



**BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITIES INFRASTRUCTURE IN
SCOTLAND**

And

**THE FEDERATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND LEARNING**



**SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOME OF
CONSULTATION and INFORMATION EVENTS
ON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND LEARNING**

(Black and Ethnic Minorities Perspective in Scotland)

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1. Introduction

BEMIS in partnership with the Federation of Community Development and Learning conducted three major consultation events, aimed specifically for black and ethnic minority voluntary sector organisations and groups. This was extended to include direct interviews with various groups from the black and ethnic minorities voluntary sector.

The purpose of these consultations was to:

- a) Provide information on community development and learning.
- b) Provide information on the National Standard for Community Engagement (English perspective feeding into Scottish settings)
- c) To initiate a discussion forum from which to discuss the Scottish perspective on community development and learning, and to provide a forum for debate on the Scottish Standards for Community Learning & Development
- d) to enable members of the black and ethnic minority communities and voluntary sector to inform to the development of a strategy paper on community development and learning.

The overall response to the events and feedback have been very positive and provided not only wealth of accurate and up to date information on the needs of the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector and communities on community development, learning and engagement, but also highlighted the commitment these communities and sector has in wishing to develop better forums, partnerships and platforms for joint working.

Equality for all communities was a key theme that ran through all three events and that without support and commitment from the government, wider voluntary sector, other key agencies and the BEMVS – there would continue to be an impasse, exclusion and disengagement of many communities.

It was also recognised that community development and learning has become more important over the last two decades with new communities forming or settling in Scotland and, through developing an equal and fair framework through which engagement and involvement could be assured for all communities in processes that govern their lives – this would provide a foundation to build a more civil and equal society for all in Scotland.

Training is not the only solution; it has to be part of a larger strategy that includes social justice, capacity building and partnership working

BEMIS (Black & Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland) *(Promoting diversity and equality in Scotland)*

BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland) is the national umbrella body supporting the development of the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector in Scotland. The development of this organisation followed consultations and research with the black and ethnic minority community groups/organisations across Scotland and the formation of a working group in 1997 that took the recommendations from the research further. “**Listening to the Voice**” is the research report which forms the foundation of the development of a national infrastructure organisation which was set up in Dec 2001.

The major aims and objectives of BEMIS are in representing and supporting the development of the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector across Scotland, and, in supporting the diverse communities and individuals that this sector represents especially those under-represented and disadvantaged. The research that informed to the establishment of BEMIS identified these key infrastructure development aims and objectives:

- ❑ To strengthen the capacity of the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector.
- ❑ Raise the profile of black and ethnic minority voluntary sector and its needs at strategic local and national levels.
- ❑ Coordinate the voice of the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector and ensure pertinent issues are raised with the relevant bodies
- ❑ To take a lead on policy issues and debate which are of concern to black and ethnic minority communities at both local and national levels.

BEMIS recognises that we work in a context of inequality. It aims to redress these inequalities by empowering communities. BEMIS will work towards an inclusive society by establishing structures that recognise and promotes diversity and empower the black and ethnic minorities communities across Scotland.

The Federation for Community Development and Learning *the UK-wide network for community development training*

Supporting the development of communities through advancing and promoting community work learning at local, regional and national levels and the creation of appropriate opportunities for training and qualification

The Federation supports a network of individuals, organisations and groups interested in community development learning and training to share information and good training practice, to learn from each other and to provide good opportunities for community development learning.

- We develop, out of the experience of our members, materials and training resources to support good practice in community work training.
- We produce regular training bulletins and information sheets and work with our members to publish materials that help share good training practice. Special interest groups within the Federation meet to share practice around particular perspectives and issues, including Ubuntu for Black community development workers and activists and the Accreditation Group.

- We work at a national level to develop new arrangements for community work training and qualifications that are accessible and relevant to those involved in community work activities.

