



How to Engage with Ethnic Minorities and Hard to Reach Groups

Guidelines for Practitioners

“No one is hard to reach, just more expensive to reach.
It is important to put more effort and creativity in reaching
these groups.”

– Paul Vittles

Tanveer Parnez

BEAUIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and
Cultural Minority Communities

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Background

In addition to the already existing ethnic diversity and usual migration movements, many European countries have seen in recent years a significant shift in the structure of population due to the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and 2007.

On the whole, according to Eurostat, there were **48.9 million foreign-born residents in the EU in 2011**, 9.7% of the total population. Of these, 32.4 million were born outside the EU and 16.5 million were born in another EU Member State.¹ On 1 January 2011, more than 75% of the foreigners in the EU resided in Germany, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and France.

Foreign-born residents and many ethnic communities in general, are often considered **hard to reach groups**. The term, however, may suggest that there is an inherent reluctance of these groups to be reached. We choose to emphasise the positive engagement strategy where service providers seek ways to understand and work with diverse groups in an engaging manner and so we do not employ the “hard to reach” phrase in these guidelines.

Without any doubts there are communities or sections of population that are not engaged fully in an active participatory citizenship process and fail to access services². They may experience language difficulties, difficulties in accessing information, they may think that service-providers do not care about them, do not listen or even are irrelevant to them³. On the other hand, it has been recognized that on the side of service-providers there is often limited or ineffective interaction between the different stakeholders, limited knowledge of multicultural guidance and

1 Vasileva, K. (2012): Nearly two-thirds of the foreigners living in EU Member States are citizens of countries outside the EU-27. Populations and social conditions. European Commission

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3433488/5584984/KS-SF-12-031-EN.PDF/be48f08f-41c1-4748-a8a5-5d92ebe848f2>

2 See: Bracketz, N. (2007): Who is hard to reach and why? ISR Working Paper. Swinburn University of Technology: Hawthorn. <http://www.sisr.net/publications/0701bracketz.pdf>

Other groups for which the term “hard to reach” is often applied include: gays and lesbians, homeless people; ‘hidden populations’, i.e. groups of people who do not wish to be found or contacted, such as illegal drug users or gang members; as well as broader segments of the population, such as old or young people or people with disabilities.

3 See: Wilson, D. (2001): Consulting Hard to Reach Groups, Local Authorities Research & Intelligence Association (LARIA) seminar, 15 November. <http://laria.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/68-LARIANews-February-2002.pdf>

education, lack of resources, political uniformity and restricted funding that result in lack of suitable services.

The problem of engaging diverse groups is of **special concern to the medical and educational fields**, as they tend to have poorer health and educational outcomes. A number of European Commission reports and recommendations highlighted the need to develop strategies to assist in including these groups in service and information provision, as well as in employment, education and active citizenship. This includes European Council Recommendation 92/441/EEC; Recommendation on Active Inclusion 2008/867/EC; Council conclusions of 17 December 2008; European Parliament resolution from May 2009; COM (2010) 2020 – *Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth*; COM(2010) 758 – The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

In order to develop a suitable, effective range of outreach strategies to enable engagement of diverse groups of ethnic minorities and migrants:

- those working with individuals from these groups need to overcome their own prejudices about the groups,
- preconceptions and misconceptions need to be addressed on both sides,
- reliable statistical data on the groups concerned needs to be gathered,
- specific characteristics and needs of these groups need to be understood¹,
- awareness of the availability of services needs to be raised among diverse communities,
- joined-up attitudes need to be developed among stakeholders,
- capacity (including training programmes) to sustain an inclusive approach towards diverse groups needs to be built.

The above aims can only be achieved where service providers and members of diverse groups work closely together, informing the process of mutual understanding and adjustment. It also needs to be remembered that in working with minority and migrant communities one size doesn't fit all.

The issue of cultural awareness adds to the complexity of the issue. It is important to acknowledge that what is considered appropriate behaviour in one culture it may not be appropriate in another. It is important to be aware of other peoples' cultures and values, beliefs and perception. How do we see diversity and why do we react in a particular way towards different migrant groups? Misinterpretation occurs when we lack awareness and knowledge of other people's cultures, diversity and behaviours, so it is important to engage with diverse communities to learn from each other and

¹ Some of the numerous barriers that ethnic minorities and migrants face are: little work experience, language barriers, little family support, unrealistic family expectations, lack of information about education, uncertain legal status or status that prevents access to employment and training, few positive role models, low or non-existent qualifications, qualifications that are not recognised, low literacy and numeracy rates, financial difficulties.

see things from other perspectives in order to develop culturally sensitive services across the board.

About the guidelines

The guidelines presented here have been designed **to facilitate the challenging process of reaching ethnic communities and migrants and building capacity in order to support inclusion and integration of the group members, stakeholders and networks. They consist of a range of creative, ready-made activities that, taken together, offer a toolkit for tackling exclusion of diverse ethnic and migrant groups.** The activities have been developed and successfully applied by BEMIS Scotland in a range of projects, workshops, training sessions and focus groups.

The guidelines consist of 6 modules:

- 1. Engaging diverse groups** (outreach workshop)
- 2. Equality and barriers to involvement** (workshop for stakeholders)
- 3. Identifying community champions**
- 4. Training community champions** (training session)
- 5. Involving parents through parent councils** (equality workshop for parent councils)
- 6. Understanding barriers to involvement** (workshop for parent councils)

Due to the compulsory character of education in Europe, the role of the school environment in facilitating integration and information provision for diverse ethnic and migrant groups can be seen as especially promising, and so modules 5 and 6 are focused on using parent councils as vehicles for the delivery of activities aimed at encouraging and nourishing empowerment and active citizenship among diverse ethnic and migrant groups.

We believe that sharing the guidelines with stakeholders in other regions of Europe will help all of us to get closer to the vision of building an inclusive European society which recognizes fully the rights of all citizens and adheres to their needs.

Objectives

The objectives of the guidelines are to:

- provide policy-makers and engagement workers with clearer understanding of the diverse issues and situations affecting diverse groups;

- develop skills in using policy and domestic law, national legislation and international human rights instruments to include diverse ethnic and migrant groups and protect their rights;
- develop knowledge and skills to tackle underrepresentation of diverse groups in national and local projects, schemes and policies;
- upskill knowledge and confidence in monitoring and reporting cases of violations of rights of the diverse groups.

The guidelines will enhance learning, understanding and retention of knowledge. The formation of small groups will allow participants to build a platform to reflect, discuss and increase confidence and understanding in working with diverse communities. The modules will benefit trainers, organisations and the diverse groups themselves.

METHODOLOGY

The guidelines are developed with ‘learning styles’, which will be suitable for trainers and the target audience. The guidelines can be used in a number of ways including: workshops, seminars, tutorials, case studies, role-playing exercises and team activities.

Each module can be used as a stand-alone or be spread over one to two days in order to get the maximum learning out of each module. Each stakeholder can devise their modules or training and develop appropriate timings to provide contact time to ensure that support mechanisms are built in according to the needs (for instance via individual sessions, email, Skype and telephone with their host tutor).

Learning outcomes

- increase in knowledge and understanding of diverse groups of ethnic and migrant communities;
- increase confidence in working with and for the diverse groups of ethnic and migrant communities;
- increase in competence of European and host country’s law;
- increase in co-operation and knowledge sharing across Europe to provide support to diverse groups of ethnic and migrant communities;
- develop abilities to attract and sustain a higher volume diverse groups of ethnic and migrant communities within host country to use the services and participate in civic matters and active citizenship;
- increase in the diverse groups’ knowledge of the host countries and their roles and responsibilities as citizens;

- empowerment of individuals in recognising their rights and gaining the confidence to challenge violation of their rights.

How to use these guidelines

- Each of the 6 modules in the guidelines can be used on its own.
- Each can be flexibly adapted to individual or group sessions in terms of content as well as duration (the timetable proposed for each module can be adjusted).
- It is recommended that group sessions are delivered in groups not larger than 18 people.
- As a guideline, one facilitator/trainer should be available for every 7-9 people.
- The list of resources needed for each activity is presented at the end of each activity.
- Facilitators will need to become familiar with the overall flow and content of the modules and, in some cases, will need to prepare information (data, for example) relevant for their country/region. Although majority of the examples provided in the guidelines are universally applicable, some (for instance those providing statistical information) serve only as examples. It is therefore strongly recommended that time is allocated for the facilitators to prepare for delivering the workshop, including preparation of handouts.
- Specific needs analyses (including content of the workshops but also cultural and language needs) of the diverse groups may need to be carried out in some cases (for instance, when working with newly arrived migrants or Roma communities in the host country). The activities need then to be adjusted accordingly to meet the needs.
- Facilitators are encouraged to be imaginative and use visual aids as well as a variety of icebreaking exercises, methods of active engagement and evaluation methods (see the Hints and Tips section below).
- After delivery of each module it is recommended that the steering group organising the workshop/training session meet to reflect on the outcomes and discuss the results of feedback from the workshop participants. This will ensure quality control and re-adjustment of the content of the activities or methods of their delivery.
- Glossary of terms used is attached at the end of the guidelines for further reference.

Hints and Tips

Each module should start with an ice-breaking exercise and finish with an evaluation/feedback

ICE-BREAKING EXERCISE (ICE-BREAKER)

At the beginning of each workshop or training session the facilitator introduces himself/herself and, usually, will explain how the session will be developed throughout the day. To help people know each other build group spirit and get to know the facilitator, to build the bond between participants and the facilitator and to help to get things off to a good start the facilitator/trainer should then introduce an **ice-breaking exercise (ice-breaker)**. The ice-breaking exercise can also be used to re-energize participants during sessions when addressing complicated, serious issues.

It needs to be remembered that the ice-breaking exercise needs to be sensitive to cultural differences and needs of participants. Throughout the guidelines basic examples of ice-breaking exercises are provided for each of the modules. Some additional ideas are presented below.

Where do you stand?¹

In the front of the room, create an imaginary line. All the way on the left side is one extreme, and all the way on the right side is the other extreme. Make sure there is enough space for people to stand anywhere along this imaginary line.

To play this game, you will ask everyone several questions. Everyone will then respond by standing somewhere along the imaginary line according to how strong of an opinion they have on that item. For example, if you ask people “coffee? or tea?” people will stand far along the left hand side if they strongly prefer coffee, and they will stand on the far end of the right hand side if they strongly prefer tea. If they are neutral, they will stand in the middle. You can ask many kinds of questions. For example:

- Winter or summer?
- Sweet or salty?
- Rock music or classical?
- Chocolate or strawberry?
- Morning person or Night person?
- Would you rather be short or tall?

¹ Adapted from <http://www.icebreakers.ws/medium-group/extremes-game-where-do-you-stand.html>

- Would you rather be rich or beautiful?

The questions can be funny or you may ask deeper questions – including questions that may be relevant for the workshop you are about to start.

If¹

With this exercise one needs to remember that some participants (e.g. newly arrived migrants) may have poorer grasp of language or some literacy issues, so the exercise may not be suitable for them.

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Write 20 'IF' questions on cards and place them (question down) in the middle of the circle. The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card.

This is a simple icebreaker to get people talking and listening to others in the group. Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF' questions to add to the list. The questions may be very general or may be a mixture of general questions and questions relevant for the session. Some examples are provided below:

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If I gave you £10,000, what would you spend it on?
3. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
4. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
5. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?
1. If you could change one thing in your child's school, what would it be?

Fabulous flags activity²

Pass out a sheet of paper, pens, and coloured pencils/crayons and/or markers to each person. Explain the activity: "We're now going to draw flags that represent or symbolize us. Please design your own flag of you – include some symbols or objects that symbolize who you are or what you find enjoyable or important." You can show your own sample flag if you like. For example, you could draw: a guitar (representing your passion for music), a tennis racket (someone who enjoys sports), a country like India (representing your affiliation with a country). Give everyone a set amount of time to draw (e.g. 5 minutes). Ask the participants to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew. If it is a large group, you can divide everyone into smaller groups and ask them to share their flags with each other, or you can just ask a small number of participants to share.

1 Adapted from http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf

2 Adapted from <http://www.icebreakers.ws/get-to-know-you/fabulous-flags.html>

Variations

After everyone has finished sharing the individual flags, as a big group you can ask everyone to brainstorm ideas on what to draw for a large flag that would represent the group. Proceed to delegate individuals to draw certain parts of the group flag. Alternatively, you can collect the individual flags and paste them onto a board to create a “quilt” of individuals.

EVENT EVALUATION/FEEDBACK

Evaluation/feedback at an event is communication about how well (or how poorly) the organisers performed.

Evaluation/feedback should be an essential part of any training programme, conference or workshop. By asking the participants to provide their feedback at the end of an event, the organisers learn if they have achieved the learning outcomes, what, in the view of the participants, were the strengths and weaknesses of the session, what could be improved and how. Evaluation is then a very important tool that the organisers can use to ensure that activities are delivered effectively and that the participants feel engaged.

You may gather feedback through a questionnaire (see below) or through other activities. It has to be noted, however that written forms require high level of literacy and so may not be suitable for all groups. In such cases the more visual examples (such as the target board, presented in Module 1 ([→ See “Activity 4: Summary and conclusion” on page 16](#))) will be more useful. One of the reasons we used the “target” feedback forms was because there was little reading involved and it was much more visual

Feedback form

[→ See “Example Feedback form” on page 9](#)

Keep and revise¹

Materials needed:

- few sticky notes for each participant;
- pencil for each participant;
- flipchart sheets, prepared beforehand by the facilitator.
- Instructions
- Prepare a flip chart paper. Draw a horizontal line across the middle. On the upper part write “keep” and on the lower “revise”.

¹ Adapted from Fast, L., Neufeldt, R., et al. (2002): Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual, Vatican City: Caritas Internationalis, 2002, p. 19.

Example Feedback form

Thank you for attending this event. Your feedback is important to us—please take a few moments to let us know what you think.

1. Of the issues discussed today, which are most important to you?

2. Why are these issues important to you?

3. What was the best thing about the event?

4. How would you rate the event (please put a cross in the appropriate box next to each question (X))?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I found this event interesting.				
I felt able to contribute to discussion.				
I would consider coming to a similar event in future.				

