A spring launch for Complementing Teachers

On the 1st of May Complementing Teachers: A Practical Guide to Promoting Race Equality in Schools, was appropriately launched at the Institute of Education, London. Jagdish Gundara at the IoE’s International Centre for Intercultural Studies hosted the event, which was attended by guests that included many of the contributors to the publication. The Runnymede Team was out in force and Granada Learning, the publishers, were well represented. The highlight of the launch was provided by pupils from Rockmount Primary School, Upper Norwood who, under the guidance of school staff and with the unplanned participation of some of the guests, played out an exercise from the Key Stage 1 lesson ‘Staying Afloat’. (We can confidently report that no adults were harmed in the process.)
Introduction to the launch from Michelynn Lafîèche

At the launch of Complementing Teachers, after welcoming everyone to an event it was an honour for us to be holding. Runnymede’s Director M Michelynn Lafîèche expressed warm thanks to our hosts at the Institute of Education, Jagdish Gundara and the International Centre for Intercultural Studies. Michelynn had been kind enough to find both time and space for the event at the Institute, and our publishers, Granada Learning, had catered the evening, and had also given us much support and encouragement in bringing the project to fruition.

Celebrating the book itself, which has been almost 2 years in the making and involved over 80 contributors, many of them practising teachers, Michelynn said:

It is a great achievement in our view – trying to coordinate the work for this publication has been a challenging and an invigorating process, but we are sure that it is this kind of collaboration that produces the best work and we are honoured that so many of you were willing to work with us on this project.

Complementing Teachers was created:
1. to update and replace an earlier Runnymede publication, Equality Assurance in Schools;
2. to respond to one of the recommendations of the Parekh Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain;
3. to help schools meet the requirements of the RRAA 2000;
4. and to help schools plan and deliver an inclusive curriculum.

It promotes education and achievement for all, particularly those who traditionally have been excluded from or marginalised in some mainstream educational establishments. It is also intended to help all pupils prepare for life in a culturally diverse society.

The practical issue of promoting race equality through the curriculum is challenging but it is clearly important both legally and morally, and there is no absolute way in which to achieve this. Through this handbook, we have tried to provide teachers and education practitioners with examples across all areas of the curriculum as a starting point from which to explore the key issues of excellence, citizenship and identity to promote equality.

Indeed, these four concepts were the starting point for us and what we hope we have achieved is to weave them through the examples we, collectively, have provided in this text. Complementing Teachers advocates a curriculum which:

• E = prioritises equality of opportunity and access
• e = ensures excellence for all
• i = supports the development of cultural and personal identities
• C = prepares pupils for citizenship

If course this handbook was not created in isolation. There are educationists and practitioners who have made invaluable contributions to promoting race equality over more than three decades – and many of them are here tonight! And Runnymede itself, in 1993, published Equality Assurance in Schools, a source from which Complementing Teachers has been able to draw inspiration in order to create new material for the 2000s. Our new handbook is intended to build on this rich history to promote race equality and to ensure that it penetrates to the core of all classroom practice. As Professor Parekh, Chair of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, says in his foreword to Complementing Teachers:

Promoting race equality is not just a question of removing obvious forms of discrimination but also of creating an environment in which all children realise their full potential and are able to relate to each other in a spirit of equality and mutual respect. It involves appropriate changes in the curriculum, methods of teaching, organisation of the school, and its overall discipline and ethos. If followed widely, its recommendations should help make the UK a cohesive and relaxed multicultural society.

Michelynn also spoke of how the impetus of the work carried out around Complementing Teachers is going to be maintained:

In terms of the future, it is not our intention simply to launch this book and leave it. We are now developing a seminar series that will be appropriate for INSET training to help schools and teachers get the most out of this handbook. The pilot series, being created and run in collaboration with NASUWT, will be launched before the end of this term. By September 2003 we will have a well-developed seminar that we will be happy to roll out to any school and/or group of teachers, youth workers or other educationists interested in looking more closely at how to use this book. Nicola is leading on that, so do contact her at the Runnymede office.

In her closing remarks Michelynn acknowledged the help of Runnymede’s funders:

Runnymede is an independent organisation and relies on the generosity of its funders and supporters. We could not have accomplished this work without them. In particular, for this project we received support from BCT, PHF and NASUWT, and I should like to acknowledge them here.

Also speaking at the launch of Complementing Teachers, Nicola Rollock said:

I joined Runnymede at the end of 2001 to take up this project that had been initiated by Linda Appiah during her time at Runnymede. Working on Complementing Teachers has not only given me a first-hand insight into the world of book design, publishing and marketing but has supported my own doctoral research, also in the area of education and race equality. The book as it stands here today is a result of the hard work and commitment of many people. I would in particular like to thank the teachers involved in the writing of Section B of the book who spent considerable time researching their contributions. I would also like to thank those listed below for their input and support throughout.

Steering Committee:
Kate Gannon, Runnymede Trustee
Steve Bruce, (then) Commonwealth Institute
John Brown, QCA
Sonja Hall, CRE
Chris Hendshaw, Barnet LEA
Rahida Sharif, (then) O F S T E D

Additional Support to the Steering Committee:
Linda Appiah, Lewisham LEA
Ros Spyr, Runnymede’s Publications Editor

Editorial group:
General thanks to those who worked closely with us and to all the writing teams (see p.195 of the book).

The team at Granada Learning and Letts Educational:
Neil Ward, Managing Director, Granada Learning
Andrew Thaves, Publishing Director, Schools, Letts Educational
Sally Moom and her team at Sally Moom Publishing Services
Rebecca Jones, Marketing at Granada Learning
Catherine Lane, Press PR at Granada Learning
At Runnymede:
Rob Berkeley, Filiz Caran, Sarah Isal, Qaisra Khan (Michelynn, Ros and Kate already mentioned above)
Welcoming a whole new resource

On May Day, at the Institute of Education, London, the much-awaited launch took place for Complementing Teachers: A Practical Guide to Promoting Race Equality in Schools. This event was seen as the welcome culmination of 2 years of ongoing work from a wealth of experts in the fields of education and race equality. Nicola Rollock recounts the book’s history and looks to the future of this new publication for the classroom.

Background to the book

Complementing Teachers was written to replace Runnymede’s successful Equality Assurance in Schools.1 Significantly, many of the issues regarding identity, society and quality advocated in Equality Assurance remain relevant today. However, the numerous and crucial amendments to the Race Relations Act brought about as a result of the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, along with developments in Education legislation, meant that extensive changes needed to be made to a publication now a decade old.

How the content came together

An initial meeting attended by academics, policy-makers, local government and other interested parties to discuss the idea of developing a new book took place at the Commonwealth Institute during June 2001. From the broad pool of those keen to contribute to the new book emerged a number of committees, each with varying responsibilities based on members’ time and area of expertise. The names and organisations of those who lent their support are comprehensively detailed in the acknowledgements section of the new book; however, in order to give some indication of the numbers involved, it is worth briefly describing the remits of the various committees:

The Steering Committee comprised 8 people (including Nicola Rollock, Michelynn Lafleche, Director of the Runnymede Trust, and Runnymede Trustee Kate Gavron). This group made final editorial decisions regarding the book and its content. It met at least every 3 months and maintained regular email contact to offer ongoing advice and support.

The Editorial Teacher group was made up of a set of professionals (practising teachers and academics) who led the writing for their subject area of specialism. This is represented by Section B of the new publication. Runnymede’s June 2002 Bulletin provides an account of the writing day held in April of the same year, which brought together members of this team to begin the writing process for this section.

Each team within the Editorial group was further supported by a Virtual Editorial Group to whom they could turn for additional assistance and ideas regarding their subject area.

In addition there were a number of individuals who contributed to chapters in Sections A and C of the book.

Design

Considerable attention was given to the overall appearance and design of the new publication. The aim was for an accessible, photocopy-friendly publication that teachers would be able to pick up and use frequently, with a CD-Rom attached to enable teachers within a school to download given pages at their convenience.

Runnymede worked closely with Sally Moon, of Sally Moon Publishing Services, to address each of the aforementioned issues in relation to the colour, font size and text layout of the book. The book cover and ‘E’ composite, which Runnymede has affectionately named Evelyn (applicable to both sexes), were designed by Natalie Rollock and contribute to the clean, contemporary style of the handbook. The Evelyn symbol is central to the approach and content of the book, and is in fact composed from the first letters of the book’s key themes of Equality, Excellence, Identities and Citizenship (p.3). Readers will notice that Evelyn sits in the background to the text throughout the entire book.

1 Equality Assurance in Schools: Quality, Identity, Society - a handbook for action planning and school effectiveness, to give the book its full title, was originally published in 1993, and reprinted six times in its lifetime.
Challenges, consultation and final celebration

Putting together a handbook of this nature presents many challenges. Not only were there extensive debates about terminology and appropriate use of language, a sensitive yet important issue in the field of race, but also the task of editing scripts from such a large and diverse group of experts was clearly an undertaking of some scale and took many months of reading and revision to the text.

Further refinement of the content was carried out following an extensive consultation process, which took place towards the end of 2002, with the new year characterised by a cycle of receiving and closely inspecting the final proofs.

Publication and launch

Complementing Teachers: A Practical Guide to Promoting Race Equality in Schools was officially published on Monday 14 April 2003. Printed copies arrived at the Runnymede office amid an atmosphere of subdued apprehension. After all, this was a moment of reckoning, a moment when the outcome of all the hard work, meetings, coordination, management and research would be inspected by the rest of the Runnymede team and, indeed, a wider public. As it turned out, the compliments were many and the anxiety, though understandable, had been unnecessary.

The launch, kindly hosted by Jagdish Gundara and the International Centre for Intercultural Studies, was the first public opportunity for many of the contributors to examine the results of their hard work. In addition to the writers themselves, representatives from Granada Learning, including the Managing Director Nigel Ward, staff from the DfES and members of the press were in attendance.

The evening was not only a means of formally thanking those who have supported Runnymede in this venture, but also an opportunity to witness pupils from Rockmount Primary School, Upper Norwood present one of the activities from the book under the guidance of their deputy headteacher, Paul Thomas (see opposite).

This proved to be a very entertaining and engaging display, which the pupils successfully carried out with support from some (relatively unprepared) adult participants who included Maud Blair and Chris Gaine. Following the launch, pupils were presented with certificates to thank them for their hard work and contribution to the evening.

What happens next?

Nicola Rollock is working with the Granada Learning PR and marketing team to respond to the demand for the new publication and to ensure that it is widely disseminated. Initial feedback from teachers and LEA staff has been extremely positive, with comments reflecting, for example, the book’s accessibility, the usefulness of having all the key stages represented, and the fact that it helpfully addresses a much-neglected area.

A training programme is also being developed, with the support of the NASUWT, on how to effectively use the book. Pilot sessions will take place during the remainder of this term, with the series being launched at the start of the new academic year.

Renewed thanks

Runnymede would like to thank those involved in the production of Complementing Teachers for their time, support and commitment during the last 2 years. We hope that this publication makes a significant contribution to the teaching and learning that takes place within and outside of classrooms across the country, and encourages debate in the often-masked area of race and race equality to ultimately help make the UK ‘a cohesive and relaxed multicultural society’.

Complementing Teachers: A Practical Guide to Promoting Race Equality in Schools

By Granada Learning for The Runnymede Trust  Pp 216
ISBN: 184085 9121
Price: £30 (+VAT) includes free CD-Rom

Complementing Teachers is available from Granada Learning
(phone free on: 0800 216 592, visit www.letts-education.com or email school@lettsed.co.uk)
A 10% discount is applicable to orders of 100+ copies
A free Complementing Teachers poster will be included in your order. This offer applies for a limited period only.
Nine Year 6 children interpreted a Key Stage 1 lesson ‘Staying Afloat’ from the Physical Education section of the book, which was then adapted to suit the older children. This activity had been chosen to demonstrate some of the key principles of the book in a relatively short space of time.

As background preparation for the lesson, the children had spent some of their Easter break researching a project on a country of their choice, which they would later be quizzed on as part of the activity itself. (These projects are going to be used within the teacher professional development sessions that Runnymede will be running with the NASUWT.)

