

Welcome to Interfaith Action's winter bulletin, keeping you up to date with all our current projects, events and recent success.

2008 has been a year of development and growth for Interfaith Action: establishing *Interact* magazine as a unique media project for students to gain practical journalism and graphic design experience; expanding our University Programme to support students at 6 universities in London, with dialogue facilitation, workshops and project planning support; and enabling over 100 students and young people to volunteer on our unique inter-faith projects, including one off events and longer term placements. This Bulletin describes more about all our projects and their key success.

Kat and the directors would like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals and organisations who have supported and participated with us over the past 12 months. Seasons Greetings and Happy New Year!



...Volunteers on the Safe Garden Project

Volunteering in the City!

In October & November we attended 7 university Fresher or Volunteer Fairs, promoting Interfaith Action and our projects to thousands of students across the Capital. Through this we have signed up a fantastic total of 150 new volunteers; interested in one of our current initiatives or generally involved in our overall projects and wanting to become more involved in future inter-faith activities (on and off campus).

Since then we have continued to hear from many more students and young people through our partnerships with London Volunteer Centres and V Involved Teams (and university volunteer services), who advertise all our opportunities. We would particularly like to thank Enfield, Camden & Westminster Volunteer Service as well as the North and Central London V Involved Teams, the Jewish Volunteer Network & the Futures Project.

Interfaith Action is a not for profit organisation working with young people and students from all faith backgrounds, across London to develop interfaith volunteer projects.

Our aim is to build understanding and respect between people of all faiths (and none), working predominantly with 14-25 year olds.

We achieve this through facilitating dialogue, raising awareness and strengthening understanding; but most uniquely through establishing volunteer projects for young people to participate in over a specific period of time - building friendships and working together for mutual benefit (to them and their local community).

We work with university students, chaplains and student unions to establish interfaith groups and activities on campus.

And produce *Interact* magazine the only (known) interfaith, culture and lifestyle magazine produced by and for students, in the UK.

Our priorities for 2009 are to:

- Build on our success at universities to support student-led projects on and off campus;
- Improve our workshops and training for students and develop a network;
- Increase group volunteer opportunities for under 25 year olds;
- Replicate existing volunteer projects and develop the magazine project to include professional mentors and increased experiences for participants

University Programme

Our University Programme supports students at universities across London to set up inter-faith groups and activities on campus, with training, workshops and ongoing support through their development.

In 2009 we hope to be expanding our programme, so watch this space!

Gender Equality & Faith

This term we have facilitated an event at the University of Westminster and a dialogue session at Imperial College (in November).

At the University of Westminster we were asked by the Chaplaincy team to support an event on the theme of Gender Equality. We facilitated a group dialogue for over 20 staff and students, with much success, increasing understanding and experience of dialogue.

Since establishing an interfaith group at Imperial College last academic year, the group continued this term with weekly dialogue sessions on a variety of themes. We facilitated one on the theme of Gender Equality with a new approach to initiating the dialogue.

To find out more about how we can support you to set up or develop your interfaith group or activities at university please get in touch.

We can provide workshops on Getting Started; What is Interfaith?; Facilitating Dialogue, and; Developing your own Interfaith Project.

Volunteer Projects...

Safe Garden Project

Since September 2008 we have been running our Safe Garden Project, funded by the Enfield Stronger & Safer Community Partnership (and supported by Age Concern Enfield).

The project provides young volunteers to assist elderly residents with their gardening on a weekly/fortnightly basis. Working in pairs the volunteers (aged 16-25) help residents with tasks including cutting grass, weeding, pruning, general tidying and painting gates and fences.

The aim of the project is to promote good relations between people from different faiths and cultures; increase understanding and respect between young people and elderly residents (inter-generational); reduce anti-social behaviour and crime; specifically burglary and vandalism often targeted at elderly or disabled residents with overgrown gardens (improving community safety and cohesion).

To date we have 19 volunteers registered, including a group of students from Enfield College working towards their Level 3 certificate. As part of this they will complete up to 50 hours with us on the project. We also have 7 elderly or disabled people registered for support, and we are also helping 2 community organisations with overgrown gardens.



Interact Magazine

Our student media project continues to go well with two further issues published in June and October this year.

The next issue will be available in February 2009 with a special feature on International Development & the Millennium Development Goals, produced by 10 volunteers on the editorial team and many more contributing remotely.

Community Links Project

A new initiative in partnership with North London Hospice to train volunteers to promote the work of the Hospice, particularly engaging with local faith communities in the three boroughs the hospice serves: Barnet, Enfield, & Haringey. Six volunteers have been recruited for this project and will begin in the new year, following their training and induction in December.

We would like to thank the following charitable trusts and organisations for funding our projects:

Interfaith Action for London including University Programme, Interact Magazine & Volunteering :

- City Bridge Trust - Fostering Leadership & Reconciliation
- Trust for London
- DCLG - Connecting Communities Plus

Safe Garden Project:

- Enfield Stronger & Safer Community Partnership Board



Working together for a safer London

Supporting London's Communities