5. Do you have any specific comments on the answers given in question 4?

6. What have you learned from this event?

7. How will this event impact your work?

8. Is there anything we can improve for next time?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. We are grateful for all feedback.

- Hand out 2 or 3 sticky notes and pencils to each participant.
- Assign the task:

“Think back to today’s session and on each sticky note write one thing you liked and would keep, and one thing you didn’t like and would like to change. Then place each sticky note with positive comments on the upper part of the flip chart, and each one with negative comments on the lower part of the page.”

An alternative option is to open up discussion about the things the participants liked and didn’t like. Facilitators should then capture

everything that is being discussed. The sticky notes and discussion session can also be combined, if the facilitators suspect that the participants may not be confident in expressing themselves in writing.

- After completion of the day's activities, review participants' comments and apply the necessary changes accordingly, where possible.

Improvement ideas

Ask each participant to write down on a sticky note three ideas (however big or small) that would help to make your workshop better and more valuable.

Module 1: Engaging diverse groups

(outreach workshop)

1

Of all the places that you may consider when planning a strategy of reaching out to diverse ethnic and migrant groups, schools are the most accessible places where you will find a number of migrants and members of ethnic minorities from diverse communities. Other places which are worth considering when planning to engage diverse groups are community centres and supplementary language schools (like Polish Saturday schools, of which over 500 exists across Europe) run by the diverse groups themselves, centres where adult migrants or ethnic minority members learn the language of the host country, interfaith groups and the like.

These establishments can help to facilitate a number of outreach initiatives – be it by **providing parents with information packs, inviting them to take part in surveys or by hosting workshops and training session**. They are invaluable at the stage of needs analysis as well as when you are delivering projects and campaigns. The regulations on working with schools may vary from country to country and it is crucial to learn about the regulations before you start planning any activities. It is best practice to obtain any formal approval in advance.

The framework presented in this module **can be used for any subject, including issues in health care, education, employment, personal safety etc.**

Linguistic and cultural differences – good practice

The trainers need to be sensitive to the diverse language and cultural needs of the parents. They need to understand that people may view things differently and be careful not to offend anyone. It is good to have at least a rough idea about the cultural backgrounds of the delegates and take it into consideration when planning the workshop.

It is also a good practice to determine in advance (e.g. through a quick survey) if interpreters will be needed at the event. Another way of ensuring the language is not a barrier, is to mention in the advertising materials that delegates who need some help with the language may bring with them a friend or a family member to help them understand the discussion and participate in the workshop. Volunteers, teachers or even other delegates may also help. Graphic aids like symbols, simple illustrations etc. are helpful too but, again, make sure they are really needed. People may feel upset if they speak the language relatively well and they are treated as if they didn't. It is best for the trainers to be prepared for any occasion but they shouldn't be making assumptions and remain flexible in all aspects of the delivery of the workshop.

AIMS OF THIS MODULE

The module is designed to:

- Engage with diverse groups directly in a discussion on a specific subject (e.g. access to health care, parental involvement in schools).
- Identify the needs of diverse groups and barriers that the groups experience in accessing services.
- Clarify things that the diverse groups are confused about.
- Make clear which things that are commonly repeated are not true (this is called mythbusting).
- Collect opinions of the groups.
- Provide the groups with information on a specific subject matter.

The workshops are best delivered by two trainers for groups of 12-18 people. In a given setting (school, community centre etc.) the workshop may be repeated a couple of times, if needed.

Most examples provided in the module are based on the 36 workshops on parental involvement for ethnic minority and migrant parents that BEMIS delivered in Scotland (more information is available on <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk> and some video material is also available at <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk/videos/>).

EXAMPLE SESSION TIMETABLE

09:30–09:40	Introduction to the session and icebreakers
09:40–10:25	Sharing opinions/experiences/histories
10:25–11:00	Mythbusters

11:00–11:15 Summary, conclusions and evaluation

GENERAL NOTES TO TRAINERS

The structure and content of each workshop will depend on the subject matter. It is important that all resources (including relevant information packs) are prepared in advance. As a trainer you should be flexible about the choice of exercises and methods of work to accommodate context relevant to your country/region.

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION AND ICEBREAKERS

Notes for trainers:

- Introduce yourself and tell a couple of words about the organisation you represent.
- Explain the aim of the workshop and explain how the session will be delivered.

People feel more valued if they know something will happen with their views and opinions. It's about empowering people to share their experience, not just 'consulting' or 'telling'.

If gathering information explain what will happen to it, how it will be used, shared with whom, protect confidentiality etc.

- Introduce an icebreaking exercise (see the Hints and Tips section at the beginning of the guidelines) to make the delegates relaxed.

Icebreaking exercise

The exercise can be selected upon the trainers' knowledge of the delegates. One of the safest, most neutral options for the trainers working with diverse groups is to go round the group and ask the delegates to give their names and tell them what they are hoping to learn.

For examples of other ice-breaking exercises see the Hints and Tips section at the beginning of the guidelines.

ACTIVITY 2: SHARING OPINIONS/EXPERIENCES/STORIES

During the first activity the delegates are invited to talk about their experiences or barriers or stories (depending which would be more suitable for your purpose) with accessing a particular service. This can be specific to education or can cover issues such as health care, police, leisure facilities etc.—depending on what is the main focus of the workshop.

The activity starts with presenting three leading statements that you need to prepare in advance (see below). One of the statements should ask explicitly **“What barriers are you facing (or did you face) in accessing X”** (substitute for X any area that you want to focus on in the workshop e.g. access to schools, access to health care, access to employment etc.).

Notes for trainers:

- Write 3 leading statements on posters or flipchart sheets. It works better if there is an illustration that fits the subject matter – it makes the discussion less formal, more relaxed. The notes can then be made directly on the illustration.

Example 1: Statement and discussion

For a BEMIS workshop aiming at increasing parental involvement in schools this exercise focused on sharing information on activities undertaken with children. The following statements have been written on the flipchart sheets:

- Things I do with my child at school
- Things I do with my child outwith school
- Barriers to getting more involved with the school



Flipchart sheet for statement 1.

- Go through each of the statements in turn asking the delegates for responses. Write them on post-it notes and attach to the relevant poster.

Note: some parents may not feel comfortable to write down things on their own if they do not know the language fluently. It is important to make everyone feel welcomed and overcome such issues with discretion. If there are two trainers available, you can divide the groups into two and take notes for them so that no one feels excluded (or stigmatised). If you have interpreters at the workshop, or any other helpers you may also ask them to help.

You may also think about developing some simple graphics (e.g. cliparts) to shown the kind of issues people are likely to identify to make this exercise more visual.

- Attach the post-it notes to the flipchart sheets.
- Go through each of the flipchart sheets in turn to offer feedback to the group.
- Invite further discussion on the issues raised that you find most relevant and try to ensure that you understand clearly what the delegates wanted to say

(for example, where someone writes, “Language is a barrier”, it is important to understand whether this is about interacting with people or understanding written texts).

Resources needed for the activity:

- 3 flipchart sheets with statements written on it.
- As many different colours of post-it notes as possible.
- Pens.

ACTIVITY 3: MYTHBUSTERS

Aims of the activity:

- to clarify important matters;
- to help bust myths (make clear which of the commonly repeated things are not truth);
- to help you understand what the delegates’ level of knowledge in a given area is;
- to give you an opportunity to improve the delegates’ knowledge in this area.

The exercise is based around a **couple of statements**. For each of them the delegates will be asked to assess if they are true or false.

The statements should be a mixture of frequently repeated myths, issues related to your services that you know diverse ethnic and migrant groups are confused about in your country/region and facts that are important for the subject being discussed. The number of statements to be discussed will depend on the complexity of the issue and time allocated.

It is important to **make clear to the delegates that this is not a test or examination**, but that the purpose of the exercise is to learn how well the delegates understand the given service/issue etc.

Notes for trainer:

- Prepare the statements in advance and write each one on a separate sheet of flipchart paper.
→ See “*Example 2: Some statements from BEMIS’ workshop on parental involvement in Parent Council at school:*” on page 16
- Present the statements to the group (one at a time).
- Ask the delegates if the statements are true or false.

Note: Depending on the number of people attending the session and the layout of the room you may either ask the delegates to answer the question by

Example 2: Some statements from BEMIS' workshop on parental involvement in Parent Council at school:

- The main job of Parent Councils is to raise money for the school.
- All schools have a Parent Council.
- Only members of the Parent Council can attend meetings.
- Parent Councils take part in recruiting a head teacher.
- Other people can be asked to join the parent council for a short while if needed.
- Head teachers have a right and a duty to attend the Parent Council meetings.

Examples of statements for a workshop on accessing health care services:

- You need to be employed in order to have access to public health care.
- You need a referral from your family doctor in order to see a specialist.
- All vaccinations for children are compulsory.
- If you need to see a doctor at night you go straight into hospital.
- All information discussed with your doctor is confidential.

asking them to raise their hands for each question if they think the statement is true, or ask each to write *True* or *False* directly on the flipchart sheet.

- Go through the statements, commenting on and clarifying each of them and inviting group discussion wherever possible.

→ See “**Example 3: Excerpts from discussions on parental involvement in Parent Council at school facilitated by BEMIS.**” on page 17

- Distribute printed information on the statements with detailed, clear descriptions either confirming the statements or busting the myths (see Example 3 above).

Resources needed for the activity:

- Sheets of flipchart paper with the statements written up one question per sheet.
- Marker pens for writing answers.
- Information sheets providing factual information for each of the statements to be handed to each of the delegates at the end of the activity.

ACTIVITY 4: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Notes for trainers:

- Thank all delegates for coming to the workshop and their contributions.
- Ask delegates to say (or write) something they will have learnt/will do when they leave the session.

Example 3: Excerpts from discussions on parental involvement in Parent Council at school facilitated by BEMIS.

STATEMENT: The main job of Parent Councils is to raise money for the school.

False. Money is only part of what the Parent Councils can do. They represent the parent forum and:

- organise fundraising and social events e.g. discos, fairs, celebrations;
- communicate with the parents e.g. through newsletters and social media;
- discuss with the teachers matters relevant for education e.g. homework policy;
- participate in matters relevant to school e.g. inspections;
- Campaign on, for example, some changes to the school.

STATEMENT: Parent Councils take part in recruiting a head teacher.

True. Members of the Parent Council undertaking this task have to go through special training. The training will differ according to the local authority practice.

STATEMENT: Other people can be asked to join the parent council for a short while if needed.

True. Teachers, local community leaders, road safety advisors etc. can be invited to join the Parent Council.

Note for trainers:

- Talk about the different people who may be invited to join the Parent Council, e.g. grandparents and other family members, representatives from the local community. This may be particularly useful when a project/campaign is underway – during a campaign on road safety it might be a good idea to ask the local community police officer to join the parent council on a temporary basis.
- The Parent Council can ask local councillors or community councillors to attend meetings or join the Parent Council as a non-voting member.

- Invite any further questions and either give answers or let the delegates know where they can look for answers (e.g. websites, brochures etc.).
- Evaluate the session.

→ See “*Example 4: Evaluation method*” on page 18

Example 4: Evaluation method

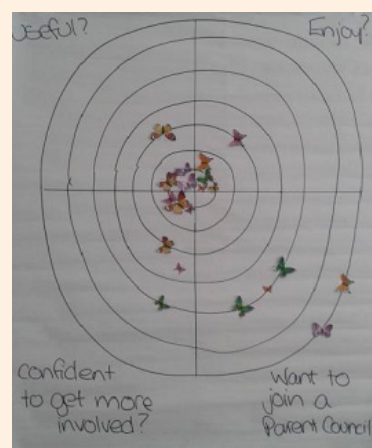
The BEMIS project used a “target board” graphical evaluation form which has been warmly welcomed by many delegates. Each delegate answers evaluation questions and each puts a mark (or a sticker) on a target board. The highest scores are those closest to the centre.

The target board functions well as a visual indicator of performance but it can also be coded and analysed, if required, by giving a numerical value to each section.

The illustration below shows an exemplary evaluation board for four questions (the board may be divided according to the needs):

- Was the event useful?
- Did you enjoy the event?
- Are you confident to get more involved in your child’s school life?
- Do you want to join a Parent Council?

For other examples of evaluation methods see the Hints and Tips section at the beginning of the guidelines.



Module 2:

Equality and barriers to involvement

(workshop for stakeholders)

2

As mentioned in the introduction to this Guidelines, the key elements to ensure development of suitable and effective range of outreach strategies are: overcoming prejudices about people from diverse ethnic and migrant groups, awareness of the specific needs of these groups and joined-up approach attitude among stakeholders.

This module will discuss general issues in equality and barriers to involvement faced by people from diverse groups. It should be adjusted depending on the specific characteristics of the audience. It is likely that specific service providers (e.g. health care professionals, educators, support workers etc.) will identify additional issues and so it is vital to keep an open mind. It is also important to use correct information (including statistics) which is relevant for the subject discussed and the audience. Activities proposed here should therefore be treated as examples.

AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP

- In general, the aims of the workshop can be summarised as follows:
- increase understanding of equalities practice;
- provide research-based evidence on migration and migrants and issues concerning these groups;
- bust commonly repeated myths about immigration;
- develop general understanding of the various needs and characteristics of ethnic groups and migrants;

- identify steps and practical ideas to overcome barriers that diverse groups face;
- increase participation and inclusion of diverse groups using a combination of local expertise and collected good practice.

EXAMPLE SESSION TIMETABLE

09:30–09:40	Introduction to the session and icebreakers
09:40–10:00	Mythbusters
10:00–10:20	Diversity and equality
10:20–10:30	Positive action
10:30–11:35	Scenarios
11:35–11:45	Conclusions and final remarks

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION AND ICEBREAKERS

Notes for trainers:

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain the aim of the workshop and explain how the session will be delivered.
- Go round the group and ask the delegates to give their names and to share with others what they are hoping to learn (you may also use an ice-breaking exercise, see the Hints and Tips section at the beginning of the guidelines).

