

ELREC Newsletter



Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council

Promoting Racial Equality and Fighting Racial Discrimination

The ethnic minorities face inequality in education, employment, health and housing. In recent years there has also been an increase in racial attacks.

Research by Wendy Davies and A. Ohri shows:

- 43% of minority of Pakistani origin have no qualifications.
- 15% of BME community is unemployed compared to 7% of indigenous population.
- 40% of minority of Pakistani origin over the age of 60 describe themselves as being of ill-health compared to 22% of indigenous population.
- 30% of BME community suffer

overcrowding in housing compared to 7% of indigenous population.

For the last 35 years ELREC has been promoting successfully racial equality and fighting against all forms of racism. There is a lot to be done. Stand up if you believe in what ELREC is doing -- Join ELREC.

Together we will be stronger, better able to challenge and eliminate all forms of inequality and also work for a just and integrated society in Scotland.

This will be our last Newsletter for this year. I would like to wish all our readers and members a merry Xmas and a happy New Year.

Professor Braj P Sinha, Chair

**Issue 10
December 2006**

ELREC MANAGEMENT BOARD

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Editorial

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

ELREC AGM

We were delighted with another successful Annual General Meeting held on 16 November 2006 at the Scottish Parliament, a well attended event with 80 individuals made up of ELREC members, partners and well wishers. The AGM was hosted by Mary Mulligan MSP who welcomed the audience and reminded us all the importance of participating in the Scottish democracy and making use of the parliament.



We were also joined by our keynote speaker, Aziz Sheikh, Professor of Primary Care

Research & Development of University of Edinburgh. His presentation titled "Improving the Health of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, Progress So Far and Challenges Ahead" gave the audience plenty of food for thought. It highlighted the ethnic penalty suffered by minority ethnic groups, which was further exacerbated when the research examined the results by religion.

At the event, our Chair Professor Braj Sinha launched our special edition of Annual Report commemorating our 35 years of achievements.

The changes to ELREC's Memorandum and Articles of Association meant that we only needed to elect Board members. We were pleased to be rejoined by Shahnoor Chowdhury, Shami Khan, Susanne Munday and Indleeb Walayat.

The decision for Office Bearers were decided at the Board meeting held on 21 November 2006. The full list is as detailed on this page.

CRE Race Convention 2006

The Commission for Racial Equality held a two-day convention, in London, on 27th and 28th November 2006, to celebrate 30 years of the Race Relations Act.

It was a glitzy event with more than 160 high profile and celebrity speakers which included journalists, politicians, civil servants, international diplomats, TV presenters and people from other professions. The number of participants was about 1000.

It was a great opportunity to represent ELREC at such a significant event. However, one cannot help but feel disappointed by the lack of ethnicity balance both amongst the speakers and audience. The gathering also highlighted the lack of representation from certain communities within UK politics and media. Racial equality is an important feature of good race relations and bodies such as the CRE should ensure that the institutional racism that prevents equitable representation in the community should be removed.

By Nina Giles

Inside this issue:

<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>Complainant Aid Development</i>	2
<i>Community Development</i>	3
<i>Youth Zone</i>	4
<i>Lothian & Borders Police</i>	6

Complainant Aid

Introducing Rita Kochar

(Rita is covering for Christine Maitland-Francis during her maternity leave.)

I cannot believe that I only started working for ELREC around two months ago. I feel that I have been there for a lot longer - in a good way of course! The staff are great and I am always busy which makes the time go faster. What I find most interesting about my job, is the varied caseload that I have, ranging from employment issues to harassment. Recently, I have had a few cases relating to discrimination against a person based on their religion and realised that there is very little information in this area.

Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations

The regulations came into force in December 2003. This is still a relatively new area and very little case law on it exists. It is now unlawful to discriminate against workers because of their religion or similar belief. That is to treat them less favourably than others because of their religion or belief. Religion or belief includes any religion or religious belief, however it does not include a similar political belief unless it is similar to a religious belief. The Employment Tribunals will have to decide which circumstances are covered by these regulations.

What is Religion?

Employment Tribunals and courts will take certain factors into consideration when deciding what constitutes a religion, such as:

- Collective worship
- Clear belief systems

Recent cases which have brought these Regulations to the media attention include the well known case between **Mrs A Azmi v Kirklees Metropolitan Council 2006** in which Mrs Azmi brought proceeding alleging direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of her

Muslim religion against the school where she worked.

Less well known religions such as Humanism and Paganism are also covered under these Regulations. Interestingly, the Regulations will also cover those who have no religious beliefs or similar beliefs.

Who is Covered by these Regulations?

