



January 2005, No. 10

Results published of survey of BME groups

The results of a survey of Black and minority ethnic (BME) voluntary groups in the East of England has recently been published on MENTER's website, www.mentor.org.uk. The research was carried out on behalf of MENTER by BMG Research in 2004. 397 organisations were initially mailed the questionnaire and in all, 90 organisations responded, which represents a response rate of 23%.

The overall picture of the sector is one of many small organisations

operating with few staff, with a bias towards unpaid voluntary staff (44% have no paid staff). These organisations provide a variety of services from health to community development and advice on race discrimination/harassment. Three-quarters of respondent organisations are membership organisations. Most organisations have a predominant BME group among their trustees – only 11% have no majority group. In addition to services provided,

staffing and trustees, the 12 page report also covers funding, organisational status, sector support and planning for the future.

Along with the survey MENTER also commissioned a series of in depth interviews across the East of England. Six BME target groups were identified: young people aged 16-24, women, Travellers, refugees, people from newer communities and those living in rural areas. This report is also available from the website.

Developing a Regional Health Strategy for the East of England

Preparation for the Regional Health Strategy, which is produced on behalf of the Regional Assembly, is now underway, with the strategy due out for consultation in Spring 2005. The strategy will provide the region with a strategic framework to improve health and tackle health inequalities. For the strategy to work everyone's input and involvement is needed.

Three stakeholder workshops have already taken place at which a range of representatives

from a broad spectrum of the health, social care and voluntary sectors have discussed what the strategy can offer. In order to build a better picture of what is taking place, and to gather as many views as possible, there will be more in-depth meetings with people who have not yet had a chance to contribute.

If you would like to be part of this process, and want to shape the strategy, please contact anne-marie.diaper@dhs.gsi.gov.uk, telephone 01223 372836.

MENTER is funded by the Home Office/Active Community Unit and EEDA

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Deadline next issue:

11th March 2005

E E D A

East of England Development Agency

On the 20th September Graciano Masauso joined MENTER as Outreach Development Officer for Norfolk and Suffolk. Dr. Oswald Matika left in May last year and Graciano has been continuing Ozzie's excellent work. In the following article Graciano tells MENTER members a bit about himself and what he would like to achieve working for MENTER.

My name is Graciano Masauso and I was born in Zimbabwe in a family of nine being the third of six boys and three girls. I came to the United Kingdom in 2001 as a student. I am personally aware of BME issues, many of which I had to deal with as I settled in the UK as a student and after my studies when I was granted leave to remain.

My educational background is very diverse. I graduated with an MBA from the University of Kent at Canterbury in 2002 and BSc Honours in Economics from the University of Zimbabwe in 2000. I also have various diplomas and certificates in among other things Child Development & Psychology and Mental Health Law.

I have been a staff member of MENTER since 20th September 2004 and I have had the opportunity to meet organisations, groups and individuals and start consulting and mapping out

the services available to BME groups within Norfolk and Suffolk.

I have had a great deal of experience within the voluntary sector both in Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. I had the opportunity to develop skills in business management, economic and social research, volunteer recruitment, marketing, community development, community groups, support groups, mental health, education and the overall development of good practice within the voluntary sector.

In my work experience, I have been fortunate to have had ample opportunity to interact with people from various cultures and backgrounds at a range of different levels. In Zimbabwe I worked for several companies but also as Support Officer for the Refugee Services for people from the Great Lakes Region during the 1994 genocide and as Community Development Officer at UZ for the Community. In the UK, I worked as Outreach and Support Officer for BME Mental Health Carers at The Princess Royal Trust for Carers in Barnet, North London.

The corporate analytical skills I have acquired through direct training in economics and business

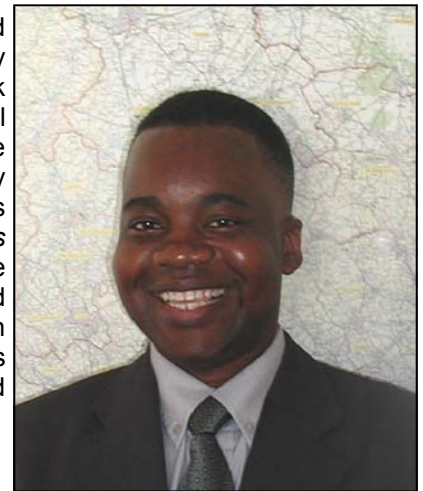
management and more indirectly through voluntary work and personal experiences will be essential and usefully applied. These skills include *vis-à-vis* extensive experience in networking and collaborating with other organisations locally, regionally and internationally.