On the evening, the children were divided into three teams. Three children and a member of the audience in each team had to get from one side of the hall to the other without touching the floor, using resources such as trays and cricket bats. This activity encourages teamwork, cooperation and forward planning. It can be made more or less difficult by juggling with the number of resources provided.

At predetermined points, each team had to pick up and read information cards listing facts about some of the countries that the children had researched over the Easter break. When each team reached the other side of the room successfully, they were asked questions about what they had read, and the team with the most correct answers was the winner.

The pupils really enjoyed this activity. They had the opportunity to talk about their own country of origin, if they chose, and some had told stories about their parents and grandparents. This lesson clearly has cross-curricular possibilities and would be a good way to finish off a project on countries around the world or a comparison of two continents.

The book was definitely accessible, helpful, easy to follow and, though the lesson plans and activities are listed by key stage, it was easy to take an idea for a younger group of pupils and adapt it for this age group. Rockmount is planning to incorporate the book as part of its curriculum development for the new academic year.

Nicola Rollock (Bonneville) and Rob Berkeley (Rockmount) are governors of two culturally diverse London primary schools that are already discussing ways of incorporating many of the book’s ideas into their practice.

Nicola Rollock is Runnymede’s Research and Policy Analyst for Education.

Launch photos are by Rod Leon.
The Challenge of a Black Regional Network

Beverley Prevatt-Goldstein talks about how BECON (the black minority ethnic community organisations network), is working hard to persuade mainstream organisations that a black perspective should be built into all decision-making.

BECON, a Black Regional Network in the North-East of England, is one of nine regional networks established by the Active Communities Unit (Home Office) since 1999. Each network became functional at a different date during these last 4 years, and has developed approaches that differ with the conditions in each region. These can reflect, for example, the density of the black population, the number of established black voluntary and community groups, whether BECON is perceived as competition by local and sub-regional black networks, and the ability of statutory and white-led voluntary networks to engage on equal terms with a black regional network. However, there is a common agenda - 'giving voice to the Black Sector' - and consequently common challenges.

BECON's aims - to enable regional policy and practice to be influenced by the views of BME (black minority ethnic) voluntary and community groups and their communities and to better meet their needs - appear to meet legislation such as the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), government policy as reflected in the guidelines for local strategic partnerships, and good practice as outlined in The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: 'all citizens are of intrinsically equal value and all should be able to participate in decisions that affect them.' But in 2001 when BECON became operational there appeared to be little structure and groundwork on which to build. BECON therefore had to create its own route map. With its first allies, the Community Development Team in Government Office, North-East, BECON sought to:

• Obtain a space in regional fora. This was not easily achieved. Regional fora preferred other, more familiar, figures despite their more limited regional coverage, disseminating capacity and less representative role. There was a discomfort with this new player which had to prove its right to a place at the table.

• Begin a dialogue with new initiatives such as the Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Networks. Again, partnerships proved hesitant with only 2 of the 14 local strategic partnerships initially responding to offers to assist them in fulfilling their responsibility to be inclusive. Two years on, through persistence and alliances, BECON has achieved much. It now has regular meetings with senior officers in the Regional Assembly, Government Office and the Regional Development Agency, is part of their consultation network and is engaged in developing memoranda for working together, though the equality of partnership working remains debatable. While there is still suspicion amongst sub-regional and local partnerships a handful of these have initiated contact with BECON and a few short-term partnerships have developed.

In a presentation to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Conference in 2002 BECON spoke of the demoralising and time-consuming process of knocking on closed doors or doors that allowed entry to the waiting room only, and suggested that 'resistance to change and prejudice/racism' might be the reasons for the barriers. From its current position 'in the waiting room' this seems still to be the case.

BECON cannot ethically represent or advocate on behalf of a network without ongoing communication with that network and without enabling it to represent itself. BECON therefore sought to:

• Begin a dialogue with the local BME groups about developments and opportunities such as new networks, sources of funding, and regional changes, offering continual information through newsletters and network meetings. The challenges here were twofold. The majority of groups were severely under-resourced and did not have the capacity to engage consistently in anything beyond day-to-day local issues, but were understandably concerned at what might become another layer between them and decision-making.

• Begin a process of encouraging direct and accountable representation through capacity-building schemes for BME individuals such as Community Participation Training. So far,
BECO N has been most successful in enabling BME individuals to make progress in developing their participation and representation skills and knowledge. The challenge for the established representatives to use open channels of dissemination, and for organisations to work with and support newer representatives, is ongoing.

In engaging with the network, BEC O N began to take on local capacity-building, in addition to its regional and strategic role, since:

- organisations are unable to engage in regional issues without the capacity to adequately manage their local and organisational issues; and
- a black regional organisation’s credibility with local BME organisations depends not only on its status with white organisations but on whether it can deliver on the local issues that matter, such as access to funding to management training, and support in tackling racial harassment in ways that value all black ethnicities (including asylum seekers and refugee) and all areas of the region.

BECO N therefore offered funding workshops and business management training throughout the region while attempting to bridge the operational and strategic priorities by:

- researching the most appropriate ways of meeting skills gaps (training and employing BME participatory researchers) and disseminating this information among training providers;
- devising a funding strategy with other regional organisations and funders and implementing it jointly;
- working with local development agencies to identify how their services could be made more accessible;
- implementing specific projects (business development, physical activities) which work with partners to improve their funding of, delivery to and direction by BME groups.

The challenge faced by BEC O N is the historical one for all voluntary organisations: how to remain an initiator, how to challenge the mainstream to provide appropriate services rather than allow organisations to dump their responsibility on short-term funded and marginalised organisations. However, this is set in the wider context of the debate on whether specialist ‘ethnic’ organisations are still appropriate, a debate which has been intensified by the focus on ‘community cohesion’. The interpretation of community cohesion which seeks to marginalise black-led organisations has the potential to seriously challenge the existence and mission of BEC O N and other black-led organisations, leaving black citizens as unequal members of an ‘integrated society’.

BECO N is a black organisation working to develop other black organisations so that their members can participate equally in influencing mainstream provision, thus increasing a community cohesion based on equality and inclusion. Additionally, BEC O N recognises that mainstream organisations need to change to enable equal participation at the centre of decision-making. BEC O N, therefore, in its ongoing relationship with organisations such as Government Office, District Councils, Local Strategic Partnerships and Trades Unions, discusses how they need to enable equal participation, often recommending the Chapter on Organisational Change in The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. But power is not easily shared and the challenge continues. Nevertheless, by engaging with BEC O N – a black network of black organisations – mainstream organisations are assisted in confronting the need not merely to aspire to equality and diversity as distinct goals but to engage with ‘the politics of recognition alongside the struggle for equality and racial justice’.

BECO N’s aims for the next 5 years, following its rapid expansion, centre on consolidation as a quality organisation and network. This will involve development of its internal and external communication systems, and expansion of its partnership network so that it can operate at a strategic level across the whole region while maintaining an advisory and monitoring role for operational activities at local and sub-regional levels. It will also work towards facilitating network members in their direct representation of the BME communities, helping them to participate more fully in civic and economic activities, and decision-making at every level. Key to the development of these aims are the activities of maintaining a vibrant network, building capacity in partnership with others, and working positively with all organisations so that they listen to the voices of BME communities.

Beverley Prevatt Goldstein has worked extensively in the fields of social work practice, social work education, community development and training and consultancy. She is an active researcher and her 20 publications include articles and chapters on identity, black perspectives, feminism, and evaluation of initiatives in voluntary organisations and social work education. From 1996 to 2001 she directed a Social Work programme at Durham University. In 2001 she became Director of BEC O N and a member of the General Social Care Council, the regulatory body for social care in England.

RUNYMEDE'S QUARTERLY BULLETIN JUNE 2003

COMMUNITY COHESION

Beverley Prevatt Goldstein has worked extensively in the fields of social work practice, social work education, community development and training and consultancy. She is an active researcher and her 20 publications include articles and chapters on identity, black perspectives, feminism, and evaluation of initiatives in voluntary organisations and social work education. From 1996 to 2001 she directed a Social Work programme at Durham University. In 2001 she became Director of BEC O N and a member of the General Social Care Council, the regulatory body for social care in England.

Beverley Prevatt Goldstein has worked extensively in the fields of social work practice, social work education, community development and training and consultancy. She is an active researcher and her 20 publications include articles and chapters on identity, black perspectives, feminism, and evaluation of initiatives in voluntary organisations and social work education. From 1996 to 2001 she directed a Social Work programme at Durham University. In 2001 she became Director of BEC O N and a member of the General Social Care Council, the regulatory body for social care in England.
North of England Refugee Service

Established in 1989, the North of England Refugee Service is an independent and charitable organisation which exists to meet the needs and promote the interests of asylum seekers and refugees who have arrived or have settled in the North of England. Sead Masic, its Policy and Development Coordinator, writes about how the organisation has developed significantly during the last 5 years.

NERS (the North of England Refugee Service) acts as an agent of positive change in order to improve the everyday life conditions of asylum seekers and refugees, and to promote social inclusion by facilitating their integration and equal participation within British society. Since April 2000 NERS has been operating the One Stop Shop Service contract in the North East. This service is available to all asylum seekers who are entitled to support from the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS), which was established under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Background to Asylum

An ‘asylum seeker’ is a person who requests refugee status in another state, usually on the grounds that he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country or believes their life or liberty is threatened by armed conflict or violence. Since the 1980s more than five million people have submitted requests for such a refugee status in Western Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia. With the era of open immigration in the post-World War II years now a distant memory, such large movements of refugees have set off a backlash amongst traditional receiving states and continents. But the concept of asylum is not new. It has been in existence for almost 3500 years and can be found, differently interpreted, in many ancient societies. A Hittite King in the second millennium BC declared:

‘Concerning a refugee, I affirm on oath the following: when a refugee comes from your land into mine he will not be returned to you. To return a refugee from the land of the Hittites is not right.’

In more modern times, the member nations of the European Union, especially those with colonial backgrounds, have traditionally welcomed immigrants. The UK, France and the Netherlands have all received significant numbers of people from the Commonwealth, Algeria and the Dutch Antilles, respectively. Today, the UK remains proud of its record on immigration, to which it can refer as far back as the 18th century, when London already enjoyed a cosmopolitan populace.

The Geneva Convention

The cornerstone of international refugee protection is the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol. The Geneva Convention was designed as a response to the mass migration flows Europe witnessed in the immediate aftermath of World War II. With European displacement firmly in its mind, the Geneva Convention originally contained a geographical and historical clause, which automatically banned people from certain countries from claiming asylum. The 1967 Protocol removed these restrictions and allowed people from any country to claim asylum. The Convention provides protection to those who have:

‘a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion ...’

It is important to recognise that the Convention does not make the claiming of asylum an individual right. The granting of asylum has always been (and remains) the right of a state. However, the universal recognition of asylum by states can be viewed as implicitly conceding to an individual the right to claim asylum.

NERs Data

NERS is a regional organisation and covers the counties of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Cumbria, Durham and Tees Valley through 5 offices currently located in Middlesbrough, Sunderland, Walsend and Newcastle upon Tyne (2).

It employs 42 people with backgrounds that span a range of occupations: housing officers, doctors, journalists, community development workers, former Red Cross workers, nurses, vets, social workers, credit co-op workers, graduate accountants and students.

NERS’s work puts it into close touch with many types of organisations, both local and national, as it deals with accommodation providers (council and private housing), local authorities in our catchment area (social services departments in particular), local churches, benefits agencies, schools and colleges, medical professionals, a number of funding organisations and trusts, the Police and other partners, organisations and agencies which are involved in working with refugees and asylum seekers.

Specific agencies with whom NERS works closely include: Banks of the Wear, BECON – the Black Ethnic Minority Community Organisations Network, Legal Services Commission, the National Asylum Support Service, North East Consortium for Asylum Support Services, Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, PMS (Personal Medical Services), Refugee Action, Refugee Council, Refugee Integration Unit (Home Office), and the Tyne and Wear Partnership.
Recognition of Needs
NERS recognises refugees to be a specific-needs group, requiring specialised support and/or assistance. Refugees leave their countries because of threats to their life and freedom on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or because of civil strife, warfare, or violation of their human rights.

