Finding Common Ground

Assessing the scope for community mediation as a tool for conflict resolution amongst Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Cardiff

A project funded by the New Ideas Fund, Welsh Assembly Government, hosted by the Vale Mediation Service and carried out by
Katherine Hughes, Katherine Hughes Associates
Manjit Mahil, Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales

Katherine Hughes
KATHERINE HUGHES ASSOCIATES
26 Bryngwyn, Caerphilly, CF83 1ET
Tel: 029 2088 6569   Fax: 029 2086 0848
E-mail:katherine.hughes@btconnect.com

Manjit Mahil
BLACK VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK WALES
Crichton House, 11-12 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5EE
Tel 029 20 44 01 89
E-mail: m.mahil@bsvnw.org.uk

Contents

Acknowledgements

This study was carried out by Katherine Hughes and Manjit Mahil. Katherine Hughes planned and devised the research, recorded the focus group and individual interviews and wrote the project report. Manjit Mahil recruited community intermediaries, facilitated and hosted most of the focus groups, and was responsible for community liaison.

We wish to thank the following for their invaluable contributions to this project:

❑ Vale Community Mediation Service for hosting it

❑ The Welsh Assembly Government New Ideas Fund for funding it and particularly to Robert Willis for advising us on methodology throughout the project

❑ The Steering Group for their guidance

❑ The community intermediaries for opening doors to their community and for co-facilitating – Rajma Begum, Carrole Fox, Kinsey Hayak; Vilas Kerrai, Riaz Hassan, Marcus Campbell and Sa'eed Soleman

❑ The workshop participants who spoke so openly at the focus group workshops and whose anonymity we have promised to preserve.

The New Ideas Fund aims to support small research projects that address themes within the Social Justice and regeneration portfolio, with clear relevance to the strategic objectives set out in "Wales: A Better Country." Without this fund this study would not have been possible.

We have sought to consult with the groups at all stages during the production of this report, but responsibility for any errors or misunderstanding lies with the authors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How can community mediation better assist people from black and minority ethnic communities to resolve conflicts?

This question led to this research study funded by the Welsh Assembly Government's New Ideas Fund and carried out by Katherine Hughes and Manjit Mahil (Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales) between February and October 2006.

Mediation is a well-established process, which contributes to the prevention, management and resolution of disagreements, in which an impartial third party helps people in dispute to find common ground and a mutually acceptable resolution, which is agreed and not imposed.

The Vale Mediation Service, which hosted the study, was concerned that mediation is perceived as a "white" remedy, one based on neutral values and a self-help approach. So this study sought to establish whether the process would be acceptable and effective in resolving disputes within and between black and minority ethnic communities.

It was agreed to undertake the study in Cardiff because of the concentration of minority ethnic groups there. The African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Gujarat, Pakistani and Somali communities were selected because they represent the largest populations.

The researchers sought to ascertain experiences of conflict and conflict resolution. A topic schedule was developed and refined by the Steering Group. Community workers were recruited from each of the 5 communities and interviewed using the draft topic schedule, which was then refined. They were invited to recruit 10 members of their community (who could be friends, family, or associates) to a focus group. They were also asked to host, co-facilitate and interpret for the group and to arrange for the discussion to be held in familiar surroundings and at appropriate times. The discussions were held over a 6-week period between June and August 2006 and were in the main, audio-recorded, with transcripts being agreed by the co-facilitators before their use as a basis for the report.

Participants were asked 10 questions including:

- What is unique about your community?
- What do you understand by conflict?
- What are the main conflicts you experience?
- How are rules laid down about how you should behave with other communities?
- How did you deal with conflict? Was the conflict resolved?
- Are there other ways of sorting out conflicts? Which methods work best?
- What would be an ideal approach?
- Is there a role for training? If so, who should be trained and how?

Case Study Cardiff: extracts from selected focus groups

"Conflict starts when people want to be in control; it exists more here than back home. Back home people are more relaxed, with people dressing more in a Westernised way, whether they are well off or not. Here we're a minority and there is more pressure on us to behave in a way that is expected of ours. The lifestyle can be restrictive. People want to undermine you."

"Conflict prevents people from speaking to each other. They can be within the family, within community organisations. At a community level it's often to do with power. The caste and class system also cause conflict – for example, people will go to one mosque, but not to another. People sometimes bring conflict with them from their country of origin. They also get into conflict because they are set in their ways and have their own fixed ideas. They may come from different parts, come from different castes, come from an urban or rural background, have different education, and work experiences…"

Pakistani Community

We in the Pakistani community are building a mosque for our community centre. It was a former social services building. Many barriers are put in our way – from planning and building controls to neighbours complaining about the noise and parking."

"The Pakistani community unfortunately does not have a place to go to mix with other communities, although it does have a mosque and some people play cricket. For example the Samaj is presented as being just for the Hindu community.   If our community had a centre we would mix with other communities. Some ground rules might be:

❑ There should be a management committee for all community facilities, with voting rights for each community
❑ There should be training to support good understanding and good relationships with other communities
❑ Language problems need to be resolved
❑ Lack of experience is often a cause of conflict
❑ There is a need for protocols which set out how people will behave with each other – this needs to be backed up by agreed policies, procedures, and ways of resolving problems
❑ There needs to be training about what the rules mean and how they will be applied
❑ All management committees need to have the same understanding of the rules."

Gujarat Community

"We in the Gujarat community don't have conflicts with our neighbours, but they have conflict with us. White people have a conflict with us because of our colour. Our community centre is based in a multi-coloured area, and the

neighbours complain about noise. They call the police and shout through the window. They complain about the cars parked in our street. Our culture keeps things calm. We don't fight back. We tend to get on with what other people want. Hinduism encourages us not to 'charge back'. It is more likely that people will walk away and not speak to each other."

The community centre had an argument with neighbours at Diwali some years ago. There was an incident where a neighbour's window got broken during a firework display. We said that we would pay for it – it really wasn't worth the argument. The neighbour would not have it and became noisy. We said 'we live in this country and we've got to stay here' – we backed down as we always have to back down. This 'resolves' the problem, but it does not give us internal happiness. Last year at Diwali we told the police and they warned the neighbours that the event was going to happen. By doing everything properly, this worked well."

"In our business we have had problems with white youths wanting to purchase alcohol. If we don't serve them they call us names and break our windows. More police patrolling is needed to sort out these problems."

Somali / Bangladeshi Communities

"We have experienced conflict here about running our shared (Somali / Bangladeshi) centre. The basis of the conflict is about lack of experience in running the centre – we cannot communicate and we don't trust each other."

"Our background, up-bringing and faith set the rules. If we go to a centre, the centre rules prevail. If it goes against our religion, we don't go there. At the centre, we all had a say in the rules. We agreed the rules, trained people about them, and we adopted them to ensure that conflict did not arise. We put the rules up on the wall. When everyone got used to the rules we put them away. We had a honeymoon season."

African-Caribbean Community

"It would be helpful to have black history. We should show the racists that there were black heroes – not just the people who got into fights with the English."

"What's in people's heads has to do with what happens at home. Most people don't get a chance to learn why they hate. Resolving conflict involves feeding them the good stuff – their mindsets need to change."

Findings and conclusions

The study highlights the importance of creating awareness of the way others live, with education for Global Citizenship from an early age being a high priority. School visits to local community facilities were cited as an example of breaking down the barriers and as a way of countering prejudice.

It was widely agreed that conflict arises because people fail to understand, communicate or respect each other. Misunderstandings arise because people have different experiences, ideas, or ways of seeing things.

The overall impression gained from the study was that communities want to live in harmony and want to have clear structures and 'rules of behaviour'. However, there is a tension between 'multi-culturalism' and a desire to retain cultural identity, which needs to be better understood by everyone – citizens, service providers, and decision-makers.

The tradition of many groups is to provide for the members of their community, such as creating community or faith centres and celebrating together. These features of social stability support the rules of behaviour amongst many BME communities. However, such arrangements are weaker amongst much of the indigenous white community, with the dismantling of many structures, such as churches, chapels and voluntary societies, underpinning hostility to the activities of many BME communities.

This research suggests that most conflicts *within* BME communities are resolved through community structures, which are perceived as being stronger than in Western society – thus falling out with the community can be painful. Elders help to resolve disputes or smooth out problems within the community and the systems seem to be robust and effective. Mediation in its conventional sense is likely to have limited use here, although there is scope for developing its skills within a different cultural model.

There appears to be no effective single system to deal with *inter-community* conflict. Participants want a mechanism, which is local, safe, culture-sensitive, even handed, involves respected local people, is not institutionalised, is confidential, and where the rules and procedures are known. Mediation has a place here – indeed two of the women's groups decided to use mediation to resolve a dispute. It appeared that the male groups would prefer a more imposed solution, such as intervention from the police or enforcement by the local authority. A need is highlighted for respected community members to be involved in any solution.

Stereotyping, assumptions and barriers to participation are widespread, making it difficult to bridge between communities. Many groups cited examples of difficulties within the school system to support global citizenship, and within the world of work to support integration. The study has shown the need for better understanding of the issues affecting the BME community, of good practice, and of the constraints on providers. It suggests a toolkit, which meets the needs of groups, helps providers to negotiate on common ground, defines a way of ensuring consultation and engagement, and provides guidelines for addressing conflict.

The project budget allowed us to implement the agreed methodology, but not to look at all BME groups, to assess the views of white groups or to use a triangulation approach to examine other perceptions.

Although the study was undertaken in Cardiff, the results are nevertheless valid elsewhere. What shines through the evidence presented in this report is the importance of understanding these cultures in supporting harmony and role of cultural values in creating disharmony.

Recommendations

1. There is a clear need for education for global citizenship, with an emphasis on teaching cultural awareness to young children. This must address the chasms that exist between communities, fundamental differences in values, culture and traditions, and the ways in which people interact. Education for global citizenship is needed at all levels and in all quarters of our society and in all schools, irrespective of the mix of pupils. The earlier that children become aware of the way other people live, the more likely it is that diversity is respected and valued.

