

Uniting Reading- An Update

- In Reading £10k was provided in 2007 to set up and develop the work of the **Reading Forum against Extremism** and 80K has been provided in 2008 to establish and develop the work of the **Berkshire Forum Against Extremism (BFAE)**.
- Following the Pathfinders Projects and consultation with the community, an action plan was created, entitled '**Working Together to Prevent Violent Extremism in Reading**'.
- Following further consultation with the community the group: '**Working Together to Prevent Violent Extremism in Reading**' has now changed to '**UNITING READING**'

Uniting Reading

- Be fully supportive and based in good community cohesion
- Involve the community in the governance arrangements of the work
- Ensure that the work is delivered from within Reading Communities with support from external organisations/experts where this adds value
- Ensure that the demands of the funding conditions are fully understood by applicants, including formal clearance and security checking.

Mission Statement

- Working across all communities to challenge extremist views, support good community relations and, promote awareness and understanding

- The Pathfinders identified **4 Priorities**, that structured the action plan:
 - **Women**
 - **Young People**
 - **Raising Awareness**
 - **Faith**

Women

- To engage women and support empowerment to achieve community integration.
- Provide opportunities for women to share experience and provide practical skills.
- Challenge stereotypes and media images.

Young People

- To engage with young people in the priority age group of 14-19 years who live in Reading to increase knowledge, confidence and leadership and reduce vulnerability to extremist influences.
- To engage with young people at high risk of extremist influence and already engaged in criminal behaviour.

Awareness and Support

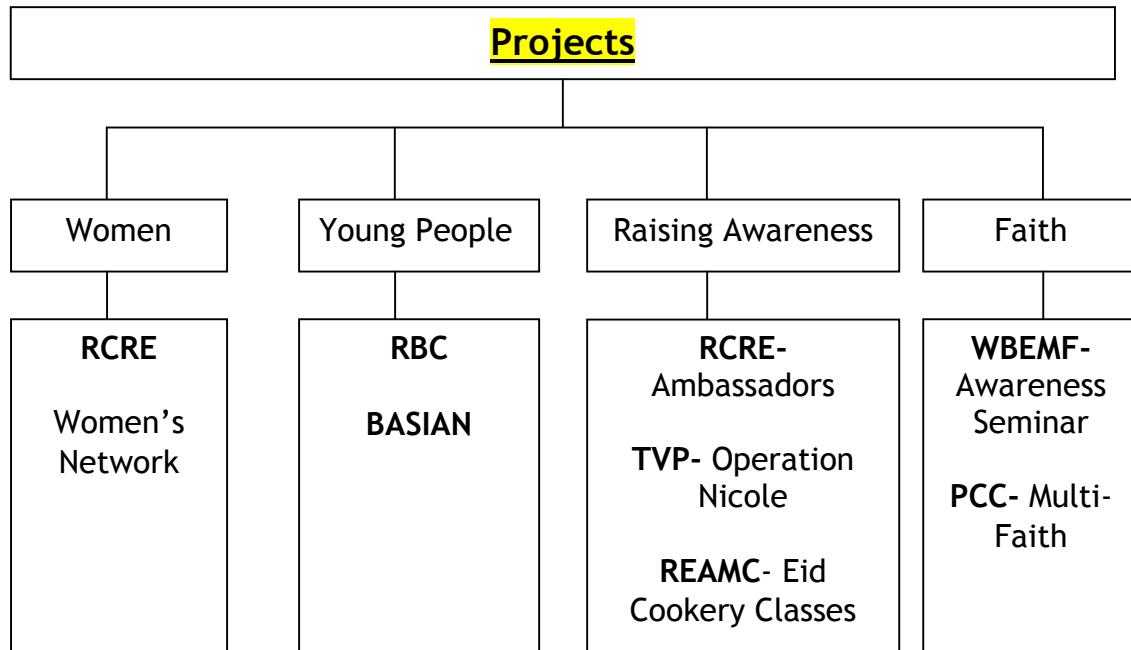
- To engage with the whole community to raise knowledge and awareness of extremism as an essential part of Community Cohesion.
- To build the resilience of community against all extremism and build on culture awareness of areas of risk and opportunities to reduce risks.

