



BASNET & Human Trafficking Foundation Online Forum

One Year On: Promoting Race Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

15th July 2021 1pm – 3.30pm

Chaired by Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey

Co-ordinated by Naeema Ahmed

The recording of the meeting can be viewed [here](#)

Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

Dame Sara spoke on the food voucher issue; vouchers replaced money during Covid which didn't work for many BME survivors who shopped at cultural shops which were too small to accept vouchers.

Noted how some BME survivors have said counselling was seen as weak and observed the need to acknowledge cultural issues and mental health support.

Plan is very comprehensive, three key areas that link to the Commissioner's plan:

1. Importance of evidence and data
2. Lived experience ensuring that survivor voice informs progress
3. Importance of cultural intelligence and awareness (critical for police, LAs, housing & legal profession)

Debbie Ariyo Founder and Chair of BASNET Presenting the Race EDI Action Plan

Problem of racism in NGO sector.

Conducted a survey which confirmed 64% experienced racism or had seen service users experience racism.

The good news is some organisations are already beginning to act and 75% of organisations say they are thinking of doing something about EDI.

Action plan itself:

- Policy and data key to everything
- Wanted measurable outcomes
- People were ready – MS PEC said we will do this; openness to collaboration; humbleness in sector

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- Over representation of BME in County Lines cases – but no strategic action plan; and not always seen as modern slavery issue; not part of modern slavery strategy; at present need a county lines action plan
- Victims and families are not involved in research - key action for MS PEC
- Police chief written to regions about county lines so there is some progress
- Difficulty in accessing housing after getting DLR; Getting abuse from council officers
- Want to work to track progress for each of us
- Activists recognise there is a problem
- Everyone welcome to become a member of BASNET

For change to happen in the sector it will be anti-trafficking leaders, activists that have a personal commitment to change and are prepared to go the length to make these changes happen to tackle racism and discrimination.

Dr Elizabeth Such University of Sheffield

- Huge issue in academia around diversity; racism fuels Modern Day Slavery
- Action plan covers every arena
- Racism fuels experiences of trafficking and modern slavery in the UK
- Community voices need to be involved in research going forward
- Breadth of Action Plan we can all choose a part where we can be a deliberate activist
- Survivor voice within the research panel
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Neena Samota, St Mary's University

- Home Truths Report thinking about inequities in the charity sector there is a need for nuanced data to create outcomes in reality
- Evidence and data are key themes within the Action Plan – identifying how important starting at data collection.
- How do we make Black Lives Matter in the work we are doing here?
- We can all play role not just statutory sector – what role do we play in that data collection? Only presenting NRM data on nationality.
- We want to understand the range of people you provide services to. What have we put in place to better understand the nuanced data of the people we deal with daily, but also, we need self-reflection on the makeup of the charitable sector?
- Yes GDPR issues to manage, but this will make services better once we know what the problems are – then we can shape direction of services as well as policy if we have that data
- How do we embed good EDI policy in everything that we do? start with the data.
- We will create a depository of good practice around EDI: online site with BASNET

Racial discrimination has been an enduring feature of the criminal justice system. Collaborative work with grassroots organisations will mean we can establish systems that keep a good record of what we do.

Panel Q & A

QS – Baroness Lola: what can we do to push for data?

Liz Such: positive steps by research council now collecting ethnicity data; require a different way of thinking; reward BAME communities participating; research needs to include commute voices.

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Neena Samota: section 95 requires the data, but we can't get the data from the Government. Binaries are so embedded we can't get data deliver EDI in any sensible form.

Qs – NRM and EDI need closer working → Yes action plan has section on this.

Survivors Panel Discussion

- Housing can feel very discriminatory
- Thin line between lack of cultural intelligence and racism
- Organisations need to have clear guidance and use evidence from current situations; so for the Modern Slavery Unit re the services they provide: NASS accommodation means you get removed out of areas you have connections.
- Court always challenging you if your story is true and it is very traumatic when you are challenged. Judges not believing stories
- Make sure people are trained properly and treat all like human beings
- If people haven't been to school, then they aren't always able to express themselves.

Dr Alex Bach, Modern Slavery PEC

Modern Slavery PEC makes up six research institutions who have a fund into researching Modern Slavery, great opportunity to address issues in inclusivity. As a research community there is a need for better data collection on who is receiving funding to improve transparency. How funding for research could impact what is being produced and shifts what perspectives are being included.

Modern Slavery PEC is going to work with their funders to improve diversity and inclusion. Can do better in terms of representation in events, there is such a need for diversity of voices. Minimum requirements for speakers, going to take this to their advisory board.

Robin Brierley West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, Davina and Jasmyn

Last year West Midlands started a conversation on whether they should produce an anti-racism statement and felt they wanted to do more something with longevity.

Anti-Racism Working Group – collaborative effort across the network to develop an action plan. Published a declaration of intent regarding their action plan to demonstrate commitment to move away from tokenistic and generic anti-racism statements.

Action plan promoting racial justice throughout the network tailored plan that accounts for the characteristics of the networks and all perceived obstacles to overcome challenges in implementations.

Recommendations for organisation:

- Senior leadership should commit to moving away from tokenistic statements of intent
- Consult expert organisations such as BASNET and develop anti-racism working group which should be available to join by everyone in partnership
- Develop internal survey to collect primary data across organisation

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- Development anti-racism action plan (desired outcomes, looking at obstacles, create a timeline, make it clear who is responsible)

Phil Brewer STOP THE TRAFFIK

Focus on Charities: Collaborative Projects

How charities can collaborate, looking at project example of STOP THE TRAFFIK and FLEX, and LAWRS. Identified that Latin American women in cleaning, hospitality and domestic work were at heightened risk of exploitation.

