

ELREC Newsletter



Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council

Promoting Racial Equality and Fighting Racial Discrimination

If you are a member of ELREC, you would have received a letter from our Company Secretary and your membership renewal form. To retain your membership, you must return the form before 1 April 2007. Otherwise, your membership will lapse by default at the end of April. If you have not already done so, I would urge you to return the form to the office as soon as possible. If you need help with completing the form, please contact the office.

Professor Braj Sinha, Chair

Issue 11
March 2007

ELREC
MANAGEMENT

Editorial

Welcome to the eleventh 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.

victims to resolve with themselves of the treatment they were subjected to before, during and after the proceedings. It is our aim to examine how ELREC and our partners can support the victims better.

NHS Lothians Draft Equality and Diversity Strategy and Disability Equality Scheme

NHS Lothian has recently launched a public consultation on their draft Equality and Diversity Strategy and Disability Equality Scheme. The consultation runs until Monday 30 April 2007.

The strategy sets out NHS Lothian's commitment to promoting health across the whole population, as well as ensuring the provision of healthcare and employment opportunities that are accessible, "user friendly" and equitable to all in experience and outcome and reflect the diversity in the local population

The full document is available online at www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk or copies can be sent to you free of charge if you contact Sheila Clark, Lothian NHS Board, Deaconess House, 148 Pleasance, Edinburgh EH8 9RS (Tel 0131 536 9038).

By Nina Giles
Director

Scottish Alliance for Racial Equality Councils

The Scottish Alliance for Racial Equality Councils was officially launched on Saturday 17 February 2007. The event was marked by the signing of Memorandum of Understanding by Chairs and Vice Chair of the four Racial Equality Councils in Scotland.

As SAREC we aim to:

- work towards reducing inequality and elimination of racism, and any other form of discrimination, either based on ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, religion, or sexual orientation
- promote equality for all
- promote and strengthen good relations between and within different national, ethnic, and religious groups

New Projects

In this issue, you will find some of the new services we have introduced in ELREC. Thanks to the funding from Scottish Executive, we will be delivering a series of community planning events during March and April. More information can be found about our Community Planning Project on page 4.

With the support from a Social Work Placement Student, we will be engaging with the victims of racial discrimination and harassment to find out the support they require in addition to advice and advocacy. In our experience, many victims suffer long term psychological, physical and social effects as a result of taking up legal proceedings on racial grounds. Given the lack of specialist support in this area, it is difficult for the

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Complainant Aid

Different Burdens of Proof: Ethnic Origins

I have now been here for almost seven months. My contract will be coming to an end soon when Christine Maitland-Francis return to work after her maternity leave. ELREC is still as busy as ever and I have learned a lot along the way. In some of my casework I have found a lot of areas of law difficult to grasp. For example, ethnic origins, nationality, race, colour, national origins each have a different test, known as the 'burden of proof' and for those of you who have ever thought what the word 'ethnic' actually means, it can be quite a difficult concept to understand. However some case law does provide guidance in this area.

Although ethnic origins have a good deal in common with the concept of race, 'ethnic' was used in the Race Relations Act in a much wider sense than the strictly racial or biological. A group is defined by reference to its 'ethnic origins' if it constitutes a separate and distinct community by virtue of characteristics which are commonly associated with common racial origin. For a group to constitute an ethnic group for the purposes of the Race Relations Act, it must regard itself and be regarded by others, as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics. The essential characteristics being

- there is a long shared history, of which the group is conscious as distinguishing it from other groups and the memory of which keeps it alive
- A cultural tradition of its own, including family and social customs and
- manners often but not necessarily associated with religious observance.

There are in addition to the above,

other characteristics such as:

- A common geographical origin or descent from a small number of common ancestors
- A common language
- A common religion different from the general community surrounding it
- Being a minority or being an oppressed or a dominant group within a larger community.

For the purposes of the Race Relations Act, a group of persons defined by reference to ethnic origins must possess some of the characteristics of a race, namely group descent and group of geographical origin. Interestingly, gypsies have been held as a separate racial group but Rastafarians do not fall within the definition of a separate ethnic group.

