



ELREC Newsletter

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council

Promoting Equality • Fighting Discrimination • Fostering Good Relations

ISSUE 44: July 2015

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From the Chair:

Before I introduce the excellent work ELREC is doing for the community, I will give you an update on the case relating to the unfair withdrawal of ELREC's funding by Edinburgh Council.

It is nearly five months since ELREC's funding was withdrawn and given to another organisation that has since asked ELREC for help. Because ELREC complained to the Council that some of its officers "lied" to recommend the withdrawal of ELREC's funding, a second investigation is being carried out by a senior officer of the Council. ELREC worked well with this investigating officer and although ELREC agrees with her observations of unacceptable practice, ELREC believes that these unacceptable practices relate to "lying" and has asked for evidence relating to the investigating officer's conclusions and has requested that a mediator should be appointed. This is now being carried out by the Council.

In summary, the investigating officer's report contains the following statements: One officer that earlier "apologised" for "confusion" instead of "lying", offered to "apologise" again but ELREC refused this meaningless gesture. The investigating officer also used the word "confusion" to explain 'unacceptable actions' of officers. ELREC has not accepted this attempt by the investigating officer to state that officers were 'incompetent' but did not 'deliberately lie'. ELREC believes that these unacceptable actions of the officers were deliberate and included "lying".

Some of the 'unacceptable actions' reported by the investigating officer were: "better practice" was required, various issues were "extremely confusing", "more professional manner" was required and "processes that have been referenced or cited during my investigation are not of a sufficiently high standard or robust and transparent enough". There were "no written record", "different words have been used interchangeably" to describe committee structures that did not exist and there was "inadequate guidance and firm parameters". In addition, there was a lack of "formal remit" and lack of "clear, agreed communication channels with a written audit trail of decisions".



From the Chair cont.

ELREC requested the legally required Equality and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) form, which officers said was carried out in 2014. The first form sent to ELREC contained anomalous 2015 information in an ERIA dated 2014. This ERIA was written in 2015, so was the second 'corrected' ERIA form which was also dated 2014. Despite this attempt to mislead, the investigating officer stated that, "I do believe that this (not sure which?) ERIA would have benefited from your (ELREC's) involvement and should have engaged a wider group of people than it did". This damning statement sums up how officers of the Council disregarded the law and the Human rights of the members of ELREC and the Human rights of other people in the community. This action of the Council officers and EaRN (Equality and Rights Network) members, who produced the ERIA form, should reflect on the 'truthfulness' of the statement they made, that their ERIA "Recommendations are proportionate and will be delivered".

The investigating officer stated that since ELREC's Board members and officers were selected as dictated by ELREC's constitution no further investigation was required in this matter.

Although two officers of the Council said they did not know that a related Board meeting was being recorded, available evidence indicated that they did know.

ELREC will continue to inform you of the developments in this case. Mediation is the next stage.

In general: ELREC is functioning well. This is due to the excellent commitments of its staff and volunteers. Significant funding from the Lottery, funding from the Government and the Robertson's Trust have helped ELREC to continue working in partnership and to develop areas of work which will benefit the community.

ELREC has just appointed a new Project Lead Officer/Fundraiser, Dr Elisabetta Spano MSc. She will use her research experience and skills to develop and improve the work that ELREC does for the community. She also has a fund raising role. This is important because despite losing its funding from the Council, ELREC continues to work with the police and has recently helped the NHS to stage a community health meeting in Edinburgh, even though ELREC was excluded from the Council's ERIA assessment. That the organisation that received ELREC's funding from the Council has asked for help from ELREC indicates that the Equality Impact of advising the Council to remove ELREC's funding was not assessed "proportionately" by those who carried out the flawed ERIA for the Council.

ELREC's staff, volunteers and others have again contributed to this newsletter. Please read what we are doing and, you are welcome to join us in all of our activities. Finally, I would like to thank all those who helped ELREC to raise significant funds recently to help those who suffered in the recent Earthquakes in Nepal.

Foyso Choudhury MBE

Chair

A Report: Festival of Politics – 2015. Scotland and Slavery.

On the 14th August, the first event of the Festival of Politics was held in the debating chamber of the Scottish Parliament. An almost capacity audience attended.

Professor Sir Tom Devine, Scotland's principal historian lectured on the real role of Scots in the British slave trade and what was the legacy. The Presiding Officer of the Parliament, Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP chaired the event successfully.

The Panellists were Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, Emeritus Professor Heriot Watt University and Honorary President of ELREC; Ms Louise Welsh, author and collaborator with regard to the Empire Café 2014 Commonwealth Games Project in Glasgow and Stephen Mullen, an historian from Glasgow University.



After outlining the extensive but 'hidden' history of Scotland's connections with British slavery in the Caribbean in the 18th and 19th centuries, Sir Tom concluded that the financial benefits which Scotland gained from its involvement in this slavery were significant and contributed to the industrial and economic development of Scotland which occurred during the industrial revolution.

During the debate Professor Palmer demonstrated that Scotland's involvement in this slavery is still visible. For example: The Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow which was a slave master's house. On a lesser scale, but no less important, were...24 Forth Street, 13 Gilmore Place, Harmony House and Inveresk Lodge. All the owners of these properties owned slaves: The Necropolis in Glasgow was built by a slave owner so were the Academies of Bathgate, Dollar and Inverness: Jamaica Street in Glasgow was built in 1763 to trade in sugar and coffee from



24 Forth Street, Edinburgh

Jamaica: Perth made linen clothes for slaves and Killearn was rebuilt by Blackburn who was a slave owner in Jamaica. Many place names in Scotland bear the names of famous slave owners such as Grant, Campbell, Gladstone, Baillie, Buchanan, Speirs, Wedderburn, Ewing and Oswald: Dundas (Lord Melville), whose stature stands in St Andrew Square in Edinburgh, was the powerful politician that stopped Wilberforce from abolishing the slave trade for 15 years: Oswald's grand house (Oswald Hall) remains in Auchincruive, Ayrshire. He and the Grants were partners in the buying and selling of slaves but he was selected by the British government to negotiate the Paris Peace settlement in 1783 which included Benjamin Franklin and future presidents of the United States, after the defeat of the French in the naval battle for Jamaica in 1782. At that time, the free

labour of about 250,000, often rebellious, Jamaican slaves provided Britain with more than half of its income from its empire. Oswald confirmed the independence of the USA and retained Canada for the British Empire rather than giving it to the USA. France was given Senegal.