ACTIVITY 2: MYTHBUSTERS

The aim of this activity is to highlight the discrepancy between the common beliefs and facts concerning migrants and ethnic minorities. In order to deliver this part of the workshop the trainers need to make sure that they have reliable statistics and factual knowledge and that they are familiar with the most commonly repeated statements, headlines and prejudices concerning diverse ethnic and migrant groups.

Notes for trainers:

- Before the session starts, prepare 4-6 general statements about diverse groups – a mixture of commonly repeated myths as well as some true statements that may not be necessarily widely known. The statements should be relevant to the issue of ethnic minorities and/or migrants and parent councils.

Example 1: Some examples of general and specific statements

“In 2012/13, more people came to the UK than left.”

“Fewer than 250,000 people migrate to the UK from overseas every year.”

“Health care services must take responsibility to translate all materials into community languages on request.”

"Suicide rates among migrants from Eastern Europe are higher than among White British people."

- Display the statements on a flip chart paper or a whiteboard
- Ask each of the delegates to mark each statement as “True” or “False.”
- Discuss the answers to the mythbuster questions (again, trainers need to be very well prepared to lead the discussion).

ACTIVITY 3: DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

In this activity we aim to provide clear picture of diversity and challenges in working with diverse communities, as well as to understand diversity better in order to help the underrepresented groups to become more involved.

Before the planned event the organisers need to prepare a **“Diversity and Equality” sheet** (Example 2) containing a couple of statements relevant in the context that the delegates work in (e.g. health care, education, police). It is recommended that it contains general statements as well as statements applying specifically to your region/country and context of work.

Facilitator’s notes for the sheet should also be developed in advance to highlight to the facilitators the points that should be covered in the discussion. It is also a good practice to provide the participants with a **notes page** to clarify the statements from the “Diversity and Equality” sheet.

Notes for trainers:

- Divide delegates into groups.
- Ask the delegates to go through the “Diversity and Equality” sheet from their pack on their own
→ See **“Example 2: Suggestion for Diversity and equality sheet.” on page 22**
- Ask the delegates to go through the “Diversity and Equality” sheet in groups.
- Lead a discussion on the answers, using your facilitator’s notes.
→ See **“Example 3: Facilitator’s notes for the Diversity and equality activity.” on page 22**

- You may issue Diversity and Equality Notes highlighting the key messages.

→ See “*Example 4: Diversity and Equality Notes*” on page 23

Example 2: Suggestion for Diversity and equality sheet.

1. “When talking with ethnic and cultural minorities, people are afraid of saying the wrong thing.”
2. “Individual people can't make a big difference for progressing equality.”
3. “Treating people differently is the cause of resentment, we should treat everyone the same.”
4. “There is no racism in ethnically mixed areas.”

Example 3: Facilitator’s notes for the Diversity and equality activity.

“When talking with ethnic and cultural minorities, people are afraid of saying the wrong thing”

- (Some) people are scared.
- Fear of offending is NOT limited to one group: people from ethnic and cultural minorities can be anxious about offending too.
- Being scared of offending or hurting people is not shameful.
- Information about minorities often come from the media and is often distorted.
- Fear can lead to saying the wrong thing (target fixation e.g. “Don’t mention the Germans”).
- Part of the point of this session is to address this fear and help overcome it.
- Conversations based on ‘respectful curiosity’ are unlikely to offend. People rarely mind talking about themselves if they feel safe to do so. So respect and the celebration of difference are fundamental.

Key message: It’s OK to be scared, as long as the fear is acknowledged and confronted.

“Equalities is an issue for the leaders of the Local Authority; individual teachers can’t make a big difference.”

- Individual people can certainly make a big difference.
- But not on their own.
- For equalities to prosper, everyone has to work to achieve what they can.
- Thinking that it is “someone else’s problem” is almost certain to end up with nothing happened and problems continuing.

Key message: Promoting equalities is a partnership with everyone having to contribute.

Treating people differently is the cause of resentment, we should treat everyone the same.

- Treating people differently can feel unfair and cause resentment.

- There are often good reasons for treating people differently e.g. if a child's parents are getting divorced he may be treated differently for bad behaviour compared with a child who is not going through the same difficulties at home.
- If appropriate, explain why people are being treated differently to try and prevent resentment.
- Treating everyone the same can lead to indirect discrimination e.g. holding a meeting open to everyone on the first floor (not accessible to someone in a wheelchair).
- It is important to recognise when indirect discrimination is happening and think of actions to take to address this.
- Taking steps to address indirect discrimination is called positive action, recognising and trying to overcome barriers to participation.
- Analogy: you are having a dinner party and your guests include vegans, coeliacs and people who don't like vegetables. If you cook any one dish, not everyone will be able to eat. This is treating everyone the same, but the outcome is unfair. Cooking different dishes for different people means everyone has the same chance to eat. This treats people differently, but is fairer, since the outcome (being able to eat) is more important.

Key message: Treating everyone the same can lead to indirect discrimination

Example 4: Diversity and Equality Notes

- **“When talking with ethnic and cultural minorities, people are afraid of saying the wrong thing”**
Key message: It's OK to be scared, as long as the fear is acknowledged and confronted.
- **“Individual people can't make a big difference for progressing equality.”**
Key message: Promoting equalities is a partnership with everyone having to contribute
- **“Treating people differently is the cause of resentment, we should treat everyone the same.”**
Key message: Treating everyone the same can lead to indirect discrimination.

Resources needed for the activity:

- “Diversity and Equality” sheet for each participant.
- Facilitator's notes.
- Diversity and Equality Notes (see Example 4) for each participant.

ACTIVITY 4: POSITIVE ACTION

Taking steps to address indirect discrimination, recognising and trying to overcome barriers to participation is called Positive Action.

The proposed Positive Action activity is designed to highlight the power that service providers have to help include an underrepresented group in the provision of services.

Notes for trainers:

- Provide the delegates with the following scenario (example for employers of local cultural centre):
You work in an ethnically diverse area. Over the past couple of years the area has experienced a considerable increase in Arab population, which created a lot of tension based on prejudice around Islam. You are looking for one person to join the Consultation Committee at your local cultural centre. There are no members of Arab background on the Committee and you want to change this to become more representative of the area.
- Explain difference between **positive action** (which is legal and officially encouraged) and **positive discrimination** (which is unlawful). See “Glossary” on page 83 for definitions.
- Ask which of the following steps should be taken? (You may want to give participants laminated copies of the statements and ask them to mark each as *acceptable* or *unacceptable*).
 - Advertise your search for the Committee member only in Arabic.
 - State ‘Arabic origin’ on any advertising material produced to recruit the new member.
 - State that Arab community is currently under-represented and that you encourage applicants from that background.
 - Get a stall at an event at the mosque and talk to people there about joining the Committee.
 - Make a decision to only accept a person of Arabic origin for the current vacancy.

ACTIVITY 5: SCENARIOS

In this activity we present a skeleton for designing a mixture of group work and plenary discussion with the aim of:

1. looking closer at some of the scenarios that are likely to occur when you are trying to engage diverse groups in your work or service provision;
2. offering measures to overcome the most typical barriers.

The organisers should prepare in advance a list of carefully selected 10-15 scenarios in engaging diverse groups to discuss with the delegates as well as a list of

accompanying questions and facilitator's notes. If you have conducted consultations with the diverse groups before, it is advisable to make the gathered information and opinions anonymous, adapt them and incorporate into the scenarios to reflect the real situations. It is a good practice to prepare summarising notes for the delegates as well. This should include the full list of scenarios and the facilitator's notes.

Some, very general examples of the scenarios, questions and facilitator's notes are reproduced below. More are available in Module 5 for the specific context of the work done by parent councils.

Notes for trainers:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4-5 people.
- Select 2-3 scenarios for each group (each printed on a separate sheet).
- Ask each group to answer the questions under the scenarios and make notes. This part should take around 25-30 minutes.

Example 5: Example of scenarios for Activity 5

Scenario 1: "What is there for white indigenous men?"

Over the past few years, your area has become increasingly diverse, however, the clients of your local library haven't diversified at the same rate. At a staff meeting, you are discussing a proposal to attend a sequence of events with faith and community groups over the summer term to promote the library and community centres across your town. One of your colleagues feels that this is wrong and says, "I note you are going to non-Christian faith groups and the community groups you are visiting exclude white groups indigenous to this country. It's all very well promoting diversity but what about our white men? This is racism!"

Questions to ask:

- How would you respond?
- Where is the line morally and/ or legally between trying to attract minorities and discrimination?

Scenario 2: "I don't understand the information the school sends me"

Rabina moved to Scotland about seven years ago. She has three young children, the youngest two are not at school yet. Rabina doesn't read English and is not able to go to classes because of her child care commitments. She does not understand the letters from her city council. The school arranged for a letter to be translated into her native language but she is not able to read in her native language either.

Questions to ask:

- How do you think Rabina feels?
- What can you do to help Rabina?
- What could your council do to help Rabina?
- Are there any other services that could help support Rabina?

- Ask each group to read out the scenarios they were given, the questions and their answers.

If you decide to prepare the notes for delegates, explain to them that you will distribute the full list of scenarios and notes at the end, so there is no need for the delegates to keep very detailed notes during the plenary part of the activity.

If needed, ask additional questions to make sure that all important points have been covered. Use the facilitator's notes to help you with this. This part of the activity should take 35-40 minutes.

→ See “Example 6: Facilitator’s notes for scenarios 1 and 2 (as presented in Example 5)” on page 27

- Distribute the Delegate’s Notes for the activity (list of all scenarios you came up with and copy of the facilitator’s notes as described in Example 8)

Resources needed for the activity:

- 10-15 scenarios printed on separate sheets.
- Paper and pens for the participants to make notes.
- Facilitator’s notes.
- Delegate’s notes pack for each delegate.

ACTIVITY 7: CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

- Summarise the event and thank the delegates for participation.
- Distribute any remaining handouts, notes or other materials.
- Ask the delegates to complete evaluation forms.

Example 6: Facilitator's notes for scenarios 1 and 2 (as presented in Example 5)

Scenario 1: "What is there for white indigenous men?"

How would you respond?

- Explain that this isn't discrimination - you are trying to engage with an under-represented group.

Where is the line morally and/or legally between trying to attract minorities and discrimination?

- This is covered in the Positive Action activity

Scenario 2: "I don't understand the information the school sends me"

How do you think Rabina feels?

- Someone who struggles to speak the language may feel very isolated and lonely.
- Many migrants may struggle with correspondence/materials sent from the local authority but it is much more difficult for those who do not speak the language of a given country fluently.
- As Rabina seems to spend much of her time at home with children she may not be too confident to get involved with the school.

What can you do to help Rabina?

- Are there any employees of your organisation who could help Rabina?
- Are there any community groups/services that could help with translation or with improving her literacy? There may be some courses that she could attend.
- This may be an opportunity to look at the correspondence sent by local authority. Is it written in user-friendly language? Does it recognise those people for whom the language of a given country is a second language or those who struggle with literacy? It may be a good idea to consider redrafting the materials or act as a focus group.

What could your council do to help Rabina?

- Work with people from migrant backgrounds to improve communications.
- Provide "podcasts" in community languages on your website.
- Make contact with relevant services to help with language and literacy issues.
- Contact providers of language courses and see what classes are available – help Rabina and people like her access these classes.

Are there any other services that could help support Rabina?

- Local community groups
- Local libraries.
- Other?

Module 3:

Identifying community champions

3

Community champions are representatives of a given community who have an in-depth knowledge of the specific characteristics and needs of a given group and who serve as links between service providers and communities. They may be either volunteers or may be appointed by you as sessional workers or employees.

For the purpose discussed in this module, community champions are not expected to work as community leaders speaking on behalf of the community but rather as links, helping the community become more active in general.

Apart from the defining characteristics mentioned above, any candidate for a community champion should usually also:

- have a very good knowledge of the language of the host country;
- have a very good knowledge of the language of the community he/she will be working with;
- have a very good understanding of the barriers to accessing services that migrants and people from ethnic minorities face;
- have at least basic knowledge about the area or service he/she will be helping to open for diverse groups;
- have a proven record of working with communities;
- be a confident and friendly individual;
- be able to show flexibility in working with groups;
- have an understanding of equality issues.

It is an additional asset if the community champion has experience in providing training to groups or individuals.

Including community champions in pilots, delivery of programmes and local schemes is becoming increasingly popular. Such an approach reflects also the European Commission's emphasis on community involvement and local ownership, which encourages people to take a proactive role in their local area.

Community champions should not only be able to spread information but also have the capacity to identify local issues and problems and come up with their own solutions. In this top-down approach development of the sense of responsibility and active citizenship is a key issue.

This module provides some advice on identifying suitable community champions.

ACTIVITY 1: IDENTIFYING THE TASKS

Analyse carefully the programme you want to be delivered to communities, highlighting the parts that the community champions could facilitate.

Prepare concise description of the workshop/training session/event that you will require the community champion to deliver, including:

- aims of the project;
- expected learning outcomes from the community;
- description of particular activities within the delivered project;
- expected list of resources needed for the activities.

ACTIVITY 2: DEFINING THE PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Prepare a description of the community champion's main duties, skills, qualifications (if applicable) and experience by looking at:

- the description of the project (as prepared in Activity 1);
- characteristics of your target group;
- general characteristics of community champions as presented in the introduction to the module.

It is a good practice to use a list of items and categorise them as essential or desirable, depending on the needs of the project (see example below). You will then be able to identify quickly if a given candidate meets your requirements.

Example 1: Person specification for recruiting community champions.

	Essential	Desirable
Min. of 2 years' experience of working with or in the sector.	✓	
Strong Leadership and people management experience.	✓	
Ability to monitor and evaluate services to ensure service improvement.	✓	
Ability to monitor, analyse and report succinctly.	✓	
Ability to communicate clearly and liaise effectively with others.	✓	
Fluency in the minority language.	✓	
Proven ability to develop rapport and empathy.	✓	
Positive attitude and spirit.	✓	
Experience of working with families and young people.		✓
Experience of working with ethnic minorities.	✓	
Experience in providing training for groups.		✓
Highly organised and committed.	✓	
Own transport.		✓

ACTIVITY 3: MATCHING A SUITABLE CANDIDATE

In order to find a candidate with characteristics, experience and skills matching your description it is recommended you consider:

A) Your existing employees:

- enquire among your existing employees if any of them comes from a community that you would want to reach;
- check how they fit your description of community champions.

