

# New Deal for Communities

## The National Evaluation

### Research Reports

#### **Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Inclusion**

Research Report 12

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Those wishing to know more about the evaluation should consult the evaluation's web site in the first instance  
<http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/home.asp>



*Sheffield Hallam University*

# **Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Inclusion**

Research Report 12

## **Authors:**

Claudine Rausch  
David Gillborn

*Institute of Education, University of London*

July 2003  
ISBN: 184387 039 8

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
BME Inclusion: the national and local contexts .....	1
New Deal for Communities and BME inclusion .....	3
<b>Methods</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>The Salaam Centre: Hartlepool NDC</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Context and problem .....	4
Getting started: .....	4
<b>Nature of the intervention</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Aims and objectives.....	6
Delivery.....	7
Partnerships and networking: ‘links with everything’ .....	8
<b>Outcomes and impact</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Overview .....	9
Representation: ‘standing and speaking up’ .....	10
Direct work with the police and local council .....	10
A presence in the town: ‘major symbolic importance’.....	11
Struggles and challenges .....	12
Education: ‘the whole process is about learning’ .....	13
Looking forward .....	14
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Key Issues for Partnerships: Black &amp; Minority Ethnic Inclusion</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Sources of advice</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Notes</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## Executive Summary

Addressing the particular disadvantages of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups is an important strand in the NDC initiative. At present, however, only a minority of partnerships are able to identify any 'active' projects in this area. This report reflects on the general context for BME inclusion both nationally and within the NDC initiative more specifically. In particular, we examine progress in Hartlepool NDC. The project is in the relatively early stages of development and findings from the research at this stage should be treated as provisional.

The aim of the Hartlepool scheme is to set a process in motion by which community participation is encouraged, through a series of meetings and consultations, leading to the establishment of the 'Salaam Centre', which provides an important means of raising the profile and influence of local BME communities. Within this process local residents from Black and Minority Ethnic communities were involved to help overcome previous marginalisation by establishing local representative networks.

The research to date has identified a number of key attributes of effective BME projects which may form a basis for good practice elsewhere:

- **Representation** on key local bodies: Local Strategic Partnership, Community Network Neighbourhood Forums;
- **Employment and training** of local residents that contributes to capacity building;
- Enabling **communication** between residents;
- **Raising the profile** of the local Black and Minority Ethnic communities;
- **Work with police and council:** awareness training and representing local residents;
- **Recognition of local community needs** and increasing access to services;
- **Identifying future needs** and work.

The research also suggests that the following areas require particular consideration if problems are to be minimised:

- **Accountability:** Communications between different participants and active participation on the part of NDC staff and steering committee members encourages accountability.
- **The role of volunteers:** Many aspects of the project rest on very few active participants, many of who are volunteers themselves, who give hours of their own time on top of long working hours.
- **Need of expansion:** The Salaam Centre is something of a victim of its own success. It started small and now the Centre sometimes cannot provide as much as local residents might like. The premises do not afford the space for confidentiality nor for many different activities to be taking place at the same time, since it is essentially one large room.
- **Raised expectations:** In view of its status as a pilot study, and the relatively short life of the project to date, its impacts have been very significant. Its success has created raised expectations and it seems vital that these hopes are met in the future.
- **The wider education context:** The BME focus, sensitivity and determination evident in the Salaam Centre is mostly absent from dedicated education projects focusing on formal compulsory and post-compulsory education.

## Introduction

The bulk of the report focuses on a single development in Hartlepool, although this is also informed by contacts elsewhere (in Birmingham: Aston, Lambeth and Sandwell NDCs).

The report covers the following issues:

- The current context for BME inclusion;
- The nature of the intervention, in terms of its main aims and objectives;
- How the project has been delivered, including partnerships and networking;
- An exploration of outcomes to date;
- A consideration of relevant issues for the future.

### BME Inclusion: the national and local contexts

A significant and growing proportion of the population are of minority ethnic heritage. Early analyses of the 2001 Census for England and Wales indicate that almost one person in ten self-identify as of Black or other Minority Ethnic heritage (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Ethnic origin in the 2001 Census (England & Wales)**

Ethnic Origin	Proportion of Population
White	91.3%
South Asian (incl. Indian, Pakistani & Bangladeshi)	4.4%
Black British (incl. Black Caribbean and Black African)	2.2%
Mixed Race	1.4%
Chinese	0.4%
Other	0.4%

Source: Adapted from BBC News (2003)

This overall picture can be deceptive. Levels of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residence vary greatly from one region to another: around half the BME population nationally live in Greater London. This diverse and complex picture is reflected in the NDC partnership areas. For example, overall around 77% of NDC residents self-classify as 'white' (considerably less than the 91% nationally).<sup>1</sup> However, this overall figure masks a great deal of variation: at one extreme there are 17 NDCs with more than 90% white residents: on the other hand, there are 7 partnerships where white residents account for less than half of the population.

