



Date: Thursday 23rd September 2021

Time: 11am – 12pm

Location: Zoom

Theme: Communities meeting with the new head of the Scottish Government Race Equality Unit, Frankie McLean

Chair: Danny Boyle, BEMIS Scotland

AGENDA

10:45 am - Zoom link opens

11:00 am - Welcome - Rami Ousta – BEMIS CEO

11:05 am - Frankie McLean, Scottish Government, Head of Race Equality Policy Unit. Welcome, introduction and what's next for Race Equality policy development in Scotland

11:15 am - Open floor discussions, Q+A.

11:55 am - Thank you and summary

12:00 pm - Meeting ends

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Trishna Singh OBE	Sikh Sanjog
Rajnish Singh	BEMIS
Eman Hani	CSREC
Kieran Gilmore	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC)
Ephraim Borowski	SCoJeC
Samina Ali	Rainbow Muslim Women's Group
Kimi Jolly	East and Southeast Asian Scotland
Margaret Lance	Women In Action
Rukhsana Ali	Milan Senior Welfare Organisation
Jeanette Findlay	Call it Out: the campaign against anti-Irish racism and anti-Catholic bigotry
Ashli Mullen	Romano Lav
Yen Nalci	DGMA
Meriem Timizar	International Women's Group

Elric Honoré	Fife Centre for Equalities
Aerin Lai	East and Southeast Asian Scotland
Rose Filippi	Maryhill Integration Network
Janos Lang	Ando Glaso
Ahashan Habib	Aberdeen Multicultural Centre
Huda Alarishi	SAWA
Alison Jardine	Fife Migrants Forum
Sammy Alakil	Yemeni Scottish Foundation
Rose Sehakizinka	Isaro Community Initiative
Ebrima Kalleh	LGBT UNITY GLASGOW/Scotland

Proposed Actions TBC

- ✓ BEMIS to lead with SG on facilitating relevant policy priorities of strategic review of race equality leading towards 2023 refresh
- ✓ Frankie and Race Equality Unit to meet quarterly with communities facilitated by BEMIS /EMNRN policy priorities and thematic discussion agreed in advance. Opportunity to invite other SG or duty bearer colleagues to attend to provide input
- ✓ On core community concerns like funding or prevailing relationships with core duty bearers like SG, Police or local authority BEMIS to support communities directly on thematic issues. IE. Policing and racism, Equality, Human Rights and marches and other areas identifies as community priorities. Taking issues directly to duty bearers to resolve and develop positive working relationships that respect rights

Meeting Note:

- Rami Ousta opened the meeting and welcomed Frankie McLean, the new head of the Race Equality Policy Unit at the Scottish Government.

Rami outlined BEMIS remain committed too

- ❖ Working between and with SG and communities to link up priority policy areas for each community.
- ❖ Provide capacity development support and expertise on equalities and human rights to communities to help influence policy areas to reflect their human rights
- ❖ Work with Government and duty bearers to respond to the pandemic, recovery ongoing policy priorities
- Frankie provided an overview of the Scottish Governments forthcoming work in relation to Race Equality in Scotland. The Scottish Governments priorities have been informed by the work of the Expert Group on Covid and Ethnicity and the Race Equality Framework and Action Plans that preceded the Pandemic. As such work has been streamlined into two specific, if interconnected area

1) An immediate priorities plan to respond to covid 19, the recommendations of the ERG and core policy priorities up until 2023 - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/immediate-priorities-plan-race-equality-scotland/>

2) A strategic review of race equality priorities to begin in 2021 and inform work from 2023 onwards.

- ✓ Frankie outlined SG general principles.
 1. A human rights-based approach that develops policy based upon the lived experiences of citizens with communities and citizens helping to inform policy development.
 2. The Strategic review offers a perfect platform to re-integrate communities into policy development on the protected racial provisions of colour, nationality ethnic or national origin.
 3. Government wants to remain open and engaged.

Community Interventions:

Interventions were taken in groups with Frankie then offered an opportunity to respond.