B) Local community groups (including faith groups)

- Talk to the leaders of local community groups who may be able to recommend someone suitable for you.

C) Local newsletters, notice boards and community media.

You can put a job advertisement on a local community notice board or in a community newsletter. Some groups (for instance the Polish migrants all over Europe) have very well developed online and printed media networks.

- D) Asking **other stakeholders** who worked with the groups you want to reach – maybe they will be able to recommend someone who proved very successful in delivering activities for diverse ethnic and migrant groups in the past.
- E) **Local schools** – it is worthwhile asking members of the parent council or teachers if they could recommend a suitable candidate from the parents they know.

ACTIVITY 4: INTERVIEWING

While interviewing, use the description of the community champion as described in Activity 2, noting down information about:

- skills;
- experiences;
- qualifications;
- other essential and desirable characteristics.

Be open and flexible in your choice – finding good community champions can be a difficult task but once you have a well-planned strategy for the project and a suitable candidate to deliver it, the project will benefit significantly from his/her involvement.

Module 4:

Training community champions

(training session)

4

The workshop discussed in this module is a scaffolding that stakeholders may apply in preparing community champions for delivering variety of projects, schemes, seminars, workshops etc. Importantly, conclusions from the workshop should also be used by your organisation to prepare action points, responsibilities and final strategy to deliver your project/initiative to the diverse groups through the community champions.

A use of **presentation slides** is recommended during the workshop as is preparation of a **proposed toolkit** that the Community Champions could use.

The duration of particular activities within the workshop are flexible with longer or shorter breaks and/or informal components over the breaks – depending on the subject of the workshop and characteristics of the participating group.

It is very important to make the workshop as inclusive as possible and **for the delegates to experience a high level of ownership of the session**. This will make them feel empowered and confident to deliver the workshop. Specific guidelines to facilitate this are provided for the particular activities below.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the workshop the appointed community champions should:

- have sufficient knowledge about the service provider and its relevant services;

- be able to clearly explain the purpose of a given project, scheme, seminar or workshop that they have been appointed to deliver to the community;
- be able to clearly explain the importance and structure of the services to the members of the diverse groups;
- be able to discuss the services on a one-to-one basis within communities;
- identify opportunities to build upon what is already done and;
- identify contacts and groups for whom contact with the service providers may be beneficial.

EXAMPLE SESSION TIMETABLE

09:30–09:45	Introduction to the session and icebreakers	15 mins
09:45–10:15	Background to your organisation/project	30 mins
10:15–11:15	Preparing the champions to deliver the project to communities	60 mins
	BREAK	30 mins
11:45–12:15	What are the benefits?	30 mins
12:15–12:45	Facilitated discussion	30 mins
12:45–13:15	Action plan, contacts and conclusions	30 mins

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION AND ICEBREAKERS

Notes for trainers:

- Welcome the delegates to the workshop.
- Introduce an icebreaking exercise (you may use examples from the Hints and Tips section at the beginning of the guidelines or “Example 1: Ice-breaking exercise.” on page 35).
- Establish **ground rules** for the workshop.

Ground rules are the basic rules to which all the participants agree to adhere during the workshop. This may include things like:

- answering phone calls,
- leaving the room,
- asking questions,
- requesting breaks etc.

Example 1: Ice-breaking exercise.

Ask the delegates to split into pairs (encourage them to work with someone who they don't know).

- Ask them to get the following information from the other person:
 - their name;
 - where they are from and two things about them;
 - their experience of the field that the workshop is focused on.
- Ask each person to tell the wider group the information that they got from their partners.

By doing this short presentation, delegates could have a greater level of control about the information; also shared stories are a great way to break down barriers, so this element is of particular importance to this section and to establishing the ethos of the day.

By allowing the delegates to decide (or negotiate) at least some of the ground rules you will make a positive start. This will also help considerably in facilitating the delegate's inclusion and ownership of the workshop. The trainers need to make it clear that they will abide by the rules being set, which also communicates how much control the delegates have.

Example 2: Rule for using mobile phones

Letting the group decide what the rules for the use of mobile phones are shows respect and consideration for the fact that many delegates participating in the workshop may be volunteers who have caring responsibilities and would prefer to keep their phones switched on.

ACTIVITY 2: BACKGROUND TO YOUR ORGANISATION/PROJECT

It is important for the community champions to learn about your organisation as well as about the project they will be helping you to deliver to the diverse groups. They need to feel knowledgeable about who you are and how you operate if they are to act confidently on your behalf, feeling included and responsible for the delivery of your project.

Stopping to answer questions and engage in discussion during this activity is really helpful. It is about telling a story and it is important to involve the delegates as much as possible, since the purpose of the workshop is to make them part of the story.

We strongly recommend using presentation slides for this part.

- Introduce your organisation and its aims to the community champions. The points that you should usually cover are:
 - the full name of your organisation (and acronym, if you use one);

- where is it based;
- when was its established;
- who funds its activities;
- what are the main partner bodies of the organisation;
- what are the main aims of the organisation;
- what are the achievements/success stories so far (again, it is good to use a presentation here – providing numbers, graphs, photos from former projects etc.);
- your website address.

To make delegates pay attention and see you much information they have taken in, you may offer, for instance, a quiz about organisation with small prizes after the presentation.

Provide the community champions with general, printed information packs about your organisation (if you have them).

- Introduce shortly the workshop/project that you will be asking the community champions to deliver to communities (more information will be provided in Activity 3 below).
- Give reasons why you want to reach the particular communities. If you have any statistics available that would prove diverse ethnic and migrant groups fail to access the services you are focused on, or are disproportionately underrepresented in a given area, it would be good to provide the numbers here.
- Explain why the contribution of community champions is crucial in reaching the target groups of migrants and ethnic minorities. Emphasize the fact that the delegates have been invited to the workshop as they have been recognised as having an in-depth knowledge of the communities (and their languages), their needs and barriers that they are facing.

ACTIVITY 3: PREPARING THE CHAMPIONS TO DELIVER THE PROJECT TO COMMUNITIES

The aim of this activity is to **discuss with the community champions the workshop or project (or other activity e.g. survey) that they will be then asked to deliver to their communities (target groups).**

At the end of the activity the community champions should:

- have clear understanding of what they will be required to do with the target groups;

- have factual, background knowledge about the services/project they will be discussing with the communities;
- be able to tell how the community can benefit from the training the delegates will be providing;
- have confidence to deliver the training/project to the communities;
- feel empowered to contribute ideas to the design of the training/project for communities.

This activity should again be made inclusive and as accessible as possible to make the delegates feel valued and confident to deliver the training/project. Great care needs to be taken to avoid strictly “telling” and “demonstrating” in this activities. Let delegates feel their way through the training, asking questions and participating.

Notes for trainers:

- Make a short introduction about the aim of the activity i.e. preparing the community champions to deliver training/project to target groups and gathering the community champions’ opinions on the final form and content of the workshop/project.
- Provide basic information about the aims of the training/project that will be delivered to the communities (i.e. introduction to public health care, introduction to education system, welfare system etc.).

Example 3: Aims of a workshop.

BEMIS Scotland run a workshop for community champions to train them to deliver workshops to ethnic minority parents on the importance for parental involvement. Activities presented in Modules 5 and 6 were used as the basis for the training. The community champions were informed that the aims of the workshop are:

- engage with parents from migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds directly in a discussion on parental involvement in schools;
- identify the needs of these groups and barriers to parental involvement that they experience;
- clarify what aspects of the education system/parental involvement opportunities the groups are confused about;
- make clear which things that are commonly repeated are not true;
- collect the groups’ opinions and ideas on improvement;
- provide parents from diverse groups with specific information on issues relevant to parental involvement.

- Present the main components of the planned training/project for communities and go through it in the form of a conversation: ask for stories and information; ask delegates to think about problems that they foresee and

their solutions. This will really help the delegates to have a sense of ownership of the information that they are asked to share.

Example 4: Components of training

For the parental involvement workshop BEMIS trainers discussed the following components with the community champions:

- Introduction to the session and icebreakers (including types of appropriate icebreaking exercises).
 - Sharing opinions/experiences/histories (including the three proposed leading statements as discussed in the example for Activity 2 in Module 1).
 - Mythbusters (specific myths and statements that require clarification).
 - Summary, conclusions and evaluation (including proposed evaluation methods).
- Present a toolkit accompanying the training session, if you have developed one. Ask the delegates for their opinions and suggestions.

Example 5: Toolkit

For the BEMIS workshop on parental involvement the toolkit for parents consisted of printed information on the Mythbusters (see Activity 3 in Module 1). The toolkit was discussed with the community champions and their contribution towards improving it were warmly welcomed.

- Ask the community champions to discuss any specific methods and ideas for the delivery of the workshop/project to the communities.
- Discuss why the community would benefit from this session. It is important for the community champion to have a clear sense of purpose.
- Invite participants to **share any comments on the session and any problems** they see with delivering it.

Apart from preparing the community champions to deliver the workshop/project to the communities, this activity will also help you to introduce some final adjustments to the workshop/project for communities (including adjustments to the materials that you will provide the community champions and the target group with).

ACTIVITY 4: WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

In this activity the delegates are invited to reflect on the practical benefits that the community groups can gain from participating in the planned project/workshop. By discussing the benefits the community champions will become more motivated in delivering the project/workshop to the community, as they will be aware what difference the newly acquired knowledge or skills may make in the lives of the

individuals and whole communities participating in the initiative. This, again, will allow the community champions to take ownership of the initiative.

The delegates may repeat some of the things that have been said before during the session, but you should encourage them to try to think about other benefits, also for the wider community and society in general.

Notes for trainers:

- On a sheet of flipchart paper write at the top “Benefits for individuals and communities”
- Divide the champions into groups of 3-4 and give each group a pile of post-it notes (each group should have a different colour).
- Ask the delegates to discuss and write on the post-it notes the practical benefits that both individuals and communities will gain from participating in the project/workshop.

Example 6: Benefits for individuals and communities:

If the community champions were to deliver, for instance, a workshop for diverse groups on health care services in general, some of the benefits that you would want the delegates to identify would be:

- increased awareness of the way the health care system works;
- prevention of infectious diseases in individuals and society;
- quicker access to services and quicker diagnosis;
- prevention of serious illness development in individuals;
- better health and improved wellbeing of the diverse groups;
- more confidence in the health system.

- Ask each group to attach the post it notes to the flipchart sheet. Once all groups attached their notes, go through them, asking additional questions if needed.
- If there is anything that you fill the group missed, add it here and ask the delegates if they agree with you.
- Feedback to the groups. Summarise the findings of the activity and praise the delegates for insightful analysis.

Resources needed for the activity:

- A flipchart sheet with “Benefits for individuals and communities” written on it.
- Different colours of post-it notes.
- Pens.

ACTIVITY 5: FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS

This workshop ends with two facilitated discussions. These are the components of the session that really involve the delegates and **make explicit how their skills and knowledge are valued**. It is critical that the facilitation of this discussion reflects this. As a result of these discussions **a set of action points and a pathway forward should be developed**.

For this activity you need two sheets of flipchart paper. Write **“Where the session for community groups can be run and how the Community Champions can be involved in this?”** on one of them and **“What are the pathways forward and around meeting the support needs of the Community Champions?”** on the other.

Notes for trainers:

- Explain to the group that you will be discussing two issues now and attach the flipchart sheets to the wall or white board so they would see it clearly through the activity.
- Begin with discussing the first question by asking suggestions on the venue for delivering the project/workshop and write down their responses. Then ask the community champions what they could contribute from themselves in terms of skills, knowledge and experience (this will give them the chance to highlight their own personal assets and will also give you more information about the range of skills that they represent).
- Move on to the second question – invite the delegates to share with you information on any forms of support they will need in order to deliver the project/initiative to communities (this can range from travel costs, hiring a venue with wheelchair access to printing some materials etc.). Be open to all suggestions and do not dismiss any in public even if you feel they are irrelevant (you may always talk about such suggestions with the delegate individually).
- Thank everyone for their contribution and assure them that the points they made in this part of the workshop will be taken into account when preparing the final strategy for the delivery of the project/workshop for communities.

Resources needed for the activity:

- Two flipchart sheets with the topics for discussions written on them.

ACTIVITY 6: ACTION PLANS, CONTACTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The final part of the workshop gives you the chance to present your plans for the community champions. As before, also in this point it is important to allow them to contribute and feel actively involved in the planning of your outreach campaign.

They are the people you will be relying on so you want them to understand clearly what is expected of them as well as make them feel responsible, in a positive sense, for what is becoming your joined project.

Notes for trainers:

- Present your action plan in delivering the project/workshops for communities (including number of events and timeframe).
- Ask the delegates if they feel this is a realistic plan and listen to any suggestions they may have.
- Discuss together an action plan for you as a group (e.g. need for further training for community champions, regular meetings to feedback on the delivery of the project etc.).
- If you are able to agree on any forms of support as discussed in Activity 4, you may do it at this point or let the group know when you will be able to respond to these calls for support.
- Establish if any of the delegates (or the group collectively) requires information about any other resources or contacts to some people of organisations.
- Summarise the event and thank the delegates for participation.

Module 5: ***Involving parents through parent councils*** *(equality workshop for parent councils)*

5

In most of the EU countries schools have parent councils. The members of the councils are usually elected by parents from among themselves and their role is generally to support the school in its work with pupils and parents and to promote contact and communication between the school, parents and pupils. The specific roles of parent councils will vary from country to country. In Scotland, for instance, parent councils have a say when it comes to the curriculum (programme of teaching), they work closely with teachers and they play an important role linking school to community, kindergarten/early years or other service providers. In the Netherlands the parent councils too play a very important role in supportive activities undertaken by parents and organise events in consultation with the school staff (in addition, there are participation councils – formal policy-making bodies in which teachers and parents, and in secondary education also the pupils, are represented on an equal basis, both qualitatively and quantitatively). In Poland, on the other hand, the role of parent councils is usually limited to organising school events. Parents from diverse groups may not necessarily realise that in the country where they now live parent councils may work differently to the way they were used to in their country of origin.