The *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report* is one of the most important developments in this field nationally. The report drew attention to the widespread existence of racism in public services (including the police, housing and education) and was especially significant for broadening the debate beyond extreme and crude forms of violent racism, so as to include more subtle but equally dangerous forms of 'institutional racism':

[Institutional racism consists of the] 'collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which

amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership' (*The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, Macpherson, 1999: 28)

One of the most significant outcomes of the Lawrence Inquiry was the extension of race relations legislation to place a positive duty on all public authorities to pro-actively pursue race equality (through the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000). Regardless of local demographics, therefore, all public authorities (including schools, councils and the police force) have a statutory duty to create a race equality policy, to monitor its effects, and to take action to ensure race equality.

The need for greater dedicated work on race equality has been thrown into relief in recent years. New data released by the Department for Education & Skills (DfES), for example, shows that Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils continue to achieve results in school examinations that are, on average, significantly less than those of their white counterparts. The situation is especially pronounced for Black (African Caribbean) pupils whose results in the latest statistics were *less* than they had achieved in the same survey two years earlier -- against a backdrop of year-on-year improvements by white pupils (DfES 2003).

It is not only in schools that issues relating to BME inclusion have significance. The summer of 2001, for example, was marked by disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford that were sparked by the actions of neo-nazi organisations (the British National Party and the National Front). These were followed by electoral success that have seen five BNP councillors elected between 2002 and 2003. Developments such as these are only the tip of a much larger iceberg of mistrust and fear in some areas. An analysis of the MORI household survey data reveal disturbing levels of fear and racist assault in the NDC areas (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Racial Assault (fear and experience of) by Ethnic Origin and Percentage of White Respondents in NDC Area**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>NDC area percentage white respondents</b>	<b>Worried about racial assault</b>	<b>Experienced racial abuse in last year</b>
<b>White</b>	50% or below	33%	6%
	51% - 90%	24%	4%
	91% and over	15%	1%
	<b>Total (white)</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Black</b>	50% or below	36%	6%
	51% - 90%	35%	6%
	91% and over	47%	19%
	<b>Total (Black)</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>South Asian</b>	50% or below	46%	7%
	51% - 90%	50%	12%
	91% and over	51%	11%
	<b>Total (Asian)</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>9%</b>

Source: MORI household survey data: secondary analysis by Dr M. Grimsley (Sheffield Hallam University).

The data in Table 2 show the proportion of respondents first, who reported being *worried* about the danger of racial assault, and second, who had *experienced* racial abuse in the last year. The fear of assault is strikingly high for all groups: White 20%; Black 36%; South Asian

48%. White respondents were the least likely to be worried about racial assault and the least likely to report actual abuse in the last year (3% overall compared to 7% of Black respondents and 9% of South Asians).

The table also shows the data broken down according to the level of ethnic diversity in the NDC area itself: areas where white respondents account for 50% or less; where between 51% and 90% are white; and where 91% or more are white. The table suggests that both the fear of assault and the experience of abuse tend to be higher for BME groups as the area becomes less diverse: 47% of Black respondents and 51% of South Asians were worried about racial assault in NDCs where 91% or more residents were white. In these areas 19% of Black respondents and 11% of South Asians report racial abuse in the last year. In contrast, white respondents are most likely to be worried about racial assault (33%) and to have been racially abused (6%) in areas where whites account for half or fewer residents.

It is clear, therefore, that BME inclusion is a vital and pressing issue. In the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, new legislation placed a positive duty on *all* public authorities to proactively pursue race equality. The common fallacy that such issues are not of relevance in mainly white areas is challenged by NDC data such as Table 2, which reveal the extent and nature of racism in these areas. It is within this context that some NDC projects are addressing BME inclusion.

## **New Deal for Communities and BME inclusion**

Addressing the particular disadvantages of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups is an important strand in the NDC initiative. However, a review of partnerships' work plans in 2001 and 2002 reveals that many partnerships have not planned dedicated work on this issue. In addition, some partnerships that *had* identified this as a focus in their 2001 plans did not retain it in their 2002 reports. In addition, of those NDC areas currently *indicating* work on this issue, there are even fewer describing BME projects as 'live' or 'active'. This repeats the findings of some previous regeneration initiatives (SEU 2000; DETR 2000a).

Nevertheless, some work is underway in regard to BME inclusion across the NDC projects nationally. For example, a colleague from the Education Theme Team researching 'Raising Achievement' came across a 'Somali home/school liaison project' in Tower Hamlets (London), which had apparently not been defined locally, nor reported in documentation, as a BME inclusion project. This raises an issue in further research and evaluation as to how BME projects are being defined and indicated in local NDC planning and evaluation reports, particularly with regard to the evaluation of outcomes.

