

## Responses to Open Space 1

"The media should be showing the positive images not always negative images thereby causing "scare-mongering"

### Cultural diversity makes better programmes

"Thank you for your letter. I was very interested to read the account of the 'Can We Listen to Each Other' discussion.

I will pass this on to our Head of News & Current Affairs, Blair Jenkins, who can deal with the questions you raise as regards to our journalism.

As for non-news programming on BBC Radio Scotland, I can assure you we have a pro-active policy of cultural representation both on air and in terms of our recruitment of programme makers. It is my belief that this kind of cultural diversity makes for richer, better and more interesting programmes that become more relevant to the changing audience in Scotland.

Yours sincerely  
Jeff Zycinski  
Head of Radio, BBC Scotland

### An important area for the media to get right

"I am more than happy to describe the work we have carried out in recent years on reporting multicultural issues.

Following a series of articles in the tabloid press in Scotland (one in particular in *The Daily Record*) in relation to asylum seekers and refugees, the NUJ embarked on a campaign to raise awareness of multicultural differences and the importance of accuracy of reporting. Our campaign drew in other organisations including Oxfam, the Refugee Council, Amnesty International, Scottish Civic Forum and the British Council as well as a number of politicians.

We have been involved in producing a number of publications for journalists and media students. These guides for journalists have been welcomed as a good tool and source of information/contacts to help hacks get the story as accurate and reflective of the communities affected as possible.

The NUJ also sponsor awards for journalists who have written outstanding pieces on the issue to encourage publication of diverse cultural positions and the

problems, successes and contributions of "immigrants" to this country.

We believe this is an important area for the media to get right, particularly in light of growing racism and fascism. We will continue to encourage higher standards as well as inclusive reporting on all our communities.'

Paul Holleran, Scottish Organiser,  
National Union of Journalists

### Diminish harmful stereotypes

"Yes ethnic issues come up frequently, usually linked to an event in the news such as the London bombings, Islamophobia, *Daily Mail* reporting on asylum seekers, city riots, crime.

We look at how editors choose subjects that will be relevant to their readers



and often, alas, these are issues which respond to some of the wrong instincts such as racism and sectarianism.

On my postgraduate course I have one Pakistani, one Indian, one Cameroonian and one Nigerian. So reporting of ethnic issues comes up frequently. One view we often hear is: yes bad news makes news and sometimes exposing bad news such as blatant racism leads to something good in that there is a public or political reaction.

There is also a feeling that credible information on crucial issues like immigration, unemployment, and religion will displace misinformation, passion, bigotry, sectarianism and hatred.

So my feeling is that ethnic minorities should not set out to change the established media but be creative in finding other channels and other ways of presenting information about themselves to raise public awareness and diminish harmful stereotypes.'

Mark Meredith, Programme Leader, MSc Journalism, Napier University, Edinburgh

### Corporate social responsibility in Boots plc

Key facts:

Around 10% of our current workforce comes from an ethnic minority background.

- We are improving the content and coverage of our diversity training.
- We are working to identify any barriers ethnic minority women face in progressing their careers.
- We are improving our monitoring of ethnic background.

### Cultural diversity

We believe it is in the interests of our business to employ a workforce that reflects the United Kingdom (UK) population. We serve the whole community and our ability to respond to the needs of all our customers is clearly

enhanced if our own community within Boots is equally diverse. Of the people we employ around 10% come from an ethnic minority background, however this is not reflected at all levels in Boots. We have a diversity policy relating to gender, race, religion, belief, age, disability and sexual orientation.

Our focus this year is on:

- Improving the content and coverage of our diversity training
- Improving our monitoring

of ethnic background so we can track the progress we are making.

- Working to identify the barriers ethnic minority women face in progressing their careers.

### One Scotland many cultures

'We want a modern dynamic Scotland that fosters integration but respects diversity...'

'We need...to tackle issues of inequality and integration.

'We need...to develop a shared agenda across communities – to encourage people to work together on common problems and mutual areas of concern...'

'We must recognise that our communities are diverse and this must be respected.'

Scottish Executive Review of Race Equality work in Scotland (November 2005) www.onescotland.com

LEITH OPEN SPACE GROUP

JUNE 2006

# NEWSLETTER

## Time to get involved



Questions hung in the air after the second multicultural Open Space event at Leith Academy on Sunday May 28. How can we overcome the obstacles that prevent ethnic minorities taking more active part in politics, business and voluntary work? Where do we go from here?

Answers were there too. At the end of the day most people agreed it is time to get involved. The next step is to decide how.

There was a different mood at the May event – and not just because the sun was shining through the glass roof of the staffroom at Leith Academy. Perhaps a sense of urgency brought people out in the cold to the November event at Ocean Terminal. Six months ago, in the aftermath of the London bombings, participants wanted to rediscover common values, to make streets and

homes safe again, and to counter the negative images portrayed in most of the media.

This time there seemed to be more frustration. 'Business as usual' for most ethnic minority communities means struggling for funding, striving to make a living from a small business, trying to gain skills for paid employment through voluntary work.