School authorities and parent councils themselves should use all opportunities to ensure that equality is an intrinsic part of all their actions. However broad or narrow the role of parent councils, they always have **the power to encourage parental involvement in schools. In the context of reaching diverse groups this can easily**

translate into facilitating integration processes and information provision (on education system and alike).

AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop is aimed at existing members of the parent councils. It is designed to:

- increase understanding of equalities practice;
- provide research-based evidence on migration and migrants and issues concerning these groups;
- bust commonly repeated myths about immigration;
- develop general understanding of the various needs and characteristics of ethnic groups and migrants;
- demonstrate the importance of inviting and including representatives of diverse minorities as members of parent councils;
- identify steps to enhance parental involvement locally;
- identify steps to overcome barriers that diverse groups face;
- emphasise how important the representation and the parental involvement of diverse groups in general is for integration processes and good relations within the broadly understood school community and beyond.

EXAMPLE SESSION TIMETABLE

09:30–09:40	Introduction to the session and icebreakers
09:40–10:00	Mythbusters
10:00–10:20	Diversity and equality
10:20–10:50	Valuing languages and cultures
10:50–11:00	Positive action
11:00–12:05	Scenarios
12:05–12:15	Conclusions and final remarks

GENERAL NOTES FOR TRAINERS

Detailed aims are discussed below separately for particular activities.

Some parts of the workshop are variations of the activities from Module 2.

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION AND ICEBREAKERS

Notes for trainers:

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain the aim of the workshop and explain how the session will be delivered.
- Go round the group and ask the delegates to give their names and to share with others what they are hoping to learn (you may also use an ice-breaking exercise, see the Hints and Tips section at the beginning of the guidelines).

ACTIVITY 2: MYTHBUSTERS

The aim of this activity is to highlight the discrepancy between the common beliefs and facts concerning migrants and ethnic minorities. In order to deliver this part of the workshop the trainers need to make sure that they have reliable statistics and factual knowledge and that they are familiar with the most commonly repeated statements, headlines and prejudices concerning diverse groups.

Notes for trainers:

- Before the session starts, prepare 4-6 general statements about diverse groups – a mixture of commonly repeated myths as well as some true statements that may not be necessarily widely known. The statements should be relevant to the issue of ethnic minorities and/or migrants and parent councils.

Example 1: Some of the statements used in workshops organised by BEMIS in Scotland.

- “By law, parent councils must know the ethnic makeup of their school community”
- “Parent councils must take responsibility to translate all materials into school community languages on request”.
- “In 2012/13, more people came to Scotland than left”
- “Fewer than 30,000 people migrate to Scotland from overseas every year”

For more examples of statements (with facilitator’s notes) see Appendix A at the end of the module.

- Display the statements on a flip chart paper or a whiteboard
- Ask each of the delegates to mark each statement as “True” or “False.”
- Discuss the answers to the mythbuster questions (again, trainers need to be very well prepared to lead the discussion)

Example 2: Excerpts from facilitator's notes for the statements used in BEMIS' workshop.

“By law, parent councils must know the ethnic makeup of their school community”

Note: This statement is false, but it starts a discussion, covering some law and some good practice. It is a good idea to know the ethnic makeup in order to ensure fairness, however, it is by no means necessary.

“Parent councils must take responsibility to translate all materials into school community languages on request”.

Note: Not really, they could be challenged if they didn't but they'd be safe not to. They do, however, have to consider barriers to communication, including language barriers.

“In 2012/13, more people came to Scotland than left”

Note: This is true, but only 2,100 more came to Scotland than left. And only 53 more men arrived than left. Scotland needs increased migration, not reduced.

“Fewer than 30,000 people migrate to Scotland from overseas every year”

Note: True, this is a relatively small number and it needs to be remembered that almost 28,000 are leaving a year

For more examples see Appendix A at the end of the module.

ACTIVITY 3: DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

In this activity we aim to provide a clear picture of diversity and challenges in working with diverse communities, as well as to understand diversity better in order to help the underrepresented groups to become more involved.

Before the planned event the organisers need to prepare a **“Diversity and Equality” sheet** (→ See *“Example 3: Diversity and equality sheet used in workshops organised by BEMIS in Scotland.” on page 47*) containing a couple of statements relevant in the context of Parent council and parental involvement. The list of statements will serve as a departure point for a discussion on diversity and equality and it is recommended that it contains general statements as well as statements applying specifically to your region/country.

Facilitator's notes for the sheet should also be developed in advance to highlight to the facilitators the points that should be covered in the discussion. It is also a good practice to provide the participants with a **notes page** to clarify the statements from the “Diversity and Equality” sheet.

Notes for trainers:

- Divide delegates into groups.
- Ask the delegates to go through the “Diversity and Equality” sheet from their pack on their own

Example 3: Diversity and equality sheet used in workshops organised by BEMIS in Scotland.

- “When talking with ethnic and cultural minorities, people are afraid of saying the wrong thing.”
- “Equalities is an issue for the leaders of the Local Authority; individual teachers can’t make a big difference.”
- “Treating people differently is the cause of resentment, we should treat everyone the same.”
- “There is no racism in rural Scotland.”

- Ask the delegates to go through the “Diversity and Equality” sheet in groups.
- Lead a discussion on the answers, using your facilitator’s note.

Example 4: Facilitator’s notes for the Diversity and Equality activity used in workshops organised by BEMIS in Scotland.

“When talking with ethnic and cultural minorities, people are afraid of saying the wrong thing”

- (Some) people are scared.
- Fear of offending is NOT limited to one group: people from ethnic and cultural minorities can be anxious about offending too.
- Being scared of offending or hurting people is not shameful.
- Information about minorities often come from the media and is often distorted.
- Fear can lead to saying the wrong thing.
- Part of the point of this session is to address this fear and help overcome it.
- Conversations based on ‘respectful curiosity’ are unlikely to offend. People rarely mind talking about themselves if they feel safe to do so. So respect and the celebration of difference are fundamental.

Key message: It’s OK to be scared, as long as the fear is acknowledged and confronted.

“Equalities is an issue for the leaders of the Local Authority; individual teachers can’t make a big difference.”

- Parent councils can certainly make a big difference.
- But not on their own.
- For equalities to prosper, everyone has to work to achieve what they can.
- Thinking that it is “someone else’s problem” is almost certain to end up with nothing happened and problems continuing.
- It is important for Parent Councils to reach out to different groups of parents in the school and make them feel welcomed.
- Recognise and value when parents volunteer and help out at the school.

Example 4 Continued

- Parent Councils can be responsible for creating a friendly welcoming atmosphere that celebrates all cultures and backgrounds.

Key message: Promoting equalities is a partnership with everyone having to contribute.

“Treating people differently is the cause of resentment, we should treat everyone the same.”

- Treating people differently can feel unfair and cause resentment.
- There are often good reasons for treating people differently eg. if a child’s parents are getting divorced he may be treated differently for bad behaviour compared with a child who is not going through the same difficulties at home.
- If appropriate, explain why people are being treated differently to try and prevent resentment.
- Treating everyone the same can lead to indirect discrimination e.g. holding a meeting open to everyone on the first floor (not accessible to someone in a wheelchair).
- It is important to recognise when indirect discrimination is happening and think of actions to take to address this.
- Taking steps to address indirect discrimination is called positive action, recognising and trying to overcome barriers to participation.
- Analogy: you are having a dinner party and your guests include vegans, coeliacs and people who don’t like vegetables. If you cook any one dish, not everyone will be able to eat. This is treating everyone the same, but the outcome is unfair. Cooking different dishes for different people means everyone has the same chance to eat. This treats people differently, but is fairer, since the outcome (being able to eat) is more important.

Key message: Treating everyone the same can lead to indirect discrimination

- You may issue Diversity and Equality Notes highlighting the key messages.
→ See **“Example 5: Diversity and Equality Notes used in workshops organised by BEMIS in Scotland.” on page 49**

Resources needed for the activity:

- “Diversity and Equality” sheet for each participant.
- Facilitator’s notes.
- Diversity and Equality Notes (see Example 5) for each participant.

ACTIVITY 4: VALUING LANGUAGES (AND CULTURES)

Knowledge of the language of the host country is unquestionably a very important factor behind successful inclusion of any individual and group. In the case of diverse groups from ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds this is also one of the key

Example 5: Diversity and Equality Notes used in workshops organised by BEMIS in Scotland.

- “When talking with ethnic and cultural minorities, people are afraid of saying the wrong thing”
Key message: It’s OK to be scared, as long as the fear is acknowledged and confronted.
- “Equalities is an issue for the leaders of the Local Authority; individual teachers can’t make a big difference”
Key message: Promoting equalities is a partnership with everyone having to contribute.
- “Treating people differently is the cause of resentment, we should treat everyone the same.”
Key message: Treating everyone the same can lead to indirect discrimination.
- “There is no racism in rural Scotland”
Key message: That racism is an issue in all parts of Scotland and we must all guard against it.

barriers to involvement. The provision of language courses has become an integral part of policies in all countries that experience influx of migrant workers.

The discussion on language related issues in the context of diverse groups from ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds should not, however, stop on the language of the host country. **Showing the diverse groups that their languages (and cultures) are valued is one of the most successful methods of progressing towards mutual trust and integration in a society.** Moreover, there is a significant body of research showing that the maintenance of the home language is an important factor contributing to the intellectual and emotional development of a child from a migrant family, to the child’s attainment in school and to family cohesion. Yet, there is still a lot of misconceptions around the issues of bilingualism.

The aim of the activity is to provide the delegates with a platform to discuss existing language attitudes and language policies, equip them with the basic factual knowledge concerning bilingualism, signpost further sources of information and give them a chance to discuss ways in which they can act as facilitators for the acquisition of the language of the host country on the one hand and maintenance of home languages on the other.

Notes for trainers:

- Prepare two sheets of flipchart paper. Write on top of the first one “Support offered for ... [enter the language spoken in your country]” and on the other “Support offered for home languages”.
- Divide the delegates into groups of 5-6 people and ask them to discuss and put on post-it notes how the school supports the parents and their children in

learning the language of the host country and home languages. (This should take no longer than 10 minutes)

- Collect responses, put them on the flipchart paper and summarise what the delegates wrote.
- Provide the participants with a printed list of “Bilingualism questions and answers”

→ See “*Example 6: Bilingualism – questions and answers*” on page 51

It is also recommended to put on the bottom of the “Bilingualism questions and answers” list information on where to find more about bilingualism (website links, books etc.).

- Prepare two sheets of flipchart paper. Write on top of the first one “How can parent councils contribute to the learning of language ... (enter the language spoken in your country); and on the other “How parent councils can help promote the maintenance of home languages”.
- Divide the delegates into groups of 5-6 people. Ask them to discuss and put on post-it notes how the parent councils could support the parents and their children in learning the language of the host country and their home language(s). Ask the delegates to write their answers on post-it notes. (This should take no longer than 10 minutes). The aim is to identify ways in which parent councils could get more involved in supporting language learning.
- Collect responses, put them on the flipchart paper and summarise what the delegates wrote.

Resources needed for the activity:

- Sheets of flipchart paper with the following statements written on it: “Support offered for ... (enter the language spoken in your country)”; “Support offered for home languages”; “How can parent councils contribute to the learning of language ... (enter the language spoken in your country); “How parent councils can help promote the maintenance of home languages”.
- Post-it notes.
- Pens.
- “Bilingualism questions and answers” sheet.

ACTIVITY 5: POSITIVE ACTION

Taking steps to address indirect discrimination, recognising and trying to overcome barriers to participation is called Positive Action.

The proposed Positive Action activity is designed to highlight the power that parent councils has to help an underrepresented group to become more involved.

Example 6: Bilingualism – questions and answers

(example with English as the language of the host country)

Q: What languages are the most important?

A: Some business sectors may view certain languages as more relevant than others, based on their working environment. But in terms of cognitive benefits (e.g. improved decision making) and social skills (bilinguals often find it easier to take someone else's perspective), all languages are equally useful. The increased flexibility often found in bilinguals will benefit a child, whatever their future career path.

Q: We are not native speakers of English. Should we be speaking English at home?

A: Even if you don't speak English at home, your child will pick up English very quickly once they start school. You can give your child a head start by attending English-language playgroups and nurseries before starting school.

Q: Won't children struggle at school if they don't speak English at home?

A: Evidence shows that children will soon learn English once they are exposed to it at school, although we recommend that families try and provide their child with some English input before starting school, for example an English language playgroup. Once a child is bilingual, they often find it easier to learn other languages or to learn to read. So in fact, encouraging families to maintain their home language can help give a child the best start in life.

Q: What is the best way for families to bring up bilingual children?

A: There is no 'correct' method that will work for all families. What's important is that the child hears both languages in roughly equal amounts, and in a natural setting. It's also important that families feel their home language is valued by society.

Q: What are the benefits of bilingualism?

A: Bilingualism is a fantastic opportunity to help a child:

- maintain a link with their family, culture and heritage;
- develop stronger skills in reading, language learning, attention and thinking.

To reap these benefits, children need to feel that both their languages are valued. However, research does suggest that speaking multiple languages helps children perform better in some areas, especially tasks that involve ignoring irrelevant information.

Q: A child in my class doesn't speak English. What should I do?

A: Chances are that the child does not speak much English at home – and that's fine. Once children start hearing English in school, they will soon pick up the language. However, additional support for such learners can be useful; ask your school about accessing help and resources from your local English as an Additional Language provider.

... But all children are sensitive to attitudes about their languages.

The list presented above has been compiled on the basis of resources available on the website of Bilingualism Matters Centre in Edinburgh. Bilingualism Matters is an international network of university research units across Europe. You can visit <http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/> for a full list of branches to identify those operating in your country. They may be able to provide you with additional support in bilingualism-related matters.