## **Methods**

This report of BME Inclusion within the Education Theme is based on a case study visit to Hartlepool NDC and contacts made with other partnerships indicating education based BME Inclusion projects in their plans:

- Birmingham (Aston)
- Lambeth
- Sandwell

In addition to the NDCs noted above, two other partnerships also indicated the existence of significant projects (Haringey and Nottingham). However, both these partnerships are currently the focus of detailed case study work by the national evaluation team and it was decided not to add to their evaluation load at this time.

This report draws upon a range of data sources, principally: semi-structured interviews; a review of relevant documentation; and visits to the Salaam Centre and the Hartlepool NDC office.

## The Salaam Centre: Hartlepool NDC

### Context and problem

The West Hartlepool NDC Delivery Plan describes West Central Hartlepool as ‘a cohesive neighbourhood fringing Hartlepool town centre’ containing ‘approximately 4,470 households and a population of around 10,625’. The Black and Minority Ethnic population of Hartlepool forms a small percentage of the overall population: the 2001 census indicated the BME population formed 0.7% of the Hartlepool town-wide population and 1.4% of the NDC area. According to data gathered through the MORI household survey of NDC areas, 97% of the Hartlepool NDC self-categorized their ethnic origin as ‘white’.<sup>2</sup> This puts Hartlepool in the bottom quartile of NDCs in terms of their ethnic diversity: in essence, it is one of the ‘whitest’ areas in the initiative.

The West Hartlepool NDC Delivery Plan makes reference to ‘the need to work within the grain of Government Policy and Advice’ and as such the document states that they have ‘sought to develop [their] programme to be consistent with the approach adopted by the Social Exclusion Unit, particularly related to the report ‘Bringing Britain Together’ and the reports of the Policy Action Teams’. This proved especially useful in relation to early moves to encourage community participation.

Hartlepool NDC respondents describe a process by which community participation was encouraged through a series of meetings and consultations. Within this process, and in order to specifically involve local residents from the Black and Minority Ethnic community, New Deal for Communities and Hartlepool Borough Council commissioned a ‘project sponsor’ (the Workers’ Educational Association, WEA), to produce ‘a report on the needs analysis of minority ethnic communities and to determine their experience and awareness of statutory and non statutory services’. One respondent describes the starting point for the Black and Minority Ethnic project:

‘those communities had felt excluded from previous regeneration schemes and excluded from discussions about regeneration (...) So we felt that, or the group that we were working with, felt that a project needed some sort of focal point.’

### Getting started:

#### ***‘probably as close to a blank sheet of paper as you’re going to get’***

Several respondents described the early months when New Deal for Communities was getting started in Hartlepool, encouraging participation of local residents from the outset, and the ‘evolution’ of consultative structures. One respondent describes the process thus:

‘there was as probably as close to a blank sheet of paper as you’re going to get in these situations in late ‘99, early 2000. There weren’t a lot of residents’ groups; it was an area that hadn’t had regeneration funding and initiatives...So we designed a consultation exercise for that very first stage in early 2000, which was for about three or four months and the design basically involved a lot of focus groups trying to meet different recognisable, different nature of the community, women’s groups, people with disabilities, carers, young people, children, older people, residents’ groups, as such. And I think there were about 18 or 19 focus group-type meetings, which we



then fed in to community meetings. So we had like residents' meetings which were publicised.'

It is important to note that, despite the 'blank sheet of paper', there were early and concerted attempts to consult widely. In addition, there was an explicit recognition of the need to identify different client groups and to try actively to involve them in NDC. This is vital, especially where there can be a tendency to believe that because BME groups are a minority, their concerns are either marginal or will be covered by more general approaches.

'in those residents' meetings, we said "well, this is what NDC is about; this is what we're getting from these folk". And from that process, in those first three months there was generated a body of people - which in the early days were 30 or so. Twenty to thirty starting and then growing slowly, who met regularly and formed themselves into what became known as a *community forum* and it's grown from that (...) And now it's a monthly public meeting, if you like, which is open to everyone who lives in the area, and has a much wider mailing list.'

Recognising the complexity of factors faced by each individual NDC area, short discussions with respondents at other NDCs (whose work programmes suggested that they were exploring BME issues) suggest that some other partnerships have become stuck at this stage. It could be speculated that Hartlepool's relatively small local BME communities have made these processes of initial engagement a little easier to move forward. However, respondents in Hartlepool reported previously very limited involvement by the wider community of local Black and Minority Ethnic residents, including access to local services and previous regeneration projects. Respondents also commented upon the particular marginalisation of such a small BME community. Consequently, the small size of the local BME population could have acted as a further barrier to participation, because local representative networks were not well established. For example, under the heading '*But we don't have many people from Black and ethnic minority background in our area!*' a DETR report recognises the tendency for increased isolation and marginalisation of people in areas with smaller BME populations (DETR 2000a, p. 13).

Respondents were clear that processes of involvement have not been without their struggles. The commitment and support of a few key local residents, and a commitment by key NDC staff to the structures of representation underpinning the project would appear to have driven the project beyond discussion and into action.