But beneath the frustration there seemed to be a feeling that it is time to make something happen. Action points show two main themes. On one hand, people want government to do more to overcome obstacles to integration. Voluntary organisations described the impossibility of making long-term plans on short term funding. Minority communities fall between the gaps in policy as they compete for their share of

*Continued on page 2*

## One way to get involved

Leith Open Space Group is inviting people from all minority communities to take part in a Shadow Scheme to bring together local people with councillors and members of parliament in our constituency of Edinburgh North and Leith.

The Shadow Scheme, provisionally called Opening Doors to Democracy, is based on the successful scheme pioneered by Operation Black Vote in Bristol – where they produced five candidates for local elections.

**Open Space participants want:**

- Grassroots groups to work together to establish strong networks to develop joint work and lobby politicians
- Infrastructure and resources to support ethnic minority volunteering
- Education on core values (respect, honesty etc) which we all share
- Ethnic minorities to get involved in the political system
- More support for local businesses from local/national government.

If you are interested in taking part please contact Leith Open Space Group Tel 0131 556 4646 or email leithmcevent@btconnect.com

cash from one public purse. Community organisations made a strong case for a better infrastructure to help them develop. Positive discrimination might help, said some. And a bid to make voting compulsory nearly made it to the top five points.

On the other hand, participants also agreed that 'we' must do more to make our own opportunities. The winning vote went to the idea that grassroots organisations would gain more power if they

worked together more closely. Not far behind was the belief that local businesses could work together to display their goods in supermarkets. A campaign for a community garden could grow.

As our Open Space facilitator, Maggie Havergal, discovered when she started typing up the workshop notes, "If the votes for all the action points about "WE should get involved and not wait to be asked" were added up, it would be a clear winner."

## Open Space turns words into actions

So let's get started. We chose Open Space because it is a truly democratic process. There is no agenda, no keynote speech. Topics for discussion come from the floor, people choose which workshop they want to join and at the end they vote on the key points they would like to take forward for action.

As Maggie Havergal explained, the process was originated by Harrison Owen who noticed that the best discussions at any conference always took place during the coffee breaks and lunch breaks. He put that together with something he learned while he was working in Africa – that when people are sitting in a circle they communicate with each other.

The strength of Open Space is that it gives people a chance to talk and listen to one another. Including politicians. Mark Lazarowicz, was there as our Westminster MP, Malcolm Chisholm as our MSP and Minister for Communities, and Phil Attridge and Dougie Kerr were there as local councillors. But none of them made speeches. They were part of the circle.



### Food for thought

Even in an Open Space some of the best ideas come at the lunch break. Food is a talking point – who made these delicious bhajis? What's in this quiche? Everyone enjoys food – so why not have an event celebrating the multicultural food of Leith? If you have any thoughts about making this happen we will be delighted to hear from you.

### Music

It wasn't all talk. Edinburgh Interfaith Choir joined us to give a short but moving and heartfelt performance before lunch. Our warmest thanks to the choir (and the members who joined us for

afternoon workshops) and to Kimho Ip, composer and artistic director of Intercultural Arts and Music Project who compiled a CD of different musical influences as background music for the lunch break.



Perhaps music is another future meeting point for communities?