My vision is that of a multi-racial society where all views are equally valued and all aspirations expressed no matter how trivial they may seem and where all voices are heard and cherished.

My aim is to promote race equality and relations, improve community cohesion and the social and economic inclusion of minority ethnic communities. I will work in partnership with other agencies to build BME infrastructure, networks of knowledge sharing and in helping to create a safe environment that is rich in diversity and equality. I will work with the team at MENTER and others to identify BME problems and constraints, formulate and implement projects to address these and evaluate progress.

My hobbies include fishing, playing tennis and watching cricket.

I look forward to working



with BME communities to help them achieve their aims and goals, and contributing to the kind of society to which we all aspire.

For more information about MENTER's work in Norfolk and Suffolk, please contact me on the address given below.

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**Inspire
East is
launched**

A new network that aims to spread a culture of learning in the regeneration sector was launched in December in Ely. Inspire East, which has previously been known as the Regional Centre of Excellence, is funded by EEDA and the ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), and hopes to maximise the benefits of redevelopment in the Region's towns, villages and cities. Various agencies including Community Renewal Network East and the Learning and Skills Council have been involved in deciding its role, while an advisory group of national and regional organisations, including COVER and Rural Action East, will contribute to its development. More information at: www.eeda.org.uk

Promoting Black and minority ethnic trainers and consultants in the Region

During the beginning of this year you would have read articles on the progress of the BMET project. MENTER worked in partnership with the project initiator, Jim Thakoordin, CRNe, Go-East, the Refugee Council and other partners to promote the work of BME Trainers and Consultants. It was felt that there is a pool of expertise that is under-utilised, usually because training and consultancy contracts are awarded through invisible, informal networks that do not include BME people. Where contracts are awarded these are often related only to equalities work, even though BME trainers have other useful skills e.g. in project management, community development, voluntary sector development and regeneration. The lead organisation for the project was

Community Renewal Network East (CRNe). The project team was advised throughout by Jim Thakoordin. The promotion of the project took two routes: (1) Consultation events in Bedford and Luton (2) work with agencies in the

appointing a trainer or consultant. It also includes relevant legislation referring to appointing trainers or consultants and finally the bulk of the directory is focused on details of BME trainers and consultants from the Region. We are pleased to confirm that the directory is available to download from MENTER's website www.menter.org.uk or CRNe website www.crne.org.uk. Although this project was heavily advertised we are aware that some consultants and trainers might not be included. Therefore they can download a questionnaire at the CRNe website and include their details in the directory which will be updated quarterly. We would like to thank all those who have supported this project and hope you enjoy using the directory.

Get your copy of the BMET directory

region to assess training and consultancy requirements and to highlight the publication of the directory.

The final copy of the BMET Directory includes "good practice" guidelines on writing a brief, contracts and

Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites

We at the East Anglian Gypsy Council have been campaigning for recognition of the accommodation needs of the Gypsy/Traveller Community for the past thirty years now, with successive Governments seeing the lifestyle as a law and order issue rather than one of accommodation, until now that is.

Last December (2004) the ODPM published a Consultation Document entitled 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller sites', The content of which is a new circular to replace DoE Circular 1/94 "Gypsy Sites and Planning". The new circular is the result of the Governments commitment to review circular 1/94 made during the passage of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

DoE circular 1/94 provides advice on the procedures to be followed in ensuring that the planning system recognises, protects and facilitates the traditional lifestyle of Gypsies and Travellers by identifying and making provision in development plans for their land and accommodation requirements. The new circular puts into place advice on what procedures now need

to be followed.

