

**CCIN Innovation Funding 2025 - Policy Lab : Entry  
# 985****Organisation leading the project**

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

**Lead Councillor or Officer**

Sulafa Abushal

**Job Title**

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Faith, Young People &amp; Resilience: Understanding the Past, Strengthening Cohesion, and Preparing for the Future

**How much funding are you applying for?**

£ 20,000.00

**Summary of project idea (150 words max)**

Young people from faith communities often experience lower levels of belonging and trust, while misinformation and crises can deepen division. Faith communities play a vital role in resilience, cohesion, and crisis response, yet their contributions are sometimes misunderstood or overlooked. This project, led by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in partnership with Wigan, Trafford, Bury, and Oldham, will empower young people to strengthen resilience and cohesion in their communities.

Through workshops, scenario planning, and creative storytelling, young people will examine past faith-led crisis responses, explore the impact of misinformation, and develop practical solutions to bring communities together. By fostering interfaith collaboration, the project will build trust, equip young people with key skills, and enhance crisis preparedness. A key outcome will be a youth-led Faith, Cohesion & Resilience Toolkit, providing guidance for faith groups, councils, and communities.

Aligned with the Greater Manchester Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant, this project supports co-production, social partnership, and community leadership, creating a replicable model for councils.

**Which other CCIN members will work on this project?**

- Bury Council
- Trafford Council
- Oldham Council
- Wigan Council

**1. What are the three key outcomes this project will achieve?**

1. Young people will take a leading role in resilience and crisis response, developing the skills, confidence, and networks to challenge misinformation, strengthen cohesion, and support their communities in times of disruption.

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2. Faith communities, councils, and young people will form stronger, long-term partnerships, embedding faith and youth perspectives into local crisis planning and ensuring communities are better connected before, during, and after emergencies.

3. A youth-led Faith, Cohesion & Resilience Toolkit will be developed, providing councils and communities with practical guidance, tested strategies, and real-world case studies to embed inclusive, faith-informed approaches to resilience.

### 2. How does your project support the CCIN Statement of Values and Principles?

This project embodies CCIN's commitment to co-operative values and principles by ensuring that young people, faith communities, and councils work together as equal partners in building resilience and strengthening community cohesion. It reflects CCIN's focus on social partnership, democratic engagement, innovation, and shared learning.

**Social Partnership** - The project brings together young people, faith groups, councils, and wider statutory partners to create a shared understanding of resilience, misinformation, and community wellbeing. By embedding faith and youth voices in resilience planning, the project ensures councils and communities work together as equal contributors to emergency preparedness and social cohesion.

**Democratic Engagement** - This project actively involves young people and faith communities in shaping local responses to crises, ensuring they have a direct role in decision-making. It aligns with CCIN's principle of ensuring that all voices—particularly those who are often underrepresented—help shape public services and community planning.

**Co-Production** – This project is co-produced with young people and faith groups. Their experiences and insights will shape policy, inform practice, and lead to the development of the Faith, Cohesion & Resilience Toolkit, ensuring that solutions are community-led and meet real needs.

**Innovation** - This project introduces new ways of working with young people and faith communities to tackle misinformation, promote resilience, and strengthen community ties. It creates a scalable model that councils can adopt and adapt, ensuring innovative approaches to resilience planning and crisis response.

**Maximising Social Value** - The project supports CCIN's goal of embedding social value in public sector work by recognising and strengthening the role of faith groups and young people as key contributors to community wellbeing and crisis response.

**Learning & Sharing Best Practice** - The learning from this project will be widely shared beyond CCIN, ensuring that other councils, faith networks, and community groups can adopt and build on its successes.

**Walking the Talk – Turning Principles into Action** - This project turns cooperative principles into real, tangible action.

### 3. What is your idea and how will you allocate the budget?

#### Background

Young people from faith communities often experience lower levels of belonging and trust in their local areas, with misinformation and crises sometimes deepening division and eroding social cohesion. Despite this, young people are often overlooked in resilience planning, even though they are among the most impacted by crisis events—whether through disruptions to education, employment, or community stability.

