

Trade unions and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers:

**Organising through learning and inclusion
strategies**

Cases from the North West of England

Miguel Martinez Lucio, Robert Perrett and Steve Craig



The University of Manchester
Manchester Business School



Contents

Page

List of abbreviations	2
Acknowledgements and author details	2
Executive Summary	3
Introduction	5
Section 1 – Research methods and case overview	6
Section 2 – The North West region in perspective	7
Section 3 – Black and Minority Workers, trade unions and the learning agenda	10
• <i>Far right politics and trade unions</i>	10
• <i>The growing importance of learning for trade union renewal</i>	11
Case 1: Communicating with the community	13
Case 2: Learning and skills as a vehicle for dignity	14
Case 3: Learning and the understanding of culture	15
Case 4: Learning and the understanding of history	16
Section 4 – Building alliances through the learning agenda	18
<i>Engaging SME's in the BME community</i>	18
<i>Engaging the new social networks of BME communities</i>	19
Conclusion and summary (Possibilities and challenges)	20
Appendix	22
A1) Using the report as a training tool for local trade union officials	23
A2) Equal opportunity audit – A checklist of practices	24
A3) List of useful web pages	25
A4) TUC reports of potential interest	26
A5) Other references – Non TUC	27

List of abbreviations

BME	– Black and Minority Ethnic	LCN	– Liverpool Community Network
BNP	– British National Party	REC	– Racial Equality Council
BRM	– Black and Racial Minorities	UAF	– Unite Against Fascism
CAB	– Citizens Advice Bureau	VCS	– Voluntary and Community Sector
CRE	– Commission for Racial Equality	VSO	– Voluntary Sector Organisations
ESOL	– English for Speakers of Other Languages		

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dave Eva and John Halligan from the North West TUC for their support and funding of the research. The authors would also like to express a special thanks to all the interviewees who gave up their time to talk to us in great detail about their experiences.

The empirical research undertaken for this paper was conducted in early 2007, there have been further developments in these cases since publication.

Author details

Prof. Miguel Martínez Lucio is a Professor of Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, and is the Project Director – Miguel.MartinezLucio@manchester.co.uk

Dr Robert Perrett is a Lecturer and principal researcher in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management at Bradford University School of Management – r.perrett@bradford.ac.uk

Steve Craig is a Lecturer at the Trade Union Studies Unit at Wigan and Leigh College

Foreword

This research provides Unionlearn (North West Region) with the opportunity to illustrate how it works with our trade union partners to make a positive difference to the lives of young people, workers and black minority ethnic communities across the region. The short empirical case studies contained in this report clearly demonstrate 'best practice' (in the truest sense of the phrase) by highlighting what can be achieved when unions, individuals, businesses and community organisations work collectively to support, inspire and empower their respective constituencies.

The North West region is a diverse and dynamic cultural and economic area the nature of which has, in part, shaped the historical development of the areas communities and the response of trade unions to represent and promote the socio-economic aspirations of their members.

The cases presented in this report showcase a range of themes central to the promotion and practice of modern trade union engagement strategies with black and minority ethnic groups. These themes reflect and underpin a traditional set of trade union values – those of dignity, respect, equality, social inclusion, understanding, learning and communication – which prove to be as relevant in contemporary society as they were historically.

Despite the many social and economic challenges facing the region it is encouraging to be able to demonstrate the continued relevance and contribution made by trade unions across the geographic and industrial sectors of the North West. Evidence is presented here of unions communicating with communities in Burnley to extend their influence beyond the workplace; of using the learning and skills agenda to promote dignity at work and re-engage with vulnerable workers at various sites across the region; to developing racial awareness training materials within Blackburn Council; and working with young people to tackle the roots of racism in Liverpool.

I commend the work of all parties involved in the aforementioned activities which demonstrate that unions are vibrant, innovative 'learning organisations' with the ability to 'manage change' and 'add value' to people's lives and to the businesses and communities across the North West region.

Dave Eva

Unionlearn, Regional Manager

Executive summary

Overarching objectives

The overarching aims of this report were as follows:

1. To highlight the diversity and richness of trade union responses to the representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups through the development of learning strategies, networking and building effective links with local communities.
2. To highlight how monitoring racism and xenophobia is a fundamental part of the work of trade unions.
3. To show how trade unions are seeking to address the roots of exclusion through coordinating efforts with the range of new actors that have developed to provide support to BME workers.
4. To assist in the development of good practices in respect of union learning strategies and linking up with the community.
5. To share information about the wide variety of strategies that already exists.
6. To highlight strategies that contribute to a strong labour movement response.

Research methods

The research sought to highlight a range of learning strategies developed by unions as part of their wider approach to the organisation and representation of BME workers within the North West of England. A qualitative research design was adopted so as to develop an in-depth understanding of these strategies. The research comprised two key stages:

1. Interviews with key TUC and regional union officials in respect of BME organisation and representation and their learning agenda.
2. Four diverse cases developed by various trade unions with a focus on learning and the community. An overview of these cases is presented below.

The large majority of interviews were semi-structured in nature although some unstructured discussions and focus groups were also conducted. Most interviews were conducted with union organisers, project workers as well as representatives from the institutions they engaged with, such as schools, the council, Churches, community centres, and voluntary sector organisations.

Overview of cases

The cases presented in this report are based around the following themes:

- Case 1: Communicating with the community – How a union can extend its influence beyond the confines of the workplace. Set in the Burnley area.
- Case 2: Learning and skills as a vehicle for dignity – Learning strategies used as a form of union renewal and re-engaging vulnerable workers. Set at various sites across the North West of England.
- Case 3: Learning and the understanding of culture – The development of racial awareness training materials. Set within Blackburn Council.
- Case 4: Learning and the understanding of history – Tackling the roots of racism by developing projects within schools. Set in Liverpool.

Discussion and findings

1. The organising activities of unions in respect of BME groups have increased over recent years.
2. Learning has become a critical vehicle which is at the centre of many new initiatives.
3. Unions were working with communities and local community activists to deliver services on matters such as employment.
4. Minority ethnic project workers allowed unions greater access, and generated effective links, with local BME communities.
5. The steady opening of a dialogue with local, established community networks aimed at the voluntary sector and political representation, presented the possibility of a more dynamic and organised approach to questions of social inclusion.
6. The development of local voluntary groups who are engaged in the learning agenda is more substantial and extensive than that of the trade union movement.
7. Learning agendas have been fundamental to the re-connecting of trade unions with civil society and local communities. It has become a major arena for developing a proactive agenda of social inclusion.

Appendix

Please note; the appendix incorporates a training tool for local union officials and a catalogue of practical information that you may find of interest. This includes:

- a. An equal opportunity audit (adopted from TUC publications). This will allow you to see where the focus of your strategy has developed in relation to equal opportunities monitoring.
- b. A list of useful web addresses where you can acquire advice and expertise on diversity and equalities issues.
- c. A list of TUC and academic publications of potential interest

Trade unions and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers: Organising through learning and inclusion strategies

Cases from the North West of England

Introduction

The question of racism and social exclusion remains a fundamental problem within the UK labour market and migrant communities continue to be marginalised in a variety of ways. The differences in incomes, social conditions, cultural awareness and personal capacities have meant that trade unions continue to face a workforce that is fragmented and treated differentially. Tackling, monitoring and regulating is a fundamental part of the work of trade unionism in relation to racism and social exclusion. Confronting racism in the workplace and the community also means developing a more proactive attempt at explaining the new cultural complexities of society and the heritage of many of the peoples living in the UK. The trade union movement has begun to address the issue of social exclusion and racism through a range of innovative strategies and their learning agendas.