The main changes compared to circular 1/94 are, among other things:

- A change in the definition of Gypsy (paragraph 13 '*People of nomadic habit regardless of race or religion*'). The new definition recognises that Gypsies may stop travelling, either permanently or temporarily for health or educational reasons or because of caring responsibilities.
- A requirement that local authorities identify suitable sites for Gypsies and Travellers in their development plans and documents.
- Improved guidance on drafting the criteria in development plans against which applications for sites not allocated in the plan will be judged.
- An explanation of how local housing assessments will assist local authorities to quantify the level of need and how the new planning system and the involvement of Regional Planning boards will help to translate that need into allocations in the planning process.
- A section on the Local Authorities responsibilities under the Race Relations Act.
- The Inclusion of advice on how Local Authorities should seek to engage with Gypsies and Traveller

and build trust.

- The inclusion of advice to Gypsies and Travellers, and their Representatives, as to how they should engage with the planning system

The full document can be obtained by contacting the following webpage:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_033598.pdf Respondents have until the 18th March 2005 to respond.

Although we have some concerns, the new Circular is a well thought out and much fairer document. However by itself, it will do no more to increase provision than that of circular 1/94. The real work will be in the enforcement of the advice in the light of the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. We must be diligent in making sure that the terms of this act are indeed adhered to when the needs of the community are assessed and provision planned.

John Day, Assistant General Secretary, East Anglian Gypsy Council

More information can also be found on the website of the East Anglian Gypsy Council, www.eagc.org.uk and on www.menter.org.uk

Can you... make a difference



Over the years I have often heard people complaining about things that have happened at their child's school. They say that they feel powerless, and have no influence over what they see as a bureaucratic education system. Sometimes it is because of some new government imposed initiative, but in most cases it is because they feel the school is too removed from their daily experiences and often because they do not understand the education system and how modern schools are run.

In my experience most parents involvement with the school is to deliver their offspring in the morning and collect them in the evening and perhaps participate in the odd parents evening. However those that do take the trouble to get involved in what is happening within their local school find the effort most rewarding both for the pupils and for themselves.

There are a lot of ways that the community -and I don't mean just parents- can get involved with their local school. Ask your local head teacher how you can help. By far the best of all these ways is by becoming a School Governor.

Ideally schools are managed by the communities they serve via the Board of Governors. They decide what the school's budget will be spent on and what the curriculum will be (within National guidelines) and they make the school's policy. Yes, there are things that are imposed as there are in any part of modern life, but the main ethos and direction of the school is in the hands of the Head Teacher and the Board of Governors.

In most areas of the Region there are vacancies for School Governors, and in particular there is a requirement for Governors from Black and minority ethnic communities. Such people bring to the school the benefits of their knowledge, experiences & beliefs, providing the school with a depth of knowledge and an ethos that can only occur with the support of the community.

I myself was a School Governor for twelve years and found the experience most rewarding both in the relationships I formed with the school's staff and pupils and in the personal development received via the governor training programme. I have made friends that I will remember for the rest of my life.

Schools need good Governors to succeed in their role of producing well educated and well adjusted young people. In short.....they need you.

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You find your local contact details

Website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/governors

Luton
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 Governance Services
 Luton Borough Council
 Unity House
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 Luton
 Tel: 01582 5430

I have always been interested in helping. However living in London there was never any time. My family moved from London to Basildon in 2000 and this was my opportunity to change my lifestyle. I met Heather Leverett at an information day held in Basildon, and as this was one of the areas that had always fascinated me, I quickly signed up to the role of School Governor. Before I could get my breath back, information from governor services had been sent to me, closely followed up with an email with the schools in my area.

Once the application form had been sent back and the school chosen, I received a letter from the chair of governor welcoming me to the school, followed up by a phone call from the head teacher.

Within a matter of time I received an agenda stating the time and day of the full governing body meeting. This takes place once a term. The day duly arrived. I was nervous and apprehensive, however on arrival at the school I was made to feel very welcome by all, taking my place at the meeting listening to all the

discussions (I kept thinking to myself what have I got myself into). I did not understand anything that was discussed -I felt like a fish out of water- and most of what was said went over my head.

However, after six months I gradually started to get to understand the terminology. One thing was very apparent, there was such passion and commitment among the governors in wanting to ensure the school was succeeding.

There is a lot of support from Governor

nce to your local school?

