



Black and Ethnic Minorities  
Infrastructure in Scotland



## **Report on Poverty and Community Planning Survey For Ethnic Minority Communities**

**June 2009**



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[http://www.bemis.org.uk/BEMIS%20Poverty%20Survey.pdf?sm=ltofvE2\\_2fMrorgWbMuRbXrw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.bemis.org.uk/BEMIS%20Poverty%20Survey.pdf?sm=ltofvE2_2fMrorgWbMuRbXrw_3d_3d)

## SECTION 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Government is committed to tackling poverty inequality and deprivation through the Community Planning framework. This report is based on a consultation by the Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) with members of voluntary faith-based and community organisations from diverse ethnic minority communities in Scotland. The purpose of the consultation is to seek their views on Government support for tackling poverty inequality and deprivation through local Community Planning Partnerships.

It is the latest output of BEMIS as part of its commitment to ensure that diverse ethnic minority communities and the voluntary sector have a voice in policy development as well as playing an active role in civic settings. It seeks to include their input, perspectives and views within current policy debates.

This report looks at how members of voluntary faith-based and community organisations from diverse ethnic minority communities are being enabled to play an active part in tackling the effects of deprivation and inequalities among their own communities, and also how this policy framework is being filtered down within their communities.

### BACKGROUND TO SURVEY

#### Achieving Our Potential

This is the Scottish Government's policy framework for tackling poverty. Published in November 2008 it sets out a framework for Government support in conjunction with COSLA (on behalf of local authorities in Scotland) for tackling poverty and income inequality. This framework sets out a common agenda for the whole of the public sector, the voluntary sector and the private sector. The proposed approach includes the following:

- 1) **Tackling Income Inequality** e.g. training support for people into work and in work; child care for workers; support in maximising benefits.
- 2) **Longer term measures to tackle poverty (focussing on low income)** e.g. support for parents and children in school; tackling health inequalities; tackling discrimination; delivering good quality affordable housing, and improving poor areas.
- 3) **Supporting those experiencing poverty** e.g. support for homes affected by rising fuel prices and debt.

There is considerable Scottish Government funding for this policy going into Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)<sup>1</sup> through the Fairer Scotland Fund - £435 million to be spent by Community Planning Partnerships over the next three years<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as Community Health & Care Partnerships (CHCPs) such as in Glasgow [http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Residents/Care\\_Support/CommHealthSocialCare/](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Residents/Care_Support/CommHealthSocialCare/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/fairer-scotland-fund>

The aim of the fund is “to increase economic participation for all, improving social cohesion and creating stronger communities”. The fund is to be spent on:

- regenerating disadvantaged communities;
- tackling poverty by helping vulnerable people and groups; and
- overcoming barriers to employment.

The guiding principles of the fund are as follows:

- a clear focus on investment to address the causes of poverty, not its symptoms;
- a strong emphasis placed on making early interventions for vulnerable individuals, families and disadvantaged communities;
- promotion of joint working between local partners;
- focused action on improving employability as a key means of tackling poverty;
- empowering communities and individuals to influence and inform the decisions made by CPPs.

CPPs are expected to use the Fairer Scotland Fund as a catalyst to accelerate the achievement of real outcomes for the most disadvantaged areas and vulnerable people as tracked through Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs).<sup>3</sup> The Scottish Government’s expectation from this investment is evidence over time of “positive change and meaningful community involvement and empowerment”. However it is left up to CPPs to agree on initiatives to be supported by the fund based on local circumstances and priorities.

### **Community Planning Policy Framework<sup>4</sup>**

According to the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* Community Planning is defined as a process by which the planning and provision of (all) public services in the area of a local authority are provided. Local authorities have a duty to initiate, maintain and facilitate this process and Scottish Ministers have a duty to promote and encourage the use of Community Planning. However community planning partnerships encompass the whole of the public sector with an emphasis also on inclusion of the voluntary sector and the private sector.

The Concordat agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA in November 2007 set out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government – “based on mutual respect and partnership”. Through the Concordat, local government is committed to supporting progress at national level through improvement in outcomes at local level. The move to an outcomes approach is a significant change in the way that public services are planned and delivered in Scotland, a central element of which is the ending of ring fencing of local government funding and the creation of Single Outcome agreements (SOA) between each Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the Scottish Government.