This report aims to outline a series of complementary yet differing union approaches, which are based on cultural, learning and educational strategies regarding social exclusion. It highlights the diversity and richness of union responses in representing BME workers through the development of learning strategies and building effective links with local communities. It is clear that alongside learning strategies, there are novel forms of engagement with the community via the plethora of local organisations that have developed over recent years that seeks to give voices and represent the interests of BME workers. These new actors are playing an increasing role in the representation of minority groups in the community and the workplace and so the potential to develop relationship and alliances with such groups has never been greater.

The report finds that learning has become a critical vehicle in organising and representing the needs of BME workers. Moreover, learning strategies have been used by unions to further develop their relationships with voluntary sector community support groups and their members. By recruiting minority ethnic project workers unions gained greater access to local BME communities, gained greater political leverage and presented the possibility of a more dynamic and organised approach to questions of social inclusion.

Although learning agendas have been fundamental to the re-connecting of trade unions with civil society and local communities, there still exist a number of challenges. Whilst endorsed by unions some initiatives are wholly reliant upon the efforts of specific activists or project workers, once they leave the union or the funds run out, so does the initiative. In this sense there is a tendency for such learning initiatives to be short-term in nature. There is also often a failure to communicate such initiatives within the union movement which can mean that they are lost beyond the immediate scope of their activity. Furthermore, longer-term interventions of a cultural nature only ever yield results that are not immediately visible and are therefore hard to justify to those that hold the purse strings.

Section 1 of this report presents the research methods adopted for this study. Section 2 gives an overview of the labour market and ethnic characteristics of the North West Region. Section 3 outlines some of the literature surrounding cultural, learning and educational strategies in respect of racism and social exclusion. The four cases are subsequently presented; these are followed by Section 4 which is divided into two sub-sections. Using evidence concluded from additional case studies from Lancashire and Accrington the first sub-section highlights the importance of engaging 'Small and Medium sized Enterprises' (SMEs). Focussing on an advanced Black and Racial Minority (BRM) network in Liverpool the second sub-section emphasises the need to develop alliances and working partnerships with community organisations where they already play an advisory and support role. Finally a conclusion and summary is presented.

Section 1 – Research methods and case overview

The research aimed to generate qualitative data to assist in the development of an in-depth understanding of the learning strategies being developed by unions as part of their wider approach to the organisation and representation of black and minority ethnic workers within the North West of England. An intensive research design was therefore adopted. Interviews were undertaken with key TUC and regional union officials so as to identify innovative learning strategies; from these interviews a number of good learning cases were identified. These strategies fall under the following headings and are presented in this report as four short cases:

- Case 1: Communicating with the community
- Case 2: Learning and skills as a vehicle for dignity
- Case 3: Learning and the understanding of culture
- Case 4: Learning and the understanding of history

Set in Burnley, Case 1 highlights how a union can extend its influence beyond the confines of the workplace and raise its profile within predominantly minority areas by working alongside existing community members and support groups. Case 2 highlights two areas where learning strategies can be used as a form of union renewal and re-engaging vulnerable workers. It first looks at dedicated learning centres based in the community and subsequently the case analyses learning representatives and their potential effects in respect of ethnicity and gender. Case 3, located in Blackburn, shows how training materials were developed to address questions of cultural awareness following dialogue between key managers and trade unionists. Finally, Case 4 highlights how unions are tackling the roots of racism by developing projects within schools.

The number of interviews conducted for each case varied due to the degree of access permitted. The large majority of interviews were semi-structured in nature although some unstructured discussions and focus groups were also conducted. The researchers sought to minimise bias and obtain the most 'rounded' view of each case by interviewing a wide range of individuals with a variety of interests. Where permitted, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed in full.

The following section provides a brief overview of some of the workforce characteristics of minority groups within the North West region. The report subsequently presents some of the literature and recent debates in respect of how trade unions are developing learning strategies to address issues of racism and social exclusion. The four themed cases are then presented in the order described above as well as more detailed analysis of the importance of SMEs and partnerships with community bodies. A discussion and conclusion is presented bringing together many of the lessons from the literature and the cases. Finally the appendix explains how this report can be used as a training tool for local trade union officials and incorporates a range of useful and practical information.

As the research was conducted in 2006 and 2007 some of the cases may have developed or changed in terms of their activities and participants

Section 2 – The North West region in perspective

The North West region is divided into nine main Counties and Unitary Authorities which, in turn incorporate 46 local authorities. The nine Counties and Unitary Authorities are; Blackburn with Darwen UA, Blackpool UA, Halton UA, Warrington UA, Cheshire County, Cumbria, Greater Manchester (Met. County), Lancashire County, and Merseyside (Met. County). These are listed here as the ethnic composition between areas differ greatly (this shall be covered in more details below). In comparison to Great Britain as a whole, the industrial composition of jobs most over represented in the North West of England was that of manufacturing according to *Region in Figures: North West* (Winter 2004/05 – figures for 2002). The proportion of ‘employee jobs’ classed as manufacturing in Britain as a whole was just 13.4 per cent in comparison to 15.1 per cent of the North West. This difference was even more stark in specific areas of the North West, for example; 20.1 per cent of employee jobs in Halton were manufacturing, 20 per cent in Lancashire, 19.6 per cent in Cumbria and 16 per cent in Cheshire.

The population of the North West region in 2004 was 6.8 million, an increase of 23,000 between mid-2003 and mid-2004 (ONS Regional Snapshot). This contrasts with the 23 years prior to 2004 when the population steadily decreased by 1.6 per cent. According to Census data (*Region in Figures: North West*, Winter 2004/05), the proportion of the population categorised as “Non-White ethnic group” was considerably lower than the national average; 5.6 per cent in comparison to 8.7 per cent nationally, although this varied considerably by County and Unitary Authority. As Table 2.1 (below) illustrates, by far the largest proportion of the non-white population within the North West was that of Pakistani, representing almost twice the national average. Other significant differences include the black population being largely under represented within the North West and a significantly larger Chinese population than the national average.

Although the proportion of ‘non-white’ population within the North West was lower than the proportion for England and Wales as a whole, this varied considerably by sub-region (*Region in Figures: North West*, Winter 2004/05 – Table 2.10). These are listed below, figures inside the brackets () show the proportion of the population categorised as ‘non-white’: Blackburn with Darwen UA (22.1%), Greater Manchester (8.9%), Lancashire County (5.3%), Merseyside (2.9%), Warrington UA (2.1%), Blackpool UA (1.6%), Cheshire County (1.6%), Halton UA (1.2%), Cumbria (0.7%).

Table 2.1 – Resident population: by ethnic group, April 2001¹

	Percentage of total population		% of ‘non-white’ population	
	North West	England and Wales	North West	England and Wales
White	94.4	91.3	-	-
White British	92.2	87.5	-	-
White Irish	1.2	1.2	-	-
Other white	1.1	2.6	-	-
Non-White ²	5.6	8.7	100.0	100.0
Mixed				
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0.3	0.5	5.9	5.3
Mixed White and Black African	0.1	0.2	2.6	1.7
Mixed White and Asian	0.3	0.4	4.6	4.2
Other Mixed	0.2	0.3	3.6	3.4
Asian or Asian British				
Indian	1.1	2.0	19.3	22.9
Pakistani	1.7	1.4	31.3	15.8
Bangladeshi	0.4	0.5	6.9	6.2
Other Asian	0.2	0.5	3.9	5.3
Black or Black British				
Black Caribbean	0.3	1.1	5.5	12.5
Black African	0.2	0.9	4.3	10.6
Other Black	0.1	0.2	1.4	2.1
Chinese	0.4	0.4	7.2	5.0
Other	0.2	0.4	3.6	4.9

¹ Census data have been used in this table so that as much detail as possible can be provided about the ethnic composition.