2. Ways of resolving conflicts should, where possible, seek to reinforce traditional systems. Efforts should be made to make these work even better, for example, by giving Elders a better understanding of other communities or the scope for mediation in addressing specific problems that people encounter (for example, conflicts over land use planning).

3. The value placed by communities on self-help, stability, tradition, authority and community harmony should be better understood and acknowledged, with community harmony recognised as a key feature of community well-being. Local providers need to be trained more robustly in diversity issues, with more resources also being applied to preventing potential conflict between and within communities.

4. More work is needed to ensure that the particular needs of BME communities in respect of land use planning and community regeneration are fully understood and addressed. Guidance, toolkits, training, awareness raising, better consultation and dialogue are all ways in which this could happen. In respect of the new Local Development Plan process, local planning authorities need to ensure that BME groups are fully involved from the start.

5. A toolkit for community providers should be prepared, drawing on the lessons of this study. In particular, this would support good practice in global citizenship education and amongst planners, community development and regeneration specialists. Separate funding should be allocated to this task to ensure a good product and collaboration with focus groups.

6. The role, opportunities and limitations of mediation should be better understood, and it should be available to those who need and want to use it.

This means training people from BME communities, women, older and younger people, and others who are 'culturally aware' in the skills of mediation – whether or not these skills will be used within a mediation service in its true sense.

7. There is particular value in training young people to be mediators – both as a means of generating community harmony and because it provides for personal development and routes to employment

8. There may be scope for more inter-community working and the development of community fora. However, their format, purpose, geographical coverage need to be clarified. Their role and links with the community would need to be identified.

9. A further dialogue amongst the focus groups, discussing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report, is needed to ensure that they are in the driving seat of this work. Further resources are needed for this – indeed the relationship of this research study with policy development needs to be more clearly identified. Initial proposals are included in Appendix C.

10. Results of this study should be widely publicised and used as training materials.

1.   Introduction

This study came about because the Vale Community Mediation Service was asked to help clients from different Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, but felt unable to respond.   They wanted to know how mediation could better help to resolve conflict between and within different communities.

Mediation is a well-established process, which contributes to the prevention, management and resolution of disagreements, in which an impartial third party helps people in dispute to find common ground and a mutually acceptable resolution, which is agreed and not imposed.

The project proposal was developed by Katherine Hughes Associates on behalf of the Vale Community Mediation Service.   The team comprised Katherine Hughes and Manjit Mahil of the Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales. An application for project funding was made to the New Ideas Fund in November 2005. Funding was granted in January 2006, the study began in February 2006, the fieldwork took place in June – August, the draft project report was prepared in September and the study was completed in January 2007.

The project was guided by a steering group comprising Amanda Protheroe (UWIC), Liz Mitchell (Cardiff Communities 1st), Riaz Hassan (Cardiff Communities 1st), Vicky Ibbertson (Vale Mediation Service), Helen Prior (Mediation Wales), Steve Sidall (South Wales Police) and Soad Hamdi (Women Connect First) with support from Ruth Musgrave from Newham Conflict and Change and Hen Wilkinson from Bristol's Community Resolve.

It was initially planned to carry out the study in Cardiff and the Vale. It was recognised that there were some differences between the issues faced by the BME population in the Vale and the BME population in Cardiff. However, because the BME population in the Vale is more dispersed and apparently more 'invisible' it was decided to focus the study on Cardiff. Here, it was argued, recruitment would be easier, issues could be more easily identified and an infrastructure exists to address them. It was also felt that some lessons learned here could be applied to other parts of Wales.

It was agreed to focus on 5 communities – African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Gujarat, Pakistani and Somali because they are the largest BME communities.   We were unable to include many other established community groups – e.g. Chinese, Yemeni, Sikh and Gypsy and Traveller groups. We also took a decision not to hold a 'white' focus group because it would have added to the complexity of the study.

Within the confines of a £10,000 grant, the project has sought to describe the perceptions of individuals from selected communities about the way they interact with others.   To our knowledge most studies in this area take a more *quantitative* approach; we hope that this *qualitative* approach, which allows the participants to speak for themselves, will communicate the messages they want to convey to administrators and policy makers. This study may be criticised for not having recruited a more 'representative' cross section of each of the communities or not attempting to

include other groups. A further study should address these issues, and perhaps use triangulation (comparison of different sources and types of evidence) as a check on validity.

Looking back at the results of the study revealed that a context is needed. Over the past 200 years, the southern part of Cardiff has successfully absorbed immigrants from all over the world. In the past, incomers often left their family and history behind them, intermarrying and settling into the local way of life. Nowadays, immigration is mostly of whole families and there is more emphasis on preserving cultural identity. This brief potted history of each ethnic group participating in the study is designed to provide a context for the study.

Local Context

The **African-Caribbean** community began to arrive in Cardiff in the early 20th Century. with most people arriving as economic immigrants in the 1950s. The population was largely concentrated in Butetown until the 1990s when it began to disperse to other parts of the city. At the 2001 Census most of the 3,500 people lived in Grangetown, Butetown, Pentwyn and Riverside.

Bangladesh experienced intense political upheaval in the early 1970s and many **Bangladeshi** families came to the UK during this time, in search of stability and work and encouraged by changes in immigration laws. There were 2,546 Bangladeshi people in Cardiff recorded in the 2001 Census, mostly living in Riverside, Plasnewydd, Grangetown and Canton.

The British Indian community, of which the **Gujarat** community is a part, has been in Cardiff since the late 1940s, when young men came to the UK as economic migrants. Most of the Indian community came from India, but in the 1980s many people came from East Africa. The British Indian community of 3,829 people is widely spread throughout Cardiff, with the majority of people living in Grangetown, Riverside, Cathays, Canton, Heath and Gabalfa.

The **Pakistani** community is well established, with most people coming to Cardiff as economic migrants in the 1950s. The community experience very high levels of employment and self-employment, with low incomes. The population of 4,264 people live mainly in Grangetown, Plasnewydd, Riverside Cathays and Penylan.

The **Somali** community has been in Wales since the 1880's when sailors, working merchant seaman, settled in Wales and married local Welsh women. The Somali community in Cardiff has the largest British-born Somali population in the UK and is one of the oldest minority ethnic groups in Wales. Most of the Somali community settled in Butetown, Grangetown, Riverside, Adamsdown and Plasnewydd, with a small percentage dispersing beyond these areas. The Somali community comprises 2,189 people in Cardiff according to the 2001 Census.

2.   Aims and Objectives

1. To ascertain what the most appropriate mechanisms are for tackling conflict amongst Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in Cardiff and the Vale.

    *   To assess the perceptions of BME communities about conflict resolution and the scope for and constraints on interventions, such as mediation, arbitration, advocacy, conciliation and race equality training.

    *   To assess the particular needs of BME communities for mediation (both as a service and as a self-help capacity building tool) in relation to diverse cultures, religion, language and social isolation and the need to build on people's trust and existing practice.

    *   To explore the components of a model of mediation provision, which will ensure access to and provision of effective, timely intervention amongst diverse BME communities.

    *   To assess the capacity building requirements of BME communities and determine approaches and policies in recruiting, providing accredited training, mentoring, and retaining volunteer mediators from BME communities, which will support self-help and community /user-led provision.

2. To determine methods of provision in order to ensure feasibility, viability, and sustainability (whether a stand alone service, provision hosted by one of the partners or threaded through the work of many partners).

    *   To assess how BME mediation provision might fit into the national and local agendas for social justice, community safety, inequalities, etc.

    *   To explore, with organisations working with the BME community, the partnerships needed to ensure access, methods of referral and common standards of quality, trust, and effectiveness.

    *   To explore the most appropriate service model for provision to be feasible, viable and sustainable (for example, accredited training, professional practice standards, funding opportunities, monitoring and evaluation, risk assessment and sustainability plan).

3. To set up a steering group of key players, both to steer the project and as a forum to develop partnership working in the field.

3.   Approach

The project was essentially an investigative, qualitative study designed to identify the nature of the issues concerning inter community conflict and explore possible policy objectives. It was not designed to establish the extent of the problem or the feasibility of policy responses. Thus qualitative, in depth methods were used to ascertain the views of small groups of people, recognising that those views may not necessarily be representative of the population as a whole. It was decided to use focus groups as the basis for soliciting views and it was agreed to convene these using intermediaries who were already known to Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales (BVSNW) although this did not determine the choice of communities.

It was decided at the inception of the project to investigate the views of the 4 most prevalent BME communities in Cardiff and the Vale, as follows:

- **Pakistani**
- **Bangladeshi**
- **Somali**
- **African Caribbean**

Subsequently the **Gujarat** community was added to this list. There was much discussion about which communities to include. In particular, there was a widespread interest in including other communities, but it was accepted that if the methodology was found to be appropriate, it could be extended.

Many people suggested that it would be difficult to "engage" with people from BME communities. Possible barriers included:

- Being unable to recruit an objective, representative cross section of community groups
- Being unable to offer adequate confidentiality or to adequately secure people's trust
- Difficulties in communicating without misunderstanding or misinterpretations
- Difficulties in engaging in a dialogue when the same terms and intended meanings can be understood in different ways

As a result, much effort went into setting up the project in a way that would foster dialogue and ease barriers to communication, including:

- Setting up a steering group of 'critical friends' to identify potential opportunities and consider potential barriers. The steering group met in May 2006 to discuss draft topic schedules and possible directions and outcomes for the project. Its role is also to consider the draft recommendations, organisations that need to be involved in implementation and the approach to launching the report. The steering group comprises members from mediation projects, Cardiff Communities 1st, the Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales, Mediation Wales, and academic staff.

