

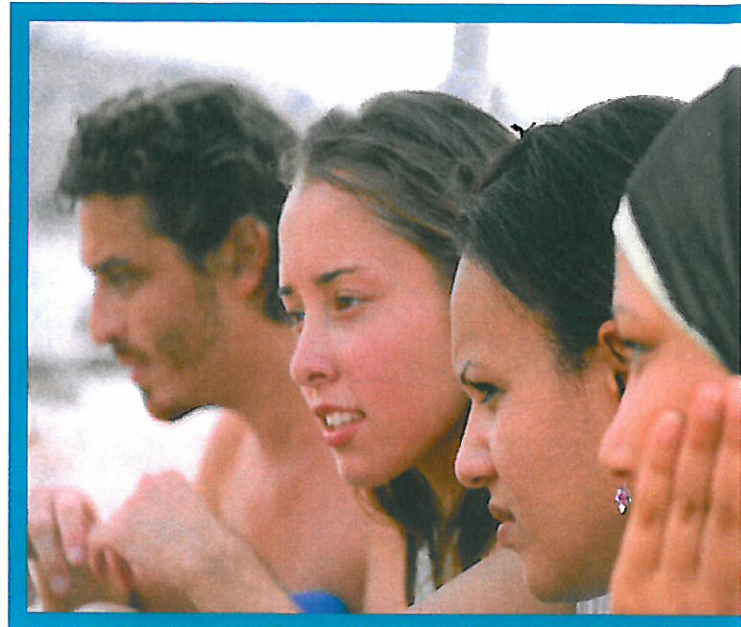
VALREC Newsletter

Issue 18 Winter 08/09

Young Peoples Workshops

by Wayne Lee

Young people are often bullied for being different, particularly around race, sexual orientation and religion. We have developed interactive workshops as a tool to engage with young people to discuss these topics. The aim of the workshop is to inform young people about diversity, raise their capacities and enable them to be more objective and to think outside the box. The media often plays a huge part in shaping peoples thought patterns and the mind of a young person can be impressionable. If young people have never been exposed to something different they don't often know how to respond. The more we can educate young people; we can take another step closer to eliminate some of the most prevalent types of bullying. The workshops we run are specifically set up for this purpose.



Merthyr International Club

On the 26th October, Merthyr International Club, supported by VALREC, held a youth disco for Migrant Worker children which was funded by Communities First Trust Fund. The event was held at The Guest Keen Club in Merthyr and over thirty five young people from Polish and Portuguese backgrounds attended. Many of the young people brought Welsh friends with them. The event was catered by a local Portuguese café owner who provided Portuguese fair which was enjoyed by all who attended. The young people had a great time and were all keen that the Club hold another event soon.

Polish Ladies Day Out

By Helen Williams

VALREC are currently in the process of organising a Polish ladies day out. If enough interest is generated from our social gatherings, eventually we are hoping to establish a Polish Women's Support group over the Borough's that we cover to provide representation, support and information for the large population of Polish people living here, in South Wales. We are keen to get in touch with anybody from the Polish Community who is interested in getting involved with VALREC.

Please contact helen@valrec.org or call 01443 742704.

Who do you see - Living together in Wales

by Christine Protheroe

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) launched its report, "Who do you See" about people's attitudes towards discrimination and equality in Wales. An event took place in the Liberty Stadium in Swansea and VALREC were invited. The survey revealed that "the people of Wales have broadly positive attitudes and areas of significant prejudice persist."

VALREC will be identifying themes and areas of work that we can impact on to break down barriers and challenge stereotyping and prejudice within our areas of benefit.

Young People, Graffiti and the Community

By Sam Nawaz

This November VALREC, in partnership with the Youth Offending Service, is seeking to run a graffiti project centred around Black History month. Caerphilly Borough has been kind enough to sponsor this initiative to educate its young people about the importance of black history month.

This project is aimed at young people, who are currently engaging in illegal graffiti. The participants of this project will attend anti discrimination and race awareness classes followed by classes in graffiti design. They will create and combine ideas for graffiti designs with the local artist and then try out techniques and designs that allow them to spray graffiti in a controlled environment without being at risk of committing offences.



The primary aim of this project is to:
Promote the knowledge of the black history month.
Disseminate information on positive Black contribution to British Society.
To promote good relations between persons from different racial groups.

What Mari's Been Up To!

By Mari Rees

I'm working on a new project based, initially, at the Eco Park in Caerphilly County Borough. We are hoping to identify non-native flora and fauna and to build a narrative around them about how they came to be in CCBC.

The project would be rolled out by piggybacking on other schemes. School visits to the park could include identifying particular flora and fauna that have an interesting tale of how they came to be there or working with adults in Ramblers' groups etc. Cefn Forest Partnership, Cefn Forest Friends of the Eco Park and Groundwork are interested and at this stage, supportive, So I hope we'll be able to get this up and running soon.

If it's successful, this could be rolled out in any number of arenas and to virtually any age group. For instance, most of the Communities First Partnerships I work with seem to have walking groups as part of their commitment to healthy living, they would be a natural place to start and the projects would become sustainable very quickly.

Valleys Women Ethnic Minority Support Group

By Mina Perry

Valleys Women Ethnic Minority Support Group (VWEMS) has picked up a Diversity Award Wales 2008 run by Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales (BVSNW) and was short listed for the second year running. VWEMS has been recognised for the work they do and the support they give to women in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Area for providing ESOL and confidence building classes to its members and for holding a quarterly event throughout the year in the community.