Notes for trainers:

- Provide the delegates with the following scenario:

Over the past three or four years the Polish population at your school has increased to make up a substantial percentage of the school population. There are no parents of Polish background on the parent council and you want to change this to become more representative of the wider parent forum. At present there is one space on the parent council.
- Explain difference between **positive action** (which is legal and officially encouraged) and **positive discrimination** (which is unlawful). See Glossary (at the end of the guidelines) for definitions.
- Ask which of the following steps should be taken? (You may want to give participants laminated copies of the statements and ask them to mark each as *acceptable* or *unacceptable*).
 - During the next recruitment drive, only advertise in Polish.
 - State ‘speaking Polish is essential’ on any advertising material produced to recruit new members.
 - State that Polish parents are currently under-represented and that you encourage applicants from that background.
 - Get a stall at an event at the Polish Centre and talk to parents there about joining the parent council.
 - Make a decision to only accept a Polish parent for the current vacancy.

ACTIVITY 6: SCENARIOS

This activity, which is a mixture of group work and plenary discussion, aims to:

- A)** look closer at some of the scenarios that are likely to occur when parent councils endeavour to engage more parents from diverse groups;
- B)** offer measures to overcome the most typical barriers.

10-15 scenarios, accompanying questions and facilitator’s notes should be carefully thought over and prepared in advance. Some examples of the scenarios, questions and facilitator’s notes are reproduced below. The full lists used by BEMIS in Scotland are included in appendices at the end of the module and can be adjusted to fit the context of your region/country.

It is a good practice to prepare summarising notes for the delegates as well. This should include the full list of scenarios and the facilitator’s notes.

Notes for trainers:

- Divide the participants into groups of 4-5 people.
- Select for each group 2-3 scenarios (each printed on a separate sheet).
- Ask each group to answer the questions under the scenarios and make notes. This part should take around 25-30 minutes.

→ See “**Example 7: Some scenarios used in the BEMIS Gathered Together project.**” on page 54

- Ask each group to read out the scenarios they were given, the questions and their answers.

If you decide to prepare the notes for delegates, explain to them that you will distribute the full list of scenarios and notes at the end, so there is no need for the delegates to keep very detailed notes during the plenary part of the activity.

If needed, ask additional questions to make sure that all important points have been covered. Use the facilitator’s notes to help you with this. This part of the activity should take 35-40 minutes.

→ See “**Example 8: Facilitator’s notes for Scenario 1 and 2 used in the BEMIS Gathered Together project**” on page 55

- Distribute the Delegate’s Notes for the activity (list of all scenarios and copy of the facilitator’s notes for the activity as in Appendix B and C).

Resources needed for the activity:

- 10-15 scenarios printed on separate sheets.
- Paper and pens for the participants to make notes.
- Facilitator’s notes.
- Delegate’s notes pack for each delegate.

ACTIVITY 7: CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

- Summarise the event and thank the delegates for participation.
- Distribute any remaining handouts, notes or other materials.
- Ask the delegates to complete evaluation forms.

Example 7: Some scenarios used in the BEMIS Gathered Together project.

Scenario 1: “What is there for white indigenous men?”

Over the past few years, the community that your school serves has become increasingly diverse, however, the parents who are involved with the school haven’t diversified at the same rate. At a staff meeting, you are discussing a proposal to attend a sequence of events at faith and community groups over the summer term to promote getting involved with the school. One of your colleagues feels that this is wrong and says, “I note you are going to non-Christian faith groups and the community groups you are visiting exclude white groups indigenous to this country. It’s all very well promoting diversity but what about our white men? This is racism!”

Questions to ask:

- How would you respond?
- Where is the line morally and/ or legally between trying to attract minorities and discrimination?

Scenario 2: “Making your Parent Council more accessible”

The Karasi family, from Lithuania, have just started in a small primary school. Mr and Mrs Karsai have very good spoken English and you are talking to them at a parents’ evening. At the end of your time, they tell you that they have tried to attend some of the events for parents, but that they found them quite intimidating and did not want to go back.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think the parents felt intimidated?
- What can you as a Parent Council do to help them?
- What could the school do to help them?
- Are there any other services that could help support them?

Scenario 3: “I don’t understand the information the school sends me”

Rabina moved to Scotland about seven years ago. She has three young children, the youngest two are not at school yet. Rabina doesn’t read English and is not able to go to classes because of her child care commitments. She does not understand the letters from school. The school arranged for a letter to be translated into her native language but she is not able to read in her native language either.

Questions to ask:

- How do you think Rabina feels?
- What can you as a Parent Council do to help Rabina?
- What could the school do to help Rabina?
- Are there any other services that could help support Rabina?

For full list of scenarios see Appendix B at the end of the module.

Example 8: Facilitator's notes for Scenario 1 and 2 used in the BEMIS Gathered Together project

Scenario 1: "What is there for white indigenous men?"

How would you respond?

- Explain that this isn't discrimination - you are trying to engage with an under-represented group.
- Accept that men may also be under-represented at the Parent Council and ask for advice on reaching out to this group.

Where is the line morally and/or legally between trying to attract minorities and discrimination?

- This is covered in the Positive Action activity.

Scenario 2: "Making your Parent Council more accessible"

Why do you think the parents felt intimidated?

- They may have arrived at the Parent Council meeting and been unsure what was expected of them (some parents attend Parent Councils thinking that they are parents' meetings with the teacher).
- If they were left on their own to try and interpret what was going on and did not feel welcome, then this could have been quite an intimidating experience.

Parental involvement may be very different in their home country and the parents could have attended the meeting with false expectations.

What can you as a Parent Council do to help them?

- Get to know the Parent Forum – ask the head teacher to let you know of any families from ethnic/cultural groups who may not be aware of the work of the Parent Council.
- Improve communications with the Parent Forum. All parents should be aware of the role and responsibilities of a Parent Council.
- A member of the Parent Council should be given the job of welcoming new members/observers at each meeting whether they are other parents or invited guests. They should try to explain what is happening as clearly as possible.
- If the Parent Council is aware of families who struggle with English they could try to find parents/members of community group who speak both languages well enough to translate at meetings and/or use information leaflets.

What could the school do to help them?

- The school could access relevant services at the local authority and get in contact with community groups.

Are there any other services that could help support them?

- Local community groups.
- Local authority.

For full list of facilitator's notes for other scenarios see Appendix C at the end of the module.

Appendix A (for Activity 2)

Other examples of statements and myths about migrants and ethnic minorities with facilitator's notes used in workshops organised by BEMIS in Scotland. Similar examples, based on local or national statistics can be used in other countries.

“Moray is the 3rd most ethnically diverse local authority in Scotland”

Note: Using census data and using “Origin outwith Scotland” as our measure, this is true (3rd behind Edinburgh and then Aberdeen with 22% of residents being born outwith Scotland). If we use origin outwith UK it slips down to 20th place (with 4.3% of residents born outwith UK).

“Highland Local Authority is far more ethnically diverse than most other Scottish Local Authorities”

Note: Yes, 7th in origin outwith Scotland & 12th in origin outwith UK. It is rather diverse compared to many other Local Authorities.

“All of the councils in the central belt of Scotland are ethnically diverse, however we measure it”

Note: Except for the councils to the West of Glasgow. 2 of the 3 least ethnically diverse council areas are in the Central Belt & 6 of the top 10. If we include origin outwith Scotland, we have to go to 12th least diverse before we find something outwith the Central Belt.

“Parent councils are exempt from the Equality Act (2005)”

Note: No, but they are exempt from the general and specific duties passed under it.

Appendix B (for Activity 6)

Examples of scenarios used in the BEMIS Gathered Together project.

Scenario 1: “What is there for white indigenous men?”

Over the past few years, the community that your school serves has become increasingly diverse, however, the parents who are involved with school haven't diversified at the same rate. At a staff meeting, you are discussing a proposal to attend a sequence of events at faith and community groups over the summer term to promote getting involved with the school. One of your colleagues feels that this is wrong and says, “I note you are going to non-Christian faith groups and the community groups you are visiting exclude white groups indigenous to this country. It's all very well promoting diversity but what about our white men? This is racism!”

Questions to ask:

- How would you respond?
- Where is the line morally and/or legally between trying to attract minorities and discrimination?

Scenario 2: “Making your parent council more accessible”

The Karasi family, from Lithuania, have just started in a small primary school. Mr and Mrs Karsai have very good spoken English and you are talking to them at a parents’ evening. At the end of your time, they tell you that they have tried to attend some of the events for parents, but that they found them quite intimidating and did not want to go back.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think the parents felt intimidated?
- What can you as a parent council do to help them?
- What could the school do to help them?
- Are there any other services that could help support them?

Scenario 3: “I don’t understand the information the school sends me”

Rabina moved to Scotland about seven years ago. She has three young children, the youngest two are not at school yet. Rabina doesn’t read English and is not able to go to classes because of her child care commitments. She does not understand the letters from school. The school arranged for a letter to be translated into her native language but she is not able to read in her native language either.

Questions to ask:

- How do you think Rabina feels?
- What can you as a parent council do to help Rabina?
- What could the school do to help Rabina?
- Are there any other services that could help support Rabina?

Scenario 4: “Why should I go to the school, there is no problem”

Henri and Anna have been living in this country for two years, they have two children in school and both children have settled in well. You are talking to Henri as he picks up the children from school. You mention some of the events that you have on for parents and he looks quite confused and says that he does not think they will attend. He tells you that in the country he grew up in, parents only went into school if there was a problem or their child was in trouble.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think Henri and Anna don't see the need to get involved?
- What can you as a parent council do to help Henri and Anna?
- What could the school do to help Henri and Anna?
- Are there any other services that could help support Henri and Anna?

Scenario 5: "Respecting different beliefs"

The parent council are organising a social event for parents/carers which involves serving alcohol. A small group of Muslim parents have objected to this.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think these parents felt this way?
- What can you as a parent council do to help these parents?
- What could the school do to help them?
- Are there any other services that could help support them?

Scenario 6: "I find the times of the meetings very difficult"

Adil has expressed interest in joining the parent council. The parent council normally meets on a Friday afternoon at the school once a month. Adil explains that he often needs to be at the mosque for prayers at this time and would be unable to make the meetings.

Questions to ask:

- What would be good practice for the parent council in this situation?

Scenario 7: "Does celebrating my own culture oppress others?"

The parent council in a Scottish school has planned an event celebrating the various cultures present in the school. They plan to do this through families presenting food, song and dance from where they are from. The discussion in the planning meeting turns to a Scottish contribution. Alasdair says that he thinks the celebrating Scottish culture alongside the others could be oppressive.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think Alasdair felt this way?
- How would you respond to Alasdair's point?
- Is this event still appropriate in the light of these comments?

Scenario 8: "It's only banter"

Jim has been on the parent council for 3 years. He frequently makes jokes that are sexist and racist, however the other members of the council have felt that no harm

is meant and that it is Jim's way of expressing himself. Jane is a new member of the parent council and, during the first meeting she attends, challenges Jim about his humour. Jim appears quite upset and responds that it is only banter and that everyone was happy until Jane joined the council.

Questions to ask:

- How should the Chair respond to this situation?
- How can future such incidents be avoided?

Scenario 9: "I'm only saying what I feel"

The parent council is discussing traffic outside the school. The discussion covers how levels of traffic might be reduced, when Sadie tells the group that she feels many parents have to drive to avoid the Roma traveller site half a mile from the school. The reasons she gives for this are that "it's an eyesore" and "it's for our children's safety". You know that another member of the parent council, Annie, is a settled traveller who has relatives on the site, but no-one else on the council knows this.

Questions to ask:

- How do you (the parent council chair) respond to Sadie's concerns?
- Is it Annie's responsibility (rather than yours) to defend the site?
- Why might Annie not want others to know her background?

Scenario 10: "I'm not confident in my English – can't talk in front of people"

Meriem is currently learning English, she is very anxious about making mistakes and will ask her daughter to check what she has written when she communicates with the school to make sure her spelling is correct. Meriem has been to meetings at the school but doesn't say much as she is worried about saying the "wrong" thing.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think Meriem feels worried about this?
- What can you do as a parent council to help Meriem?
- What could the school do to help Meriem?
- Are there any other services that could help support Meriem?

Scenario 11: "I do not know my rights and how to get involved"

Patricia arrived in Scotland within the last 10 years. She feels she doesn't have enough information about how things "work" in Scotland and had not known that she was allowed to join the parent council.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think Patricia doesn't know her rights?

- What can you do as a parent council to help Patricia?
- What could the school do to help Patricia?
- Are there any other services that could help support Patricia?

Scenario 12: “I don’t understand the curriculum”

Abdul has been in the country for almost a year- he speaks quite good English but finds the new education system difficult to understand. He is worried about how he can help his children in the new system.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think Abdul feels worried about this?
- What can you do as a parent council to help Abdul?
- What could the school do to help Abdul?
- Are there any other services that could help support Abdul?

Scenario 13: “I don’t have time – I am a single parent with a baby and many school activities are in the evening”

Maria has a 10 month old baby and doesn’t have any family or close friends who are able to help with child care. Her school has regular activities including “pamper evenings” for parents, parent council meetings etc. but Maria is unable to attend as she has a young family to take care of.

Questions to ask:

- Why do you think Maria feels this way?
- What can you do as a parent council to help Maria?
- What could the school do to help Maria?
- Are there any other services that could help support Maria?

Appendix C (for Activity 6)

Examples of Facilitator’s notes for scenarios in Activity 6 used in the BEMIS Gathered Together project.

The notes are aimed to provide general guidance. In some cases it may be needed to adjust them to the circumstances specific to a given country (especially when it comes to further support that is available). The notes can be printed and given to the delegates as “Delegate’s Notes”.

Scenario 1: “What is there for white indigenous men?”

How would you respond?

- Explain that this isn’t discrimination – you are trying to engage with an under-represented group.
- Accept that men may also be under-represented at the parent council and ask for advice on reaching out to this group.

Where is the line morally and/or legally between trying to attract minorities and discrimination?

- This is covered in the Positive Action activity.

Scenario 2: “Making your parent council more accessible”

Why do you think the parents felt intimidated?

