



# ELREC Newsletter

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council

*Promoting Equality • Fighting Discrimination • Fostering Good Relations*

ISSUE 46: April 2016

## From the Chair-

Hello all and welcome to the 46th edition of our newsletter for April 2016. ELREC has had a busy start to the 2016 year and have begun the new financial year strongly.

Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow Board Members and members of the organisation for putting their faith in me once again by re-electing me as the Chair of the organisation.

We have had a number of large events over the last few months which will be covered later within this newsletter. On the 31st of January we had our inaugural annual Equality Champions' Gala Dinner which was a great success and brought people and communities from across the equality spectrum together. A number of people were recognised for their hard work in the equality field in the last year. I would like to congratulate them all again and am sure that they will continue their great work.

ELREC held its AGM on 24<sup>th</sup> February at the City Chambers. It was a successful event, with speeches from Councillor Maureen Child and Prof. Geoff Palmer, ELREC's President, as well as updates from myself and Elisabetta Spano, ELREC's Project Lead Officer.

The AGM was well attended by ELREC's staff and volunteers, as well as organisation's members and others. It was a good occasion to present ELREC's Annual Report, with updates and information on all our projects and the work we do. During the AGM we also renewed our Management Board: I am delighted to confirm the re-election of Mr. Shami Khan, Ms. Melanie Beaumont and Ms. Irina Lazarenko, and also the appointment of Mr. Rajnish Singh. I am sure that Mr. Singh, with his expertise and knowledge will bring an important contribution to ELREC.

Furthermore, we elected our office bearers at our board meeting in March. Carl John has taken over the position of Treasurer, Rajnish Singh is our new Secretary, Amjad Chaudhry has taken over as Convenor of the Education Subcommittee and Azra Sharif-Qayyum is the Convenor of the Volunteering Subcommittee. Irina Lazarenko is continuing in her role as Convenor of the Finance Subcommittee and Melanie Beaumont is continuing as the Convenor of the Membership Subcommittee. We have also co-opted Neena Agarwal and Chris Wigglesworth onto the Board this year to add their expertise. We have re-established a working relationship with Edinburgh Council and I hope this will produce great results for the community.

I hope that you find the information in this edition interesting and useful. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact the office.

Foyso Choudhury MBE, Chair



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E Spano

#### Office & Program Coordinator

N Ogilvy

#### Equalities Engagement Officer

M Rahman

#### Support and Advice

A Musamba

#### Youth Development Officer

N Greener

#### True Colours Worker

U Dosen

#### Youth Zone Coordinator

C Nicoletti

#### Research Assistant

H Lawrence

#### Bright Choices Officers

N Currie, M Rostami, A Arabzadeh

#### Work Space Maintenance

D Panton

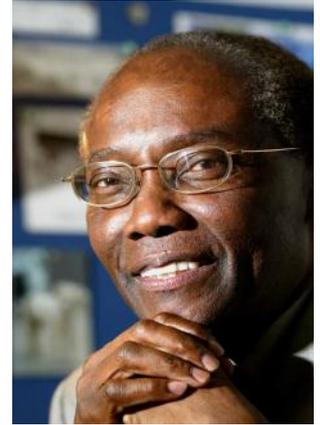
#### Communities for Conservation:

Coordinator — J M Gaunand

Link Officers — D Tai, E K Lukaszek,  
P Ishaq, A Ibrahim, A Kassim, M Diaz

## The Nonsense called Racism

Working to help different people in society is a challenge because of various factors: such as dealing with the 'concept of race'. Prejudice against people of different 'races' developed into a serious social problem in the late 1950s when I lived and worked in London. In 1965, when I was a PhD student in Edinburgh, the first race relations law was introduced. That this law had to be strengthened over the years indicates that despite all the race relations work that has been carried out, racial prejudice that leads to racial discrimination sadly still exists in our society.



We tend to define things to ease understanding and communication. If something is difficult to define, it is likely that difficulties will be associated with related activities. Present reports in our National newspapers confirm that 'race and racism' are still at the centre of how we live today. Maybe we would become more tolerant about differences between human beings if we gained a better understanding of the meaning of the word 'race'. This is not my area of expertise but the vagueness of the definitions and meanings of the words race and racism may be part of the problem. If these words could be defined more clearly, some of the causes of racism may disappear benefitting us all.