Scotland owned a greater proportion of slaves than any of the other nations in Britain.

Therefore, it is not surprising that young men like the great poet Robert Burns made plans to sail to Jamaica to work as slave masters to become rich like other Scots had done. Thankfully, for the sake of his poetry, Burns did not sail.

Associated with this seeking of money to improve personal wealth and the wealth of Scotland, was the development a black (non-white) Scottish Diaspora in the Caribbean during slavery and after British slavery was abolished in 1838. These Scots, by descent, were not invited to past Scottish Diaspora Gatherings but greater political and historical awareness have change past attitudes and now the non-white Scottish Diaspora, who have Scottish surnames and genes which will not disappear, is now an important part of such Gatherings in Scotland.

The audience raised various point such as: There are still slaves in the world. Professor Palmer agreed that this is a terrible evil but evils should be addressed not compared. Comparison tends to reduce one evil and elevate the other. Professor Palmer and Professor Devine pointed out that the

slavery being discussed at this event was chattel slavery where legally, a slave had no right to life and was 'property'. That is why slave owners were given £20Million (£17 Billion in today's money) as compensation for their 'property' at the end of slavery (at Emancipation) in 1833 - 1834. Another member of the audience said that Scotland's awareness of this history was limited by the fact that few descendants of this slavery lived in Scotland. However, Professor Palmer said that evil deeds should be acknowledged and addressed even if the victim has no voice to protest. He quoted a short sentence from a previously unknown historical letter he discovered while working at the Heriot Watt University. This letter was written by Gibson-Craig, the MP for Midlothian in 1838, whose family owned the Riccarton Estate, where the Heriot Watt University is now based. Gibson-Craig told his father in his 1838 letter that the vote to end British slavery was 96 to 93 for this particular vote. Most of the MPs deliberately did not vote. Total abolition of slavery was not a popular cause. However, Gibson-Craig, with great courage, stated to his father..."I voted with the majority (for abolition) and would do so again". This kind of goodness and dignity does not need to hear the voices of victims to act justly and fairly on their behalf.

The Presiding Officer closed this successful event by suggesting that those who stated that Scotland should help the development of Caribbean countries that helped Scotland's development in the past should write to MSPs who would take appropriate action. The general view was that this historical approach to politics was another fruitful way of developing good race relations.



Oswald Hall



*Henry Dundas statue,
St.Andrews Square,
Edinburgh*

Sir Prof. Geoff Palmer OBE

Honorary President

From the Project Lead Officer/Fundraiser

Dear all,

I am delighted to join ELREC as the new Project Lead Officer/Fundraiser and to give my contribution to the excellent job that the organisation has been doing for years.

I was born in Cagliari, the main city in Sardinia, Italy, where I lived for a good part of my life. I graduated in Political Science in my hometown university, and afterwards I achieved my Postgraduate degree in International Relations, with a thesis on the development of democracy in Botswana. In 2008 I moved to Scotland to study first for an MSc by Research and then for a PhD, both at the Centre of African Studies at the university of Edinburgh. My PhD thesis was qualitative, focusing on different migration movements from apartheid South Africa to Botswana and the related issues of the liberation struggle, questions of citizenship and transnational connections. It combined archival research in the UK, South Africa and Botswana, as well as in-depth interviews with refugees and economic migrants.

During my studies I worked as a teaching assistant, tutoring in a number of undergraduate courses at the School of Social and Political Science, and as a research assistant for a project on party politics and stateless nations. Finally, I gained experience as a conference assistant for various events organised by the university in both paid and unpaid positions.

Dr. Elisabetta Spano, Espano@elrec.org.uk



From the Office and Program Coordinator

Hello everyone,

The first quarter of the 2015-16 financial year has been one where our projects have all been working hard to get started or continue where they left off in March. Updates for all of these can be found within this issue.

Our staff base continues to grow with new projects starting up and I would like to welcome them all to the team. Nicole Currie and Mitra Rostami are working at ELREC for the Bright Choices project, a joint initiative with Sacro and Mutli-Cultural Family Base, that will be tackling the issue of Honour Abuse. This four year project is in its very early stages so keep an eye out for updates from them in the future.



Gabriela Lobo has joined us to start up our Youth Zone again. This initiative aims to provide a safe, comfortable space within ELREC for young people from the BME community and help them get into employment or further education. Hannah Lawrence has joined in the last few weeks to take over the Barriers of Poverty and Inequality research project and Adil Ibrahim has joined our Communities for Conservation team. Finally, I would also like to welcome our new Project Lead Officer/Fundraiser, Dr. Elisabetta Spano, who will be joining us this week. With the new additions our staff team has grown to 15 and is full of dynamic, hard working people.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who was involved or has contributed to our Cycle for Nepal Challenge on the 8th of August. The day was a great success and we have raised around £1500 so far. The collection is still in progress and the final sum will be announced in the next newsletter. If you would still like to donate details can be found later in this newsletter.

Neil Ogilvy, NOgilvy@elrec.org.uk

ELREC's Cycle for Nepal Challenge

On 25 April 2015, a massive earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 hit Nepal, killing more than 9,000 people and injuring over 23,000. The April 2015 Nepal earthquake, or 'Gorkha earthquake' has devastated the mountainous Asian state- destroying crucial infrastructure, such as key transport lines, hospitals, health centres, schools and countless homes. In the worst natural disaster to strike Nepal since the 1934 Nepal- Bihar earthquake, 2.8 million have been displaced leaving hundreds of thousands of families homeless, without access to basic supplies, such as safe drinking water, food or shelter.

Compelled to do something to help various members of the Nepalese community in Edinburgh, the Nepal Scotland Association and the Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC) decided to take a stand, or more accurately, a pedal, to raise money for the already poor nation of Nepal, and its people in these very difficult times.



The result? The ELREC Cycles for Nepal Challenge: a 20-mile charity cycle ride from central Edinburgh to Balerno and back to raise much-needed funds for the Nepal Scotland Association to assist in the reconstruction of schools and homes destroyed by the earthquake.

On 9 August, thirty people of varying ages and backgrounds accepted the challenge and took to their bikes to support Nepali victims, while a handful of supporters followed on foot. On the beautiful summer's day, the path along the Water of Leith through Dean Village rang to the excitement and dedication felt by participants.