It underpins current funding provided to local government by the Scottish Government over the period 2008-09 to 2010-2011. The funding they receive from

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/SOA>

<sup>4</sup> Our thanks to The Improvement Service for this comprehensive but accessible explanation of community planning. <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/community-planning/>

the Scottish Government (The Fairer Scotland Fund) is based on what they commit themselves to achieve in their Single Outcome Agreements. The Government will be tracking their success in tackling poverty as this is one of the cross-cutting themes in every Community Planning Partnerships' Single Outcome Agreement.

Community Planning Partnerships have also legal obligations in relation to their equalities duties. Equality Impact Assessment is one of the requirements of the public sector and is legally binding. EHRC Scotland is pressing for equality impact assessments to be central to the design of policies and services by Community Planning Partnerships. These will be assessed by the Scottish Government in conjunction with the EHRC and COSLA.

### **European Legislation on Tackling Poverty**

For a long time the voluntary sector in Scotland has been excluded from having a voice in Europe and this is particularly true where the ethnic minority voluntary sector is concerned. Historically, most development has been disseminated to UK bodies which, in turn, tend to consciously and unconsciously sideline Scotland. Yet it has been European legislation and directives by the European Council and the European Parliament on tackling poverty that have laid the framework for UK legislation. The four Key guiding principles of this legislation under the European Year of combating Poverty and Social Exclusion are:

- to give a voice to people under the current financial climate of poverty and exclusion in accordance with the European guiding principles of solidarity and social justice.
- Recognising the fundamental rights of people living in poverty, and social exclusion to live in dignity and full respect.
- An increase in the public ownership of social inclusion policies, emphasising everyone's responsibility in tackling poverty and marginalisation and Commitment of all that involves all levels of governance.
- Encourage social cohesion in enhancing quality of life and welfare of civic society and providing opportunities and sustainability of developments through lifelong learning and skills and training.

The European legislation and directives place a responsibility on member states to take actions at all levels to embed the guiding principles in the field of social protection and inclusion: inclusion of most disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in extreme poverty under the 2000 Lisbon summit which reaffirm the initial political commitment of the EU States at the start of the Lisbon strategy, in 2000, calling for "a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty" by 2010.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Following publication of '*Achieving Our Potential*' by the Scottish Government BEMIS was keen to explore how the Fairer Scotland Fund and the work of

Community Planning Partnerships were supporting minority ethnic communities at the local level.

An electronic questionnaire<sup>5</sup> was developed using Survey Monkey and was emailed to over 600 members of BEMIS and a link was posted on the website and publicized in the BEMIS MEMO on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2009 issue No. 173. Support was given with completion of the questionnaire such as making available a PDF paper version and offering telephone support if required. In the event respondents were able to complete the questionnaire on-line. The questionnaire went live on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2009 with a closing date of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009.

The survey covered the following themes (See appendix 1):

- Background and priorities of respondents in terms of forms of discrimination
- Views on causes of poverty within diverse ethnic minority communities
- Awareness of the Government poverty policy framework and of European legislation
- Views on the definition of poverty and which types of discrimination are likely to lead poverty
- Views on which initiatives are most effective within diverse ethnic minority communities
- Concerns about increased Xenophobia and racism in Scotland as a result of the current economic crisis
- Involvement in community planning, barriers to involvement
- Interest in being involved in the way public agencies deal with poverty and discrimination based on race and other forms of discrimination.

Participants were also asked whether they would like to receive a copy of the report and to be further involved in this initiative by BEMIS.

