Young people cross the religious divide

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Muslim Jewish Roots has received a £24,600 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and will be run by Haringey-based Faith Regen Foundation.

The project, supported under HLF's Young Roots programme, not only crosses faiths but also generations as 20 Muslim and Jewish young people set out to learn about the history of each other's communities in East London. They will interview the elder members of each community as well as visiting the London Muslim Centre, the Jewish Museum London, the Brick Lane Mosque and the Museum of Immigration and Cultural Diversity.

Experts from the British Library will help train the young volunteers in interviewing techniques after which they will record the memories of local people. In order to look back to life a century ago and discover how different faith communities came to settle in the area the project's young researchers will be assisted by the Jewish Museum and by the Department of History at Oxford University.

Once the information has been gathered it will be shared in a number of imaginative ways. These include an online e-magazine, a filmed documentary and high profile event at the House of Commons in June next year to be attended by Muslim and Jewish MPs. And young people will also be trained up as 'ambassadors' to visit mosques, synagogues and museums to talk about the completed project.

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: "This is an important and imaginative project. It will raise awareness of the common history of the Muslim and Jewish communities in East London and help to preserve their history while providing an opportunity for the young people from both faiths to learn new skills, to interact and work together."

For Faith Regen Foundation, chairman Brian McAndrew, said: "We are delighted with this grant as the work we do in bringing people of faiths and beliefs together is really important to keep Britain great. Raising this sort of money is never easy so a big thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund."

Notes to editors

• The Young Roots programme celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. In the past decade HLF has awarded more than £27million to over 1,250 Young Roots projects throughout the UK.

• Faith Regen Foundation is a Muslim-inspired multi-faith charity, operating at both a national and international level that aims to build bridges between multi-faith communities, government and civil society.

• Brick Lane Great Mosque. The building, at 59, Brick Lane, has been used by a range of different religions and in the late 19th century it served as the Spitalfields Great Synagogue.

Further information

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