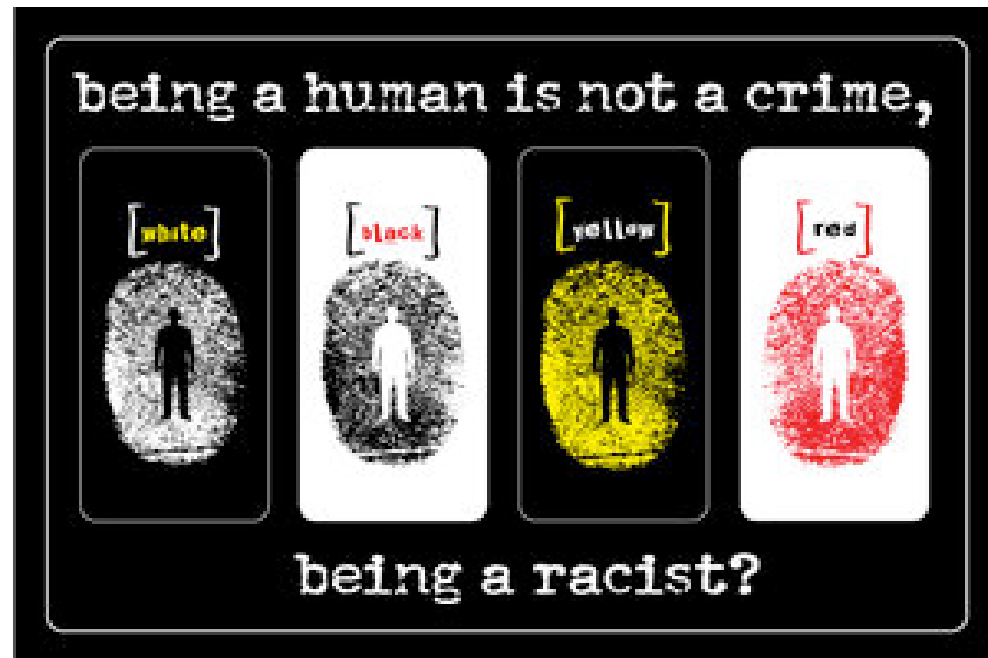




The Race Equality Centre in Leicester and Leicestershire



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Annual Report 2008/09

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CHAIR'S FORWARD

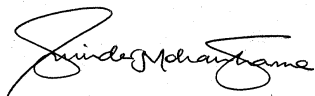
I am pleased to present this report for 2008-2009. It celebrates the successes of the services being delivered and the successes of individuals who have engaged with us, either as users, volunteers, students, staff or committee members.

This period evidenced the consistent and pro-active work with new arrivals to the City; it further showed that The REC works in collaboration and cooperation with other agencies across sectors to achieve race equality outcomes that are measureable. This Centre champions the necessity to embed equality within society and to that end our work spans a myriad of spheres, most of which could not be quantified within a few pages.

The REC continually strives to improve life chances through up skilling and/or challenging others to recognise that racism and racial discrimination are still real obstacles to many of our communities. The main objective of The Race Equality Centre for the future will be to build upon the valuable areas of work currently being undertaken, ensuring that it remains increasingly fit for purpose. We have increased the already close working relationships with other equality bodies, to foster a seamless approach to tackling multiple equality issues arising for individuals and communities alike.

We have also started to undertake work in the county. This coincides with the recent figures of increased population growth from the city into the county. We have been making efforts to engage more fully in research and publication: which highlights the current status of race equality within our area of benefit and beyond and the steps needed to promote racial justice.

This Annual Report presents a mere snapshot of outcomes for the financial year 2008/09, despite real capacity challenges. I would like to thank all my colleagues on the Executive Committee, the Council Members and all of the staff who have continued to perform so admirably over the last twelve months.



Surinder Sharma - Chair
The Race Equality Centre

Generic race equality work

Our generic race equality work seeks to engage proactively with organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire to advocate and encourage the development of strategies, policies and practices that comply with the spirit of the race equality legislation.