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<sup>5</sup>Survey questionnaire can be accessed at:  
[http://www.bemis.org.uk/BEMIS%20Poverty%20Survey.pdf?sm=ltofvE2\\_2fMrorgWbMuRbXrw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.bemis.org.uk/BEMIS%20Poverty%20Survey.pdf?sm=ltofvE2_2fMrorgWbMuRbXrw_3d_3d)

## RESULTS

**Profile of respondents (see Appendix 1)**

Seventy four members of BEMIS responded to the survey - 44% representing an organisation, 15% a community, and 41% responding as an individual. Respondents and/or their organisations were based in the following health board and local authority areas, 40% coming from Glasgow City and 17% from Edinburgh:

Health Board areas		Local Authority Areas
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	31	Glasgow City (27), West Dunbartonshire (2), East Dunbartonshire (1), East Renfrewshire (1)
Lothian	16	Edinburgh City (12), West Lothian (4)
Forth Valley	8	Stirling (5), Falkirk (3)
Grampian	4	Aberdeen City (3), Aberdeenshire (1)
Lanarkshire	3	North Lanarkshire (2), South Lanarkshire (1)
Fife	2	Fife (2)
Tayside	2	Dundee City (1), Perth & Kinross (1)
Ayrshire & Arran	1	East Ayrshire (1)
Dumfries & Galloway	1	Dumfries & Galloway (1)
Highland	1	Argyll & Bute (1)
Scotland	1	
Others	4	

Table 1: Geographical distribution of respondents

Approximately 50% worked with or represented most diverse and ethnic minority communities in their area of which 9% worked specifically with asylum seekers or refugees. One fifth worked with the Asian and Chinese communities, one third Arabic, Muslim and African & Caribbean communities, and the remainder 7% with White Scottish. Many worked with specific sections of these communities such as Muslim women, or lone mothers who had been trafficked, children and ESOL learners. Almost half of the respondents work with three or more faith communities (on average 3 faith communities) and one fifth of respondents with six or more faith communities. The respondents therefore represent a diverse cross-section of cultural and faith communities across Scotland.

**Tackling poverty and Discrimination**

In order to set in context views on tackling poverty and discrimination, respondents were asked to what extent poverty work was a priority for their community or organization:

- ✓ Three quarters were prioritizing work around poverty and the causes of poverty,
- ✓ and not surprisingly a larger proportion (four fifths) were actively tackling discrimination based on race, religion and belief.
- ✓ One half were tackling discrimination related to gender,



- ✓ and noticeably also a significant minority discrimination around age (40%), disability (40%) and sexual orientation (31%).

This indicates that respondents are active across a broad range of equality issues that have a bearing on poverty.

## **Causes of poverty (see Appendix 2)**

**Within diverse ethnic minority communities the main cause of poverty was felt to be:**

- employment and unemployment
  - ✓ access to employment,
  - ✓ discrimination within the workplace,
  - ✓ low wages,
  - ✓ and lack of support in getting into employment (see figure1).
- The second main cause was discrimination related to race, religion or belief. However this form of discrimination it was felt also underlies other forms of inequality and causes of poverty – “*social exclusion due to socio-economic disadvantage, a sort of BME class*”:

**Among women:** *Lack of support for employment needs, religious discrimination, ethnic minority women discriminated and geared towards low paying and low skilled labour.*

**Among young people:** *Poor support within the state school system i.e. language support needed in some cases.*

**Within education and training:** *Lack of provision of ESOL classes so that people can integrate into the wider community.*

**Among employers:** *Prejudice from those that have access to providing job opportunities to people from BME communities; racist assumptions among employers.*

**Among service providers:** *Deficit in awareness of needs of raped / slaved/trafficked/abused women and children; lack of support for families with language problems.*

**Within welfare benefits:** *Lack of access to bilingual money advisers; BME people are claiming fewer benefits than they are entitled to (due to lack of information or language barriers).*

**Within employment services:** *Lack of transitory support into work for those with no recourse to public funds.*

**Within health services:** *Diverse health issues not being recognised and tackled.*

**Within immigration services:** *Inability to work while seeking asylum due to slow processing by immigration services/home office; insecurity hence lack of capacity to plan.*