Protection is the main reason behind the decision of refugees to seek asylum in the UK. Asylum seekers have little psychological preparation regarding the exile process, its implications, nor even the nature of the host country’s society. They often lack language skills to access services and are unfamiliar with the structure of social welfare provision in the UK, or their rights as asylum seekers. Most importantly, the effects of their pre-arrival experiences can seriously compromise their ability to easily learn new social norms, develop English language and vocational skills and independently meet their needs. Indeed, a great proportion of the refugee population arriving in the UK are seriously traumatised after having been tortured and/or incarcerated in their country of origin, institutionalised in camps and/or having spent varying periods of time in a state of social dislocation.

The effect of pre-arrival traumatic events can be exacerbated by difficulties encountered due to restricted access to social services upon arrival in the UK. In addition, there exist some similarities between the experience of racism and discrimination faced by refugees and those of people from minority ethnic groups.

However, NERS also recognises and respects that its user group constitutes people of great resilience and resourcefulness, who bring with them vocational and independent living skills, and have the capacity to contribute to the community in which they settle. As such, NERS also aims to promote and facilitate the potential of its users to organise and empower themselves to lead independent lives.

Research Activities and Reports
The North of England Refugee Service is committed to remaining up-to-date and informed on all refugee and immigration issues. Part of NERS’s work involves commissioning and participating in a wide range of research initiatives. Here are brief descriptions of its most recent research projects as well as other asylum seeker/refugee research related work to which NERS has contributed.

Asylum Seekers Meeting Their Healthcare Needs
A new report by the BMA’s Board of Science and Education states that the health of asylum seekers may actually get worse after entry to the UK and calls on the Government to allocate sufficient funding and implement effective policies to ensure that the health of this minority group does not deteriorate in the UK. The report claims that from the point of entry to the UK not enough is being done to safeguard the health of asylum seekers. Basic medical testing does not routinely take place which means tuberculosis (TB) often goes undiagnosed; those suffering from psychological affects of torture are not always referred to specialist centres and unaccompanied children are not given appropriate vaccinations and immunisations.

The report recommends that:
- Dispersal policy should be effectively managed so asylum seekers receive adequate accommodation and are not moved from place to place.
- Funding for asylum seekers should not come from existing budgets for GPs, as this will have a knock-on effect on the healthcare provision of the resident population. New money should be made available to GPs.
- Children should be educated within the local community to improve integration and also their general wellbeing.
- Asylum seekers should not generally be held in detention, especially families and children, as in many instances this can remind torture victims of their experiences and compound their psychological torment.

NERS - Move on report
NERS, Banks of the Wear and a host of other organisations have just published a report on the availability of Move On housing for refugees in the Northeast. Among the key results of the report are the following:
- Approximately 43% of respondents stated that they would definitely and a further 36% would possibly like to remain living in the Northeast region when considering their move on from NASS contracted dispersal accommodation.
- Respondents’ preferred areas for Move On housing in the Northeast were areas other than those into which they had been dispersed – principally for reasons of personal safety and the avoidance of racial harassment.
- A high proportion – 50% of black and 30% of white respondents – had been the victims of racially motivated crime and harassment while in the region, most of them on more than one occasion. Comparatively few – less than 5% – reported that they had been victims of other crimes.
- The most often quoted continuing support needs were in relation to housing and employment and training in that order. Also, respondents saw refuge-based organisations rather than ‘mainstream’ providers as their preferred source of such support.
- Key elements to be considered in the provision of Move-On accommodation are opportunities for belonging and the encouragement of feelings of security, community and support.

Understanding the Decision-making of Asylum Seekers
Recent research published by the Home Office has exploded the myth that the majority of people coming to this country have a detailed knowledge of our immigration and/or our benefits systems. The research interviewed 65 asylum seekers and refugees already living in the UK as well as reviewing other research. The majority of the interviewees were ultimately driven by the need to reach a place of safety, irrespective of the country they found themselves in.

The key findings show that the interviewees also took the following into account when deciding on a destination:
- Presence of relatives and friends already in the UK
- Belief that the UK is a safe, tolerant and democratic country
- Previous links between their country and the UK (including previous British colony and ability to speak English)

The report highlights once again, the key role of agents in channeling asylum seekers to certain destinations. Vital to the report is the finding of little evidence amongst the interviewees of any detailed knowledge of UK immigration procedures, their entitlements to benefits whilst in the UK or the availability of work once in the UK. Most interviewees stated a desire to work and support themselves during their asylum application rather than be dependent on the state.

How NERS has developed
Over the last 5 years NERS has significantly grown into the biggest refugee assisting organisation in the Northeast. In 1997 there were just 6-7 employees. When the Government introduced the dispersal system asylum seekers and refugees were sent from the south to be accommodated in the northeast of England and the existing number of workers was unable to cope with such a number of newly arrived clients. NERS signed a One Stop Shop contract with the Refugee Council and employed staff to deal with day-to-day enquiries. At the same time services were developed in line with PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations), and as a result of the quality services provided, NERS has achieved the Quality Mark given by the Legal Services Commission.
Ethnicity Questions and the 2001 Census

Most of the results of the 2001 national census have recently become available on a government website [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001]. Omar Khan tries to interpret whether answers to new questions for 2001 have produced a clearer picture of how we look at – and to – ourselves.

Since the ‘ethnicity’ section first appeared in the 1991 national census (prior to which there was only a question on place of birth), responses to this question have elicited a high level of interest. While growth rate projections have often grabbed the most attention, it is important to recognize that it is the numbers and diversity of the population that impact directly on policy.

Wether determining housing requirements, health indicators, transport needs, educational achievement, and nearly all aspects of the public sector – particularly local government – the density and diversity of the population is as important in evaluating policy as in proposing and developing new initiatives. And of course equal opportunities policies require such data to provide benchmarks.

The following summary is necessarily selective, and readers are advised to interrogate the government website for more specific responses. However, it is important to be careful in reading the information, not simply because statistics are often misleading, but also because the methodology employed by the government is not without its critics.

Key Findings on Ethnicity in the UK

According to the census, 7.9% of the United Kingdom, 9.1% of the population of Great Britain is black and minority ethnic, with a total of 4.6 million persons (see Table 1). This compares with a figure of 5.6% in Great Britain (not including Northern Ireland) in 1991, and although there has undoubtedly been significant growth over 10 years, closer inspection of the various categories demonstrates why it is important to read the statistics more carefully. As the informational commentary on ethnicity and religion notes, the increase must be understood ‘partly as a result of the addition of Mixed ethnic groups in 2001’ (from website).

The findings of the 2001 census reveal that 14.6% of all respondents in the United Kingdom described themselves as being of ‘mixed’ origin. Note that certain sub-categories have been collated in this table, but the broader category may be a less accurate representation of respondents’ self-definition.

For example, the ‘Mixed’ designation included ‘W hite and Black Caribbean’, ‘W hite and Black African’, ‘W hite and Asian’ and ‘O ther’ sub-categories, but the various groups may identify more with one or another of their backgrounds than with other mixed groups. That is to say, ‘W hite and Black Caribbean’ mixed persons might perceive themselves as having more in common with ‘Black Caribbean’, ‘Black O ther’ or even ‘W hite’ populations, and less so with ‘W hite and Asian’ or even ‘O ther Mixed’ groups, the latter of which is probably enormously diverse.

Table 2 presents the findings for the various groups in England and Wales only, as the breakdown of the ‘mixed’ category was not available for Northern Ireland and Scotland on the website. As in the 1991 census, the largest category is South Asian at 45.1% followed by various Black groups with 25.4%. However, both figures have reduced by about 4% in relation to the overall BME populations since 1991. These figures require further explanation, particularly in relation to the format of the ethnicity question in the 2001 census. Significantly, the number of categories increased from 9 in 1991 to 16 in 2001, complicating any straightforward comparisons. As Table 2 indicates, the 2001 census was considerably more nuanced, even within the ‘white’ category; the form contained categories and sub-categories presumably with the intention of yielding more specified and accurate data.

The increased number of categories clearly represents an improvement from the 1991 census. In this 1997, we had noted four particular problems with the categories chosen in the census. Only one of these has been fully...
addressed, namely the inclusion of religious affiliation. However, it is worth reiterating the other concerns since they point to continued difficulties and their partial resolution. The following criticisms of the nature of the question were emphasized:

1. It aroused confusion between the terms 'ethnicity' and 'race'; whose precise meaning is still clouded by uncertainty;
2. Groups such as the Vietnamese and Cypriots were not included, nor were people of mixed origin;
3. The 'black other' category did not do justice to the experiences of African Caribbean people born in Britain.

The first difficulty is unlikely to be fully overcome, although it may be less relevant to the black and minority ethnic (a term that combines race and ethnicity) populations today:

Complaint two has been at least partially addressed, with the introduction of the mixed category and the possibility that Cypriots might identify as 'White Other' and Vietnamese as 'Chinese or other ethnic group: Other'. Yet both of these latter responses raise further questions, notably the difficulty of making direct comparisons between census data regarding the breakdown of the BME population since the categories could require stability over at least two of three censuses so that respondents are familiar with the question and its categories.

Regional Variation of BME Population

An important aspect of the black and minority ethnic population in Britain is its regional variation. The overall figure of 8% in fact masks significant variation, with many areas containing substantially fewer and certain areas many times more than this figure. Table 3 gives a snapshot of the black and minority ethnic population in the nine regions of England (including London) and Wales.

As the emboldened figures indicate, only 2 out of the above 10 regions (London and the West Midlands) match the overall percentage of 9% over England and Wales as a whole. Yet even this observation obscures certain trends. Much as in other

### Table 2. 2001 Census Categories and BME% in England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of population</th>
<th>% of BME population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. White</td>
<td>45,533,741</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>641,804</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,345,321</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total White groups</strong></td>
<td>47,520,866</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Caribbean and White</td>
<td>237,420</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African and White</td>
<td>78,911</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and White</td>
<td>189,015</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>155,688</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. British or British Asian:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>1,036,807</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>714,826</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>280,830</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>241,274</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Black or Black British</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>563,843</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>479,665</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>96,069</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Chinese or Other Ethnic Group:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>226,948</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnic Group</td>
<td>219,754</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total BME</strong></td>
<td>4,521,050</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complaint two has been at least partially addressed, with the introduction of the mixed category and the possibility that Cypriots might identify as 'White Other' and Vietnamese as 'Chinese or other ethnic group: Other'. Yet both of these latter responses raise further questions, notably the difficulty of making comparisons between census data regarding the breakdown of the BME population since the categories could require stability over at least two of three censuses so that respondents are familiar with the question and its categories.

Regional Variation of BME Population

An important aspect of the black and minority ethnic population in Britain is its regional variation. The overall figure of 8% in fact masks significant variation, with many areas containing substantially fewer and certain areas many times more than this figure. Table 3 gives a snapshot of the black and minority ethnic population in the nine regions of England (including London) and Wales.

As the emboldened figures indicate, only 2 out of the above 10 regions (London and the West Midlands) match the overall percentage of 9% over England and Wales as a whole. Yet even this observation obscures certain trends. Much as in other
developed countries, non-white populations tend to cluster in urban areas. In England, London alone contains nearly half (46.4%) of the BME population. This is even more marked for certain groups than for others. For example, 56% of ‘Bangladeshi’ and ‘Other Asian’, 61% of ‘Black Caribbean’, 63% of ‘Black Other’ and nearly 80% of ‘Black African’ persons live in the capital. This compares with only 10% of White British persons.