❑ Visits to the projects in London and Bristol to get an insight into successful conflict resolution projects and the type of issues experienced. Conflict and Change, run by Ruth Musgrave, provides a conflict resolution support facility in Newham, the most ethnically diverse local authority in the UK. The Bristol Community Resolve service, run by Hen Wilkinson, builds on this model.

❑ Focusing the project in Cardiff where BME communities exist in sufficient numbers to be visible. Some of the people attending the Gujarat focus group live in the Vale, but otherwise all the participants in the project came from Cardiff, and in the main from Grangetown and Butetown.

Advice from the steering group and the Bristol and Newham projects led us to approach the community through trusted intermediaries or opinion formers (for example, community workers). With one exception these were recruited by BVSNW through their prior contacts. They were invited to attend a 1-hour interview. Having secured their support for the project, we asked them to recruit 8 – 10 community members to a focus group, which we were to facilitate with their support. They were provided with a leaflet to explain the project and were offered £10 interview attendance costs, a promise of confidentiality and a commitment to being consulted about the final report. See Appendix B.

The initial interviews were held with people from the following groups:

❑ Pakistani (male over 30 years)
❑ Bangladeshi (female over 30 years)
❑ Somali (male under 30 years)
❑ Somali (female over 30 years)
❑ African Caribbean (female over 30 years)
❑ African Caribbean (male under 30 years)
❑ Gujarat (female over 30 years)
❑ Sikh (male over 30 years)
❑ Arab (one female over 30 years to recruit Pakistani women over 30 years).

These intermediaries were asked to convene focus groups of 8-10 people in convenient locations in Central Cardiff, to be held at convenient times, with refreshments and expenses of £10 per person attending. The intermediaries themselves were paid a fee of £50 for recruiting and translating / co-facilitating. The recruitment of the focus groups in this way was effective, with an average of 9 participants. The focus groups ranged from 5 to 13 people (excluding the intermediary / co-facilitator, the facilitator and record keeper). The cost of focus groups varied, but overall the cost was just over the target budget of £1600.

It was planned to record all the discussions using an audio-recorder to supplement written notes. In most cases this was done, although one intermediary refused permission and thus the workshop depended on written notes alone. In some of the focus groups some of the discussion took place in languages other than English, with a facilitator translating, thus calling into question the added value of the tape-recording process.

The intention was to ensure that discussion groups were kept deliberately informal and user-friendly. To this end, the topic schedule was revised several times in order to keep the number of questions to a minimum. The topic schedule was first used in the intermediary interviews and was subsequently revised following them.

It was decided to segment the groups into male and female and over 30 and under 30. This was taken to mark the threshold between mature adults and young people. With the exception of the Over-30s African-Caribbean group, males and females met separately.

In the main, the focus group members represented the middle tiers of their community – the people who have a community role, make things happen, understand the rules of their society and have lived long enough in South Wales to understand how things work here too.

In the focus groups that required it, the intermediary /co-facilitator and some participants had the language skills to include comments from older participants with limited English.   This applied especially to older women from the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali communities.

The project resources did not stretch to providing a crèche and although we specified this in the recruitment (particularly in the workshops specified for older women), one workshop included a well-behaved baby.

The researchers are grateful to the intermediaries / co-facilitators for convening the groups of participants. We had the impression that this was quite an achievement, particularly amongst the women, who are "time-poor", having to juggle their time between their children, their housekeeping and family responsibilities, and often a paid job.   Time-keeping was not rigorously adhered to, but prior discussion with the intermediaries enabled us to reduce the list of questions within the topic schedule.

The topic schedule used to generate discussion had 10 questions and follow-up questions, covering a definition of conflict, participants' experience of it within their community and between communities, how conflict is tackled within and between communities, what works and what doesn't and what needs to be done if a mediation service is to work. See Appendix A.

We asked the facilitators to convene meetings to suit the convenience of the participants.   Accordingly most of the women's sessions took place during the morning, while most of the men's sessions took place in the late afternoon and evening. Having morning meetings may have excluded some working women, but several of the participants worked as nurses, community workers and other professions and were able to allocate their time to the project. If the meeting had been held in the evening, more people would have been excluded.   The evening sessions for younger and older men worked well.

The notes and recordings of the focus groups were written up verbatim and were sent to the intermediaries / co-facilitators to ask their group if they accepted these notes as an accurate reflection of the discussion. The focus group discussion notes were then used as the basis for writing this project report.   Clearly this involved a process of

interpretation and selection. The intermediaries/ co-facilitators were invited to comment on the interpretation and to ensure that the points that their groups wanted to make were adequately reflected in the report.

Table 1: Focus groups convened for the study

Workshop	Segment	*Age range	Number	Convenor	Venue	Day	Time
African - Caribbean	Older M & F	30-65	8	Carrole	Butetown Community Centre	Sunday	5-6.30 pm
African - Caribbean	Younger M	20-25	5	Marcus	BVSNW - Butetown	Thursday	6-8 pm
Pakistani	Older M	40-60	6	Riaz	Channel View Community Centre	Wednes day	6-8 pm
Bangladeshi	Younger & older F	25-50	10	Rajma	Women's Centre, Neville St	Friday	10am–1pm
Somali	Older F	25-50	10	Kinsey	Women's Centre, Neville St	Monday	10am–1pm
Somali	Younger M	20-30	13	Sa'eed	BVSNW - Butetown	Tuesday	6-8 pm
Gujarat	Younger & older F	25-60	10	Vilas	BAWSO, Cathedral Road	Friday	7pm–9 pm
Pakistani	Younger & older F	25-60	10	Soad	Women Connect First	Tuesday	11am–1pm

* these are estimated age ranges

The intermediaries recruited via BVSNW worked well in the sense that they were able to recruit the targeted participants to the focus groups at the agreed date and time, they co-facilitated in order to ensure participation, translated and supported participants as necessary, secured their cooperation in having the workshops audio-recorded and secured comments on the transcript of the focus group. However, the one workshop recruited, facilitated and hosted by another organisation worked less well - with a ragged start and finish, an inexperienced facilitator, no permission to audio record and a lack of targeting of focus group members. The information collected in this workshop is no less valid, but the process was more difficult and goodwill and interaction with the group was not generated to the same extent.

This project was conceived as a piece of research, but we hope that it will generate interest from and action by organisations at national and local levels and funding for research and development projects.

The steering group held its second meeting in September 2006 to consider possible outcomes for the project.

Finding Common Ground, Hughes & Mahil 2007
Project funded by the Welsh Assembly Government's New Ideas Fund 2006 and hosted by the Vale Mediation Service

16

Limitations of the methodology

1. The method of recruitment required the facilitators to call on their own networks of friends, relations and associates. It cannot therefore be said that the focus groups were 'representative' of a cross section of the communities they come from. In all cases the groups represented a small segment of the population – either a community of interest, a group of people working together, people using the same centre or extended family. They tended to be respected and 'respectable' members of the community – for example, shop-keepers, taxi drivers, social and community workers, nurses, and business people amongst the 30+ population. In the under 30 focus groups people were less likely to be economically active. In all cases the people recruited had insights into inter-community activity and were able to make suggestions about how problems could be resolved. There were few people who were 'socially excluded' (homeless, long term unemployed), who were deeply alienated or who had suffered seriously damaging prejudice. This study was unable to reach this part of the community; moreover a focus group methodology would have been less appropriate.

2. The focus group methodology used for this project was appropriate in providing in-depth, qualitative discussion of some key issues concerning conflict amongst the groups convened. The project budget allowed us to implement the agreed methodology in a systematic way – but not to look at all groups, or use a triangulation approach (i.e. looking at an issue, such as, the conflict over community facilities, from a range of perspectives including the views of white and other races as well as those whose views we sought).

3. The project has been inclusive, using a cascading system starting with known contacts of BVSNW to recruit participants. Attempts were made to ensure that participants' involvement was valued, by keeping them informed, covering their expenses, providing a convenient venue, guaranteeing confidentiality, and inviting their comments prior to acceptance of the focus group transcript.

4. The use of intermediaries / co-facilitators within focus groups was very important in ensuring the quality of the research. They tested out and commented on the topic schedule, helped in determining the timing and content of the focus groups and recruited a group of workshop participants who generally interacted well and understood the purpose of the workshop. In some cases they also acted as co-facilitators and interpreters; this was essential for the discussion groups of older women. There is potential to extend the role of these intermediaries if the project were to assume a developmental focus.

5. The quotations shown in the Findings section come from more than one source, representing a consensus of points made by a small group of individuals, translations by the co-facilitators and the interpretation and selection of comments by the researchers. It would have been interesting to report on how many of the group were making the same comments, but the informality of the focus groups made this difficult.

4. Findings

Unpicking the layers of the "BME communities in Cardiff" reveals a rich kaleidoscope of different races, religions, languages, people who have reverted or converted to another religion, different geographical communities, people who have 'Westernised' to varying extents, people who have lived in Cardiff all their lives and people of dual heritage. This study reports on their views, perceptions, attitudes and values in terms of their own and other communities, with particular reference to conflict and how it is resolved.

The following section of the report comprises quotations from the eight two hour focus groups and selected interviews held as part of the project from June to August 2006. We have not added anything other than headings to the dialogue as we feel this would only have detracted from the clear statements made by the groups. An interpretation of the key emerging issues is found in Section 5, Conclusions. The findings demonstrate similarities between communities and have the potential to highlight the common ground between them.

The structure of this section follows the topic schedule, found at Appendix A.

What is special about your community?

African Caribbean over and under 30 years

> "We're probably the oldest community in Cardiff and have the best grasp of the language. We are well established, understand the social infrastructure, are generally confident, can access services, maintain our identity, be informed and make things happen."