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 SGF
 533; Fax:
 ors@thurrock.
 r
 ck.gov.uk
 nce
 ounty Council
 d Development
 d AL4 8PY
 372
 ertscc.gov.uk

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 Tel: 01473 584927

Western Area
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 Tel: 01284 352110

How much do you know about the way in which the community works with school...and the way in which your local school's work with children from your part of the community?

At the heart of every community is a school, which provides education and life skills to the children of the community.

The way in which they learn and develop will have a significant impact on the community of tomorrow....good, bad or indifferent. How well the community is integrated into the school at a variety of levels is a determinant factor in these outcomes.

One of the most important areas of this integration is that of school governance. How well are Black and minority ethnic groups represented on your local governing bodies, and how helpfully could you make a difference in supporting your local school with its crucial work on such issues as 'Every Child matters'..... a national initiative to help every child be healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve.

School governing bodies reflect the local community in the strategic work of the school, and governors are people who want to make a positive contribution to children's education.

Being a school governor gives you the opportunity to make a very special contribution to your local community which will not only make a difference to the life and work of the school and its pupils, helping the educational professionals to get it right and get results, but can also make a very real difference in the way that the community is understood and is enabled to support the school.

Governors can be parents, or represent the community, faith group, local education authority, or school staff. Together with the Head Teacher the governing body sets the future direction for the school, and makes collective decisions on such as policies, the school budget, performance targets, and the school development plan. For the sake of on average 6 hours a month, being a school governor is a rewarding way of making a difference, and a good way of putting something into your local community.

Heather Leverett
 Governor Services Manager
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 homepage: www.essexcc.gov.uk/governors



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Services if you are unsure of anything. There are various sites where you can obtain information. Also you can ask your colleagues from the school. Never feel shy to say, I don't know.

There are training opportunities from induction in being a new governor to doing a BTECH Certificate.

As a member from the BME community I feel it is vital that there is representation to ensure that issues can be addressed and raised. It is not enough that we pay lip service. I am very

proud in being a Governor knowing the children of today, will be the future of tomorrow. My contributions, although small, will make a difference.

Currently I am Governor for two primary schools. Also, I am a member of the Basildon Focus Group looking at recruitment from the BME community, and empowering parents in Basildon in being a Governor.

I would always recommend being a Governor. It is rewarding to know that you are making a difference within your local community.

However, most importantly the children are benefiting from decisions that you make for the school. Pick up the phone to find out more about becoming a Governor, your life will change forever.

Cecilia Metzger
 Vice- Chair St.Teresa's R/C Primary School
 Governor
 St. Margaret's C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School

Norfolk Criminal Justice Board information event on Wednesday 9th February 2005

The Norfolk Criminal Justice Board is holding an information event for Black and minority ethnic communities on Wednesday 9th February 2005

Venue: Blackfriars Hall in Norwich from 5.30pm to 8.00pm

The CJB comprises the main criminal justice agencies, namely the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Courts, the Probation Service, the Youth Justice Team and the Prison Service. All the agencies are very keen to understand the needs and views of local communities throughout Norfolk, particularly Black and minority ethnic communities on issues such as:

- How the Criminal Justice System in Norfolk operates and how it impacts on crime in their community;
- The BME communities' levels of confidence in the Criminal Justice System and how it deals with victims, witnesses or people charged with crimes from their community;
- How individual agencies are dealing with hate crimes;
- What opportunities might exist for members of their communities to pursue a career in one of the Criminal Justice agencies

The information event will provide an opportunity to

hear about the work of each agency and meet with staff as well as representatives from partner agencies. The event will include short presentations about our work, including inputs by people from BME communities about their experience of the criminal justice system or who work within it. This is a really important opportunity for the Norfolk Criminal Justice Board to engage with members of the BME communities in Norfolk. We therefore hope that you will be able to attend and that you will be able to bring some guests with you. A light buffet supper will be provided.

If you would like more information on this event, please contact:

Abraham Eshetu, Diversity Adviser, Norfolk Constabulary on 01953 424019 or Sean Whyte, Norwich and Norfolk Racial Equality Council on 01603 611644.

To register your attendance you can send an email address to: yatesh@norfolk.pnn.police.uk or whiten@norfolk.pnn.police.uk with your name, organisation, the number of guests you are bringing and stating any dietary requirements.