The Federation has played a central role in developing:

- The revised Occupational Standards for Community Development Work and the subsequent revised community work S/NVQ. (England)
- The England Standards Board (an endorsing body)
- Paulo, the National Training Organisation for Community Work, Community Education, Informal Adult Learning and Youth Work www.paulo.org.uk
- The Community Work Forum

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2. Consultation and Information Events 29th April-1st May 2003

Three major events were held, in Inverness on 29th April 2003, Edinburgh on 30th May 2003 and Glasgow on 1st May 2003. Delegates described as “activists in the field” attended each event. Common themes and concerns emerged from the separate events as well as important particular concerns and issues for community development in Highlands and Islands.

Delegates were advised that the events would aim to:

- Provide an opportunity to meet and discuss learning and community development needs.
- Help develop an understanding of community development and training issues.
- Identify the opportunities for learning that exist for the black and ethnic minority communities across Scotland.
- Contribute to the development of a community development and learning strategy for black and ethnic minority communities in Scotland.
- Provide an opportunity to find out what is happening in community development and learning in England and seek to identify good examples and experiences.

3. Delegates' Hopes for the Events

The delegates were asked to identify their hopes and aims for the events. Common response included the following:

- Share experiences
- Find out about available resources e.g. training, personnel services, access to information, funding opportunities
- Network
- Learn ways to engage with community
- Explore links between BEMIS and the wider voluntary sector in support of community development and learning.
- Identify issues and challenges in BEM community development
- Discuss equality issues e.g. institutional discrimination

4. Needs Identified by BEM Voluntary Organisations and Groups

The participants wanted opportunities to gain more understanding of community development and learning in England, apply this to Scotland and explore how their own particular roles and work might fit into that.

They were keen to know what measurable standards and outcomes to measure effectiveness of community development and learning activities could be used and developed in Scotland.

Participants saw this as another opportunity to network and to create effective partnerships, disseminate information, to pass on good practice and build the voluntary sector as a strong, cohesive body – which were considered important activities giving potential for growth and development.

They hoped that they would be able to identify barriers specifically facing BEM communities in their areas and fields of work.

Exit strategies were mentioned too -in terms of work and funding. These were seen as important so that supported communities are not left without resources and without being given help and opportunity to seek alternatives when projects come to an end.

There was a commitment to take advantage of the opportunities to have direct consultation with key players and stakeholders, for example, funders, decision and policy makers etc.

Participants saw the need for more consultation with organisations on their needs.

4.1 Particular Needs of the Highland and Islands and Rural Areas in General.

It was strongly noted by delegates at the Inverness event that the distances and travel times unique to the Highlands and Islands mean that difficulties in establishing systems for communication and dissemination of information are particularly acute there.

Opportunities for networking are even fewer than in the Central Belt and geographical dispersal can mean BEM community groups and workers can feel relatively isolated.

4.2 Skills and Knowledge Needed

Delegates were asked to identify what skills and knowledge they felt would help them in their Community Development and Learning work.

NEEDED SKILLS

A range of skills were identified by participants, including:

- Counselling skills – to tackle challenging situations, develop people-oriented approach, overcome those whose voices are already heard strongly
- Lobbying
- Advocacy
- Interpersonal (like motivational and communication), assertiveness
- Fundraising
- How to promote diversity, participation, tolerance, acceptance not only within organisation, diverse communities but also agencies this sector engages with
- Needs assessment, governance and management,
- How to effectively identify need, outcomes, impact
- Presentation skills / motivation
- How to challenge and overcome stereotypes and negative attitudes
- How to give advise and educate and, not least how to how to mobilise communities

NEEDED KNOWLEDGE

- How to set-up community groups
- Seek corporation/charity status.
- Where to go for help
- How to find out what resources are available
- Learn about education system and policies
- Learn about how organisational structures work, including governmental parties, policy-making and initiatives
- Learn about other cultures and how to disseminate information

Changing the systems... is difficult but tinkering with it makes not real difference either – we have to make real change to make a real future."