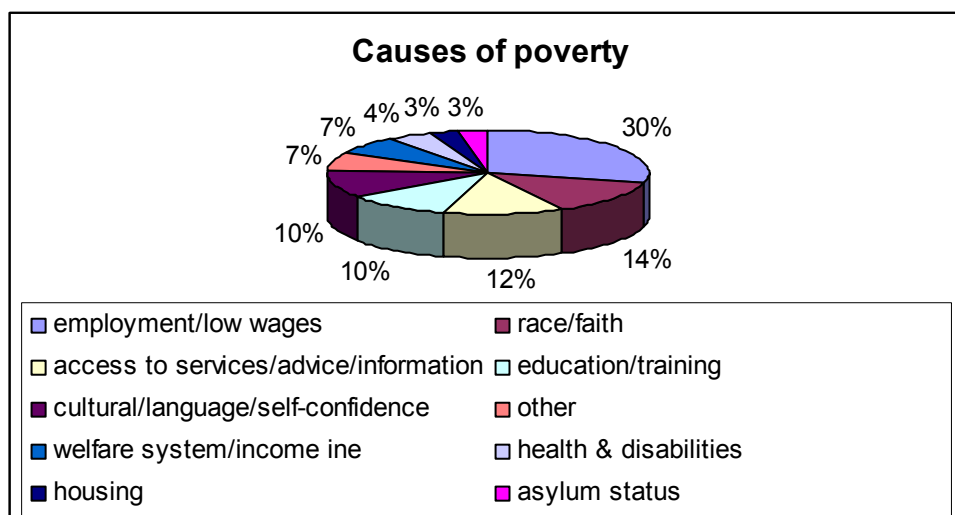


Fig. 1: Underlying causes of poverty

### Awareness of policy and legislative framework

Two thirds of respondents were aware of the Government's policy framework in tackling poverty but only just over a quarter were aware of EU legislation tackling poverty.

Their definition of poverty tied in with their understanding of the causes of poverty. While two thirds agreed with the definition given in the Government's report '*Achieving our Potential*' that poverty means lack of money, over four fifths of respondents saw lack of access to employment as the defining feature of poverty; three quarters defined poverty in terms of access to education and opportunities; and over two thirds access to adequate housing.

Lack of employment	82%
Lack of access to education	76%
Adequate housing	68%
Being excluded	68%
Lack of money	64%
Being discriminated against	62%
Lack of access to services	52%
Low social status	48%

Table 2: Definition of poverty

Being discriminated against was seen as a key element of poverty within diverse ethnic minority communities, and 94% of respondents found that in their experience race discrimination is the most likely form of discrimination to lead to poverty, followed by faith (58%) and gender (50%).

There were real concerns about the impact of the current economic crisis on diverse ethnic minority communities because of an increase in Xenophobia and racism. 94% voiced the following concerns:

- BNP - exploiting national crisis for own agenda
- Failures in immigration system

- Jobs restricted to family/friends
- Unhelpful media stories e.g. British jobs for British workers
- Impact particularly on BME women and young men
- Reaction by host population - racist incidents, concerns about standard of living

### Views on effective approaches to tackling poverty

Of the Scottish Government's proposed initiatives the three overarching programmes that respondents felt were equally most effective in tackling poverty and income inequality among diverse ethnic minority communities were: **Training for people to get into employment; child care; and tackling discrimination.**

<b>Government's proposed initiatives</b>	<b>%</b>
Training for people to get into employment	80
Child care	80
Tackling discrimination	80
Improving poor areas	63
Support for parents	61
Reducing health inequalities	59
Improving quality of housing	59
Training support for people in work	55
Support for children in and outside school	53
Tackling debt	53
Maximising wages	51
Maximising benefits	45
Support for children in playgroups and nurseries	45
Tackling fuel poverty	37

Table3: Effectiveness of poverty initiatives

Other suggested initiatives were:

- ESOL classes
- improving awareness of available training and broadening horizons e.g. maximising the aspirations of our young people
- skills training e.g. driving lessons to improve mobility and access to job market.
- training for employers
- educating people in life skills; getting professional imams to support our aims
- empowering communities

### Involvement in community planning

In order to explore engagement with the community planning process and with community planning partners, respondents were asked a number of questions around their awareness, level of engagement, and support for tackling locally some of the root causes of poverty and inequalities.