National Origins

To make things even more complicated the courts apply different tests to prove nationality or ethnicity or colour or national origins. The meaning of 'National origins' have also been defined and this is taken to be more than just nationality. To which group a person belongs depends on the circumstances. This can often be a difficult area for practitioners to grasp and in fact some people are not even aware that the different tests exist.

Racial Grounds

The phrase 'racial grounds' is defined by section 3 of the Race Relations Act 1976 as meaning, on the grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. Where a complaint is brought on the grounds of discrimination on one of the categories listed under section 3 of the Race Relations Act 1976 and fails, it is not possible to raise the same complaint but under

different racial grounds by invoking a different category.

Race Discrimination and Harassment Practitioner's Forum

Due to the complexity of the different tests involved on different racial grounds, ELREC will be holding its next quarterly forum in this area. Jill Bell who is the Head of Legal Affairs at the Commission for Racial Equality has kindly agreed to provide us with her expertise in this area. The purpose of the forum will be to share information, developments and exchange best practice. Ms Bell will aim to provide us with valuable information and share her knowledge and expertise in this area.

Ms Bell will further examine case law relating to this topic and then proposes to answer questions and provide a Forum for discussion. This will be followed by a time for networking and the opportunity to share what participants would like to achieve by being a part of the forum.

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

The Forum will take place on 29 March 2007 at the ELREC's offices. 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.

We would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance by Wednesday 21 March 2007.

By Rita Kochar
Complainant Aid Officer

Community Development

Abolition of the Slave trade

On 25 March 1807, the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed and it is now the 200th anniversary of the act. Britain was involved in the transatlantic trade whereby millions of people were subjected to cruelty and torment however sadly 200 years following the abolishment of slave trade we are still faced with modern day slavery under the form of human trafficking.

Thousands of women, children and men are trafficked to the UK each year from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. Victims are often smuggled into Britain or brought in on false passports by adults posing as relatives. Most are then put into work immediately and are often subjected to inhumane treatment, physical and sexual abuse. These victims are smuggled into Britain with promises of a better life, well paid jobs and security while others are forced here against their will. In some cases parents have sold their children in the hope that they will have a better life whilst in other cases they have sold their children in order to escape poverty and destitution.

Human trafficking gangs are exploiting the expansion of the European Union, and targeting Britain as a market for human slaves. Trafficked women and children from different countries are being brought over by false pretenses and fake promises and forced to work in prostitution. Approximately between 200 and 6000 women and girls are trafficked into the UK each year and forced to work in the sex industry. The victims are intimidated with a campaign of violence and threats to both themselves and loved ones if they even think to seek any help from anyone. These criminals are

targeting the most vulnerable and needy and exploiting human beings for their own greed and selfish satisfaction. **This is nothing short of modern day slavery.**

It is disgusting and shocking that in a day and age where we have legislation to protect us and authorities to support us that modern day slavery is still happening in our cities. It is saddening to see that 200 years after the abolition of the slave trade that similar practices are still happening under our very noses and human rights and dignity have been breached in every way possible.

Diversity Lay Speakers Get Together

Recently we held a diversity lay speakers get together at ELREC to bring together past speakers and new speakers. This was an informal event for a chance to network and to recruit new lay speakers to share their experiences of racism with Lothian and Borders police at their training sessions. The event went well and one of the outcomes of the meeting was that people would like to see more informal get togethers like this to happen on a regular basis. Some also suggested that they would have liked to have met someone from Lothian and Borders diversity training team. Following the points made from this meeting we are organising another get together on:

Wednesday 25th April at ELREC offices, 6-8pm. Refreshments will be made available

A trainer from L&B Police will also be available to meet with everyone and to answer any questions on their training sessions. Please confirm your attendance by email or phone.

Media

Think about ethnic minorities and the media platform including advertising, entertainment and news:

Now read these quotes that are from people from Leith & Restalrig in relation to this topic:

“All bad headlines are about ethnic minority people”

“People watch TV everyday and don’t see any Chinese/Japanese people so they will think its strange to see one here that is why the ethnic minorities get stared at or laughed as if they are in any unlucky situations”

“Change that stereotype image of ethnic minorities”

“Negative image about Islam”

“After the London bombings, the news coverage has always been negative” (Speaking about ethnic minorities in the media)

- Do you agree with the above quotes?
- Do you disagree with them?
- Do you feel that there is enough representation from ethnic minorities on the TV/radio?
- What do you think of the roles that are given to black and ethnic minority people in soaps and programmes?
- Have you ever applied for any media related jobs?
- Have you been successful?