5. Responses to 'National Standards in Community Development and Learning' (England In Comparison to Scotland):

Delegates were given a short presentation on the development of the National Standards in England. They were asked to identify the areas of their organisations' work in relation to

the key roles identified in the National Standards and how these could inform to the development of Scottish standards and, in particular, those that meet the needs of the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector and diverse communities across Scotland.

At the Glasgow and Edinburgh events, delegates identified the most appropriate areas but the point was made a number of times that these key roles, as identified in the National Standards for England were essential but did not fully reflect the Scottish perspective on community development. It was noted that the communities in Scotland are different, both in dynamics, geographical spread and diversity than England and therefore many of the key points did not relate directly to their needs or understanding.

Many delegates struggled to fit their work into the criteria given.

At the Inverness event, all the delegates found the presentation and language of the National Standards very confusing. Instead of attempting to fit their own work in the terms of the Standards, the group made the following points:

- Standards are restrictive and elements (such as points under key roles) do not reflect the Scottish perspective or understanding of community development especially in rural areas.
- Many of the points under the key roles are interlinked across the board and others are repetitive.
- We need standards that reflect community development issues and understanding in Scotland especially meeting the needs of rural areas. The English perspective is very positive but too much to meet communities' needs in Scottish rural settings.

“the BEMVS needs to take ownership of real, accurate and effective research and outcomes”

6. What can contribute to Community Development?

Delegates identified many potentially positive factors in community development, including:

- Different organisations working together - listening, sharing, questioning
- Being proactive in maintaining contacts
- Capacity building
- Acknowledgement of diversity
- Recognition and valuing existing skills and experience – long-term ongoing mapping process needed, with real commitment from the Scottish Executive.
- Long-term planning and funding – 5 to 7 years, not 1 or 2 years
- Effective/reflective practice
- Community participation in decision-making
- Respect and trust, consensus, confidence, empowering individuals and groups
- Recognition of existing/creation of new groups that represent local population
- Organic/bottom-up approach not top-down facilitation
- Developing a desire for communities to work together
- Political will

“There needs to be a real black history for Scotland to show our children who we are”

- Visible people from BEM making real contributions to decision-making – as opposed to tokenism
- Local, reachable, welcoming venues where there can be information sharing / exchange of good practice and basic knowledge / skills as well as support (practical / counselling) etc.
- Translation of material still important - part of cultural heritage in many communities - others still have members who can only read-write in original language.

“Networking with organisations in the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector is essential. Not enough of it is available or happens”

7. What barriers are there to Community Development?

- Difficulties in engaging with communities e.g. involving them in consultation, research and networking due to social exclusion, economic and/or geographical isolation.
- People in power not acknowledging diversity of BEM communities – seeing only one homogenous black community.
- Lack of communication skills (especially in lobbying/campaigning)
- Lack of opportunities
- Lack of access to information about existing opportunities, services including health services and benefits.
- Distrust of governmental organisations – Home Office / Scottish Executive needs to work with voluntary organisations but is not responding.
- Uncertainty over immigration issues.
- Language barriers.
- Stereotypes and negative attitudes.
- Consultations can be disempowering if grass-roots communities not engaged.
- BME communities do not have ability to challenge what is taught in schools and misconceptions created.
- “Women and youth issues are still getting lost.”
- Prevailing attitude that BME families are too few to constitute a community.
- No one has an exclusive remit for community development – it is an add- on to his or her jobs or other work and usually without recognition or support.
- Many delegates expressed that they did community development work outwith their job and that in order to effectively make a difference we need a Community Development resource national for the black and ethnic minority voluntary sector.
- ‘Gatekeepers’ can be seen as limiting – relying on their opinions instead of seeking participation throughout BEM communities.

“There are many different barriers that are faced by the BEM communities such as language, culture etc, but non more so than the gatekeepers, limited access to information, key people, resources and playing politics - it promotes the divisions not the cohesion”

8. Good and bad practice in Community Development training

As well as identifying good and bad practice in training, delegates also noted that training is not the sole solution for building communities, but that it must be part of a larger strategy including social justice, capacity building and partnership working. It was further noted that consistently high standards of training with a concern for accuracy are crucial.