One of the dedicated cyclists I had the opportunity to speak with was twenty-two year old Manish Khatri, a fourth year Computing student and Campus Officer at Napier university who, upon discovering the news of the terrible earthquake decided to travel to Nepal for two months to help. Manish explains that "I knew that my family and friends back in Nepal were OK but I couldn't stop thinking about the ones that weren't, and the ways I could help them if I was in the field". He decided to use his university, work, friends and family connections to raise as much money as possible under the Nepal Scotland Association (NSA) and send a work team to Nepal. Manish and his friend Ashis Pun travelled to Nepal on their own pocket so they could use their NSA funding to assist those in the most affected areas, including the village where Manish grew up:

"When we were going around the affected areas for the first time, my hands and legs were shaking, my eyes started watering as the streets that I used to walk were not same, the monuments, the temple and the school were all destroyed."



While in the field Manish and his team slept outside in tents, "and had to keep running every night when there was a little shake". Despite this, they were involved in fifteen different projects. Manish decided however to use his own savings to help his village of Dhading as opposed to using the NSA funding, because the way he saw it, his village might have been destroyed but it still had many capable people that could help. In that spirit Manish bought mosquito nets for 206 homes, construction tools for schools and houses, and provided money and staple food ingredients for the elderly in Dhading. Additionally, the team took on a project in Manbu, neighboring Barpak, which is near the epicentre of the earthquake, in one of the most remote areas of Gurkha. The project was to help rebuild the school and hostel, which served to accommodate students from more than 15 villages, as well as the poor and disabled. Manish described the hardship of these people who weren't receiving any assistance from the government, but pointed out that the school had over 600 locals over the past two months come to try and help even if their son or daughter didn't go to school.

He said that "the unity was beautiful", but even with their help and solidarity "those kids that had lost their family or who were in an extremely poor situation were sleeping on the floor, and skipping meals because the hostel couldn't afford to provide them lunch." Manish explained that "the students in the hostel reminded me of myself, and my friends in Scotland," this tore at Manish's heartstrings, and he decided to go for broke and give nearly everything he had, 50,000 Nepalese rupees (£420) to assist the students.

On the way back from Gurkha, however, Manish had an accident, and was injured and had to spend the rest of his savings on X-rays and medical treatment. Although he spent all of his savings, became ill, and was injured he does not regret anything he did, and is grateful for the opportunity to help his native country, and frankly just to be back alive.



When Manish conveyed to me how much he appreciates, and wants to thank ELREC for organizing "such an amazing charity work" I could feel so much warmth and gratitude in his voice. He also said that he felt very blessed to have participated in the Cycle for Nepal challenge, where the team had a strong sense of togetherness and "everyone made him feel like part of his or her family."

Moreover, the Cycle for Nepal Challenge helped to raise around **£1500** in online and cash donations for the Nepal Scotland Association. Indeed, everyone who organized the event, participated or donated should feel proud to have been a part of it, and to have contributed to such a worthy cause. Although the Cycle for Nepal Challenge was a great success, and the funds raised will go to assisting some of the most affected people in Nepal, the destruction from the earthquake has still left many populations and rural areas to fend for themselves. Manish insists that "even a little help means so much for [the people of Nepal]."

If you can spare £5 or more please donate to this worthy cause by following this link: <http://www.gofundme.com/ELREC4NEPAL>. All of the funds raised are being donated to the Nepal Scotland Association: <http://www.nepalscotlandassociation.org/>. The final sum will be announced in the next newsletter.

ELREC will provide you with feedback on the use of the funds in Nepal. The funds will help to re-build homes for the victims in villages such of Nuwakot and Gorkha where there is acute poverty.

Written by: Andrea Westcott-Lacoursiere, ELREC volunteer and participant of the Cycle for Nepal Challenge

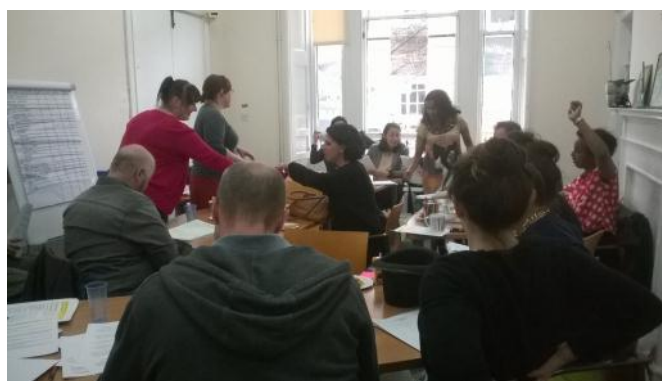
Volunteering to Achieve July update

Una

Hello all,

In the last months we have been focusing on improving our application process and overall staff/volunteer teamwork and cooperation. We are delighted to welcome Maria, ELREC's new volunteer coordinator intern, who has been a tremendous help with during this time.

Our trainings programme has continued with two new workshops provided in June and July. With the help of LGBT Youth and Equality Network our volunteers had the chance to learn more about LGBT awareness and intersectionality issues. We are very happy to report that the feedback for both trainings was very positive and we already working on providing new trainings as per our volunteers requests and interests.



Maria

Hello my name is Maria Florez, I am from Colombia (South America) but have been in Edinburgh since winter 2013 and became part of ELREC at the beginning of July 2015. My role at the organisation is mainly to assist with the coordination of volunteers within the organisation.

The values of the organisation have been at the core of my development as a professional and individual; however this –as every new opportunity – is a challenge, an opportunity to deepen my knowledge and understanding of Human Right issues but also practical ways to influence people's relationship with one another.

As you know, volunteers are an undeniable and essential part of ELREC, so I am very excited to see what we can achieve as an organisation. I would say that my experience is still in progress but I think that having been both volunteer and volunteer coordinator myself (in the past and currently) has helped me understand the needs of the organisation but also the expectation of the volunteers.

So far I have loved it, so I am looking forward for the couple of months ahead and I hope -even when my role is finished- that the strategies we come across along the way are still good use for the coordination of volunteers in the organisation.

From the Youth Development Officer

Greetings from the YPAH project. In the past two months we've facilitated 7 workshops on racism and Islamophobia, the majority being in North Edinburgh. The feedback from these workshops has been great and they unanimously credit the work of the YPAH volunteers.

The YPAH group has also facilitated its first restorative justice program in North Edinburgh; it has been a great success and all the participants past the 5 week program. We hope to be doing more of these sessions in North Edinburgh and across Lothian's.