I would like to hear from anyone who has a view on how minority ethnic people are represented in the media platform. ELREC is planning on holding a Media forum in May, date to be confirmed. We are going to have key contacts from media industry who will listen to your views, share their own experiences and answer any questions. We are keen to hear from all backgrounds. Please contact or email me your views by the end of April: shanif@elrec.org.uk or if you are interested in taking part and would like to reserve a place.

By Shasta Hanif

Community Development Officer

Community Planning Project

New project launched on awareness rising on Community Planning Partnership (ELREC-CPP)

My name is Mizanur Rahman, I have just started working for ELREC last week as Events Co-ordinator under the Community Planning project (ELREC-CPP) funded by Scottish Executive.

The area of Community Planning process always attracts me while I was studying MSc in Sustainable Development in Stirling University, followed by my previous job for CNRS¹ (Bangladesh) as a Community Motivator in Community Based Participatory Action Plan Development Project in south eastern Bangladesh funded by UNDP.

We are a small team of two, includes myself and Shazana Hussain (Development Assistant) providing administrative and organisational support to the project. We both joined last week, Shazana has a lot of experience of working with BME organisations i.e. Black Community Development Project in North Edinburgh and West Edinburgh Multicultural Organisation.

So far, we have spent most of our time introducing ourselves to our colleagues and gathering information.

Background history of Community planning in Scotland

The concept of community planning originated in the 1995 Labour Party consultative documents "Renewing Democracy, Rebuilding Communities" and by the end of 1995 Clackmannshire council piloted this approach. This process was primarily concerned with developing new approaches to consultation with communities

rather than partnership arrangements with other public spending bodies. (SPICe Briefing: 02/67)

What is community planning?

Community Planning is a process which helps public agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives. The aims of Community Planning in Scotland are:

- making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; allied to
- a commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services



Ref: 'A community plan for Edinburgh'

It is also important that people within communities are fully aware of what Community Planning means for them and that they have the means to engage as they wish.

The success of the Community Planning process will depend on the commitment to, and

participation of, a wide range of public, voluntary, community and private sector bodies. Community Planning is not a new concept and is already established in Scotland.

Statutory basis for Community Planning

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (the Act) provides the statutory basis for community planning. It requires local authorities to initiate and facilitate community planning, and NHS boards, the enterprise networks, the police, and the fire and rescue services to participate. Other public bodies, voluntary organisations, community groups and business organisations should also be involved.

Key to making this successful is the need to support the process with programmes for awareness raising and training. It has also been recognised, that the necessary cultural changes will have a longer timescale. There is still a need for on-going change to working cultures, behaviour and attitudes to achieve effective partnership working with a genuine community focus. (Community Planning: Statutory Guidance)

Joint approaches: The Three Equality Duties

The Equality act established the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) that will come into force in April 2007 integrating three equalities duties; race, disability and gender into the new commission (CEHR). In line with the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, public bodies in Scotland must ensure that they give due regard to race, disability and gender equality in relation to the work of community planning. It will

[¹CNRS: Centre for Natural Resource Studies, CPP- Community Planning Partnership]

Community Planning Project (cont.)

be ensured in the CP partnership level that it takes forward work to promote equality.

After October 2007, the CEHR have formal powers of enforcement to ensure whether the public authorities (CPP partners) taking action towards equality strands within their CPP activity.

Aims and objectives of our project

ELREC-CPP was launched in February to carry out until April 2007. The project activities will be conducted within the ELREC working area, four local authorities; City council of Edinburgh, West Lothian Council, East Lothian Council and Mid Lothian.

Aims and objectives of ELREC-CPP;

- Better understanding on current status of equalities within the Community Planning Partnership and process across Edinburgh and Lothian
- Raise awareness of the inequalities experienced by marginalised communities and the potential benefits to those communities and community planning partners for their engagement with community planning
- To strengthen relationships with local communities and partners to engage with CPP and the CEHR (Commission for Equality and Human Rights) oncoming process

We are therefore planning to hold public events, i.e. seminars in each of the four local authority areas over the period of March-April.

