

# belonging together

## Embedding the legacy

### August 2013

*This document continues from the Belonging Together Partnership Document 2010-13. It is the end-of-project report for the Belonging Together Partnership Steering Group, for sharing with the Senior Leadership Group, and with those engaged in equality, diversity and inclusion.*

*Compiled by Revd Katei Kirby, Belonging Together Partnership Officer 2010-2013*

## PART 3 – THE OUTCOMES

### The reporting process

36. It was established at the beginning of the final year of the project that there would not be a report to Methodist Conference in 2013 as expected. It was however agreed that Methodist Council would have opportunity to engage with the outcomes of the project in 2012/13, in much the same way as they had opportunity to explore the agreed specific aims during the first year of the project in 2010/11.
37. The Belonging Together Partnership Steering Group noted the progress made under each of the specific outcomes, and identified concerns and outstanding issues brought to light during the life of the project. These along with initial recommendations were presented to the Senior Leadership Group in March 2013 and to Methodist Council in April 2013 (MC/13/43). Methodist Council's response to the discussion demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that the learning and sustainable outcomes from the project were shared across the Connexion.
38. To take this forward, Methodist Conference 2013 adopted the following notice of motion:

#### ***Notice of Motion 202: Embedding the Legacy of the Belonging Together project***

*In light of:*

- 1. The General Secretary's report to the Conference and with reference to embedding an ethos of inclusion as a lasting legacy;*
- 2. The Church's recognition of racism being a denial of the Gospel (SO 013B);*
- 3. The need for greater emphasis to be put on the realization of a racially inclusive Church; and*
- 4. The benefit of the Belonging Together project which ends in August 2013,*

*the Conference acknowledges the work which has been undertaken over a number of years, and therefore directs the Methodist Council to consider, in consultation with the appropriate bodies, the findings and recommendations of the 'Belonging Together' project and to report to the Conference of 2014 on how any recommendations may be implemented.*

*Proposer: The Revd Peter Brown*

*Seconder: The Revd Olufemi Cole-Njie*

*Signatory 1: The Revd William H Anderson*

*Signatory 2: The Revd Dr Stuart Jordan*

*Signatory 3: The Revd Dr Roger L Walton*

*Signatory 4: The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray*

*Signatory 5: The Revd Freddie Takavarasha*

*Signatory 6: The Revd Ebute Obiabo*

*Signatory 7: Mr Gerry Davis*

*Signatory 8: Ms Veronica Franklin*

39. Methodist Conference also engaged with the outcomes of the project through one of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion workshops. The responses demonstrated a commitment to intentional ethnic inclusion through meaningful engagement and effective (shared) resources.

## The final updates and recommendations

40. The Steering Group received an end-of-project update on each of the 12 specific aims at their final meeting in August 2013 for. This information is collated in table below, and includes the recommendations for embedding the legacy.

Specific aim	Led by	Final update	Recommendations
<b>1</b> <b>Develop policies that reflect a clearer understanding of the pathways by which ordained ministers join the Methodist Church in Britain from partner Conferences, and improve their induction and training support</b>	D&M in close cooperation with D&P, WCR and Queen's Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colleagues in D&amp;M are liaising with Governance and with Ministries Committee on the revisions to criteria</li> <li>Positive feedback has been received from those ministers and circuits involved in the revised induction programme</li> <li>A consultation event was held in May 2013 and the outcomes captured will be used to inform policy development</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance and Ministries Committee to receive the 'confidential' report, and take steps to implement the criteria</li> <li>Consultation outcomes to be used to improve the experiences of ministers transferring in the future</li> <li>Improved induction programme be held in the Learning Network, and developed in line with Notice of Motion 209: One Mission Statement</li> </ol>
<b>2</b> <b>Research and map the experiences of people from under-represented backgrounds coming forward for leadership</b>	Research in close collaboration with D&M, Birmingham and other districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus groups held at Methodist Conferences, and key Connexional events</li> <li>Listening and learning tools developed for EDI toolkit</li> <li>Findings collated for information and sharing on request and as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening and learning continues as part of the core Research function</li> <li>Applications to the new Director of SRI for grants for research contributing to ethnic inclusion be supported</li> <li>Analysis and reports be made available to SLG, committees and policy makers</li> </ol>
<b>3</b> <b>Improve support for culturally distinct congregations, fellowships, and the ministers serving them, and explore how we celebrate identity in the life of the Church</b>	D&M in close cooperation with districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on the major cultural groups collated; handover notes to be produced</li> <li>Information on the fellowship groups and language congregations has been mapped electronically</li> <li>A 'confidential' report is being produced for Ministries Committee</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'confidential' report be shared with co-chairs of the project ahead of the presentation to Methodist Council</li> <li>Establish a Connexional forum / resource group to advise on key issues and shape policy to develop opportunities for culturally distinct congregations / groups</li> </ol>

