

ELREC Newsletter



Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council

Promoting Racial Equality and Fighting Racial Discrimination

ELREC is celebrating its 35th birthday this year and a big party will be held to mark the event. We will keep you informed about the party and hope you can join us.

Professor Braj P Sinha, Chair

Issue 7
March 2006

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Editorial

Welcome to the seventh issue of ELREC Community Newsletter which aims to bring our readers news and information about our work as well as the latest development in the race equality field.

Community Voices

ELREC recently attended the first Community Voices Network conference, in Glasgow, where we held an information stall to showcase our projects including our new initiatives Restalrig Community Relations Project and Leith Fact Finder which are funded through the Community Voices Programme.

The Network is supported by the Communities Scotland to enable community activists i.e. people who work for their communities on a voluntary capacity, to come together to discuss policy issues that they see are important to their communities.

The questions that were raised at the conference could apply to any setting be it geographical community or community

of interests. "How do you define a community?" "Who is in the community?" "What could be done to bring people together?" "What do we do with them when we bring them together?"

At the conference, there was a cartoonist who was capturing the sentiments from the delegates. One illustration particularly stood out for me, with the caption of "one person's solution is another person's problem". Given the diversity existing in Scotland and more power are being devolved to local areas, it will be a challenge to ensure equalities are being addressed consistently at local level.

National Standards for Community Engagement

The standards have been created by Communities Scotland to help developing and supporting better working relationships between communities and agencies delivering public services. Minister of Communities, Malcolm Chisholm, wrote that "only by genuinely engaging with local people

can we develop services which meet local needs and aspirations". Public agencies are expected to apply these standards in all forms of community engagement, most noticeably Community Planning.

The standards cover 10 areas: involvement, support, planning, methods, working together, sharing information, working with others, improvement, feedback and monitoring and evaluation. It is a useful tool to measure the effort and genuineness of the public agency in trying to engage with your community.

A full pack of the standards can be obtained from Community Engagement Team at Communities Scotland.

New Recruits

We are delighted that Maurice Kazoka and Anjam Sheikh will be joining ELREC staff team as Sessional Outreach / Street Workers. They will be supporting the delivery of our Restalrig Community Relations Project and Leith Fact Finder.

By Nina Giles
Director

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Complainant Aid

RACIAL HARASSMENT can happen any where e.g. home, school, work, or on the street. It can occur in several forms such as:

- verbal or written racial abuse including telephone calls and printed material or literature
- name calling
- physical assault including spitting
- damage to property
- complaints about noise, smells and uncleanness
- victimisation and bullying of children by neighbours or other children
- false malicious complaints
- arson or attempted arson

What is a racist incident

"A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person."

The Police will use this definition to identify a racist incident.

The role of the Police

The Police are responsible for investigating criminal offences and ensuring that persons are prosecuted. Because many incidents of racial harassment will amount to criminal offences, the Police have powers to take action. The Police investigate the crime, collect evidence and may arrest suspect(s). If there is sufficient evidence, information is then passed to the Procurator Fiscal who decides whether to institute criminal proceedings or not. The Procurator Fiscal is required to

take the racial element into account when arriving at this decision.

Apart from law enforcement, the Police have a role to play in protecting, helping and reassuring the community. They can still respond to racist incidents that are not criminal offences and should report, record and investigate with the same commitment.

Why bother to report?

You should always report racist incidents. If you don't, the perpetrator may go unpunished and it is likely that they will harass you or other persons again. The Police now operate a positive arrest policy for racist crimes. This means that where there is sufficient evidence of an offence, with a power of arrest, the suspect(s) will be arrested. There will be times when the Police cannot take action in response to a report. However by making a report a record will be created which may be useful in cases where assailants defend themselves by making counter-allegations.

To report a racist incident:

In the case of an emergency dial 999. Otherwise telephone your nearest Police Station and tell them you want to report a racist crime or racist incident. You will need to give them as much information as possible to help them identify the perpetrator. If you do not feel comfortable to report the incident to the Police directly, ELREC can report it for you.