GOOD PRACTICE IN TRAINING

There follows a list of elements of good Community Development Training. The items mentioned reflect commonly accepted good practice in adult learning: respect for previous knowledge and experience, practical application, as well as respect for the trainees needs at different levels.

- Appropriate use of technology e.g. multimedia presentations
- ICT chat rooms
- Accept different views
- Learning designed to build confidence and empower
- Everyone is valued
- Active participation
- Sharing information
- Motivate each other
- Recognising personal resources – skills, experience
- Interactive discussions
- Material – relevant, explained, detailed
- Positive, engaging body language
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Follow-up / keeping in touch
- Time allocation
- Short sessions, breaks, variation
- Recognition of learning needs
- Ownership
- Collaboration
- Peer mentoring – creates new support culture
- Pre-prepared course outline, aims and learning objectives
- Open attitude and honest about aims

“Many organisation / groups have access to lots of important information that could inform to the way decisions are made – they need support in how to do research / consultations – need training”

- Clarity over roles, knowing what to expect
- Workers' rights respected
- Have glossary of new terms, let learners add to this during course
- Choose right training method for subject
- Sufficient ice-breakers
- Not too rushed
- Ongoing development of trainers
- Motivating
- Practical and theoretical aspects
- "Not training for the sake of training" but applicable in day to day work
- Challenging and thought-provoking
- Focused
- Certification

BAD PRACTICE IN TRAINING

As above, adult trainers in the main, commonly accept the elements perceived as 'bad' training:

- Use of jargon
- Too much emotional involvement
- Too reliant on technology
- Apathy
- Limited thinking
- Making assumptions
- Disengaging, negative body language
- Mismatched aims
- Tokenistic
- Costly
- Dictatorial
- Boring
- Lack of information / support / listening to delegates
- Training impractical, not useful for working environment]

"How are people going to value what we have and can achieve if we don't tell them "?"

9. Proposed Action Plan

In many of the comments made, delegates noted BEMIS' role as the national umbrella body supporting the development of the BEMVS infrastructure in Scotland. Delegates felt that BEMIS has the core role and responsibility, in partnership with the BEMVS, to take forward the work from this consultation and facilitate follow up events as well as progress the work in the proposed action plan.

Potential elements identified for the action plan

1. Consultation to develop Scottish National Standards for community development and learning.
2. Conference and consultation exercise with Scottish Executive / Communities Scotland on what is community development and learning
3. Skills audit / mapping exercise across Scotland's BEMVS
4. Development of trainers database
5. Need training for trainers from the black and ethnic minority communities
6. Development of trainers certification process and ongoing training programmes
7. Training programmes to get everyone on the same level of understanding of:
 - What is community development and learning
 - Why is this important in this field
 - What is social justice
 - What is capacity building / identify gaps / develop effective plans to meet those gaps in organisations/communities needs.
 - How do you network effectively
 - How do you develop partnerships / manage them
 - How do you set up evaluation and monitoring processes in relation to the internal and external work of the organisations (individual / partnerships / community)
 - How do you consult effectively
 - What is social cohesion
 - How do we recognise and promote the good work and practice of the organisation/community
 - How do we effectively research on issues?
 - Who benefits from community development and how do you measure this (individuals – service users/worker. Organisations, partners, stakeholders, communities)
 - How to be a trainer
 - How to communicate effectively
 - Making presentations
 - Dealing with difficult situations constructive (interpersonal skills/confidence/assertiveness)
 - How to promote your organisations (use of media, DTP, local connections, wider voluntary sector)
 - How to set up community groups / organisations
 - How to arrange networking / information exchange events
 - How to identify issues for working groups and forums
 - How to effectively monitor and evaluate work

- How to make useful reports
- How to engage new members of the community
- **Practical skills Needed**
 - Organisational
 - Corporate / charity status
 - Financial
 - Management Committees / Board of Directors
 - Personal management
 - Membership management
 - Fundraising
 - Resource management

9. Black / ethnic minority history in Scotland.

The lack of a history for black and ethnic minorities communities in Scotland plays a part in the continuing discrimination, racism, exclusion and under-representation of the diverse communities in Scotland. The impression still remains that these communities are foreigners, or transient therefore different. Whereas historically, it can be shown that the black and ethnic minority communities have been an active part of Scotland's social, economical and community life for centuries.