We've also set up the LGBT charter, promoting LGBT equality within ELREC and throughout the work we do. There have been two training sessions and two meetings of the charter group and I would like to thank everyone who attended.

We've also been doing a lot of research and fundraising work, we currently have two youth based funding proposals being written up and two currently being reviewed by funders, fingers crossed that we get good news on those. If anyone is interested in putting a funding proposal together or wants to learn more, just drop me an email.

We've also been doing quite a bit of research; looking into youth based work, gypsy traveller awareness, extensive research on Hate crime in North Edinburgh and research into the importance of restorative justice. I want to thank everyone who has been doing research, created activities, planned youth sessions and facilitated workshops

We have a four workshops coming up in the next few weeks, if you would like to get involved, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Two will be focussing on racism and two on hate crimes / media stereotypes.

Last but definitely not least, we've recently started a youth zone, funded by the Robertson Trust and The Big Lottery Young Start. It will be relaxed space for young people to come and get advice on volunteering, education and employability training/ knowledge. If anyone would like to get involved, Gabriela Lobo is the new coordinator and would love hear from you.



Nicholas Greener, Youth Development Officer

NGreener@elrec.org.uk



Young People Against Hate



Young People Against Hate (YPAH) brings young people in Edinburgh together to raise awareness about the hate crime in their community and encourage others within the community to do more to tackle problems such as racism, homophobia and islamophobia. Our aim is provide the tools and develop the skills for young people to be able to challenge discrimination and become peer educators.

Free YPAH Workshops

The Young People Against Hate project delivers free interactive workshops for young people between the age of 16-24, on topics such as:

- **Racism**
- **Homophobia**
- **Islamophobia**
- **Cultural awareness**
- **Immigration myth busting**

Peer Educators

Peer education revolves around learning and sharing new information from people who share similar social backgrounds, age range and life experience. We know that young people learn more effectively from their peers.

We are always looking for new volunteers to help with research and take workshops.

Volunteering

This is an opportunity for young people, who are interested in equality. Our goals:

1. Peer Educators will gain new skills and confidence
2. Peer Educators are better informed about discrimination and hate crime
3. Peer Educators will be given the tools and materials to address issues of discrimination and hate crime

If you would like to be a Peer Educator or to book a free workshop, please get in touch:

Contact : Nick Greener

Email: Ngreener@elrec.org.uk

Or call: 0131 556 8577

Or pop into ELREC for a chat, address:

14 Forth Street

Edinburgh , EH1 3LH

Communities For Conservation Project

WANT TO REDUCE YOUR ENERGY BILLS?

Although the demand for our energy advice service is constantly increasing, the energy advice home visit service that we offer is still free and open to individuals from Chinese, South Asian, African and Polish backgrounds. Since April we have benefitted many households:

- We helped over 40 clients to reduce bills and stay in control of their bills by advising them to set online accounts with their supplier and submit meter readings to get accurate bills.
- We increased clients' confidence by phoning their energy supplier with them to discuss issues.
- We helped 5 clients to switch to a cheaper energy supplier.
- We advised clients on debt situation.
- We helped 2 clients to draught proof their old windows.
- We helped clients to switch from prepayment meters to normal meters.

As of now, we have referred 63 people to our partner Home Energy Scotland, conducted 49 joint visits with them, a third of which have qualified for measures including grants, income maximization, warm home discount, etc. Some of those measures have changed people's lives.

CASE STUDY:

"The heating system of this stone-built house was over 20 years old. The controls were located underneath the old fireplace so not the easiest to access. The client did not misuse the heating, she was always very conscious of rising bills so made sure the heating was used properly. But the house was not heating up properly and the energy bills were constantly high. The family were often cold during winter months. After a joint visit with Home Energy Scotland, the client qualified for the Energy Assistance Scheme and a technical survey was conducted. Things happened quickly from the initial referral to HES to an engineer coming out to do the survey and then installation. The boiler and all radiators were replaced at no cost to the client. The client is very happy with our service. She didn't believe she would get anything". Parveen Ishaq, Energy Advisor.

If you want to book a home visit with us, email: cfc@elrec.org.uk or call 0131 556 0441

FOOD GROWING

In the midst of the growing season, our community gardens are in full swing. Lettuces, chervil, radishes, herbs, coriander, choy sum, pak choi, spinach, strawberries, raspberries and many more fruits and vegetables are being abundantly harvested every week in the gardens in Niddrie, Wester Hailes, Drumbrae, Royal Botanic Garden and Portobello. Our community gardeners, Khalid Bashir and Rhona Donaldson, our volunteer garden coordinators Madhavi and Bageshri, and the volunteers of the Royal Botanic Garden are running the sessions with enthusiasm. They teach participants all the imaginable gardening and food growing skills. Our community gardens are open to all. If you want to join, please get in touch with us.



Jean-Matthieu Gaunand with Aileen McLeod, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform holding ELREC's Climate Change Pledge.

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS

In June, we organised a trip to Whitmuir Organic Farm for 37 people from the Polish community. The scouts and their parents had the opportunity to discover the world of organic farming. Children fenced the pigs, fed the sheep, planted broad beans, harvested radishes and played with the hens. Everyone had fun learning about nature and organic farming. The trip was very popular and the farm visit was greatly appreciated.

"Best lunch ever!" "Great experience! We need similar activities in the future."



We screened the award winning documentary 'Just Eat It' and debated on the question "how to tackle the problem of food waste. A participant said: "this movie has changed my life: it showed how much waste there is out there. I'm even less fussy about use by date. I will urge people not to waste food." Due to the success of the event, we have created the '[Edinburgh Sustainable Meet Up](http://www.meetup.com/Edinburgh-Sustainable-Meetup/)'. If you want to meet new people, participate in interesting environment-related activities, have fun, and get inspired, join the group now: <http://www.meetup.com/Edinburgh-Sustainable-Meetup/>.

David Tai coordinated an excellent event to raise awareness of climate change amongst 30 people from Chinese background. The presentation on climate change was followed by an educative game on ranking electrical appliances.

Ewelina Lukaszek organized an eco-event "save the bees" in May at the Ukrainian club. She also delivered a series of 6 Eco Classes at the Polish Saturday School covering the themes of climate change, extinct animals, water, food waste, recycling and energy.

The 15 pupils learnt in fun ways about how to be "greener", the importance of recycling, saving energy and reducing food waste. The classes encouraged children to discuss the topics and pass knowledge onto their peers.