Summarising the findings of these early review and consultation processes relevant to the Black and Minority Ethnic communities, one respondent reported that 'at that time, the time of the survey, [existing arrangements] were not particularly perceived well by most members of minority ethnic communities'. The recognition that more needed to be done, and the drive to establish processes that would ensure this, have been vital to the developments in Hartlepool.

## Nature of the intervention

### Aims and objectives

The project was described by respondents as having several main aims, emphasising the following:

- That it is a pilot project (initially funded for 2½ years);
- Training and employment of local residents:
  - adult education courses,
  - training in community work for local residents to work at the centre,
  - training for the management committee of the centre.
- Providing a focal point for the local BME community;
- Increased communication and participation of local BME residents in other local NDC projects.

The aims are summarised here by one of those respondents:

'The project is designed as a pilot project to do several things. One, to train and employ local residents from minority ethnic communities as development workers. Because it was clear that ... well, those skills didn't exist within the community and this is a capacity-building project, the main aim of which is to try and develop a voice for minority ethnic communities, to try and assist them to articulate and to be organised around the issues which are important to them. And we felt that if we can train and employ local development workers, that (in terms of sustainability) is so much stronger than having to rely on bringing outside expertise in. I think the other main part of the project is as a focal point for the minority ethnic communities in Hartlepool, which are very small and I think, in a way, that smallness makes them particularly isolated, so it's an important focal point for information, for advice, for support'.

The initial pilot project funding was approved for two and a half years, with a view to extending the BME project work after this initial period of time. The 'time-limited' nature of NDC's initial investment is an interesting decision. Two and a half years is not a long time to bring about major changes, including capacity building, employability and helping a small, isolated community to find a voice locally. Nevertheless, there seems to be some confidence that NDC support will continue after this initial period, hopefully, with more significant investment in the future.

Also talking about the intended aims and beneficiary groups, respondents reported work with the police and local council. So that as well as having explicit aims that concern working with local Black and Minority Ethnic residents, workers and residents expressed the need for the centre to also have an influence on local service providers:

'That also came up in the report, about relationships with the police, Social Services, Council. So I saw NDC and said they'd been a catalyst to open it up, yes, and for change'

Using the Salaam Centre as a conduit for wider BME issues, and as a means of addressing other local services, is an ambitious and potentially very positive aim. Respondents did not refer explicitly to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 but by providing a point of contact and a means of articulating local concerns, the Centre effectively presents an

opportunity to aid public authorities in meeting their new duties under the amended race relations legislation. The Salaam Centre could have a significant wider benefit among local service providers, that currently have difficulty making connections with BME communities, by providing a means for positive and strong community involvement and consultation. In this way relations between service providers and communities are clearly a two-way process. Consequently, future evaluation of the effectiveness of work in this area should consider not only what the local resource centre is doing for their local service providers, but also consider the policies of public authorities and their outcomes for Black and Minority Ethnic residents.

## Delivery

Despite its significant and challenging aims, the Salaam Centre itself is a relatively modest development. The Centre comprises a shop front, with one main room for all of the work at the centre. The centre employs one full time and three part time workers and has links with other services. There are also outcomes that go beyond the 'face-to-face work' with residents and these are discussed further in 'outcomes' (below).

During the opening months of the centre, workers described the main activities as being adult education courses and a range of advice services for local residents. The first course that was run was an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course, and respondents also spoke enthusiastically about the success of a recent food hygiene course.

Respondents report the centre as being used by a range of local Black and Minority Ethnic residents, mostly those from the larger Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities (which were described as being long established communities in the area). One respondent also highlighted the equal number of Bangladeshi and Pakistani representatives on the management committee.

One main aspect of the Centre's activities in the first year has been advice work, and staff at the centre emphasised their role as *enabling* local residents through their advice work:

'We've got people coming in here and they want forms filling in and rather than just fill the form in for them and get the information, what we prefer to do is actually go through the form with them. And I would say 50% of the time they could have filled the form in themselves and we can show them this, you've got a good command of English, you've got a good understanding of this'.

This kind of approach can be very powerful. It is easy to slip into a service role (filling in forms) but much more effective (though time consuming) to take advantage of the educative potential of the exercise in the way described (above). The processes are deceptively simple but the outcomes can be genuinely empowering: '*we can show them this, you've got a good command of English, you've got a good understanding of this*'.

Workers have found a much higher volume of requests for advice work than they had expected, and as such initial plans for NVQ training in community work have been put on hold for the workers at the centre, who have instead been concentrating on benefits and welfare advice training:

'we said that the development workers would be, by the end of this process, be at NVQ level 3 (...) It was all well and good seeing it in black and white, but at the end of the day, as we've driven through this process, it's become more apparent that those weren't necessarily the skills that people need up front.'

Changing priorities in this way shows a readiness to be responsive and flexible. However, it is also important to ensure that the workers themselves are given sufficient support.