As Table 4 demonstrates, the four largest metropolitan groups in England contain over two-thirds of the BME residents, though only 25% of White groups live in these urban centres. The ‘White Irish’ and ‘White Other’ populations are also concentrated in these areas, though not as much as the non-white population. In fact, the following numbers are themselves somewhat impressionistic since Table 5 reveals that the 33 boroughs of London have BME populations ranging from 5% to 60%, though only Havering is below the national average and two-thirds have BME populations double the national average. Table 6 then lists the other 12 non-London districts in the country with BME ratios over 15%. This shows that while the London districts still predominate (the top 9 are in London), the others are also concentrated in or near metropolitan or urban areas.

(often with work-related, particularly manufacturing, connections of various vintages).

**Religious Affiliation**

A final important issue arising from the census is the first-time inclusion of a question on religious affiliation. As noted above, Runnymede and others had been requesting for some time that such a category be added, and though over 4 million persons (nearly 8%) failed to fill out the voluntary question, the results are of some interest.

The largest category was Christian (71.7%) followed by ‘No religion’ (14.8%). Roughly 6% of respondents therefore follow another religion, with Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist and Other being the six options on the census form. Table 7 represents the total share of each religion among the non-Christian responses. As for the ethnicity figures, religious groups are concentrated in urban areas, with London containing the highest densities of most faiths (the population of the capital is 8.5% Muslim, 4.1% Hindu, 2.1% Jewish, 0.8% Buddhist and 0.5% Other). The government website commentary offers a useful summary of the data:

Thirty-six per cent of the population of Tower Hamlets and 24 per cent in Newham are Muslim. Over one per

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan area</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>BME population (%)</th>
<th>% of English BME population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>7,172,091</td>
<td>2,068,888 (28.85)</td>
<td>46.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>2,043,231</td>
<td>512,361 (20.05)</td>
<td>11.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorkshire</td>
<td>1,842,813</td>
<td>236,398 (13.17)</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Manchester</td>
<td>2,260,507</td>
<td>221,821 (8.94)</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13,318,642</td>
<td>3,039,468 (21.27)</td>
<td>68.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>% BME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Havering</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromley</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexley</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond upon Thames</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barking and Dagenham</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of London</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston upon Thames</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillingdon</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kensington and Chelsea</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wandsworth</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammersmith and Fulham</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenwich</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnet</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haringey</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hounslow</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waltham Forest</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redbridge</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwark</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambeth</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrow</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ealing</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brent</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newham</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>BME population</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pendle</td>
<td>13,449</td>
<td>89,248</td>
<td>15.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>40,278</td>
<td>266,988</td>
<td>15.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oadby and Wigston</td>
<td>8,938</td>
<td>55,795</td>
<td>16.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coventry</td>
<td>48,205</td>
<td>300,848</td>
<td>16.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>74,806</td>
<td>392,819</td>
<td>19.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell</td>
<td>57,426</td>
<td>282,904</td>
<td>20.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>101,624</td>
<td>467,665</td>
<td>21.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>52,538</td>
<td>236,582</td>
<td>22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton</td>
<td>51,805</td>
<td>184,371</td>
<td>28.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>289,681</td>
<td>977,087</td>
<td>29.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>101,182</td>
<td>279,921</td>
<td>36.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slough</td>
<td>43,224</td>
<td>119,067</td>
<td>36.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
person in nine of the population of Hertsmere in Hertfordshire, is Jewish.

Evaluating census data is a difficult process and it is important to be hesitant in drawing conclusions about the findings, particularly given subjective responses, changes in categorizations and questions about the methodology employed. Nonetheless, the increase in the black and minority ethnic population is an important development and one that should have some consequences.

For example, while only 10 members of the Commons are from a black and minority ethnic background, a 9% membership of the population of England and Wales would suggest a parliamentary representation figure closer to 50, or five times greater than at present, would be more appropriate. We can extend this observation to suggest that census findings are vital for delivering good policy and planning for local services, on which the comfort and efficiency of people’s daily lives depend. Insofar as community members – and their local and national government representatives – should be aware of the wants and needs of their locality, the census provides a meaningful benchmark.

Table 7. Non-Christian Religious Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of non-Christian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1,546,626</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>552,421</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>329,358</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>259,927</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>144,453</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>150,720</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Due to an internet campaign that encouraged people to answer the religion question with the whimsical response of ‘Jedi Knight’, 390,000 people (0.7% of the population) persuaded themselves to state Jedi as their religious affiliation.

Background Notes on the 2001 Census

1. Census day was 29 April 2001. Census data give a snapshot picture of the country at this time. Population counts by age and sex for England and Wales, regions of England and England and Welsh local authorities were published on 30 September 2002.

2. The Office for National Statistics is responsible for the census in England and Wales. The Census in Scotland and in Northern Ireland is carried out by the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency respectively. Census data for Scotland and Northern Ireland are released separately.

3. There were three Census questions in 2001 on the topic of ethnicity and religion.

Country of birth. This question asked ‘What is your country of birth?’, with tick box options of: England; Wales; Scotland; Northern Ireland; Republic of Ireland and Elsewhere (please write in the present name of the country).

Ethnic Group. This question was similar to the one asked in 1991, but with changes in some categories. In particular, people could tick ‘mixed’ for the first time. It asked ‘What is your ethnic group? Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.’

(A) White. Tick box options of: British; Irish or Any other White background (please write in).

(B) Mixed. Tick box options of: White and Black Caribbean; White and Black African; White and Asian or any other Mixed background (please write in).

(C) Asian or Asian British. Tick box options of: Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Any other Asian background (please write in).

(D) Black or Black British. Tick box options of: Caribbean; African; Any other Black background (please write in).

(E) Chinese or other ethnic group. Tick box options of: Chinese; Any other (please write in).

Religion. This question was new in 2001 and was voluntary. It asked ‘What is your religion?’, with tick box options of: None; Christian; Buddhist; Hindu; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; Any other religion (please write in).
Working with Potential Perpetrators to Prevent Racist Violence

After a few months of work on Runnymede’s ‘Preventing Racist Violence: Working with Potential Perpetrators’, the overall shape of the project is now coming together. Sarah Isal reports on the research so far, and on phase two.

Our project aims to map existing local and community-based projects that use prevention as a means of reaching out to and changing the attitudes and behaviours of potential perpetrators of racist violence in London. From this mapping exercise, we will develop best practice models and disseminate them widely to other municipalities, local organisations and schools. In addition, a network of ‘race’ and crime experts, including practitioners in locally based organisations, will be developed over the course of the project to support ongoing information and practice sharing and develop follow-up schemes.

What follows is an update on activities undertaken in phase one, and the findings that arise from these first few months of action and desk research.

Setting up the project

In setting up a structure for running the project, we put together a steering group to keep track of and advise on progress. Bringing together a group of people with a diverse range of expertise in the field, including youth workers, criminology experts, young people and anti-racist activists, the steering group is proving itself useful in its provision of advice, both in general and on the direction of the project.

In the same timeframe, Runnymede was approached by the Criminology and Socio-legal department at the University of Westminster to ask if our organisation would be interested in recruiting an intern for work experience. As this approach was made at the outset of the project, it was particularly timely and we agreed to accept an intern to support us in the setting-up phase. We offered internships to two very strong candidates at interview, and Aarti Patel and Kiren Rai worked with us one day a week for a little over two months. This experience was extremely positive both for the interns and our organisation. Aarti and Kiren, through their knowledge of criminology, were able to contribute significantly to the initial phase of the research, and although they have now completed their internship, their involvement will continue to benefit us through their membership of the steering group.

Activities

The first stage of the project consisted of a scoping exercise to identify recent and ongoing projects with similar objectives to ours, as laid out in our introductory report Perpetrators of Racist Violence (May 2002). We contacted a range of people and organisations whose work provided a strong starting-point for our research. This included phone calls to certain key organisations to establish what they were doing in the preventative field (i.e. community centres, parenting classes, Youth Offending Teams [YOTs], etc.), internet research to look up recent projects that resembled ours, and visits to organisations that were working directly or indirectly towards preventing racist violence and that were interested in hearing more about our project.

As we started to gather our information, we decided to treat these meetings and phone calls as interviews in themselves, which allowed us to tease out some findings from the very early stages and which has already given us an idea of the way forward in relation to the mapping exercise.

Findings

Our phone and desk research, as well as the meetings we attended, produced a number of initial findings that will not only be reflected in the mapping exercise but also delivered a sense of the needs of the organisations we met. We all realised that their clear view of what was needed could only enhance the use they could make of a project such as ours.

Relevance

Our initial research confirmed that a lot of work is being carried out in support of victims of racist attacks. A lot of effort is also going into trying to change racist attitudes in society in general. However, few projects seem to focus on preventative work with potential perpetrating communities. Furthermore, work that is taking place seems to be either fully or partly carried out by statutory bodies. Although this might be linked to the fact that statutory organisations are easier to reach than ‘pure’ community-based organisations and projects, it also points to another important finding which is the importance of multi-agency and partnership work.

Tackling racist violence within mainstream projects

Whereas our desk research identified many projects that challenge criminal behaviour in general, these ‘mainstream’ projects do not specifically tackle racist offending. For instance, the YOTs that we interviewed acknowledge that there is an issue about racist attitudes amongst young people sent to them for having committed other types of offences, but nothing is in place to challenge those attitudes.

Similarly a project we came across uses cognitive methods with young potential offenders to change their attitudes to crime. However, no specific part of this project looks at the issue of racist violence in particular.

A final example illustrates the
point outlined above: a YOT member mentioned that they often encouraged offenders’ parents to attend parenting classes and look at ways to challenge their children’s behaviour. Thinking that this could be good practice for early intervention in changing racist attitudes, we investigated further. However, we could find no indication that these classes addressed issues around racist behaviours. In many projects, race is just part of a more general objective, such as crime reduction or preventing anti-social behaviour. In a few cases, those responsible for carrying out the project did recognise the need to pay specific attention to tackling racist violence through those mainstream programmes, but had not yet worked out how to do it. Could incorporating this into the very broad remit of parenting classes be too much of a challenge? One possible objective of our mapping exercise could therefore be to tease out the aspects of these projects that deal or could deal with racist violence in particular.

Clarifying terminology
Before embarking on the mapping, however, we need to seek clarification of the academic terminology used in relation to prevention. In discussing this issue with the steering group, and in particular with academics in the field of criminology, it was agreed that the definitions of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary prevention would be using are:

- Primary prevention: changing society at large to challenge its racist attitudes
- Secondary prevention: working with potential perpetrators of racist violence to prevent them from offending
- Tertiary prevention: working with perpetrators who have offended and were caught, aiming to prevent them from offending again.

It is important to keep this terminology in mind when carrying out the mapping exercise for researchers. However, it is also important to recognise that these academic terms are often confusing and not necessarily significant for the organisations that we contact. Indeed, when told that we are researching projects that deal with ‘primary’ prevention, they usually ask for clarification. The terminology will nevertheless be useful to us when classifying projects in the mapping process. Furthermore, the primary/secondary/tertiary model does raise an issue about the scope of the project, which is discussed below (see the section on ‘Issues of scope’).

Language issues in general
When making phone calls to various organisations we thought conducted relevant research or projects, we noticed a complex yet clearly present language issue that has to be examined before reaching the mapping phase. We realised that people did not have the same definition of certain words used in the ‘race relations field’. Expressions such as ‘anti-racist work’ or ‘cultural diversity’ were sometimes interpreted as irrelevant to their type of work and we were therefore often told that their work involved no element that would fit the remit of our project. The challenge is that, in certain projects, the ongoing work does not appear to have a race agenda but it actually touches upon it in ways that are crucial to our research. This links back to the association of the word ‘anti-racism’ with a specific and perhaps narrow type of work, often taken from the angle of victim support rather than of perpetrators. This could impact quite strongly on the mapping exercise and it is therefore important for us to ensure that the language used when initiating contact with groups does not exclude certain areas or projects.

Does work with white perpetrators fit with the anti-racist agenda?
Another finding of interest and debate during our steering group meetings was the definition of ‘anti-racism’, and whether the target groups of our research consider themselves or their work to be part of the ‘anti-racist’ movement (i.e. is work that focuses on young potential white perpetrators part of anti-racist work?). Indeed, some organisations may feel their work does not reflect the aims of our project when in actual fact their work would be a valuable contribution to it.

