

# CEMVO

COUNCIL OF ETHNIC MINORITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

An organisation for Scotland's  
Minority Communities



*Strengthening  
Communities*

Jagroop Kaur Dhillon, Colin Lee, Gary Craig

# **CEMVO**

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## **A Report for CEMVO Scotland**

**Jagroop Kaur Dhillon, Colin Lee and  
Gary Craig**

## **Table of contents**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Overview</b>	<b>3</b>
	2.1 Scotland's governance	3
	2.2 Minority ethnic communities in Scotland	4
	2.3 The context for the voluntary sector	8
<b>3.</b>	<b>The Scottish minority ethnic voluntary sector</b>	<b>10</b>
	3.1 Problems of definition	10
	3.2 Inactive organisations	11
	3.3 A unitary body?	11
	3.4 A brief profile of the voluntary sector	12
	3.4 General problems	14
<b>4.</b>	<b>The research process</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>The views of interview respondents</b>	<b>20</b>
	5.1 Funding	20
	5.2 Recruitment difficulties	25
	5.3 The sector's capacity	28
	5.4 A divided sector?	31
	5.5 A lack of co-ordination	34
	5.6 Other issues	37
<b>6.</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>CEMVO in Scotland: a prospectus for development</b>	<b>44</b>
	7.1 CEMVO: work in progress	45
	7.2 A structure for CEMVO Scotland	47
	7.3 Priorities for CEMVO Scotland	48
	<b>Appendix 1: Responses to the survey questionnaire, and the questionnaire</b>	<b>51</b>

# **1: Introduction**

The main body of this report was based on a study undertaken by Jagroop Kaur Dhillon following a structured consultation with many Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector Organisations (MEVSO) within Scotland. Some parts of the report have been updated (particularly in relation to Chapter 2, Section 2.2, black and minority ethnic communities in Scotland, in the light of the 2001 Census results) and contextualised by Colin Lee and Gary Craig. Gary Craig undertook a final edit of the report.

Jagroop Kaur Dhillon was engaged by the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) Scotland to undertake this study. CEMVO itself was established in 1999 by the Ethnic Minority Foundation (EMF) to provide support, capacity-building and sustainability to the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector (MEVS) throughout the UK and a Scottish office for CEMVO was opened in 2003.

The brief of the study was to research the Scottish Voluntary Sector but more specifically the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector (MEVS) within Scotland. This involved an intensive and extensive period of consultation with the MEVS throughout Scotland. The purpose of these consultations was two-fold:

- to share information about the work CEMVO had started carrying out at a UK level but particularly outside Scotland; and
- to gather information from Scotland-based organisations about what their key concerns were for the sector and the kind of problems they were encountering in trying to run their organisations on a daily basis.

To provide a basis for the consultative work, a mapping exercise was carried out, cross-correlating as many different directories and listings of Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector Organisations (MEVSOs) as were available in order to construct a comprehensive database. Additionally, the study required the researcher to investigate the stance of local government and of other relevant bodies including funders and educational bodies. These groupings are referred to in the report as the different sectors which were studied.

Samples were drawn up from each of these groupings, that were as representative as possible in terms of their geographical disparity and broad approaches to working with minorities. The samples in each grouping were then contacted and interviewed using a semi-structured interview approach. A postal questionnaire was also devised as a mechanism for gathering further information from MEVSOs alone. The findings from the interviews and the survey were analysed using key themes that emerged from these data gathering exercise. As we shall see, the study broadly demonstrated the fragmented and weak nature of the BME Voluntary Sector in Scotland.

Many of the concerns expressed by the participants to the study – across different sectors and across differing sizes of organisation within each sector – highlighted the need for an organisation which could focus on voicing the needs of the black and minority ethnic voluntary sector in Scotland. Most of these concerns were areas covered by the main aims and objectives of the EMF and CEMVO, in particular, the need for more resources; for a higher degree of professionalism; for representation at a higher political level; and for the guidance of Minority Ethnic youth. The

## *Strengthening Communities*

argument for a CEMVO-like organisation in Scotland is thus based on a series of elements of evidence regarding:

- the major concerns of the people involved in the different sectors;
- the key problems faced by organisations working with or for minority ethnic organisations;
- what they perceived as the way forward in terms of organisational infrastructure; and
- what they felt they needed from an organisation like CEMVO.

The following chapters first describe the Scottish context for the study (Chapter 2), what we know about the Scottish Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector, drawing in part on the postal questionnaire sent to minority organisations and other sectors (Chapter 3) and the methodology of the study (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 reports the major findings from the interviews with minority respondents in particular. In Chapter 6 and 7 the implications of the findings are drawn out, together with an outline of the kind of work programme which CEMVO Scotland could develop, based on its experience in England.