Recent data highlights these challenges:

- The After the Riots report (Belong, 2024) and the GM Policing & Community Safety Survey show that young people (16-24) report lower levels of safety, belonging, and confidence in community cohesion than any other age group.
- Misinformation and crisis-related tensions have contributed to community distrust, the targeting of places of worship, and breakdowns in interfaith collaboration.
- Many young people feel disengaged from decision-making structures, despite their potential to be key influencers within their communities.

At the same time, young people have the power to drive positive change. When provided with the right skills and opportunities, they can challenge misinformation, build trust across faith and cultural groups, and lead community-based

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resilience efforts.

Faith communities have a long history of stepping up in times of crisis—from mobilising support during the COVID-19 pandemic to responding to local emergencies such as flooding and community tensions. However, young people's involvement in these responses has often been informal and under-recognised. This project will change that by equipping young people with the skills, confidence, and networks to take an active role in resilience-building.

### The Project

Led by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in partnership with Wigan, Trafford, Bury, and Oldham, this project will empower young people from diverse faith backgrounds to strengthen resilience, tackle misinformation, and foster cohesion within their communities.

The project will take place over three key phases, each designed to build knowledge, develop skills, and create practical solutions:

#### Phase 1: Understanding the Past – Faith, Resilience & Cohesion Oral Histories

- Young people will explore historical faith-led responses to crises, examining how faith communities have supported one another in times of emergency (e.g. riots, floods, the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Workshops and oral history sessions will engage faith leaders and elders, capturing their experiences and highlighting what has worked well in building resilience and cohesion.
- Community disruption & cohesion mapping will allow young people to identify key moments of solidarity and crisis, helping them understand the role of faith in strengthening trust and overcoming division.

#### Phase 2: Tackling Misinformation & Strengthening Resilient, Cohesive Communities

- Interactive workshops will explore how misinformation spreads during emergencies, how it creates division, and how faith communities can counteract false narratives.
- Scenario planning exercises will put young people in realistic crisis situations (e.g., heatwave, power outage, fire, community tensions), asking them to co-develop practical responses that strengthen trust, cooperation, and interfaith collaboration.
- This phase will also challenge negative narratives, helping young people identify proactive ways to change public perceptions about faith and resilience.

#### Phase 3: Co-Producing the Faith, Cohesion & Resilience Toolkit

- Young people will design a practical resource that helps faith communities prepare for and respond to future crises while fostering cohesion.
- The youth-led toolkit may include:
  - o Guidance for tackling misinformation and knowing when/how to act.
  - o Templates for emergency response messaging, ensuring faith groups can communicate effectively.
  - o Stories from faith communities showcasing resilience, cohesion, and interfaith cooperation.
  - o A directory of trusted local and community contacts for crisis response and support.
  - o Practical and informal ways for faith groups to support each other, based on real-life successful approaches.
- The toolkit will be disseminated across partner areas and shared with CCIN members, ensuring learning from this project informs resilience strategies beyond Greater Manchester.

### Building on Local Networks & Support

This project will draw on existing local partnerships and networks, ensuring it is embedded in community structures and sustainable beyond the project's lifetime:

- Interfaith networks in Wigan, Trafford, Bury, and Oldham will support community engagement and trust-building.
- The Youth Combined Authority could support the project ensuring it is shaped by young people's voices and connecting with wider youth engagement strategies.
- The Faith & Belief Panel and Race Equality Panel could provide strategic insight, ensuring the project reflects lived experiences and addresses barriers to community cohesion.
- This work directly supports the Greater Manchester Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant, which was adopted by GMCA in March 2024. The Covenant sets out a framework for collaboration between faith communities and public bodies, ensuring that faith groups are actively involved in shaping community resilience and social cohesion. This project will bring the Covenant's

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commitments to life, embedding practical solutions that connect faith, young people, and local government in resilience planning.

Budget Allocation.

This project will be delivered in partnership with a specialist youth and faith engagement organisation, ensuring that young people and faith communities lead both the design and delivery. The budget is structured to maximise impact, while in-kind contributions from local authorities, interfaith networks, and GMCA panels will provide additional resources to embed the work within long-term resilience and community cohesion strategies.