We organized a family friendly environmental day at Corstorphine Hill in April with the gardening group from Drumrae. Well attended by parents and children, the session was much enjoyed. Children went off in groups with their parents in a scavenger hunt for natural materials. They brought the materials back and shared what they had found. Our community gardener explained somethings about each natural object. After returning to the community

centre, the group cooked up nettle soup, and made some wild garlic pesto. Everybody learnt plenty, adults and children.





CASE STUDY

The client is an elderly Chinese man living alone in his three bedrooms flat. His only source of income is his Pension Credit. Due to years of financial difficulties, seldom has the client turned the heaters on even when it snowed in winter. During winter, to minimise his bills and because his home was too cold, the client would go to the library or the shopping mall during the day to warm himself up. After the library and the shopping mall closed, he was forced to go to McDonald's or KFC for a shelter. When both restaurants were closed, the client stayed home unwillingly. Due to the weather condition in winter, he was always uncomfortable and sometimes ill. David Tai conducted a home visit at the client's home, and discovered a cold flat, an old heating system and draughty windows. We immediately referred the client onto Home Energy Scotland to find out whether the client would be eligible for any grants to improve his home. David and Elaine Benzies went to the client's home for a second home visit. After several checks, the client successfully qualified to the Energy Assistance Scheme. A few months later, the client had a brand new heating system, and loft insulation installed at no cost. After the improvement, the client always stayed at home and enjoyed his warm home. The client is very grateful for the help from David and Home Energy Scotland.

ELREC's Support and Advice Service

If you've been discriminated against; need assistance or are looking for housing and benefits advice, we're here to help. We offer free and impartial advice for individuals who have suffered discrimination, need to report hate crimes or need assistance in working with public bodies. If we're unable to help, we'll help you take your case to an appropriate organisation who can.

If you would like to come and see us, please call and book an appointment first, and also write down details of the incident, paying particular attention to dates. We'll listen to your case and make an assessment, helping you to identify your options and decide on the best course of action.

To report an incident or get more information contact us at: ELREC, 14 Forth Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LH. (T) 0131 556 0441 (F) 0131 556 8577 (E) admin@elrec.org.uk (W) www.elrec.org.uk

Youth Zone

Hello, my name is Gabriela Lobo and I am the new Youth Zone Coordination here at ELREC. The Youth Zone is a new project that aims to reach BME young people in Edinburgh and Lothians. We want to provide a safe and fun environment where they can 1) discuss current and relevant issues, 2) build self-trust, confidence and self-esteem and, 3) develop skills and abilities that will enable them to find employment or enter a higher education programme.



The rational for this project came from the evident need in Edinburgh from a young group directed specifically for BME youth. The Edinburgh Youth Social Inclusion Partnership wrote that in 2003 there were few youth groups for the BME community, that 54% of BME youths had never been a part of a youth group while 52% believed that while there were lots of youth activities in Edinburgh they felt that they “were not for them”.

Additionally, in 2011, a report made by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, highlighted the fact that there is a pattern of lower educational attainment, poor conversion from education to employment rates, and seclusion within many BME communities in Scotland. Equally, The Scottish Government observed that this group of young people participated less in particular apprenticeships and mainstream youth projects across Edinburgh.

In an attempt to encourage this group of young people to participate in their community and motivate them into taking the next step into adulthood, we are creating this space. The project is being developed as we speak and we hope to be able to open our doors to them at the beginning of September, 2015.

Additionally, I appreciate the warm welcome and constant support I have received from everyone at ELREC and want to welcome anyone who has any questions or suggestions in relation to the Youth Zone project to contact me at any point.

Gabriela Lobo
Youth Zone Coordination
GLobo@elrec.org.uk

A volunteer's experience

I am Bageshri. I got involved with ELREC since last year through its community gardening project. And started volunteering for the same project from April this year.

I love gardening and enjoy volunteering as a gardener coordinator. My main duties are co coordinating between Botanic Garden staff and the team members, Updating weekly updates on groups Facebook page, creating monthly report etc. This volunteering has helped to built my self confidence and develop new skills.

Bageshri



Volunteer With ELREC!

Volunteering with ELREC is a great way to develop your skills, meet new people and work as part of an enthusiastic team. We're always looking for helpful and reliable volunteers, so why not make good use of your skills, get involved and join our volunteering team? For more details visit our volunteering page: www.elrec.org.uk/volunteer.htm or contact the ELREC office on 0131 556 0441 or email us at: admin@elrec.org.uk

Trip to the Woods

On Wednesday 29 July a group of staff and volunteers went on a trip to Lord Ancrum's Wood, outside Dalkeith. The wood is owned by the Forestry Commission, who kindly funded the event. Thirteen of us packed into a minibus at Forth Street and after a hiatus at Cameron Toll (involving a missing key to the petrol tank) we arrived a little late to be met by the Forestry Commission's rangers. We started with a conducted tour of the woods where the knowledgeable rangers told us of ecological importance of managed forestry and trees in general, with demonstrations to show how fascinating and useful trees are. After an icebreaker and picnic lunch in the sunshine we then had more activities organised by the rangers around the topic of climate change, followed by a demonstration of Tai Chi, with music, by Connie (pictured).



Many of us could well believe that it takes years to master it, and a few had to drop out! Rain curtailed any further fun and we made our way back to the minibus and got back to Forth Street a little earlier than planned.

Among the feedback from the event:

"Peaceful, relaxing and entertaining"

"Inspiring and relaxing"

"It's nice walking in the woods and learning new things about nature"

Overall it was well received and further opportunities like this would be welcomed.

David Panton

Participant and ELREC Admin Volunteer

POLISH FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE

The **FAMILY SUPPORT** project
is designed to help Polish families settle in a new
country and reduce their stress, anxiety, barriers and
challenges related to moving and living in Scotland.



Polish Family Support Centre is an organisation established in 2009. We are a growing charity focusing on providing support to the Polish minority in Scotland. We offer comprehensive support for disadvantaged people through offering counselling, social and advocacy services, principally targeting the difficulties Polish face after leaving their native country.



Scottish Charity No. SC034152

Polish Family Support Centre

172 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 5EA

T: 0131 281 0429 E: info@pfsc.co.uk W: www.pfsc.co.uk

Polish Family Support Centre is registered as a charity in Scotland, No. SC034152



Barrier of Poverty and Inequality

Hi all! My name is Hannah Lawrence and I have joined ELREC as the Research Assistant of the Barriers of Poverty and Equality Project. I am from North Carolina but have been a student in the UK since 2012, so I feel more British than American these days!

