

# The Dream Job Report - Summary

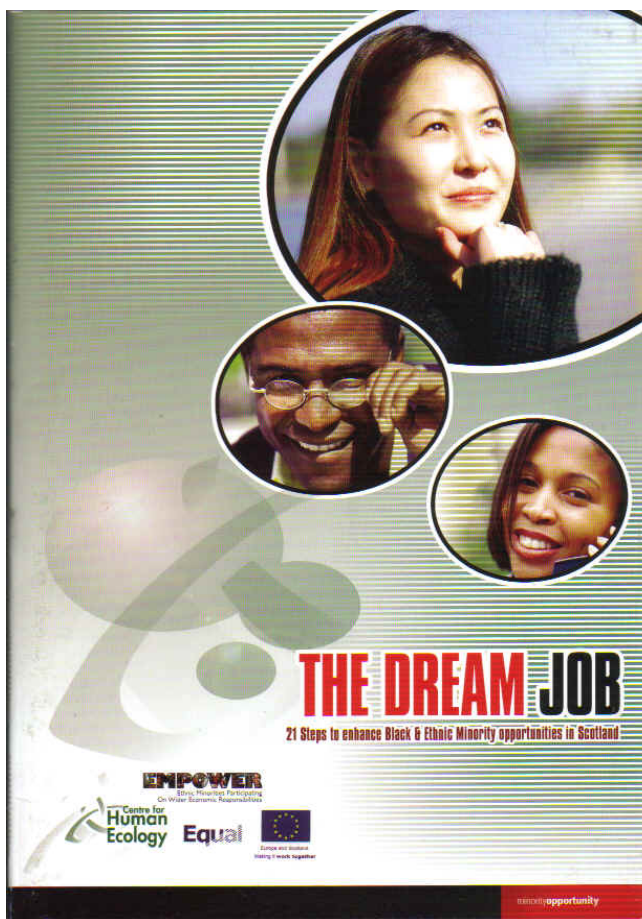
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## The Dream Job Report

### 21 Steps to enhance Black and Ethnic Minority opportunities in Scotland

Launch Date: 23 September 2005 at the Stone of Destiny, Edinburgh Castle

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## Executive Summary

1. The report has been researched by the [Centre for Human Ecology](#) for EMPOWER – a coalition of black and minority ethnic groups in Scotland. It asks the fundamental question of whether young Scots who are not “white” find it easy to aspire to their “dream job”. Some 30 highly focussed “key informants” were interviewed, either individually or in small groups. They came from all over mainland Scotland, and represented a wide range of skills and professions.
2. Four key questions were asked, leading to a 21-step programme of recommendations to enhance minority opportunities in Scotland:
  - a. “Could you tell us a story of an experience of work in Scotland?”
  - b. “What would be a dream job for the young people in your community?”
  - c. “Do you know anyone from your community that has a dream job?”
  - d. “What would help more young people from your community to get a dream job?”
3. In answer to the first question, stories ranged from working in department stores to a former soldier of Saddam Hussein’s now working as a landscape artist and running a restaurant. Some had very positive experiences and warned against seeing racism where other factors were to blame. Others reported humiliation, like being made to sit and wait for hours to get a job interview or being told that vacancies had been taken even when they were still being advertised.
4. In answer to the second question, there was an overwhelming sense that black and minority ethnic (BME) Scots saw a Dream Job as being one where they could fully contribute their skills for the common good. They wanted to avoid being stereotyped into “ethnic” or “black sector” areas of employment, and wanted qualifications gained elsewhere to be better recognised here. Dual or multiple identities should be recognised (eg. African-Scot), and cultural differences need to be understood so that people can give of their best without being expected to behave in ways that offend their beliefs or customs.
5. In answer to the third question, many saw a dream job as eluding them because of racial prejudice. Some, however, found that genuine respect for their difference had led to them being seen positively – for example, a Muslim who needed to be able to pray at work being told, “we welcome that sort of person,” by the non-Muslim management of a bus company that subsequently employed him.
6. In answer to the last question, many respondents emphasised the importance of the young having positive role models. There was little evidence that those interviewed currently felt they had many such role models, but some saw that they themselves could become a role model. Emphasis was placed on being available to be used by the community, giving back to others, and being open to others. But these require the “host” community or employer to model welcoming behaviour. As one respondent surmised, “I am the living proof that this organisation has made a start.”