One obvious anomaly is that we have *races of people* but *one human race*. This would make more sense if we referred to *one human species* instead of *one human race*, where a species is the same entity or group as is defined in Biological science for other animals and plants. Therefore, human beings, like all other living entities, are diverse but in terms of the biology of evolution are the same. Therefore, the phrase *human race* should be changed to *human species*. In this regard, UNESCO's 1978 Declaration on Race and Racial prejudice (Article 1) makes biological sense by stating, "All human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock, they are born equal in dignity and rights and form an integral part of humanity."

Our customs and practices do not alter this *sameness*. Therefore, prejudices that relate to culture, religion, body structure, colour, gender, sexuality or ability are an insult to our *genetic sameness* as one distinct *group or species*. No one has a right to damage, destroy or disrespect the genetic (biological) *sameness* which made us what we were, are and will be.

It is ironic that the origins of the word race, that has caused such damage in the world, is uncertain. It has been stated that the concept of race entered the English Language by the 1580s. This coincides with when we entered the black chattel slave business. Therefore, the word race with its contrived but evil hierarchy of human importance, is not an old word. Its early use described visual differences between people but when these visual differences were used to justify political self-interests in the eighteenth century, denigrating prejudices relating to so-called differences in intelligence, quickly turned into international discriminatory practices such as turning black people in chattel slaves, ironically during The Enlightenment. Chattel slaves were designated as a 'race apart'... not human. However, the fact that they were forced to produce the children of their white slave masters, confirmed that black slaves and white slave masters were *the same species...the same humanity* because different species do not produce offspring or do not produce offspring which are normal (eg. mules). Nature has its way of showing the truth.

As I said above, I know very little about the academic, philosophical or psychological use of the word race. However, as a descendant of Caribbean slaves, I know that 'racism' can be as serious as the racism shown by Slave masters, Hitler, the Klu Klux Klan, Enoch Powell and Institutional-International racists, or it can be as trivial as the 'racism' shown by the passenger at Birmingham New Street train Station that thrust her luggage at me and insisted that I carried it to the taxi. The practice and portrayal of historical prejudices is not racism, it is a denigration of our common humanity as *one species*. We are not races we are *one people*.

Other animals (eg domestic cats) which have different colours, shapes and forms are regarded as one species and *not* different races. Also, there is no such thing as the *cat race*. It is time that our educational system eliminated the nonsense that different human beings are 'races' and that there is yet 'another race' called the human race.

So called 'racism' should be seen as *human rights abuse* because that is what it is; it is an abuse of our shared humanity. It is like attacking our own family and friends. If we desist from this abuse, the "dignity and rights" of every human being will be protected as outlined in the 1978 Declaration of UNESCO. The acceptance that an attack on human beings that look different from us is "racism" and can be understood, is nonsense; it is, in fact, a disgraceful attack on our common humanity that should not be tolerated anywhere in the world.

### **Sir Prof. Geoff Palmer OBE**

Honorary President

#### **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](mailto:admin@elrec.org.uk) (W) [www.elrec.org.uk](http://www.elrec.org.uk)

## From the Vice Chair

Dear all,

It is a pleasure to contribute to ELREC's newsletter.

First, I would like to thank ELREC members for re-electing me again in the Board of the organisation and as Vice-Chair, as well as Convenor of Personnel Subcommittee. I am very grateful for the trust you are putting on me and I am keen on keep working and contributing to ELREC work and, more in general, to promote equality in our communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank ELREC staff and volunteer for the work and commitment that they put in every day in what they do. In these first few months of the year we saw a few changes in the composition of ELREC staff. We said goodbye to Andrew Camilleri, who was a volunteer and then Youth Zone Coordinator, who did a very good job while he was employed with us. We have welcomed Azita Jabbari as the new addition in Bright Choices project, Cristiana Nicoletti as the new Youth Zone Coordinator and Mariana Diaz as the Spanish Community Link Officer for Communities for Conservation. I am very happy to see how ELREC family keeps growing with very skilled and enthusiastic people. I am also very proud to say that we currently have over 40 volunteers, and 20 of them come in regularly (once or more a week) to support our staff and our daily work. Their passion and dedication is very much appreciated by everyone in the organisation.

More details can be found in the next few pages, I hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter.

**Shami Khan**

**Vice Chair and Convenor of the Personnel Subcommittee**



## From the Project Lead Officer and Fundraiser

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Dear all,

It has been a while since our last newsletter. We had our AGM on the 24<sup>th</sup> February at the City Chambers and we published our Annual Report just before that, which highlighted our work in the previous year, with some insights from the current projects.