Since I have only just joined the ELREC family and started work on this fantastic project, I have mostly been playing catch up. Nonetheless, the wheels of the project are spinning and we are so excited about the big plans in the works. This is not a new project at ELREC, so many of you may be familiar with our objectives. But in short, we are trying to identify why Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and African communities (more than any other communities in Edinburgh) are continuously experiencing high levels of poverty. There have been many enlightening reports and studies attempting to understand the underlying causes of this phenomenon-- in fact, our project is based on one such report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. But the reason that our project is necessary is because most of the previous reports have been based predominantly upon quantitative data, leaving some significant gaps in our understanding (and therefore ability to help solve the problem). Therefore, our report will be primarily *qualitative*, to see if we can shed some insightful light on the issues by reaching out to the communities in person. Which brings me to my next point—what are we up to now?

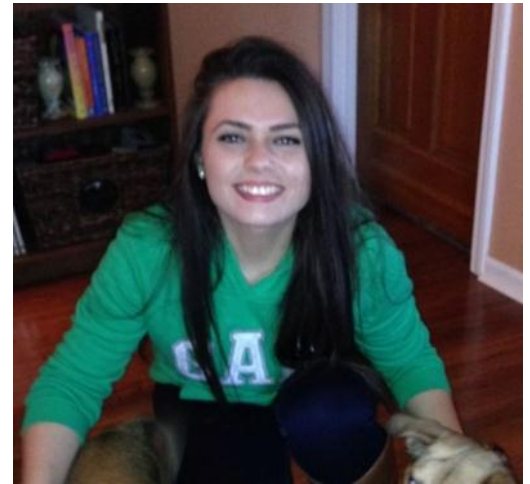
Currently we are designing a survey to distribute to these communities—it asks questions and tackles topics and themes typically unexplored. It will be the statistical foundation of our qualitative structure. This structure will be built out of case studies (by conducting in-depth interviews), and multiple focus groups, with discussion topics tailored to each community. So the recruitment of participants for these three modes of analysis is the next big undertaking. I would be overjoyed to welcome volunteers from these three communities—with their unique insight and, perhaps, language skills, this project would benefit greatly. With that said, I look forward to working with *all* of those willing to give their time to such an amazing project and wonderful communities!

If *you* or *anyone you know* is interested in attending a focus group (with refreshments and great discussions!), participating in an in-depth interview (carried out flexibly via phone, skype, or in person), or filling out a survey (the survey will be digitized for simpler dissemination very soon), then please contact me at hlawrence@elrec.org.uk. The contribution of the public's time, knowledge, and/or community contacts is integral to the success of this project!

As for the ELREC community, I have received such a warm welcome this past week and so I want to say a big thank you to everyone that has gone out of their way to offer help or simply just say hello. What a fantastic organization to work with!

Until next time!

Hannah Lawrence, hlawrence@elrec.org.uk





Free English Sessions

Welcome to LET (Learn English Together)



The community-based English language sessions are organised as collaborative learning. We are a small group of learners, who want to improve our English language skills at a beginner and intermediate level.

We meet once a week and have great fun learning English. We also do activities together: such as visiting museums, outdoor activities, cultural events and photography.

We are all different nationalities, background and ages - everyone willing to learn English is welcome to join us.

We are based in ELREC, a registered charity in 14 Forth Street, EH1 3LH

We are in walking distance from Princes Street.

For more information please call 0131 556 0441 or email admin@elrec.org.uk

Sessions take place every Thursday at 6.30pm



As of April 2015, the *Welcoming A Greener Future Project* assists migrant communities living in Edinburgh to improve their English language skills, save energy and reduce their carbon footprint.

The project consists of the following:

Home Energy Saving— to help people use energy more efficiently in their home, reduce carbon emissions and save money.

Community Engagement and Integration— to assist newly arrived migrants engage in activities intended to raise awareness about climate change.

Re-New, Re-Use, Re-Cycle Programme— to help people reduce their carbon emissions through re-using, renewing and recycling clothes, shoes, books, household items, furniture and a lot more.

We also offer English classes for all levels and Employability guidance & support.

Join Us!

Please join us to find out more about climate change, how it affects you and what you can do to tackle it!

For more information, please visit www.thewelcoming.org

Contact us by email: info@thewelcoming.org or call 0131 346 8577



TRUE COLOURS

TACKLING RACISM UNITING EVERYONE

DO YOU BELIEVE
IN A WORLD FREE
FROM PREJUDICE?

DO YOU WANT
TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE?

STAND UP FOR
EQUALITY!

ALL DIFFERENT, ALL EQUAL!

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN OUR PROJECT CONTACT UNA DOSEN: UDosen@elrec.org.uk OR DROP INTO OUR OFFICE TO SAY HI. WE WOULD LOVE YOU TO JOIN US IN OUR QUEST FOR A HAPPIER SOCIETY! YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT TO US, AND ITS IMPORTANT FOR CHANGE
BECOME A TRUE COLOURS VOLUNTEER: LEARN ABOUT EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. CHALLENGE BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION. DEVELOP FUN AND INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS. BUILD UP YOUR CONFIDENCE. ADD NEW SKILLS TO YOUR CV AND MEET OTHER SUPER AWESOME PEOPLE!



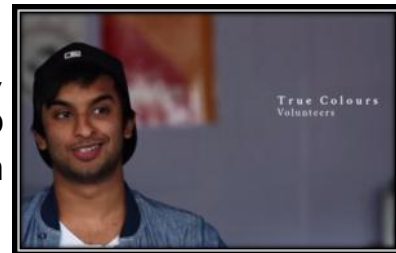
www.facebook.com/truecoloursgroup

ELREC (EDINBURGH & LOTHIAN REGIONAL EQUALITY COUNCIL)
14 FORTH STREET, EDINBURGH, EH1 3LH FOR MORE DETAILS ON

True Colours newsletter update – July

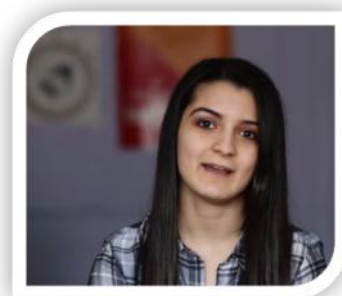
Hello everyone,

First of all I would like to welcome our new volunteers Andrea, Denise, Rhianna and Jay to the team. We are always happy to have new faces in the group and they are doing crucial work in our continuing fight for equality.