² ‘Non-White’ ethnic group includes all minority ethnic groups but not ‘White Irish’ or ‘Other White’ groups

Source: Census 2001, Office for National Statistics

Finally, Table 2.2 illustrates the proportion of BME employees of working age who were union members but isolates Merseyside from 'the rest of the North West'. As can be seen the proportion of BME employees (all sectors) within Merseyside that were trade union members was 36.8 per cent, higher than any other region. By contrast, the figure for the rest of the North West was just 16.9 per cent, lower than any other region. The table highlights the considerable differences in BME union membership by region, however, more detailed analysis would be required to explain the reasons for these considerable differences.

Table 2.2 – BME **employees** of working age who were union members: by region

Region	% of BME employees who were union members
UK	23.4
Merseyside	36.8
West Midlands	28.2
East Midlands	24.9
Eastern	24.7
London	23.4
South East	22.4
South West	22.4
Scotland	21.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	21.5
Wales	19.8
North East	19.2
North West (excluding Merseyside)	16.9

Source: Labour Force Survey August 2005, Office for National Statistics – figures refer to Autumn 2004.
 Note: BME does not incorporate 'White Irish' or 'white other'.

This section has presented a brief overview of some of the key features of the labour market within the North West. This will hopefully allow the reader to better locate the research findings within both the regional and wider context. The following section outlines some of the literature surrounding cultural, learning and educational strategies in respect of and racism and social exclusion.

Section 3 – Black and Minority Workers, trade unions and the learning agenda

Trade unions have in the past been criticised for inadequately representing the broad canvass of groups that constitutes the Black and Minority Ethnic community in the United Kingdom. Criticisms have ranged from ambivalent attitudes by both members and the leadership of trade unions towards ethnic minorities (see Bhavnani and Bhavnani, 1985; Mayhew and Addison, 1983), to more serious accusations of direct and indirect racism and exclusion (minorities seen as 'outsiders' rather than part of the collective unit). Trade unions have pursued various ways (internally and externally) to address such issues since the late 1960s, and over recent years there has been a growing feeling that unions are starting to successfully re-orientate their concerns and priorities and have begun to respond to such issues in a more supportive and strategic manner. This is encouraging as ethnic minority communities incorporate some of most disadvantaged workers within the UK labour market and this is a sector of the economy that is rapidly increasing in size. Furthermore, the need for a united front in the face of the growing threat of the far right within the North West, and the UK as whole, has never been greater.

One way trade unions are addressing such issues and raising their profile in respect of BME organisation and representation is through the learning agenda in the workplace, but increasingly outside within the community, schools, Churches and other religious organisations, social clubs and council buildings. Learning is an issue that affects everyone, inside and outside of the workplace, and some trade unions are utilising this not only to fight racism and xenophobic attitudes, but more generally to provide support and assistance to many aspects of a person's life; not just their work-life.

This section is divided into two sub-sections. First it addresses issues relating to the growth of new tensions and racism and how trade unions are tackling this; and second, this section highlights why the learning agenda has become so important to trade union renewal and how it is being used in respect of ethnic minority groups.

New Challenges

The re-mergence of a far right political presence in society has presented parties and social organisations such as trade unions with a major challenge. Institutional and workplace strategies for addressing imbalances increasingly require a broader long- term agenda. The success in specific local elections by the BNP has raised concerns in various parts of the UK. Furthermore, the right wing press has begun to create an alarmist approach to issues of migration. This has led to a range of new strategies aimed at tackling the electoral challenge of such groups. Trade unionists are at the forefront of many of the anti-BNP campaigns. These have consisted of leafleting, mass meetings, and educational developments. In the main, the attempt is to draw attention to the far right and xenophobic profile of such parties. This is, nevertheless, complicated by the increasing reference to migration amongst the mainstream parties in ambivalent terms. Given this, the trade union movement and trade union activists have mobilised resources to deal with the threat of the far right.

Tackling monitoring and regulating is a fundamental part of the work of trade unionism in relation to racism and social exclusion. Yet it is becoming increasingly clear that there is the need to complement strategies focused on employers, the workplace and political terrains with a broader social and cultural strategy: and at the heart of this is the learning agenda. Fighting racism in the workplace and the community also means developing a more proactive attempt at explaining the new cultural complexities of society and the heritage of many of the peoples living in the United Kingdom. The trade union movement has begun to address the issue of social exclusion and racism in a piecemeal manner through a range of innovative strategies. In the main, the strategies that are normally studied are those focused on the workplace, the nature of management decisions, and the general threat of racism in the community. However, this report argues that anti-racist activity must run through unions in terms of structure, strategy and identity, interweaving with the very purpose of trade union considerations on equality, fairness and justice. Davis et al (2006) attempts to broaden the understanding of the different responses trade unions adopt in respect of racism. These are seen as key dimensions of the trade union response to racism. This report dissects trade union policies and argues that trade unions must develop in the following areas:

- Unions must acknowledge the reality of racism and internally accept the realities of the problem both externally and internally

- Bargaining systems have to integrate equality issues into the centre of their agendas
- Trade unions must have black activists on leading union committees
- The gender dimension is fundamentally interwoven with questions of race and cannot be separated
- The recruitment of black workers must be a priority
- The role of ethnic monitoring must be institutionalised
- Black workers must be represented and supported through coherent and systematic strategies
- Anti-racist education and training must be a vital part of the learning agenda
- Campaigning against racism must be part of the standard work of trade unions

In *Tackling the Roots of Racism*, Bhavnani *et al* (2005) argue that racism is changing and multifaceted. Questions of ethnicity and culture are now compounding the question of race and racism: exclusion and marginalisation are operating at various levels from the institutional to the personal. The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry raised the question of how more proactive support mechanisms and inclusion mechanisms were vital for a greater and more consistent engagement with the question of racism. For this reason, Bhavnani *et al* (2005) argue that tackling racism should be undertaken at all levels and on a daily basis through the media, the workplace, the legal dimension, cultural issues and welfare service delivery. The question of exclusion and marginalisation through racism has become a more complex problem and challenges institutions to respond in terms of their auditing, monitoring, representation, and training mechanisms and not solely their recruitment processes and mission statement. At the heart of this is the question of understanding, perception and education. This is a vital dimension as it begins to dovetail with the general push towards the learning agenda within industrial relations. This is not a synchronised shift given that the learning agenda in the case of trade union strategies are focused on technical and communication skills. The question of cultural understanding is not that explicit within the new trade union agenda, however the report does present cases where trade unionists have begun to use this learning agenda in a more innovative way. The renewal of the labour movement in the United Kingdom is in great part linked to the development and use of the learning agenda. This report shows how such agendas are shaping an alternative, innovative and inclusive approach and basis for dealing with the broader question of exclusion and racism.