On 31<sup>st</sup> January we had our Equalities Champion's Dinner at Heriot Watt University to celebrate the achievements of those who worked to advance equality in our society. It was a successful and well attended event, which also gave us the opportunity to present ELREC's projects and commitment to equality and human rights to a broad and diverse audience.



With regards to funding, I am very pleased to announce that at the end of this financial year we managed to secure funding to continue a number of our projects. True Colours and Equalities Engagement have been extended for three more months, until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016. We have already submitted two more applications to the Scottish Government to further continue them from July 2016. In March we achieved funding from the Climate Challenge Fund to continue Communities for Conservation for another year, which has now expanded to include a Spanish Community Link Officer to work with the Spanish speaking community in Edinburgh. We have also secured funding for a cycling project that aims to encourage BME individuals to use bikes more often in the city and outside. Besides these successes, we are waiting for the outcome of a number of other applications and we are planning to submit more which can hopefully widen our areas of work and interest.

We have had some changes among our staff since our last newsletter. I am pleased to welcome Cristiana as our new Youth Zone coordinator, Azita, who joined the Bright Choices project in February, and Mariana, who has just joined the Communities for Conservation team as Spanish Community Link Officer. They are all bringing their skills and expertise to strengthen ELREC and its work. I would also like to thank Andrew Camilleri who provided a great input into our Youth Zone in his time as Coordinator.

I have been in this post for eight months and I have really enjoyed my work, mostly thanks to ELREC staff, volunteers and the Board. I therefore thank them for making ELREC such a friendly and stimulating place to work.

**Elisabetta Spano**

[espano@elrec.org.uk](mailto:espano@elrec.org.uk)

## From the Office and Program Coordinator

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Hi all,

Since our last newsletter ELREC has hosted and been involved with a number of events. It was lovely to see many of you at the Equality Champions' Dinner in January and also meet many new faces. It was great to see so many people there to celebrate equality work taking place in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

We have also run a number of in house training sessions for our volunteers and wider afield. Topics for these have covered a wide range of equality issues from disability awareness to first aid training. All were well attended and feedback has been positive. The idea behind them is to provide awareness raising and knowledge that our volunteers can use within their own lives and take back to their communities. Many of our volunteers are also currently looking for work and these sessions provide them with valuable experience to display to potential employers.

As we head into the new financial year the majority of our projects are carrying on and continuing to make a positive impact on the communities that they work with.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with all of our staff and volunteers going forward.

**Neil Ogilvy—NOgilvy@elrec.org.uk**



## From the Youthzone Coordinator

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Hi everyone! After a small break due to the change of coordinator, the Youth Zone is back!

I would like to use this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Cristiana and I have been the Youth Zone Coordinator since April 1<sup>st</sup>. I would like to thank Andrew Camilleri, who did a wonderful job before me. During the last few months, Andrew carried out activities with several young people and got in touch with other organisations in Edinburgh. Check our Facebook and Twitter and keep up to date, because some new partnerships might start, so you will be able to reach us also in other parts of Edinburgh!

Meanwhile, the drop-in service on Wednesdays from 4 to 7 pm goes on and is open to everyone not only to get help in looking for a job, higher education or volunteering opportunity, but also for all the ones who want to have a chat and some fun in a relaxed atmosphere.

Come and meet us, or follow us on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/youthzoneedin>) or Facebook ([www.facebook.com/youthzoneedinburgh](http://www.facebook.com/youthzoneedinburgh))!

**Cristiana Nicoletti**

**cristiana.nicoletti@elrec.org.uk**



## True Colours

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Hello from TRUE Colours,

First of all I would like to give a huge thanks to all of our volunteers for their commitment and hard work with the group. We have been quite busy in the last few months, focusing not only on our workshops but also on the research regarding anti-bullying policies in Edinburgh schools. The research is looking to discover a little bit more about how students and teachers feel about bullying in their own schools. We are trying to find out how schools are dealing with this issue, and to see if there is anything more to be done to help students and teachers confront this problem head on in the communities.



TRUE Colours has also continued working with schools to deliver our peer education programme. Since November we have visited five schools and youth centres, where we have conducted workshops about issues such as Cyberbullying, Bullying, prejudice and discrimination, Islam and gender, Gender Equality and Gender Representation, Immigration, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, myth busting, Racism and Hate Crime.