> "As a community we are well-integrated. We do not segregate or exclude anyone. We allow others to participate in what we have to offer. There is no conflict in our community. It's easier for us to mix with others than it is for others to mix with us: Tiger Bay used to be a place where all the nationalities got on together, but it's not like that any more. West Indians are becoming a minority amongst ethnic minorities – the West Indian Community here in Butetown seems so small now because people have been dispersed."

> "Ours is a close community. You walk down the street and say 'hello' to people because everyone knows each other. In Butetown there are many different cultures, but we all get along together. In Riverside it's different as people don't mix so much – if I went there, people would know I wasn't from Riverside."

Bangladeshi women aged 30+

> "Ours is a very close knit community. We don't like to access mainstream services and we prefer services run by the community. We find that most

events don't have vegetarian food, and most of the time the food is not labelled as vegetarian or Halal. Language is an ongoing problem for us."

"Our community is not as strong as it might be. There's a political division which comes from back home, which prevents people from integrating. The separation is mainly amongst the men. That's why we have two Bangladeshi Community Centres."

Gujarat women 30+

"Many people came after the war (World War II) as young men to earn money. The idea was that you returned to India after a year and lived like a king. Most people ran out of money because they had to support their large family and the money lenders. So they started to come over and stay in the UK. We do have conflicts with other parts of the community. Some arise because of where we came from. The East African Asians were more westernised than those who came direct from India and that difference has continued."

"We meet together, are close, and we have chances to get together. Men, women and children are included in our celebrations – children learn from these events about our culture.   It's important for us to maintain our culture and its colourful celebrations. We own our own centres – we've funded them and we don't want to lose them. Getting together is very important in our community. We have functions of 600-700 people we need to be really organised and get on with each other"

"There are three centres in Cardiff: the India Centre [Splott], the Parade [Roath], and the Samaj [Grangetown]. A centre may be more cultural or may be cultural with a temple. People use different centres according to their caste, background, where they originated from in India; but this does not stop them from going to other centres. The centres provide many different activities – dancing, drums, aerobics, computers and much more."

Pakistani men 30+

"We're very open and outgoing. We welcome suggestions, but we don't take things on board quickly or change our ideas. Pakistanis have been here for the last 58 years; they have contributed to the Welsh community and the economy – many males are self-employed and on a low income; very few are unemployed. Pakistanis wear beautiful clothes and have a rich culture; they have a high moral culture and a clear idea about how things should be done."

Pakistani women 30+

"Ours is a close community. We help each other out. We understand each other. We have a common faith and set of beliefs, common values and aspirations. We are welcoming to others."

Somali women 30+

"We all speak the same language and have the same strand of religion. Everyone knows that our faith is the most important thing. Differences within our community lie within this overarching, unifying characteristic."

"We all know each other and help each other. We meet frequently and interact a lot. We welcome people into Cardiff and bring them into our community to ensure that they are not isolated. Everyone knows everyone else's business. Our family and friends help us with what we need and with advice. We like to discuss things – and when we do we argue, speak loud, talk over each other and don't listen to each other. We are a pragmatic community – we like to sort things out quickly."

Somali men under 30

"We're a close knit, unified community. We help each other. Most of the people in Cardiff come from the English speaking part of North Somalia. Somalia was a mixture of African, Asian and Middle East trading. Many languages are spoken there – Somali, Arabic, English, French and Italian (Somali is our native language, Arabic to do with our religion, English, French and Italian come from occupying powers)."

Understanding conflict

African-Caribbean men under 30

"I think of conflict as a clash of sides that don't join together – it always has two sides. It's about two sides, bad vibes, bad things, you don't agree. There's nothing good about it."

"I experienced a lot of conflict in my life growing up. The conflicts were about identity – which schools you went to, which race you belonged to. I was a victim of stereotyping."

"Fights usually happen between someone who was born here and someone who moved here 5 years ago. It almost never happens between people who were born here. And if we have a fight, we'll still be friends."

"I was brought up as a Rastafarian and now I've become Islamic. At the time of 9/11 people gave me a hard time - but it was my own community that hurt me the most because they ostracised me – they made me think 'what makes me a member of my community?'"

"I don't feel there is just one experience of conflict. I live down the bottom of Butetown. The people using Mermaid Quay[1] – they think they own it. When we walk past they stare at us – I'd like to say to them 'what are you looking at?'

---

[1] This is a smart restaurant area in the regeneration area of Cardiff Bay, which was carved out of Butetown.

People say, if you come from the Docks you have a Docks Mentality – we're portrayed as lazy, arrogant, violent and drug dealing. They don't understand our culture, how our parents speak to us."

"Ignorance causes and breeds conflict. People watch too much TV and they don't want to learn. They don't teach cultural awareness – just white history. They pass judgement on you, they make assumptions and they think they have identified your culture and creed."

"I wanted to go into the 6th form at my school. I was told that I couldn't come back because I was too big, too dangerous and too violent. I told my Mum who said it was because I was too black."

"Going to the north of Cardiff or up the Valleys, 'faces with colour' don't fit in – they dress, walk, stand and even smoke differently."

African-Caribbean men and women aged 30+

"In the 1990s there was a lot of conflict between the Somalis and Butetown people because they wanted to 'own' the area - but they've settled down. We've learned about each other's culture and religion.

"In running our multi-cultural community centre, we're relaxed and laid back and we don't pick fights with anyone. We don't experience conflicts within our community. We don't have conflict with the Somali women, but we do have conflict with Somali men."

"The Somalis look down on us because of our history of slavery. They regard themselves as being African. We don't have this strong sense of being African and there is an issue about our own identity. They think we're so inferior, especially people of mixed race. We do experience inferiority with other Africans because we're sons of slaves"

"I only realised that the Somalis don't like us when there was a programme on TV a few months ago. But why? I don't get it. They have set up their own centres and if you go there, they make you feel really uncomfortable."

"I used to feel sorry for them because they had fled from a war torn country and they had just arrived. But I don't like the fact that they get concessions above us. I don't see why housing around here is designated to Somalis, when I had to wait in a queue for my house. Why do they get priority all the time?

Bangladeshi women 30+

"There is not a precise word for conflict in Bengali. The nearest word is disagreement or misunderstanding. Within the Bangladeshi community conflict is often to do with religion. People from different communities have the same religion, but practice it differently. We don't have problems with Indian and African-Caribbean people, because we don't share the same religion and

culture. But we disagree with those who share the Muslim religion, because we interpret it differently"

"Some people think they are better Muslims than we – for example in Saudi Arabia they think they are more educated. There are 4 or 5 ways of practicing our religion – different schools of thought – some are stricter than us. This causes a lot of conflict between our communities."

"Conflict starts when people want to be in control; it exists more here than back home. Back home people are more relaxed, with people dressing more in a Westernised way, whether they are well off or not. Here we're a minority and there is more pressure on us to behave in a way that is expected of us. The lifestyle can be restrictive. People want to undermine you."

"We've had a lot of problems in the Centre[2] in sharing our facility with the Somalis. We're small, humble, diplomatic people, they are much bigger. It's like an elephant and an ant. They don't listen to us."

Gujarat women 30+

"Conflict is a difficult and unknown concept in our community. Within the Indian culture it is believed that you must respect each other. It is generally a passive culture and people do not believe in arguing. You believe that these things are meant to happen, and in time they will resolve themselves. There is conflict between young and old, but this is not resolved because we don't know how to resolve it."

"We don't have conflicts with our neighbours, but they have conflict with us. White people have a conflict with us because of our colour. Our community centre is based in a multi-coloured area, and the neighbours complain about noise. They call the police and shout through the window. They complain about the cars parked in our street. Our culture keeps things calm. We don't fight back. We tend to get on with what other people want. Hinduism encourages us not to 'charge back'. It is more likely that people will walk away and not speak to each other."

"Sometimes we have conflicts with the men in our community centre. They order us around and tell us to do things in a certain way. When you are doing something voluntary, you don't want to be ordered around. Nowadays women are independent and they expect to be able to make decisions for themselves."

Pakistani men aged 30+

"Conflicts are disagreements, disputes, differences or they may be about unequal power. In our religion, conflicts should be forgiven, resolved very quickly and forgotten. If you forgive within 3 days, it's the other person's problem. The way and speed of resolving conflicts depends on the level of the conflict: if it is a minor problem (for example a neighbour dispute), it is best to

---

[2] A women's community centre in Riverside for Bangladeshi and Somali women

resolve it quickly; if it is a major conflict (for example a child getting injured or an attack on our religion) it can be much harder to resolve."

"We are building a mosque for our community centre. It was a former social services building. Many barriers are put in our way – from planning and building controls to neighbours complaining about the noise and parking."

Pakistani women aged 30+

"Conflict prevents people from speaking to each other. It can be within the family or within community organisations. At a community level it's often to do with power. The caste and class system also cause conflict – for example, people will go to one mosque, but not to another. People sometimes bring conflict with them from their country of origin."

"Conflict happens when people have different issues to resolve, different points of view, different experiences, ideas or ways of seeing things. Conflicts arise because of people coming from different countries, or different parts of the same country, between these born Muslim and those converted / reverted to it, between different levels in society and particularly between people with different levels of education and ability."

"People within the Pakistani community get into conflict because they are set in their ways and have their own fixed ideas. They may come from different parts of Pakistan, come from different castes, come from an urban or rural background, have different education, work experiences… Those brought up in Pakistan have a different outlook from those born and brought up in the UK - there are conflicts between the Pakistani community and the education system over the age at which girls should have sex education."

Somali women 30+

"The Somali word for conflict is "they are into it" – there's something between them and they don't understand each other. When people have a conflict, they often do not speak to each other and they may have to ask their parents to sort out the problem. Parents, family, friends, Elders or mutual friends will all intervene to sort the problem out. Generally if there is a conflict between two women the men will take action to resolve it. If the conflict is between two men they will need to go to the Elders to resolve it."

