

Get your voice heard!

使別人聽到你的聲音！

আপনার বক্তব্য অন্যদের জানতে দিন

أسمعنا صوتك!

اپنی رائے کا اظہار کریں!

Wasza opinia się liczy

North Edinburgh and Leith Black and
Minority Ethnic (BME) Community
Participation Pilot Project

Stakeholder Report April 2006

The story so far...

In September, 2005 a group of eighteen local people and professionals came together at the invitation of the Centre for Human Ecology and Edinburgh City Council Equalities Unit.

The 'Get Your Voice Heard' programme had been promoted through local BME networks. The idea was to explore how the group might influence the way that 'local community planning' structures started working in the area, so marginalised people's voices could be heard.

The group is a great mix of local people, planners, health professionals, police, and council workers. Everyone in the group has committed to attending sessions for a full year; being open to learn, change and challenge; and bringing their 'whole' self into our conversations...

Our Questions...

To date, we have met for five sessions. During this time, we have mapped local BME priority issues, got to know one another, and taken a strategic look at 'community planning' and how it will affect us.

Session five was a turning point. In this session, we have collectively agreed how we want to work together to make an impact.

Our work will be framed by keeping a sharp focus on these questions:

1) How can community planning processes practically address inequalities in listening to people's voices?

2) How can we design our voice so it can be heard? And how can we design structures so that they can hear/listen?

Our Themes...

Over the next five sessions, we will be working in teams focussed on getting to the roots of the following priority themes for BME people living in the area:

- Leith and Granton Development
- Culture
- Local Facilities
- Neighbourhood / Housing and related topics
- Tackling Inequalities

Our Map...

We are creating a 'local's eye view' of the area. It helps us keep track of questions like:

- How does we see things?
- Which services do like? Where are the gaps?
- Who doesn't yet have a voice in our project?

Frequently Asked Questions...

Who is behind this?

In 2005, local BME organisations and the equalities unit of Edinburgh Council invited the Centre for Human Ecology (CHE) to work in North Edinburgh to help to make sense 'local community planning' for local BME folk.

CHE has worked for many years with people who don't have a strong voice in Scotland's democracy. In 1999, our 'Who's a Real Scot?' report suggested racism in Scotland is not in line with ancient Scots values. From 2002 we have focussed on supporting black and minority people across Scotland to gain a voice. See www.che.ac.uk for more.

Can you really make a difference?

Throughout the programme, the participants and facilitators are aware that raising expectations beyond what can be delivered is not a good idea.

For this reason, whilst staying positive and optimistic that this group can achieve some practical goals, we are also being real about the political realities of engaging with the community planning agenda. We've got a few things going in our favour, however:

- 1) We have high level support (for example, from local BME NGOs, the Leader of Edinburgh Council, and decision makers in local police, health and council services).
- 2) We are thinking and acting strategically, together.
- 3) We are working in very participative way with the help of facilitation from the Centre for Human Ecology.
- 4) We have confidence in ourselves as able to listen to the wider community in North Edinburgh.
- 5) We recognise that 'bottom-up' knowledge is just as good as 'top-down' experts who have traditionally done planning for us, not with us.

How can I get involved?

The current group came together in September 2005 in response to our original invitation. There will be more opportunities to get involved through 2006. We will be focussing on the questions and themes that we've identified as priorities for now (see the other side).

If you would like to be kept informed of future opportunities to get involved, or just to stay in touch through this newsletter, let Gina Headden have your details. You can reach her on:

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North Edinburgh & Leith community planning boundaries