Name	Organisation	Points raised
Kimi Jolly	East and Southeast Asians Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Authority and Local statutory bodies having little to no understanding of East and Southeast Asian communities ✓ Policing, revictimization, and re-traumatization ✓ Data doesn't capture us. We are more diverse than "Asian". ✓ Census category aggregation cannot reflect the diverse East and Southeast Asian communities of Scotland
Aerin Lai	East and Southeast Asians Scotland	<p>ESAS communities face racialisation and racism in Scotland but are not appropriately reflected in SG policy outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Our experiences are a legacy of colonialism and imperialism and this is not reflected in education or funding
Trishna Singh	Sikh Sanjog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sikh Sanjog are the only specialist frontline organisation providing support to the Sikh community, women and young people in Scotland. ✓ Inexplicably we had our funding cut in its entirety via the new Equalities and Human Rights fund. There is now no service provision for us. How does this fit with our equality and human rights? ✓ How are our rights protected, respected, and fulfilled if we are not given the capacity to engage in policy that directly affects us? Especially in light of CV19 when we have had very difficult circumstances to respond too?
	Ando Glaso	

Jani Lang		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Roma communities are diverse in an of themselves. We require a tailored approach to different policy areas. ✓ The Roma communities should be involved in discussions that directly affect them`
Margaret Lance	Women in Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Need to consult communities directly in policy areas that affect them ✓ BEMIS help provide a level of support, especially over Pandemic that has enabled us to help community members but often top-level decisions are told to us rather than involving us ✓ We have never heard of the immediate priorities plan and no one in the community knows about it
Ashli Mullen	Friends of Romano Lav	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued discrimination in labour market for Roma communities ✓ Roma communities remain detached from policy discussions and outcomes that affect them. ✓ Need a human rights-based approach to policy
Jeanette Findlay	Call it Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Numerous instances where the SG has just refused to have any meaningful engagement with the multigeneration Irish community. For example, We had excess covid deaths and our queries were shut down and no meetings although we asked to meet Minister McKelvie ✓ We attended meetings on reforming the curriculum to respond to the UN CERD recommendation and it was like we didn't exist. As if we hadn't even been there. The meeting note didn't even recognise a single point we made. ✓ Over the last 8 months there have been numerous illegal and legal marches that have espoused anti Irish racism and anti-Catholic bigotry. We face this every, single year. Our community is unique in this respect. We wrote to FM to ask for meeting and no reply. No one wants to engage our human rights on these issues.
Rajnish Singh	Scottish Indian Arts Forum (SIAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Important that communities have access to decision making processes that affect them. In Edinburgh SIAF / Edinburgh Diwali have had to work hard to have our engagement respected and participation. ✓ We are not all the same. The SG must respond to the different issues of communities.
Meriem Timizar	International Womens Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ BEMIS have provided an opportunity over the pandemic for community voices to be heard. They have provided proactive support to us to ensure voices of members.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ International Womens Group provides specialist services to asylum seekers, refugees and circumstances now are most difficult we have seen.
Ebrima Kalleh	LGBT UNITY GLASGOW/Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ LGBT asylum seekers are ignored and we do not know where our rights can be heard ✓ BEMIS has supported us but where do we go and what to do we do for people to listen to us? ✓ We must engage people through our organisation and listen to us

Frankie McLean (Head of Race Equality Unit / SG Response)

Government must be comfortable to have honest and open discussions. Often this can be challenging for Government and civil service but it is imperative that we are aware of the variety of situations that affect different communities.

We are at the beginning of a cycle of Race Equality 2021 - 24 work and it will be crucial for our shared work to reflect our shared aspiration to make Scotland a fairer country and for you to see substantive change in your lives and that of future generations.

- 1) We want to include communities in the strategic review to make sure the next race equality action plans responds to key priorities based upon lived experience. This will begin now.
- 2) The Equality and Human Rights Fund is one strand of funding that was massively oversubscribed too, we acknowledge this, it is very difficult to make funding decision but it is not the only funding option. We will share further funds and opportunities in the coming period.
- 3) SG wants to proactively engage with different minority ethnic communities via both the strategic review but developing understandings of community issues that can then focus on thematic issue via BEMIS and the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network.
- 4) Where direct engagement is required due to community specific issues like those highlighted by ESAS and CIO we want to respond and listen to concerns to help inform our longer-term work.
- 5) In the immediate moment we can raise issues with colleagues to highlight concerns from a Race Equality perspective with regards to Sinophobic and anti-Irish and / or Catholic racism and / or bigotry. We can feed this back to communities directly and work with our intermediary partners BEMIS to provide independent equalities and human rights advice. Scottish Government Ministers will decide policy objectives.