The steering group concluded that phrases like anti-racism are still being linked to work with black and minority ethnic communities. For instance, a member of our steering group who had been a youth worker on a London estate, working very successfully with young white potential perpetrators, stressed that although she considered this to be an anti-racist project she had to be cautious about representing it as such to the young people with whom she was working.

This response was confirmed to a certain extent when making our phone calls: it was often the case that the mention of ‘work to challenge or prevent racist violence’ would see us immediately redirected to units or contacts that worked exclusively on issues around black and minority ethnic communities. There is a need to clearly identify who are the targets of the mapping exercise and how to overcome both the linguistic and political barriers around words such as ‘anti-racism’. This can be overcome by targeting broader circles than those initially thought of, that is outside the conventional ‘anti-racist’ world, when mapping organisations that work with potential perpetrators.

Issues of scope
Finally, it became apparent that decisions regarding the scope of the exercise had to be reconsidered and at a number of levels:

- First, the project focuses on preventative projects and work; however, primary, secondary and, to a certain extent, tertiary prevention are clearly equally important. The range covers work in race equality to change society’s attitudes towards racism (primary); preventative work with potential perpetrators (secondary); to work carried out by probation officers with offenders in order to prevent re-offending (tertiary). In that case...
context, the scope of the mapping is very broad. The question is, therefore how to ensure that the exercise does not get diluted into a collection of broad, relatively meaningless data. One way would be to pick a number of key projects or organisations that are particularly representative of each of these levels of intervention and build recommendations from them.

- Similarly, the wealth of information gathered from just one meeting with one particular council prompted considerations of geographical scope. It might therefore be necessary to narrow the research down to a number of boroughs, chosen carefully by ranking criteria (i.e. number of racist attacks measured against proportion of black and minority ethnic population, and so on).

- Finally, although the project requires the mapping exercise to collate information on community projects, the distinction between community-based and government or statutory-based is not clear-cut, in particular in cases of multi-agency activity which is characteristic of this area of work, and encouraged in the various London boroughs (through strategic partnerships, and so on).

Next steps
Following its initial stage, the research will focus next on the mapping exercise. This activity will involve the collection of data on schemes that currently operate in a number of London boroughs, through a variety of media, including youth clubs, clinics, probation offices and religious groups, and will aim to assess the effectiveness of their methods in working with potential perpetrators and preventing and/or rehabilitating racist offenders. An element of this strand of the work will include examination of the effectiveness of rehabilitated ex-offenders who act as role models for their peers.

The research will address issues such as the measurability of effectiveness, the level of inclusiveness that such groupings offer to potential offenders, the level of multi-agency work and how to identify areas of good practice. The latter will form the basis of a guide that will disseminate good practice for grassroots organisations as well as local authorities, probation officers, youth and social workers, etc. It will also make recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of policy-making in this particular area.

---

Aarti Patel and Balkiren Rai have spent the last few months participating in a Runnymede internship scheme, contributing to the research base of the 'Perpetrators of Racial Violence and Harassment' project, which is being managed here by Sarah Isal. Now at the end of their internship, Aarti writes about what it was like to get involved in the scheme.

Kiren and I are both in our final year of Criminology and Socio-Legal studies at the University of Westminster. We were undertaking a work experience module that required us to work for a total of 70 hours, and were both accepted by Runnymede to complete an internship with them. We were interviewed at Runnymede by Sarah Isal (project supervisor) and Michelle Lalléche (Runnymede's Director) and, to our surprise, were offered a place to work jointly on the Perpetrators project.

The two of us had decided to apply to Runnymede as, during our time at university, we had come across many of Runnymede's publications, and after visiting their website had discovered that much of their current work was of interest to us. We also knew that the project we would be working on involved contact with material concerning Perpetrators of Racial Violence, which is appropriate to our degree courses.

Every Wednesday, therefore, in February to April 2003, Kiren and I worked alongside Sarah Isal at Runnymede.

Everyone thinks that when you attend a work placement all you do is photocopy and make tea and coffee; you could not be more wrong. Throughout our placement we have undertaken a lot of research work in relation to the project, and in fact have done no photocopying at all, nor made tea and coffee. There has never been a moment at Runnymede when we wished we were not there, as the work we have done could not have been more varied.

Along with Sarah we attended interviews and meetings with different people in relation to our project, and have even been asked to stay involved with the steering group after our placement ends. With Sarah away on holiday one week, Kiren and I were asked to attend a conference in her place. We were firstly shocked that she trusted us enough to go to the conference, and secondly were a bit worried, as we had never been to one in our life before.

We have gained so much experience from this placement. Neither of us has ever had to undertake a project this big from scratch; we have not previously had to meet with people to obtain information; and up till now had never been involved in a steering group. Our verbal skills have developed, as when you call people for information you need to sound professional, not like a student. Our written communication skills have also improved, as we have on many occasions written up the minutes of meetings and interviews that we have attended. This has been extremely helpful as it is the type of work that we are currently doing at university and that we hope to be involved with in our professional lives to come.

Working at Runnymede is going to benefit us immensely in the future as we already have experience that many people still haven't attained by the end of their university course; and it is experience that will carry on after our placement is over due to our involvement in the steering group.

The people at Runnymede do not treat you like someone who is just useful for running around after them, but like a full member of the team. Kiren and I have sat in on two of their team meetings, and have also taken part by reporting back on where we feel we've got to with the project. The first team meeting really broke the ice, as we got to know each member a bit better by hearing them talk about what they do and how their own projects and plans were working out.

We can honestly say that anyone who undertakes an internship at Runnymede needs to be ready to do some serious but interesting work. It is not an easy ride, but the experience that you gain from it is something that you would never have expected.
The Return of ‘Integration’ – towards a new European policy framework?

A concept considered discredited some time ago has re-entered the British race relations discourse: ‘integration’. Anja Rudiger looks at what this does to the UK’s more customary pro-equality and anti-discrimination approach.

The concept of integration featured most prominently in the government’s white paper, which introduced a number of ‘integration’ requirements for individuals. It has also been taken up by the Commission for Racial Equality, which – though careful to speak of ‘integration as a two-way process’ – now considers that its ‘core business is the successful management of the social effects of migration’.

**Discourse and hegemony**

This suggests that the debate is increasingly framed in terms of coping with migration, rather than tackling discrimination and promoting equality throughout society. Such a perspective has long been prominent in other European countries. It could have the advantage of bringing migration policies and practices within reach of race equality standards. But why is it that at the same time that issues of migration and ‘integration’ attempt to hegemonise the race equality discourse, recent migrants and asylum seekers become ever more vilified subjects of restrictive policies? Practice on the ground suggests that a focus on ‘integration’ could come at the expense of an inclusive equality agenda that drives forward structural and cultural change.

**EU integration initiatives**

At European level, the integration debate has taken place in the context of increased global migration and the Community’s new competence for immigration and asylum policies, thus continuing a focus on newcomers rather than diverse societies. The 1999 Tampere European Council called for a ‘vigorous integration policy’ for migrants and set the fair treatment of third country nationals as a policy objective. The European Commission placed this in a wider social context by calling for political leadership to overcome social divisions and to generate acceptance for diversity. It emphasised that social cohesion requires the implementation of integration policies that promote equality and diversity, based on a recognition of the pluralist nature of European society. In its seminal Immigration Communication, the Commission linked integration to socio-economic equality as well as political and civic rights, thus moving beyond a traditional assimilation agenda. Aware of the limitations of many national efforts to promote integration, the Commission’s rights-based approach seemed to pave the way towards establishing a common EU policy framework, unobstructed by narrow notions of national identity and membership.

This policy agenda has been complemented by a number of legislative initiatives. These include the adopted anti-discrimination Directives under Article 13 TEC, but also a series of draft Directives to improve the legal status of third country nationals, which are stalled in the Council. Since the 2002 Seville European Council, the Tampere focus on integration and fair treatment has generally shifted to an emphasis on immigration control.

Nevertheless, the Commission has continued its policy debate on integration, culminating in its recent publication of a Communication on these issues. This process has received support from the Greek EU presidency, which declared early on that it wanted to complete the pending legislative instruments relating to third country nationals and promote measures on integration. The Commission’s paper sets out the need for a holistic approach, acknowledges racism and xenophobia as a barrier to integration and advocates the idea of civic citizenship with rights and participation detached from nationality. However, it refrains from proposing a full-fledged EU integration policy but calls for a reinforced co-ordination process with a network of national focal points to harmonise integration policies in selected priority areas and an annual EU report on integration/immigration.
National identity, human capital and pluralism

What benefits could a joint EU approach to integration bring, especially when viewed from a race equality perspective? In the current political climate, EU co-ordination might not necessarily present a step in the direction of greater equality and diversity. Fuelled by concerns over economic and military security, in many Member States a renewed emphasis on a single national identity has displaced any tentative moves towards a multicultural understanding of relations between different communities.

Moreover, most Member States tend to treat integration issues as a matter of national ideological consensus, linked to ongoing processes of nation building and maintaining social order. Across Europe, this has given rise to different conceptual frameworks on integration.

- Firstly, the French republican model promotes the political assimilation of individuals into a national unity based on substantive values and rights. Through citizenship, the individual enters into a relationship with the state that cannot be mediated by groups, thus ruling out any ethnic, religious or cultural belonging which exceeds the private sphere. Racial or ethnic minorities are not recognised as groups with distinct needs and rights that state action would have to take into account.

- Secondly, the model of functional assimilation into an ethnically or culturally defined nation state includes minority ethnic people in one area, usually the labour market, while largely excluding them from civic and political participation. Countries such as Germany, Austria, Denmark, Italy and Greece tend to limit integration policies to the labour market and social welfare system, thus often failing to accord minorities a stake in society. An emphasis on either common ancestry or shared culture perpetuates the idea of a homogeneous society with substantive values to which migrants and minorities need to assimilate.

At a policy level, these models support a focus on human capital issues, such as improving an individual's educational qualifications and employability, rather than attention to structural disadvantages. This prompts policymakers to see cultural and religious differences as major obstacles to integration. By concentrating on individual adaptation, they tend to forgo a wider, more long-term perspective on social cohesion, based on the sustainable management of diversity.

In contrast, the strength of a more multicultural approach, as pursued by the UK - and in the past also by the Netherlands and Sweden - lies in recognising that inclusion can only be achieved if all people have equal access to a society's resources, institutions and democratic processes. In a pluralist conception of democracy, the presence of different ethnic and racial groups is accepted and democratically regulated, with equal participation encouraging a cross-fertilisation of cultures and identities. The emphasis is on promoting equality in all spheres, through legislation and equal opportunities policies, while enabling the exercise of different cultural practices. This can help create a cohesive citizenry that sees little tension between common national and distinct group identities.

To achieve equal access and participation, institutions within society must adapt to and manage the consequences of continual change. A proactive equality regime can support this process through positive action measures that promote a culture of equality and diversity. In Britain, pressures exerted by black and minority ethnic communities, especially where combined with commitment by key decision-makers, have enabled some progress in this regard. Across Europe, however, the role of community involvement and public or private sector leadership is likely to remain marginal as long as a focus on human capital prevails, because the onus for change will continue to be on individuals.

A European equality vision

If blockages to inclusion at national level often expose a lack of political will to accommodate diversity within the nation state, the possibility of joint EU action on integration acquires a new, more positive meaning. Beyond the constraints of the nation state, a coherent policy framework by an enlarged and diverse Union could help promote inclusion guided by equality and diversity.

While such a framework would have to prove all migration policies against adverse impact on inclusion, it would need to move beyond a migration perspective to address the management of diversity in multicultural societies. An equality vision would have to lie at the heart of European policymaking, starting with the momentum generated by the Article 13 Directives, extending this to third country nationals and adopting positive action measures along the lines of a public duty to promote equality.

This would require a mainstreaming of equality and inclusion objectives throughout all EU policymaking, programming and practices, making them an integral part of employment, health, housing and education policies, criminal justice co-operation, public consultation mechanisms and other policy areas. The European employment strategy, the social inclusion objectives and the European social agenda would require a better integrated and more consistent focus on the inclusion of minorities, supported by specific targets and sanctions.

