

**MEWN Cymru's
Manifesto for the
National Assembly for Wales
2007**



**Empowering Women
Challenging Barriers
Combating Racism
Working towards Change**

MEWN Cymru – an Umbrella Body for Black and Ethnic Minority Women in Wales

- ◆ Supporting BME women from 1994
- Membership based organisation (individuals & Organisations)
 - ◆ Registered charity No. 1066735
- Company limited by guarantee No. 3044208

Our Mission

To remove the barriers to participation faced by Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) women in Wales. Our belief is that by empowering BME women, challenging barriers and combating racism, MEWN Cymru is working towards change.

Our Manifesto

MEWN Cymru wants to work in partnership with the National Assembly for Wales to continue:

- ◆ To empower women from BME communities and enable them to develop their own initiatives or projects and participate fully in mainstream services.
- ◆ To represent the needs of BME women in policy forums and campaign on issues affecting them.
- ◆ To actively promote anti-discriminatory practices.
- ◆ To meet the needs of BME women within a welcoming and safe environment.
- ◆ To raise the awareness and knowledge of service providers.

The Following Projects Run by MEWN Cymru Have Identified Specific Issues Which Need to be Addressed to Bring About Some Important Changes in BME Communities of Wales

Ethnic Minority Women's Health Awareness Project (EMWHAP)

- To assist BME women to have a greater access to mainstream health service providers in South Wales
- Increase awareness of common health issues

Common Health Issues Identified by this Project:

- ❑ BME women are less likely than the general population to visit their GPs for treatment or check up due to a number of reasons. For example,
- ❑ BME women have a lack of awareness on how the health care system works; available services
- ❑ BME women have language (ethnic & jargon) difficulties
- ❑ Cultural issues make health care settings unfamiliar environments for BME women
- ❑ BME women have preconceived perceptions that the health system is insensitive to their care needs (Vivienne Walters, 2004).
- ❑ Many BME women suffer ill health, unable to seek early treatment as they feel disempowered
- ❑ Despite higher levels of heart disease, many South Asians are less likely to receive coronary surgery and revascularisation than white patients (Connections, winter 2004/2005)
- ❑ BME women are more likely to book late for antenatal care and miss out on screening programmes and general treatment and care services

Action Needed:

- Provision of cultural/faith based training to health service providers
- Provide translators/interpreters when needed
- Conduct BME specific trainings
- Provision of general information on available health services
- Provision of advice and support to BME women and Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Lobbying of mainstream health providers & policy makers

Training Research Environment Education Project (TREE II)

- Increase awareness of the importance of our environment & how to conserve our environment
- Increase awareness among BME women about the links between environmental and health issues.
- Raise awareness among organisations in the environment sector about the barriers BME women face in accessing their services.

Common Issues Identified by this Project:

- Lack of awareness of environmental issues in BME communities across Wales.
- Lack of awareness of the links between environmental and health issues in BME communities across Wales.
- Many barriers faced by BME women in accessing services provided by environmental agencies.
- Environmental agencies ignorant of the social and cultural needs of BME women.

Action Needed:

- Increase environmental awareness in BME women
- Provision of cultural/faith based training to environmental agencies
- Encourage integration between cultures
- Community Gardens
- Community Kitchens
- Allotments for sustainability
- Community leaders & groups embracing environmental agenda

Black & Ethnic Minority Support Team (BEST Project)

- Support BME communities which are based in Communities First (CF) areas.
- Support organisations to understand BME issues & guide them to profit from funding from CF Programme through CFSN.
- Try to influence Statutory/Business organisations to modify policies to be more inclusive and understand BME issues and barriers.

Issues Identified by BEST:

- Business and financial planning assistance.
- Assistance with fundraising
- Assistance with evaluation and auditing
- Assistance with legal and structural issues
- ICT training
- Training and skill building of boards, groups and organisations
- Networking and support systems

Action Needed:

- Assist BME communities to help themselves by empowering them to strengthen their own communities.
- Provide improved means of communication between community organisations & individuals and mainstream organisations (e.g. forums).
- Engage people with use of new technology
- Overcome isolation of communities
- Increase communication & exchange of information between communities and organisations.

Learn and Earn II Project**Issues Identified by this Project:**

- Lack/cost of childcare is a barrier to BME women participating in mainstream learning & gaining employment
- Travel is a barrier to BME women participating in mainstream learning & gaining employment
- Lack of English is a barrier to BME women participating in mainstream learning & gaining employment
- Fear of prejudice & cultural constraints are a barrier to BME women participating in mainstream learning & gaining employment

Action Needed:

- Affordable Childcare
- Affordable/specialised travel scheme
- More ESOL specifically designed for peoples needs
- Assistance for BME communities to bridge gaps for themselves by providing services for themselves – identifying & training community champions in ESOL & childcare
- Integration between BME communities
- Integration between BME communities & Welsh communities