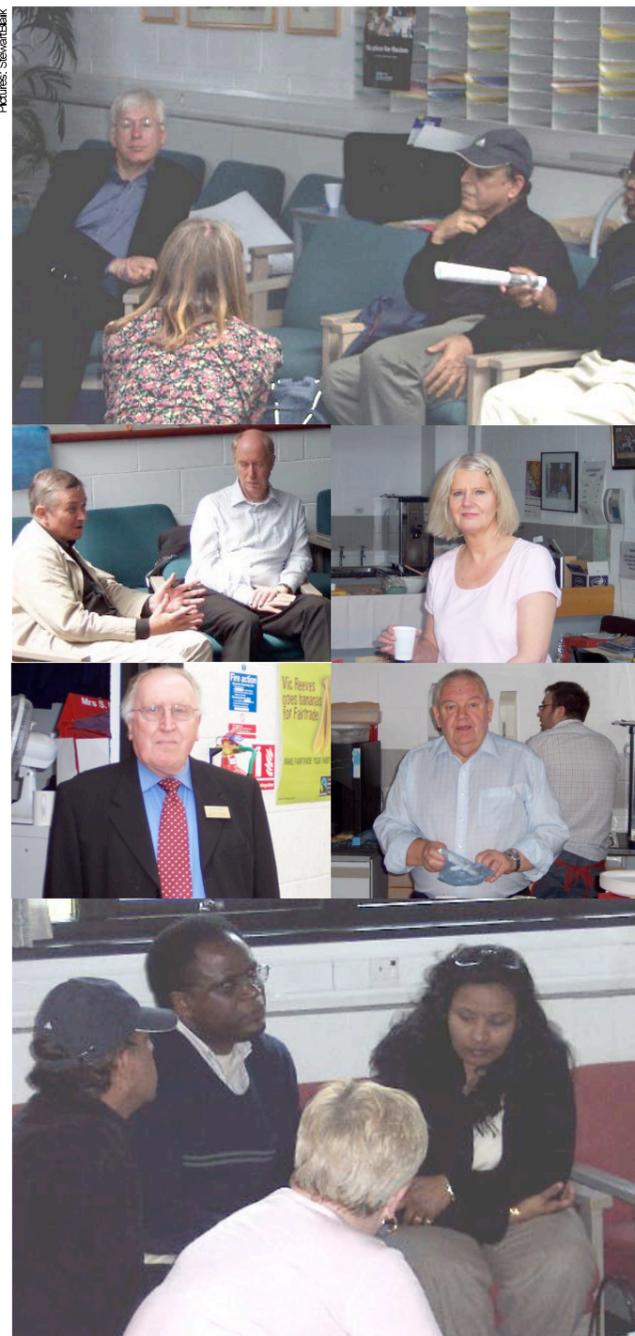
### Feedback

"We appreciated the open agenda, allowing people to bring up issues of immediate importance. We were particularly pleased that the issues we raised were seen to be so important, coming second only to personal development in the final voting. We were also glad to have an opportunity to speak to you about the problems faced by our organisation at present and greatly value your interest and support. We found the day very useful and felt that a lot of good points were made" – Scottish Council for Minorities

### Thanks to:

Maggie Havergal, Senior Associate Open Futures, Leith Academy Community Education team, Sootmid Fair Trade team, Edinburgh Interfaith Choir, Kimho Ip of Intercultural Music and Arts Project, Tommy Miah of the Raj Restaurant.

The Multicultural Open Space event was sponsored by Leith Walk Central branch of the Labour Party and organised by Leith Open Space Group: Stewart Blaik, Mike Cowley, Jenny Duncan, Nick Gardner, Dougie Kerr, Rami Okasha and Fay Young.



## Workshop discussion notes and outcomes

### TOP FIVE ACTIONS PRIORITIES VOTED BY PARTICIPANTS

- 1 Grassroots groups to work together to establish strong networks to develop joint work and lobby politicians (11 votes)
  - 2 Infrastructure and resources to support ethnic minority volunteering (10 votes)
  - 3= Education on core values (respect, honesty etc) which we all share (9 votes)
  - 3= Ethnic minorities to get involved in the political system (9 votes)
  - 4 More support for local businesses from local/national government (8 votes)
- (There were then 5 issues having 7 votes, making them 5th= )

### 1.0 MORNING SESSION ISSUE AND ACTIONS

#### Group 1: Mrs Unis. Support for local businesses



#### Group 2: Akhtar. Volunteering and ethnic minorities support in Scotland

- Action point 1- There's a need for an infrastructure and resources to support ethnic minority volunteering (10)
- Action point 2 – None of the major umbrella volunteer organisations are targeting ethnic minority volunteers either to work with them or be represented in the management structure (4)
- Action point 3 – There's a need for a monitoring system to evaluate the success of ethnic minorities' volunteering (2)

#### Group 3: Habib. Getting people to listen

- Action point 1- Local representatives should LISTEN more, feel more accountable, and more Open Space events (6)
- Action point 2 – Make "structures" more accessible (-)
- Action point 3 – Make voting compulsory (7)

#### Group 4: Calum. The East European community in Leith

- Action point 1- Need to form integrated service providing advice and information to new migrants – Leith, Edinburgh-wide, Scotland-wide (7)
- Action point 2 – Provide positive images, messages, points, facts, contributions. Needs to be specific and related to "us" (7)
- Action point 3 – Work with churches and new community leaders (1)

### AFTERNOON SESSION: ISSUES & ACTIONS

#### Group 1: Myriam. Individual development

- Action point 1- "Education" – Core values (respect, honesty etc) ("Universal values") (9)
- Action point 2 – Opportunities for people to come together – inter-faith, youth parliament, share experiences etc. (7)
- Action point 3 – Community involvement. Volunteer corps with organisational framework. (1)

#### Group 2: Mrs Unis. Policies

- Action point 1- Grassroots groups to work together to establish strong networks to develop joint work and lobby policy-makers (11)
- Action point 2 – Begin debate about how to ensure an ethnic minority voice in decision-making (5)
- Action point 3 – Ethnic minorities to get involved in the political system (9)

#### Group 3: Alan. What brings us together more than what separates us

- Action point 1- Events to bring people together – sport, culture etc. Cause – religion/body/culture etc. Fixed awareness. Society makes us diff. (All same spiritually?) making better use of facilities (multi-cultural city gardens and allot's) A multi culture day / many small events (7)
- Action point 2 – Facilities, spaces, gardens, for kids (7)
- Action point 3 – Education (-)

#### Towards an Inclusive Democracy

#### Group 4: Akhtar. Transferable skills

- Action point 1- No sustainable policy on Fresh Talent scheme (3)
- Action point 2 – Lack of structure to recognise foreign qualifications (-)
- Action point 3 – No recognition of transferable skills by employers (-)