

Moving towards Ethnic Inclusion

A discussion paper

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The energy and talents of ethnic communities constitute a vast resource yet to be tapped. Parallel to that full participation in society, for all full British citizens, is a joy and a right. There is goodwill within many organisations, but this can only be switched on into action through a deepened understanding of Equal Opportunities, leading to concrete expression through the development of a specific strategy to address ethnic inclusion.

Invest in organisational culture change

Organisations need to be aware of the specific Equal Opportunity issues in relation to ethnic inclusion, and develop further understanding in relation to it self as an organisation. It means:

- Awareness training for all members of the organisation, in particular trustees and senior staff, in order to lay down the basis for senior commitment, which is essential for incorporating ethnic inclusion into the policy and strategy .
- A deepened understanding of Equal Opportunities would enable personnel to for example:
 - a. Examine pivotal operational themes, scientific or practical, which affect the engagement of ethnic groups. e.g. Clarity about working concepts and language.
Or, access by ethnic groups who cannot afford transport or entrance fees. Enjoyment of activities is often the first step to engagement and understanding. One cannot support what one has never seen. Appreciation and understanding underpins all public commitment and participation.
 - b. Open up the organisation to the contribution of ethnic groups to the vision of our future environment. e.g. Their involvement in the development of programmes of activities, the design and distribution of leaflets or resource packs. Focus groups around key organisational themes, and thrashing out solutions to involvement together.
 - c. Re-position the organisation within the context of multi-cultural Britain in a socially and environmentally connected world. e.g. addressing the multi-cultural interpretation of sites or developing culturally appropriate ways of delivering services is an important part of the overall picture.

Invest in outreach programmes to ethnic groups

Only senior commitment, resulting from a programme of organisational culture change, will lead to appropriately resourced outreach programmes.

Investing in outreach programmes means:

- Personnel training and developmental support to enable staff to gain skills to work with ethnic groups in a culturally and socially relevant way against their status as full British citizens.
- The running of activity programmes and events designed to engage everyone in different cultural visions of heritage and nature.
- The development of outreach materials with positive images and the use of appropriate language.
- Developing multi-cultural resource materials for all.
- Fully funded projects specifically directed at ethnic groups.

Equal Opportunities for All

Over one-third of the population of Leicester are Asians from the Indian Sub-continent. The projection is that the ethnic population will be the majority in the near future. In London one in four people hail from a different country of origin. Of course, more work with ethnic people will be concentrated in such areas. But, Equal Opportunities is not a numbers game. The real issue is Equal Opportunities for all individuals in Britain wherever they are.

Working with partners which represent ethnic communities

Organisations, such as BEN, which are representative of ethnic communities would welcome the opportunity to work in equal partnership closely others to jointly achieve ethnic inclusion.