"Back home in Somalia women are more westernised and get involved in politics. Here the men do not think that women can think for themselves. They do not like women to step out of their traditional roles."

"Here there is a conflict between the female and male. Each is trying to get something for the community to meet their own agenda. The men were not happy when we started to get involved in the Women's Centre."

"We have experienced conflict here with the Bangladeshi women about running our centre. The basis of the conflict is about lack of experience in running the centre – we cannot communicate and we don't trust each other."

Somali men under 30

"Conflict in Somalia is often over territory. The problem is there, not here; we have more on our mind here – it's a different society. Many other communities have issues with Somalis; they don't get into conflict with us, but they have stereotypical views, rely on hearsay and have a bad image of us. People make assumptions about us. Individually we don't know whether this leads to our being treated unfairly and not getting jobs. We don't have the problems with others, but they have problems with us. We focus on our own interests and we don't worry about what others are thinking."

Rules of behaviour – how should you behave with other communities?

African-Caribbean aged 30+

"Tiger Bay has never been about one ethnic group. Colour, race and country of origin never mattered – but now it is an issue. It used to be a place where all nationalities got onto together. As a child my best friend was a Somali. We ate, played and celebrated Eid together. There was no sense of differences. This has changed in the last 5 years."

"In our community centre we have a constitution in which the rules are set out. The rules do not get broken. The community centre is in the heart of Butetown. We get on fine with all the communities – the Yemenis come here and we get on fine. We want all the groups to feel that they can use it, but the Somalis do not want to mix. Their religion is very strong. It's fair enough that they should want to preserve their identity – we all want to do that."

African-Caribbean men under 30

"There aren't rules as such – but we know what to do and how to behave. The sorts of things this would cover are:
- ❑ We must show respect
- ❑ We must not talk to people in the wrong way
- ❑ We don't tell people off in the street
- ❑ We respect the older generation for taking a stand against the police – they often got into trouble with the police because of their colour and standing their ground
- ❑ We should not gossip, break confidences, 'snitch'
- ❑ We should avoid causing embarrassment.

If people break rules you tell them not to do it again. You avoid them, keep your distance and often the trust would not be restored"

Bangladeshi women aged 30+

"When we work with our communities we all have ground rules and we have to respect them. We leave our culture behind; other people respect us as professionals. Colleagues who are Somalis are very helpful. But at the centre we're volunteers and individuals. It is different – there's no respect."

Gujarat women aged 30+

"Our religion sets the rules – we are vegetarians, no alcohol and no smoking. We're not allowed to kiss in public. We have a constitution in our centre in Grangetown and we have to follow the rules set out in the constitution. Sometimes men might bring in alcohol – generally their own families will see it happening and sort it out. Otherwise the committee sees to it – we don't want to cause embarrassment. Schools have visited and learned about our culture and religion. At school outings there is always plenty of food – we show love with food."

Pakistani men aged 30+

"The Pakistani community unfortunately does not have a place to go to mix with other communities, although it does have a mosque and some people play cricket. For example the Samaj is presented as being just for the Hindu community.   If our community had a centre we would mix with other communities. Some ground rules might be:
- There should be a management committee for all community facilities, with voting rights for each community
- There should be training to support good understanding and good relationships with other communities
- Language problems need to be resolved
- Lack of experience is often a cause of conflict
- There is a need for protocols which set out how people will behave with each other – this needs to be backed up by agreed policies, procedures, and ways of resolving problems
- There needs to be training about what the rules mean and how they will be applied
- All management committees need to have the same understanding of the rules."

Somali women aged 30+

"Our background, up-bringing and faith set the rules. If we go to a centre, the centre rules prevail. If it goes against our religion, we don't go there."

"In the Centre, we all had a say in the rules. We agreed the rules. We trained people about the rules. We adopted the rules to ensure that conflict did not arise. We put the rules up on the wall. When everyone got used to the rules we put them away. We had a honeymoon season."

How is conflict dealt with? Do these methods work?

African-Caribbean men aged under 30)

"When I was 14, there used to be fights between black and Somalis in a field – most taking place in the school holidays. We all went away and came back with reinforcements. The conflict wasn't resolved. When I saw them again in school, I fought them again. We've grown out of it now. Taking the conflict into school to get it resolved would not have worked – at that age you don't even listen to your parents – so why should you listen to the school. It's much better to walk away, but that comes with age."

"I had a fight with a Somali guy. Our fathers got together and said 'we go to the same school, live in the same community, we're black and should try to get on better"

"We draw on our morals and standards from our faith:
   "Before I became a Christian I would get into fights; I now uphold my own personal standards and give people more of a chance."
   "Before I became a Muslim a couple of years ago, I'd fight over stupidity. I'd now walk away. I'm calmer and I'm supposed to forgive others."

"If conflict happens within your family, you would go to your brothers. You'd rely on your family. We would not go to youth leaders or even people in the community – the best advice is close advice. If conflict happens with another family, we'd get advice from our own family before approaching the other family – they may not be peace-loving people. If it were a violent issue, you'd never go to female members of your family for advice. Otherwise there's no reason not to go to females for advice."

African-Caribbean aged 30+

"We've never had to resolve conflict amongst ourselves – there's never been any conflict here. If someone broke the rules, we'd talk to them about it.   If there were a conflict with the Somalis, we'd probably just turn our backs. If we asked for help, the conflict would just escalate. And whom would you go to? There is no independent body and the other side would tell you that you're prejudiced. The Somalis don't want to listen to what you have to say – so how could you sort it out? If we did something wrong, we'd say, 'fair enough, I'm sorry'; but they don't."

A conflict between Bangladeshi and Somali Women

The Bangladeshi and Somali women went to a third party to resolve a conflict over their joint management of the Neville Street centre. The problem was not resolved initially and they have both agreed to mediation. It is important to both parties to resolve the problem – not only because the successful future of the

centre depends upon it, but because they do not wish to lose face with the male members of their communities who were not wholly supportive of this initiative.

"We rely on professionals to be even-handed, confidential and independent. We expect them to be fair, not to take sides or avoid the causes of the conflict. We have to work in partnership – so we need to find ways of sharing and getting on with each other."

"We should be able to compromise and get on. The conflict still persists because we don't understand why we don't both have the same urgency in trying to resolve things as quickly as possible. They have not behaved as we thought they would – and we don't know why."

Gujarat women aged 30+

"Within a family setting the Elders used to sort out any problems. Conflicts generally don't go outside the family and the joint (extended) family culture is disintegrating. People may seek advice from friends, but they come to their senses pretty quickly. There is a culture of putting up with and sorting out problems. We expect things to sort themselves out. Generally we don't fight and we live in harmony."

"Within the community centre we generally don't have big conflicts. The priests look after the spiritual part of the temple; their role is to advise on right and wrong – not to sort out conflict. If conflicts arise between men and women, the women will back down. It's not satisfactory and it means that people get frustrated and don't participate in community life.

The community centre had an argument with neighbours at Diwali some years ago. There was an incident where a neighbour's window got broken during a firework display. We said that we would pay for it – it really wasn't worth the argument. The neighbour would not have it and became noisy. We said 'we live in this country and we've got to stay here' – we backed down as we always have to back down. This 'resolves' the problem, but it does not give us internal happiness. Last year at Diwali we told the police and they warned the neighbours that the event was going to happen. By doing everything properly, this worked well."

"In India, if there is a strong argument (such as about property or money) they will kill you. People who have money use their power – a bit like a mafia. Over there conflict can be quite hidden and people can get away with murder. Laws there are less strict, less enforced and there is more corruption. We have more opportunities to resolve conflict here and we feel safer."

"In our business we have had problems with white youths wanting to purchase alcohol. If we don't serve them they call us names and break our windows. More police patrolling is needed to sort out these problems."

Pakistani men aged 30+

"If conflict happens in the street, it usually does not last long and people sort it out themselves. Friends and acquaintances would help. Grangetown is very close – someone is bound to know someone who will resolve a problem. The main causes of conflict are public nuisances, loud music in the street, or children from other communities. We'd prefer to resolve these problems ourselves, rather than resort to the Police. The Police could make the situation worse and it would become too bureaucratic if we had to go to court and there were reprisals. We think our own approach would be more effective for small things."

"People approaching the community centre in South Riverside are encouraged to find ways of sorting out conflict themselves. If this is not possible, community workers will advise them to find people in their community (for example, senior members of the family or Elders in the extended family) to 'awake their own qualities'. Nowadays, people go to friends and others outside the family, but people do not understand confidentiality and their gossiping about the problems only makes them worse."

"Most of the problems are small. Most of us were born and bred here and we have adapted to the British way of life. We respect the law of the land. Most conflicts come to a reasonable conclusion with a realistic solution. You turn to the law if you have to, but if you can you 'sort out' problems yourself."

"'Sorted out' means that people are satisfied, assured of the right way, their needs are fulfilled and there is a feeling of fair play"

"If there is a major problem, you need a more robust system to resolve conflict. The Jirga system, used in Pakistan and Afghanistan, works on a respect basis. We have respect in our culture, but in Western culture, there isn't respect for the Elders. In our culture we call people 'Uncle' out of respect (not our 'real' uncle), but in Western culture you call your uncle by name. There is no respect. If you have a system that works you must have trust and respect."

Somali men under 30

[As young Somali men] "we have little experience of other communities and therefore don't know what will happen if there is a conflict with another community. There is a step by step process in dealing with conflicts which are internal to the community. If two people were involved in a conflict (male or female), they or their families would resolve the problem. If it got bigger it would be referred to community leaders (Elders) who are widely respected and would mediate. Problems would rarely go to the Imam – as Elders are widely respected as 'reasonable' people who would not prejudge the situation. Elders provide a solution and tell the parties how to resolve the problem – restoring communication, apologising and making retribution as appropriate."

Would other approaches, such as mediation, work better – and in what circumstances?