## **2: Overview**

### **2.1 Scotland's governance**

Scotland constitutes the most northern area of the island of Great Britain and shares a border with England. Although Scotland makes up a third of the land of Great Britain at 31,510 square miles, it only holds around 10% of the overall population. The geographical boundaries of Scotland include the islands of the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland. Much of northern Scotland is characterised by deeply rural areas in which the proportion of the population from minority ethnic communities is small. Nevertheless, there are minorities in each Scottish local authority area and, as other research has shown, the problem of rural racism is a substantial one (de Lima 2002).

The population of Scotland was estimated at 4,998,567 in the 1991 census, rising to an estimated 5,119,200 by 1999<sup>1</sup> but dropping back a little by the time of the 2001 census to 5,062,011. The majority of this population resides in the five main cities of Scotland: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Inverness.<sup>2</sup> Scotland's local government system was reorganised in 1996 to a unitary system with 32 local authorities. Twenty-nine of these local authorities are on the mainland and three represent the various island areas (Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles)

A Scottish Parliament was established by the UK government in 1999 to devolve more authority to Scotland itself; this operates at a national level and is housed along with the Scottish Executive (the operational body) in the capital city of Edinburgh. Although the UK government has reserved powers, including defence, general taxation and social security, for example, Scotland has its own education, health, social work and legal arrangements, and its own banking system and bank notes. The devolved Scottish Parliament prides itself in being an egalitarian nation with equal access and equal opportunities for all (the myth of "the lad o'pairts").<sup>3</sup> The Scottish Parliament is keen to be seen to promote such ideals and be more accessible to the Scottish public. The Scottish Executive has published an annual report entitled *Social Justice ... a Scotland where everyone matters* (see e.g. Scottish Executive 2002<sup>4</sup>) which sets out a strategy for 'delivering a better life for the most disadvantaged people and communities in Scotland.' Within this strategy, minority ethnic groups are identified as one of the more marginalised communities but it is arguable that the Scottish Executive has yet to set out a clear strategy for meeting their needs.

This strategy is beginning to emerge as a result of a series of research studies commissioned either independently or in conjunction with the Scottish Executive (see below). It is also enthusiastic in general about its support for the voluntary sector and although there is not a specific document to outline the nature of its relationship with the MEVS (comparable, for example, to the Compact in England and, in particular the specific guidance, *Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community*

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<sup>1</sup> Mid-1999 Population Estimates, Scotland <http://wood.ccta.gov.uk>

<sup>2</sup> Scotland Facts and Figures, <http://www.scotland-calling.com>

<sup>3</sup> Fraser, W. H and Morris, R.J. eds, (1995) "People and Society in Scotland: Volume 2 1830-1914" Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Executive, 2002, *Social Justice*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

*Organisations: a Code of Good Practice*), the Scottish Executive does outline as part of its shared values in the Scottish Compact its commitment to,

*"... pluralism which welcomes the diversity of identities and interests within Scotland, including minority ethnic groups such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, and upholds the right of each interest to speak on its own behalf"*

and to,

*"Equality of opportunity which maximises the opportunities for all people to contribute from their distinctive traditions, religions, cultures, values and abilities to the shared life of the wider community, as well as their own particular communities of need and interest. This includes opposing institutional, or other forms of, discrimination, and promoting participation and inclusion."*<sup>5</sup>

Although larger voluntary sector organisations draw down funding streams from the Scottish Executive and, through the Executive, from European sources of funds, most MEVSOs are dependent on local government for their funding. Although the Scottish Executive is committed to the principle of race equality, and, as we show below, has begun to make progress, the conference held at the end of 2003 reviewing activity in relation to the Race Relations Amendment Act shows how far it has to go effectively to achieve this goal.<sup>6</sup>

## **2.2 Minority ethnic communities in Scotland**

The minority ethnic population of Scotland was approximately 1.3% of the overall population in the 1991 Census, increasing to just over 2.0% of Scotland's total population by the time of the 2001 Census. Although the minority ethnic population as a whole is small, comparable to that of many large rural counties in England, two important points need to be made. First, the Scottish minority ethnic population has grown by about 50% over the last ten years, a rate of growth far greater than for the population as a whole, or for the minority ethnic population anywhere else in England. Secondly, as with the Scottish population as a whole, minorities are concentrated in the Central Belt.

The 2001 Census identified the ethnic makeup of the Scottish population as shown in Table 1 below. Three-quarters of all non-white Scottish minorities are thus from South and South-East Asia, again a disproportionately large number compared with the UK as a whole.