The growing importance of learning for trade union renewal

Since the late 1990s it appears that trade unions have placed an increasing emphasis upon their learning agendas, predominantly within the workplace but also through community projects and learning centres. The election of the Labour government in 1997 represented a greater commitment to the lifelong learning agenda, furthermore the government sought to involve trade unions in skill formation and learning policies. The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was established in 1998 funded by the then Department for Education and Employment which made funds available to trade unions, through the TUC, to develop innovative learning activities through a partnership framework. Subsequently, the 2002 British Employment Act conferred statutory rights to new Union Learning Representatives (ULRs). It is clear that unions have embraced learning and are continuing to expand and develop their programmes. The TUC (see Unionlearn strategic plan 2006–2009) claim that most of their 65 member unions have run projects through the Union Learning Fund, almost 500 projects in total covering over 3000 workplaces. Over 13,000 Union Learning Representatives have been trained and a target of a total of 20,000 has been set for 2010. A target of 100,000 learners and 250,000 learners a year going through the union route has been set for 2006/7 and 2010 respectively. Around 90 Union Learning Centres have been established and make up the trade union 'learnirect hub'. Centres offer a wide variety of courses usually either in the workplace, local colleges or union offices. Most participants undertake ICT and 'Skills for Life' courses; centres increasingly provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses have also had a good take-up and can be seen as a positive way in which trade unions can engage with, and offer support to, new migrant workers.

So why have the opportunities conferred by the UK government's lifelong learning strategy been so embraced by the trade union movement? Structural changes within industry and the changing composition of the labour market have resulted in unions pursuing new approaches to membership; the learning agenda being an important one. Learning is

perceived as a 'positive sum game' (all parties gain) and so receives government funding, making union learning partnerships an attractive and, to an extent, economically viable option for unions. Unions are often perceived solely as workplace institutions only representing the needs of employees in grievance and disciplinary proceedings (see Perrett and Martínez Lucio, 2006). The learning agenda has the potential to alter this 'traditional' image of trade unions and show that they can, and do, improve the working conditions of employees in other ways. For Forrester (2004), union learning initiatives offer unions the opportunity for fresh partnerships and alliances with external agencies around a common agenda, for example over gender and ethnicity. He states that (2004: 418), 'a learning perspective informed by 'divisions and differences', for example, provides a more imaginative and politically innovative basis for linking community and workplace audiences around, for example, the recent anti-racist campaigns by the TUC'. This has been shown to be the case through empirical research conducted by Martínez Lucio and Perrett (2007). They illustrate through a series of detailed case studies how benefits can be created through unions developing alliances and extending their networks into Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. Similarly, Wills (2004) highlights how *The East London Community Organisation* project (TELCO) brought together academics, community groups, faith based organisations and some trade unions in a campaign to develop a more social oriented understanding of the living wage. Wills (2004) highlights how UNISON's approach to community unionism and networks facilitated their approach towards local alliances.

Forrester (2004: 418) believes that such initiatives encourage the reformation of trade unions as 'societal actors' rather than workplace partners. However, the workplace is still an important arena for unions to improve their image and their representation of migrant labour, for example; supporting workplace learning for minority groups and migrant workers, initiatives to combat racism in the workplace, learning around cultures and wider societal issues which can 'strengthen the critical and political opportunities for trade unionists to deepen and broaden their existing antiracist educational and campaigning activities' (*Ibid*: 418). Ultimately the learning agenda has been perceived by unions as an opportunity to generate new forms of activism and contribute to increased influence and membership.

Munro and Rainbird (2004: 431) show that partnerships around learning, based upon an independent trade union agenda 'do not undermine a union's capacity to take industrial action and are compatible with the organising agenda'. They (*Ibid*, 431) also suggest that there is evidence that participation in learning programmes can stimulate active membership, possibly lead to recruitment into traditional shop steward roles, of which there is seen to be a shortage from minority communities, and potentially revitalise workplace trade unionism (see also Payne, 2006). In respect of Union Learning Representatives, findings by Wallis *et al* (2005: 300) suggest that they have succeeded in stimulating interest in trade union membership amongst non-union members and that they have further extended their role in terms of 'developing on-site learning facilities, monitoring the progression of learners, providing redundancy support, negotiating training policies with employers, and working in partnership with employers' (*Ibid*, 294). Finally, the workplace learning agenda creates obvious benefits for employees, particularly when they possess few qualifications. Formal, nationally recognised, qualifications can be gained as well as other, hard to quantify, benefits such as greater confidence, a sense of achievement, enlarged job roles and autonomy and a sense of empowerment (see Munro and Rainbird, 2004).

It is apparent that the trade union learning agenda not only helps provide valuable skills and qualifications to the most vulnerable sections of society, it can also be used to portray unions as social movements, concerned with the difficulties faced by minority communities; furthermore it can promote cultural understanding and educate people most at risk of being exposed to racist attitudes, be that in the workplace, the community or the school playground.

The following section presents four short empirical cases which illustrate innovative ways that trade unions are responding to issues of social exclusion through a variety of learning strategies.

Case 1: Communicating with the community

Increasingly it is being realised by many within the labour movement that not only do trade unions need to extend their influence and focus beyond the confines of the workplace in to the community and to diversify the range of services they offer, they are also realising that they themselves might not be the best placed to deliver these services. Moreover, some unions have concluded that the best way to raise their profile within minority communities is to work alongside, or employ the services of, existing community groups or influential individuals. This has been a strategy adopted by the GMB in the Burnley area of Manchester.

Mr Hasan had lived and worked in Burnley most of his life since coming to the UK from Pakistan in 1984. As well as being an active GMB member, Mr Hasan had always been involved in community events and regeneration; he was well known and had developed extensive personal networks through the Mosques and the local council. For some years Mr Hasan and the Lord Mayor had organised the Manchester Mela. Three to four years prior to fieldwork the GMB were seeking to launch a new community campaign in the Burnley area, focussed around anti-fascist activities (given the growing influence of the BNP in the area), extending the GMB's learning agenda, and also to further engage the community and raise the profile of the union. Mr Hasan was identified as the ideal project worker to spearhead the campaign and so the GMB approached his employer and received approval to second Mr Hasan to the project.

The results

The anti-fascist campaigns received considerable media coverage and support from the council and community alike. The learning agenda was extended into various communities across Manchester's suburbs through the GMB applying for funds for computers and other resources for learning centres. Finally, the profile of the union was raised considerably through the numerous activities Mr Hasan was engaged in. For example he acquired a list of voluntary sector support groups from Manchester CVS and personally wrote to them all offering them, and the communities they represented, free advice from the union. Through personal contacts Mr Hasan developed and nurtured a relationship between the GMB and a well established, influential, not-for-profit community support and advice centre in the heart of Burnley. Part grant funded, part commercially funded through private project management contracts, this organisation ran a variety of short-term community projects, provided advice and information to the community covering issues such as housing, migration and benefits, advised other voluntary groups on bid writing and ran a resource library. The GMB's contribution came in the form of funds for an advanced learning centre with ten computers, and at the time of fieldwork they were looking into developing the relationship, with the GMB offering support in respect of employment advice to the community. All employees of the organisation had become GMB members at the time of fieldwork. Mr Hasan's varied work within the community had raised the profile of the GMB and improved its reputation and credibility. Moreover, at the time of fieldwork Mr Hasan had been elected Councillor for the Burnley area giving him substantially wider political and community influence.

Case 2: Learning and skills as a vehicle for dignity

The development of lifelong and continuous learning constitutes one of the major pivots of trade union renewal and re-engagement with the workforce in the past ten years. Furthermore, learning is a major platform for social inclusion: in recent years, it has been a focus of trade union activity, linked into the broader objective of anti-racism and cultural awareness. Here we highlight three distinct ways in which learning acts to show the union in a 'new', or at least less traditional, light being less concerned with workplace grievances and more with developing its members' abilities and confidence and reaching out to the needs of vulnerable workers.