<p><b>4</b> Put in place a model of sustainability for events and networks which support culturally distinct congregations and ministers from under-represented backgrounds</p>	<p>E&amp;D supported by those responsible for racial justice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fringe event and ‘Ubuntu’ held in 2013 sponsored by Belonging Together</li> <li>• Race Stakeholder Forum functioning and established with measurable contributions to the E&amp;D Resource Group and Belonging Together project</li> <li>• Constitution and remit of Belonging Together Ministers Group reviewed</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Fringe event/Ubuntu be used as a model or template for Connexional, district and local events to recognise and celebrate ethnic inclusion, and those who contribute to the journey</li> <li>2 Continue to build confidence of ministers by providing sustainable support for meetings and activities</li> <li>3 Develop a permanent structure for ethnic diversity issues as part of the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) programme</li> </ol>
<p><b>5</b> Facilitate and support engagement with cultural diversity through ministerial training programmes through learning resources for Connexional churches</p>	<p>D&amp;M in collaboration with learning institutions and regional training networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal training opportunities completed as invited, and in a range of settings with positive feedback</li> <li>• Opportunities being explored to embed this aim the activities of the Learning Network</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Resources (books, presentations, notes etc) be made available or recommended to the Connexion</li> <li>2 Learning Network include the good practice and learning in the training and resources offered and made available to the Connexion</li> </ol>
<p><b>6</b> Increase the diversity of people coming forward for lay and ordained ministry, and improve support offered during candidating, preparing and stationing</p>	<p>D&amp;M, D&amp;P with support from Projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership of committees reviewed and revised, and significant changes made to the profile</li> <li>• Recruitment messages and tools improved using new technologies and inclusive language</li> <li>• Strategy paper not produced, but the preparation and training of committee members enhanced for the interviewing process</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Keep the profile of committee members under review to better reflect the diversity of the Church</li> <li>2 Review the recruitment strategy and processes to ensure that key opportunities are better promoted and provided, particularly to encourage participation in earlier stages of training</li> <li>3 Continue to enhance the preparation and training for committee members</li> </ol>

<p><b>7</b> Develop strategies to spread more widely the spiritual, theological and practical understandings discovered or developed in London, Birmingham and other Districts</p>	<p>ES&amp;D in close cooperation with districts and the Communications, D&amp;M and Projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications messages and tools reviewed and advice sought on development of new tools</li> <li>• Ecumenical links maintained and shared</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Communications mechanisms be monitored and reviewed for reach, effectiveness and impact</li> <li>2 Ecumenical relationships be maintained and opportunities for joint initiatives with a range of other churches be explored/budgeted for</li> </ol>
<p><b>8</b> Build capacity for children and young people to engage with cultural diversity</p>	<p>D&amp;M</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts made to engage all youth in the participation strategy saw increased numbers at key annual events, and the first female African/Caribbean Youth President appointed for 2013/14</li> <li>• E&amp;D is now part of the key training for those on the ONE programme, and ad hoc training offered to those working with children and youth</li> <li>• Short term support for long term integration of the Association of Black Methodist Youth (ABMY) is ongoing</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Sustain efforts to maintain an encourage participation of young people of all backgrounds in children/youth events across the Connexion</li> <li>2 Continue to engage with those leading ABMY and give clear leadership for long term integration in the core children/youth programme</li> <li>3 Make and maintain connections with young people in fellowship groups or language congregations, and share learning with those working with / among culturally distinct groups</li> </ol>
<p><b>9</b> Promote the flexibility of CPD and demonstrate how CPD embodies an ethos of inclusion and participation within the Methodist Church in Britain</p>	<p>E&amp;D supported by OoSC, Faith and Order, Law and Polity and Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework agreed for developing tools accessing and understanding CPD</li> <li>• Support given to BTMG and Race Stakeholder Forum to improve access to CPD, Methodist Conference/ Council papers and connected processes</li> <li>• Principles adopted by Methodist Conference 2012 as a framework for the theological statement</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Governance Support to lead on overseeing the development of CPD access tools</li> <li>2 Support key groups to encourage access and understanding of governance processes</li> <li>3 Work closely with Faith and Order to complete the theological statement by 2015</li> </ol>