Overview

All communities represented today are critical to Scottish Government policy development. We won't always get everything right but we are committed to being the best we can possibly be in the immediate future and working to evolve our work together in the weeks and months ahead.

Points Raised via chat function

- ✓ Authority and Local statutory bodies having little to no understanding of East and Southeast Asian communities: Policing, revictimisation, and re-traumatisation. If any data is at all collected about our communities (seldom so in UK, even worse off in Scotland) Researchers (mostly without lived experiences of affected ethnic minority groups) who collect data by ethnicity for socio-economic trends, not understanding cultural nuanced (with misunderstood analysis and inferences causing harm, data collected of communities not understood), also not knowing or understanding the correct racial terminologies or inter community dynamics and distinctions. ie: Asian other or Asian being misunderstood as being South Asian which causes harmful assumptions about socio economic trends in UK.
- ✓ For the Sikh Community we have been in Scotland for over 75 years and we are still 'invisible' still fighting to be recognised as a minority within a minority
- ✓ Can it be made publicly available who received funding under Equalities and Human Rights Fund and from the New Scots Integration Fund? Who, how much and to do what?
- ✓ Thank you for your opening statement - and the recognition that a lot of difficulty faced from the third sector/grassroots is simply colleagues in government not being aware of their own privilege; resulting in so many discussions going ending nowhere in term of real change and attrition. There is a cost (personal and professional) by those attempting those discussions. So many people take part at 0 gain. Its good to have some recognition and support from the 'top' the breakup of monoculture is both required and welcome might help more voices brave these situations, but tangible change would be more likely.
- ✓ Vietnamese and Chinese make up some of the highest trafficked and exploited people in terms of numbers in Scotland, we are the only organisation offering culturally sensitive befriending services to these communities and even receiving referrals from first responders as soon as yesterday, clearly this service is needed and yet we still have no core funding.
- ✓ Universities have their own trustees and investments etc, their funding should not be from specially established funds from the ScotGov for groups supporting minority groups
- ✓ why should we have to always have to keep looking for funding why are we not part of mainstream? Why are we constantly being told the that the funding was oversubscribed there needs to be transparency and also information as to which communities will the people funded will be reaching with their funding from this EHR fund? Are they going to be reaching out to Sikh women living with domestic abuse, children with autism unemployment young Sikh people living within and struggling with two cultures, their mental which of those funded by Equality and Human Rights Fund I would like to have answers to my question not be just passed onto another stream of funding. Which by the way hasn't transpired yet
- ✓ Communities are suffering from research fatigue and we have had enough of this

- ✓ IWG is also works with women of all backgrounds, particularly vulnerable women from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. We are the only organisation to the best of my knowledge that offers one to one counselling for these women that is also culturally sensitive (counsellor who speaks Arabic) but we have not found any support in funding to continue or to establish our own base. We keep being told that we fit all the criteria and that funders want o help communities like ours, but at then end of the day we are still getting the same old rejections.
- ✓ There was a recent 'project by the Police Scotland- Scottish Institute of Policing Research in which we have now been given a new name 'seldom heard communities' we were invited to apply alongside a partner organisation that was linked to Universities. We were unsuccessful all the money went to The Universities which 'seldom heard' communities is they have linked to is still not known. So structural discriminations is still alive and well and we should not be afraid to call it out. What is the point of having these seminars and putting it out as though they really want to engage and its only a paper/zoom exercise to tick off
- ✓ 'Equality for all' please rethink of the criteria, is it rural based community organizations are not qualified to get funding? Because all 48 funded projects from the human rights fund seemed to be all national organisations and yet how many of them are really able to work nationally, resource the national agencies but not recognise the local community group who have been working in the ground for years, had done all the hard work to support the local BME communities yet gets no support at all. Why not have smaller funds available, making sure local community groups get some funding to keep them open.
- ✓ Government needs to talk to the Irish community directly about issues affecting us, like racist marches, there is no point talking to another Scottish Government department who have refused to listen to us for years, are welded to a “sectarianism approach” and then come back and tell us your have funded the sectarianism sector who do not have any credibility in our community
- ✓ If asylum seekers were allowed to work it will reduce inequality in our communities. They have skills they can earn money and improve their lives
- ✓ Thank you to Frankie and SG for engaging today, there is much to do. Thanks, BEMIS, for support and facilitating discussions.

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