Race Discrimination and Harassment Practitioner's Forum

ELREC has recently started a forum which is aimed at increasing expertise in the field of race discrimination and harassment casework. The second meeting of the forum was held on 23rd February 2006. We had a well delivered talk on the "Burden of Proof" which was facilitated by Vic Craig, Employment Tribunal Chair and lecturer in Employment Law at Heriot Watt University. Vic explained the reasons why so few race cases are brought to Employment Tribunal. He assured us that although race cases are likely to be more complex they can still be winnable. Competence in handling such cases can only be built up over a period of time.

There were 8 persons in attendance and the feedback received was extremely positive. Every one said that they learned a lot from the session.

If you are an advisor and/or you wish to learn more about race casework, we would encourage you to join the forum. Please contact us for details of the next meeting.

Coming up in the Next Issue...

...Just thinking about taking a race discrimination case to an Employment Tribunal can be a very daunting thought for claimants. Susan Chen will share her experience of the Tribunal system from the perspective of a claimant in next quarter's newsletter.

*By Christine Maitland-Francis
Complainant Aid Officer*

Community Development

.....Check out the inserts for an update on the upcoming exciting community development projects starting at ELREC.....

Identity? Self-Identity? Ethnic Identity?

Developing a sense of self is an essential part of every individual. This identity of a person develops throughout their life as ones personality shapes and develops. I'm sure I can easily say that at least every black and minority ethnic (BME) person has had to struggle with some part of their identity at some point in their life. How does a BME person get a balance between their own values and beliefs and also their cultural tradition and heritage? As well as to some extent fit into societal norms and expectations? Conform to

social stereotypes? There is almost an unspoken and understated pressure that people from minority backgrounds have to face and that's the issue of multiple identities (no not multiple personalities). The one where you want to fit in with the rest of the world, the one where you want to keep your parents and your family happy, the one where you want to practice your religion or faith safely without the fear that you're preaching terrorism, the one where you can wear what you want and say what you want etc..... On top of this, trying to keep your mental health and well being intact when your identity is affected by prejudice and racism.

Here's one account of being BME and living in Edinburgh.....

"Having an identity means you identify with some one or some group that have similar interests and characteristics as you. I was born and bred in Glasgow in a predominantly white middle-class area. I always considered myself as Glaswegian because I had a strange Glaswegian accent. I shared the familiar Glaswegian sense of humour and friendliness that is well known the world over, therefore I identified with the people around me.

As a child I saw the world through my Glaswegian eyes, of course, there were times when I was reminded about my brown skin, usually in a derogatory manner, which often came as a shock to me because my identity was the same as the others. However, I managed to be accepted without realising that I was working harder than others at forming friendships and establishing an identity.

As I grew older I tried to establish my education. I knew I was Scottish, and having been brought up mainly in the company of British people and due to the lack of black

role models at that time, I identified more with the Scottish culture than the Asian culture. I found it easy to just accept that I was Scottish. However, I started realising that my identity was now being challenged more frequently by racist attitudes. As a child, life seemed easy, you played with your friends and you all shared common interests and goals. You had your occasional racist name calling but you soon developed skills to cope with that. As a teenager you had similar experiences, however, life became harder as people made me question my identity, by reminding me that I was different, and not the same. Then came adulthood, now if I had been warned about this then I would have prepared myself for the battle that lay ahead. Here the name calling was not the issue, as I had already developed skills to deal with this through childhood. It was the hidden agenda that was difficult to accept. I hadn't realised that, through the eyes of others, I was seen as different. I hadn't realised that, I would have to work harder than my white peers. I hadn't realised that, I would be overlooked for promotion whilst I watched my white peers, quite often less adept than myself, rise through the ranks. I hadn't realised that my career would become a dead-end career, but for my white peers it would remain open ended. I hadn't realised that I would become despondent with my career whereas most of my white peers remained excited about theirs. I hadn't realised that my Scottishness would be stripped away from me.