These basic components of an EU policy framework suggest that a race relations approach, derived from the British model, still has much to offer to European policymakers working on inclusion. The emphasis on fighting discrimination and promoting equality should be strengthened rather than refocused - we can only drive forward a progressive European agenda if we continue to champion anti-racism, equality and diversity.
Parliamentary Monitor III

In previous issues of the Bulletin, Runnymede has examined the workings of the committee system and how bills are debated and enacted. Some of the bills examined in the past, including the Criminal Justice, Courts and Equality bills, have moved forward and their progress can be found on the government website [www.parliament.uk]. In this article O mar Khan addresses another important aspect of parliamentary procedure, namely parliamentary questions.

While the public cannot intervene by questioning the government directly, constituency MPs often present specific and local concerns in the form of a parliamentary question. The role of questions is to seek information or press for action from the government, and though Prime Minister's question time is the most closely watched, oral and written questions are directed at all departments of the government. It is therefore important to understand the rules and conventions governing the form, content and selection of such questions.

Although they were relatively rare until the 19th century, parliamentary questions are now an important aspect of British democracy, evidenced by the 40,000 put to the government every year. These are usually referred to a specific department, providing both the questioner and the government with an opportunity to present quite detailed information. According to the government factsheet (located on the above website), parliamentary questions can be divided into four categories:

1. Questions for Oral Answer
2. Urgent Questions
3. Cross-cutting Questions
4. Questions for Written Answer

Oral Questions give departments much work since they have to provide not only an answer to the Question itself, but also full background briefing on which the Minister can base his answers to supplementary Questions. Supplementary answers can vary from the factual to the highly political, so that the briefing must anticipate every ramification of the original Question. While some Questions are genuinely seeking information or action, others will be designed to highlight the alleged shortcomings of the Minister's department or the merits of an alternative policy. But not all Questions are hostile. Many, especially those 'inspired' by the Minister or otherwise put down by party colleagues, will enable popular decisions to be sought and government successes to be advertised.

As noted in the March Bulletin, government bills occupy the vast majority of parliamentary time. Question time is reserved for the first hour of business every day from Monday to Thursday, meaning that 4 hours are reserved per week for ministers to respond. Of course not all questions can be asked, and therefore a random computer shuffle has been instituted to select a certain number. However, first a member of parliament must table their question to a specific department and if it is selected he or she will receive an answer in the Chamber on a day specified in the Order Paper, also printed on the government website. Ministers are usually given 3 days to respond unless the matter deals with W als, Scotland or Northern Ireland, in which case the consultation period is extended to 5 days.

In order to respond to the diversity of questions, the government establishes a rota whereby the various departments are allotted specific days on which to answer questions, with larger departments receiving more time that smaller ones, though all Departments answer roughly once a month. W hile questions related to race, like those on all matters, are often influenced by popular and/or media concerns, they do emerge somewhat independently from time to time. For example, Michael Fabricant (Conservative, Lichfield) posed this question in the Home Office slot on Monday 16 June, asking the Home Secretary: 'What steps he is taking to minimise racial and religious hatred; and if he will make a statement.' Members may not ask any question they please and are specifically prevented from asking about matters of opinion, matters among the new ministers joining the Home Office team as part of the mid-June reshuffle are Baroness Scotland QC as Minister of State for the criminal justice system and law reform, and Fiona Mactaggart as Parl. Under-Sec. for race equality, community policy and civic renewal. Beverley Hughes remains Minister of State for citizenship and immigration, and will deputise for the Home Secretary on civil renewal, terrorism and resilience.
GOVERNMENT

not related to the minister’s remit, questions of law or where the information is readily available elsewhere. These restrictions are interpreted by the Clerks of the House, but the final authority rests with the Speaker. In fact, the Speaker has substantial leeway in the matter of questions, as evidenced by the following quote from the government’s factsheet:

The Speaker controls the pace of Question Time; if he calls too many supplementaries the Minister will be put under close scrutiny on a few Questions, but the total number of Questions answered orally will be quite small. However, if he calls too few supplementaries, more Questions will be answered orally, but the Minister may be given too easy a passage. A balance has to be struck; and it is likely to be struck differently by different Speakers.

Currently 15 to 20 Questions are answered orally on an average day.

For an example of the length and form of a question, supplementary and response, consider the exchange recorded in Hansard for Tuesday 20 May (see below).

Prime Minister’s Questions are a form of Oral Questions, now answered on Wednesdays for 30 minutes. The same rules apply as above, but since the Prime Minister has overall responsibility on government policy, he can be asked a question on nearly any aspect, except for those (few in number) that relate to issues of national security and other areas.

While Prime Minister’s Questions thus presents a difficulty for the government and prime minister in being appropriately briefed on any question whatsoever, the nature and diversity of the questions and supplementaries often result in a somewhat diffuse debate. On the other hand, as witnessed by many observers, the spectacle is not only highly entertaining, but also a unique arena in which official government reaction and opinion is asserted and recorded.

Urgent Questions
These sorts of questions are fairly self-explanatory; though at times highly significant. Wherever an issue must be addressed immediately, a Member must submit the Question to the Speaker before noon on the day he seeks a response. The Speaker decides on the relevance of the Question and it is sent immediately to the relevant Department. Two basic requirements must be met in order for a question to be judged ‘urgent’: first, it must in fact be urgent; second, it must be a matter of public importance. If accepted, these Questions are asked at the end of the Oral Question time period, and the same rules and procedures apply as specified above.

Parliamentary Oral Question/Supplementary/Response, Tuesday 20 May 2003 (Hansard)
[Original Oral Question] Kali Mountford (Colne Valley): [on] What assistance the Department is giving to support family and personal relationships in ethnic minority communities.

[Reply] The Parliamentary Secretary, Lord Chancellor’s Department (Ms Rosie Winterton): This year, the Department made available £5 million to the marriage and relationship support grant programme. Out of the total grant programme, £800,000 is being spent on work that directly supports family and personal relationships in ethnic minority communities.

[Supplementary] Kali Mountford: I am grateful to the Minister. Friend for that answer and for the close attention that she pays to the issue. She knows that conferences have been held throughout the country, including at the Kirklees domestic violence forum in my area in Huddersfield and in the Hounsfield last week, when the all-party groups on domestic violence and on children met. At that meeting, the point was again made that ethnic minority women are much less likely to come forward for help, despite their being at least as likely to experience problems. What can my hon. Friend do to help local groups that want to support women in their communities, create new groups and help people through the grant system, which they currently find difficult?

Ms Winterton: My hon. Friend is right to ask how we can improve access to the grant fund process. Every year, the Department, through application forms and feedback forms, looks for ways in which to ease the process. I would be more than happy to hear about any difficulties that specific groups, especially from ethnic minorities, have experienced, and about examples of how we can improve the system. My hon. Friend is also right to draw attention to the fact that many people from ethnic minorities will not gain access to all the necessary information on, for example, remedies for domestic violence. We are considering a series of issues and methods of improving matters. Not least, we have translated into many different languages a guide that we recently produced about legal remedies for victims of domestic violence.

Mr Gary Streeter (South-West Devon): Does the Parliamentary Secretary agree that support for family support groups, in focus and funding, does not sit comfortably with the Department’s overall functions, and that it is not well done? Is it not time the Government modernised the entire procedure for support for ethnic minority families, and more widely, moved it to a Department that is primarily focused on supporting families in this country and ensuring that the support is properly given?

Ms Winterton: I disagree profoundly with the hon. Gentleman’s suggestion that the delivery of service is poor. I think that, in terms of the number of people who are given adult relationship support, our record is impressive. The hon. Gentleman had a point, however, in saying that our support should be tailored to support for other things such as parenting. I assure him that I work closely with other Departments, particularly the Home Office, to ensure that happens.
Cross-cutting Questions
Introduced only since January 2003, Cross-cutting Questions are meant to deal with issues that pertain to more than one department, for example youth policy. At present, it is envisaged that four Cross-cutting Questions times will be presented in each parliamentary session.

Questions for Written Answer
These constitute the vast majority of Questions asked in parliament. Written Questions are often more detailed and require comprehensive responses from the departments to which they are addressed. Despite substantial costs to members, several hundred are submitted a day, perhaps evidence that they are considered a suitable and effective way of engaging with Ministers.

There are, in fact, three different kinds of Written Questions, each with slightly different rules:
1. Questions tabled for oral answer that were not answered in Oral Question Time.
2. ‘Ordinary’ questions, which do not specify a date by which a response is sought. The convention is that Ministers will reply in 7 days, but this is not a binding rule and some questions are left unanswered for over a month. These constitute
3. ‘Named Day’ or ‘Priority’ Questions, in which members request a response for a specific day, usually within 3 days of tabling the question. Although Ministers are required to make some sort of response on the given day, it is often merely to state that the question will be answered as soon as possible. Most questions are in fact the ‘ordinary’ variety. Many are focused on the financial and administrative functioning of the government. Another common form is to ask the same question of a number of departments. The boxed examples indicate the form of the questions, all with specific reference to race equality issues, with the last of them also indicating how Government often responds to such queries.

Parliamentary Questions in the 21st century
Parliamentary Questions are not just the most exciting aspect of democracy but also represent an important opportunity to receive information from the government and pressurize for action in areas where developments might be stalled. Although it may seem like a procedural affair whereby the opposition are scoring debating points and the government is simply ‘planting’ favourable statements, the randomness of the selection of oral questions, the topicality of urgent questions, and the sheer volume of written questions ensures that meaningful public concerns are addressed. Readers should note that members often raise questions important to their constituents and that suggesting such a course of action might be an effective way of increasing the likelihood that the government will respond to specific issues.

Members can now submit their written questions by email, and the statistics do suggest a noted increase in questions as this has become more common. Even where questions are framed in a particularly partisan fashion, they are a valuable way of

Form in which Questions are asked - recent examples on race equality
6 March 2003: Mr Patrick McLoughlin (West Derbyshire): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the administrative costs were of (a) Active Community Unit grants, (b) Race Equality grants and (c) Refugee Integration Unit grants in the last financial year.

10 April 2003: Mr Graham Brady (Altrincham & Sale West): To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what estimate he has made of the cost to maintained schools of (a) setting up and (b) maintaining the ethnic monitoring programme required by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

5 June 2003. Angela Eagle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in his Department and non-departmental public bodies on implementing the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; and if he will publish the results of the monitoring required by the Act.

[This same question also addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer]

9 June 2003 written response. Mr Straw: The FCO published its Race Equality Scheme, setting out how it would meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, in June 2002. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House. The FCO is shortly to issue its report on progress during the first year of the Scheme. This will include the results of the monitoring required by the Act. We will ensure that a copy is sent to my hon. Friend.

All from Hansard, dates as given.

Postscript: Current Status of the Equality Bill (from the Odysseus Trust Website)
‘The Bill has now successfully completed its passage through the House of Lords and has moved to the House of Commons where it is being sponsored by Angela Eagle MP (former Minister for Race Relations) with the support of Vera Baird QC MP and Norman Lamb MP (LibDem Treasury Spokesperson). The Bill has already received a tremendous welcome in the Commons with over 230 MPs signing an Early Day Motion in Support.’

(Odysseus Trust Website: http://www.odysseustrust.org)
A SENSE OF PLACE
Displacement and Integration: the role of the arts and media in reshaping societies and identities in Europe

24-27 November 2003, The Old Library, Cardiff, Wales

A Sense of Place is a major 4-day international event that will investigate, question and shed light on ‘displacement’ and ‘integration’ in Europe, through the intellectual focus of the role of the arts, culture and media.

In the context of heightened public suspicion, fear and intolerance, and evolving European human rights and immigration policies, A Sense of Place will consider how societies are in flux, how cities are in transition, and how rebuilding is taking place at both a physical and psychological level.

This creative and inquiring event will focus on common threads rather than differences, and address such questions as:

• How do different cultural norms challenge or enrich societies in host countries? How do organisational cultures and institutional frameworks need to evolve to reflect the changing map?