This history of the involvement of black and ethnic minorities communities in Scotland will show the contribution individuals, and groups, from these diverse communities have made, across Scotland in developing social justice, equality, community and many other areas.

The continued exclusion of these communities and stereotyping as transient or "not Scottish" is based on the false assumptions made, all of which could not stand should a record of Scotland black and ethnic minority communities not only be made available but also celebrated.

This tool would also enable young people to find role models that are ethnic minorities and Scottish, again building a perspective that empowers and enables the next generation to feel more involved in the communities they will cherish.

Having a Scottish black history is not about the past but about the future and building a foundation upon which young people, especially those from the new communities, from under-represented or excluded communities can inform, equally to the development of Scotland's social, judicial, economic growth and future.

- 10. Resource management / what are your resources (visible / invisible)
- 11. How to find information on resources
- 12. How to share knowledge / understanding / experience – disseminating information

10. Summary

Delegates recognised a number of key issues that were mirrored throughout the three consultations. These key issues were:

1. The need for effective, relevant training, which provides accreditation, standards of good practice and learning, but also allows for the highest level of engagement by being aware of and respectful of cultural, religious and other needs.
2. More inter-agency work / partnerships / networks need to be development across community development, learning and training – nothing can be done in isolation and the wider voluntary sector, authorities, government and other agencies have a responsibility in being proactive in engaging with diverse communities
3. Stereotyping still exists continues to create misunderstanding between communities and wider society – these contributes to further creating barriers that prevent equal and effective community development and learning. These have to be recognised, taking responsibility for and tackled.
4. Need to profile the history and good work already done by the black and ethnic minorities voluntary sector an diverse communities – show we can do this and our expertise / knowledge and experience if of value and which, if used effectively could facilitate the development of initiatives more equally across communities, genders and other groups.
5. Needs standard for community development and learning for Scotland and the black and ethnic minority communities should be engaged at the beginning of this process, not asked as an afterthought.
6. There is a great deal of work ahead and the BEMVS need a focus, a conduit through which to channel information, learning, needs etc –need to have a national community and learning officer with BEMIS.

Appendix 1

National Standards in Community Development and Learning (ENGLAND)

Delegates identified the areas of their organisations work in relation to the key roles identified in the National Standards for Community Development

KEY POINT	MAIN AREA OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Selected by:
a	Develop working relationships with communities and organisations	20
b	Encourage people to work with and learn from each other	17
c	Work with people in communities to plan for change and take collective action	9
d	Work with people in communities to develop and use frameworks for evaluation	3
e	Develop community organisations	7
f	Reflect on and develop own practice and role	15

However the point was made a number of times that these key roles, while very positive, do not reflect the Scottish perspective on community development as needs differ.

Delegates identified elements within each key role as being:

KEY ROLE (A)

Develop working relationships with communities and organisations

- Make relationships with communities
- Build relationships within and with communities and organisations
- Develop strategic relationships with communities, organisation and within partnerships

KEY ROLE (B)

Encourage people to work with and learn from each other

- Contribute to the development of community groups/networks
- Facilitate the development of community groups/networks
- Facilitate ways of working collaboratively
- Promote and support learning from practice and experience
- Create opportunities for learning from practice and experience
- Support and take action with individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict

KEY ROLE (c)

Work with people in communities to plan for change and take collective action

- Work within communities to select options and make plans for collective action
- Contribute to collective action within communities
- Support communities participation in planning and taking collective action
- Contribute to the review of needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities within a community
- Work with communities to identify need, opportunities, rights and responsibilities.