The Regulations apply to all workers, including those

- who are already directly employed with the organisation
- contract workers
- agency workers

Employers are also responsible for the behaviour of their own staff towards others employed by someone else but working on their premises.

Employers now have to consider whether their rules and procedures indirectly discriminate against particular religions or beliefs. It is a good idea for staff to check that their organization has an Equal Opportunities Policy which includes Religion and Belief.

What to do if you think you have suffered Discrimination or Harassment?

- Speak to the person harassing you informing them that their behaviour is unacceptable, failing this
- Talk to your manager or Trade Union Representative, failing this
- Use your organizations grievance procedure which provides you with a right to appeal,
- If all this fails, you have the right to bring your case to an Employment Tribunal under the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.

ELREC is able to provide help and assistance in this area.

Race Discrimination and Harassment Practitioner's Forum

Due to the fact that the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003 are still relatively new and there are some areas which still require clarification. ELREC are holding the next Practitioners Forum in this area.

Mr William Frain Bell, who is both an advocate in Scotland and a Barrister in England has agreed to provide us with his expertise on the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. Mr Bell promises to provide us with valuable information and share his knowledge and expertise in this area.

Mr Bell will further examine case law relating to this topic and then proposes to answer questions and provide a Forum for discussion.

Anyone who already deals with racial discrimination and harassment casework would benefit from this session.

If you wish to attend, (please note that the Forum is limited to persons who have some casework experience) please contact Rita Kochar, Complainant Aid Officer.

The next meeting of the Forum is on 15 December 2006 from 10.00 am to 12.00 a.m.

One Day Training Event - Race Relations Act

ELREC will be providing a full one day training course on Tuesday 6 February 2007 at our offices at 14 Forth Street, Edinburgh. The course is designed for advisors handling racial discrimination and harassment casework and will be based on a combination of direct tutoring, group work and case studies. For more information and to reserve a place, please contact Rita Kochar on 0131 556 0441 or email rkochar@elrec.org.uk. Please note that spaces are limited and reservations necessary.

Cost: £30 per delegate

*By Rita Kochar
Complainant Aid Officer*

Community Development

Maurice, Anjam and Lisa our outreach workers have been out and about over the past 8 months in Leith, Restalrig and Lochend areas interviewing and collecting data from BME communities for the Restalrig community relations project and the Leith fact finder. This phase of the project has now been completed.

So far there have been 139 BME individuals who have completed the questionnaires in Leith and 89 who have completed the questionnaire in Restalrig/Lochend.

We are currently in the next phase of the project which is carrying out focus groups in relation to the main issues identified within the data collected. We have recently organised a free business information session on 'how to start your own business'. This event was only set up due to people from the community expressing an interest within this area and as a direct result of the questionnaires. It was very successful event with 12 people attending.

INFORMATION EVENING: How to start your own business



Some of the comments of the night were:

"Great...it was very helpful. I now know how to at least start my ambition"

"Very informative. I didn't know how to start a business plan before and now at least I know where to go for more information."

POLICE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS



The findings have also shown that under reporting of racist incidents is still a major issue and people are still not reporting for various reasons. Within some communities there is still a mistrust within the police and their services, while for some people the service has been excellent. As with all service provision we need to focus on areas of improvement and these findings have highlighted a definite need to improve community relations between the police and minority ethnic communities. Until this is successfully achieved then racial hate crimes and incidents will continue to be unreported and unresolved.

Some of the comments to start improving community relations between the police and bme communities were:

"Police need to mix more with communities to build trust"

"They are trying but they need to train their officers in mandatory cultural awareness"

"Engage more with people especially young people"

"Listen to the public more"

To take this forward a focus group was set up with bme communities and Superintendent Ramzan Mohayuddin. This was a well attended event with 16 people taking part. The group was representative of different ethnicities and included young people. Many different viewpoints were discussed in why people were not reporting all racist incidents and possible ways forward. Some of the reasons why people weren't reporting all incidents and that were also echoed in the research findings were:

"We never know the outcome of our report...what happens next?? "

"It takes so long to report an incident and then nothing comes of it"

"It makes us angry that we still have to put up with racism...sometimes we just want to ignore it but others times you are so fed up and angry that it's hard to ignore it and you end up taking matters into your own hands..."

Way forward action points:

- Continued contact with minority ethnic communities from the Police making sure this is representative of all communities, ages and backgrounds.
- Possible bi-monthly drop in surgery with Police and BME communities in a similar format as this focus group.
- Session on crime prevention advice from police to communities especially young people.
- Highlighting successful case studies from reporting to prosecution stages.