The right stuff?

Do you have the skills to represent BPHA tenants' viewpoints? Can you consider issues for all the areas where BPHA has homes?

If the answer is "Yes", then you might be interested in the elections later this year for the BPHA Customer Services Committee.

The Committee's role is to

- help to develop and approve policies
- monitor and approve expenditure for projects or improvements
- ensure that BPHA provides quality, accessible services.

There are five vacancies

- two for BPHA tenants in the Bedford borough area
- two for BPHA tenants outside the Bedford borough area
- one for a leaseholder from any

You'll receive training, as well as other support to help you. Another committee member will be your "buddy".

We cover transport costs if outside Bedford, and reasonable actual child care costs.

Interested?

Call us and we'll send you an information pack so you can see what is involved.

If you decide to apply, we will invite you to an informal interview.

If you are still interested and go through this first stage, you can stand for the election in May in which all BPHA tenants can vote.

We are particularly keen to attract some of our younger tenants aged 18 plus, as well as tenants from minority ethnic communities who are currently under-represented on the committee.

Application forms are due in by 11th March.

For more information, contact Maureen Baker on

01234 221348, or email maureenb@bpha.org.uk

Or visit www.bpha.org.uk



Members' Spotlight: Muslim Action Forum (MAF)

The Muslim Action Forum (MAF) launched its activities in an open meeting in Watford a month after 9/11. Riaz Hussain, MAF's chair, explains why: "The terrible events in New York triggered a chain reaction of negative feelings towards Muslims, first of all in the media, but also among certain individuals in our society. This led to discrimination of Muslims in the workplace and bullying in the play ground, to name a few. Also worrying was the sheer number of assaults on Muslims and the laid back way these were dealt with."

Together with a small number of concerned members of the Muslim communities MAF contacted various agencies in the Watford area, among who were representatives from the police, headmasters and politicians including Claire Ward (MP) and Vince Muspratt (Leader of Watford Borough Council). Riaz: "We reached out to all agencies that we could think of, to see if we could address the problems together. By talking you can hopefully make things better. The other option was to bury our heads in the sand."

MAF formulated its objectives around creating a better understanding of Islam and Muslims through awareness and education and community cohesion. Ultimately, what affects one community, also affects another. Riaz: "This is our country. We are English Muslims and we're proud to be British. We form part of the heritage of this country and we want what is best for everybody. I want my child and my neighbour's child to grow up in a community in harmony."

MAF puts partnership working to the forefront of its activities as they believe that this is the best way to tackle widespread prejudice. Riaz has been amazed by the many preconceptions of non-Muslims, which he believes, are mainly due to the way the media portrays Islam and Muslims. Fortunately he also

feels encouraged by the success of MAF's activities, which include over seven exhibitions on Islam and Muslims that have been visited by a couple of thousand students and other members of the public. Riaz: "People are normally intelligent and open to the issues that we raise. This is what makes the UK such a wonderful country."

However, MAF has only been able to fight what looks like the tip of a massive iceberg. There are fundamental problems because of a lack of understanding. This became shockingly apparent at 'Voice of Achievement', the Muslim pupils in schools conference which MAF organised in March 2004. The outcomes were published in a report last November. The conference, the first of its kind, acted as an opportunity for Muslim pupils to raise their concern and discuss their views on educational issues that they have been facing. It was also an opportunity for pupils to listen to local role models and key speakers on motivation and raising aspirations. Riaz found the outcomes quite distressing: "They feel resented and misunderstood. They are very perceptive to what is happening and articulate in expressing their feelings and concerns"

At the conference there were five workshops in which the pupils could express their feelings and recount their experiences. Most pupils complained of a low self-esteem due to racism, which the schools fail to address. The participants also felt that most of their teachers have very little understanding of Muslim needs or values. Boys and girls felt that some teachers have low expectations of them and that they are not stretched to their true abilities. Riaz: "It was very evident that they want to learn, but that the

school is not user-friendly." He also brings up the clear lack of role models, both in the school as teachers and mentors and in the text books: "The Afro-Caribbeans have been very successful in going back into their history and gaining strength from the past. It will help Muslim pupils if they learn in schools about their history and about this great astronomer or mathematician who was a Muslim." Correct Muslim history being taught is imperative for these students to feel their faith has contributed to mankind and in having a good perception of themselves.