Faith

- To engage with a wider range of faith organisations to give collective respect and responsibility for informed comment between faiths.
- To engage directly with all faiths in Reading to give support, Resource and encouragement to reduce vulnerability to extremist influences.

Based on these findings, RBC and partners then approached organisations and invited them to put in a bid for Prevent funding, which would support their projects, and help meet the Prevent Objectives.

Projects



Operation Nicole

The main aim of Operation Nicole is to break down the barriers between police and the community by promoting an understanding how counter terrorism works. Simultaneously it provides officers with an insight into the community concerns and impacts that counter terrorism operations can have on these communities.

It is a table-top exercise that brings different members of the local community together, to deal with a simulated terrorist incident, which is designed to lead to greater understanding of the complexities the police face when dealing with the community aftermath and following a terrorist incident.

The session will be followed up with several ACT Now sessions run across the community.

Eid Cookery Classes

Reading East African Muslim Community is holding an Eid Cookery Class with a difference. The cookery class has two specific characteristics to it:

- Firstly, they aim to bring women from different ethnic minority backgrounds together to cook traditional Swahili food, and,
- Secondly they hope to invite community members (no statutory bodies or service providers) together to not only celebrate Eid but through speeches educate delegates about community cohesion and Uniting Reading

For more information please contact Said Mahmood on reamco@hotmail.co.uk or Riti Vishwakarma at Riti.Vishwakarma@reading.gov.uk.

West Berkshire Ethnic Minority Forum

An Islam awareness seminar, called 'Understanding British Muslims' was held on the 8th July. The seminar was organised by the West Berkshire Ethnic Minority Forum with the eminent Muslim scholar Dr Musharraf facilitating the vent.

The seminar was divided into four sections (Basic Introduction to Islam, Islamophobia, Jihad and Women's Rights) with a dedicated question and answer session at the end of each session.

Over 40 delegates representing all service providers and statutory bodies attended the seminar. A feedback form was handed out at the end of the evening with positive feedback being recorded by all attendees.

Multi-Faith

Pakistan Community Centre have recently had a multi-faith project approved where their main aim is to bring all faith s together, to create a community of mutual respect, tolerance and a celebration of diversity.

The project will hold approximately 12 workshops on exploring Islam and exploring a multi-faith setting. With it ultimately resulting in a 'Belief in Reading Charter'.

To launch the project, the issue of extremism was headlined at this year 's Pakistan Independence Day celebrations, where over 500 people attended and showed support for both the project and against violent extremism.

For more information about this project, please contact Ejaz Elahi at ejaz.elahi@hotmail.com.

BASIAN (Engage)

A project to help support vulnerable young people become resilient to message of violent extremism and targets for radicalisation has also been approved.

The project will target up to 10-15 vulnerable individuals and help the, by holding up to 6 workshops on:

- Islam, community cohesion
- General IT Skills and citizenship and PC maintenance and Repairs
- Islam and Peace
- Web Design
- How to counter extremist theology- creating a counter narrative
- CV Writing and interview skills

It is hoped that following these workshops some of the delegates will be employed as outreach workers to help with recruit further members for the workshop.

For further information please contact Urfan Azad and BASIAN on urfan@basian.org

Ambassadors Project

The Ambassadors project aims to train members of the community to become ambassadors. All ambassadors will be equipped with training and once completed they will be able to go around the community successfully holding debates.

It is believed that the very act of increasing the number and diversity of community ambassadors will increase community resilience and 'embedding' of the values and 'Live Reading' as a diverse community.

Currently an ambassador's workshop is being organised for service providers and statutory bodies to make them aware of Prevent Violent Extremism and Uniting Reading

For more information please contact Rasib Hussein at Rasib@rcrc.co.uk

Further Information

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