The activities under the project will be undertaken to engage with key Community planning partners and gain knowledge about the equality strands within the community planning processes, and identify methods of making processes more

accessible. It will further supplement to the oncoming CEHR - joint process coming into force from October 2007.

By Mizanur Rahman

Events Co-ordinator

GED will come into force next month. .

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) under the Equality Act 2006 comes into force in April 2007.

GED leads to demonstrate fair treatment of women and men in their employment, in the delivery of policy and services. The following duties have been set out by Scottish Ministers earlier last month.

General duties for public bodies

The gender equality duty is a new legal requirement on all GB public authorities, when carrying out all their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- *To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex*
- *To promote equality of opportunity between women and men*

Specific duties in Scotland

By 29 June 2007

- Gather information on how their work affects women and men.
- Consult employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders.
- Assess the different impact of policies and practices on women and men and use this information to inform their work.
- Identify priorities and set gender equality objectives.
- Plan and take action to achieve



gender equality objectives.

- Publish a gender equality scheme, report annually and review progress every three years.

Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Equality Duty came into force on 4 December 2006.

This legal duty requires all public bodies to actively look at ways of ensuring that disabled people are treated equally. All of those covered by the specific duties must also have produced a Disability Equality Scheme, which they must now implement.

The basic requirement for a public authority when carrying out their functions is to have due regard to do the following:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Specific duties set out a framework to assist authorities in meeting their general duty. All public authorities covered by the specific duties must:

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme (including within it an Action Plan)
- involve disabled people in producing the Scheme and Action Plan
- demonstrate they have taken actions in the Scheme and achieved appropriate outcomes
- report on progress
- review and revise the Scheme.



Firstly we need to welcome two new members of staff to the Youth Zone Team. Jennifer Ba and Brendan McGeever have joined as 'On-Call' Sessional Workers so that Youth Zone is never understaffed. They have come at just the right time as we are organising lots more targeted outreach in schools, at events and generally in places where young people are and so it is great to have some more enthusiastic faces to help flyer and raise the profile of the Youth Zone. Tommy has reduced his hours due to growing commitments at work and so they are both guaranteed at least one shift a month but I think they will have lots more as Lisa's one to one programme takes off.

ELREC Youth Development is currently taking part in a piece of research that is examining the make up of pupil councils with the aim of making them as representative and accessible as possible.

Last Saturday (17th March) Learn Direct Scotland held an event aimed at increasing the access of those from BME communities to learning and enhance their employability as well as giving them advice on starting their own businesses. ELREC had a stand at this event, alongside various other service providers, featuring Capoeira Dancers as well as a piece of art work that was created by the members of Youth Zone and a community artist over the last couple of weeks. Funded by Learn Direct, the focus of this project was to learn a new skill that portrayed Youth Zone and its users so that it could both be displayed at events and in

Upcoming Events In The Youth Zone

- Off the wall exhibition at gallery of modern art on Thursday 22nd March, guided tour
- Representatives from Volunteer Scotland and Gorgie Farm will be in for a chat on Friday 23rd March
- Raj from Scottish Youth Council is coming in on Thursday 12th April as part of our Voting and Democracy project

the Youth Zone itself, but also involved a Learn Direct adviser coming to talk to them about various career paths and further education options.

Think SM:ART Youth Conference

The Think SM:ART Anti-Racism Conference for S3's has been organised for Monday 23rd April in the City Chambers. All secondary schools in Edinburgh have been invited and so far 13 of them have confirmed they are attending. We have several special guests opening the event and then the morning will centre around an interactive session given by The Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot. During the lunch break there will a market place for young people to find about the different organisations they can get involved with in order to have their say on issues that are important to them (such as racism!) as well as the opportunity to be interviewed for Forth One and take part in a Podcast. We have 8 workshops planned for the afternoon with one still pending. These are designed to be hard hitting and thought provoking; tackling a wide range of issues such as globalization, community tension, media, religion, terrorism and immigration.

The emphasis of the conference is on young people working together to come up with practical measures that they can take away with them to

Youth ZoneThe place to Be and Be

Seen!!.....