As such, the workers and the centre are responding to direct requests and local need, and workers emphasised the importance of the trust they held with the local community (being themselves residents and members of that community). The success of the project to date highlights questions, not only about the provision of such services (e.g. benefits and welfare advice) *before* the Centre was established, but also emphasizes the need for planning in order to meet *future* needs.

'The other communities in Hartlepool are using the community centre as well, they're starting to use the centre, they are Turkish community right, they took part in the Food and Hygiene course. (...) We have now five names, two of them from Algeria, one of them from Iran and another one from somewhere in Lebanon. So people from other communities are using it (...) so the message is going to all the communities.'

Whilst high attendance at the courses suggests the Salaam Centre is meeting direct and immediate needs of the local BME community, comments by respondents also reveal the limitations of local employment opportunities (especially focused round the food industry):

'what we found is we've got a different type of clientele coming through the door as opposed to what we had initially expected and we were surprised by the demand for the centre by people who have just come into the UK. A lot of them end up in the food industry, the majority of people in NDC, especially in the Bengali community work in restaurants and take-aways (...) but you haven't got the command of English and you can't get a job in a factory, you can't get a job here and you can't get a job there'.

Government documents already noted above refer to employment opportunities for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Referring to the commitment by this NDC project, to involve and recruit people from local BME communities, one respondent observed:

'There's a big lack of opportunities ... I'm a graduate, I graduated in 1994 and until this job came up I've been working in factories, I've been working in restaurants, take-aways. There's very limited, unless you want to travel to another part of the country, in the North East it's very limited. So to see somebody go through the education system and get a job at the end of it, that's quite rewarding. To know the fact that this centre has been part of it, it's even more rewarding'.

Whilst respondents have mentioned some intended links to the 'wider community' they mainly reported their involvement in the immediate needs of the local communities, not the broadening of employment opportunities, or widening of educational opportunity. The question is whether more structural shifts in educational and employment opportunities and outcomes feature in future developments, through *and beyond* this particular NDC project. In essence, the Salaam Centre is meeting many immediate local needs but, as its success grows, the limitations of existing services and employment opportunities locally will become increasingly obvious and frustrating.

## **Partnerships and networking: 'links with everything'**

Considering 'links' in the broadest sense, and perhaps articulating something of the intended links to the wider community, one respondent observed:

' I think because the project is a capacity-building project, i.e. it's all about building the capacity of minority ethnic communities to be organised and articulate needs and express the issues important to them and make sure that a slice of not only regeneration but existing services are meeting the needs of, well, in that sense it links with everything. It's a sort of central project, really.'

The Salaam Centre has a management committee, which is *The Hartlepool Asian Association*. Respondents and documentation (Project Appraisal Summary Report) describe the provision of training for the Resource Centre Management Committee to be a part of the Workers Educational Association (WEA) brief. The interaction between different stakeholders was the subject of some further comment by respondents, and this is discussed further below (in the section ‘struggles and challenges’). Respondents also referred to workers who use the premises from The Children’s Fund and the Sure Start initiative, enabling additional work to take place with children and young people.

‘The Children’s Fund workers, it’s another WEA project, they fund two Children’s Fund projects across Hartlepool, and we felt, when I put the bid together, when the Children’s Fund first set up there was very little structured activity that was going on for minority ethnic communities and I thought it was important that we put something in place to work with the kids, etc., and again as in the past, employ your local individual who would oversee that and manage that project, apart from WEA.’

## Outcomes and impact

### Overview

Respondents indicated several key outcomes:

- Representation on key local bodies: Local Strategic Partnership, Community Network Neighbourhood Forums;
- Employment and training of local residents;
- Enabling greater communication between residents: both formally at meetings and informally in the street;
- Raising the profile of the local Black and Minority Ethnic communities (having a ‘focal point’).
- Work with police;
- Work with council: awareness training and representing local residents;
- Increased communication with regard to other NDC projects e.g. the housing plan;
- Recognition of local community needs and increasing access to services;
- Identifying future needs and work.

## **Representation: 'standing and speaking up'**

Several respondents emphasised the importance of local residents' representation on wider local bodies as being a major outcome of the project. In particular, they pointed to the election of a local resident from the Black and Minority Ethnic community onto 'Community Network' and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The Local Strategic Partnership (mentioned by several respondents and with a website at [www.hartlepool.gov.uk/hartlepoolpartnership/hartlepoolpart.htm](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/hartlepoolpartnership/hartlepoolpart.htm)) links with current government policy (DETR 2001). It is also specifically recommended that LSPs 'should be an inclusive forum and represent all sections of the community' (DETR 2000a: 6.50). This has not happened by chance. One respondent explains some of the interconnections between these different local bodies:

'So there's been improved representation at LSP level. In terms of the Council, they've set up a new, well, they've extended the role of what they call Neighbourhood Forums in the town. And through... the role of HVDA, the voluntary development agency, and they've got a role of supporting resident involvement, community involvement in these new structures and new partnerships that have been established. And I think the fact that the [Salaam] Centre is there and is active and is a focal point'.