- They may have arrived at the parent council meeting and been unsure what was expected of them (some parents attend parent councils thinking that they are parents’ meetings with the teacher).
- If they were left on their own to try and interpret what was going on and did not feel welcome, then this could have been quite an intimidating experience.
- Parental involvement may be very different in their home country and the parents could have attended the meeting with false expectations.

Scenario 3: “I don’t understand the information the school sends me”

How do you think Rabina feels?

- Someone who struggles to speak the language may feel very isolated and lonely.
- Many parents struggle with correspondence/materials sent from the school and local authority but it is much more difficult for those who do not speak the language of a given country fluently.
- As Rabina seems to spend much of her time at home with children she may not be too confident to get involved with the school.

What can you as a parent council do to help Rabina?

- The parent council represents ALL parents in the school and acts as a voice for those who do not have the skills or confidence to do this themselves.
- Get to know your Parent Forum; are there any other parents who could help Rabina? Remind her she can bring a friend along with her to help with translation.

- Are there any community groups/services that could help with translation or with improving her literacy? There may be some courses that she could attend.
- This may be an opportunity to look at the correspondence sent by the school/ local authority. Is it written in parent-friendly language? Does it recognise those parents for whom the language of a given country is a second language or those who struggle with literacy? The parent council could offer to help the school to redraft materials or act as a focus group.
- Provide a space for parents to meet and provide crèche facilities.

What could the school do to help Rabina?

- Work with the parent council to improve communications.
- Some schools provide a “podcast” of the newsletter in community languages on their newsletter which helps overcome literacy issues.
- Make contact with relevant services at the local authority to help with language and literacy issues.
- School/parent council could contact providers of language courses and see if they could run a class in the school – help parents to access classes and become more familiar with the school etc.
- School provide “learning groups” for parents to learn how to help their children with their learning and the opportunity to meet with other parents.

Are there any other services that could help support Rabina?

- Local community groups
- Local authority services
- Local libraries

Scenario 4: “Why should I go to the school, there is no problem”

Why do you think Henri and Anna don’t see the need to get involved?

- Parental involvement and engagement has a different meaning in their home country.
- Have not had previous experience of being involved in the school and don’t see the need.

What can you as a parent council do to help Henri and Anna?

- Provide them with information on how schools operate in Scotland and how parents are involved and represented.
- At the start of term get children to design an invite to the first parent council meeting- this will increase the chances of parents coming along and gives

the parent council a chance to explain what they do and the relevance of the parent council (not just about selling cakes).

- Organise a workshop for all parents (try to encourage parents from ethnic/cultural groups) on how they can be engaged in the school community and what their role is in their child's education.
- Develop a space in the school for parent news – a noticeboard, website, Facebook page. Information could include tips on how to get involved with your child's education, parent council etc.

What could the school do to help Henri and Anna?

- Try to give parent-friendly information with advice on parental involvement and what the school expects from parents and families.
- Parent council and school organise careers evenings for pupils and parents – this is particularly important for parents who are new to the country and may not understand the system

Are there any other services that could help support Henri and Anna?

- Local authority

Scenario 5: “Respecting different beliefs”

Why do you think these parents felt this way?

- Alcohol is against their religion.
- Previous negative experience of events where there has been alcohol.

What can you as a parent council do to help these parents?

- The parent council should represent all parents in the school and should take any objections/comments seriously whether they agree with them or not.
- The Chair could ask the parents to send in a written objection or attend a parent council meeting to discuss the matter.
- If necessary, the members of the parent council may take a vote on whether to go ahead with providing alcohol at this event.
- A compromise may be necessary; this is an event for parents and carers with no children. Rather than selling/providing alcohol, the parent council could ask people to bring their own choice of refreshments.

What could the school do to help them?

- The Head teacher is an advisor to the parent council but is also there to represent all parents and other members of the school community.

Are there any other services that could help support them?

- Local community groups.

Scenario 6: “I find the times of the meetings very difficult”

What would be good practice for the parent council in this situation?

- It is always a good idea to review how the parent council is run and whether the times of meetings are accessible to all. Of course, you can't take everyone into account but could alternate between afternoon and evening meetings.
- The local authority provides funds to support parent councils and this money could be used to provide crèche facilities if evenings are difficult for those with childcare problems.
- For parents who can't make meetings at any time, think about “virtual membership”. Change the constitution so that parents do not have to attend meetings but will agree to respond to questions/requests via email.
- It is normally considered good practice to avoid Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays for meetings since the holy days of the major religions fall on these days

Scenario 7: “Does celebrating my own culture oppress others?”

Why do you think Alasdair felt this way?

- Alasdair may misunderstand how equalities work. This is very common with stories in the mainstream media all the time about what we are and aren't “allowed” to celebrate. These stories have no basis in law or good equalities practice at all. Culture of the country of residence is no less important than any other and should be celebrated alongside the others. Celebration of any culture is quite distinct from imposing culture, which might be oppressive, however, all of us should have the ability to celebrate our own culture and to share those things that are important about who we are.

How would you respond to Alasdair's point?

- Explaining good equalities practice is important. Alasdair is worried about offending others and by acquiring the right knowledge; he should be able to be more comfortable with what is possible.

Is this event still appropriate in the light of these comments?

- Absolutely, celebrating culture is a fantastic way to understand where one another are coming from.

Scenario 8: “It's only banter”

How should the Chair respond to this situation?

- The Chair should try to explain to Jim that this humour is not appropriate.

- Speak with Jim individually that comments that are seen as sexist (regardless of his intention) are offensive and this language shouldn't be used when he is acting as a member of the parent council, representing all parents.

How can future such incidents be avoided?

- Set out guidelines for committee members.
- At the start of every committee meeting, the Chair should set some ground rules – no interrupting whilst others are speaking, respect others points of view, etc.

Scenario 9: “I’m only saying what I feel”

How do you (the parent council chair) respond to Sadie’s concerns?

- Ask Sadie what she means by “for our children’s safety”, what is perceived as unsafe?

Story: Roma families from Bosnia came to Glasgow as refugees – locals felt threatened by groups of them standing about on the streets, however for the Roma seeing lots of people on the streets meant it was safe for them – an empty street would mean there could be a sniper in one of the buildings and would make them feel unsafe.

- Her opinion is probably based on information from the media and/or hearsay. She should be given more information on traveller communities to allay her misconceptions.

Is it Annie’s responsibility (rather than yours) to defend the site?

- Annie should not feel obliged to speak out; that’s her choice.
- The parent council may wish to meet with representatives from the traveller community to discuss ways to work together.

Why might Annie not want others to know her background?

- She may have already experienced prejudice about the traveller community and may feel this will happen again.

Scenario 10: “I’m not confident in my English – can’t talk in front of people”

Why do you think Meriem feels worried about this?

- Meriem is still learning English and probably does not yet have the confidence to speak. She may be worried about other peoples’ opinions and does not want to give the wrong impression or look stupid.

What can you do as a parent council to help Meriem?

- A member of the parent council could support Meriem at meetings – explain in simple terms what is happening and ask whether she would like to say

anything. The supporter could speak on her behalf if Meriem does not feel confident enough to do this.

- Think about how the parent council communicates with all parents. Are things presented in a parent-friendly way?
- Work with the school to produce materials and correspondence that is accessible to all.
- Contact local community groups and/or other parents that may be able to help with translation when necessary.
- Remind Meriem that she can bring a friend with her to explain anything and provide support

What could the school do to help Meriem?

- The school could work with the parent council to improve its communication methods.
- Someone could contact local community groups and/or local authority EAL services to help with this. Homework/ learning groups for parents in school to help parents learn how to support their child's learning. This gets parents into school and could make Meriem feel more confident and relaxed in school.
- Some schools use symbols in communication with parents (e.g. traffic lights system to let parents know how things are going in school) – quick and easy to understand.

Are there any other services that could help support Meriem?

- Local authority services.
- Local community groups.

Scenario 11: “I do not know my rights and how to get involved”

Why do you think Patricia doesn't know her rights?

- This is probably through no fault of her own as parental involvement may have taken a very different form in her home country.

What can you do as a parent council to help Patricia?

- Make sure that Patricia and all other parents know about the parent council – its role and responsibilities, its activities and how to join/contact the committee members.
- At the start of term get children to design an invite to the first parent council meeting – *this will increase the chances of parents coming along and gives the parent council a chance to explain what they do and the relevance of the parent council (not just about selling cakes).*

- Produce a leaflet about the parent council.
- Organise a workshop/event on how parents can be involved in their child's education.

What could the school do to help Patricia?

- Work with the parent council on the above suggestions.
- Make sure that the school's materials and correspondence is always written in parent-friendly language.

Are there any other services that could help support Patricia?

- Local authority.

Scenario 12: "I don't understand the Scottish curriculum"

Why do you think Abdul feels worried about this?

- He may be trying to compare what he was used to in his home country. Parents may have difficulties understanding how the curriculum, programme, assessment criteria work especially if they do not understand the language of their new country well.

What can you do as a parent council to help Abdul?

- Organise an information evening/day about how parents can be involved in their child's education.
- Provide leaflets on different aspects of the curriculum.

What could the school do to help Abdul?

- Work with the parent council and pupils on the above suggestions.
- Make sure that everyone understands the purpose of homework and how parents may support their child.
- Make sure that all communication with parents is written/presented in an accessible way.

Are there any other services that could help support Abdul?

- Ministry of Education website.
- Local authority.

Scenario 13: "I don't have time – I am a single parent with a baby and many school activities are in the evening"

Why do you think Maria feels this way?

- She is likely to be even more isolated as she is new to the UK and doesn't have the same social supports (also may have limited money for child care etc.)

What can you do as a parent council to help Maria?

- Consider organising some events/activities for the daytime.
- Use the money given by the local authority to support the running of the parent council and organise childcare/crèche facilities for evening activities.
- Ask Maria if she would like to be a “virtual parent council member”; she does not have to attend meetings but could answer questions or add to discussion via email/Facebook/letter/phone. The parent council constitution may have to be changed to reflect this.

What could the school do to help Maria?

- Work with the parent council on the above suggestions.

Are there any other services that could help support Maria?

- Local authority.
- Community groups.

Module 6:

Understanding barriers to involvement

(workshop for parent councils)



The more open the parent councils and schools are to members representing diverse communities the greater the chances are they will have a positive impact on both parents and their children, which can significantly improve the children’s educational achievements (according to Berla and Henderson’s study¹, not the income or social status, but the extent to which a student’s family is able to become involved in their children’s education at school and in the community is the most accurate predictor of the student’s achievement in school).

This module, which supplements Module 5 (“Involving parents through parent councils”), is designed to be **delivered by two trainers** to a group of parents who are members of the parent councils, as well as to school staff who support and/or are involved with parent councils. The session is a **guided walk-through of the barriers that parents from diverse groups face**, with a facilitated discussion at the end on what can be done to reduce or overcome these barriers.

The workshop described here is designed to be delivered to a group of representatives from parent councils and staff from various schools, but can also be used, after necessary adjustments with parent council and staff from a single school.

The session works best as a small to medium sized session, since it relies on plenary discussions, which can be less involving in larger groups. We would therefore recommend limiting the size of groups to **no more than 25 without a redesign of the session.**

¹ Henderson, A., Berla, N. (1994): A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP

- To build on existing good practice and local knowledge to further improve the recruitment of diverse group members in parent councils
- To increase parental involvement in the life of the school, using a combination of local expertise and collected good practice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the workshop delegates should be able to:

- identify groups who might have barriers to involvement;
- describe what these barriers are;
- explain how they can be overcome;
- identify at least ONE thing they would do differently in working with diverse groups.

EXAMPLE SESSION TIMETABLE

The proposed duration of the workshop is 120 minutes + breaks

09:30–09:45	Introductions and icebreakers	15 minutes
09:45–10:05	How parental involvement is promoted	20 minutes
10:05–10:40	Opening up parental involvement	35 minutes
10:40–11:20	The way forward	40 minutes
11:20–11:30	Summary	10 minutes

ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKERS

Notes for trainers

- Before the event display the learning objectives of the session (see above) in a visible place – on flipchart sheets, posters or on a whiteboard.
- Introduce yourself to the delegates.
- Explain the aim of the session – go through the displayed learning objectives
- Ask people if this is what was expected and if there is anything further that the group wish to cover

- Icebreaker: ask the delegates to introduce themselves and, going round the room in turn, to giving the following information:
 - their name;
 - which parent council they are on;
 - length of time on the parent council;
 - role on parent council;
 - why they got involved in the parent council;
 - how they felt at their first meeting and what things held them back.

This helps set the scene and gets the parents thinking about the barriers to engagement, as well as motivations for engagement. Whilst one trainer introduces this section, it is worthwhile for the other to be keeping a note of who is from which parent council, so that groups can be properly organised when people are moved round.

Resources needed for the activity:

- Flipchart sheets or posters with learning objectives written on them

ACTIVITY 2: HOW PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IS PROMOTED?

Notes for trainers

- Get delegates into 2-4 groups (depending on numbers) which consist of, to the greatest degree possible, people who are from different parent councils.
- Depending on whether there are school staff present as well and who these staff are, the trainers may wish to have a separate “educators” group within the session. This can be particularly relevant if there are a number of head teachers within the session who have formal relationships with the parents.
- Ask the groups about activities they currently take part in to encourage participation from ALL parents/carers.

Note: You will need a pre-positioned flipchart divided into two sections labelled: “passive activities” and “interactive activities”. The passive activities are things like a newsletter or emails that are essentially one way communication tools, with the interactive ones being two way, e.g. attending the introductory parent meeting when the child is starting school, organising social events for parents etc.

This exercise can be run in one of two ways:

Method one

- Ask the delegates to write down the activities they currently take part in to encourage participation from ALL parents/carers (each one on a different post it note). Each group should have a different colour of post-it note. This part usually takes around 10 minutes.
- Ask each group to bring a “unique” post-it note and read it out to the group, explaining it if needed, and attach it to a pre-positioned flipchart into either the “passive activities” or “interactive activities” section. The trainer can introduce a competitive element to this with the “winner” being the group with the most activities or the most “unique” activities.