Thursdays 3 to 7 pm

Fridays 1 to 5 pm

challenge racism in their schools and communities. It is hoped that openly discussing the issues will give them ownership of the solutions and empower them to take actions such as delivering peer education sessions or assemblies in their schools, establishing an equalities post on the student council or standing up to racist incidences they might see. After the conference a simple pack will be compiled containing all the activities and ideas that were produced so they can be used by pupils and schools as a resource to help implement (with support) some of the suggestions.

I attended an event run by the Voluntary Action Fund for projects that they fund; it was very interesting (and reassuring) to hear what various other groups are doing and to share all our challenges and triumphs. They are going to make these regular events to enable projects to iron out any difficulties they encounter and help them apply for further funding successfully.

Lisa and I attended training at Canongate Youth Project on working with challenging youths. We picked up some interesting and useful ideas and it was good to network with other youth workers.

Our funding from the Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership ended in December and I have just written the final project report, which will, with any luck, encourage them to extend it as we have performed very well!!

By Fay Benson

Youth Development Officer

What's Happening at the Youth Zone

Although January was quiet in Youth Zone we have had quite a few activities over the last few weeks. The highlight was a quadbiking trip on Thursday 15th February. It was quite an adventure. The centre was in Dunoon which meant we had to cross the sea on a Ferry (although it is not an Island as I originally thought!). We thought our trip might be cancelled when we were told that the ferries were not in operation due to the high winds. However, luck was on our side and we managed to get across eventually through a rival ferry company, although the journey was very very bumpy! Once we got to the other side we were stopped by the police as one of the break lights on our coach was damaged!

As we made our way to Quadmania it started to rain heavily. When we finally got there everyone was kitted out with waterproofs and had a fantastic, if extremely muddy time, racing through the fields. Our bus driver for the day, wore a tartan waistcoat,



played Scottish folk songs on the coach and was called Hamish! He was a great tour guide, sorted out all our problems calmly and he even drove back through Loch Lomond so we could see some wonderful landscapes. Definitely a day to remember!

Due to the recent controversy over the Big Brother racism row, the evening news approached us to write an article on the matter. The young people discussed the incident, shared their views and together we came up with the article that was published on the 1st February.

On Friday 2nd February we took some young people to the cinema to see the movie 'The Last King of Scotland' and they thoroughly enjoyed it. Superb, thought provoking and powerful, a must see movie.

We had our own little celebration for the Chinese New Year on 18th February. There were Chinese decorations and we showed our young people the art of Origami (Japanese Paper Folding) to celebrate the Year of the Pig. There were also many tasty Chinese new year snacks and red lucky envelopes (Lai See) were given out with sweets inside as a gesture of good luck and fortune for the new year.

One to One Support

I (Lisa) am currently working on promoting a new service at Youth Zone. It is a free and confidential one to one service aimed at BME young people. We provide help with CV's, career planning, university and college applications and support in accessing mainstream services. We operate according to the needs of the service user to design a unique personal development plan. Through this we are able to explore the issues and ideas that are important to them. I have been going into schools and colleges to promote this service and I am also working in conjunction with the Lisa from Shakti Women's Aid to go into the schools at lunchtime for drop in sessions.

We now have a Youth Zone Mobile so that we can keep in contact with the young people and update them about different activities and events that are going on. If you are a young person and you want to get in touch with the Youth Zone or the Youth Development team give us a ring on 07902100474.

Lisa Lam

Youth Development Assistant

MEX4Y - Minority Ethnic Exchange for Youth

The Youth Practitioners forum is experiencing some problems. We had to organise two meetings this quarter due to low turn out the first time round, despite having a presentation from Penumbra and The Scottish Development Centre for Mental health on BME young people and self harm. Unfortunately it wasn't much improved the second time and it has been decided to try coordinating activities via email, with meetings when necessary.

Despite this there has been some movement on the website front and ELREC have decided to add a page to their website which will serve as a forum for all BME youth services in Edinburgh and will be regularly updated by ELREC youth development. We are now just waiting for all the information from relevant organisations.



Student Place Project

Hello ELREC! My name is Melissa Elliott and I am a student at the University of Edinburgh. Originally from Denver, Colorado in the United States, I came to Scotland to get my Master's degree in Social Work. As part of this programme I will be spending the next three months at ELREC. I am very excited to be here, to learn as much as I can and to be a part of such a hard working, kind and dedicated team.