Several respondents emphasised not just representation in terms of attendance, but the increased confidence and participation of those involved on these bodies.

'standing up for themselves again, standing and speaking up. Whereas a year ago they wouldn't even have opened their mouths, just the shyness, so shy, and that, and also the change that I see in this community.'

This also touches on the perceived improvements in communication regarding wider NDC projects:

'I think what's worked well is that there's been improved, certainly improved communication between NDC and minority ethnic communities in relation to project development and communication particularly in relation to the housing plan. The project has helped facilitate much improved communication both through advising us on where there are issues and where they're feeling that there's an information or communication gap.'

## **Direct work with the police and local council**

When asked which groups the centre works with, respondents talked about the local police and council, as well as local residents. One respondent described the work of the centre with the local police:

'roughly every month or two month, we meet up and any racial incident that has been reported to the police, it gets a number and it basically brought to this case study group and every single case is gone through and until that case has been dealt with, it's never closed. It's either closed by the person who has actually made the complaint, or reported an incident, him being happy and saying yes, you can close the case, or the police can't take any further action. No case is missed now'.

A brief exchange between respondents suggested a shift in the police approach to racist crime:

'Has that changed some way, I seem to recall a conversation going back quite a way now. There was a reluctance by the police to classify crimes as racially-related crimes.'

'Any crime now, if the person reporting the incident, if he says it's racial, it's racial, basically'.

Here we have a further example of the Centre being involved in extensive networks that advance BME inclusion in important, though sometimes, hidden ways. Following the recommendations of the *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report* (Macpherson 1999) a simplified and more powerful definition of a 'racist incident' was adopted by the Home Office:

'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.' (Home Office 2000)

This definition applies to all police forces in England. However, there is a growing weight of anecdotal evidence which suggests that many forces have yet to recognise the consequences of this change. The evidence from Hartlepool shows how a relatively simple development, bringing together representatives from relevant groups (including BME communities) can help to ensure that this new definition is carried through in a robust and transparent way.

Also, in regard to the council and access to services, respondents referred to the planned development of community interpreters. Asked if letters and communications have been translated to date, or whether there have been interpreters available, the answer was 'No, it's something that's currently being worked on'. This is particularly disturbing in view of how long a Black and Minority Ethnic community has been present in the area: respondents all spoke of members of this local community stretching back thirty and forty years. Now that the community is finding a voice through the Centre, and influence via local networks, at last this issue is receiving attention.

### **A presence in the town: 'major symbolic importance'**

'It's a major issue for the community.  
Yes, it's just constant, spat at, sworn at, insulted.'

Racism, in crude and more subtle forms, is a reality in NDC areas. The Salaam Centre has revealed, and challenged, racism from its inception. The Centre's very existence is of vital importance in this respect:

'the project has been very important in a symbolic sort of way as the first sign that there is a minority ethnic community, that there are minority ethnic communities in Hartlepool. I mean even though there is a Mosque you wouldn't know it was a Mosque, it's [a house], hasn't even got a sign saying Mosque or anything on it, so nobody would know, unless you're a neighbour of it ...'

'I think it's been important symbolically and it's been hugely important for the members of those communities: huge meetings, packed meetings and massive participation in electing a management committee. Quite a lot of tension and arguments over what is a relatively small project in NDC terms, I mean regeneration terms, but of a major symbolic importance. So there was a worry due to basically the high level of ignorance and racism in Hartlepool that that might have a counter effect and there were some early depressing signs, like verbal abuse of the survey workers when they were going round doing the surveys. We had to get them transport, to get them a sort of a minder in a sense to drive them round'

'I think if you had to point your finger at one thing and say what has been a success of this venture over the last 12 months: that has got to be a key thing hasn't it. The fact that there is now a focal point in the community with which people can identify ... it's essentially just physically being here has empowered a lot of community and the fact that we've got a physical presence where they go to, an organisation, a physical presence, they can get hold of somebody really and I think that's been a key strand of what's going on'.

In addition to the 'early depressing signs, like verbal abuse of the survey workers' (noted above), one respondent received threatening phone calls and the window of the centre had been 'put through':

'I did think there was going to be a lot more racist incidents, knowing how racist people are. And there were still times when I was at meetings where I actually, like, stop it, stand up for the [Salaam] Centre: New Deal Community meetings, you'll get an odd person who says "Oh, well, why haven't we got it, they've got one?", or they'll say, "them Pakis have got one". And of course, I address that ... And when I explained, you know, why it was there and went really into the background. This is a pilot and I actually said, "as far as I'm concerned, it's for anybody in that community, you're quite welcome to go in there, it's up to you to go through them doors".'

'That's an interesting one isn't it, because my limited understanding is that that sort of level of racism is constantly directed at the Black and Ethnic Minority community in the town and that was just the surfacing of it into our consciousness for the period of that survey'

This point about the experiences of racism becoming visible was indicated more strongly by another respondent, from whom the racism had previously been hidden:

'Somebody pulled up in a car and threatened one of the girls that we had out doing the surveys on the door. Horrendous. I just didn't think that it existed, I wouldn't have thought it existed in our community, it's strange, isn't it?'

