Dear Woolf Friends,

Does interfaith work? This is a question with which the Woolf Institute, and probably too few others, wrestle. Our Measures of Success project, completed last year, explored the tricky topic of effectiveness and produced a free resource – a toolkit – for local organisations wishing to evaluate their interfaith initiatives.

One such initiative is the Forum of Faiths programme run by the London Borough of Newham (LBN). As a local authority, LBN is special for at least two reasons. First, the place it serves – a large urban area in East London - is very diverse religiously. Second, LBN places more data at the heart its work than many other local authorities. In short, it loves social science!

Over the years, researchers at the Woolf Institute and LBN staff have forged a trusting and mutually beneficial working relationship. Having long taken advantage of their approaches and insights, we were delighted to be asked to evaluate the Forum of Faiths programme.

The Forum was established to include more faith communities in LBN’s decision-making processes and to provide opportunities for local people from all faith backgrounds to meet. Through its regular events, LBN hopes to encourage dialogue and unity. The question is – does it work?

Armed with our toolkit and a voice recorder, we attended a meeting of Forum members. We heard wonderful accounts of community action during the pandemic alongside constructive criticism of the local authority – and, yes, a few moans.

The Woolf Institute is well-placed to undertake collaborative evaluation work of this nature. We have the research and policy skills but, and far more importantly, also understand the dynamics of religion and have the cultural sensitivities required to support faith communities.

As we complete our evaluation report for our friends in Newham, reflecting on their successes and remaining challenges, we offer you this week a short round-up of our other related work in this area.

We hope you are well and thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Dr Julian Hargreaves
Director of Research, Woolf Institute
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**READ: Bringing people of different faiths together to solve the world’s problems is a noble goal – but it’s hard to know what it achieves**

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**REWATCH: SLAVERY AND INVISIBILITY IN THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN**

The sixth webinar of the series, organised jointly by Woolf Institute and the Society for the Medieval Mediterranean on 'Slavery in the Medieval Mediterranean'.

The speakers were Dr Hannah Barker, Dr Cristina de la Puente and Dr Craig
IFTAR AT THE WOOLF INSTITUTE
The Woolf Institute invites you to break fast with us on Monday 4 April at 20:00 in the KC Shasha Suite in celebration of the holy month of Ramadan. Congregational Maghreb prayer to take place after iftar.

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