We have exciting news from the TRUE Colours group. The Show Racism the Red Card documentaries "This is my home" featuring TRUE Colours was launched on 17th July. The series of short films are exploring the issues of immigration and racism from the point of view of Scotland's migrant community. The films include deeply candid personal accounts by individual immigrants from as far afield as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Iraq,

seeking to inform the national conversation about immigration, from the point of view of the UK's migrant population. TRUE Colours are delighted to have been a part of the project and contribute with our own experiences. We encourage everyone to join the conversation on social media using **#thisismyhome** to share their personal stories and opinions on the topic. Watch the documentaries here: <https://goo.gl/ArQuqr>



During the last three months we were continuing our peer education project, in particular with St Augustine's High School, where we had a successful recruiting event with more than 20 people signed up to either join or support the TRUE Colours project. We have also been working hard on creating new workshops covering topics like human rights and cyberbullying.



From the Equalities Engagement Officer

Hello to everyone from Equality Engagement Project. Our new project, Diversity in Public Life and Democratic Process is funded by Scottish Government is running very well. This project begins with identifying key stakeholders from the public organisations and community groups, community councils, electoral commission and public appointment commissioners across Edinburgh and the Lothians.



Enthusiasm and huge positive response have shown on project by the stakeholders over the period of networking. Currently a questionnaire survey is being conducted to determine the barriers which limit the participation. We have an event planned in October to publish the results of the survey and to raise awareness about engagement of BME community in public life and democratic process, in partnership with local electoral commission and other institutions related to public life. More information about the project can be seen on our brochure by [clicking here](#).

We have also partnered with this year's Midlothian Wellbeing Mela 2015. In collaboration with Health-in-Mind, Midlothian People's Equality Group (MPEG) and Midlothian Council, the Mela event will take place on 26 September, Saturday 1.00pm at Glencorse Centre, Auchendinny, Penicuik, Midlothian. Over the Edinburgh festival seasons, ELREC is working closely with Just Festival- 90 Minute Citizenship project.

Survey on Diversity in Public Life & Democratic Process

I am glad to announce that ELREC has launched a project aimed at increasing engagement of diverse communities in public life and the democratic process.

The new project, which is funded by the Scottish Government, also aims to increase representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in public life and democratic process across the Edinburgh & Lothians.

In order to identify the barriers which limit the participation, we are conducting a questionnaire survey. Findings from this survey will then be used to plan & design the next phase of this project.

We would kindly like to request that you complete this survey online; it will take 15-20 minutes. Your view is really important to determine the next steps of the project.

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/elrec>

Please let us know if you require a hardcopy of the survey by post. For any inquiries, please contact us by email: mrahman@elrec.org.uk or telephone 0131 556 0441.

Your vote matters. Make sure you're in

The Electoral Registration Officer has launched the updating of The Register of Electors across Edinburgh and the Lothians. Household Enquiry Forms are being delivered to all households across the area from 3 August. Only one person in the household needs to complete this form. It can be completed/updated by going to www.electreg.co.uk/lothian-vjb and entering the security codes printed on the form.



People are able to vote in Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections when they are 16 and over, and in UK Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections when they are 18 and over.

As 16 and 17 year olds can now vote in Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections we need details of: -

- 14 year olds that will turn 15 by 30 November 2015
- Those aged 15 and over

Young persons will be included on the register and able to vote when they become old enough.

NEW VOTER REGISTRATION

New electors will also need to register individually which can be done online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or by telephoning 0131 344 2500 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Registration only takes a couple of minutes but you need your national insurance number and date of birth to complete an application.

Please note, being registered means you have right to vote at elections and could also improve your credit rating. For further information on electoral registration please visit www.gov.uk/yourvotematters

Calling for new members at ELREC!!

ELREC strives to embody the principles of transparency; integrity; equity; mutual co-operation; and participatory democracy.

ELREC welcomes all individuals and organisations who share our aims, visions, and values to join us as members. As a member you will have the opportunity to shape ELREC policy direction; participate in ELREC's annual Management Board election; and attend ELREC events and lectures. Our members also act as links to various communities. You will receive a copy of the ELREC Quarterly Community Newsletter and receive information on equality related events.

We welcome membership from individuals from diverse groups as this results in the better representation of all protected characteristics. We would be much obliged if you would consider joining us, as well as helping us by encouraging individuals and organisations known to you to join ELREC.

More information regarding membership, application forms as well as full copies of ELREC's Memorandum and Articles of Association, can be viewed by visiting our membership webpage or contacting our office:

www.elrec.org.uk/member.htm

Just Festival: 90 Minutes of Citizenship

Owing to the support of the National Lottery Fund, this year Just Festival will offer 500 free-entry tickets to allow individuals and communities affected by age, employment, prejudice and disability to attend selected events within our new project, 90 Minutes of Citizenship. We would like to provide more opportunities to young adults and adults from socially excluded communities in particular, to engage in public debates and exchange observations and ideas during our discussions. Introducing this new project as part of Awards for All, we are aiming at making this Festival accessible to all. Thus in order to ensure that beneficiaries are the concerned target group, Just Festivals will partner with entities providing support to socially excluded communities to facilitate ticket bookings and organise transport for attendees outside of Edinburgh.

We have 20 tickets available for each event, which includes 17 conversations, 2 TED Talks, 2 screenings of Edinburgh Thru Docu Lens, 2 performances of 'Resilience' by Active Inquiry and 2 'Talk Shops' workshops. Each and every event uses different approaches to engaging audiences, allowing you to reflect on, discuss and comment on vital matters.

90 Minutes of Citizenship is a social inclusion project designed as part of the Edinburgh Just Festival programme. The project aims to increase public participation in discussions and debates over vital social issues. Having observed the gradually improving interaction level at our conversation events as well as the increasing need amongst young adults and adults for being involved in public debates, this innovative scheme will provide a platform for people to gather and shed light on important subjects, increasing diversity amongst audience members and encourage communications between individuals.