• What is meant by integration and who are the key players? How do societies adapt, and what can they gain? Do the arts have a legitimate contribution to make to debates around national identity and displacement?

• To what extent are the mass media forming public opinion, as opposed to responding to public opinion? How does the global proliferation of the media facilitate or subvert true representation and active citizenship around issues of displacement and integration?

• How far are artists with experience of displacement contributing to innovative artistic expression and practice? How does the displaced artist re-encounter or re-define his or her identity within this process?

• Under what circumstances can participation in the arts be a key to breaking down barriers and overcoming prejudice?

The event will be particularly valuable for arts and social policy makers, humanitarian aid workers, social and environmental analysts and officers, academics, educators, funders, artists and media practitioners, architects, cultural theorists, and venue managers. Individuals with personal experience of displacement are integral to the event.

To complement the themes running throughout the conference, a series of evening events have been programmed in collaboration with local arts and music venues in Cardiff, including Chapter Arts Centre (films, filmmakers and directors in Q&A sessions) on 25 Nov, and the Coal Exchange music venue (poets, musicians, vocalists, acrobats and dancers) on 26 Nov, headlined by Israeli saxophonist Gilad Atzmon & Orient House Ensemble with guest Palestinian vocalist Reem Kelani.

A British Council initiative, A Sense of Place is supported by Arts Council Wales, Cardiff 2008, Welsh Assembly Government, and the Gulbenkian Foundation, and run in collaboration with the Runnymede Trust, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, The London Metropolitan University, Cardiff Council, Chapter Arts Centre, and Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies.

Proposals for presentations, papers and discussion group themes are encouraged and suggestions for funding and/or partnerships with key organisations are welcome, particularly for the education programme.

Readers of the Runnymede Bulletin will receive a 15% discount off the delegate fee if booked before the 30 July 2003. When booking please quote reference R.B.03.

Further information about A Sense of Place and a booking form are on: www.asenseofplace.org.uk

Enquiries to: info@asenseofplace.org.uk

Proposals, suggestions of funding sources, offers of donations – all to: director@asenseofplace.org.uk

In June at inIVA’s gallery space in East London, M ade in Paris: Photo/Video has been featuring the work of Algerian French and Iranian artists Marc Garanger, Ghazel, Samta Benyahia and Majida Khattari. The show is part of a London-wide event coordinated by the French Embassy during June, ranging from ‘identity photographs’ taken during the War of Independence (1954–62) to geometrical patterns and sculpture, and from the Veil as everyday garb to western high fashion linked with Islamic codes of dress and behaviour.

The Institute is at 6–8 Standard Place, Rivington St, London EC2A 3BE [tel: 020 7729 9616; www.iniva.org].

‘Suitcases and Sanctuary’
at the Museum of Immigration and Diversity, Spitalfields

National Refugee Week (15–22 June) has afforded a rare opportunity to see inside 19 Princelet Street, London E1 - a building still in too fragile a state to be open permanently to the public.

Contrasting with the scare stories and sweeping generalisations of many news reports, ‘Suitcases and Sanctuary’ is a very simple show, telling stories of exile, hope and renewal of generations of refugees and immigrants who have made their homes in Britain. Poems, poetry, even potatoes, are piled in suitcases to display the work of today’s children, to illustrate their understanding of what it means to be a stranger. As George Alagiah says, ‘tomorrow’s migrants are today’s citizens’.

This little exhibition can be seen at the rarely open 19 Princelet Street museum, a small but evocative historic building which encapsulates so much of our mixed and many layered multicultural society. Entry is FR EE, though donations are encouraged from those who can, to help us reach the target needed to save and preserve this Grade II* listed building so it can open permanently in future.

To see more of our work to create a welcoming space and educational resource where people from all communities and cultures can explore together, visit www.19princeletstreet.org.uk

Future Opening Dates include:
Sunday 13 July (12-5pm) – as part of ‘respect’ Week
Sunday 7 September (12-5pm) – Brick Lane Festival and European Day of Jewish Culture and Heritage
Saturday and Sunday 20-21 September (10am-5pm) – London Open House weekend
This Is Where I Live –
A Progress Report

Runnymede’s arts-based policy project, This Is Where I Live, has been gathering momentum over the last few months. Rajiv Anand, Project Coordinator, reports on how things are developing.

This Is Where I Live is a project that is beginning to engage young people nationwide in a debate about heritage, identity, nation and citizenship. The project is to use focus groups and differing art forms, such as photography, music, drama and dance, to act as a creative springboard in helping young people from disparate backgrounds express their feelings and beliefs in such a way as to make an impact on local, regional and national policymakers, as well as to engage with each other.

A cross-Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland in urban, suburban and rural settings, the TIWIL project has started to gather testimonies from groups of young people. In cities such as Cardiff, Liverpool, Belfast, Bristol, Dundee and London, the young people involved are keen to showcase their creativity throughout the duration of the project, which will culminate in a conference to be held in London in June 2004.

In Cardiff, the Sherman Theatre is linking TIWIL to their Acting Out project – a new educational and performance initiative in collaboration with Cardiff Council’s Schools Service. Here pupils from year 10 and 11 who are in danger of being excluded from the classroom will be given a hands-on experience in a professional arts environment. The 12 young people will work on live performance and video for TIWIL.

The work in Liverpool is with The Merseyside Youth Association, a charity which delivers a range of advice and information services to young people at their centre called The Door. Their work has enhanced young people’s skills in circumstances where they face problems in housing, health, disability, equality and employment. In this instance, we will work with the Association’s disabled group of 10 young people, aged 11–22, on poetry and creative writing.

The groups of young people already involved are living testimony to the fact that the UK is an exceptionally diverse nation, and that communities bring with them their own lived experiences, thoughts and realities, all of which go towards making our society interesting and vibrant to inhabit and grow up in. We have focused on contacting groups which are made up of hard to reach young people, including those from differing racial, religious, cultural and social backgrounds. Groups from the Hindu, Muslim and Bahá’í religions, as well as young people in care, people who have been excluded from school, and groups from disadvantaged cultural and social backgrounds will be involved at a grassroots level.

This Is Where I Live will enable young people to contemplate issues they may not necessarily have had a chance to think about in the past and to respond to outcomes in a positive manner. Various art forms are coming to the fore, and a creative national pattern is being constructed through the mediums of drama, music and dance. The young people will be able to share their findings and art forms through a series of performances in each of the national countries.

A city venue will be selected in each UK country, and the young people will assemble there to showcase their works to one another as well as to audiences. This is scheduled to take place early in 2004. Accompanying the performances will be an exhibition, developed from material reflecting how the groups developed their work, which will also tour nationally. Project findings will also contribute to a policymaking publication which will voice the young participants’ thoughts. This, along with a set of web-based resources, should be ready for early 2004.

This Is Where I Live is a unique project that aims to effect tangible learning outcomes, which include: specific arts development training, along with reasoning skills, technical skills, team-building skills, management and personal development and general administrative competence. The project will also support and nurture young people’s understanding of anti-racist thinking and will help foster respect, understanding and tolerance between peoples of dissimilar backgrounds, highlighting the importance of living in a community of communities and of individuals.

Plans for the next couple of months will take us to various parts of the UK, visiting Cardiff and Bristol in June, Liverpool and Mansfield in July. The work in London is ongoing, and involves focus groups with young people from which to develop their findings in related art works which will eventually feed into the project at a national level.
VSO's 'Cultural Breakthrough' Campaign

Integration without difference means forced assimilation to a prevailing monoculture. It is coercive, impractical and undesirable. But likewise, difference without integration leads to mutual ignorance, and social segregation. That is why I support integration with diversity, founded on the common citizenship of people from different backgrounds who have different interests and beliefs.'

(Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, Home Secretary)

This is one statement among many to have emerged from the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)'s Cultural Breakthrough campaign that is thoughtful, considered, and in some ways, surprising. VSO have managed a rare feat; to get opinion formers to consider 'race', culture, and diversity honestly and thoughtfully. The campaign aims to explore the barriers, benefits and opportunities for greater connection across cultures in Britain and beyond. It involves three key elements: research, essays and photos.

The Research

The report, So You Think You're Multicultural?, provides a picture of attitudes to, and experiences of, multiculturalism across Britain. It draws on three pieces of original research commissioned by VSO, which reveal that the majority of the UK public are not connecting with other cultures and don't see this as a problem.

The research included a randomly selected nationwide telephone quantitative survey, focus groups with urban professionals, quantitative research with former VSO volunteers, and interviews with novelist Diran Adebayo, psychologist Oliver James, philosopher Alain de Botton, and TV producer Yaba Badoe. The key findings of the study reveal some rather contradictory responses:

- 77% of respondents to a nationwide poll agree that different cultures in Britain coexist rather than connect;
- 37% have very little or no contact with people from different cultures;
- 81% are content with the contact they currently have and do not wish for any more contact with other cultures in Britain;
- 77% would like to know more about other cultures and think they could learn from them.

These findings suggest that a large number of respondents had understood the messages about the benefits of cultural diversity, but found it difficult to connect with people from ethnic or cultural groups different from their own. The authors argue that this is the cultural breakthrough that needs to be made. One means of making this breakthrough, the authors suggest, is through volunteering for VSO since:

- 69% of VSO volunteers consider that they have had more contact with people from different cultures in Britain as a result of volunteering experience, which has fundamentally changed their interactions.

The research report goes on to suggest ways in which people can make a cultural breakthrough and reports on respondents' experiences of developing cross-cultural understandings and connections. It also suggests that readers might want to volunteer for work on cross-cultural issues with some of the organisations they endorse.

Experiencing the issue of cross-cultural connection is especially salient at this time as summer activities begin across the UK that will attempt to bring together different ethnic and cultural groups. The views presented here will echo the experiences of many people working on community cohesion projects, and provide some support for the crucial work that they are doing.

The Essays – Defining Moments

Leading figures in politics, academia, literature, the media and the entertainment worlds apply their insight and experience to addressing notions of cultural exchange and multiculturalism in Britain.

A glance at a map means I can pinpoint the Asian millionaires in Bushey, the Bengali housewives in Bow, the Sikh families in Tooting, the Punjabi artists in Hoxton, and thousands of others whose parents landed as strangers in London, never imaginating that their children would feel part of the city and shape it themselves. Around me I hear teenagers mixing cockney glottals with black patois and Punjabi slang. It's a new language with a unique beat and it drums through all our work, the new Londoners. Innit?

Other contributors include George Alagiah, Sorious Samura, Jung Chang, Shazia Mirza, Ben Okri, Naim Attallah, David Tomlinson and David Blunkett.

Reading the collection is inspirational in engaging the reader with ideas, styles of expression, and challenges, which may be unexpected. The collection alerts (or reminds) readers about the diversity of ideas and perspectives that contribute to our nation and our world. Some essays are reflective, others campaigning, some personal, others political, yet all are engaging.
The Photographic Exhibition

This major exhibition, on the Cultural Breakthrough theme, captures the defining moments of cultural discovery experienced by celebrities and ordinary people alike.

Organised in association with Panos Pictures and the Guardian, the launch took place on Wednesday 4 June at the Guardian and Observer Archive and Visitor Centre. The launch gave visitors a chance to view the images and words of contributors that included Martin Bashir, William Dalrymple, Nitu Sawhney, Terry Waite and Oona King MP to name a few.

Visitors were enthralled by the photography; a very effective way of capturing cultural experience. It was evident from the exhibition that the contributors’ experiences had changed their worldviews or determined the direction of their careers.

Jonathan Dimbleby and Pratibha Parmar, both of whom contributed to the exhibition, gave keynote speeches. Jonathan talked about his personal experiences in Ethiopia, and emphasised how enriching those experiences have been. Pratibha spoke about the practice of Female Genital Mutilation amongst Maasai Women in Kenya, which she argued was a human rights and not a cultural issue.

For further information about the campaign, to read the essays and the research report, and see a sample of pictures from the exhibition, visit www.culturalbreakthrough.co.uk, or contact VSO at 317 Putney Bridge Road, London SW15 2PN (tel: 020 8780 7200).