Now I see the world through the eyes of my children who are proud to be Scottish. I worry about the battles and challenges that lie ahead for them. I hope by the time they reach adulthood attitudes will have improved."

Anonymous, 2006

*By Shasta Hanif
Community Development Officer*

One Day Race Discrimination Training Course

ELREC is offering an introductory level one day training course on **Tuesday 4 April 2006** at ELREC's offices. The course is aimed at advisers and information officers and will be based on a combination of direct tutoring, group work and case studies. For more information and to book a place please contact Christine Maitland-Francis on 0131 556 0441 or email cmaitland-francis@elrec.org.uk. Spaces are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. Cost: £20 per delegate

Youth Services

Diversity-Identity-Youth (D.I.Y), an event for young people aged 11-25, is offered at the Edinburgh City Chambers on Thursday, 6 April 2006 from 10.30 am - 3.45 pm. The day's activities have been designed by young people and aim to celebrate diversity, challenge stereotypes and give young people a voice. Participants will be able to choose among various workshops including hip hop dance, film making, cultural heritage, and diversity and race. There will be presentations by young people, and participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions of decision makers during a panel session. The event is free and lunch will be provided. The day has been organised as part of Youngedinburgh, the youth services strategy for the City of Edinburgh Council and its community planning partners. Places are limited, so young people and youth groups should contact Erika Morton to inquire about spaces. (Erika Morton, Youth Services Officer, City of Edinburgh Council, Erika.Morton@edinburgh.gov.uk or 0131 222 4820).

Reaching Out Programme

The Practitioners Exchange Network Forum has officially been given the title of **MEX4Y**—Minority Ethnic Exchange for Youth.

The next meeting is taking place on 8th March at Wellington Court from 12pm to 2pm.

We will be looking at the design and content of the website for young people and practitioners.

Diversity and BME Youth Issues WORKSHOPS

I am involved in delivering workshop sessions at the EMEDI (Edinburgh Ethnic Minority Drugs Initiative) Conference on the 7th March. This Conference will present the findings of a consultation in drug and alcohol use amongst BME communities across Edinburgh.

I will be delivering and facilitating two workshop sessions. The first workshop will be looking at the application of the Race Relations Act, Diversity and BME youth Issues and the second workshop will be addressing barriers and issues affecting BME communities and people who participate in substance use.

Personally I enjoy this aspect of my role. Developing and delivering training workshops is always challenging and fun.

DIY Conference 6th April 06 City Chambers

Each workshop session brings new challenges and fresh scope for innovation.

As this conference is the first in Edinburgh for BME young people, without being exclusive, the workshop I deliver will be young person centred however, still address discrimination and diversity.

Largely, I am enlightened by working with young people as I believe they inform best practice for any youth development work.

I think its is important to build and encourage youth participation in the main areas of service provision, particularly where youth services are concerned.

*By Aisha Sohail
Youth Development Officer*

Office space is available for renting at ELREC. Monthly rental £300. For more information, please contact Elizabeth, Administrator.





Lothian and Borders Police

Family Protection Seminars

Assistant Chief Constable Tom Halpin has announced the launch of a new initiative to reach out to the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary sector who are working with women and families. The intention is to provide the best support and information surrounding the area of Family Protection. Lothian and Borders police have specialist 'Family Protection Units' who deal with the most challenging aspects of policing such as child protection, domestic abuse, missing persons and children committing crime. The next step will be to bring BME Women's groups and women police officers together to discuss what information would help these groups support their communities. Once it's clear what the communities want the Police are committed to delivering this to the many groups who support the communities throughout the Lothian and Borders area.

Fire raising attack on Asian family

Many readers will have been concerned by the articles in the Evening News earlier this month regarding vandalisms being committed against Asian families in Edinburgh. The paper spoke of tensions within the community and community leaders have called for any witnesses to come forward and assist the police.