<p><b>10</b> Map the current diversity of the Church</p>	<p>Research in collaboration with D&amp;M and E&amp;D</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groundworks commissioned to develop the infrastructure to map statistical data on ethnic diversity online</li> <li>• New staff recruited with expertise to develop and implement mapping tool</li> <li>• Statistics for Mission data collection forms improved to capture relevant data</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Maximise online facilities to tell the story of the ethnic diversity across the Connexion</li> <li>2 Retain expertise (staff) to record, and verify date, and to promote the tools at district and circuit levels</li> <li>3 Continue to review the way that data is collated and made available</li> </ol>
<p><b>11</b> Research and map the diversity of those coming forward for ministries</p>	<p>Research in close collaboration with E&amp;D, D&amp;P and D&amp;M</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised form piloted for collating diversity data of those coming forward for ministry</li> <li>• A report has not yet been produced or presented</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Mapping the diversity of those coming forward for ministries be a key responsibility of the new Director of SRI role in the Learning Network, working in collaboration within the Connexional Team / D&amp;P</li> </ol>
<p><b>12</b> Evaluate the project and disseminate lessons learnt</p>	<p>Projects et al</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection and reflective practice was encouraged and used throughout the project to embed learning</li> <li>• Update reports and presentations were provided to the Steering Group and ‘big issues’ discussed</li> <li>• Collaboration was both encouraged and modeled by project / lead staff throughout the process</li> <li>• A range of articles were published internally and externally</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The update provided for the Steering Group be made available to the Steering Group and SLG as a record of the learning and outcomes of the project</li> <li>2 Collaboration be encouraged to embed the legacy of the project, both in activities and resources</li> <li>3 Resources produced for and by the project be made available for wider use</li> </ol>

**Brief reflections on the project**

41. Significant progress has been made on all 12 specific aims, and the summaries (above) perhaps do not adequately reflect the complexities or volume of the tasks required within each of the specific aims, nor indeed the effort and energy that went into achieving these outcomes.



42. Some of the specific aims changed shape during the life of the project, but every effort was made to maintain the focus provided by the driving forces for the project. There are only two instances where work has been extended beyond the life of the project. That said, the Partnership Steering Group recognizes that further work is still needed both to embed the project aims, and to take forward those areas which the project did not specifically seek to address, but which came to light during the process.
43. The emphasis or bias of the 12 specific aims towards leadership and leadership roles was also duly noted. The Partnership Steering Group were clear that that did not preclude or prevent the ethos of ‘belonging together’ being applied across all ministries and activities of the Church. When the vision for the project was shared at district or circuit level by project staff, it proved helpful to paint the bigger picture that the specific aims painted, and then encourage local thinking on the issues.
44. The Partnership Steering Group also noted that collaborative working was the hallmark of the project’s success, and that that was made possible both by the dedicated staff recruited and the response of those who engaged with the process. **The challenge which remains post-project is to identify key places or personnel within the Connexion who can be and become champions of the ‘belonging’ ethos, to continue to give this agenda momentum.**
45. ‘Ubuntu’ (which means I am because we are), is the term used by Nelson Mandela and others to identify the transformation that takes place when there is meaningful inclusion. When Martin Luther King Jr dared to dream out loud fifty years ago, it was dream for the value of all people to be a lived experience.
46. At the heart of ‘Belonging Together’ project has been the hope and expectation that the people called Methodist would experience in all areas of the life of the Church the kind of inclusion that Jesus prayed for in John 17. The project has confirmed that when effort and energy are invested in this, it is both possible and transformational.
47. At the ‘Heaven Touching Earth’ fringe event hosted by Belonging Together, Daleep Mukarji (Vice President of Conference) said that inclusion needs an “active strategy”. At the same event, Revd Olufemi Cole-Njie said that belonging and inclusion needed to affect the whole church “from grass roots to governance”. ‘Belonging together’ is not an additional task, but an ethos that needs to be evident in every activity and on every agenda of the Church. The key question that needs to be asked and answered post-project is: how?
48. Methodist Conference has already adopted the notice of motion which will keep ‘belonging together’ on the agenda of Methodist Council and in the work plan of the Connexional team. **It is vital then that the Church has opportunity to explore the recommendations, and agree those that it will take forward, ensuring that plans are owned, shared, resourced and championed across the Connexion.** It is also vital that the Church recognizes the gaps that remain in areas of ethnic inclusion, and develops sustainable structures to bridge them.
49. The project concludes with a prayer written by Doreen Daley (Wandle Valley):
- Heavenly Father, we pray for people who feel that they don’t belong, who feel that they are excluded. Give them vision and hope that they might know that you are with them, and that your door is always open to all who come. Through Jesus Christ our Lord – Amen*
50. Thanks are due to all those who supported the project and to those who will embed its legacy.