Rob Berkeley, Runnymede

Idylls of the Kingdom

Racism and the Dorset Idyll: A report of the experiences of Black and minority ethnic people in Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset
Chris Gaine and Kirstin Lamley
Dorset Race Equality Council, 43 Oxford Rd, Bournemouth BH8 8JB

A Country Life

Us city dwellers often forget that our worries are not exactly the same as those of people who do not live in the urban sprawl. Black and minority ethnic communities in the UK are based largely in our cities. Recent census data reported that over one in four people in Greater London are not White. In Dorset there is a different story to be told, just over one in a hundred people are from minority ethnic communities. How is community built in these circumstances; how are racisms responded to; how do you develop a sense of belonging when in such a small minority? In this remarkable study the authors have presented the experiences of members of BME communities in an attempt to answer some of these questions.

This study is remarkable because in it you can hear the voices of those who are so often disregarded and because it is addressed to those who have it in their power to effect change. Dorset REC pulled together an impressive coalition to support the research project including six councils (Poole, Bournemouth, Weymouth and Portland, Dorset and West Dorset), the police and health authorities, a housing association, the development agency, and education agencies covering the entire life span (Sure Start, Connexions, and the LSC). The researchers engaged in the daunting task of unearthing the voices of people who had to this point been ignored.

Some interviewees were sceptical about the value of the survey, seeing it as little more than a ‘paper exercise’, believing that nothing could change people’s minds about the racism they encounter. (p.27)

Alongside questionnaires, the researchers managed to conduct 190 semi-structured interviews with individuals from BME communities, 112 interviews with professionals working in services that impact on the lives of people from BME communities, and engaged 50 young people in focus group discussions. This makes the survey larger than any carried out in the region before.

The report will resonate with the experiences of people nationally and with the difficulties involved in researching ‘race’ in any arena. In order to research the experiences of people for minority ethnic communities across Dorset, the authors ran into the typical problems of indifferent ethnic monitoring, lack of comparability of existing data sets, the poor definition of the White and Black other categories, and the lack of monitoring of overseas students and migrant workers. Nonetheless, the research is powerful and even-handed in relating the experiences gathered. For many respondents their experiences had been largely positive, others expressed their marginalisation and isolation:
Yes, I do [feel a sense of isolation here]. I do feel it because I think I'm the only one in this workplace ... and I do feel it when I'm out and about, and go to a nightclub or I go to a restaurant or something ... I can be the only one in there. I do feel sometimes, I do feel vulnerable and ... you could be in a group but your still on your own, if you know what I mean.

Such isolation made it difficult to tell whether experiences were racialised or individualised. This in turn led to anxiety for some respondents:

Well racism is a perceived thing isn't it at the end of the day and I could say things have happened to me because I'm Black but would I be right? I don't know ... when she goes into the shop with our son, she gets the feeling ... that they tend to be watching and it's not just a glance, she thinks that they are actually watching her because [he's] Black and that he's more likely to do something...

As well as gathering data on people's general experiences and on their sense of belonging in the region, the report focuses on respondents' specific experience of certain public services Social Services, Education and Youth Services, Housing, Environmental Health, Health, and the Police. Unfortunately, none of these services comes out with an entirely positive response, and the report presents a series of challenges to these services in their duties to both eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote race equality.

There are in particular issues that Further and Higher Education Institutions must respond to in inviting overseas students to join them. The authors use a case study to note the extent of the exclusion and marginalisation that was reported to them by overseas students:

- We hate England, not just Weymouth. If you come to my country and you see the way people treat you, you would hate the country, all the country not just the people who you know ...
- Even when you go out in a group people just look at us like ohhh and just you can see how they react. And sometimes a policeman stops us and says you can't walk in that kind of a group, we are about ten you know, and they just very seriously split us into just five and four like this. You can see what I mean? The authors conclude this illuminating report with three challenges to public services in Dorset, noting that while institutional racism is pervasive in Dorset it is not 'as systematic and as explicit as the MacPherson Report argued was the case within the Metropolitan Police'.

The first challenge is responding to the 'pervasive sense of marginalisation and varying degrees of exclusion many informants spoke about'. The second is recognition that equality does not mean uniformity. The third challenge relates to the 'dispersed, isolated and sometimes individualised character of the Black and minority ethnic population':

The key point here is that with a small and disparate Black and minority ethnic population, relevant communication and shared resources between public services produce better public services, to the advantage of both those who work in the services and those who use them.

This is an important study, which takes a scholarly yet innovative approach to unearthing the experiences of a group of people who are often disregarded. The authors and organisations involved should be commended for their sensitivity and bravery in taking this work forward. The question remains as to why similar studies are not being carried out all over the country – maybe our cities have something to learn from our country cousins.

Rob Berkeley, Runnymede

Norfolk at Ease: A county with a vision of inclusive communities
Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council, Boardman House, Redwell St, Norwich NR2 4SL; March 2003

Norwich and Norfolk REC have been instrumental in developing responses to government policy on race and cultural diversity in rural areas. The 'Norfolk at Ease' report is an exemplar of engaging communities with government policy. NNRREC has worked in partnership with Norfolk Equal Opportunities Network to develop a countywide partnership plan, a Race Equality Scheme for Norfolk. In 'Norfolk at Ease' they also report the results of a baseline study on what Community Cohesion means to people living in Norfolk and how it can best be achieved.

In 'Norfolk at Ease' we are presented with another picture of the diversity of our communities outside of the major conurbations and the key areas of concern to the Black and minority ethnic population in rural and semi-rural situations. — Rob Berkeley, Runnymede
Challenging the stereotype

Currently it's possible to read many books and articles about Islam and Muslims. The diversity in the literature is great and ranges between publications in which Muslims would not even recognize themselves or their community, to those which challenge stereotypes, whilst exploring the issues of diversity and reality within the community.

A book should not be judged by its front cover alone but there is no doubt that many of us decide which book to read based on first impressions. For instance, a book with a Muslim woman kneeling at prayer whilst dressed in an army uniform would automatically challenge a few stereotypes and indicate that the publication could prove to be an interesting read. An added bonus of the picture on the front cover of British Muslims and State Policies (published by C R E R at the University of Warwick) is that the ethnicity of the Muslim woman is not obvious. In contrast, the front cover of Muslims in Britain (published by the Minority Rights Group) features an Asian woman putting out washing in her garden whilst her children play alongside.

The challenge once the reader opens a book is to see if the publication does add to the debate and move it forward. The debate around Muslim identity needs to be moved forward because, according to the 2001 Census, 'After Christianity, Islam was the most common faith with nearly 3 per cent describing their religion as Muslim (1.6 million).'

Also, all the socio-economic indicators show that Muslims, particularly those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, are one of the most deprived groups in Britain. Particularly since the events of September 11 2001, there has been an increase in anti-Muslim attitudes in Britain, which has sometimes resulted in attacks on individuals and property; also in religious discrimination. In December 2002 the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) reported that 'Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, fueled by the September 11 attacks and the Middle East Conflict, are in danger of becoming an epidemic of prejudice and hate.'

The mainly qualitative study (by the University of Warwick) examines state policies towards Muslim communities in Britain, and concentrates on the following in particular:

- Perception of the issues as they relate to social and public policy development in employment and service delivery in public, voluntary and private sectors
- Relevant policy and practice
- Gaps between the existing good policy and practices within the public, voluntary and private sectors and the aspirations of the Muslim communities, the voluntary sector and the institutions and agencies themselves, towards further action.

Its methodology – analysis and review of secondary research, plus one-to-one interviews, focus groups, roundtables, etc. – makes for an interesting read. It contains within it a mixture of factual information interspersed with impressions by Muslims. These not only indicate the strength of feeling amongst the community but also that it has not been able to fully feel the positive impact of some recent changes.

The purpose of the M R G publication is also to explore the diversity of the Muslim experience in Britain, and call for legislative and policy change, particularly in the current climate. It succeeds in delineating the complexity of the Muslim communities – there is no single, clearly defined perception of British Muslim

A Symposium on Muslim Education
8 July 2003, 7.0–9.0 p.m.
St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill

As part of its commitment to widening the participation of Muslim students and to the development of Christian–Muslim relations, the School of Theology, Philosophy and History at St Mary's College is hosting a seminar on Muslim education. There will be four speakers: N azwah Bozeh, headteacher (retired) of Ernest Bevin School, Tooting Bushra N azir, headteacher of Plashet School, N ewham Salma Sualymani, headteacher of Suffah Primary School, H ounslow Abdullah Trevathan, headteacher of Ismailia School, B romley

The symposium will take place in the Waldegrave Drawing Room, St Mary's College, Waldegrave Road, Strawberry Hill, T wickenham, T W 1 4SX. All are welcome. For further information contact Dr Lynne Scholefield (tel: 020 8240 4159; email: schole@smuc.ac.uk).
Qaisra Khan has worked for Runnymede in a research and fund-raising capacity since 2001. In June 2003 she becomes the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Manager for Newham Training Network.

Runnymede Team:

Michelynn Lafèche
Director

Rajiv Anand
Project Coordinator

Robert Berkeley
Senior Research and Policy Analyst

Filiz Caran
Projects Officer

Sarah Isal
Research and Policy Analyst (Europe)

Omar Khan
Policy Researcher (Consulting)

Nicola Rollock
Research and Policy Analyst (Education)

Rosa Spry
Publications Editor

Kings Mill Partnership Accountancy Services

identity ... the notion is complex, diverse and equivocal’ (p. 32). This social complexity does not make it easier to see how to proceed when government is reluctant to legislate against ‘Islamophobia’, and communities are left to deal in their own way with their unease over lack of anti-discrimination protection (pp. 28-30).

British M uslims, whilst listing the issues that concern M uslims and highlighting disadvantage, does not dwell on disadvantage. It points out that some issues, such as education, are more complex than at first appear - e.g. ‘M uslim children in Glasgow and some areas of London were performing better than M uslim children in Birmingham and Bradford’. Detailed analysis shows this can be linked to factors such as class and length of stay in Britain. It also refers to the culpability of the M uslim community, and interviewees make recommendations for other M uslims too, including that there should be greater dialogue with other faith communities and that Elders undertake further education. One specific criticism levelled at M uslims in Britain, at its launch, was that it does not highlight how well M uslim girls are doing educationally as compared to boys.

British M uslims refers in detail to a number of areas of good practice in a variety of sectors and then goes on to make recommendations. Some of the examples of good practice that caught my attention were:

• an NHS outpatients’ department reviewing missed appointments and then introducing an electronic multi-faith and multi-ethnic calendar so that patients can be given appointments that do not clash with their important days;
• M uslim lay preachers being allowed to visit all prisoners of different faiths;
• special swimming sessions for M uslim males (yes males) in one London Borough;
• provision of halal food in the army;
• and the Metropolitan Police Service introducing hijab-wearing uniform to encourage potential hijab-wearing candidates.

Initiatives of this kind show how a bit of thinking and doing can make a difference. They need to be promoted - and regularly assessed for success - so that effective good practice eventually becomes part of the mainstream.

Both books are dealing with the needs of the M uslim community, so their recommendations tend to cover similar areas. They include issues around perception, representation and discrimination. The important role the media plays and the need for it to dispel ignorance among the western nations about Islam are highlighted.

‘Britain is now irrevocably a multi-racial and multi-faith society. It is a fact that Muslims are an integral part of Britain. Almost 60 per cent of the Muslim population is British born. Most of them are British citizens and Muslims are the largest religious minority group in Britain’, states the M R G report. ‘M uslims are now an integral part of a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-faith Britain. Religious organisations play an important role in civil society and provide substantial support for their members’, states the C R E R report. Both publications prove the importance of those statements with varied emphasis. Both provide thought-provoking Conclusions and Recommendations, along with useful bibliographies, relevant international instruments, and the other ancillary material you expect from scholarly research. But the ‘Policy and Practice’ and ‘Good Practice’ sections of British M uslims convey a sense of progress – already achieved and still in prospect – that give you confidence in the likelihood of much more to come.

Qaisra Khan