Dedicated learning centres

Although increasingly not the case, greater funds available for level 1 and 2 education under the Labour government has presented an opportunity for trade unions to extend their learning agenda, particularly into the community, in the form of learning centres. A wide range of learning centres, in some way linked to unions, have emerged across the North West and particularly around the Manchester and Liverpool suburbs. It appears there is no shortage of space or desire for these centres but instead a shortage of institutions, particularly local councils, prepared to pursue bids to fund and operate them. In one observed case a union had secured funds, predominantly through the Union Learning Fund (ULF), for a modern learning centre with around 10 computers, a study area, and resource library, located in a council building and staffed full time by seconded council workers. In a second case, a similar learning centre was located in a Church-owned community centre in an industrial district where City and Guilds courses were taught by local college tutors. In addition a union project worker was also a qualified tutor and assessor. Often tutors would go out to workplaces to teach courses and, at the time of research, staff were advertising the learning centre services through leaflets drops in local industrial estates.

What these cases, and many like them, have in common is that irrespective of where they were located, who ran them, who taught the courses and who wanted the credit for them; it was a union that had secured the funds, done the work and made it possible. These particular cases were underpinned by South Asian activists/project workers who were able to draw together the variety of streams of support required and build alliances between the unions, the council and community bodies.

Women, ethnicity and learning representatives

In Accrington, there has been a distinct initiative between a local college and the TUC aimed at developing South Asian female learning representatives. The project was designed to appeal to female workers even if they were not a trade union member with an aim to foster greater confidence and develop potential links into the community and hard to reach workplaces. In addition, the objective of getting training out to a broader number of South Asian women was established as a benchmark and point of reference for trade union work and learning initiatives generally. This meant the raised awareness of gender and social issues within local migrant communities. The role of a like-for-like union learning representative as a guide and mentor, who could link the local female Asian community into institutions like trade unions, is becoming a pivotal feature of such types of work.

Case 3: Learning and the understanding of culture

Local government is a vital space for the elaboration of socially engaged strategies. Various local councils have been at the forefront of anti-racist strategies through the pioneering of educational strategies, the development of BME worker networks and support services, and the linking of its political and administrative arms through BME Councillors and networks. The role of South Asian Councillors in the North West of England is a vital link between the trade union movement, public bodies, local social services and the local communities. Whilst experiences vary, some of the best practices are to be found in many local council bodies.

External political factors have contributed to a need to focus on and address the needs of council workers. In the wake of the 9-11 events and the London bombings, behaviour towards Muslim workers has been, at times, racist and discriminatory from various sources. One of the main catalysts for the development of a more focused strategy of BME support was the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, prompted by institutional racism within the police force in the wake of the murder of a black youth in London. This began a more detailed process of auditing equality issues within the public sector. Various initiatives have therefore been developed: for example, the development of a black workers' network was central. Such networks are becoming an integral part of public sector equality strategies.

In the case of Blackburn, a need to develop a set of training materials for the local workforce emerged that would address broader questions of cultural awareness. After a dialogue between key managers and trade unionists, a training package was developed. The aim of the materials was to present the complexities and richness of minority ethnic communities. It was designed to raise the consciousness of historical backgrounds and to appreciate the facts about migrant communities. The nature of the training allowed for a broad dialogue on identity and ethnicity.

The training took place in Blackburn council and saw trade unionists play a key role. It developed training materials, which made people reflect on the assumptions and the realities of ethnicity and race issues. Whilst successful and engaging, the initiative was not disseminated systematically due to a variety of funding and organisational factors. Neither was a follow-up evaluation undertaken making it unclear as to the extent to which the initiative's training materials were taken up or whether they were effective. As is often the case, such initiatives tend to get lost in the gaps that exist between local council bodies and local trade union structures despite the efforts of various individuals involved. This is something we turn attention to later.

Case 4: Learning and the understanding of history

The work of trade unionists in relation to schools is an increasing feature of their anti-racist and educational activities. A wide variety of trade unions have begun to visit schools in relation to a range of subjects such as racism, health and safety, employment relations and others. Such strategies not only assist in educating young people in respect of race issues they also help raise the profile of the union and re-establish contact with tomorrow's labour market. Unions have in the past been criticised for not adequately connecting with younger workers who subsequently develop little knowledge or understanding of trade unions; such school strategies could be an innovative means of addressing such difficulties before they emerge.

Furthermore in Liverpool, New Heys Community School had witnessed a rise in the number of racial incidents in the local vicinity'. There was a challenge emerging from the fact that many students aged 11-18 had understood for example little about the Holocaust and were unaware of traditions of African slavery – the latter of which was directly related to the history of Liverpool as a central imperial port. This brought forward an attempt by Learning Mentors within the school to develop a programme of mentoring, mediation and multi-cultural awareness amongst the students. The involvement of external agencies was encouraged and so one of the local TUC-Unionlearn, regional development workers and a TUC-Unionlearn tutor began to develop a range of resources; the first was a series of texts and materials, adapted from resources previously used by the TUC for the purpose of tackling racism in the workplace.

A team of ten trade union activist were briefed and conducted a series of PSCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) lessons across the whole of the school's year 10 group using an extensive range of materials and adopting a 'modular-blended learning' approach to the delivery of sessions. The mentoring and inclusive tutoring skills of the TUC-Unionlearn were important in developing a more engaging and less hierarchical approach to the delivery of the materials. Moreover, through the TUC's links, international and local institutions could be accessed by students. In effect, the students were made to feel they 'owned' their personal development and the issue and subjects explored during the project. As the list of topics below illustrates, the range of issues incorporated within the training and mentoring material, although focussed predominantly on race, diversity and identity issues, covered other employment topics with underlying theme of safe and fair workplaces where prejudices should not be tolerated. The broad themes incorporated included:

- Tackling racism
- Equality and diversity
- Migrant workers, those seeking asylum and refugees
- Stereotyping, prejudice and the use of language, images and the role of the media as mediums to perpetrate hate and institutionalised racism
- Assertiveness, networking, developing 'tools for tolerance' and 'conflict resolution' to challenge racism at all levels
- Identity, culture, communication and integration
- Exploring family/historical roots and their effect on current attitudes and the shaping of communities
- The exploration of 'music' and its societal/cultural influence; its adoption by social and cultural sub-groups to 'archive experience and history'; and musical roots and links
- Analysis of the concept of 'power' – its use and abuse
- The role of trade unions, the law and access to representation and advocacy

(Tackling Racism Group: 2006: 4)

The programme also incorporated visits to museums, workplaces, film and theatre events; hosting of European and international trade union youth and student delegations; cultural events, interviews with community elders; a visit to Auschwitz and a range of other classroom based exercises/activities.

Students were able to develop presentations, portfolios and make videos of their experiences throughout the lifetime of the project. As the group developed, it established a momentum within the school as new cohorts from lower years entered the programme and peer-tutoring lessons were delivered by the students to younger year groups. The questions of racism and ethnicity were approached in broader terms as all types of students were asked to look at their family origins and roots, and realise the breadth and depth of identity amongst the Liverpool working class. The question of race and ethnicity – in terms of the need to challenge it – was presented in developmental terms so that students could develop skills and understandings that would serve them in the workplace in later life.

To sustain the initiative, the parties decided to establish a student led, independently constituted, 'Tackling Racism – Promoting Diversity Group' (TRG) which would be associated with the school but run autonomously and embed the tackling racism activity throughout the school community. TUC-Unionlearn representatives were able to support and 'capacity build' the TRG's ability to conduct formal meetings, take minutes, elect a Chairperson, Secretary and other Committee membership positions and apply for funding to continue the work of the initial project. The TRG attracts over fifty permanent members and has a large number of 'associate members', it holds monthly meetings and has extended the 'reach' of its activity as it secured significant levels of funding for its work. Through observation and interviews, the students engaged with the issue in a constructive manner. The role of the school Learning Mentor and the part played by the TUC-Unionlearn in organising and implementing the programme were paramount in creating a different dimension to the trade union's traditionally perceived role in a community.

