



Faith
Centre



Our Vision

Interfaith Leadership • Global Impact • Understanding Religion



Our Vision

Religion continues to be present in the public sphere today in ways that many had not anticipated, shaping lives, communities and nations in dramatic ways all around our world. Faith communities provide great resources of vision and social capital to address the problems of our age. But strands of religion also create their own problems, as extremism, intolerance and violations of religious freedom divide societies.

In a university that gathers people from every corner of the world and every imaginable faith tradition, the LSE Faith Centre models an accommodation of robust religious pluralism within our staff and student bodies, as well as setting a strong agenda for developing the religious literacy and interfaith understanding that is so urgently needed in the wider world.

As religious conflict increases in all corners of the world, we seek to build relationships and transform attitudes, in order to form leaders for a more peaceful global society.

Our work is now having a global impact as we extend our student programmes and global society engagement to the training of interfaith leaders around the world. We are building our alumni network to pioneer new initiatives in interreligious cohesion and understanding. All this ground-breaking interfaith work is resourced by our interdisciplinary research unit, Religion and Global Society, bringing critical thinking to bear on the interaction of religion and global affairs.

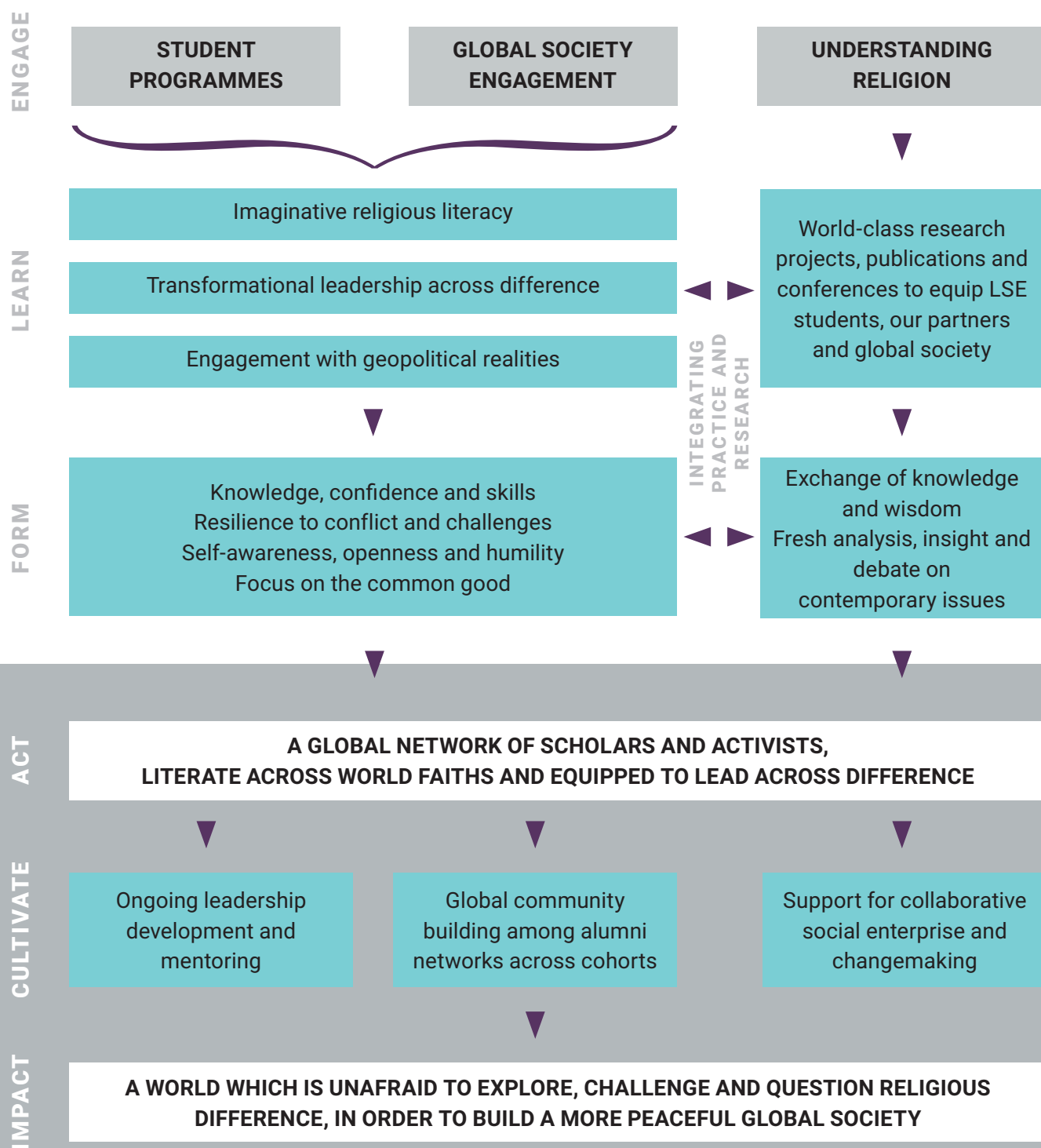
We would welcome the opportunity to work with individuals and organisations interested in sharing our commitment to developing religious understanding and interfaith leaders for the betterment of society and for maximum global impact.



The LSE Faith Centre is quite audacious. It reaches out into challenging subject matter which can be avoided by other interfaith initiatives.”

LSE alumnus

Theory of Change





Student programmes

LSE students come from 150 countries around the world. Many of them are from regions of escalating religious tensions, such as the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and Central Africa, among many others. Equipping them to be interfaith leaders is at the heart of our work. Our aim is to support students to explore, challenge and question religious differences. We are unafraid to delve into the difficult spaces within and between faiths in order to foster robust interfaith leaders. Based at a university with a global reach, the LSE Faith Centre does not merely want to manage imported conflicts on campus; we want to export peace and changemakers.

