

Two Projects, One Goal

Sara Mody and Anjali Wareham worked as interns for Runnymede last summer. Sara, in her final year at Trinity University (San Antonio, Texas), studying business and economics, worked with Robert Berkeley on a project regarding race awareness and diversity training. Anjali graduated from The University of Edinburgh with a history degree and completed an MA in Museum Studies at UCL in 2003. Anjali worked with Nicola Rollock on The Real Histories Directory.

Runnymede has established a reputation for promoting race equality in a number of different subject areas. The projects that we were working on reflect the diverse nature of Runnymede's work.

The Real Histories Directory

The Real Histories Directory is a teaching and learning resource, primarily for schools but also the wider community, which acts as a one-stop portal of existing resources to support the inclusion of cultural diversity into the school curriculum.

Background research for the project involved contacting various schools and LEAs to find out what, if anything, they did to promote cultural diversity within the curriculum, what they did for Black History Month and what kinds of resources they would like to be made available to them. The responses indicated that one of the major obstacles facing many educators is time. As one respondent pointed out, while the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has made many people more aware of their legal responsibilities, the fact remains that teachers often feel so burdened with new initiatives and directives that they often lack the time and the resources to embark on activities that might require in-depth background research.

The Real Histories website allows people to locate resources (such as books, storytellers, museums, culturally diverse toys) that already exist, both in their own and other LEAs, as well as allowing them to submit information about their own resources or organisation. The database can be explored by region, subject area, name and type of resource, or through a keyword search. We hope that this website (officially launched in January 2004) will act as a

portal to enable those with an interest in cultural diversity to effortlessly access the wealth of material available, and encourage people from all backgrounds to find out more about the UK's diverse heritage.

Training

The race awareness and diversity training project has been looking into the progress of the recommendations made in *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. One of its aims is to fill a need within the field in order to make training more effective and efficient. After performing desk research in order to determine who was offering training and what type of training was being given, interviews were held with diversity trainers and consultants currently working in various areas in the UK. Each interviewee presented a different perspective on the goals of training courses and the needs of the sector. One trend that was mentioned pertained to resources available for the development of training courses. Issues varied between the availability of materials to the quality of resources used. The insight the interviewees provided helped to develop a new project idea, to be pursued in the near future.

A Joint Goal

Despite the fact that these projects intend to influence two different groups of people, both have the same underlying theme of promoting the understanding and acceptance of different cultures, beliefs and histories. A number of people see legislation regarding race and equality as detached from their everyday lives and, as a result, the impact of these policies can be limited. These two projects aim to provide people with the resources that will enable them to turn legislation that can appear intangible into practice. While there is legislation requiring public organisations to train employees, private organisations are not required to do this. Runnymede's project should assist organisations in the development of equality training programs and ensure the quality of the resources used. The Real Histories project aims to accomplish a similar goal in schools, where educators, already aware of the need to incorporate cultural diversity into the curriculum, may not perceive it as a priority. Through the Real Histories website, resources that can improve the integration of different cultures, histories and beliefs into the current school curriculum on a continual basis are made accessible, and the wider community too is encouraged to explore aspects of the UK's culturally diverse heritage.

A key aspect of Runnymede's work is encouraging a wider appreciation of cultural diversity in the UK; both of these projects – in their separate ways – hope to support the accomplishment of this goal by promoting understanding through education.