The union movement was able to act as a bridge into a range of educational and cultural bodies, funding councils, and economic organisations. The TUC-Unionlearn and wider labour movement came across as a body with knowledge, networks and a tradition of mentoring and support. This dimension of work is becoming increasingly important yet there appears to be a lack of sharing when it comes to such experiences amongst the many bodies involved in this new feature of anti-racism.

The TRG is an active 'work in progress' as it continues to attract new members and develop its work with Unionlearn and a variety of external agencies such as Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Youth Service, Liverpool University, 'Aim Higher' and National Museums Liverpool. The TRG has won a number of awards across Liverpool and Merseyside ('Best Project' Liverpool Youth Service for example) and has been recognised as a 'model of best practice' by Liverpool City Council. In addition, the Community Foundation for Merseyside nominated the TRG for an 'Innovation' award as part of the 'Spirit of Merseyside Awards' in 2007.

It would appear from the recognition accorded to the TRG by external institutions and the affirmative experiences cited by the TRG and trade union representatives, that the combination of trade unions and young people working together in schools and in the community is a very positive force to tackle racism, promote diversity and repositions the union movement within the perspectives of tomorrows potential members.

Section 4 – Building alliances through the learning agenda

Learning agendas have been fundamental to the re-connecting of trade unions with civil society and local communities. It has become a major arena for developing a proactive agenda of social inclusion. However, such strategies vary in terms of their development and the manner in which services are delivered. The provision of new forms of union services and support strategies within BME communities are part of a broader politics and approach to services that involves many organisations. The development of local voluntary groups who are engaged in the learning agenda is probably more substantial and extensive than that of the trade union movement. In this respect, how trade unions understand, approach and work alongside a broad range of learning organisations in BME communities is an important feature of the learning revolution. Trade unions do not stand alone in the world of learning, quite the contrary: if anything, in regards to BME issues, trade unions are recent entrants. However, the effectiveness of trade union learning strategies may depend on the broader network strategies they develop.

Engaging SME's in the BME community

One of the challenges of dealing with social inclusion issues is the understanding of the entrepreneurial dimension of the BME community. Along with local, autonomous social bodies there is a strong tradition of micro businesses with various communities. This is often a missing link in much of the work of trade union engagement with BME communities. This is partly due to the inability to understand the history and social fabric of such communities. It also emerges from a failure to map the interests and self-organisation that may emerge. In part, this is social but it is also economic. The novelty of new migrant cultures in terms of small businesses illustrates how micro business activities are misunderstood given that such initiatives have defined a range of settled migrant communities during the 20th Century. The relevance of this feature is broad. In dealing with social exclusion, social groups develop markets and business initiatives. This is relevant for this analysis because it means that support for social and political initiatives is more complex and expansive than stereotypes of local immigrant communities would suggest. Moreover, it means that there are employers within migrant communities: textiles and retailing in Asian communities, construction subcontracts in Polish communities to name but a few examples. None of these are new but as is often the case they are downplayed. For the trade union movement links with SMEs are a potential link into communities, but they are also businesses (micro or otherwise) which employ people.

In Lancashire, the development of an employer-training project is driven by a greater deal of workplace and employment evaluation and regulation. In work done by the TUC and Accrington and Rosendale College, mentioned earlier, there is an increasing focus on learning as a vehicle for including individuals within the training and learning agenda of public institutions, and this was discussed in the previous case. In this area, the missing link in much of this work was not just the need for female South Asian union learning representatives; it was also the engagement with the local Asian business community: the Asian Business Federation. There is a dialogue emerging between trade union officials and such federations focused on various features of the new industrial relations agenda.

In the first instance, the importance of understanding the challenge of increasing regulation within the employment relation is key. The pressures on micro businesses in dealing with greater concerns in health and safety, equality related issues and general administrative procedure means that trade unions can offer valued advice for such businesses. The role of trade unionism and the benefits of dealing with a regulated environment are a central feature of the dialogue that began to emerge within this sector. Moreover, given the centrality of skills and communication to the employment and business agenda, the role of unions as links into the resources and funds that are available to such businesses may facilitate a dialogue and training programmes that yield a variety of benefits. Greater union awareness, a more supportive approach to learning and learning representatives and a greater understanding of regulations in areas such as health and safety mean that this dimension is a potential source of influence for enhancing working conditions but also drawing smaller business into a wider politics of equality. Many businesses of such a nature contribute to this in their local social and even, in some cases, religious work and contributions but the prospect of a link with trade unions means that some of the worse excesses of small and medium sized business in industrial relations and social terms, whatever their ethnic origin, can be avoided. In other work undertaken by the authors in the East Midlands, a minimum wage campaign, was supported by a leading union, the local council, the Inland Revenue and DTI (now the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform), was unable to be effective over the longer term due to the failure to

convince local businesses within the targeted BME community in question. The project had like-for-like activists involved, who worked within the community spaces of the BME community, but it was unable to win the trust and understanding of key local ethnically based businesses. This therefore raises the importance identified in the case of Accrington of developing training and discussion forums for local businesses. In many respects, social inclusion and greater cultural awareness requires a broader approach and an appreciation of the actors and players on BME communities.

Engaging the new social networks of BME communities

The delivery of front line learning and social services involve a variety of players. Trade unionists are developing learning strategies in an environment where there are various local voluntary organisations participating in a similar manner. In Liverpool for example, the Liverpool Community Network (LCN) is based in an old school in Toxteth, which has been converted into a large community centre with a range of meeting rooms, offices, information materials, and social facilities. In this particular local organisation there are eight networks covering a range of topics related to women's issues, training, housing, and others. There are 2,000 groups involved in one form or another in LCN, which sees itself as an organisation for representing Black Racial Minority (BRM) individuals. The communities involved are predominantly already established African-Caribbean as well as newly arrived Somali communities. Whilst interests and perspective vary, the different networks help set up a framework whereby supporting services are delivered and local interests communicated. This network then feeds into local city-wide and regional forums: articulating the interests of its members and constituent groups. LCN helps focus resources and projects around specific needs and capability issues within its membership organisations. The organisation has secured funding from a range of sources for training and learning. In addition, it has begun to intervene in Liverpool based initiatives related to the 2008 'Cultural Capital of Europe' initiative. These raise the need for a greater focus on training for the service sector and the construction sector. Various labour market initiatives were instigated with the aim of preparing and developing individuals from Black Racial Minority communities. These did not involve trade unionists directly and were driven by professionals and representatives involved with various local council and training bodies.

In observing meetings between TUC officials and tutors and individuals within the LCN, it became clear that both were active participants in the new agenda of learning. The meetings were able to allow common experiences to be exchanged in relation to funding, regional employment initiatives, and local network developments. The new market for learning resources requires an acute awareness of where funding exists, how funding can be deployed, and what is expected in terms of outcomes. The sheer scale of knowledge that such networks develop in terms of local issues, concerns, capability needs, and cultural factors is very difficult for a white, male dominated trade union to replicate. Given this, employment issues are a central feature of large parts of the work of organisations such as the LCN.

The challenge of the labour movement is to be able to work alongside such networks and to provide an understanding of labour market and employment issues, which is normally missing unless a local activist has a relevant employment or trade union background. The steady links established by various individuals within such networks and the trade unions indicate a possible degree of mutual support and awareness; however there is an issue of trust that needs to be addressed. Many networks within local minority ethnic communities tend to view trade unions as organisation that are focussed on large workplaces and settled communities (see Perrett and Martínez Lucio, 2006).