Within the private sector we have acted as consultant and training provider to large employers, to help to refine the institutional understanding of discriminatory practice and to assist senior members of staff in reviewing their individual practices.

Within the public sector, we have worked with Local Authorities, Health Authorities to encourage the application of their race equality duties – especially when conducting race equality impact assessments and in developing of race equality schemes (including action plans).

Programme of work for 2008 – 2009

Area of Programmed Work	Output	Outcome
<p>Leicester Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Racial minority representation ii. Stronger Communities Partnership (SCP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Steered Task Group ii. Development of strategy to ensure commitment to creation of Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Representation being secured from Sector ii. Chair of SCP, SCP located in Leicester Partnership's revised constitution
<p>NHS Leicester City</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Developing Equality Impact Assessment practice ii. Equality & Human Rights Steering Group iii. Race4Health Peer Review iv. World Class Commissioning v. Race Equality Scheme Audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Delivery of training to middle managers ii. Advice provided to members of Board iii. 2 days intensive examination of race equality practices within the PCT iv. Participation in consultation for strategy document v. Facilitated meetings to secure understanding of race equality outcomes in service delivery and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 50 managers trained ii. Proposed strategies reviewed iii. Production of a report from which PCT drew an action plan iv. Recognition within strategy for the need to address EIA as each work is being commissioned v. Pro forma produced. RES action plan review report submitted to Board Members

Area of Programmed Work	Output	Outcome
<p>Voluntary Sector</p> <p>i. Highfields Community Association</p> <p>ii. African Caribbean Centre Development Group asset Transfer</p> <p>iii. Black Achievement Forum</p> <p>iv. African Caribbean Citizens Forum</p> <p>v. Voluntary & Community Sector Economic Development Network</p>	<p>i. Participation in monthly meetings, development days and roundtable discussions as Vice Chair</p> <p>ii. Participation in monthly meetings as advisor</p> <p>iii. Regular meetings with key representatives from Leicester's African & Caribbean vcs and policy leads from Children & Young peoples services</p> <p>iv. Regular involvement as advisor</p> <p>v. Co-ordinating response of voluntary sector to strategic economic development proposals</p>	<p>i. Asset transfer for centre as agreed at Cabinet</p> <p>ii. Terms of reference developed, Business plan completed</p> <p>iii. Ongoing- development of all encompassing systematic strategy for reducing the inequality of outcome between African Caribbean young people and their counterparts</p> <p>iv. Development of Business Plan and work programme agreed at away day</p> <p>v. Ongoing – provided a means to engage with the working neighbourhood fund programme of Leicester Partnership</p>

Area of Programmed Work	Output	Outcome
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>i. Equality & Diversity Partnership</p> <p>ii. Multi Agency Forum</p> <p>iii. New Arrivals Strategy Group</p> <p>iv. Community Cohesion Executive</p> <p>v. Mainstreaming Moderation</p>	<p>i. Participation in regular meetings</p> <p>ii. Co-Chair</p> <p>iii. Contribution to strategy development</p> <p>iv. Contributes to meetings which prioritises methodologies for strengthening practices</p> <p>v. Participation in meetings</p>	<p>i. Advice given on national indicators equality assessment. Accessible Information Document agreed at Leicester Partnership. Embedding Equalities Document agreed at SCP</p> <p>ii. Provide the means for vcs organisations to share good practice, develop strategies and identify barriers to integration for new arrivals</p> <p>iii. Strategy developed and reviewed</p> <p>v. Mapping Somali communities research completed</p>

Area of Programmed Work	Output	Outcome
<p>Research Training & Conferences:</p> <p>i. Community Engagement</p> <p>ii. Inspiring Young People</p> <p>iii. Equality & Diversity Training</p>	<p>i. Report submitted to Mainstreaming Moderation Executive</p> <p>ii. Conference for young people – Guest of Honour Rev. Jesse Jackson</p> <p>iii. Training and workshop delivered to two colleges and one infrastructure organization.</p>	<p>i. Recommendations adopted</p> <p>ii. Feedback received demonstrating increased level of inspiration and intention to engage with political/community affairs</p> <p>iii. Participants are able to locate equality legislation relevant to policy decisions.</p>

Where are they now?