During our visit to Inveralmond Community High School we had a chance to speak to the school's LGBT group and see the positive example the school is setting for other schools in the area. We had a very good response from the group and as a result we are planning a four week programme with the group. The volunteers are currently developing the programme, which will consist of four workshops covering LGBT history and major milestones in UK, tips and tools on how to deal with homophobia and homophobic bullying with the emphasis on human rights, how to help others in similar situations and examples of good practices for the teachers.

During the Human Rights Week in December, the TRUE colours group in St Augustine's High School has organised a range of awareness raising activities on the topic of immigration, refugees and asylum seekers. The activities covered assemblies and tutor times, ending with a competition on the topic of Positive Impact of Immigration. The events covered all years, which is a total of around 700 students.

**Una Dosen—[udosen@elrec.org.uk](mailto:udosen@elrec.org.uk)**

**TRUE Colours Coordinator**

**TRUE Colours need your help, Edinburgh!**

**Have you experienced bullying or been a witness of bullying? Do you talk about prejudice and equality in your school? Take the TRUE Colours anti-bullying survey and share your opinions and experiences.**

**Students: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/againstbullying>**

**Teachers: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/againstbullyingt>**

## From the Youth Development Officer

2016 has been a hugely successful year for the YPAH. The project has continued to provide workshops and one on one support for young people involved in hate crimes. However we have also placed a specific emphasis on youth empowerment and employment.



The YPAH has continued to facilitate workshops in North Edinburgh and West Edinburgh. These two areas continue to need charities to support young people, address issues of discrimination and hate crime.

The YPAH volunteers have been fantastic over the last three months helping us deliver workshops in Gorgie and West Pilton and have

developed research projects on the Equality Act 2010, Hate Crime and Youth Unemployment. The materials and research that have been done have allowed workshops to be more accurate and helpful to young people and youth workers.

The YPAH has also been able to organise trainings that have been hugely helpful for our volunteers and staff. The YPAH has been able to bring in experts from Capability Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council and SACRO, to help develop more knowledge on different marginalised groups.

This new emphasis has been a result of the hugely successful Youth Unemployment Reduction Conference which was funded by Erasmus + and supported by various charity organisations across Europe. The young people who attended the conference gave a unique perspective on youth unemployment in their home country and why so many young people are looking to improve their career prospects by moving across Europe.

The conference gave our youth workers the opportunity to deliver workshops and materials that we thought would benefit young people in any country, we all shared tools, techniques and possible solutions to some huge problems facing young people.

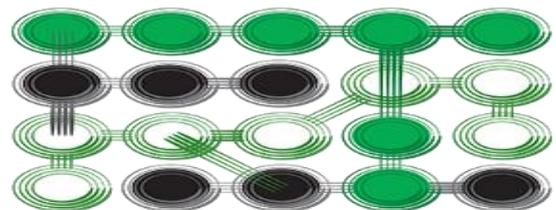


The Conference has laid the foundation for ELREC to expand its youth employment projects and also allowed ELREC to become more than a regional charity but one that operates across borders and into Europe.

The Conference was attended by 25 youth workers from six different countries and it required a huge amount of planning, organisation and dedication. The volunteers who worked on the project gave a huge amount of time to the event: Natasha, Lesley and the two Andrews, and everyone at ELREC would like to thank them for their support.

The YPAH will continue the great work started at the conference as well as increase the number of workshops facilitated across Edinburgh in relation to Hate Crimes.

**Nicholas Greener,**  
**ngreener@elrec.org.uk**



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## Communities For Conservation



With much gratitude we are delighted to announce that the Climate Challenge Fund is funding the Communities for Conservation project for another year enabling us to continue benefiting communities and the environment. Our appreciation extends to CEMVO Scotland for the amazing support that they have provided throughout the project.

By conducting 250 free energy advice home visits with the Polish, African, South Asian and Chinese communities, we have saved our clients **£100,761** over 22 months. Through our services, 15 clients received free new heating systems, 4 clients received free cavity wall insulation, 1 client received free loft insulation, 1 client received free draught proofing; we have helped 10 clients to switch to cheaper suppliers, 4 clients to get cheaper tariffs, 7 clients to switch from prepayment meter to standard meter, 4 clients to obtain financial reductions or to clear their debts, and 11 clients were referred for a Benefit check. After our visits, 2 clients have installed double glazing, and 1 client had secondary installed for free after our intervention to the council. Thanks to our intervention, 14 families changed their light bulbs to LED light bulbs in their homes. Not only has all this work financially benefited people but it has also amounted to a lot of carbon savings too!

