

Diversity

Newsletter of the Diversity Council Advocating equality in diversity

Issue No. 1

June 2001

Diversity Council launched



Delegates at the March 14th meeting (l to r) Prof. Ismail Abdullahi, Anne Thompson (ACLA), Shiraz Durrani, Michael Junor (Race & Class) Gulshan Iqbal, Kamaljit Bedi and Shashi Dorey (ALAG) and John Pateman (Race & Class)

An historic event took place in London on March 14th, 2001 when, under the guidance of Prof. Ismail Abdullahi, a number of organisations came together to form the Diversity Council. The three organisations that form the Diversity Council are African Caribbean Library Association (ACLA), the Asian Librarians and Advisers Group (ALAG), and Race and Class Group (RCG). SPICE and the Chinese Library Support Group have since joined DC.

The Diversity Council had extensive discussions with Bob McKee on March 15th where it was agreed that the LA would support the Council in different ways. It is expected that the Council will work towards becoming an LA Group on the same basis as other LA Groups. The LA Constitution stipulates that a new Group can be formed if 250 LA members (charter or associate) sign a petition to the LA Council which can then decide to recognise the Diversity Council as a LA Group, with all the responsibilities and privileges which LA Groups enjoy. The petition is reproduced on page 4 – please sign and return as indicated. Diversity Council is now represented at the Equal Opportunities sub-Committee of the LA.

Prof. Ismail Abdullahi from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association has been supporting the formation of the Diversity Council and has played a crucial role in bringing the three groups together. He also gave examples of the way in which the Black and other caucuses work within the ALA.

Relevant documents (available on the LA Website: <http://www.la-hq.org.uk>).

Ismail Abdullahi, PhD, Associate Professor, Clark Atlanta University School of Library and Information Studies. Atlanta, USA: *The role of a black librarian in the information age*. Keynote address at the Black Contribution to British Librarianship Conference, The Library Association - London - United Kingdom. 17th November 2000.

Shiraz Durrani *Combat racism in action*. Panel presentation at the Black Contribution to British Librarianship Conference, 17 November 2000. The LA, London.

Organisations behind the Diversity Council

The **African Caribbean Library Association** was established in 1981 by Ann Thompson and Kassa Tsegeye. It welcomes as members, librarians, library workers, information and IT specialists, library education specialists, writers, artists, publishers, of African or Caribbean origin. It is an independent fully constituted organisation.

ACLA is committed to the full implementation of race equality principles and policies throughout librarianship. We confront racism in publications, recruitment, training, and workplace practice. We work closely with the Black community and are committed to the honest representation of the black image and black history.

Asian Librarians and Advisors Group

Chair: Gulshan Iqbal

Treasurer: Kanai Dutta

Aims and objectives:

- To promote the use of library and leisure services in the Asian communities.
- To raise awareness of the needs and maintain service provision to Asian communities.
- To liaise with other librarians, individuals, groups and library authorities with similar aims to promote racial equality in the library field.
- To promote Asian languages, history, culture and heritage through library and information services.
- To provide a forum for Asian librarians and workers from similar fields.

Race and Class is a network of individuals and associated groups made of a number of progressive individuals and autonomous groups, each with its own specific identity, but work jointly on many fronts. They come from various professional backgrounds and include librarians, information workers, book shops, housing associations,

academicians, information students, activist organisations, among others. R&C is an activist organisation which seeks to address oppression based on race and class in all fields. R&C works closely with a number of groups.

Contact: Shiraz Durrani

SPICE (Specialist Provision in Community Languages and English) was started to support librarians working in isolation in the Midlands with responsibility to provide services to black and minority ethnic communities in 1990. The aims of SPICE, refined in 1998 in response to the changing needs of a diverse society, are:

- to ensure equality through quality
- to increase effectiveness and add value through best practice
- to promote the development of all employees
- to stimulate the development of targeted services
- to shape the strategy and future direction of all library services

Chairman: Jaspal Grewal .

Vice Chair: Kalvinder Kaur Dale

Chinese Library Support Group

Aims: To encourage professional dialogue, to exchange ideas and to promote best practice. Objectives:

- To take part in the national debate and developments on the future of the public library services within ethnically diverse contexts.
- To support service providers in developing and extending their services to their local Chinese communities.

Membership - The Group is open to any service provider which is providing or is planning to provide Chinese libraries and information services to the Chinese community in U.K.

Chair: Ms Haiyan Kang, Chinese Services Librarian, Westminster Libraries and Archives

haiyan.kang@dial.pipex.com

Vietnamese Library Support Network

There is no organised Vietnamese Library support group in the UK. However Hoi Dong has maintained contacts with Vietnamese librarians working in library authorities across the country. This Network has been recognised by the Diversity Council.

