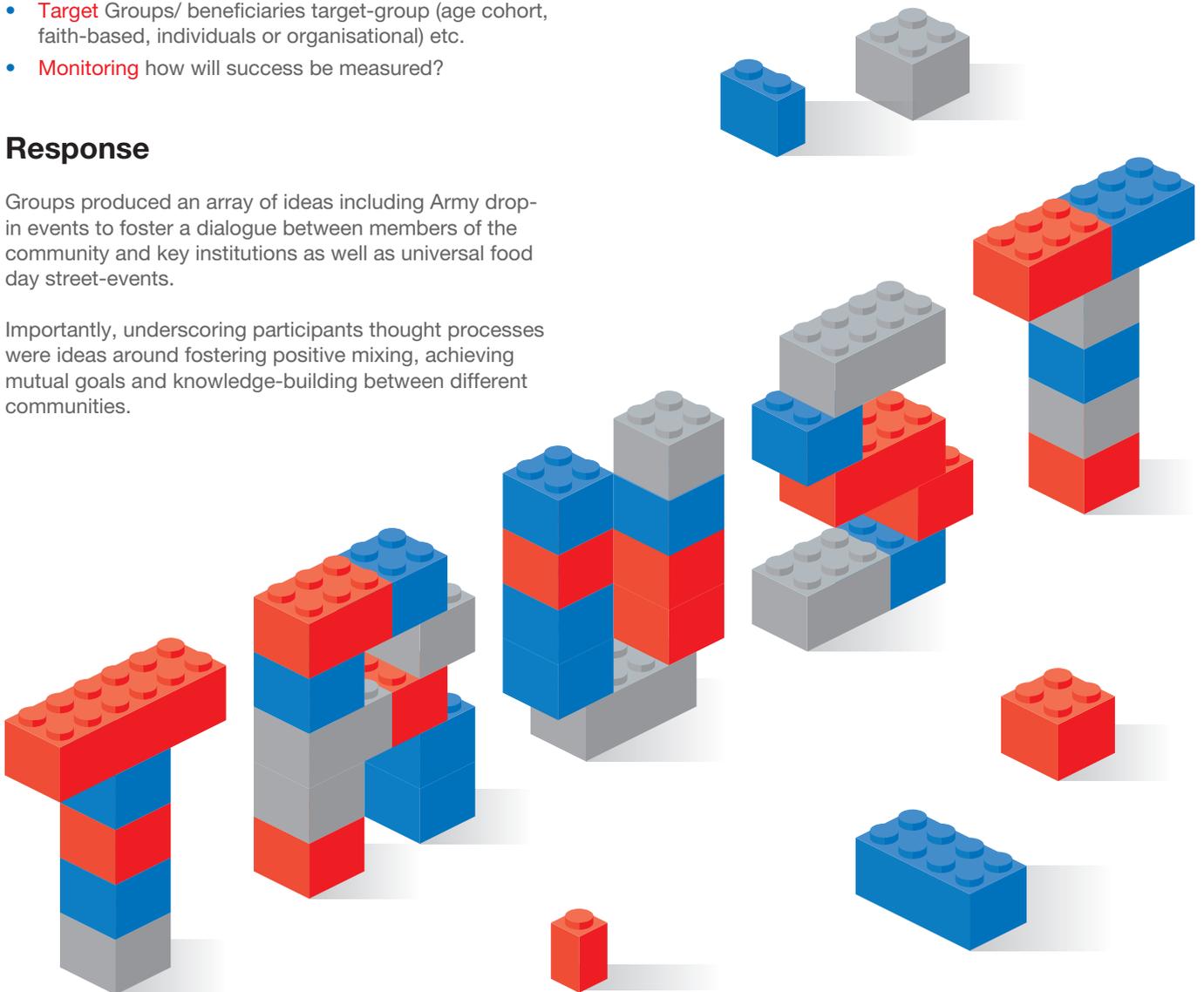
Response

Groups produced an array of ideas including Army drop-in events to foster a dialogue between members of the community and key institutions as well as universal food day street-events.

Importantly, underscoring participants thought processes were ideas around fostering positive mixing, achieving mutual goals and knowledge-building between different communities.

Concluding Remarks

Farah Elahi and Adnan Saif summed the day's proceedings and highlighted key themes such as fostering understanding, the need for positive mixing and the importance of universality. Adnan encouraged people to utilise the knowledge gained from the event in their everyday workspace. Further work was identified and Runnymede, Bridge Institute and the BMHC will continue to encourage initiatives around trust-building and community cohesion.



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