While at ELREC, I will be undertaking a project to see what services are available to support the emotional, psychological, physical and social needs of people who have been harassed, discriminated against or abused based on their race. In addition, I will be gathering ideas of what support people in the community need or would like. If you want to be a part of this project or would like to lend your ideas and input, please do not hesitate to contact me at the ELREC office.

Support Services for Victims of Racial Harassment and Discrimination

The main aim of the project is to investigate support for victims of racial discrimination, harassment and abuse. We are interested in what services are available and what services are desired for the emotional, psychological, physical and social effects of racism. This project would aim to incorporate the ideas, feelings, suggestions and effort of everyone in the community. For community members, it will be an opportunity to voice opinions and become involved in a project that will support the community. For ELREC, it will hopefully lead to support services becoming available for community members.

The project is being initiated by Nina Giles (Director of ELREC) and Melissa Elliott (Placement Student at ELREC). They can be contacted by phone at 0131 556 0441, by fax at 0131 556 8577, by email at admin@elrec.org.uk or at the ELREC office at 14 Forth Street Edinburgh, EH1 3LH.

All participants will be involved (as much or as little as they wish to) in decisions concerning the focus of the work, the methods to be used, and the form and content of any project reports.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decide *not* to take part, and if you do decide to take part you have the right to withdraw at any

stage. Involvement in the project will not affect any other relationships with ELREC, and if you have concerns about this, please raise this issue with Melissa or with anyone else you wish.

The work of the project will take place between April and June and will consist of:

1. a confidential individual meeting to establish views and opinions
2. for those interested, a series of group discussions between participants
3. a circulation of a draft of the report for suggestions
4. a presentation of this report to ELREC for use in securing services

The initial individual meeting will take approximately one hour and the discussion will be confidential. If this is all that you wish to contribute to this project, no further involvement is required. It is also possible to continue to meet on an individual basis if you would like. However, a series of group discussions relating to this topic will also be held, and present an opportunity for group brainstorming and taking action. This will probably involve a minimum of five hours work for each participant over the whole period of the project. We could arrange interpreters for those whose English is not their first language.

Here at ELREC, we are constantly trying to improve and expand upon the services available to our community. This project represents a chance for community members to become involved in securing services that are just what *they* want and need. Your opinions and ideas will hopefully turn into positive action: a support service becoming available.

Obviously, we want you to feel comfortable participating. Therefore, the individual meetings will be kept confidential. Also, any reports of the project work intended for publication outside the group of participants will be written in such a way as to preserve the anonymity of participants, if they wish, and to acknowledge the contribution of all who wish to be named. Reports intended for publication will be circulated to participants beforehand for comments and suggestions. At this stage all participants will have the right to delete any material which they feel may identify them.

You do not have to have any previous experience with ELREC in order to participate, as we would like to hear from as many people as possible who have experienced racial harassment and/or discrimination. Therefore, please feel free to pass along this invitation to anyone you know who might be interested.

The project coordinators accept responsibility to provide whatever support they can, should any tensions or anxieties arise in the project.

The above points are only a first draft, indicating generally how the project will be conducted, and your comments and suggestions concerning all aspects of the project are most welcome.

If you are interested in participating in any way, please contact Melissa or Nina at ELREC:

Phone: 0131 556 0441

Email: admin@elrec.org.uk

Address: 14 Fourth Street Edinburgh EH1 3LH

By Melissa Elliott
Social Work Placement Student

INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY PROJECT (CEMVO Scotland)

If you and your family or friends went to a restaurant for a meal, would you consider allowing a stranger at another table to select your meal for you? If you allowed them to select for you, without their knowing anything about you, your likes and dislikes, it is possible that you might not like the choices that they made on your behalf. Yet every day, decisions are being made on issues that have an effect on your daily life, that you may not be involved in.

Research shows that people from some ethnic minority communities in Scotland typically have low levels of participation in decision-making at local, Scottish, national and European level. In effect, allowing strangers, who know nothing about them – their likes and dislikes, or the issues that most matter to them – to make decisions on their behalf.

For instance, decisions that affect where they live; decisions that ensure that your rubbish gets collected and how much of it then gets recycled; deciding if you can park your car in your street and how much it will cost you. Decisions are made that affect the music you listen to; it affects the price of CDs you buy, says whether it's legal to download music from the Internet, and prevents your neighbours playing their music too loudly. Decisions are made that affect the food you eat; determines which artificial additives, colourings and preservatives can and cannot be used; decides what information is required on labels and controls the 'Sell by' and 'Best before' dating systems.

