

Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership
Community Training and Resource Centre

The STORY SO FAR

MAY 2006 edition ISSUE 4

For the past 6 years we have all worked hard trying to establish a resource centre to cater primarily but not exclusively for the needs of BME people. The resource centre was seen to be the best way of addressing the multiple needs that the BME communities face and where appropriate services would be provided under one roof. We have had many consultation meetings, conferences, newsletters to inform and involve the community. It has not been easy but we have remained focused in our goal. Some of the things that have come in our way and made it so difficult include the following:

- Working to very tight Single Regeneration Bid (SEEDA) processes and deadlines.
- Raising funds for fit out of the resource centre to match the secured SRB6 funds used to purchase the lease of the new build.
- Local resentment and opposition to the development of a BME managed Resource Centre.
- Local generic organisations being in direct competition with us and seeking funding in relation to BME specific work.
- Raising enough long term revenue funding for effective delivery of projects.
- Capacity to deliver local services to the diverse BME groups and organisations.
- Having to constantly prove to funders and other stakeholders our ability to work effectively with BME groups and organisations.
- As a BME organisation being monitored more stringently than other organisations of the same size.
- Lack of appropriate local support for an organisation of our size and speciality.

The success of the BMECP's model, i.e. diverse BME organisations working collaboratively to meet individual and common issues, is as a result of the unstinting effort and hard work by the BME community to develop one centre to cater primarily but not exclusively for the needs of all diverse BME communities and other local people some of whom face great disadvantage.

BME communities face many barriers when trying to access services within the City the main ones being the following:

- Language
- Racism/racial discrimination
- Lack of awareness of services
- Inappropriate services that are not sensitive to their needs

We are so near and yet still so far! These are our latest challenges:

1. BMECP has to address the funders' comments on the business plan in time for the 31st May 2006 deadline. By this date, all of the match funding to cover the costs of the fit out, staff costs and initial start up costs needs to be secured or written letters of support indicating the amount of funding being awarded must be provided by that date, as well as a final draft of the business plan that everyone is happy with.

2. Should the above conditions not be in place by the 31st May 2006, then there will be no option but for the leasehold (ie the building) to revert to the City Council for further development. This was clearly highlighted in the SRB6 approval letter, and there is no possibility of moving this date or offering an extension.

We are still working hard to try and meet the deadline of 31st May. We are currently working with Adventure Capital Fund to explore the possibility of securing funding from them. We are also in the meantime applying to other key funders eg Big Lottery Fund, Arts Council, and Esmee Fairbairn. We hope that funders as well as other stakeholders appreciate and acknowledge the unenviable and onerous task BMECP trustees, who after all are volunteers and the staff who have been very committed, were asked to deliver without adequate resources and in extremely difficult conditions. This project has been very complex, made worse by the tight SRB processes and local resentment. The deadline for submission of the Business Plan and for securing the match funding is getting close and BMECP needs all the support to bring this project to fruition

To this endeavour BMECP and their advisors are still working extremely hard and to tight deadline to secure the match funding required to secure the fit out cost and meet funders' and other stakeholders requirements to enable BMECP to secure the centre. Donations, in kind support and specialist input would be greatly appreciated.

BMECP would like to thank those who have supported this project so far and hope that you will continue to be willing to work with us to see this most needed project completed successfully.