*By Shasta Hanif
Community Development Officer*



Upcoming Events In The Youth Zone

- DJ workshop with DJ Vip
- Rotating activities days including careers advice, chat from the President of the Scottish Youth Parliament, graffiti art project.
- Video editing
- More capoeira

**Youth ZoneThe
place to Be and Be
Seen!!.....**

Thursdays 3 to 7 pm

Fridays 1 to 5 pm

Drop in and see....

It has been a busy time in the Youth Zone since the last edition of the newsletter. On 18th September we all went on a trip to Blackpool Pleasure beach, after many requests by the young people. After a shaky start in which the coach broke down before it had even left (much to the annoyance of the young people who had dragged themselves out of bed at 6am only to find that we didn't leave until 7.30!) it was a really good day and everyone had a lot of fun. It wasn't bank holiday in England so we had almost unrivalled access to all the rides and it didn't rain until the very last minute, which is pretty impressive for somewhere so near to Manchester!!!! Some new young people came along too, so we were able to impress them with our exciting programme, which we have endeavoured to continue since.

Youth Zone activities this quarter have included bowling, a Halloween



Party featuring a human beat-boxer (and some of our own human beat boxers and rappers)

and film-nights in which we have watched independent films from different countries, such as 'Tsotsi'. We went to watch the Christmas lights being turned on and all the surrounding events in Princes Street Gardens, rushing in out of the cold for hot chocolate and marshmallows. We had an amazing Capoeira workshop from Senzala Scotland, which 2 of the young people got

very involved in and liked so much that we are going to do it again but hopefully next time in a proper studio. We have also had an awareness raising session about drugs and alcohol. Still to come this year is a trip to the German market, with outdoor ice-skating for those that want to go, we are going to see Theatre Workshop's production of Arabian nights and have an end of year party on the very last Friday.



Two of the young people went along to their first Edinburgh Youth Council meeting in October and are now permanent members, representing ELREC and all BME issues on the executive board. As usual we have been doing one to one work; several of the young people have been writing personal statements and some are looking for work and the sessional workers and I are keen to help them in any way we can. Recently a trainee lawyer came in to chat to one young person who is thinking of pursuing a career in that field and a careers advisor has done work with some of the others. 4 young people went along to Shasta's focus group with the police, providing an impressive contribution to the discussion. Although they are slightly hesitant as to how much difference it will make they were quite taken with Superintendent Mohayuddin and felt that if anyone could do it he could!

We are working hard to publicise the Youth Zone and make sure that everyone who needs our services

has access to them. Early in September we printed hundreds of posters and then sent them out to all secondary schools, community centres, doctors' surgeries and libraries in Edinburgh. On 29th September Lisa and I went to the Telford College Fresher's Fayre, giving out goodie bags and flyers. The young people themselves made a radio sound-bite about the Youth Zone, which was broadcast throughout Thursday 23rd November on Forth fm, you might have heard it?

However promoting our work and attracting new members is still one of the biggest challenges for the Youth Zone. We still need to do much more outreach work in the places where young people hang out and constantly be alert to what young people need and want from the Youth Zone.

Both Youth Zone users and workers took part in the Scottish Executive National Youth Consultation strategy which promises to inform the future of youth work. We all felt that it was very important for BME issues to be represented at this strategic level.

Nina and I completed the 6 months evaluation report for the Race Integration Fund and have luckily (considering it was my first one) secured the next quarters funding, so that is good news for the Youth Zone.

**By Fay Benson
Youth Development Officer**

WORKING WITHIN SCHOOLS

In the last few weeks I have been working in schools delivering anti-racist workshops. I worked with S2 in Gracemount High School as part of their anti-bullying week. We worked on the "Discrimination Tree"; which aimed to reveal all the different forms of racism, discuss how this would make people feel and uncover the root causes of such behavior. Although obviously a serious subject, this was great fun and very successful, most children circled the smiley face on their evaluation forms, said they did now feel more confident about standing up to any racism they encountered and asked me to come back again, but to include more drama! It can only be a good thing, though, if they are enthusiastic about engaging with such important issues.

The students at Wester Hailles Education Centre were a little more challenging, mainly because they are personally affected by a range of social issues, which makes everything more complex I guess. Nonetheless, I think there was some good debate and it would be useful to go back to explore things further with them. Hopefully I will be able to go into other schools to do similar sessions in the future.

