

Race Council Cymru

CROSS PARTY GROUP on RACE & EQUALITY MEETING 27TH APRIL 2022 (HOSTED ON ZOOM)

Minutes

ATTENDEES

Griffiths, John Andrew (JG), Professor Uzo Iwobi OBE (PO), Jeremy Miles (JM), Meena Upadhyaya (MU), Charlotte William (CW), Chinese in Wales Association (CIWA), Shavanah Taj (ST), SY Joshua (SJ), Patricia Jones (PJ), Ray Singh (RS), Kay Denyer (KD), Stubbley-Adje Lily (LS), Cabbage Eleri (EC), Moore Robert (RM), Loren Henry (LH), Davis Susan (SD), Christina Tanti (ST), Helal Uddin (HU), Bettridge Andrew (AB), Rees Chloe, Leila Usmani, Deeze (D), Spooner Marcia (MS), Hywell Ellin (EH), Hough Sarah (SH), Ali Abdi (AA), Pogsley John (JP), Maria Mesa (MM), Jasmine Okai (JO), Shumon Shah (SS), Lisa Gardner (LG), Ross Thomas (RT), Chudi Okeh (CO)

The Meeting started at 11AM with an opening remark by the Chairman and moderator, Mr. John Griffiths MS

KEY MINUTES

1.

Chairman's Opening Remark:

He welcomed everybody to the meeting and gave a brief introduction of the speakers, acknowledging Wales to be the first UK nation to make the teaching of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories and experiences mandatory in the school curriculum, a new framework set for introduction in September 2022. He also talked about the training the Welsh Government is putting in place towards achieving an all-inclusive agenda.

2.

Charlotte William:

She gave an overview on the development of the 51 recommendations that was made on the report of the working group to the Welsh Education Policy and Practice. She highlighted some of the current happenings thus;

- Lack of appropriate resources available to teachers and other education practitioners which the Welsh Government is taking a good step to make Black and Minority Ethnic history part of the broader Welsh history.
- In terms of professional learning, there is a project called DARPL- Diversity and Anti-racist Professional Learning. This is a website still at its developmental stage, and will be a virtual campus that will host projects, events, resources, dialogues. It will also be a focal point for professional learning and development.
- Charlotte William pointed out what the Seven providers across Wales are going to function more proactively to recruit people from Black and Minority backgrounds, and some bursaries are going to be made available.

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- Betty Campbell MBE Awards - Schools will have nominations for promoting the contributions and perspective of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and the winner will be announced on the 10th of July.
- She also intimated all about the additional funding made available by the Welsh Government to the National Academy of Educational Leadership in order for them to support the idea of diversity champion amongst the board of Governors for schools, in terms of professional training and development through the National Academy.
- She reiterated her continuous work with the Welsh Government and also with qualification Wales on their advisory board, thereby looking at principles of assessment in place in our GCSE and what the new styles of curriculum in schools will look like if it was going to reflect the principles. She stated that she is open to ideas, information, questions, advice and thoughts.
- Other contributions through Literature Wales, Book Council, Arts Council and other institutions in Wales that are gearing up in relation to this agenda its resource demands were touched.

3.

Shavanah Taj- Wales TUC

In addition to what Professor Charlotte William said, Shavanah advised that we support all the projects going forward for consistency and it must be hardwired into the budgetary planning process of Welsh Government, if not, then it will become another thing that the third sector will be asked to deliver across Wales.

Some of the experiences of the black nation workers and the issues being picked up by trade unions are highlighted below:

- The Wales TUC affiliated and trade unions have welcomed the idea of Black History lessons to be introduced in schools as part of the curriculum which is revolutionary. But the major concerns when it comes to teaching unions and school unions in regards to Black Nations and other minority ethnic teachers include barriers in entering the profession, progressing in the profession, the pressure of being within the profession, pay parity, promotion prospects and lots more, and what TUC is doing in relation to bridging the gap.
- The support staff in schools in Wales vary, lack of sensitisation in pay rates, being asked to supervise classes alone when they are not trained to do so or paid for it either, terms of contract of employment differs, lack of fair wages.
- The handling of racial discrimination in schools by the school governing board and local authorities which is not reflective of the population of the local community.
- There should be some considerations in recruiting for schools' governing boards no matter the political party involved.