Congratulation to the Communities for Conservation team for their relentless efforts and dedication to help people reduce energy bills as much as they can. In addition to Jean-Mathieu Gaunand, Ewelina Lukaszek, David Tai, Adil Ibrahim, Asma Kassim, we now welcome Mariana Diaz in the team. As a Spanish speaking Community link Officer and energy advisor, she will focus on providing energy advice to Spanish speaking individuals and families. If you are from Polish, South Asian, African, Chinese, or Spanish backgrounds, we will be able to help you with your energy. Some case studies:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyBoDkKklgs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMiSe9VN2cQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnjyvdUPek8>

Our new project includes the launch of the Ethnic Minority Energy Advice Centre where we can deal with any energy issues in different languages i.e. Arabic, Polish, Hindi, Urdu, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish and French. To book an appointment call 0131 556 0441. We are also starting a cycling club for people to learn how to cycle and borrow bicycles.



## GROW YOUR OWN — COMMUNITY GARDENS

The idea for our community gardens is to get people together and learn the skills people need to grow their own food. Groups meet on a weekly basis and anyone is welcome to join. People have access to a plot for the whole growing season and can enjoy working together, making their own growing choices with access to tools, seeds and expertise. With input from experienced volunteers and special guests, community groups can also share growing and food knowledge and learn from each other. Groups plan and tend their plots through the season. Our gardens also offer the opportunity to prepare and cook some of the produce grown.



If you want to join us and have a good time with your family or friends to grow your own vegetables, join one of our community gardens at the Royal Botanic, in Niddrie, in Wester Hailes, in Drumbrae, or at Milton Road Edinburgh College.

## WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

We have organized two very successful 'Plan Bee' events in partnership with Al-Furqan and RC St Mary's school. Those events were delivered with Plan Bee and aimed at raising awareness about bees: why bees are important, how they are threatened by climate change, and how to protect them. Two videos of the events:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozI1aIbMqig>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmygtTz1vpo>

We have run different workshops over the previous months: 'Lichens as Air Quality Indicators' workshop with Frances Stoakley from the RBGE; permaculture workshops with our volunteer Finn; movie screenings; climate change adaptation workshop with Pam Candea from Sniffer, and others.

Join our [Edinburgh Sustainable Meet up](https://www.meetup.com/Edinburgh-Sustainable-Meetup/) which now has over **400 members**  
[www.meetup.com/Edinburgh-Sustainable-Meetup/](https://www.meetup.com/Edinburgh-Sustainable-Meetup/)

To volunteer with, receive free energy advice or join our workshops, events or community gardens please call 0131 556 0441 or email: [cfc@elrec.org.uk](mailto:cfc@elrec.org.uk)

Please Like our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ELRECC4C>

& Follow us on twitter: [@ELREC\\_CFC](https://twitter.com/ELREC_CFC)

Communities for Conservation Team



## MULTICULTURAL ECO-CELEBRATION



A big thank you to all the organizations and volunteers who worked hard to contribute to the success of the Multicultural Eco-Celebration on the 19th of March. This half day family friendly event was jointly delivered by ELREC, MECOPP, The Welcoming, Tweeddale Youth Action, MyAdventure, and NKS. It was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our local CCF projects and raise awareness of climate change and the environment through different activities while gathering diverse communities. Stalls and activities included: Upcycled fashion show from the Welcoming, bike repairs from MyAdventure, Kids corner and story telling from ELREC and Mara Menzies, upcycling tyres and fans workshops and demos from NKS, cookery demonstration from Tweeddale Youth Action and NKS, energy efficiency talk from Home Energy Scotland, stall from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, upcycling jewellery workshop by Changeworks, grow your own workshop by ELREC, and a food stall from the real junk food project. We were privileged to have two honourable Guest Speakers who gave fabulous speeches: Lord Provost Donald Wilson and Professor Sir Geoff Palmer. The event was attended by over 330 people from all cultures and backgrounds. Thank you to all who attended and helped make this event such a success!



"We enjoyed the cooking demonstration - very delicious from leftovers. Lovely people."

What you enjoyed most: "The diversity of people." "Home Energy Talk."