### 4. Provide a detailed budget of how you will spend the funds and whether you are bringing in other funding.

- Project Coordination & Delivery (£14,000) – Commissioning a youth and faith engagement organisation to lead project delivery, facilitate sessions, and coordinate local engagement.
- Youth Engagement & Participation (£500) – Supporting young people's involvement, covering travel expenses, participation incentives, and accessibility costs to ensure inclusive engagement.
- Workshops & Scenario Planning (£1,500) – Running interactive sessions and crisis response exercises, covering venue hire, facilitation, and materials.
- Creative & Digital Outputs (£3,000) – Developing the Faith, Cohesion & Resilience Toolkit, including content creation, digital production, and design to make it a practical, shareable resource.
- Knowledge Sharing & Dissemination (£1,000) – Supporting community outreach, local communications, and digital engagement, as well as organising peer learning events to share best practice with CCIN members.

Leveraging In-Kind Support & Local Partnerships

Alongside direct funding, the project will benefit from significant in-kind contributions that will enhance delivery, increase impact, and ensure sustainability:

- Support from Local Authority and Combined Authority teams (e.g. community cohesion, stronger safer communities, resilience, equalities, and youth participation teams) will provide staff time, networks, and strategic support, embedding the project into wider resilience and community development strategies.
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Panels – The Youth Combined Authority and Faith & Belief Panel will contribute expertise, networks, and platforms to amplify learning and share best practice.
- Interfaith Networks – Established faith networks in Wigan, Trafford, Bury, and Oldham will provide venues, advisory input, and community connections, ensuring local ownership and long-term engagement.

### 5. How does your project support the aims and objectives of the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network?

This project contributes to the future of sustainable solutions in public sector resilience planning by developing a new, cooperative model for engaging young people and faith communities in crisis response and misinformation resilience. By ensuring that local communities play an active role in shaping resilience strategies, this approach moves away from top-down emergency planning and instead creates long-term, community-led solutions that councils can embed within their local resilience frameworks.

The project will also enable radical innovation in policy and practice by testing new ways to embed faith and youth leadership in resilience planning, with learning that can be applied beyond Greater Manchester. The Faith, Cohesion & Resilience Toolkit will provide practical guidance and real-world case studies, ensuring CCIN members can adopt and adapt the model in their own areas. Through peer learning sessions, knowledge-sharing events, and digital resources, this project will support councils in exploring new approaches to resilience that strengthen community cohesion and engagement.

### 6. Which of the Government's Missions will your project support?

- Giving children the best start in life
- Something else

### 7. How will you share the learning from this project across the Cooperative Councils' Innovation Network?

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The learning from this project will be shared widely across CCIN and beyond, ensuring that councils, faith groups, and community organisations can apply the insights and approaches developed in meaningful ways. This will include:

- A Reflective Journal for Local Authorities – A practical tool for councils to track progress, document key reflections, and log changes in their approach to resilience and community cohesion. This will help local authorities embed learning into their own policies and practices over time.
- Publishing the Faith, Cohesion & Resilience Toolkit – A youth-led, faith-informed resource that councils can use and adapt to strengthen partnerships, tackle misinformation, and improve resilience planning.
- Creative Digital Content for Engagement – The project will produce videos, digital stories, and interactive case studies to make the learning accessible and impactful, helping councils and communities connect with the experiences and insights of young people and faith groups.
- Knowledge-Sharing Events & Peer Learning Sessions – Hosting an interactive session, bringing together CCIN members, partner councils, and community leaders to share successes, challenges, and practical insights.
- Case Studies & Reports – Producing real-world examples of how young people and faith communities have influenced resilience planning, offering a tested model for other councils.
- Sharing Beyond CCIN – Learning will be shared beyond the CCIN network, including through national resilience forums, faith-based networks, and community engagement platforms, ensuring wider impact and the opportunity for more councils to replicate the model.

**I agree that the final report will clearly show the Cooperative Difference that this project will deliver and follow the CCIN Brand Guidelines.**



Agree

See guidelines: <https://www.councils.coop/membership/ccin-brand-guidelines/>

### Notes



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