## Conclusions - the 21 Steps

A number of summary points emerge of measures that would help people redress the problems identified in this scoping report. Several of these could provide a focus for further research and alleviative measures. They include:

1. Educate employers that there is a potential reserve of honest hard working talent that they're perhaps not using.
2. Actively encourage job applications from BMEs so that they'll know they're not going to hit a glass door as soon as their application goes through the letterbox.
3. Show positive role models in the media and other communications, because employers may not have seen BMEs outside of certain stereotypical jobs.
4. Recognise that it is both the mainstream white population and, equally, BMEs that need to see BME representatives in positive role models.
5. Give awards and possibly a kite-mark for excellence, to exemplary employees and employers.
6. Young peoples' career services in schools and universities could be more active in approaching employers in non-stereotypical occupations and widening the horizons of BME children.
7. Tackle the issue of employers and employment law being unwilling to recognise overseas experience and qualifications or having difficulty in ensuring commensurate value.
8. Tackle racism in the workplace like we have tackled smoking: challenge it wherever it lights up.
9. Have awareness of the ways in which people can feel put down because of their accents, names, dress code, dietary requirements and other markers of cultural identity.
10. Recognise that racism is not only an urban issue, and that in rural areas it is compounded by isolation from ethnic support structures. As such, awareness of invisible racism should be integrated into Scotland's rural policy.
11. Increase racism awareness amongst both children and adults: "Adults know how to pretend [that they're not prejudiced] but you get the racism from their children".
12. Listen! Learn to see people from other ethnic groups not just in the way that you're maybe conditioned to see them, but also as they see themselves.
13. Tackle underlying psychology to change attitudes at a deep level, and not just to the shallow depth that can be achieved in statutory training.
14. Research how the social psychology of racism could become better understood at a "street" level.
15. Spread awareness of the historical relationship between the cultures of host indigenous communities within Britain and those of BMEs settling amongst them.
16. Research how behaviour that may appear racist is seen from within the indigenous Scottish psyche, and increase awareness of how unintended cultural clashes may cause offence.
17. Recognise the special support needs of those undertaking training and mentoring work where they are likely to be exposed to hurtful attitudes and difficult dilemmas.
18. Research steps that would bolster confidence, so that people can better stand their ground without seeming pushy.
19. Recognise and celebrate dual and multiple identities. They bring colour and diversity to the workplace.
20. Develop and implement criteria for becoming a "Faith-sensitive Employer".
21. Cultivate empathy: "A man's a man for a' that."

## Background Notes to this Report

In February 2002 a cross-sectoral consortium of voluntary organisations, “EQUAL”, approached the Centre for Human Ecology (CHE) to undertake a study into job opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people in Scotland. This followed on from the CHE’s earlier work on cultural inclusion in Scotland, particularly its close involvement in the *People and Parliament* report, [Reshaping Scotland? The People Speak](#) (1999), which profiled the Scottish peoples’ sense of national identity at the time of Devolution, and also, the follow-up report of CHE’s [Embracing Multicultural Scotland project, Who’s a Real Scot?](#), published in April 2000.

It was to be a small scoping study rather than a statistically profiled one. It aimed to identify a range of issues raised by BMEs and use these as pointers in developing action plans linked to the European Social Fund. This report was part-funded by the European Social Fund and is to be published on 23 September 2005 by EMPOWER and the Centre for Human Ecology, co-authored (in alphabetical order) by Alastair McIntosh, V r ne Nicolas, Tara O’Leary, Jane Rosegrant & Nick Wilding. Only the background, Executive Summary and conclusion sections are shown here. A link will be provided shortly to the full report once it is posted on the CHE and/or EMPOWER website.

We approach the study with the assumption that many white Scots take it for granted that they can aspire to a “dream job”. Would, we wondered, the same be true for BMEs? We were aware that social class might be a bigger determinant of aspiration than race – many participants indicated this by commenting that their success in achieving aspirations was substantially helped by having had family support – but we believed that the notion of a dream job would be valuable in any case for opening up discussion.

We also wished to probe the importance of role modelling in broadening people’s aspirations. What light, we wondered, might possible BME role models be able to shed by way of expanding people’s vision in Scotland today?

During March 2002, we ran focus groups and interviewed individuals from a range of BMEs traversing Scotland from the north to the extreme south-west. (The time span between the research being conducted and the report’s publication has been due to factors beyond the researchers’ control, but it does not affect the validity of the study. Indeed, debate about multiculturalism in Britain since the London bombings make it even more timely now). Even with this small but in-depth survey, a rich body of insight has emerged. This report summarises the findings. It mainly uses quotes, or descriptions, from both the individuals themselves and the focus groups.

Obvious care must be taken in using this report. We have tried to be sensitive in how we have generalised from some BMEs to many or all, but such generalisation will inevitably, on some occasions, be questionable. For example, faith sensitivity in places of work is a matter of overriding concern for some groups, but an irrelevance to others. As a report like this has inevitably had to generalise at times, we urge sensitivity in the uses made of it where this has obviously been done.

We are delighted to have procured permission from Edinburgh Castle to launch the report at Scotland’s *Stone of Destiny* which is housed there. To appreciate the relevance of this, [click this link](#). To view a text-only version of *The Dream Job Report* [click here](#). Printed versions with graphics are available by contacting <http://www.empowerscotland.org/>.

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