"Really enjoyed the upcycling jewellery workshop." "I enjoyed all the things that were on. Thanks." "I loved the fashion show." "Thanks for a lovely day – lots of good food and loads for kids to do – we are leaving with seeds, a dream catcher and a bird feeder." "Great day, great food, great show". "Wonderful kids activities and storyteller." "Everything I think has been done with love and dedication. Very good atmosphere and vibrations. " "Lots and lots to do, wish I'd come earlier. I will next year"

"I liked today because I got to meet loads of new people and learn about their culture."



## Our Volunteers

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I have thoroughly enjoyed my 3 months working at ELREC on Communities for Conservation and must now move on to a full-time employment at WarmWorks. I am confident my volunteering was crucial in the success of this job offer as I gained great insight into WarmWorks at ELREC. For this reason alone I would highly recommend volunteering in general as well as for gaining a broad range of skills and knowledge of different work environments. Further to this I would especially recommend working with ELREC as the staff are very friendly, supportive and have a great enthusiasm for the work they do. From the start I was given plenty of freedom and choice for what I wanted to do which made me feel comfortable and confident in my tasks. The environment allowed me to make the most of my expertise and feel valued as someone who can contribute to helping the communities that the charity supports.

I would like to sincerely thank ELREC and wish it a very successful future.—**David Jones**



Hi, I am a middle aged lady who applied for volunteering at ELREC 2 months ago as a need to improve my computer skills after I have finished attending short courses in my local library.

ELREC accepted my request with love. Most staff I work with are younger than me but they are able to accommodate me. They are patient, kind, generous and supportive to me.

I have improved my computer skills and I have gained confidence and self-esteem.

I have gained more knowledge and skills through attending training courses and have been involved in different projects. - **Deborah Nombebe**



Being from a scientific background I decided to volunteer at ELREC to gain experience in writing project proposals. The best part I found at ELREC is a very friendly atmosphere and all staff members are equally supportive. They provide you diverse opportunities to gain the experience based on your skills and career background. Since I joined, I have been involved in assisting staff in writing and proof reading of fundraising project proposals, providing general and clerical support to the team, developing a data base for project related material via exploring websites and organizing files on the server. I also enjoy supporting the organization at training events and workshops.— **Shailaja Mahajan**

## Bright Choices

Bright Choices provides support to individuals, families and communities in Edinburgh to overcome issues arising from Honour Based Violence (HBV). The outreach team at ELREC has been liaising with various organisations in Edinburgh from both the voluntary and public sectors and has successfully run workshops and presentations to raise awareness about HBV and the support available through our service.



Awareness raising sessions are aimed at increasing professionals' capacity to recognise and respond to HBV, and they are available for free to any organisation/professional who might come into contact with individuals and families affected by HBV, including issues around forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Other services provided by Bright Choices include emotional/practical support in a 1:1 or group setting, mediation, advocacy and restorative practices.

If you would like to arrange awareness raising session for your organisation, please contact Mitra Rostami or Azita Arabzadeh on 0131 556 0441 or [mrostami@elrec.org.uk](mailto:mrostami@elrec.org.uk), [ajabbari@elrec.org.uk](mailto:ajabbari@elrec.org.uk). For general enquiring about Bright Choices or to request an application form to access our service, please email [brightchoices@sacro.org.uk](mailto:brightchoices@sacro.org.uk).

### Bright Choices team

## 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](http://www.elrec.org.uk/member.htm)**

## Equality Champions' Gala Dinner

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 ELREC hosted an Equality Champion's Gala Dinner at Heriot Watt University. The aim of this dinner was to celebrate the achievements of individuals who have distinguished themselves for their hard work in promoting equality and human rights across the Lothians. The dinner was a very successful and over 100 people attending. The programme offered a delicious dinner, entertainment, a raffle and the announcement of the Equality Champions.



The dinner opened with a number of speeches from ELREC's Chair, Mr. Foyso Choudhury MBE, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, ELREC's President Prof. Geoff Palmer, Ms Sarah Boyack, MSP for the Scottish Labour Party, the leader of the Scottish Conservative Party Ms. Ruth Davidson and Labour Cllr. Lesley Hinds. Mr. Shami Khan, ELREC's Vice Chair,

provided the vote of thanks at the end.