Campaign objectives:

- Provide a resource to be useful to the target audience
- Gather intelligence

Creating the right content about the language used (using algorithms to reach the right people)

Getting messages out there to vulnerable groups to destabilise these vulnerabilities giving them advise on national minimum wage, deductions from wages, overtime, hours. Cultural intelligence can be lacking due to the diversity of projects STOP THE TRAFFIK undertake.

Important to collaborate with other NGOs that can advise on cultural intelligence.

- How language is used is as important as what language is used. Understanding audience will mean that they can recognise
- Sharing skills and resources and raising the tactical capability of smaller NGOs working with diverse groups can improve project outcomes
- Helps understand issues impacting diverse communities
- Awareness of lesser recognised typologies within the sector and beyond
- Opportunities for joint funding important for smaller NGOs

Theme of collaboration runs through the whole project.

Mathew Sowemimo Salvation Army

Equality is about recognising and celebrating difference, if public services do not do that, they cannot achieve good outcomes for those they seek to serve.

Certain nationality groups are overrepresented in the NRM for example both Albanian and Vietnamese survivors. It is important that the push factors, that make people vulnerable, are addressed. Exploitation in these countries have particular patterns and the police force need to recognise these and be familiar with patterns of exploitation.

Within the Nationality and Borders Bill, the Government is going to change the test of how people qualify for reasonable and conclusive grounds, and the Salvation Army is concerned about this. This could be addressed, and patterns of exploitation should be considered in this context. For example, if inconsistent statements are heard, they should place these aside the patterns they know in these push countries, which would offset concerns of inconsistent statements.

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Single Competent Authority Decisions:

Re-trafficking risks are greater in some countries for example survivors from Vietnam face higher risks of re-trafficking due to gaps in public services and the social stigma of those facing exploitation.

Another key issue is translation services and the sensitivity around this. Helen Bamber's research found that due to cultural taboo and translation errors key mental health needs are not always detected and support isn't made available. This research also demonstrates the need to consider gender equality in modern slavery, for example those who experience the greatest trauma tend to be those in forced marriages and domestic servitude. There is a need to be fine-tuned to groups that experience highest levels of trauma.

<https://www.helenbamber.org/resources>

One of the core issues of access to translation services. Children of survivors are regularly placed in situations where they must translate for their parents which is not acceptable, equally parents in schools meeting teachers need translation services.

Commitments the Salvation Army has as a prime contractor:

- Will be sharing diversity and equality plan
- Importance of safe channels, when you come to a SA safehouse if you want to make a complaint you can complain directly to the HO important safeguard they have an alternative channel to complain outside of the salvation army
- Looking to gather statistics of racial composition of SA workforce in frontline spaces
- Lesbian and gay survivors important that their identities are respected, and they are able to live the life they wish to lead – training for support networks on LGBT equality so they can respond sensitivity

In this country we are on a journey to greater equality and the destination needs to be clear. This is equality and justice.

Magdalene Adenaike CEO Music Relief Foundation

Music Relief Foundation has influenced 5000 young people and their families over the last few years.

- 60% vulnerable at risk of exploitation
- 20% involved in criminal activities

Testimonial of a parent:

There were issues of domestic abuse and the family had to be moved out of the borough and were all placed in one room. When they were referred to MRF Sarah Jones MP in Croydon was contacted about the issues of housing and they were eventually re-housed. The children were approached for county lines activity and demonstrated to MRF the clear correlation between county lines and human trafficking.

Magdalene Adenaike spoke on the importance of grassroots organisations using self-organisation to encourage members of the community to engage. Grassroot organisations have first-hand knowledge of the community and have their trust. They are experts in the field, with the ability to bridge the gap and their power to be flexible and adaptable.

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Jide Macauley House of Rainbow

House of Rainbow is a charity supporting LGBT+ in Black, African and Caribbean communities. There is no service provision for survivors in the LGBT+ community. There is a need to listen to people who are fleeing their country of origin on the basis of their sexual identities.

The continued presence of conversation therapy has impacted on fear and taboo and fuels LGBT+ survivors not getting the right support.

Therapy for LGBT+ community, issues around mental health, sexual health.

Pam Bowen CPS

CPS invited to adopt BASNET's Action Plan recommendations on improving EDI in the anti-trafficking sector in the best interest of survivors. The theme with the most relevance to the CPS is theme six which ensures legal provisions conserve the best interests of victims from minority backgrounds.

CPS has a strong interest in understanding cultural practices which fuel human trafficking and how they impact on victims, the psychological impact on victims, how this can impact behaviour and giving evidence.

- Training of staff; ensuring that external advocates in court are appropriately trained in modern slavery cases.
- Considering victim strategies; important to understand what victims' needs are going to be in terms of interpretations and immigration status.
- Prosecutors have to explain their decisions and how they arrive at them
- Cultural and psychological experts to assist a court's understanding of the situation
- Considering what protection can be offered - applying to the court for special measures
- Victims giving evidence 8 weeks after defender has been charged
- Victim impact statements to ensure judges realise the ongoing impact on the victim

Concluding Comments

BASNET will be following up and tracking progress organisations have with the Action Plan and will host another conference to report on progress. In September BASNET have a joined event with House of Rainbow.