Our programmes are extra-curricular, meaning that we can engage with students – both undergraduate and postgraduate – across courses and departments. Many students feed their learning and experiences from the Faith Centre back into their course of study and research topics.

Beecken Faith and Leadership is our flagship programme combining creative religious literacy with transformational leadership development. The programme offers four interactive extracurricular modules on the themes of faith and the public sphere, religious imaginations, faith based climate action, and conflict transformation. **Interfaith Encounter Israel and Palestine** takes students from different religious backgrounds to the region on the only British university programme of its kind. Participants explore the significance of the Holy Land for the three Abrahamic faith traditions and are challenged and inspired by interfaith leaders and activists on the ground. We also support a growing interest among our students in the practice of **Scriptural Reasoning**, a form of dialogue that grapples with the thorny issues raised by sacred texts.

“

I gained a greater understanding of different faiths, but deeper than this an understanding of living with difference beyond tolerance.”

Programme participant



“

A rich and informative exposition of the importance of religion in global political life and the opportunities for the FCO to harness its influences.”

Foreign Office training participant



Global Society engagement

LSE educates for global impact. In addition to our own international student body, we are reaching out to form partnerships with others who can effect change in the global reduction of religious conflict.

Since 2017 we have trained diplomats, development workers and British Council officials from all around the world. We have worked with the UK **Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office**, the **British Council** and the **Commonwealth Secretariat** on the delivery of religious literacy training for senior officials, educators and young people in a number of countries of heightened religious tension.

Within the UK, we work in partnership with numerous organisations, from the **Church of England** to the **University of Cambridge**, contributing to a wider community of practice and knowledge sharing at the forefront of the interfaith sector. Internationally, we are developing our links in Egypt, Indonesia, Israel-Palestine, Jordan, and throughout Europe to support interfaith dialogue in these regions, increasingly strengthened by the involvement of our own graduates on the ground through a rapidly expanding **Alumni Network**.

We are an increasingly prominent voice in the global conversations on religious freedom and pluralism in forums such as the annual **Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom** and the **Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies**.





Understanding Religion

Interfaith activism is a growing sector. But our distinctiveness comes from being part of the leading specialist social sciences institution, bringing evidence-based expertise to bear on the challenges of today's world. While 20th Century social science was inclined to think that secularisation was an inevitable process, today we are seeing how the global picture is far more complex and the role of religion in our era is a determinative one that requires critical interdisciplinary analysis.

This thinking has been dramatically advanced by the creation of the **Religion and Global Society Research Unit**, a partnership with the Departments of International Relations, Anthropology, and Methodology. Our first report focused on the impact of COVID-19 on interfaith networks in London and our **Global Religious Pluralities** project explores the formation of plural spaces, interfaith relations and climate change, and the role of women of faith in peacebuilding. Alongside the research, public engagement is at the forefront, fostering new perspectives and interfaith encounters globally, as well as the training of 300 interfaith leaders.

Our **Religion and Global Society** blog promotes understanding of religion and its relevance in world affairs. It is both a hub for LSE research on faith-related topics and a platform for other academics, policymakers and practitioners to contribute to the debate. The blog receives over 150,000 hits annually. We also facilitate a **Religion Scholars Network** to bring together and support research students working on religion in different departments at LSE. As well as supporting interfaith activists, we want to develop the religion scholars of the future who will contribute cross-cutting research to the challenges of religious conflict.

“

The Faith Centre at LSE has been a major step in recognising the crucial importance of faith for the understanding of contemporary society. A genuine sign of hope.”

Rowan Williams,
Former Archbishop of Canterbury



Thought leaders and world leaders: our alumni

Since the LSE Faith Centre opened in 2014, hundreds of students have participated in our programmes from an incredible range of religious and cultural backgrounds. They are now working all around the world in different sectors to bring about positive change.

Some are working for governments, at the United Nations or for major NGOs, including those directly engaged in interreligious cohesion and conflict resolution. Others are working in multifaith environments to develop their careers in law, diplomacy, business or industry.

We have launched an **Alumni Network** to build relationships across this global community of interfaith leaders. We are seeking to support ongoing leadership development and make connections across the network and through external partnerships to foster understanding and reduce religion-related conflict

Alumni profiles

Jack Palmer-White
Anglican Communion
Permanent Representative
to the United Nations
MSc Religion in the
Contemporary World, 2015



Having the opportunity to participate in the life and work of the LSE Faith Centre during my studies was a hugely beneficial experience. It was a space to understand and contextualise much of what I studied and added a richness to my time at LSE.

Josephine Chitra
Communications Specialist
at the World Resources Institute
MSc Development
Management, 2016



As a Buddhist minority citizen of Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, my participation in the Interfaith Encounter programme challenged my conviction about what I knew about conflict. I learnt that holding our narratives dearly without trying to understand the grievances of the opposite side is not helpful in reducing hostility.

Joseph Good
Communications Director for the
UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace
and Reconciliation
MSc International Affairs, 2018



After graduating I started working as the Communications Director for the UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, Forest Whitaker. Getting involved with the Faith Centre was unquestionably a highlight of my time at the LSE. I thoroughly enjoyed the number of thought-provoking lectures put on there, the Israel & Palestine trip, and the overall camaraderie I experienced. I cannot recommend the Faith Centre highly enough!

Esohe Uwadiae
Senior Policy Advisor at the UK
Ministry of Justice
LLB Laws, 2017



The Faith Centre has allowed me to understand – and see first-hand – how subjects such as theology, politics and history intersect, and the impact of this intersection in the modern world. I've been able to make strong friendships with people I was unlikely to have ever met, across programmes, backgrounds and ages.



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POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

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