Having reported these experiences, respondents were relieved that persistent attacks on the Salaam Centre and its staff have not continued.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that all interactions have been negative. Talking about more positive interactions, respondents emphasize the importance of interactions between local residents. For some, these are the simplest, but also the most important outcomes: greetings in the street, brief hellos that did not happen before.

'And at the end, the same bloke who previously had said "I'm not racist because I use the take-away" come over to me, because he's a resident steering group member... and he lives within this community, he come over and he said..."After listening to you today, I think I'd like to maybe come and see the Centre and maybe get a bit more involved".'

## **Struggles and challenges**

As the paragraphs above demonstrate, the project has not been without its struggles and challenges. Respondents spoke positively about their fellow colleagues and residents, but also acknowledged disagreements and arguments at different points along the way. Everyone didn't necessarily 'like' everyone else at all times, but worked together and the people interviewed evidently committed an immense amount of their own time and effort to the NDC projects. No doubt there will be plenty more challenges along the way. We are



conscious, for example, that many aspects of the project rest on very few active participants, many of whom are volunteers themselves (stretched for material resources), who give hours of their own time on top of long working hours.

Despite the pressures and challenges, one respondent captured the positive way in which disagreements can be put to use:

[They're] a bit like gold dust because they're learning opportunities. And if people are big enough to be able to sit down and say "how can we benefit from this" and "how can we learn from it", it's great'.

Additionally, when asked about any challenges, some respondents felt that the Salaam Centre was something of a victim of its own success. It had started small, and whilst this had meant they could build up gradually, expectations are high, and the Centre sometimes cannot provide as much as local residents might like. The premises do not afford the space for confidentiality nor for many different activities to be taking place at the same time, since it is essentially one large room.

'Bigger premises to start off with. There is a little bit of a problem with space. There's no confidentiality, we need larger premises, really, we do get a few delicate issues in here.'

### **Education: 'the whole process is about learning'**

There is a tendency to assume that 'education' relates only to activities that occur in schools and/or colleges. As the government's commitment to 'lifelong learning' makes clear, however, education has relevance regardless of age. It also encompasses a great many experiences and opportunities outside the realm of formal qualifications and taught courses. The Salaam Centre provides an education in numerous ways, not only for those who pass through its doors for access to advice and support, but for wider communities also.

'The whole process is an education for myself; it's not just about getting a book and reading a book and learning about certain things. It's the whole process of people coming here and learning about themselves and learning about life in general. If anybody comes in here and they've got a query and it's dealt with, then the next time they say, "Well, I could have done that". They've learned something, so I think the whole process is about learning. We do actually, like I say, we do put courses on and people have come in and physically learned something, they've learned English or they've learned Food and Hygiene. We've had IT courses in here as well. We had a good response to that. People learned there but I think the whole process is about learning. The same applies to us'

This reflects an inclusive perspective on education: recognising the wider value of experiences and moving beyond a narrow focus on certain institutions and targets. This is not to minimize the significance of formal educational certification, which can be vital in broadening labour market participation. Indeed, one of the most worrying aspects of our fieldwork in Hartlepool was that the BME focus, sensitivity and determination evident in the Salaam Centre was absent from dedicated education projects focusing on formal compulsory and post-compulsory education:

'there isn't any project other than this one that you are going to see this afternoon that has a specific BME role.'

## Looking forward

As we have noted, the Salaam Centre is widely viewed as a successful and important development locally. In view of its status as a pilot study, and the relatively short life of the project to date, its impacts have been very significant. Its success has created raised expectations and it seems vital that these hopes are met in the future.

'Hopefully, somewhere down the road Hartlepool Asian Association will take on that responsibility and drive it forward. So I think it's trying to put things into place now to try and do some work in the area and involve local people, at the same with one eye on the future. So we're looking at perhaps driving services in now and working alongside of the services which will have some sort of long-term commitment to the area. When our NDC project is long-gone, then hopefully things will still be happening.'

## Conclusions

Moves to secure race equality and greater BME inclusion have become an increasingly prominent part of contemporary social policy. This was given particular impetus by the publication of the *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report* and has become a legal imperative following the enactment of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. These issues are especially relevant to the NDC initiative. First, the NDC areas as a whole are more ethnically diverse than the population nationally. Consequently, NDC projects directly address a diverse population for whom issues of inclusion, social justice and anti-racism are likely to be pressing concerns. Second, even in areas where there is relatively little BME settlement, these issues are no less important. Fear of racial assault is more pronounced in mainly white areas and, in the past, the combination of poor educational standards and high levels of economic disadvantage, has proven to be a fertile breeding ground for racism. In view of these factors the relatively small number of dedicated BME projects in NDC areas is a major cause for concern. The lessons of previous initiatives in this field (echoed by the subject of this present report) is that BME communities do not automatically share equally in the rewards of regeneration and education initiatives. Dedicated work is necessary to involve BME communities; to gain their trust; to identify their needs; and to genuinely engage them in projects.

