

OSCE High Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination ENGLISH only

Plenary session on anti-Semitism

Intervention by the Three Faiths Forum

Thank you Mr/Madam Moderator for giving us the chance to share our experiences.

We are from the Three Faiths Forum, a national interfaith organization based in the United Kingdom with offices in Jerusalem. We are dedicated to combating prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. Our experiences working with individuals and communities on the ground have shown us that the most successful interventions are ones that happen “where people already are”.

We deliver our programmes in offices, schools, universities and places of worship, taking programmes to places where people already feel comfortable. This is the model we advocate rather than taking people out of their usual environments to “learn tolerance”.

We know that the best way to change attitudes and dispel myths is to create opportunities for people from different traditions to meet each other, and to be able to have meaningful encounters.

We have created models that allow people the freedom and safety to ask the questions they usually hide, and have their questions answered by trained speakers and facilitators.

We know that combating anti-Semitism is a very difficult task. The best methods of changing attitudes is through

- meeting Jewish people,
- showing the diversity with the faith,
- seeing Jewish people interacting with those of other faiths and beliefs,
- talking about shared values and identities,
- and acting together to make positive change.

The numbers of people that need to be reached is vast, and we cannot do this work alone. There are an increasing number of organizations working in this area, and we know from experience that if people do not have the skills to facilitate well the programmes can do more harm than good.

We ask that governments support NGO activity in their countries and facilitate exchanges of best practice and experience. We feel that interfaith and intercultural activities are a vital part of changing negative and hate filled views of others