

**NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL  
FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES (NICEM)**

**Response to Consultation on  
Cross-Departmental Equality & Social Need  
Research and Information Strategy  
March 2003**

**Introduction**

NICEM is a voluntary sector, membership-based umbrella organisation representative of minority ethnic groups and their support organisations in Northern Ireland. Currently we have 26 affiliated members from the Chinese, Asian, African-Caribbean, Muslim, Filipino and mixed marriage community.

NICEM is committed to collective action informed by people's experience and analysis of their circumstances. In pursuit of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment NICEM works for social change in relation to racism and in particular to the elimination of racial discrimination.

**Comments on the Strategy Document**

1. NICEM welcomes the initiatives of a joint-up approach cut across all departments. This Strategy Document will have significant impact on all section 75 groups if the proposed strategy is delivered in full. We must also emphasise that the key success of the Strategy is to build up a partnership approach with section 75 groups in identifying gaps of data, information and research, as well as to consult, under section 75 duty, on any future research proposal in order to ascertain the gap and contribution from section 75 group in the contents of the research.
2. We agree on the aims of the Strategy Document (paragraph 2.2). We would also like to put an additional aim, which in line with the above argument in paragraph 1, : **“To work in partnership with section 75 groups to review and identify gaps of data, information and research.”** We also agree on the principles (paragraph 3.1)
3. Regarding priorities in paragraph 4 of the Strategy Document, we have the following specific comments:

**3.1 Gap**

One of the key problems on Equality Impact Assessment is that there is no data and information on racial group whatsoever. As the result, public authorities are with tendency to claim that there is no negative impact on racial group. NICEM has been campaigning for years to introduce monitoring data in both service provision and employment of any public authorities. With the new duty (the equivalent section 75 duty) imposed under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Commission for Racial Equality will introduce a compulsory monitoring regime (also part of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommendations) in service provision and employment of public authority.

Equally, it is important to use the existing data and research more effectively in the process.

### **3.2 Baselines data**

Despite initiation and good practice to consult the ethnic minority community by the Census Office, the return rate of the Census questionnaire is very low from the Chinese, Pakistani, Muslim and other small community. Therefore, the Census figure in 2001 cannot reflect the true figures of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. The trend of internal migration from the mainland (UK) and from the south (Ireland), as well as the EU enlargement process, will encourage more people from different minority ethnic background settle down in Northern Ireland. It will boost not only the numbers but also the diversity of people living in Northern Ireland. This trend will have enormous impact on the local public services.

### **3.3 Indicators**

It is also important that to consult section 75 groups on appropriate indicators, both performance and outcome indicators.

### **3.4 Best Practice/What Works**

We totally agree the importance of sharing good practice in relation to the delivery of equality impact assessment among public authorities. It must also emphasise that we should use more imaginative way to conduct equality impact assessment in which section 75 groups can make substantial contribution.

### **3.5 Causes/Dynamics**

We agree with you the importance to understand the causes and dynamics of social exclusions and inequalities.

### **3.6 Building community Capacity**

It is the most important factor for this Strategy Document. We are entirely agreed to use the concept of social capital as the process to build community capacity at both national and European levels.

## **4. Funding and Implementing the Strategy**

**4.1** We are strongly argue for any research on ethnic minorities in the future should open tender, in particular to the UK academic and professional field in which a black perspective should be employed in all our research on ethnic minorities. We are facing uphill battle to fund local academic to do a lot of exploratory study in which they do not understand our problem on the one hand, a lot of experience that we can learn from the UK experience on the others.

## **5. Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy**

**5.1** We should have additional questions on the outcome of the strategy, as well as the cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the joint-up approach across departments.

**Should you have any queries about this submission, please contact with:**  
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