4.

Jeremy Miles- Minister for Education and Welsh Language

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The Minister said from his personal point of view that he is fully committed to making sure that the Education and the opportunities and the outcomes for all children and young people in Wales are fair and equitable in all ramifications.

- He acknowledged the fact that racism is still a reality for many children and young people in Wales through racial bullying, harassment including in schools often from their peers, the inequality and experiences in the society especially for children and young people from the minority ethnic communities which sometimes hampers their dreams and aspirations to further their Education. He reiterated his commitment to creating an anti-racist culture, one which will be infused into the Education system.
- As set out in the forthcoming Anti-racist Wales Action plan, there are long term goals which are ambitious policies to create real change and impact. They range from requiring that all Educational institutions in Wales tackle institutional racism as a whole, institution approach to improving the levels of recruitment but also retention and progression into leadership of teachers from ethnic minority communities. In other words, every Educational institution is to effectively record and act on incidences of racial abuse, discrimination, bullying and to ensure that our teaching itself also reflects the history and experiences of our diverse communities in Wales.
- The curriculum for Wales will be introduced from September 2022. It will encompass all primary schools and half our secondary schools have the option of starting this year and the other half will start next year. The curriculum will give the teachers and learners the sense of belonging in celebrating diverse culture in modern Wales. It will also support individual learners to make strong connections with their homes and communities, embracing the past and present experiences. The teachers will support learners to develop a sense of belonging that will encourage them to contribute positively to their communities and confront racism as well.
- His vision is that every young person in Wales understands how Welsh history, language diversity and culture have shaped Wales to become a unique modern state. The vision is also to inspire people to protect their unique heritage and the Welsh language and how that language is used in the wide diversity of modern Wales.
- Ensuring that every teacher is equipped with the knowledge of how to design the curriculum to reflect the practice and ensure that all schools, stakeholders develop a common approach around local Welsh and Black, Asian and other minority ethnic histories. They must understand how language plays a vital role in our identity in Wales and across the world.
- He also reiterated his commitment in implementing the recommendations from the working groups' reports, which he will be publishing in early December. Finally, he said that teaching of Black Asian and minority ethnic histories and contributions is essential, as it is about recognizing the values and contributions of all our communities across the curriculum and empowering them to explore more of our histories and heritage and develop a strong sense of identity and wellbeing as part of fair equal society and for that to be embedded in all parts of the curriculum.

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Questions and Answers

Charlotte William, Patricia Jones, Sy Joshua, Leila Usmani, Meena, Deeze all asked their questions and the minister responded accordingly.

5.

Judge Ray Singh - Reflections

If you want to change the narrative, change the systems that keep delivering inequality, that keep delivering the outcomes that work against the people. To make change we must find allies who share the ideology of my win is your win, what is good for ethnic minorities is good for wider society too.

6.

Uzo Iwobi's proposal to the meeting

She mentioned a couple of important things to note:

- Limited Funding by organizations to carry out the proposed work of Anti-racism.
- Strong cross-party approach to ensure that leaders of other political parties are carried along with the initiatives.
- Organizations to take a pledge and sign up with Zero Racism Wales.
- Individuals to take a pledge and sign up with Zero Racism Wales.
- Raising awareness in young children to be accountable for their conduct.
- To set up a conversation with members to explore on how to have a cohesive narrative on some of the concepts raised in the meeting.

7.

General Discussions and Round up

Moore Robert

Robert reveals that racism thrives under conditions of dislocation, uncertainty, deprivation and general inequality and these are evidently the background reality in the UK at the moment.

Leila Usman

- Leila raised the important question of the identification of other stakeholders being involved within the local government in Wales, towards broader cohesion outside and within schools.
- And what are the plans for the informal education sector towards mitigating racism and achieving and ensuring racial education.

The meeting ended at 12:30 PM.