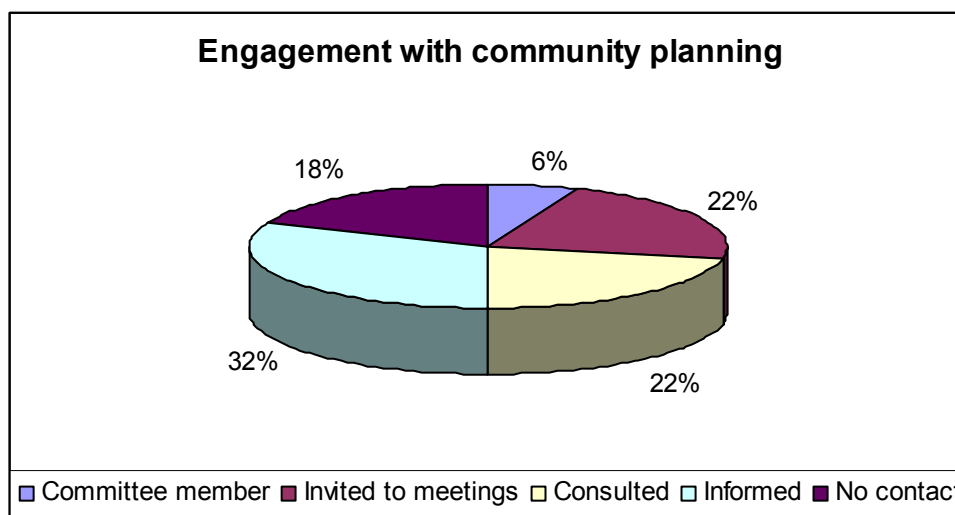


Fig. 2: Community planning engagement

- 66% knew how to contact the Community Planning Partnership in their area
- But for 50% there was either no contact or was limited to purely receiving information; and only 6% were actively involved by being represented on one of the committees.
- However there was variation in engagement - Three respondents reported that they had either applied for or received funding for their organisation, one delivered race equality training for a CPP, and a fifth engaged with the community planning process at the national level.
- Almost three quarters said that the main barrier to engagement by diverse ethnic minority communities was: “**not knowing enough about community planning**”; 52% said they did not see it as “relevant to their needs”, and 46% “didn’t understand enough about the issues they are dealing with.”
- Examples of barriers were lack of dedicated support for engagement of ethnic minorities, lack of openness to new views, and lack of time among those employed.

Levels of interest in being involved in advising on the way public agencies dealt with the causes of poverty and discrimination were relatively low:

- 36% in dealing with the causes of poverty
- 52% in dealing with discrimination based on race
- 50% in dealing with other forms of discrimination.

**The main reason seemed to be that between one fifth and one third would like more information on how they could be involved. However 60% of participants were interested in taking part in follow-up work and sharing their experiences of trying to influence policy on poverty or discrimination.**

### In Conclusion

Despite awareness of both the Government’s policy framework in tackling poverty and of the existence of community planning partnerships, there appears to be a lack of engagement by the public sector of members of diverse ethnic minorities in addressing the causes of poverty and inequalities within their own communities. This

is despite the evidence from this consultation that such communities are active across a broad range of equality issues that have a bearing on poverty.

While race discrimination is felt to be the most likely form of discrimination to lead to poverty among their communities this may not be adequately addressed by CPPs through their Single Outcome Agreements with the Scottish Government e.g. in terms of support for women and young people, within education and training or employment services, within work with employers or service providers, in supporting entitlements to welfare benefits, health services, and the procedures around support for asylum seekers.

The experience of respondents is that within diverse ethnic minority communities this discrimination is being manifested particularly within access to employment - lack of support in getting into employment, discrimination within the workplace, and low wages. Therefore the initiatives which are felt to be most effective among members of diverse ethnic minority communities are: **training for people to get into employment; child care; and tackling discrimination.** It will be interesting to see if the equality impact assessments evidence that CPP initiatives are addressing these needs through investment of the Fairer Scotland Fund.

