

<b>Institution: The University of Edinburgh</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 27 Area Studies</b>
<b>Title of case study: Challenging Stereotypes about Islam in Scottish Civil Society</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>A number of initiatives organised by the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World (Alwaleed) have provided Area Studies colleagues with the opportunity to utilise their research expertise to challenge stereotypes about Islam and Muslims with profound impact in and for Scottish civil society.</p> <p><i>Exploring Islam</i>, providing Scottish police with essential understanding of Islam in the local and global context, transformed Police Scotland's diversity training programmes.</p> <p><i>Breaking Barriers</i> deepened the knowledge of 22 young Scottish Christians and Muslims, including community leaders, about each other's beliefs and practices, overturned prejudices and equipped all to challenge prevailing discourses about the Other within their communities.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Alwaleed's outreach initiatives are underpinned, at a fundamental level, by the research of Edinburgh's Professor Carole Hillenbrand OBE, appointed Professor of Islamic History in 2000. In particular, her award-winning research into Islamic and Arab history, especially on the legacy of the Crusades, provided the backdrop to all the Alwaleed work. Drawing on her research, Hillenbrand developed the proposal that secured the £8m endowment from the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation to establish the Centre at the University (2008). Hillenbrand's proposal envisioned a centre that fostered a more profound understanding between the Muslim World and the West via the twin paths of effective outreach and high quality research. With Hillenbrand serving as chair of the Advisory Board, the Centre has developed in accordance with this model. Alwaleed delivers outreach projects underpinned by the research expertise of IMES academic staff as well as its own 'in house' team comprising Centre director Professor Hugh Goddard, postdoctoral fellows and PhD students.</p> <p>The two projects detailed in this case study were underpinned in a more specific way by the research of four particular members of both Alwaleed and IMES, thereby attesting to synergies between the two:</p> <p>Goddard joined the University of Edinburgh as Director of the Alwaleed in 2009. With over half of planet's population now considering themselves to be either Christian or Muslim, understanding the relationship, past and present, between the world's two largest faith communities is of paramount importance. Since his arrival in Edinburgh Goddard has published a series of articles exploring Christian/Muslim relations and the relationship between the Muslim World and the West, in both historical and contemporary contexts, in the process examining areas of tension between Christians and Muslims but also highlighting areas of mutual cooperation and understanding. The research of Dr Timothy Peace (appointed 2011, Alwaleed Postdoctoral Fellow) focuses on Muslims in Britain. Peace's research challenges the common tendency to homogenise Muslims in Britain, an approach that assumes that all Muslims engage with the state and society primarily as 'Muslims' rather than as British citizens. Based on his research Peace also teaches a unique course on the history of Muslims in Britain. Since his arrival in Edinburgh, Peace has published book chapters and articles exploring Muslim engagement with the political process in the UK.</p> <p>IMES colleagues included Dr Anthony Gorman (Senior Lecturer, appointed 2006). Gorman has analysed the recent Arab uprisings focusing on the key historical contexts to these and other contemporary events in the Arab World. His work has investigated civil unrest, anarchism, state policing and carceral policies in the Middle East, with particular reference to Egypt. Dr Thomas Pierret (appointed 2011) researches contemporary Islam as Islam as a dynamic and changing phenomenon with far-reaching domestic and global implications. His work explores contemporary Islamic faith and practice, Islam in Syria and contemporary sectarian divisions within Islam.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>1. Goddard, H.P., 'A biographical approach to radicalisation: Ziauddin Sardar's "Desperately</p>

Seeking Paradise" and Ed Husain's "The Islamist", for G.Joffé, ed., *Islamic Radicalisation in Europe and the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 17-33. Available from HEI on request.

2. Goddard, H.P., 'Recent developments in Christian-Muslim Relations' in S. Goodwin, ed., *World Christianity in Muslim Encounter: Essays in Honour of David A. Kerr* (London: Continuum, 2009), 2: 96-114. Available from HEI on request.

3. Gorman, A., 'Confining Political Dissent in Egypt before 1952', in L. Khalili and J. Schwedler, eds., *Carceral Practices: Prisons and Policing in the Middle East and North Africa* (London: Hurst, 2010), 157-173. Submitted to REF2.

4. Hillenbrand, C., *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999). Available from HEI on request.

5. Peace, T., 'Muslims and electoral politics in Britain: the case of Respect' in J. Nielsen, ed., *Muslims and Political Participation in Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 426-454. Available from HEI on request.

6. Pierret, T., 'Staging the authority of the ulama : The celebration of the Mawlid in urban Syria', in T. Pierret et al., eds., *Ethnographies of Islam: Ritual Performances and Everyday Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 93-101. Available from HEI on request.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The above research underpinned two projects that had a significant impact on civil society and public sector organisations in Scotland: *Exploring Islam* and *Breaking Barriers*.

##### ***Exploring Islam (October 2012 – March 2013)***

Islam is the largest minority faith in Scotland and Scottish Police officers regularly respond to incidents involving Scottish Muslims. A consultation by the then Lothian and Borders Police revealed that many officers felt ignorant of Muslim beliefs and culture and therefore nervous about their interactions with Scotland's Muslim communities. Alwaleed was approached to organise continuing professional development training. Five sessions were organised over five months. Four of the sessions were based on the research of Unit 27 colleagues (1).

Pierret led officers through the key contemporary Islamic movements and sectarian divisions within Islam. His session equipped officers with a greater understanding of violent and non-violent tendencies within Islam and the extent to which all affect the UK. Gorman explored the Arab World in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, offering key insights into the events leading to the 'Arab Spring'. Gorman encouraged officers to consider the significance of these events for the global Muslim community and the UK. Peace guided officers through the history of Islam in Scotland. He provided practical understanding of the demographics of Scotland's Muslims and of the influence of culture on community structures and behavioural norms.