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<sup>5</sup> The Scottish Compact presented to Parliament in 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Details of this conference and a report, *Promoting Race Equality in Scotland*, are available from [www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/recent.aspx](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/recent.aspx)

**Table 1: Scottish minorities: population breakdown**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of whole population</b>
White Scottish	4,459,071	88.9
Other White British	373,685	7.38
White Irish	49,428	0.98
Other White	78,150	1.54
Indian	15,037	0.30
Pakistani	31,793	0.63
Bangladeshi	1,981	0.04
Other South Asian	6,196	0.12
Chinese	16,310	0.32
African	5,118	0.10
Caribbean	1,778	0.04
Black Scottish	1,129	0.02
Mixed Race	12,764	0.25
Other	9,571	0.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,062,011</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Total non-white ethnic minority</i>	<i>101,677</i>	<i>2.01</i>

The largest area for settlement of minority ethnic communities in Scotland is in Glasgow, where 31% of the total Scottish minority ethnic population reside (42% for Greater Glasgow). Minority ethnic communities represent 5.5% of Glasgow's total population. Other major minority ethnic populated areas are Edinburgh (4.0%), East Renfrewshire (3.85%), Dundee (3.5%), East Dunbartonshire (3.09%) and Aberdeen (2.9%). Although 60% of minority ethnic communities live in one of the four major cities, every Scottish Local Authority and Health Board area has an minority ethnic community, the smallest being Orkney (0.44%). Only 14 towns in Scotland with populations of more than 500 recorded a zero minority ethnic population. In most urban areas of Scotland the largest local minority ethnic community is Pakistani. However, in more rural areas (such as Ayrshire and Arran, the Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, and Grampian) the Chinese community is the largest.

In terms of age profile, the minority ethnic communities differ greatly from that of its White communities. In general terms, all of Scotland's minority ethnic communities have proportionately larger numbers of younger people and far fewer older people. For example, 56% of all minority ethnic communities are aged under 30 compared with 36% of the white community, whilst only 7% of all minority ethnic communities are aged over 60 compared with 21% of the white community. Finally, the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and other South Asian communities have the highest proportion of people aged 15 and under, with 31% representation. This has implications both for the delivery of health and social services but also in terms of the way that the minority ethnic voluntary sector might develop.

In relation to gender, the white communities have the lowest number of men (48% overall), and particularly in later life (i.e. 80+ years of age) where women outnumber men by 3:1. Male/female imbalances are highest among the African, Bangladeshi, and Indian communities where 54%, 56% and 53% respectively of the population are males.



All of the major world religions are represented within Scotland and particularly amongst the minority ethnic communities. The religious make-up of the Scottish population is shown in Table 2 below.

Further analysis of the Census shows that women are more prevalent than men in all Christian sects. Conversely, with the exception of the Jewish faith, there are more male than female respondents that identify themselves as members of a minority faith. Comparing the faith at birth to current faith, Islam is the largest growing religion in Scotland. Finally, men were more likely than women to have no faith and also less likely to have not answered the question on religion.

**Table 2: Religious affiliation of Scottish population**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of population</b>
None	1,394,460	27.6
Church of Scotland	2,146,251	42.5
Roman Catholic	803,732	16.0
Other Christian	344,562	6.9
Buddhist	6,830	0.1
Hindu	5,564	0.1
Muslim	42,557	0.8
Sikh	6,572	0.1
Another religion	26,974	0.5
No answer	278,061	5.4
<b>Total persons:</b>	<b>5,062,011</b>	<b>100</b>

Despite being 2.1% of the overall population there is very little representation of minority ethnic communities at any level in the Scottish Parliament and this decreases the further up the hierarchy one goes – there are for example, no elected MSPs from minority ethnic groups (and the UK Parliament is not much better with 12 minority MPs out of a total of 630). This issue is also mirrored to a lesser extent in the structures of the local authorities where there are generally low numbers of minority ethnic councillors throughout Scotland. A recent study identified the lack of participation by minority ethnic groups in public appointments and highlighted barriers to their involvement, including the failure by appointing bodies to adopt many aspects of equal opportunities policies and practices which are commonplace elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Members of the minority ethnic communities interviewed for this study were very aware of this lack of representation and saw this as one of the causes for the difficulties that they were facing and in hindering the progress of their communities. Where there are people from minority ethnic backgrounds involved in these government bodies, they seem to be dealing with all the issues concerning their communities, as well as carrying out the work that they are recruited to undertake. The responsibility of dealing with any race-related issues falls on the shoulders of these few individuals and this clearly is not appropriate.