At CEMVO (Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations) Scotland we believe that all citizens should be involved in having an equal say in decisions that affect their day-to-day lives. That is where the Inclusive Democracy Project comes in. This is an innovative 3-year project, run in partnership with the Electoral

Commission, an independent, non-partisan body that regulates elections in the UK and promotes voter awareness. The Inclusive Democracy Project runs regular, free training sessions for staff, volunteers, board members and users of voluntary sector, community and religious groups amongst Scotland's ethnic minority communities. The training covers the importance of civic and democratic participation, democratic and lobbying processes, registration and electoral processes (for instance eligibility to register to vote and how to vote), and local, Scottish, national and European democratic systems.

Voting is not the only way you could make a difference. You could become even more active by lobbying your representatives so that they know your views on issues that are important to you; or standing as a candidate for your local council. Would you like to know how to do this?

In June 2007 the Inclusive Democracy Project (CEMVO Scotland) and ELREC will be jointly running a training session on 'How to engage with your Local Council'. The session will cover what the local council does, how to lobby the council, and information on how to stand as council candidate.

For further information about the Inclusive Democracy Project, or the CEMVO Scotland / ELREC training event, please contact Kit Coupar (07983 546431) kit.coupar@cemvo.org.uk, or Dr Abha Rodrigues (07922 440400) abha.rodrigues@cemvo.org.uk.



EDINBURGH INSPIRES VOLUNTEERING THROUGH THE LAUNCH OF THE CITY'S VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY

Edinburgh became the first city in Scotland to have a dedicated strategy for volunteering, when it launched *Inspiring Volunteering: A Volunteering Strategy for Edinburgh* at the Edinburgh City Chambers in December 2006.

Inspiring Volunteering was developed following city wide consultation by the Edinburgh Compact Partnership a consortium of key stakeholders in volunteering including the local Council, Police, Health, Business and the voluntary and community sector.

Harriet Eadie, Director of Volunteer Centre Edinburgh said:

"Volunteers are active in all areas of the life of Edinburgh. Volunteering has an impact on all sectors; statutory, public, voluntary, community and the business sector. Partners from all sectors were involved in putting this strategy together and are jointly committed to its implementation."

Volunteers are essential to the health and vibrancy of communities in Edinburgh, contributing the equivalent of 60 million pounds annually. With one in four people in the City volunteering the new Strategy recognises that volunteering is about far more than performing a service, and that it is also a key driver for identifying unmet needs and supporting positive change in society. The Strategy also sets out an action plan which lays out the best way to support and enhance volunteering over the next 5 years.

City of Edinburgh Lord Provost, Lesley Hinds said:

"This Volunteering Strategy is the first Scottish local strategy to be

developed by community planning partners. It provides a framework of actions to rise to these challenges and build and strengthen volunteering in Edinburgh. The Strategy is ambitious in its aims. It calls on all partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to commit to it, to resource and implement it in order to make a real difference to volunteering in Edinburgh”

The strategy can be downloaded from:

www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/strategy

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Preparing for the Next Census in Scotland

General Register Office for Scotland is inviting contribution to their preparations for the next Census in Scotland (planned for 2011), by responding to a consultation document which is available on their website

<http://www.gor-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/census-consultation/formal-consultations/index.html>

The latest consultation document explains where they are at with their planning, and seeks views on some important decisions which need to be taken in the next two years.

The consultation period runs to 7 June. Responses can be taken on paper or via the internet. A series of consultation meetings is planned for late May/early June.



Lothian and Borders Police

Introduction - New Head of Diversity

I have recently taken up post as the new Head of Diversity for the Lothian and Borders Police, as a replacement for Chief Inspector George Denholm who has been promoted to Superintendent with Her Majesty's Inspectorate. I am sure many will know George who had a real reputation as someone who was keen to engage with all sections of our communities in order to make a real difference in terms of community safety in its widest form. He will clearly be a hard act to follow, but I am certainly up for the challenge.

Being very new into the post, I want to make early contact with all our communities in order to introduce myself.