In addition to discrimination lack of information on rights may be one contributing factor – lack of awareness of rights as laid down in EU directives which the UK Government and Scottish Parliament have signed up to.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The above gives an indication of some of the issues and themes that deserve immediate attention, strategic and operational planning as well as practical approaches. Undoubtedly, there is a need for more work and research into this important area of tackling poverty in Scotland among disadvantaged communities. Similarly, more work needs to be done in order to try and quantify the effects of discrimination in relation to poverty at different levels; however the outline of this mapping exercise suggests that tackling poverty is not about some short term steps to tackle economic settings but rather should extend into wider dimensions that can address community engagement, community cohesion and education all of which combined can have positive impacts on a number of different areas in the field of tackling poverty.

- ✓ Communities tend to disengage and under- invest their commitment to civic participation roles when:
- ✓ They feel excluded,
- ✓ Their issues and voices are not addressed according to their needs,
- ✓ Or when their voice is replaced by proclaimed representatives and detached consultations.

Their sense of contribution to society's collective benefits or advantages becomes secondary and somehow separated. This notion can be deployed as a motivational rationale for investing more in community cohesion and engagement as a vehicle to stimulate collective benefits (though this might not be immediately tangible)

not only for disadvantaged groups but also for society as a whole within the civic, economic, political and other dimensions beyond the short term solutions.

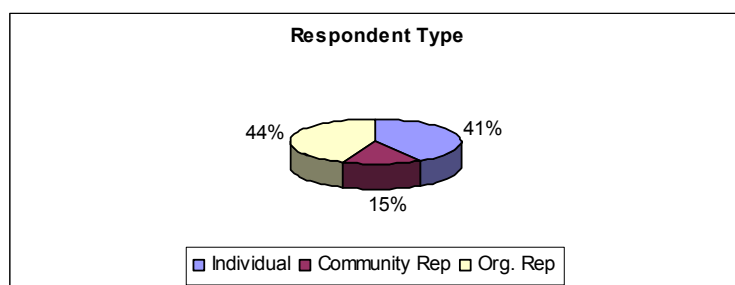
Having that in mind, our research therefore leads to the following recommendations as steps towards addressing these issues:

- *There is a need to invest further and enhance in joined up working initiatives (existing and new) involving raising awareness of experiencing poverty among disadvantaged groups and the wider setting: e.g. Poverty Alliance, FICS and grass root communities.*
- *There is a need to invest in more focused raising awareness events and initiatives where conceptions of POVERTY and tackling poverty are redefined beyond the definitions into the context of Human Rights Education.*
- *There is a need to see a stronger role for the Government in strengthening the agenda of tackling poverty where commitment to such vital issues is stipulated by CPP, wider voluntary sector, and EM voluntary sector.*
- *There is a strong need to progress Human Rights education in line with Tackling Poverty which would help:*
- ✓ *Utilize community cohesion and democratic active citizenship as a core component of tackling poverty.*
- ✓ *Break through the misconceptions of Human Rights and where Human Rights Education can be deployed as an empowering tool to tackling poverty at various levels: grass root communities, economic, civic and political settings.*
- *Training support for the ethnic minority voluntary sector (EMVS) on tackling poverty, providing new opportunities through democratic Human Rights Education and Democratic active Citizenship. This is in line with the remit and work of BEMIS at several levels and possible opportunities should be developed with local CVS's and others. Bemis, Poverty Alliance, Government.*
- *Community planning partnerships (CPP) should develop real and practical partnerships **with diverse grass root groups** locally.*
- *Addressing disadvantaged of EM in relation to employment should be viewed at several dimensions beyond the 'getting job' scope into working with employers to overcome barriers in employment of EM and equally on raising awareness on employment rights among: a role for BEMIS, Scottish Trade Unions Congress, Chambers of Commerce, and Equality & Human Rights commission (EHRC) and others.*
- *The Role of CPP and performance together with the funded projects have to be explored in line with efforts to contribute to tackling poverty where responsibilities are clarified to expectations and concerned stakeholders.*