Anti-Racism Talent Show

On Thursday 7th December we held the ELREC Anti-Racist Primary School's Talent Show in conjunction with Show Racism the Red Card. It was great. Taking place in St Mary's Leith RC Primary School, it also starred pupils from Towerbank and St Francis RC Primary School. Altogether there were thirteen acts, ranging from poetry to a piano duet, to freeze frame drama. The children were all very creative and the standard of each performance was really high, but I was most impressed by how hard hitting their ideas were and the level of understanding the children had about racism and its devastating affect on people. A fantastic Grand Finale was presented by St Mary's Leith School Choir, who were then asked to perform at the switching on of the Leith Christmas lights!

We had an esteemed panel of judges: Ruth Hutton from Communities Scotland, Chief Inspector Keith Chamberlain, Councillor Billy Fitzpatrick and our very own Chairman Professor Braj Sinha. There were medals, goody bags, certificates and a SRTRC t-shirt for all the contenders, but the three trophies went to

"Dancing away Racism"- Mahnoor, Samantha and Eilidh, P7b St Mary's Leith for
BEST MESSAGE



"The All Star Rappers"- Kimberly, Jordan S, Jordan M, Paul, Declan H, Declan A, Courtney, Cameron, Jane and Connor, P7 St Francis for
BEST USE OF IMAGINATION



"Just a Corner Shop"- Chris, Rachael, Enzo and Sarah, P7a St Mary's Leith for
BEST OVERALL PERFORMANCE



Thank you to everybody who was involved in making such a wonderful event, especially to all the children for working so hard, it will definitely become an annual fixture.

MEX4Y - Minority Ethnic Exchange for Youth

The MEX4Y Youth Practitioners Forum meeting was held on Tuesday 10th October. Six people attended and the meeting focused on making a pocket sized map to show all the facilities BME young people can access. Not only would this be an interim measure until the website is up and running but it would cover the "Digital Divide". Although I was firm about deadlines for this project there has been little movement from other partners so far!

The next meeting is on Tues 30th January 2007 and will include a presentation from 'Building Strengths within Project'.

If you would like further information relating to the Youth Zone please contact ELREC office.





Lothian and Borders Police

Edinburgh MELA Festival Survey 2006

The force carried out a survey of the black and minority ethnic patrons of the 2004 and 2005 Mela festivals. Our ongoing commitment to survey this unique multi-cultural event allows us to monitor the perception of these specific BME communities and demonstrates our determination to continually improve our service delivery.

In 2006 we again commissioned TL Dempster Marketing Consultants to carry out this work. A total of 358 respondents took part compared to 445 in 2005, a decrease largely attributed to the terrible weather of the event's first day. However this still gives a 95% statistical confidence that the responses represent the views of the majority attending the festival. The results were again extremely positive showing improvements in the trust felt by the communities and in the satisfaction perceived when they had accessed policing services.

Levels of satisfaction:

Those reporting a crime	60% satisfied
Those reporting a disturbance	91% satisfied
Those seeking advice	100% satisfied
Confident they would be treated properly	85%
Consider a career in the Police	58% - an increase of 15% over 2005
Who to report racism to	85% prefer the Police

This survey gives the force a unique opportunity to gauge the issues for our black and minority communities and this year's results provide a reassurance that our commitment to diversity and equality are paying dividends within our communities.

Chief Inspector George Denholm
Diversity Unit

As Vice-Chair, I am delighted that a prestigious firm like Hamilton Burns and Company Solicitors is working with us to provide free advice to people who need it. We would welcome other organisations to work with ELREC on similar initiatives.

Foysoil Choudhury MBE, Vice-Chair

Hamilton Burns and Company Solicitors have been operating a Legal Surgery every Wednesday from 2 to 4pm at the offices of ELREC, 14 Forth Street, Edinburgh, for some time now. We are pleased to offer free legal advice at initial interview, in respect of matters concerning Immigration and Asylum, Matrimonial work to include Divorce, Child Cases and Adoption, Residential and Commercial Conveyancing and Leases, Criminal Defence and all aspects of Civil work.

The surgery has been hugely popular and has provided immediate access to legal advice for members of the

public in respect of legal issues they are facing. We have Punjabi and Urdu speakers who can help in interpreting. There is no need to make a prior appointment and anyone seeking advice may simply attend at ELREC between the hours of 2 and 4 pm any Wednesday.

As a Firm, Hamilton Burns have been established in legal practice since 1970. We are based in Glasgow at Carlton Buildings, 63 Carlton Place, Glasgow G5 9TW. Telephone 0141 429 0600 and Fax 0141 429 0650. Email enquiries@hamiltonburns.com

Young Muslim's working with the Police, Council and Partners

A group of young Muslim men from the Edinburgh area have been in discussion with the Police in Edinburgh on how to improve relations and look at ways they might work together to help promote better understanding. Meetings have taken place where the views of both the young men and front line officers have been exchanged and debates around police policy and service to the community.