The Salaam Centre in Hartlepool NDC is an exceptionally important example of what can be achieved. It has successfully built on a network of local links and established itself as a catalyst for change. The Centre has had an immediate impact through capacity-building and adult education courses locally. Its influence can also be detected in the growing confidence of the local BME community and in the changed attitudes of other service providers (including the police and the local authority). The centre provides a means by which public authorities can better deliver on their statutory duties for race equality, under the amended race relations legislation, and acts as a conduit for the views and needs of BME communities.

In some respects the Salaam Centre has become a victim of its own success. Expectations are high and existing resources (in terms of staffing and physical plant) are stretched to the limit. The future of the Centre is not yet secure but respondents are clear in their view that not only must existing provision be continued, but also that there is an over-whelming case for expansion.

## Key Issues for Partnerships: Black & Minority Ethnic Inclusion

Aspects of good practice emerging from the research are:

- **Representation:** Local BME communities must be involved in developments, not only through the participation of individual community members but also via structured networks and consultative processes;
- **Employment and training** of local residents is a vital means of local capacity building;
- Enabling **communication** between residents (and between different ethnic groups) is crucial to addressing conflict and resolving tensions;
- **Raising the profile** of the local Black and Minority Ethnic communities is a central part of the work;
- **Work with police and council:** involvement in training and representing local people helps NDC residents and prompts better awareness among local service providers;
- **Recognition of local community needs and increasing access to services** is one of the most important outcomes;
- **Identifying future needs** is a key part of the ongoing monitoring and development process.

The research also highlights several areas that require continued attention if problems are to be minimised:

- **Accountability:** Communications between different participants and active participation on the part of NDC staff and steering committee members encourages accountability.
- **The role of volunteers:** some key aspects of the project rest on very few active participants, many of who are volunteers themselves, who give hours of their own time on top of long working hours.
- **Need of expansion:** The Salaam Centre is a victim of its own success. It started small and now the Centre sometimes cannot provide as much as local residents might like.
- **Raised expectations:** In view of its status as a pilot study, and the relatively short life of the project to date, its impacts have been very significant. Its success has created raised expectations and it seems vital that these hopes are met in the future.
- **The wider education context:** The BME focus, sensitivity and determination evident in the Salaam Centre is mostly absent from dedicated education projects focusing on formal compulsory and post-compulsory education locally. This gap is becoming increasingly evident and should be urgently addressed.

## Sources of advice

Commission for Racial Equality (2002) *Community Cohesion: Our Responsibility*  
<http://www.cre.gov.uk/pdfs/cohesion.pdf>

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)(2000) *New Deal for Communities Race Equality Guidance*  
[www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/publications/consult/newdeal/race/response/pdf/reg.pdf](http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/publications/consult/newdeal/race/response/pdf/reg.pdf)

Social Exclusion Unit (SEU)(2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Minority Ethnic Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal A guide to the work of the Social Exclusion Unit and the Policy Action Teams so far*  
[www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/bmezips/index.htm](http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/bmezips/index.htm)

## References

BBC News (2003) *Ethnic groups growing – census*, 13 February, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2756041.stm>

Department for Education & Skills (DfES)(2003) *Youth Cohort Study: The Activities and Experiences of 16 Year Olds: England and Wales 2002*. London, DfES.

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) (2000a) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Report of Policy Action Team 17: Joining it up Locally* [www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/pat17/pdf/jiu17.pdf](http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/pat17/pdf/jiu17.pdf)

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)(2000b) *New Deal for Communities Race Equality Guidance* [www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/publications/consult/newdeal/race/response/pdf/reg.pdf](http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/publications/consult/newdeal/race/response/pdf/reg.pdf)

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)(2001) *Local Strategic Partnerships Government Guidance* [www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/formatteddoc.asp?id=95](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/formatteddoc.asp?id=95)

Hartlepool NDC *Action Plan April 2002 – March 2005*

Hartlepool NDC *Steering Group Project Appraisal Summary Report: Ethnic Minorities Project*

Home Office (2000) *Code of Practice on Reporting and Recording Incidents in Response to Recommendation 15 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report*. London, Home Office.

Macpherson, W. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*. CM 4262. London, The Stationery Office.

Social Exclusion Unit (SEU)(2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Minority Ethnic Issues in Social Exclusion and Neighbourhood Renewal A guide to the work of the Social Exclusion Unit and the Policy Action Teams so far* [www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/bmezip/index.htm](http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/bmezip/index.htm)

West Hartlepool NDC *Delivery Plan March 2001*.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Our thanks to Dr Mike Grimsley, of Sheffield Hallam University, for this data.

<sup>2</sup> Our thanks to Dr Mike Grimsley, of Sheffield Hallam University, for this data.