Conclusion and summary (Possibilities and challenges)

The activities of trade unions in relation to black and minority ethnic groups have increased in the past few years. There are a range of interventions and strategies aimed at dealing with racism and the challenge of social inclusion. This report has focussed on how the learning and training dimensions have become a pivotal feature of these activities. The development of learning representatives focused around BME related issues, the development of learning centres, and the role of focused training to enable the emergence of activists within BME communities has been outlined in the report. Moreover, the strategy of dealing with the challenge of racism within young people and the educational environment has emerged as one of the more novel and socially grounded approaches involving trade unionists. These are dimensions of trade union work that are rarely visible outside of the world of industrial relations and those directly effected and influenced by such strategies. However, the research was able to catalogue a range of strategies and initiatives, which covered basic training, to IT-related learning, to cultural awareness programmes. The initiatives came out of an ability to deploy public resources in a meaningful and focused manner.

The research also detected the emergence of strategies that did not see the provision of such services in a hierarchical manner. That is to say, that the research noted that trade unionists were working with communities and local community activists to deliver the services and to apply the knowledge they had acquired on matters such as employment issues. Like-for-like activists were brought on board, and these acted as effective links into local BME communities. The case studies from Burnley were indicative of an ability to work with individuals with credibility and support from within the local community. Without such individuals the unions would have remained on the outside of local dynamics and relations. The challenge, as in Accrington, was to take this a step further and develop a female cadre of activists in the form of union learning representatives. The presence of trade union officials and tutors in addressing this challenge formed the basis of highly original initiatives alongside the work of local colleges. The role of alliances between trade unions, on the one hand, and local community activists, on the other, was supported by the trade union presence in the local college network: this allowed the trade union to roll out courses and resources within a legitimate, high profile environment. The research also noted initiatives that had begun to emerge around the learning agenda that viewed BME communities not just as helpless victims of social marginalisation, but which understood the collective framework and organisation of such bodies. The opening of a dialogue with local, established community networks aimed at the voluntary sector and political representation, presented the possibility of a more dynamic and organised approach to questions of social inclusion. Even the attempt to provide training to SMEs within BME communities shows the way a more strategic approach has evolved.

There are nevertheless challenges.

The first is that many of these initiatives whilst endorsed and supported by trade unions usually rest on a cluster of activists, tutors or officials who take it on themselves to address certain questions and develop initiatives similar to those outlined above. The failure to communicate such initiatives within the trade union movement means that such initiatives are lost beyond the immediate scope of their activity.

Secondly, links with local networks and employers require follow through and detailed programmes of support.

The tendency is towards a short-term dialogue. The pressures on individuals and their work means that resourcing a longer time relation between organised labour and social movements is not always viable. The outcomes are very much long term in nature: that is to say, organisations are less disposed to building alliances with groups and networks if they cannot see a clear outcome. However, the nature of a dialogue between such groups requires a longer timeframe. It also requires a greater understanding of the way local communities develop representative functions that often offer services very similar to those of the trade union.

Thirdly, anti-racist activity is seen in traditional terms as blocking and exposing xenophobes. That is an important activity, but more strategic longer-term interventions of a cultural nature only ever yield results that are not immediately visible. The school's initiative outlined above brought mixed views from various trade union activists as it was not focused around traditional trade union activity, although its ongoing success suggests that opinions were changing.

The fourth challenge for such strategies is that the state funding of learning in terms of ESOL and lifelong learning initiatives has recently been the subject of cutbacks. Given this current shift in policy, one sees that the effect of such cutbacks is not solely on the actual courses offered to the local community but also to the very re-engineering of trade union strategy as it tries to lock into and support marginalised individuals from all communities through the prism of learning and training.

As the case studies above illustrate, trade union engagement strategies with BME and community groups can provide opportunities for innovative and collaborative activity beyond traditional spheres of influence or areas of operation. This can add to the 'knowledge base' of respective organisations, enhance understanding of potential user groups and develop links with partner organisations or 'allies' engaged in similar activities and work.

The question of social inclusion is therefore more challenging than one would imagine. It requires an array of strategies and initiatives. The services offered need to be developed with local communities and in the context of a more inclusive political approach. To this extent the report notes the rich tapestry of initiatives that have emerged and the way new forms of social dialogue are being driven by trade unionists. To this end, learning has become a critical vehicle which is at the centre of many of these new and more subtle initiatives.

Appendix contents

A1) Using the report as a training tool for local trade union officials

A2) Equal opportunity audit – A checklist of practices

A3) List of useful web pages

A4) TUC reports of potential interest

A5) Other references – Non TUC

A1) Using the report as a training tool for local trade union officials

This report can be used as a training tool. There are many ways that this can be done. The main way would be to use the cases as the basis of group work: the following is a proposed timetable for a one day training session.

VERSION ONE

10.00	Open discussion about racism and discrimination
11.00	Use the audit list (see Appendix A2) in groups to analyse your organisations equal opportunities strategy
12.00	Discussion and short outline of equal opportunities and anti-racist union strategy. Use the list on page 10/11 from Davis <i>et al</i> (2006), see also A2.
13.00	Lunch
13.30	Group work discussion of cases – one or two cases per group
14.30	Tea/Coffee
15.00	Feedback from groups on each of the cases – 20 minutes each
16.30	Final feedback on the variety of ways to tackle racism and summary of need to work across different strategies
17.00	END

VERSION TWO

You may vary this approach and use the second half of the day as a stand-alone session:

13.00	Discussion and short outline of equal opportunities and anti-racist union strategy. Use the list on page 10/11 from Davis <i>et al</i> (2006), see also A2.
14.00	Tea/Coffee
14.30	Group work discussion of cases – one or two cases per group
15.30	Feedback from groups on each of the cases – 15 minutes each
16.30	Final feedback on the variety of ways to tackle racism and final summary of need to work across different strategies
17.00	END

A2) Equal opportunity audit – A checklist of practices

Please read through the checklist below and tick the different schemes your organisation undertakes. There are no right or wrong answers or points system, however it may give you an idea of additional schemes your organisation could potentially utilise.

Title	Yes	No
Collective bargaining		
Use of surveys to identify black members' priorities and inform the bargaining agenda		
Guidelines or advice produced for negotiators on issues relevant to black members		
Monitoring the impact of guidelines, relevant to black members, on collective bargaining		
Provide training relevant to black members to paid officials		
Provide bargaining training related to black members to lay representatives		
Union services		
Monitoring services for how they impact on BME members		
Monitor number of discrimination cases taken to tribunal		
Rules		
National rules on (general) equality		
National rules relating to women and black members		
Membership		
Keep statistics on the number of black members		
Keep records on ethnic origin of shop stewards		
Keep records of black branch officers		
Keep records of black conference delegates		
Keep records on black national executive committee members		
Keep equality statistics on senior full-time black officials		
Aims or targets for black members		
Made specific efforts to recruit women and black members		
Employment/election of equality officers		
National equalities officer with specific areas of responsibility		
Regional/group/sectoral equalities officers		
Specific person at branch level with responsibility for women and black members		
Structures		
National equality bodies for women, black and young members		
Have a national general equality committee		
Reserved seats on national executives		
Reserved seats at union conferences		
Reserved seats at delegations to the TUC		
Hold regular national conferences/seminars for women and black members		
The union as employer		
Proportion of unions that have undertaken an equality audit		
Have an equal opportunities policy		
Used positive action in recruitment procedures for black workers		
Education and training		
Monitoring participation by ethnicity on union or union sponsored training		
Encourage women and black members to attend union training		
Take steps to make sure courses are accessible to black members		
Publicity/materials/publications		
Offer some publicity materials in languages other than English		
Campaigns		
Planning to run campaigns (i.e. anti BNP) that specifically affect black members		