My name is Doug Forsyth and I have served most of my 25 years of police service in operational roles throughout the Force area. I have most recently spent two years as the Local Policing Area Commander at Howdenhall, South Edinburgh, which proved to be a very busy and challenging area to police. Previously I have been involved in a Local Authority Liaison Officer role, which involved considerable work in progressing various issues affecting the multi-agency effort towards making all our communities safer. This particular experience will be of great benefit to me in my new role within the Diversity unit of the Force.

Clearly, due to the vast number of people and organisations involved in the Diversity field, it will be difficult for me to meet everyone as early as I would hope, but perhaps in the very near future I will have the opportunity to meet and discuss the issues of the day with as many people as possible. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Safer Communities Department at Police Headquarters, where I will be happy to discuss any issues of concern.

Finally, I look forward to working together with all partners, community leaders, and indeed the communities themselves, and hope that both my experience and enthusiasm for policing is able to make a positive impact on the lives of all throughout the Force area.

Chief Inspector Doug Forsyth

Head of Diversity



Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service

The birth of what is called the modern fire service came through the passing of the Fire Brigades Act 1947. This effectively brought to an end the war time arrangements that had been put in place to deal with fire and other emergencies whilst the majority of the male workforce was in combat during the Second World War.

The newly reformed fire service rightfully offered opportunities to many of those returning from war who were familiar with the disciplined approach to work that the service called for. So although during the war itself there were many women involved in firefighting, the new service was all male. And again even though there were many invitations sent out to the colonies for workers to fill the many gaps in the British workforce none found their way easily into police or fire services.

So right from the start the fire service was an all white male employer and because it was felt that only those with certain characteristics were capable of doing this job it was left to word of mouth recruiting of family and friends of serving firemen to fill vacancies. For nearly thirty years the fire service remained an all white male environment until the introduction of equal opportunities legislation in the 1970s. At that point all public services were expected to demonstrate that they were not discriminating in employment or the delivery of services, and the fire service was forced to use more open recruiting practices.

The first black and Asian recruits joined the service at this time along with a handful of women. However by the end of the 1990s they were still in very small numbers and those who were there were reporting that they were not being treated fairly. A review of the fire service was carried out in 1999 and found that because all the policies and procedures that were used by the service had been written by white men, who in the main had never worked alongside women or black and Asian people (some had never had any social contact

with people of a different cultural background), the service was still unknowingly discriminating against certain groups. This was described as Institutional Racism and Sexism.

The review recommended that all fire services look at all of their policies to ensure that they were fair and this was reinforced by the Race Relations Amendment Act that requires public services to assess what impact their policies and procedures have on race relations. The fire service review also set targets for the numbers of black and Asian and women employees for each service to be achieved over a number of years.

Many fire services have done the necessary review of their policies and have started to work at recruiting a greater number from the BME communities. Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service has been holding open days over the past few years to increase the awareness of the fire service as a career for those who may not have previously considered it. More open days are being planned for this year so anyone who is keen to find more about what the service does and what it takes to become a community firefighter should look out for notices and details about the open days.

Some people can be put off by the length of time it takes to complete the selection and to start training as a firefighter. To make sure that the selection is fair there has to be a number of stages to the process. Each stage has to be carefully measured and this means that it all takes some time to complete. But for those with the right skills and characteristics the wait can be very worthwhile. The Fire and Rescue Service offers a very rewarding career opportunity with favourable rates of pay, many family friendly policies, flexible working opportunities and realistic promotion chances for those wanting them.

Please look out for further details of open days in your newsletter and in schools and colleges in your area.

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

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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Company Number: 183419

OUR TEAM

Nina Giles - Director

Elizabeth Ilochonwu - Administrator

Rita Kochar - Complainant Aid Officer

Shasta Hanif - Community Development Officer

Mizan Rahman - Events Co-ordinator (ELREC-CPP)

Shazana Hussain - Development Assistant (ELREC-CPP)

Fay Benson - Youth Development Officer

Lisa Lam - Youth Development Assistant

Tommy George - Youth Zone Support Worker

Jennifer Ba - Youth Zone Support Worker

Brendan McGeever - Youth Zone Support Worker

Maurice Kazoka - Youth Zone Support Worker

Melissa Elliott - Social Work Placement Student