A 16 year old African Caribbean boy, in his final year at secondary school, took part in the theft of some equipment from the school. He was observed on the school's CCTV but, when questioned about the incident, he explained that he had committed the offence under duress and because he was being bullied into the act by older youths. Unfortunately, the young man could provide no evidence to support his assertions and so, despite indications that this incident was out of character, he was punished for the theft with a permanent exclusion from the school.

The boy and his family received support from our Race Equality Officer in preparing and presenting their appeal against the permanent exclusion. Through this the family were able to demonstrate that their son was not the only student to have stolen equipment from the school but that previous punishments, given to boys from other racial groups, were less severe. On hearing this, the school Governor's Disciplinary Committee, agreed that he should not have been permanently excluded and ordered his re-instatement.

Sadly, a number of months had passed between the imposition of the initial disciplinary action and the ultimate decision of the Governor's committee. During this time attitudes between the school and the student had hardened, to the extent that the boy found it difficult to return to the school and a number of school staff expressed a disinclination to receive him back. This impasse, occurring not long before the commencement of the GCSE period, could have rendered the outcome of the appeal to little more than a pyrrhic victory. However, our Race Equality Officer worked with the family and with senior support staff at the school to put in place a programme of supported home study. This meant that the student only had to attend school to take his exams.

The GCSE results were not perfect; they were nowhere near as good as they could have been. But they were enough to allow the student to continue his studies to A level – and beyond. In summer of 2009, this young man completed his law exams, and is now a qualified solicitor.

David Purdey was Director of Leicester Council for Racial Justice (circa 1988) which was later renamed Leicester Racial Equality Council (1994). He became Wivenhoe Town Mayor during 2007/08. He is currently Chair of the Wivenhoe Ferry Trust, Secretary of the WEA and a school governor at Broomgrove Infants School.

Charlie Sweeney came to TREC as a student placement from Soar Valley in 2008. He was placed at front of house on reception dealing with clients and taking phonecalls. He also designed the front cover of our Annual Report that year. He will be attending Queen Elizabeth College in September to study Economics, Philosophy, Eng Lit & Lang combined, Media and Critical Thinking

An asylum seeker from Somalia arrived in the UK in 2000 with a one year old son and was granted refugee status in 2001. She received assistance with resettlement and integration from The REC's Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advice Project (RASAP). The Project assisted her with housing, benefits, education and training advice. In 2004, she approached the project to see if she could volunteer as her son was now in school and her English had improved. RASAP took her on and trained her on basic office skills. The project also encouraged her to study further and assisted with enrolling her on an access course at the Highfields Centre which worked around her child. After one year she came out with a qualification in advice work and now as child in full time education she has gone to study a degree course in International Affairs

Reshma Sheikh was formally a resettlement officer for the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Advice Project whilst studying for her Law Degree. After completing her postgraduate in Law she gained her LPC at Birmingham School of Law. Since qualifying as a Solicitor, Reshma has worked for a leading international law firm and won a number of awards to signify her achievements in both business and in law. She has won the following accolades to date: Society of Asian Lawyers 'Young Lawyer of the Year - 2008' award, British Asian Haftas 'Female Employee of the Year - 2007' award, Finalist for 'Birmingham Young Professional of the Year - 2008' and profiled in the 'Black Lawyers Directory - 2008/2009

Reshma continues to be actively involved in charity work and raising awareness of equality issues facing the professional sector.

In 1992 **Francis Scoon** was employed as the manager of the Leicester & Leicestershire Racial Harassment Project. In 200x he became a member of the Executive Committee of Leicester REC and continued in that position serving as Vice Chair until 200x. He is currently a Legal Advisor in the People team at DWF Law Practice, who achieved Best Practice in Diversity and Equal Opportunities

Mr S

An asylum seeker from Iraq came to UK in 2000 and approached RASAP with a friend who had already been granted refugee status and required assistance with resettlement. Mr S spoke good English and often volunteered to interpret on behalf of people from the Kurdish community.