We would like to hear from you! For more information please visit ; <http://just-festival.org/90-minutes-of-citizenship> or contact: aneesah@just-festival.org



Mizan Rahman, Equality Engagement Officer
Email: mrahman@elrec.org.uk

...an equal Midlothian is better for everyone's well being

Midlothian Wellbeing Mela

Saturday, 26 September 2015
Time: 1.00pm - 4pm

Glencorse Community Centre, 4 Firth Road
Auchendinny, Midlothian EH26 0QZ

Bus no: 37, 40 and 47 (Lothian Bus), Stop: Opposite Milton Cottages/ The Brae

- Artists from diverse ethnic groups
- A variety of wellbeing workshops
- An exciting range of Children's activities
- Opportunity to celebrate positive health and well being
- Delicious foods

A free, family friendly event, all are invited

For more information please contact:

Christine Schaffer, Tel: 0131 271 3606 Email: Christine.Schaffer@midlothian.gov.uk

Anika Wycislik Email: anika@health-in-mind.org.uk

Mizan Rahman Email: mrahman@elrec.org.uk

Organising partners: MPEG, Health-in-Mind and ELREC

Midlothian People's Equality Group





ELREC's New project aimed at Increasing engagement of the under represented minority ethnic community in public life and the democratic process across Edinburgh and the Lothians

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Study and research
- Promotional events
- Dialogue with BME 'Role-models'
- Mentoring
- Support and advice
- Information service



If you live in Edinburgh and the Lothians, are from black and minority ethnic community and interested in getting involved in public life and the democratic process, this is an opportunity for you to take part in this project.

Contact: Mizan Rahman, Equality Engagement Officer E-mail: mrahman@elrec.org.uk

**ELREC, 14 Forth Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LH | Web: www.elrec.org.uk
Find us on : www.facebook.com/ELREC | @ELRECUK**

NEPAL SCOTLAND ASSOCIATION



A devastating earthquake in over 80 years ripped through Nepal on the 25th of this April, with a death



toll of over 9000 (and sharply rising). Around 18 people have been reportedly killed by the worst ever Mount Everest avalanche disaster with hundreds injured and being rescued, 2 people at a time using high altitude helicopters. Local media reports that dozens of building in addition to historical landmarks, in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu have been all but levelled.

Nepal Scotland Association, a UK registered charity based in Edinburgh, in partnership with our Nepal based Volunteers and local NGOs has been involved in many charitable work in Nepal in the past.

In order to swiftly contribute to the current disaster, we have launched relief appeal to raise funds for communities in Nepal affected by this unfortunate tragedy. And although the situation is rapidly evolving, we do have a picture of what is required there at this very moment:

- Basic necessities like water, purifiers and purification tablets, high-energy biscuits, shelter kits and tarpaulins;
- Sanitary supplies, torches and even body bags;
- Hygiene kits, saline solution, anti-viral materials, antibiotics.

To accomplish this we need your generous gift to support our efforts. 100 percent of your contribution will go directly to Nepal and will be spent on supplies for affected people there. (NSA in-country activities is entirely funded through membership fees and volunteered time of our members and friends)

Please visit 'Make a Donation page' on our website: <http://www.nepalscotlandassociation.org/> to make a donation, however small.

Fund Raising for Nepal Earthquake Victims



NEPAL EARTHQUAKE OF 25 APRIL 2015 - MAGNITUDE 7.8

DONATE NOW

Help us reach our goal !!

Donate Online

PayPal



NEPAL SCOTLAND ASSOCIATION
(नेपाल स्कटल्याण्ड एसोसियसन)
Charity SC035084

Website: www.nepalscotlandassociation.org
Contact Number: 07989366245





ADVERTISING

We welcome organisations to advertise in the ELREC Community Newsletter for:

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

This service is available for a contribution of £100 to £250 depending on the size and placement of the advertisement. To find out more, please contact Neil Ogilvy on 0131 556 0441 or email: admin@elrec.org.uk

Our newsletter is published every quarter in January, April, July and October of each year.

CONFERENCE ROOM BOOKINGS

You can book our 20-seat meeting room on an hourly basis for £20 per hour (reduced rate for small charities and community groups)

Tea & Coffee £1 per head
Please contact the ELREC office for additional information or to make a booking.



FUNDERS

ELREC is funded by:

- Scottish Government
- Keep Scotland Beautiful Fund
- Voluntary Action Fund
- Big Lottery Fund
- Santander Foundation
- Robertson Trust

VOLUNTEERS

Alex Rainbow, Andrea Westcott-Lacoursiere, Aoife Quinn,, Archana Goyal, Arnold, Azita Labbari-Arabzadeh, Balla Ceesay, Benjamin Mignot, Caesar Simpson, Carmen Hernandez, Caroline Levack, Chandma Lala, Charlotte Emma Leggett, Claire Murrie, Connie Yeung, David Fulton, David Panton, Denise Jennings, Eleanor Shackleton, Emilie Tricarico, Ezgi Denli, Fiona Sarah Jane Brown, Gihan Soliman, Giulia Tarsitano, Hani Noor, Hannah Lawrence, Hannah Mokheri, Hnery Omorere, Holly Smith, Iain Nelson, Iwona Kuzia, James Holdcrof, Karolina Drzewicka, Kyriaki Paroutoglou, Louise Montgomery, Madhavi Lathha, Margaret Paklos, Maria Angelica Florez, Maria Angella Capasso, Maria S D Rodrigues, Markus Spperr, Morgan Jones, Natasha Hop, Nazmy Katherine Villarroel Williams, Pushpanjali Matta, Rachel Irvine, Rhianna Mallia, Roya Nejadi, Rui Zhao, Saaliha Hussain, Samuel Hanson, Sandea Roig-Montane, Shannon Chan, Stephanie Smith, Tauras Dauskartas, Terhi Maria Sepanmaa, Thomas Sutcliffe, Tibor Kiszely, Vanessa Bain, Viols Korba, Yusuf Miah, Zach Allan.

SERVICES

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional 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.

Our Objectives

- to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination
- to reduce inequality and promote a culture of human rights
- to promote good relations between persons of different groups without distinction

We pursue our aims through:

- Engagement with communities of protected characteristics
- Complainant aid for victims of discrimination and harassment.
- Support for communities in influencing change by facilitating interaction between communities and authorities
- Consultancy on equality policies, procedures and delivery of customised training on equality matters

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC)

14 Forth Street

Edinburgh

EH1 3LH

(T) 0131 556 0441

(F) 0131 556 8577

(E) admin@elrec.org.uk

(W) www.elrec.org.uk

Charity Number: SC007896

Company Number: SC183419