Other issues which clearly surfaced were the lack of facilities for prayer



"The other option was to bury our heads in the sand", says Riaz Hussein, Chair of the Muslim Action Forum.

and other religious need in schools, especially during Ramadan, as well as the student's concerns over the lack of communication between parents and schools. Girls especially felt this to be a major concern.

In a sixth workshop teachers gathered. Riaz: "It was very disappointing that out of so many teachers, so few attended. But

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

those who attended gave very good feedback and they were prepared to take action."

The conference formulated a clear set of recommendations. MAF hopes to build on the conference. Riaz: "This report should go some way in trying to address some key areas why there is so much underachievement by Muslim students. It is a resource for the schools that will help them understand their pupils better. It will make a real difference if teachers only address 10-20% of the issues and problems. But we don't want to stop here. Maybe next we will organise a conference for teachers"

Like any other organisation of its size MAF struggles with a lack of resources. Riaz: "Producing a report like this takes an awful lot of time. We rely on the good will of people. We have about 12 volunteers, and a lot of people who are only a phone call away. Most of us are professionals, which means that we have full time jobs. We sometimes even take time off work, for example to give a talk at school or when holding events and exhibitions. We have a passion to make our community better."

MAF has received some funding for the conference and receives a general grant to pay for postage, paper, etc. Riaz and other MAF activists are currently looking into applying for some more funding which will allow them to produce more quality work. Riaz can see a need for MAF to exist in the long term future to support Muslims and the wider society: "There is still a lot to be done and as long as we have the good will and determination of our volunteers and the good faith of our supporters"

MAF can be contacted at admin@mafwatford.com or call 07931 436435

**Publish your events
on MENTER's website**

**E-mail your events to
office@mentor.org.uk and
we will publish them on
the events pages of our
website (time and staffing
permitting)**

International Development: You are probably already actively involved

Connections for Development is a UK, BME led, membership-based organisation committed to ensuring that the many Black & minority ethnic communities that are here in the UK are involved in shaping and delivering policy and projects that affect our world. Others refer to this as international development, but for us, the people and communities in the UK who reflect all of that developing world, it is simply 'our world'.

CfD does not undertake international development or overseas projects. Our role is to help BME civil society in the UK become actively involved in delivering, funding and determining the work that makes a difference to our world. BME people must be confident that we work for them, they work for our world. We are:

- establishing a network of like minded people and organisations
- undertaking research within, and with, BME communities informing our membership about all aspects of development
- ensuring that BME participation is guaranteed in all policy making
- supporting our membership, helping them to be strong enough for the task
- connecting our communities to our world.

CfD feels that many in our communities do not understand that they are already actively involved in international development. Some examples are religious establishments that collect thousands for a particular issue, such as the London Black Church building a school in Montserrat, groups contributing to home, such as the Manchester Somali group that collected £25,000 and built a school back home, the women funding a midwife in a war zone and the millions of pounds people send home; remittances that for many countries drive the economy.

Everyone knows about the terrible disaster caused by the Asian Tsunami, but we know that this follows floods in Bangladesh, hurricanes in the Caribbean and other crises during the last 12 months. Remember this is also the year in which the British Government acknowledged that Africa is poorer today than it was 25 years ago. For CfD the issue is, how does UK BME society express its perspective, how can we be involved in rebuilding our countries of origin, and how can we ensure that the British Government hears and has the opportunity to act upon our views and knowledge. CfD hopes that it can help people to be involved, to deliver projects and affect policy.

As part of that, with our partner MENTER, we shall soon be arranging a Conference in Cambridge, please come along, it is your world and your voice needs to be heard.

Jim Baker
Director Connections for Development

With this newsletter you will find an information leaflet about the CfD's Network, a membership application form and a booklet entitled *The Rough Guide to a Better World*. If you would like to receive extra copies of these publications or would like further information, please contact info@cfdnetwork.co.uk or tel. 0220 537 7369. Website: www.cfdnetwork.co.uk