Lothian and Borders police are committed to supporting our Muslim community and to bring those responsible to justice. I have established a dedicated squad of detectives who are now working on this enquiry. The facts are that there have been a number of vandalisms throughout the city. These have culminated in a car being set fire to in Redford Walk, Edinburgh in the early hours of Tuesday 14th February 2006. We have now traced the Silver Peugeot motorcar that we were initially seeking and this has been eliminated from the enquiry. Another car was then destroyed by fire on the evening of Sunday 26th February in Commercial Street, Leith. We believe that these crimes may be linked and I am confident that with the help of the community we can catch those responsible and put an end to this.

We are anxious to speak to anyone who has any information in relation to these crimes or the previous incidents and now urge them to call on **0131 442 2626** or via a dedicated email address RedfordFireEnquiry@lbp.pnn.police.uk, where the information can be treated in complete confidence if required.

Alternatively they can call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** where information may be given anonymously and there may be a financial reward.

Superintendent Colin Campbell



Women. Men. Different. Equal.
Equal Opportunities Commission Scotland

Moving on Up? Minority Ethnic Women at Work

Do these quotes sound familiar?

“My white counterpart is offered many opportunities. Despite being there for less time and with less qualifications”

Black Caribbean woman, NHS trust

“It is too easy to discriminate against us and too difficult to fight alone when it happens”

Indian woman, not in paid work

“I am only 26 but have many things going against me: female, married, Asian, traditional child-bearing age”

Pakistani Muslim woman, IT sector

“I made the conscious decision to dress as Western as I could. I understand that we live in multi cultural society but subconsciously assumptions are made”

Indian woman, local authority

Research shows that minority ethnic women experience discrimination in employment on the grounds of their race and gender. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) believe that this discrimination is unacceptable and in October 2005 launched an investigation called '**Moving on Up?**'

Moving on Up? aims to commission new research and gather evidence from minority ethnic women themselves, from employers, trade unions, the public and voluntary sectors. Nina Giles, Director of ELREC is a member of the External Advisory Board for the investigation. The Advisory Board will support and assist the EOC in developing policy initiatives and practices to improve employment opportunities for ethnic minority women and challenge discriminatory practices in the workplace.

The EOC will report on its findings in January 2007, it will inform the Scottish Parliament and the British Government of the action needed to fulfil the commitment from Prime Minister Tony Blair that by 2013 ethnic minority groups will no longer face disproportionate barriers to accessing and realising opportunities for achievement in the labour market.

How you can get involved?

The EOC is keen to hear from minority ethnic women themselves. If you would like to you're your story email the EOC on bme@eoc.org.uk or go to the EOC web site and fill out a questionnaire the link is <http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=17691>

If you wish to comment or share information from a trade union, voluntary organisation, professional network, business or public body, or would like to be added to the mailing list for this investigation, please email Helen.miller@eoc.org.uk or call 0141 245 1821.

Back Page Information



ADVERTISING

We welcome organisations to advertise in ELREC Community Newsletter, for example:

- Promoting services
- Disseminating flyers
- Advertising
- Vacancies
- Consultations
- General marketing

This service is available for a contribution of £100.

To find out more, please contact Nina Giles on 0131 556 0441 or admin@elrec.org.uk

The newsletter is available on a quarterly basis.

CONFERENCE ROOM BOOKINGS

You can book our 20-seat meeting room on an hourly basis for £10 per hour

Tea & Coffee £1 per head

Please contact the office for any bookings

DONATIONS

ELREC is a registered charity in Scotland. We welcome donations however small, from individuals or organisations to help us to pursue our goal - *racial equality and justice for all.*

If you would like to share any interesting fundraising ideas with us, please give the office a ring.

SERVICES

Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council (ELREC), founded in 1971, is a voluntary body and charitable company made up of individual members and representatives from a wide range of organisations. ELREC has a remit to work across the areas of City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils.

We aim to:

- Work towards the elimination of racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups
- Promote and organise co-operation of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations

We pursue our aims through:

- Individual Complainant Aid Service
- Education and Training
- Campaigning
- Publications
- Consultancy and Signposting

To contact us:

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