Contact: Hoi Dong

hoidong@libraries.manchester.gov.uk

Some recent developments

Quality Leaders Project for Black Library & Information Workers

At a meeting in April, the advisory group approved the proposals from Quality Leaders from Birmingham and Merton. Both pilots aim to improve public library services while developing black managers. The Management Research Centre, University of North London carried out the initial feasibility study and has provided training and evaluation of the Project. It will release its latest findings on 5 July, 2001. A newsletter will be produced for QLP by the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network. QLP is represented at the LA's Equal Opportunity sub-committee by Geoff Mills, Birmingham Libraries.

LA's Policy Advisory Group on Social Inclusion

The Library Association has recently established three Policy Groups on Social Inclusion (PAGs) – on social inclusion, regionalism and devolution, and on a national information policy. The PAGs have been set up to deal with the important cross-cutting policy issues. PAGs are meant to provide a fresh look at these policy areas. Details from Terry Turner, terry.turner@norfolk.gov.uk

Conferences & Seminars

- **Diversity, Equality and organisational Change** with guest speaker Dr. Binna Kandola, chaired by Tom Bentley, Director of Demos. The final seminar in the seminar series on Race and Diversity. June 20th 2001. This will be an opportunity

to contribute to some of the key arguments which will underpin the Demos/CRE report on Race and Diversity, to be published in Autumn 2001. Details from : Marji Molavi marji@demos.co.uk

- **Libraries, museums, galleries and archives for all – tackling social exclusion across the sectors**, 29 June 2001. Details from John Vincent, Social Exclusion Action Planning Network. 01392 256045. john@nadder.freeseve.co.uk
- **Unity in Diversity**: The 6th Black Contribution to British Librarianship Conference, Thursday 5 July, Manchester. Keynote Address: Bob McKee, Chief Executive, Library Association. Details from: Victoria.anibueze@la-hq.org.uk 020 7255 0639; Fax: 020 7255 0501

Merton ReachOut

Merton Libraries have published a new quarterly newsletter about outreach services. The first issue has contributions from various communities and articles by library staff about outreach services. Full details about outreach projects will be included in a forth-coming publication, *The Community Outreach Projects Handbook*. Copies from Di Reynolds bme.outreach@merton.gov.uk.

Diversity

Diversity is an irregular publication of the Diversity Council. You can send contribution for the next issue to Shiraz Durrani (address on p.4).

Logo for Diversity: The Diversity Council needs a logo to reflect its work and to provide a positive image. Please submit your design by 31 July 2001.

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Advocating equality
Support the formation of the Diversity Council as a Group of The Library Association

In recognition of the fact that the issues of diversity are as relevant and important to the library community as they are to society at large, I call upon the Library Association to recommend to Council that the LA recognise the Diversity Council as a LA Group (DCG). This new Group should have the same status (capitation, Council members, etc.), as other LA groups.

Please fill in your name and address below:

Name: _____

Address: Home or Work: _____

Post code _____ Tel: _____

Email _____

I am a member of the Library Association (LA): Yes [] No []

I am willing to join the LA, please send application forms []

I would like to join one of the groups involved in forming the Diversity Council. Please send details of [name the group] _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Please send the form to one of the following who can also provide further details about the Diversity Council. You can return the form electronically.

<p>Ann Thompson ACLA libraryannie@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p>Gulshan Iqbal ALAG Hounslow Libraries, 24 Treaty Centre, High Centre Hounslow, TW3 1ES. 020 8583 4545/4620; Fax 020 8583 4595</p> <p>Haiyan Kang Chinese Library Support Group Charing Cross Library 4 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0HG 020 7641 4623; fax 020 7641 4629 haiyan.kang@dial.pipex.com</p> <p>Lyndsay Rees-Jones The Library Association Tel: 020 7255 0635; Fax: 020 7255 0501 lyndsay.rees-jones@la-hq.org.uk</p>	<p>Shiraz Durrani Race, Class and Equality Merton Libraries, London Road, Morden, Surrey. SM4 5DX Tel. 020 8545 4061; Fax: 020 8545 3237 shiraz.durrani@merton.gov.uk</p> <p>Jaspal S. Grewal SPICE Ethnic Services, Central Library Lichfield Street, Walsall WS1 1TR Tel. 1922 653139; Fax 01922 722 687 grewalj@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Hoi Dong Vietnamese Library Support Network, Crumpsall Library, Abraham Moss Centre Crescent Road, Crumpsall Manchester M8 5UF Tel: 0161 721 4555 Fax: 0161 721 4927 hoidong@libraries.manchester.gov.uk</p>
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