In 2004, he was granted refugee status, and RASAP assisted him with obtaining housing and encouraged him to obtain a qualification in interpreting. He obtained his qualification in 2005 and was one of the interpreters working for RASAP. He also started interpreting for the Police and the Court Service. This gave him an interest in studying Law. He studied and obtained a qualification in IELTS (International English Language Testing system) which enabled him to access University level education.

The Project supported him with his UCAS forms and he went on to study for a Law Degree in 2006.

Syd Jeffers was previously an executive committee member of LREC. He is currently a Senior Lecturer of Sociology at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of East London. He is a Member of the BSA Race and Ethnicity Study Group and Race Forum and a member of the Editorial Collective of Critical Social Policy.

Abida Hussain came to LREC in 2002 as a student placement whilst studying for her BA in Youth & Community Development. After her placement finished she continued to volunteer with us, later working part time as the youth officer for the Racial Harassment Action Group (RHAG). She became the Manager of RHAG in 2004 (later known as the Racial Harassment Intervention and Support service) and continued as Manager until 2008. She is currently an Equality & Human Rights Officer at the NHS Leicester City.

**Comment from clients:
Taken from feedback forms**

“My asylum case was very long and difficult such that by the time was granted a Refugee Status, I was weary and confused. [The REC] helped me to understand my needs and fought some amazing cases of injustice. They know the needs of the community they service which helps in their service delivery. Thank you all”

“Continue helping needy people like me please!”

“They are very helpful, very nice and well organised and I do appreciate them to give me the right advice”

“[The REC] they are dealing all the cases very quickly also they are very helpful people”

“Because I got what I need to get, thanks to all of your staff, pleasure”



Affiliated Organisations

African Caribbean Citizens Forum
Afro-Innovation Group
Age Concern
Antigua & Barbuda Association
Association of Afghan United in Britain
Association for Bengali Communities
Bangladesh Youth & Cultural Shomiti
Belgrave Baheno Peepul Centre
Belgrave Development & Enterprise
East West Community Project
Federation of Iraqi Refugees
Federation of Sikh Organisations
Fosse Health Trust
Foundation Housing
Harvey Ingram Owston Solicitors
Highfields Community Association
Hindu Religious & Cultural Society
HMYOI Glen Parva
Indian Women's Association
Indian Workers Association
Leicester African Caribbean Business Association
Leicester Asian Business Association
Leicester Asian Youth Association
Leicester Brahma Samaj
Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living
Leicester Chinese Community Centre

Leicester Ethnic Elderly Advocacy Project
Leicester Irish Forum
Leicester Caribbean Carnival
Leicestershire Caribbean Cricket Club
Leicestershire Constabulary
Leicestershire Learning & Skills Council
Leicestershire & Rutland Probation Trust
Leicestershire & Rutland Sport
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
Leicester United Caribbean Association
Moat Community College
National Association of Youth Justice
Nirankari Advice Centre
Oasis Palaces
Overseas Qualification Development Service
Pakistani Youth & Community Association
Progressive Writers Association
Punjab Link Council
Ramgaria Board
Regent College
Riverside Housing
Savera Resource Centre
Shama Women's Centre
Shree Hindu Temple & Community Centre
Shree Navrang Society
Shree Sanatan Mandir

Soft Touch Arts
St Albans Community Centre
St Gabriel's Community Centre
St Matthew's Tenants Association
Transport & General Workers Union
Union of Communication Workers
UNISON Leicestershire
Voluntary Action Leicester
Wesley Hall Community Centre
West Indian Senior Citizens Project
Youth Offending Team



Individual Affiliates

Violet Chidombwe	Kamiljit Obhi
Vinod Chudasama	Mr D.Patel
Jennifer Finlayson	Shantilal Patel
Colin Green	Arthur Rowe
Garry Guye	Resham Sandhu
Anu Jalota	Francis Scoon
Baljinder Johal	Wolde Selassie
Leena Mandalia	Surinder Sharma
Mr B Manek	Harbans Thiarey
Kulbir Minhas	Ghartey Vardon
Rohan Morgan	Mr D Wehner