*Table derived from topics covered by TUC equal opportunity audits

A3) Useful web addresses

ACAS	http://www.acas.org.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau	http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Commission for Racial Equality	http://www.cre.gov.uk
Consortium Of Ethnic Minority Organisations	http://www.coemo.co.uk
Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations	http://www.cemvo.org.uk
Equal Opportunities Commission	http://www.eoc.org.uk
Ethnic Minority Employment Taskforce	http://www.emetaskforce.gov.uk
Government Office for The North West	http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw
Low Pay Commission	http://www.lowpay.gov.uk
National Assembly Against Racism	http://www.naar.org.uk
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action	http://www.navca.org.uk
Searchlight Magazine	http://www.searchlightmagazine.com
The Social Exclusion Unit	http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk
Unite Against Fascism	http://www.uaf.org.uk
Racial Equality Councils – Check the internet for your nearest office	
Trades councils – Check the internet for your nearest trades council	

A4) TUC reports of potential interest

- Tackling Racism Group (2006) TUC at New Heys Community School Liverpool
- Davis, M, McKenzie, R. and Sullivan, R. (2006) *Working Against Racism: The role of trade unions in Britain*. TUC. London.
- Fitzgerald, I. Stirling, J. (2004), *Black Minority Ethnic Groups Views of Trade Unions*, Northumbria University, Trades Union Congress. 2004.
- Holgate, J. (2004), *Black and minority ethnic workers and trade unions strategies for organisation, recruitment and inclusion*, London: Trades Union Congress. 2004.
- Martínez Lucio, M. Perrett, R. McBride, J. Craig, S. (Forthcoming 2008), *Migrant Workers and the Recognition of their Qualifications and Skills: Engaging the vulnerable workforce and extending the learning revolution to the question of qualifications and experience*, Manchester University, Bradford University and the Trades Union Congress. 2008.
- Martínez Lucio, M. and Perrett R. (2007), *Social Inclusion and Representation Strategies in the Workplace and Community: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers and innovative trade union responses* (Feb), Bradford University School of Management and the TUC, ISBN* – 978 1 85143 245 5 (1 85143 245 0).
- Perrett, R. and Martínez Lucio, M. (2006). *Trade Unions and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities in Yorkshire and the Humber: Employment representation and community organisations in the context of change* (June). Bradford University School of Management and the TUC, ISBN* – 9 781851 432332 (1-85143-233-7).
- TUC, (2006), *Discrimination at work, It's so over*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- TUC, (2005), *Workplace training: a race for opportunity*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- UC (2005), *TUC Equality audit 2005*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- TUC (2005), *TUC black workers conference 2005: Report of the TUC race relations committee 2004-05*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- TUC (2004), *Propping up rural and small town Britain: Migrant workers from the New Europe*, European Union and International Relations Department, Trades Union Congress, London. (Nov).
- TUC (2004), *Moving on: How Britain's unions are tackling racism, TUC black workers conference 2004*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- TUC (2004), *Gone West: Ukrainians at work in the UK*, European Union and International Relations Department, Trades Union Congress, London. (March).
- TUC (2003), *Overworked, Underpaid and Over Here: Migrant workers in Britain*, European Union and International Relations Department, Trades Union Congress, London. (July 2003).
- TUC (2003), *Equal opportunity audit 2003*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- TUC (2003), *Black voices at work, TUC black workers conference*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- TUC (2003), *Equality law: a new approach*, Trades Union Congress, London.
- UC (2002), *Migrant workers: a TUC guide*, Trades Union Congress, London.

TUC (2001), *Black Workers Deserve Better*, Trades Union Congress, London. (April 2001).

TUC (2001), Black and Excluded: Black and Asian workers in the 1990s, *Stephen Lawrence Task Group, information bulletin No. 1*, Trades Union Congress, London. (December 2001).

TUC (2000), Resisting Racism at Work, *Stephen Lawrence Task Group report*, Trades Union Congress, London. (August 2000).

TUC (2000), *Challenging racism at work: Using the law*, Trades Union Congress, London.

TUC (2000), Black, Unionised and Better Paid, *Stephen Lawrence Task Group information bulletin No. 2*, Trades Union Congress, London. (April 2000).

TUC (2000), *Tackling Racism: a TUC workbook*, Trades Union Congress, London.

TUC (2000), *Exposing racism a work*, Trades Union Congress, London.

TUC (1999), Rooting out racism, *Stephen Lawrence Task Group report*, Trades Union Congress, London.

For earlier reports please contact national TUC (publications) – 020 76364030

A5) Other references – Non TUC

Bhavnani, K. and Bhavnani, R. (1985), 'Racism and Resistance in Britain,' in Coates, D. Johnston, G. Bush, R. (eds.) *A Socialist Anatomy in Britain*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bhavnani, R. Safia Mirza, H. and Meeto, V. (2005), *Tackling the Roots of Racism*, Policy Press in association with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Djan Tackey, N. Casebourne, J. Aston, J. Ritchie, H. Sinclair, A. Tyers, C. Hurstfield, J. Willison, R. and Page, R. (2006), *Barriers to employment for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Britain*, Department for Work and Pensions, Research Report No 360.

Forrester, K. (2004), 'The quiet revolution?' trade union learning and renewal strategies, *Work, employment and society*, Volume 18(2). Pp. 413–420.

Holgate, J. (2005), Organizing migrant workers: a case study of working conditions and unionization in a London sandwich factory, *Work Employment and Society*: 19: 463 – 480.

Mayhew, K. and Addison, J. (1983), 'Discrimination in the Labour Market' in G. Bain (ed.), *Industrial Relations in Britain*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Modood, T. (1997), 'Employment' in Modood, T. Berthoud, R. Lakey, J. Nazroo, J. Smith, P. Virdee, S. and Beishon, S. (eds.), *Ethnic Minorities in Britain London*, PSI.

Munro, A and Rainbird, A. (2004), Opening doors as well as banging on tables: an assessment of UNISON/employer partnerships on learning in the UK public sector, *Industrial Relations Journal* 35:5, pp. 419–433.

Payne, J. (2006), British trade unions and the learning and skills agenda: an assessment, *SKOPE Issues Paper 12*, Oxford and Cardiff Universities, December.

Wallis, E. Stuart, M. and Greenwood, I (2005), Learners of the workplace unite!: an empirical examination of the UK trade union learning representative initiative, *Work, employment and society*, Volume 19(2): 283–304.

Wills, J. (2004). Campaigning for low paid workers: The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) Living Wage Campaign, in W. Brown, G. Healy, E. Heery and P. Taylor (eds) *The Future of Worker Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 264–282.



Authors:

Prof. Miguel Martínez Lucio,
Manchester Business School – Miguel.MartinezLucio@manchester.co.uk

Dr Robert Perrett
Bradford University School of Management – r.perrett@bradford.ac.uk

Steve Craig
Wigan and Leigh College – scraig@castor20.fsnet.co.uk

Yorkshire & Humber TUC
13/14 South Parade
Leeds LS1 5QS
Tel: 0113 242 9696
Fax: 0113 244 1161

Regional Secretary: Bill Adams
Regional Policy Officer: John Lewis
Racial Awareness Forum Convener: Eddie Spence

Email: race@tuc.org.uk
Follow links from www.tuc.org.uk or go to www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/regions_info_yandh.cfm



ISBN* 1 85143 255 8
ISBN 13 978 1 85143 255 4