African-Caribbean men under 30

"Last year a young person we knew got murdered over drugs. The community leaders convened a meeting, but it made things worse. Other issues and other people got brought into the frame. I would expect community leaders to come to me and offer me help – not for me to have to offer help to them."

"It would be helpful to have black history. We should show the racists that there were black heroes – not just the people who got into fights with the English."

"What's in people's heads has to do with what happens at home. Most people don't get a chance to learn why they hate. Resolving conflict involves feeding them the good stuff – their mindsets need to change."

"If conflict resolution were put into an organisation, we would not use it. People would sort themselves out and maybe they wouldn't go outside their community. A service needs to have an outreach into communities. People resolving disputes need to be known and respected. We'd go to our own Elders, leaders or people we respect from within our community if we knew that they had been trained up. Separate provision would be needed for different races and age groups – it does not matter so much about men and women for us."

African-Caribbean aged 30+

"In order to prevent conflict from arising there needs to be better education – and especially cultural education – from a very young age. Education is vital. Respect for others is essential. People need to recognise that everyone's interest is improved if self-interest is limited. People also have to want to resolve conflict."

"The ideal sort of person to resolve a conflict needs to be independent of both sides, to be impartial, understand the culture, and be able to tell people if they're wrong."

"To be successful, a mediation service would need to be neutral and independent and not be linked in any way to the council. It should be safe and confidential, with possibly different approaches for different community groups, age groups, men and women, teenagers and adults, possibly delivered as an outreach service. Mediators would need to develop an adequate understanding of other cultures, including the Elder systems."

Bangladeshi women aged 30+

"Our conflicts are in English – why not solve them in English? We would rather go to mediation than try to resolve the problem ourselves. Mediators helping us should be female and we think they should not come from BME communities (although have experience of working with them). They should be competent

and not easily pushed around. Language might help – but there are interpreters. It does not matter where they come from – except they should not be too linked into the local community."

Gujarat women aged 30+

"The critical factors in conflict resolution are having the opportunity to have a voice and being heard, being appreciated and understood, being able to listen to others. It would be difficult to get someone to mediate from within our community – it needs to be someone with authority – perhaps someone from the council. It also needs to be someone from outside our community who understands the dynamics of our community. We would need something like an 'Open Space' discussion to set something like this up."

Pakistani women aged 30+

"If there is a conflict this will be brought out into the open with a public discussion at a gathering. The parties will have to explain the problem and the members of the community will decide how it should be resolved."

"The Jirga system works better in Pakistan than here, because there it can enforce what was decided. What works here depends on the level and type of problem – resolution could lie with the family, community Elders, with an organisation or the police. Solutions that work best bring people together and involve them in sorting out their problems. Key skills are being a good listener and communicator."

"Conflict resolution could be used for a range of conflicts. The way in which services are delivered needs to be tailored to the individual and community needs – for example, young people, male and female or different community groups. Conflict resolution should cross communities so that a range of communities can benefit from it."

Pakistani men aged 30+

"Critical factors in conflict resolution are: understanding the causes of conflict, the culture, and BME issues; being a good listener; being neutral and independent; and having the respect of both parties. For our community to accept this form of conflict resolution, it must have authority, proper backing and official support. An effective service must be culturally sensitive and reflect cultural and geographical diversity. It should be the first port of call in conflict resolution – before anyone thought of going to the police."

"The service would need to be local, discreet, cross-cultural and better than going to existing services (such as elected representatives). This body needs to be visible and people need to know where to go for support. Communities need to acknowledge that conflict is *their* problem."

Somali women aged 30+

"If I had a problem with a neighbour I would ask to speak to the man of the house and look to a senior man in my household to represent me. Third parties can all resolve conflict – it could be Elders, religious people, family friends or members. Within the community it is generally the Elders who help to resolve conflicts. Outside the community there are no similar mechanisms. We expect problems to be resolved quickly and we do not dwell on issues."

"Ideally individuals sort things out themselves and don't wash their dirty linen in public. The process of resolving conflict should be private and confidential. There needs to be mutual respect and agreements about how the problems can be resolved. We really like the idea of mediation – particularly the independent, non-judgemental, good listener who is even-handed, positive and proactive, recognises the cultural differences and commands respect. We would use a mediation service if one existed – for family, youth and community issues and for dealing with problems in school, such as bullying and racism. It's important that a mediation service has a high profile, so that people know where to go. Mediators should be women as some Somali girls cover their faces. Age and colour of the mediators do not matter. An outreach service would be useful. Conflict should be resolved as near as possible to where it is."

Somali Male aged under 30

"We rely on Elders. The Elder system works well and is based on people we respect making decisions about what should be done. Elders have informal training and learn by example. The people resolving conflicts need to command respect and credibility. People only go to them if they are prepared to listen to what they have to say. People believe that Elders will deal with problems fairly and they will also be able to deal with other communities. Elders resort to religion in resolving conflict."

"In terms of a mediation service, it would only work for us if the Elders endorsed it or the Elders became the mediation service. You don't stop something that is working well and replace it with something that may not work so well. Outsiders cannot be aware of our culture and would not have the same respect. The only other solution would be to go to the police, the council, or another enforcing body. If the problem reoccurs and if mediation pulls out, you're worse off than you were before."

What would be an ideal approach? Is there a role for training?

African-Caribbean men aged under 30

"Key people who others respect, such as Elders or leaders from within the community, are those who would naturally be mediators. They should be selected from all communities and should be trained. All the cultures in the

community could be identified and invited to an open day to raise awareness. The training could start with the Elders."

Ideally you need to train people who have experienced conflict themselves and know what it is like. We could be trained. We need to put together what we've learned here. But unless friends or family were in conflict we would not get involved. It wouldn't feel right helping others if we don't know the circumstances."

African-Caribbean people aged 30+ years

"We would be very interested in training in mediation as it is a way of helping people to help themselves. The training could be delivered here or elsewhere, and it does not need to be accredited. It would be very good for community workers to receive such training, as it would make them more aware of where the conflict is. People can do a lot to address conflict in their communities – but if they don't recognise there is a problem, they won't resolve it."

Bangladeshi women aged 30+ years

"We have had training and we don't need any more. Our separate communities have been brought up with different attitudes and there is a barrier before we open our mouths. We have tried to put our training into practice – but others who have also had training also need to apply it. We don't know what will put this into practice."

Gujarat women aged 30+ years

"We don't think people will come for training, even if courses are free of charge. A way forward may be to ask the youngsters if they would be trained. They could be recruited through the centre, although training should be away from the centre. This could provide another workplace skill – a route to employment. Training should cover the different levels of training, for example, mediation awareness, practitioners' skills and listening skills. It should include mediation techniques and also learning about each other's culture. Courses should be free of charge, with a commitment to use skills in the community. There would be benefits in promoting training amongst people from BME communities. There should be opportunities for people to mediate across communities as well as within them. There should also be a BME mediation network, a pool of people who can provide mediations and a network for information and support."

Pakistani women aged 30+

"There is benefit in accredited training as a pathway to work. Different levels of training would be sensible, starting with informal training in the community, and leading into more formal training."

Pakistani men aged 30+

"In an ideal world we need to assess what is there already and what could be adapted. We also need to focus training on people who already are natural leaders and have the respect of others. Training should include cultural awareness training."

Somali men aged under 30

"The Elders already have a system of experiential learning, which filters down throughout the community, as younger men observe Elders making decisions."

Somali women aged 30+

"Training for mediators should cover conflict resolution, communication, understanding ethnic issues, cultural awareness, knowledge of the community. Training should be accredited and certificated to increase employment opportunities for people. There should be evidence-based training. The training should be by and for people from the BME community, with an understanding of religious and cultural issues. The approach should be to identify and train active / key people from all BME communities and use them to mediate across cultures."

5. Conclusions

General

1. The research has shown how little we know about and understand the needs and perceptions of the many BME communities in Cardiff. We were fortunate to secure the co-operation of people who were willing to give us a window into their own community and their interaction with others. The study has only scratched the surface, providing a snap-shot of some of the issues arising, although it does provide some useful insights into how a small cross-section of the community perceives conflict. This study does not pretend to do more than it has done and there is scope for more in-depth, triangulated research across the wider community.

2. This was intended to be a study about conflict resolution, but the basis of conflict between communities is more fundamental. Addressing *inter-community* conflict requires all people to better understand, communicate and respect each other. The need for a more fundamental change of attitude to the new and different that immigrants bring with them requires cultural awareness and education for them and for the diverse citizens already living here. As it is, the differences between communities are often more of a chasm than a crack; finding the common ground through conflict resolution or, indeed, mediation may not always be possible, appropriate or safe.

3. There is increasing interest in Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship.[3] [4] Education for Global Citizenship "enables people to understand the global forces which shape their lives" and focuses on "the links between society, economy and environment" and "the relationships between power, resources and human rights".[5] It depends on creating an awareness of the way others live. The study has shown many instances where this global awareness is lacking. This gap needs to be addressed – at the school level (as early as possible to counter prejudice), amongst young people, new immigrants and within communities. Some communities are already playing their part by, for example, opening their doors to school visits. This approach can be built on.

About conflict

4. There is widespread consensus about what conflict is. Common key words include: disagreement, misunderstanding, two or more sides, a dispute, war. It happens when people have differences to resolve, different points of view, experiences, ideas or ways of seeing things. It can arise because people come

---

[3] Global Citizenship Secondary School Map – Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, Guidance Circular on Curriculum and Qualifications (No 11/2005) was issued by the National Assembly for Wales, May 2005
[4] Consultation Document on Education for Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Wales, Consultation Document on Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship was issued in September 2005 with responses required by December 2005.
[5] ACCAC, Estyn, Welsh Assembly Government and DFID, 2002

from different countries, different parts of these countries, or have different degrees of Westernisation or different levels of education or ability. Variations in wealth, which exist in all societies to different degrees, keep people apart, but are not usually a cause of conflict. There may be conflicts between people born into a religion, those converting to it, or between communities interpreting it in different ways. Culture has an impact on how conflict is expressed, and it was clear from our discussions that people's perceptions of each other were also a factor.