Nearly 70 officers from the then Lothian and Borders, Strathclyde and Grampian forces attended each session. These included high-ranking officers (chief superintendents and inspectors) and junior officers with community policing responsibilities. An official of the then Lothian and Borders Diversity Unit, said:

'This was a unique opportunity for our officers to hear from experts in the field of Islamic studies. Feedback from officers has been extremely positive and the knowledge gained from the lectures will doubtless help our officers understand more about the Muslim communities they encounter and serve' (2).

The impact of the sessions was acknowledged by a then senior Central Scotland Police official who went on to request further input from Alwaleed as a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) Religion and Belief Reference Group (3). The group promotes engagement between the Scottish Police Service and Scotland's faith communities.

IMES academic staff were also invited to quality-assure the "Diversity Booklet" to be distributed to every officer in Scotland (currently 17,500) in August 2013 (delayed from early 2013 by the reorganisation of police forces in Scotland). The booklet offers practical advice on policing minority communities. Goddard, Peace and Pierret made 'essential' contributions to the chapter on Islam

(pp.32-37), emphasising key sectarian concerns and cultural nuances. The quality assurance process was undertaken in March 2013 (4).

### **Breaking Barriers (November 2011 – present)**

*Breaking Barriers* was a two-day residential conference organised by Alwaleed in partnership with the Church of Scotland. Based on Goddard's research on the historical and contemporary collaborations and disputes between Christians and Muslims, *Breaking Barriers* brought together 22 young Christians and Muslims for discussions, lectures and workshops exploring Christian/Muslim relations and mutual misperceptions. Goddard led 3 sessions, focussing on, and encouraging participants to engage with, such concepts as the Holy Trinity, Jihad, and Sharia law and the historical relationship between the two traditions.

Delegates included the head of the 'Brothers' Circle' in Edinburgh (a Muslim organisation with a membership of more than 200 young men), the head of 'Beyond the Veil' Muslim Women's Group (a support and advocacy group for Muslim women in Scotland with a membership of more than 50), two trainee Church of Scotland Ministers and the editor of *Fifteen-21*, the UK's fastest-growing magazine for young Muslims with an online readership in excess of 20,000 (5).

The conference had a profound impact on delegates, providing them with key knowledge to apply to their life and work. (6) In an article written for the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association's quarterly magazine, a Christian delegate said: 'Of all the interfaith experiences I have had, *Breaking Barriers* is one of the most inspiring. The participants all have strong religious convictions, and when we get together, we do not downplay, deny, or ignore our differences. Instead, we try to understand each other's beliefs and practices, and make sure that we do not promote inaccurate stereotypes.' (7).

The *Breaking Barriers* conference inspired the 14 Edinburgh-based delegates to establish a discussion group for young Edinburgh-based Christians and Muslims (8). The group met six times between January 2012 and February 2013. A second day-long *Breaking Barriers* conference will take place in November 2013.

As a result of the success of the conference, the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association - founded in 1989 and comprising the capital's 10 faith communities (<http://www.eifa.org.uk/membership/>) - committed to funding a second *Breaking Barriers* conference in November 2013 (7, 9) to be delivered in partnership with Alwaleed. A further three *Breaking Barriers* scriptural reasoning groups will be established in Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen (7).

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

(The web links are to original webpages, but should these be unavailable a pdf of the page can be found at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/REF2014REF3B/UoA+27.>)

#### **Exploring Islam**

(1) Alwaleed Centre Annual Report 2012/2013 p.12:

[http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.115333!/fileManager/Alwaleed%20Centre%20Annual%20Report%202013.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.115333!/fileManager/Alwaleed%20Centre%20Annual%20Report%202013.pdf). Corroborates details of the CPD programme.

(2) Contact: Former Head of Lothian and Borders Police Diversity Unit, now Head of Diversity for Police Scotland W Division. Corroborates quotation in section 4 regarding the greater understanding of Muslim communities shared by police officers as a result of the training sessions.

(3) Contact: Then-Superintendent and former chair of the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland Religion and Belief Reference Group, now Superintendent for Police Scotland with responsibility for Operations. Corroborates (i) the impact and influence of police training sessions (ii) the request for Alwaleed's input as a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland Religion and Belief Group.

(4) Letter of acknowledgment from then Equalities and Diversity Officer for Central Scotland Police and editor of the *Diversity Booklet: A Practical Guide*). Source corroborates input of named staff in booklet. Available from HEI on request.

#### **Breaking Barriers**

- (5) Contact: *Breaking Barriers* delegate and editor of *Fifteen21* (<http://www.fifteen21.com/editor/>), a Muslim youth magazine. Corroborates the content and relevance of *Breaking Barriers* residential conference as referenced in section 4.
- (6) Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association *Breaking Barriers* webpage: <http://www.eifa.org.uk/breaking-barriers/>. Source contains individual statements of participants on the workshop's importance.
- (7) Article in Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association (EIFA) newsletter *Inter-Faith Matters* (Spring, 2013, p.10), by a *Breaking Barriers* delegate, reflecting on her experience of *Breaking Barriers* and the importance of Christian/Muslim dialogue. Circulation circa 10,000. Also available to view online: <http://www.eifa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/InterFaith-Matters-April-13.pdf>. Source contains statement by delegate quoted in section 4.
- (8) *Breaking Barriers* Facebook group: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/bbscotland/>. Corroborates establishment of Facebook group page by the group. A copy of the Facebook page is available at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/REF2014REF3B/UoA+27>.
- (9) Headed letter of acknowledgement from General Secretary of EIFA, then Inter-Faith Officer for the Church of Scotland. Corroborates commitment to funding a second *Breaking Barriers* conference in November 2013 as stated in Section 4. Available from HEI on request.