KEY ROLE (D)

Work with people in communities to develop and use framework for evaluation

- Support communities to monitor and review action for change
- Facilitate the development of evaluation frameworks

KEY ROLE (E)

Develop community organisations

- Contribute to the development of community groups/networks
- Facilitate the development of community groups/networks
- Facilitate ways of working collaboratively
- Promote and support learning from practice to experience
- Create opportunities for learning from practice and experience
- Support individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict
- Take action with individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict.

KEY ROLE (F)

Reflect on and develop own practice and role

- Identify and reflect on own practice, knowledge and values
- Review own practice, knowledge and values
- Evaluate and develop own practice
- Identify and take action to meet own learning and development needs
- Review and meet own learning and development needs.

Appendix 2

SUMMARY OF Delegates' Views and EVALUATION

1. WHAT WAS USEFUL ABOUT TODAY'S EVENT

- Learning about the needs and how to construct a positive element of community development
- It was useful to meet members of other organisations, to network, understand more about community development. Just meeting like-minded people, hearing their views, being able to share ideas and having time to find out what they do, where and how?
- Meeting people from different organisations, excellent facilitators, exchange of information, and unravelling community development
- Found the event very useful, this is something missing in some organisations to transform community
- Interagency communication (networking), listening to other's views
- Interesting to discuss various issues that workers are facing, clearer ideas of community development and the issues involved.
- Information and make key contacts. Different activities approach was very interesting
- Raising awareness about minority ethnic issues in Scotland, sharing experience, having beliefs reinforced, learning more about community development, learning more about work of others.
- Understanding more about the black and ethnic minority community development issues in Scotland; meeting a variety of positive people and seeing that there are huge common areas between us all. Everyone agrees power dictates too much and our "representatives" in local/regional and national politics need to learn from us to facilitate genuine community development.
- Networking with other organisations; the importance of creativity in community development work; highland issues of community development of which I was unaware; the work of the Federation – very impressive.
- Networking and raised awareness of what BEMIS is doing – huge amount of information to take back and read through.
- Learning about what others are doing, focusing more clearly on the work I am doing, looking at what makes a good training package. It emphasised the continued need for training in particularly the need to continually re-evaluate where we are and where we are going.
- Positive learning, good techniques, good development skills, good information
- Networking opportunity, learning about BEMIS presence in the Highlands & Islands, interactive sessions – good to share views

3. WHAT WILL YOU TAKE BACK TO YOUR GROUP/ TEAM OR COMMUNITY?

- Understanding the ways to develop community development where we stand and how to progress
- To develop greater training programme
- Learning of different community development concepts; network of organisations and information
- A vision of effective community development; a process which is started today to achieve a future vision
- Work with BEMIS to encourage others to take this further
- Ideas regarding empowerment of the community; identification of barriers; community ownership; empowerment; partnerships; community provision; focus on needs of community; different ideologies.
- Wealth of information regarding issues/barriers faced by community development.
- New areas of development possibilities and opportunities for partnerships working areas identified
- Ideas for joint work; a greater understanding of black and ethnic minority perspective; a fresh impetus to make sure information/events reach out further
- That we should be working harder with black and ethnic minority groups and possibly develop new projects together within the community development context
- We need more events like this on a regular basis.
- Information about what BEMIS, current government/ Scottish Executive plans
- Community development information and what BEMIS intends on doing in terms of establishing training programmes
- Links with other organisations; networking and how others present will or can link into my work. New networks/contacts for new information on community development
- New contacts and knowledge of BEMIS and how it can help / support my individual work now and in future.
- How to conduct a training programme and how to communicate
- I will take back the key roles and strategies on how to engage with communities; based on the values set out in the guidance
- Need for continued training and evaluation of content and continued development of building bridges with communities.
- A great understanding of community development issues, ideas on how to progress project/take it forward and useful contacts
- Interest in BEMIS' plan to create training courses – how forum can work with BEMIS.