5. Conflict can be expressed verbally or physically. Some conflicts are resolved quickly and easily and are part of daily interaction. Others lead to stress, disharmony, and eventually to a breakdown of communication. Conflicts arise in families, within communities, and between communities. Thus dealing with unmanageable conflict and restoring a normal level of interaction is essential to people's health and well-being.

The need for stability

6. There are many stereotypes of the Black and Minority Ethnic communities and fear of differing behaviour. However, the overall impression of this study is of communities that want to live in harmony, that want to have clear structures and a framework providing 'rules of behaviour' and at the same time that want to retain their cultural identity. There is a tension between multi-culturalism and preserving individual cultural identity and certainty to people within a 'social contract'. All these principles are finely balanced and need to be better understood, so as to encourage a way of life, which supports community harmony. People are entitled not to have to live in conflict, which greatly undermines their quality of life, well-being and cultural sustainability.

7. Although there was no 'White' focus group (this could feature in a triangulation exercise), comments made in the study about white people – particularly about their individualism, lack of respect for their elders, disrespectful behaviour – suggested that the BME communities do not want to be like them. There were many instances of conflicts between white people and workshop participants who were setting up or running facilities for their community or carrying out their daily businesses. The inference is that the indigenous population is setting the 'norms' of how things work, which the 'visitors' or intruders must embrace.

8. The 30+ age groups explained their tradition of 'self-help'. They described their struggle to create arrangements for members of their community in the face of 'white' hostility. The need for communities to be able to create places where their community can meet, in order to support social stability and rules of normative behaviour, is paramount. However, such arrangements amongst the white community are weak, with, for example, the dismantling of many structures, such as churches, chapels and voluntary societies. This vacuum in social structures means that individual communities are making their own arrangements.

9. Most of the 'Over-30' age groups cited examples of conflicts with third party interests and lack of consultation about community buildings and development. Currently the planning system bears the brunt of resolving such disputes; this topic requires further research.

Supporting diversity

10. "Behaviour" is the means by which people interact with each other. What is acceptable depends on cultural norms – for example in the way people greet or speak to each other, the way they dress, and show respect to each other. Many women said they are expected to demonstrate their cultural identity (through more traditional dress, behaviour, etiquette than in their home country, where attitudes are more relaxed). This makes them more conscious of their cultural identity, whilst there is little awareness from others about how to behave with them.

11. As the latest immigrants become less of a minority and are more established, they feel more confident in putting their own stamp on the way things happen. Some of the workshops identified how conflicts occur between the indigenous population and between older and newer immigrants. Clashes in culture also exist between faith groups (particularly highlighted in the focus groups was the conflict between Muslim and 'Western' values), although racial prejudice extends far beyond this.

How conflicts are resolved

12. Conflicts within families are usually resolved internally. Family Elders and sometimes community Elders or family friends may also help to resolve differences. Most conflicts within communities are resolved through the community structures. These are generally perceived as being stronger than in Western society – thus falling out with the community can be very painful.

13. Elders can help to resolve disputes or smooth out problems within the community. We heard of a young man who wrecked a stolen car; the Elders paid retribution to the victims and the case was kept out of the courts. However, systems that worked effectively in people's country of origin are not always translated effectively into the UK, either because they are not legal (for example, honour killing) or are not enforceable (for example, the Jirga system depends on obliging disputants to obey decisions).

14. Conflicts between men and women within communities are often resolved by the women withdrawing; this causes dissatisfaction, frustration and some unhappiness, but the conflict is 'resolved'. There needs to be recognition of the greater separateness in the lives of men and women within some BME communities. In Westernised societies there is more overlap and it is easier to combine activities and facilities. Indeed, the view was expressed that women's

lives here are less "Westernised" than men's. Women particularly from Muslim communities would want to get advice and help only from other women.

The role of mediation

15. Arrangements for dealing with conflict *within* communities were generally robust. As people become more established in Wales or more Westernised, the use of traditional systems may diminish. The importance of 'building on what is good' was stressed in all workshops and a way of blending traditional and non-traditional conflict resolution mechanisms may be a way forward. Indeed, there is scope to support mediation within traditional frameworks, as long as these fall within the British framework of Human Rights.

16. There is no effective single system to deal with *inter*-community conflict. Almost universally, participants want a mechanism for resolving differences which is local or outreached, safe, culture-sensitive, even-handed, involves respected local people, is not institutionalised, is confidential, has clear rules, and has separate support for younger and older people, men and women. There was a desire to build on current systems (such as approaching Elders). It was widely felt that if mediation were to be introduced, mediators should be drawn from respected people in the community. Here, some of the skills of mediation (e.g. finding the common ground with the help of an independent third party) could be adapted to a different cultural model to enhance opportunities to negotiate within and between community groups.

17. There is a need for systems of conflict resolution to be robust, certain, authoritative and effective. The men in the study were generally opposed to any deviation from a basis of authority – for example, the use of Imam or Elders for internal disputes and use of the police, local authority enforcement or the legal system if this did not work. Men were also less likely than the women to be willing to try mediation.

18. Mediation can have a place as a conflict resolution tool. A conflict between two groups sharing a facility emerged from the focus groups. Both groups agreed to mediation and this was reasonably successful although not complete by the end of the project. For more details of this mediation, see Appendix D.

Practicalities

19. Concerns were expressed about the practicalities of introducing a new system - how and to whom it would be presented. There were also questions about how it would relate to systems of enforcement – the police, the planning system, and environmental health – and how it would have proper authority. Not all the groups would be persuaded to use a mediation system at all and many would only use the service if it satisfied these conditions. It was widely felt that mediation should be a facility, not a (stand-alone) service, and that it should be woven into the community fabric.

20. There was very encouraging support from the workshops in terms of developing a vehicle for conflict resolution. There is enthusiasm for the idea in principle as a way of helping people to help themselves. There was recognition of the need for training in conflict resolution and cultural awareness.

The need for education and training

21. Some people felt that community leaders and community development workers should be the first people to receive training. It was also suggested that conflict resolution / cultural awareness training for young people would help to develop more community harmony, whilst giving individuals an added skill. Different views were expressed about the value of accredited training and experiential learning.

22. Stereotyping and making assumptions about people is widespread, making it difficult to bridge between communities. Whilst conflict resolution skills can help to break down barriers to communication, there remains a significant lack of understanding about the values and behavioural norms of other cultures. We live in a multi-racial society and should have awareness of key events in the religious calendar, customs, diets and expected behaviours.

23. Many groups cited evidence of the failure of the school system to support global citizenship – for example, black history teaching which failed to include heroes as well as villains and slaves (creating unhelpful stereotyping for young black people wanting to succeed in a majority white world) or sex education which frightened young Muslim girls. Some young Muslims said they experienced difficulties in keeping their job because they did not want to work on Fridays. African-Caribbean young men pointed to the hostility they met when walking the streets in Butetown, Llanishen and the South Wales Valleys. Although good work is taking place in schools (for example, visits to the Hindu temple and community centre in Grangetown) all parties are looking for more cultural awareness and global citizenship education at an early stage in young citizens' lives**.**

24. The study has shown the need for better understanding of the issues affecting the BME community, better understanding of good practice and more awareness of the constraints of providers. A toolkit, which meets the needs of groups, helps providers to negotiate on common ground, defines a way of ensuring consultation and engagement, and provides guidelines for addressing conflict, would be helpful. Participants in the focus groups were keen on this proposal and expressed an interest in being involved in this.

25. In terms of the new Local Development Plan Process, local planning authorities in Wales are required to ensure greater community engagement right from the beginning of their plan work. Clearly engagement with BME groups, along with other parts of the local community need to be part of this work. Communities 1st can assist with this.

Does this study have wider implications?

26. The particular nature of BME communities in Cardiff - the particular mix of different ethnic minority groups, and the history of living together in a shared community, may suggest that the results of this study cannot be easily generalised to other towns and cities with significant BME communities, such as Newport and Swansea, and still less to the more isolated BME communities in the Vale, the Valleys and other parts of Wales. However, the harmonious inter-ethnic community of the Docks area of Cardiff has been largely destroyed by a mixture of urban redevelopment and waves of new immigrants, who do not have the history of living together in harmony with other BME groups. Communities in Cardiff, as elsewhere, face the problems of living together with other communities, who they meet as strangers.

27. Whilst there may be limits to generalisation, what shines through the evidence presented in this report is the role of cultural values (rules on the correct ways to behave) in creating disharmony. Seen through the eyes of one culture, behaviour appropriate in another culture is seen as not just incorrect, but as "bad" or malicious. Beliefs about the views of other groups can also be corrosive. Recognising this underlying mechanism and developing ways to understand other cultures at this level (not just knowledge of different types of food or of religious festivals etc) is surely applicable to other contexts, including work with the White communities.

This research has identified policy implications, which are included in the Recommendations section below.

6. Recommendations

1. There is a clear need for education for global citizenship, with an emphasis on teaching cultural awareness to young children. This must address the chasms that exist between communities, fundamental differences in values, culture and traditions, and the ways in which people interact. Education for global citizenship is needed at all levels and in all quarters of our society and in all schools, irrespective of the mix of pupils. The earlier that children become aware of the way other people live, the more likely it is that diversity is respected and valued.

2. Ways of resolving conflicts should, where possible, seek to reinforce traditional systems. Efforts should be made to make these work even better, for example, by giving Elders a better understanding of other communities or the scope for mediation in addressing specific problems that people encounter (for example, conflicts over land use planning).

3. The value placed by communities on self-help, stability, tradition, authority and community harmony should be better understood and acknowledged, with community harmony recognised as a key feature of community well-being. Local providers need to be trained more robustly in diversity issues, with more resources also being applied to preventing potential conflict between and within communities.