ELREC staff has also had the chance to present their work to the audience. ELREC's Project Lead Officer Elisabetta Spano introduced the organisation and all the projects we have and the important work that they involve. She then introduced Mizan Rahman, who spoke about his project Equality Engagement, and Jean-Matthieu Gaunand, who talked about Communities for Conservation, which he coordinates.



The dinner was enlivened by music and dances, which entertained the audience after the speeches.



The main moment of the event was the announcement of the Equality Champions, where ELREC gave prizes and recognition to those who have worked hard to promote equality in the society. The awards recipients were Sarah Boyack MSP, Ruth Davidson MSP, Alex Salmond MP MSP, Kezia Dugdale MSP, Councillor Lesley Hinds, Rohini Sharma Joshi, Councillor Carl John, Dr Wali Tasar Uddin MBE, Mohammed Shaffi MBE, Mohammed Aslam, Dinesh Joshi MBE, and Lesley Irving.

This was the first time that ELREC organised an event of this type, and it was a success with very positive feedback and comments from those who attended the dinner. Everyone at ELREC felt very proud about this, and about the work we do, as the organisation was praised for its projects that strive to promote equality and human rights in Edinburgh and the Lothians. As the outcome was very positive, ELREC is keen on repeating this event again in future.



## Equalities Engagement

### Voter Registration surgery & Briefing Session for MSP Candidates/Agents

ELREC Equality Engagement project hosted a Briefing Session and Voter Registration Surgery to increase participation of the BME communities on 05 May Scottish Parliament Election. The session was hosted in collaboration with a City of Edinburgh Council Election team and an Electoral Registration officer. The briefing session took place on Tuesday 22nd March 2016 at ELREC's meeting room. Two colleagues from the Electoral Registration office facilitated the voter record checking service during the surgery.



Figure 1 : Voter Registration Surgery & Briefing Session

A presentation on the coming election and candidate nomination process was provided by Liz Crawford, Polling Manager, Election Team, City of Edinburgh Council. She encouraged members of the BME community to get involve in the local election and the democratic process and was willing to provide her support to foster future engagement. A number of participants signed up to be a polling assistant at the session.

### Training course on Community Activism and Public Life

ELREC Equality Engagement project, in collaboration with the CLD team and City of Edinburgh Council, hosted a training course on Community Activism and Public life on Wednesday 27th April 2016 at the Leith Community Education Centre.

The course was aimed at individuals from diverse communities living in Edinburgh and Lothians who want to work more effectively in their communities and to make a difference in peoples lives. The course included inputs from an experienced professional tutor, Jackie Mearns of the CLD Team, small group activities and discussions, individual reflection and two live case studies. Over 20 people from different ethnic communities took part in the training session. The course covered the basic understanding of 'community' and 'community activism', how to reach the people within your locality, ethos underlying the theme 'getting your voice heard' in public life and learn about community activism and its importance in a diverse community setting. Case studies were presented by Councillor Carl John, from the West Lothian Race Forum and Cllr Bryan Pottinger, Equality Champion of Midlothian Council.



## Let's Eat Together in West Lothian

The West Lothian Faith Group and the West Lothian Community Race Forum are jointly hosting the 'Let's Eat Together' event on:

**Date & Time:** Tuesday, 31 May 2016, 7.00pm-9.00pm

**Venue:** West Lothian College Terrace Restaurant, Almondvale Crescent, Livingston, West Lothian EH54 7EP

The aim of this event is to bring together local people of different faiths and beliefs, to make connections, to build positive relationships with other groups and improve community engagement and to share and learn about different beliefs and practices. For more information and to book please contact:

Email: [joanna.anderson1@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:joanna.anderson1@westlothian.gov.uk) Tel: 01506 281086. On booking, please provide your name and which faith or belief you identify with/group you are associated with.

## International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Edinburgh College hosted awareness activities to mark The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Monday 21 March 2016 at Milton Road Campus, Edinburgh College.

The event aimed to promote race equality and to raise awareness about different cultures and equality groups across the Edinburgh College community. This event was an opportunity to further build bridges between different equality groups and to promote Edinburgh College's commitment to equality and diversity.



ELREC, Sikh Sanjog, Diversity Unit of the Police Scotland, Health In Mind posted information and had their stalls at the college foyer. Information about various projects and activities was disseminated throughout the event. Susan Inglis and Sarah Taylor from the Edinburgh College Equality Team welcomed the audience at the college on this occasion.