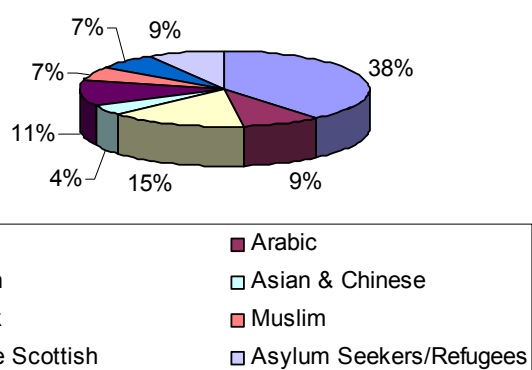
- *Raise awareness of EU year of eradicating poverty. –SCVO, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, POVERTY ALLIANCE, BEMIS, ETC*
- *Training for people to get into employment; - local regeneration agencies (LRA's), Government, local authorities*
- *Child care; - childcare partnerships, community planning, good practice.*

## APPENDIX ONE

### Profile of participants



### Diverse ethnic minority communities represented





## APPENDIX TWO

### Causes of Poverty

#### Barrier 1: Employment & Low Wages (39)

Discrimination in access to employment, opportunities in the job market, affecting employability	14
Unemployment and lack of knowledge about employability services and support for employment	13
Employment in low paid jobs, failure to secure professional employment	8
Discrimination in employment and promotion - racism and prejudice among employers	4

#### Barrier 2: Discrimination related to race, religion or belief including Islamophobia (18)

#### Barrier 3: Access to services/advice/information (16)

Access to support services	9
Lack of information and knowledge of resources	6
Quality of services targeted at specific sections of the community e.g. asylum seekers, trafficked/abused women	1

#### Barrier 4: Education/training (14)

Access to education including college/university, and support for learning	7
Low levels of educational attainment, and lack of relevant qualifications and skills	7

#### Barrier 5: Cultural/language/self-confidence (14)

Language barriers and access to language support	11
Isolation, lack of community engagement, insecurity	3

#### Barrier 6: Welfare system - ignorance of entitlements (9)

#### Barrier 7: Health & disabilities (6)

Health inequalities	3
Addiction	1
Disabling illnesses and access to support services	2

#### Barrier 8: Housing and poor environment (4)

Inadequate Housing and environmental factors	2
Poor housing stock & availability	2

#### Barrier 9: asylum status - inability to work and visa conditions (4)

New asylum seekers' visa conditions, refusal/negation of legal status, permission to work	3
Inability to work while seeking asylum due to slow processing by immigration services/home office	1

#### Barrier 10: Other – structural inequalities (10)

Structural inequalities in society, abuse of power/wealth is not distributed fairly, class discrimination	3
Lack funding, amenities, inequality and employment	2
Lack of opportunities	2
Social exclusion due to socio-economic disadvantage - a sort of BME class	1
Little community engagement	1
Credit crunch	1



## **BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITIES INFRASTRUCTURE IN SCOTLAND (BEMIS)**

**BEMIS is the national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body supporting the development of the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary Sector in Scotland and the communities that this sector represents. BEMIS recognises that we work in a context of inequality. It aims to address these inequalities by empowering communities. It will work towards an inclusive society by establishing structures which recognise diversity and empowers ethnic minority communities**

### **MISSION STATEMENT FOR BEMIS:**

**As a strategic national infrastructure organisation, BEMIS aims to empower the diverse Ethnic Minority third sector. We are committed to promoting inclusion, democratic active citizenship, recognition of diversity, human rights education, and wider representation, as well as effecting a proactive role in maintaining and enhancing pathways to influence government policy at local, Scottish, UK and EU levels.**

### **VISION FOR BEMIS:**

**Our vision is of a Scotland that is Equal, Inclusive, and Responsive: A society where people from the diverse communities are valued, treated with dignity and respect, have equal citizenship, opportunities and quality of life, and who actively participate in civic society.**

### ***BEMIS HAS THREE OVERARCHING AIMS & OBJECTIVES:***

- **To empower and build the capacity of minority formal and informal community organisations.**
- **To influence policy development, government and other public agencies in relation to equality and have a pro active role in supporting EM and the race equality agenda in Scotland (strategic partnership role to the Government).**
- **To help develop, promote & progress multicultural Scotland and active citizenship at the national and (European) levels. Be Pro active in supporting and promoting Democracy & Human Rights in Scotland ensuring active citizenship roles for EM communities.**



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