4. More work is needed to ensure that the particular needs of BME communities in respect of land use planning and community regeneration are fully understood and addressed. Guidance, toolkits, training, awareness raising, better consultation and dialogue are all ways in which this could happen. In respect of the new Local Development Plan process, local planning authorities need to ensure that BME groups are fully involved from the start.

5. A toolkit for community providers should be prepared, drawing on the lessons of this study. In particular, this would support good practice in global citizenship education and amongst planners, community development and regeneration specialists. Separate funding should be allocated to this task to ensure a good product and collaboration with focus groups.

6. The role, opportunities and limitations of mediation should be better understood, and it should be available to those who need and want to use it. This means training people from BME communities, women, older and younger people, and others who are 'culturally aware' in the skills of mediation – whether or not these skills will be used within a mediation service in its true sense.

7. There is particular value in training young people to be mediators – both as a means of generating community harmony and because it provides for personal development and routes to employment

8. There may be scope for more inter-community working and the development of community fora. However, their format, purpose, geographical coverage need to be clarified. Their role and links with the community would need to be identified.

9. A further dialogue amongst the focus groups, discussing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this report, is needed to ensure that they are in the driving seat of this work. Further resources are needed for this – indeed the relationship of this research study with policy development needs to be more clearly identified. Initial proposals are included in Appendix C.

10. Results of this study should be widely publicised and used as training materials.

Appendix A
Topic Schedule

1. **Tell us one unique fact about your community?**
   [Ice breaker]

2. **What do you understand by conflict?**

3. **What are the main conflicts that you experience?**
   - Within your community
   - With other communities

   Prompts:
   - *We do not want to hear names, or details about conflicts within families*
   - *[How much of the conflict arises from your / parents' country of origin?*
   - *What about conflict between different communities?*

4. **How are rules laid down about how you should behave with other communities?**
   Prompts:
   - *Who sets the rules?*
   - *What happens if everyone does not apply the rules in the same way?*

5. **How did you deal with the conflict?**
   Prompts:
   - *How are these conflicts generally dealt with?*
   - *Who would you go to?*
   - *Would you draw on culture/tradition/religion structures?*
   - *Would you draw on organisational structures – e.g. school, workplace?*
   - *What approaches were taken? Did it rely on someone else judging what was the best outcome? Or a group mediating?*
   - *Is blame attached to one side or another – or is no blame attached?*

6. **Were these conflicts resolved (sorted out)?**
   Prompts:
   - *What prevented the problems from being sorted out?*
   - *Feed back the conflicts that are resolved and ask: Can we agree what 'sorted out' or 'resolved' means?*

7. **Are you aware of other ways to sort out conflicts in your community?**
   Prompts:
   - ❑ *Can you describe them?   How do they work?*
   - ❑ *Do they rely on advice, listening, third party?*
   - ❑ *What makes them work well for you?*

8. **Considering all the methods of resolving conflicts within your community, which ones work best?**
   Prompts
   - ❑ *What are the reasons why they work best?*
   - ❑ *What methods don't work?*
   - ❑ *What are the crucial things that make a difference (in resolving conflict)?*
   - ❑ *What about the type of person who can help to resolve conflict?*

9. **What would be an ideal approach for you for addressing and resolving conflict?**
   Prompts
   - ❑ *What would it do?*
   - ❑ *Where would it be?*
   - ❑ *Who would be there?*
   - ❑ *What would it be like when you went through the door?*
   - ❑ *How would it work?*
   - ❑ *Would you use it – and what for?*
   - ❑ *Is there a need for a different approach according to each community group? Each age group? For men and women?*
   - ❑ *What outcomes would you like to see?*

10. **Is there a role for training to enable people to address conflict?**
    Prompts: If so,
    - ❑ *What sort of training?*
    - ❑ *For whom?*
    - ❑ *How delivered?*
    - ❑ Need for accreditation

End session

Appendix B: Leaflet Circulated to Participants

Resolving conflict in BME communities

Different ideas and interests may cause conflict in communities. Some people from BME communities who have experienced conflicts have approached the Vale Mediation Service for help, but mediators there do not know how best to help. We are undertaking this study on their behalf in the hope of improving provision.

The Welsh Assembly Government is funding this study under the New Ideas Fund grant scheme and we will be reporting back to them in September 2006.

We are particularly interested in where people in Black and Minority Ethnic Communities go to resolve their conflicts.

- What sorts of conflicts arise?

- How are these conflicts dealt with?

- Which methods work best – and which could be improved?

We plan to hold voice-recorded workshops in Cardiff for young people, aged under-30 and older people aged over-30 from the following groups: Africo Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali, and Gujarat   Can you help?

If so, we undertake that:

- We will arrange meetings at convenient times and locations

- We will pay £10 expenses for participating

- You will not be identified in any report that we write

- Anyone who has contributed will be able to see the report before it goes anywhere.

Please contact:
Manjit Mahil, Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales
Telephone: 029 2045 0068
m.mahil@bvnsw.org.uk

Appendix C: Action Plan

The research has led to recommendations, which we would like other organisations to develop and put into practice. Thus we have set out below an outline Action Plan, which we hope will serve as a starting point.

	Recommendation	Action required	Prior-ity	Target orgns
1	Education for global citizenship	Relevant organisations to promote ESDGC at school and in communities	High (H)	Welsh Assembly – ESDGC champion Cyfynfyd Local authority
2	Conflict resolution to support traditional approaches in communities	Consultation with /training of community leaders and elders to reflect needs of victims of conflict	H	Local authority, mediation groups, BME groups Police / police education team Communities 1st Cardiff/Barry
3	Proactive prevention of conflict; & ensuring community harmony is valued and developed	Resources to support training /conflict prevention measures are linked to needs of BME communities	Medium (M)**	Local authority Voluntary / Community Orgs Cardiff BME Communities 1st Barry Communities 1st
4	Conflict resolution approaches to reflect the needs of BME communities in respect of land use planning, community development & regeneration	Guidance, toolkits, training, awareness raising, better consultation and dialogue Ensure early engagement by Local Planning Authorities in respect of Local Development Plans	H H**	Cardiff BME Communities 1st Local authority / Regeneration bodies, Tai Pawb, Community Housing Cymru Local Planning Authorities Planning Aid Wales
5	Toolkit for community providers	Secure funding to develop a toolkit in collaboration with focus group convenors / community leaders	M**	Cyfynfyd Community Development Cymru / WCVA / Communities 1st Support Network
6	Role, opportunities & limitations of mediation to be better understood	Develop & implement strategy & programme for training people from BME groups in mediation skills	M**	Mediation organisations (currently a policy gap); WCVA; BVSNW
7	People across the BME communities but especially young people to be trained as mediators	Develop appropriate training and mechanisms for recruitment, accreditation / reward. Work with youth organisations to link with personal development and employment	M**	BME groups in partnership ESDGC strategy - Cyfynfyd Youth Councils & organisations Careers Wales LA to support training
8	Develop conflict resolution specific fora which are local, representative, well-respected and effective	Clarify format, purpose, geographical coverage, role & links with community. Ensure synergy not duplication	Low-M	Communities First Community orgns (NB fora already exist)
9	Drive forward the above recommendations – with and by BME community – thus converting research into policy & development action	Focus groups to take action plan forward; Co-facilitators for this project could form a steering group with a small grant to support follow up activity	M**	Cyfynfyd & BVSNW to follow-up with Toolkit Cardiff BME Communities 1st to develop training & triangulation study
10	Results of study to be widely publicised and used as training materials	Press and publicity WAG web-site Launch and distribution	H	BVSNW – e-bulletin, CRE Race Equalities 1st Communities First, Croeso-Race Equalities, Local authorities etc

*NB ** priorities are funding dependent*

Appendix D: Conflict Resolution Case Study

During the course of the fieldwork, the researchers spoke to women from the Bangladeshi and Somali communities. The two groups had been offered a building on Neville Street as a community centre. It was assumed that they would find a way of working together, sharing the resources and facilities and using the centre at different times of the week. At the time the focus groups were held (June 2006) relationships between the groups were poor and for the most part communications had broken down.

Community mediation – a method of resolving disputes in which a neutral third party encourages each party to find common ground and agree ways of working together – was discussed at each of the focus groups. Independently, the groups asked the researchers if mediation could be arranged. The researchers contacted the Vale Mediation Service.

In September two experienced mediators from the Vale Mediation Service approached representatives of each group. They met them on a one-to-one basis on different days. The groups were very keen to resolve their problems, emphasising the valuable function of the Women's Centre, and recognising its importance to each other. It became clear that despite the big areas of common ground, there were obvious differences between the groups, for example, in terms of their values, their ways of speaking to each other, their approaches to rule setting.

The mediators agreed with each group some ways of making easier communication with each other, for example using posters rather than written rules, each group having a delegated leader to do a final check of the property before leaving, having a common diary, opening up separate kitchens, and finding ways of helping each other.

By October, it was clear that the mediation was going well. The two groups agreed with the mediator that the next stage would be a face-to-face meeting to finalise the agreement. However, since then each side has had to withdraw because of illness or other problem and by the end of the project (November 2006) the final agreement meeting had not yet taken place.

Katherine Hughes
Manjit Mahil
February 2007

FINDING COMMON GROUND

We would also like to thank:

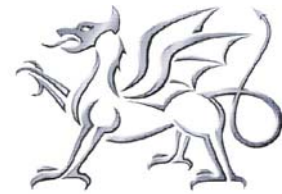The Welsh Assembly Government

The South Wales Criminal Justice Board

Communities First Support Network (CFSN)

Black Ethnic Support Team (BEST)

Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales (BVSNW)

For their support and contribution towards the, research, printing and launch of '**Finding Common Ground'**