Comment

At one of the sessions run by BEMIS, the trainers determined that there was a lot of energy in the room and that the group would respond well to competition. In order to capitalise on this, the trainers decided to “gamify” the exercise a little more and introduced a 10 second time limit for each group to get a new response. Given that it had to be unique and agreed within the group, this caused a significant degree of excited discussion within the groups and within the broader group.

Method two

- On a sheet of paper ask the groups to write down the activities they currently take part in to encourage participation from ALL parents/carers. This part usually takes around 10 minutes.
- Ask each group to read unique activities, ask additional questions if necessary
- Write the activities down on the flipchart sheets, categorising them under “passive activities” and “interactive activities”.

In general terms, the first method is better for slightly more confident groups and the second is more useful where comments need elicited.

- Feedback positively to the group on their work.
- Ask the delegates to think about the two different groups of activities and how they engage with them.

Note: “Passive” approaches tend to be in significant majority. Ultimately, a balance of the two is required to reach the widest number of parents, so delegates can reflect on current and proposed activities in order to maximise reaching out to diverse groups.

Resources needed for the activity:

- (for method one) Post-it notes in four different colours and pens if needed.

- (for method two) Paper for notes and flipchart markers for the trainer.
- A flipchart sheet divided into two sections labelled: “passive activities” and “interactive activities”.

ACTIVITY 3: OPENING UP PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- On flipchart sheets introduce three questions for the groups to consider:
 - Who is currently involved in the parent council?
 - Who is not currently involved but could be?
 - What are the barriers that might be stopping these people getting involved
- For the first 15 minutes of the exercise ask groups to write up responses to the questions onto post-it notes (it is easiest if each groups answers each question in turn).
- As the groups complete the questions, the groups or yourself attach the post-it to the relevant flipchart sheets.
- Go through the completed flipchart sheets, discussing and asking questions, as appropriate.
- If you have done module 1 specifically with parents in a school context before, you may share information on barriers as perceived by parents from diverse ethnic and minority groups – this can be quotes or some graphic representation (see below).

The trainer should facilitate a discussion on these as appropriate. The quotes or representations can be printed off individually or as one document and handed to the delegates. You may also attach them to the wall under a sheet of flipchart. Removing the sheet will then display them at an appropriate moment. A discussion on these quotes should be encouraged with comparison of views from the parents’ perspective and parent council’s perspective (current activity).

→ See “*Example 1: Quotes from a module for parents delivered by BEMIS.*” on page 74

Resources needed for the activity:

- Three flipchart sheets each with one of the questions written on it.
- Post-it notes (different colours for each group).
- Pens for the groups to use.
- Optional: print offs of quotes from parents or graphic representation of their view (see Example 1 above) – printed either individually for each delegate or written on flipchart sheets attached to the wall under empty flipchart sheets.

Example 1: Quotes from a module for parents delivered by BEMIS.

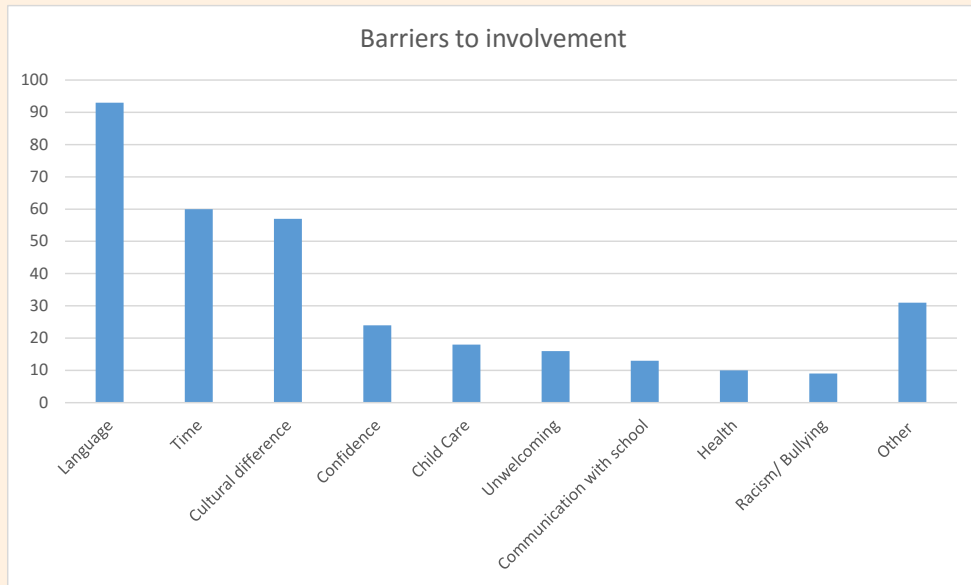
“When I arrived I could speak good English but I couldn’t understand the local people!”

“Parent Councils are only for parents who have a confident voice.”

“Time – I was involved in the past but when I started college it was hard for me to manage with school and the meetings in the evening.”

“I thought only Scottish people can take part.”

Barriers to involvement as indicated by parents participating in BEMIS workshops in 2013-2014



ACTIVITY 4: THE WAY FORWARD

- For this exercise, each group is given a topic to work through. There are three in total and they overlap to some degree, so can be distributed as the trainers see fit. These three are:
 - making your parent council more parent-friendly;
 - overcoming barriers to getting involved;
 - recruitment methods.
- For each of the headings ask the delegates to write directly on the flipchart a list of tasks or activities or approaches (whilst the headings are discrete, there will be some significant overlap).

Ensure that the list of barriers that the groups came up with in activity 3 is available for the delegates to refer during the exercise. If you have done

module 1 specifically with parents in a school context before, you may also use the information on barriers as perceived by parents from diverse groups.

- Ask the delegates to feedback to the wider group, explaining each activity if necessary.
- Trainers can add to or reflect on these lists with reference to the **Good**

Example 2: Some items from the Good Practice List prepared by BEMIS Scotland.

Communication

- Clear, simple communication – don't overload people with leaflets and newsletters or use complex language.
- Involve parents from migrant backgrounds in teaching all children in the classroom about different languages (simple things like counting, basic phrases) to make the parents feel more welcomed and engaged.
- Think about using social media.

Getting to know the parents

- Think about surveying the parent group you could ask about:
 - what the parents want from the parent council;
 - what they know about your role;
 - what skills they have;
 - what times are best for them;
 - what they might want to get involved with.
- Engage with community groups to help get to engage with parents from particular groups e.g. the local mosque or voluntary organisations for parents.

For more examples see Appendix A at the end of the module.

Practice List (see Appendix A at the end of the module) that can also be printed and given to the delegates (or emailed to them after the meeting with the point the delegates contributed).

You will find some more information and inspirations in the video materials prepared by BEMIS within the parental involvement project '**Gathered Together**'. The materials are available at <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk/videos/>.

Resources needed for the activity:

- 3-4 flipchart sheets (depending on number of groups) with titles already written up.
- Flipcharts for Activity 3.
- Flipchart pens for the group.
- Tape to attach the sheets to walls for feedback.

- Good Practice List (either printed or emailed to delegates after the event).
- Optional: print offs of quotes from parents (or graphic representation of their views) – printed either individually for each delegate or written on flipchart sheets attached to the wall under empty flipchart sheets.

ACTIVITY 5: SUMMARY

- Summarise the session.
- Ask delegates to complete feedback forms.
- Take any questions on any matters delegates don't feel were appropriately covered.
- Ask the delegates to identify one change that, following the workshop, they will make to the way they work with diverse groups. If there is enough time, it is useful to go round the group and ask the each delegate to tell the wider group what it is. If there isn't enough time, asking them to write it down on the provided sheet will suffice.

Resources needed for the activity:

- Feedback forms.
- Forms entitled "ONE thing that I will do differently".

Appendix A (for Activity 4)

Good Practice List for parent councils

The good practice examples below are divided into five categories. They have been prepared following BEMIS discussions with parent councils in Scotland. Although some of these points are specific to the Scottish/UK context, they provide a coherent set of advice that can be adjusted to the context of a specific country/region.

Communication

- Clear, simple communication – don't overload people with leaflets and newsletters or use complex language
- Texting Translation tool – does your school have it? (This has to be used carefully – we don't want people coming to a parent council meeting expecting it to be a parents evening.)
- Involve parents from migrant backgrounds in teaching the all children in the classroom about different languages (simple things like counting, basic phrases) to make the parents feel more welcomed and engaged
- Look at who is in your school for help with translation.
- Use as many different forms of communication as possible: ideally using both spoken and written forms; include “new,” online methods, as well as traditional ones
- Think about using social media
- Having a regular “news” communication across a number of formats can help keep you in peoples' minds
- Think about using podcasts to do this, so busy parents can listen whilst doing other tasks

Getting to know the parents

- Think about surveying the parent group you could ask about:
 - What the parents want from the parent council
 - What they know about your role
 - What skills they have
 - What times are best for them
 - What they might want to get involved with
- Engage with community groups to help get to engage with parents from particular groups eg. the local mosque or voluntary organisations for parents

- Have “class representatives” so that each class has a parent attached to it to make it easier to make connections between the parent council and the parent group

Raising Profile

- Talk to the parents in kindergartens/early years whose children are joining school.
- Have your annual general meeting in September to make sure you are recruiting from a new pool of parents.
- Organise information sessions throughout the year for parents with different themes;
 - How you can help your child with their homework, e.g. how does the school teach maths, English etc.
 - Bullying Policy
 - What does the parent council do?
- Be visible! Have a permanent display in the school.
- Let the children know about who the parent council are.
- Have an informal meeting for parents whose children are leaving primary school and joining a secondary school (high school) – a welcome session in May/June
- Be a friendly face – have informal meetings in the morning, talk to parents in the playground
- Ask the parents who already volunteer with the school to help with organising a group to care for children when parents are joining the meeting.

Events

- A Community Assembly – once a month invite the parents for an assembly where the children deliver the schools news and get awards, parents will come in when it’s for their kids. This works well in smaller schools.
- Celebrate cultures – e.g. through dance. This can be expanded to make it a cultural exchange, such as events where children bring stories or foods that have cultural importance to them.
- Recruit people from the local community to contribute to these events.
- Organise sports events (utilise what is happening around you) e.g. host a mini commonwealth games, national sports around the world.
- Organise breakfast sessions/coffee mornings so parents can stop in on their way to work.

- Asking parents to contribute to “World of Work” week, or similar career choice oriented events where parents could talk to children about the jobs they are doing; this is easier to arrange if you have talked to the parents during an informal meeting (see the point above).

Approaches

- Thinking of parental involvement as more than attending a parents’ meeting.
- Change expectations of what it mean to get involved; parents may not want to sit around a table but they will want to offer practical help.
- Make any meetings as informal as possible.
- Keep yourself informed about what different ethnic and migrant groups there are in your school.
- Think about timing – if you have an information session, think about having one during the day and one in the evening.
- When consulting, make sure you collect all the voices of parents not just of those who are loudest and most confident (again it helps to know what ethnic/migrant groups there are in school and know someone who can help translate).
- Ask parents to come along to parent council meetings to see what happens, how things function and what the meetings involve.
- Stick to advertised times for any meetings since overrunning can cause people difficulty with childcare.
- Organise meetings with guest speakers who the parents might be interested in hearing.
- Think about attractive venues for the meeting: they don’t always have to be in the school.
- Change the name of the parent council: they can be called anything you want them to be and “Friends of [school name]” is popular, as well as less formal
- Think about “virtual” membership of the parent council, or different ways to be a member:
 - parents can get involved by commenting on the agenda if it is circulated in advance;
 - parents can get involved by adding comments to minutes of meetings (such as “I can help with that” next to action points);
 - meetings can be joined using video calling/video conferencing software;
 - some tasks can be delegated to consenting parties without them being at the meeting.

- Think about having some sort of system for people attending meetings for the first time, whether this is someone delegated to meet, greet and talk through the process with new attendees or whether it is something more formal.

Closing words

In the guidelines presented here a number of measures was proposed to reach ethnic communities and migrants with information provision, service provision and, ultimately, inclusion and integration of the groups in the wider society.

The task is not an easy one as the groups vary in the types of their needs and barriers they face. It is therefore very important to be able to propose a set of solutions, including direct engagement with the group, engagement with key stakeholders (such as schools or local authorities as discussed in these guidelines) and engagement through well trained community champions. Misconceptions and prejudices need to be overcome on both sides and every effort needs to be made for both sides to be provided with clear, unbiased information.

We hope that the readers of the guidelines have found the ideas and activities presented here helpful and inspiring in preparation of their own strategies to tackle underrepresentation and inequalities in our common, multicultural Europe.

Glossary

Bilingualism	ability to be able to speak two (or more) languages.
Community champions	representatives of a given community who have an in-depth knowledge of the specific characteristics and needs of that group and who serve as links between service providers and communities. They may be either volunteers or may be appointed as sessional workers or employees.
Discrimination	a situation where an individual (or group of individuals) is not treated in a proper way because they are seen to belong to a particular group. Different types of discrimination include direct discrimination (e.g. women-only groups) and indirect discrimination (e.g. holding all meetings in a pub which may stop people with certain religious beliefs from attending).
Diversity	difference, in our modules this means people who come from different cultures and nations.
Equality	a situation where everyone has the same rights and opportunities as everyone else, regardless of age, nationality, religion, etc.
Ethnic minority	a group within a community which has different national or cultural traditions from the main population. This can include people who have recently left their home country (e.g., many Eastern Europeans), or people who have been living in a given country for many generations but who still have their own traditions (e.g., British Asians).
Facilitator (trainer)	a person responsible for leading or coordinating the work of a group in a workshop, training session or alike.
Interpreter	someone who does verbal translations.

Mythbusting	making clear which things that are commonly repeated are not true.
Parent council	a group of parents (usually elected by parents from among themselves) to support the school in its work with pupils and parents and to promote contact and communication between the school, parents and pupils.
Positive action	taking steps to address indirect discrimination, recognising and trying to over-come barriers to participation so that an under-represented group (or individual) is helped to become more involved.
Positive discrimination	process of giving preferential treatment, especially in employment, to minority groups of society that have been prejudiced against in the past. It should be noted that 'preferential treatment' does not mean that these individuals will automatically be preferred to another candidate, but rather that when there will be a choice between two candidates of similar level, the individual from the minority group will be preferred.