## International Women day celebration

Edinburgh Interfaith Association, EWIG and MWAE hosted a celebration event to mark International Womens Day on Sunday 6th March 2016 at Methodist Church, Nicholson Square, Edinburgh, Time: 2pm – 4pm. ELREC Equality Engagement project took part in the event and set up an information stall. The event was an opportunity to establish network with different faith groups and members of the BME community.



## LGBT History Month Celebration at Edinburgh College

To celebrate LGBT history month, Edinburgh College hosted an amazing evening of entertainment and music on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at the Music Box, Sighthill Campus - Edinburgh College. The evening event was presented by Sarah Taylor and Susan Inglis, Equality Team of the Edinburgh College. In remembrance of LGBT members who have given their lives to establish their rights, LGBT history month was celebrated all over the UK. Edinburgh College talented students performed fabulous music, recitations and guitar music. Amazing performances were also organised by the Edinburgh Gay Men's Chorus. All these were enjoyed during the evening. Sarah Taylor & Susan Inglis thank everyone for attending.



## Fit for Health, free exercise project in Lothian

NHS Lothian and Edinburgh Leisure are working in partnership to deliver the Fit for Health project: a **free** low level exercise programme for people with long term conditions in Edinburgh. Classes are run every week in Leisure Centres across Edinburgh.

If you have a long term health condition (for example a respiratory or cardiac condition, or diabetes) and are interested in being referred into Fit for Health, please ask your GP (who will find information on Ref Help) or Health & Social Care professional to be referred onto the programme. Or call 0131 458 2100 for more information. Members of the BME community group are most welcome to this project. ELREC- Equality Engagement project will be happy to provide information/support on accessing the Fit for Health project. Please contact us for more information. Tel: 0131 556 0441.

## Have your say – Diverse Community @ Edinburgh College

Edinburgh College in collaboration with ECSA & ELREC will host an equality and diversity consultation event to mark the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

Date: Tuesday 24 May 2016, from 4.30pm

Venue: Granton Campus, 350 West Granton Road, Edinburgh EH5 1QE Room GA203/205

Keynote speaker: Prof Geoff Palmer OBE and Jan Irvine

All are welcome. For further information please contact by Email:

sara.taylor@edinburghcollege.ac.uk

Please visit our web blog to find more information and update on 05 May Election: [www.diversityinpubliclife.wordpress.com](http://www.diversityinpubliclife.wordpress.com)  
Please like our Facebook page; [www.facebook.com/diversityinpubliclife](http://www.facebook.com/diversityinpubliclife)



# Have your say

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**PROF SIR GEOFF PALMER, OBE**



**JAN IRVINE**

## EXPRESS YOURSELF!

Tell us your equality priorities for Edinburgh College and the wider area

To mark World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development we are holding a consultation event with the diverse community.

**Tuesday 24 May from 4.30pm**

Room GA203/205,  
Granton Campus,  
350 West Granton Road,  
Edinburgh EH5 1QE

For further information please contact:  
[sara.taylor@edinburghcollege.ac.uk](mailto:sara.taylor@edinburghcollege.ac.uk)



EdinburghCollege



#edinburghcoll





## 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](mailto: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

## VOLUNTEERS

Alex Rainbow, Archana Goyal, Adrian Barbasumpa, Bageshri Kulkarni, Balla Ceesay, Ben Nichols, Callum Scott, Caroline Levack, Chandrima Lala, Christina Hellevik, Claudia, Connie Yeung, Cristina Popa, David Hutton, David Panton, Denise Jennings, Eleanor Gladman, Ezgi Denli, Fiona Sarah Jane Brown, Hannah Mokheri, Holly Smith, Jack Aitken, James Holdcroft, Javier Baldovi Diaz, Jenny Scholtysik, Katerina Taliatzi, Lesley Rankin, Madhavi Lathha, Deborah Nombebe, Margaret Paklos, Markus Spoerr, Mina Omarchevska, Naeema Nasar, Nahla Awad, Natasa Serafimovska, Nina Altendorf, Pawel Bladocha, Prudence Foster, Ratiba Kabli, Saaliha Hussain, Samuel Hanson, Shailaja Mahajan, Stephanie Smith, Sukumar, Thomas Sutcliffe, Tuntiak Murray, Yueyue Fitzgerald, Yuklan wong, Zach Allan, Zarah Khan, Gabrielle Blackburn, Nick Watermen

## 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

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Company Number:  
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Larger print newsletter available on request