Diversity Awards Wales

Recently VALREC has sponsored one of the Diversity Awards organised by BVSNW (small to medium sized social enterprise award).

As part of VALREC work we are committed to supporting and encouraging individuals and community projects who promote diversity in the field of Equalities.



Mina Perry presenting the small to medium sized social enterprise award.

TN2020 Transatlantic Talk

By Sam Nawaz

Earlier this year I was selected by the British Council to represent a somewhat significant and imperative platform for building bridges between countries on each side of the Atlantic.

The Transatlantic Network (TN2020) aims to connect young people across many sectors who are expected to

be in the vanguard of leadership in 2020. This gathering assembled citizens from 15 countries on both sides of the Atlantic to develop a long-term programme that provides opportunities for exploration, personal growth and, ultimately, broader problem-solving. While in Berlin, the group explored the challenges and strain of the existing Trans-Atlantic relationship, and questioned the need to work together for its continued health intellectually or through programmatic efforts. Moreover, TN2020 was honest enough to face the global reality of Asia and Africa and the need to eventually extend the network beyond North America and Europe.

The real strength and energy of a new millennium Trans-Atlantic network intrinsically connects to what makes many politicians most nervous: virtual nation building. As the world becomes smaller and people become more affected by the corporate and personal decisions of citizens in different parts of the world, it will bind regular people together in a way that nationalism cannot force.

At the end of October 2008, the first 100 members of TN2020 participated in the programme's inaugural summit. During this week-long gathering, all met with Ireland's President, Mary McAleese. One of her major platforms was that of African immigrants. I am happy to be a member of such an effort. I hope that the world will see not only the new U.S. President and his counterparts determine the bridge, but the citizens who will actually have to walk across it.



TN2020 at the New America Foundation, Washington DC, USA

Bridgend YOS Opportunity Unite Activity Day

By Helen Williams

On 7th November 2008 VALREC, in conjunction with Bridgend CBC & Bridgend Youth Offending Service took part in the Opportunities Unite Activity Day at Ogmere Life Centre in Bridgend.

Throughout the duration of the day VALREC conducted consultations using a series of workshops around stereotypes, racial awareness, migrant workers and anti bullying to engage the young people to identify their needs to ascertain what they would like to get out of the youth service provision in the Bridgend area.

Other examples of activities on the day included:-

- Duke of Edinburgh Activity Bus
- Climbing Wall
- Vent Tent (to find out views on specific issues)
- Youth Inclusion

Commission for Racial Equality

Our 3 year project funding with the former CRE has now ended. The project funded specific objectives in respect to casework, migrant workers and young people.

We have completed Monitoring Forms and End of Project Returns and we have been informed that VALREC has successfully met the targets and outcomes under all our objectives.

Due to the assimilation of the CRE into the Equality and Human Rights Commission VALREC is now no longer receiving funding for this work.

Knife Crime Prevention

By Wayne Lee

Working closely with South Wales Police and University of Glamorgan we have embarked on a project that aims to prevent knife crime increasing significantly in South Wales. The project will include research through questionnaires and workshops aimed at 11-25 year olds.

A resource pack will be developed which will be used in schools, youth clubs and various services that young people access.

Focus groups will be set up for young people to get together and talk about knife crime, share information and inform key services of ways to combat knife crime.

What's Going On!..Parc Prison – Bridgend

By Christine Protheroe

Our work has progressed well with Parc Prison in Bridgend. The Prison is a Category B local prison housing approximately 1126 male adults (convicted only), young offenders (convicted and remand) and young people (convicted and remand). The prison opened in November 1997 and is the only private prison in Wales. It is managed by Group 4 Securicor on behalf of the Prison Service.

We have delivered Equality Impact Assessment training to approximately 50 senior staff and to further endorse this work we have provided one to one support to Staff on a weekly basis. This has provided staff with the confidence and skills to proceed with the process of carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on policies and procedures. We are closely monitoring the complaints procedures in respect of racial incidents. We review all incidents on a monthly basis and select a random sample to seek feedback from prisoners and staff concerned. We are also in the process of carrying out an annual evaluation of racist incidents.

Jo Melen has had the role of the Race Equality Officer at the Prison for the past year and we would like to offer our congratulations to her on her promotion to Equality and Diversity Manager.

Blaenau Gwent Anti Bullying Conference February 2009

By Helen Williams

VALREC are currently in the process of working in conjunction with Llanhilleth Communities 1st in Blaenau Gwent to develop an Anti Bullying Conference which will target all of the young people in Blaenau Gwent Area, incorporating all facets of bullying with particular emphasis on stigmatized groups and homophobic bullying.

The conference will take place during the February half term and we have planned a calendar of weekly meetings to develop this project. The young people will play a major role in the development of the project and will receive accredited training in order to plan, develop and deliver the anti bullying conference. Federico Podeschi from LGBT centre of excellence who specialises in raising awareness around sexual orientation and supporting transgender people to get involved in activities is also working in partnership with VALREC helping deliver his expertise on the conference issues.

The outcomes of a successful conference will give a youth perspective on the development of services in the Blaenau Gwent area which is based on actual research conducted on a wide scale with truly representative young people.

Calendar Competition

By Wayne Lee

Each year every Primary School in RCT is invited by the LEA to encourage pupils to design posters with an anti-bullying theme for the Calendar Competition. The winners of the competition have their posters printed in a calendar and are invited to an awards ceremony where they are presented with a prize on stage.

The calendars are distributed to various organisations in RCT and other authorities across South Wales.

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