A visit to Police HQ has taken place where some of the specialist units have been visited by the group with an opportunity to see the broader range of activities undertaken by the police. It is hoped that members of the group will participate in the 3 day diversity training that all police staff take part in. Both ELREC and the City Council are involved in this work and discussions are ongoing to examine how the group, working with these partners, might be able to contribute further to the equalities agenda in the city.

Inspector Moore McCartney
Diversity Unit

Freedom Colour Prejudice

"My colour is me..." says the poet proudly (Edinburgh and Lothians Racial Equality Council's 35th Anniversary magazine, 2006). Here he tells us that skin colour is a primary part of his freedom: to write it out of documents is a gross insult to natural identity.

The year 2007 will be the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British Slave Trade. School children to Governments of the United Kingdom are working to commemorate the ending of the purchase/capture and transport of millions of black people, from Africa to areas of the New World such as the West Indies and America.

This short piece is not about the abolition of the slave trade or slavery; it is about the current attempt to remove the word "black" from official documents such as census forms. As a descendant of black Jamaican slaves, I find this intention offensive to my history. I cannot speak for all the descendants of New World slaves but my experience indicates that we honour the skin colour of our slave ancestors and do not want the right to describe ourselves as black taken away by people who do not understand, share or respect our historical experience.

That the eloquence to the biblical phrase, "black but comely", was reworked by racists to create the perception of inferiority and justify enslavement, was a terrible evil. The work of DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Senghor, Biko and others returned the skin colour black to its proper place as a dignified description of a large section of the human race. Out of this work came the renaissance concept of "Black Consciousness"...a concept that has made it possible for a black skin colour to be worn with dignity by anyone that carries the genes of black people. In this regard, black consciousness is about dignity in self, irrespective of the views of others. That anyone would wish to deny the significance of this re-gained dignity of black people reflects ignorance at its worst.

Any attempt to remove the rights of people to describe them as they see themselves is an unacceptable denial of human rights. It is well know that the first step in taking away the freedom of any group of people is the removal of their identity. This pointless attempt to deny me the right to call myself black is an assault on my freedom. I will not accept this. To propose that I should call myself *African Jamaican/Caribbean*, instead of *Black Jamaican/Caribbean* is as ridiculous as, one or two Europeans forcing white Americans, whose white ancestors have lived in American for centuries, to call themselves *European Americans*. Although I respect African people, I will not be a victim of such bad reasoning. In this I expect protection from my government.

Logically, the removal of the colour black, from forms, should also result in the removal of the colour white. Both these changes will require the consent of both races as is clear from the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. This has not yet been done but must be done to protect the freedom of both races. In addition, the removal of skin colour will make it impossible to monitor racism that is linked to colour. Also, there will be the dangerous deception that, in time, the present significant level of racism towards black people will disappear *statistically* if the black population is subsumed into a large minority ethnic population. For the sake of peace and progress in our society this must not be allowed to happen.

To try and explain away the word "Black" as an all embracing political concept of "non-whiteness", is unwise, unsound, wrong and disrespectful to black people, descended from a slavery that has been described as "the most profitable evil the world has known". I value the dignity my colour gives me. Racial abuse using the word black will increase if the dignity of the word is slipped under the political carpet. This will cause even greater discomfort to those who do not want to be called black. Such perverse outcomes usually emerge from decisions based on lopsided lobbying and scaremongering rather than on sound scientific evidence.

Choice is an important part of what we call freedom. That some people do not want to tick skin colour on forms should not deny me the human right of registering my identity as a black person.

Geoff Palmer DSc
(Professor Emeritus)

Forth coming Events

SPEAKING OUT AGAINST RACISM – SPEAKERS GET TOGETHER

We are organizing a get together for all the lay speakers that have taken part in the Lothian and Borders diversity training as a speaker sharing your own experiences of racism. Come along on 24 January, 6-8 at ELREC offices for some light refreshments and a chance to meet others. If anyone else is interested in becoming a lay speaker at any further sessions then come along and find out more!!!

****** Hope everyone has a great end of year break!**

Happy holidays, Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

May everyone be blessed with good health and happiness in 2007****

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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OUR TEAM

Nina Giles - Director

Rita Kochar - Complainant Aid Officer

Shasta Hanif - Community Development Officer

Fay Benson - Youth Development Officer

Tommy George - Youth Zone Support Worker

Lisa Lam - Youth Zone Support Worker

Elizabeth Ilochonwu - Administrator

Anjam Sheikh - Outreach / Street Worker

Maurice Kazoka - Outreach / Street Worker