Having said this, the Scottish Executive is taking steps to ensure that these bodies are more representative. The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), consequent on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999), has been influential in raising awareness and increasing the responsibility of public bodies in promoting racial

<sup>7</sup> Henderson, S., 2003, *Diversity in the public appointments process in Scotland*, Research Findings 8/2003, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

equality and combating institutional racism. In 2000, the Scottish Executive committed itself to major new research aimed at providing better information on the circumstances and needs of people from minority ethnic communities and has reviewed funding issues (see footnote 22). However it may take several years before the policies that it decides to establish and implement in light of research findings make even the slightest impact. For example, a recent study of attitudes to discrimination in Scotland demonstrates that there are reckoned to be high levels of discrimination and ineffective monitoring and policing of discrimination against minorities and racism more specifically.<sup>8</sup> The difficulties facing minorities in Scotland, and in rural areas in particular have been highlighted by two studies of rural racism in Scotland. These have both identified the considerable but 'hidden' extent of racism which minorities living in rural areas of Scotland – who constitute about 40% of the total minority ethnic population in Scotland – have to face not only in terms of high profile incidents, such as criminal damage and assault, but on a day-to-day basis.<sup>9</sup> This literature, and others, demonstrates that very little adequate research has yet been undertaken on the position of ethnic minorities. For example, a report on Poverty in Scotland<sup>10</sup> again acknowledges the potentially marginal position of minority ethnic groups but provides little data – other than in the case of asylum-seekers – of whom there are about 10,000 under the NASS dispersal scheme now resident in Scotland. The murder of a Turkish man, Firsat Dag, in Glasgow in 2001 has placed their position more prominently before the Scottish public as a whole but here is limited evidence to date that their circumstances have been linked to wider debates about the position of minorities as a whole.

The most comprehensive review of minorities in Scotland took the form of an audit commissioned by the Scottish Executive in 2001.<sup>11</sup> This reviewed all research relating to minorities in Scotland over the past ten years or so and concluded that there was a dearth of both good qualitative and quantitative data on the position of minority ethnic groups. The majority of studies focused on Pakistani groups, with very little attention given to the second largest group, that of Chinese people, and were largely focused also on the Glasgow area and, to a lesser extent, Edinburgh. There were hardly any Scotland-wide studies and those which existed tended to be part of UK-wide studies. The authors conclude 'we have seen little evidence of strategic planning of research related to minority people within an overall agenda that seeks to challenge racism and eliminate racial disadvantage and discrimination within Scotland'. All of these studies point, implicitly or explicitly, to the need for an effective voice for minorities in Scotland.

Most recently, a series of focus groups held with minority ethnic people in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Grampian and Fife, identified a range of needs covering health, employment and business support, education and lifelong learning, justice and the

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<sup>8</sup> Bromley, C. and Curtice, J., 2003, *Attitudes to discrimination in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

<sup>9</sup> see de Lima, P., 1999, 'Research and action in the Scottish Highlands', in P. Henderson and R. Kaur (eds.), *Rural Racism in the UK*, London: Community Development Foundation; de Lima, P., 2001, *Needs not numbers: an exploration of minority ethnic communities in Scotland*, London:, Community Development Foundation/Commission for Racial Equality.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, U. *et al.* (eds.), 2002, *Poverty in Scotland, 2002*, London: Child Poverty Action Group.

<sup>11</sup> Netto, G. *et al.*, 2001, *Audit of research on minority ethnic issues in Scotland from a 'race' perspective*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

law, housing and social work support.<sup>12</sup> This also pointed to the difficulties faced by minorities in achieving an effective voice for their needs particularly in a context where all those 196 respondents surveyed had experienced discrimination and racism. The kinds of issues which an effective voluntary sector voice might address include, for example, the inappropriate use of untrained interpreters, the need for advocacy and support, the isolation of many smaller minority groups, community involvement and participation, and the generally negative approach taken by the media.

It is also important to note that neither the 2001 Census, nor most recent research, has been able to address the growing population of refugees and asylum-seekers in Scotland, of which there are now an estimated 10,000 in Scotland, 6,000 of them in Glasgow, the only Scottish local authority to date to agree a contract with the National Asylum Support Service. This figure, if accurate, suggests that Scotland's minority ethnic population will have grown by 10%<sup>13</sup> as a result of this form of migration alone and it brings with it an even wider and richer diversity: Scotland's refugee population includes, to date, 57 differing ethnic minorities, including many such as those of Afghani, Somalian, Congolese, Iraqi Kurd and Iranian, who are newcomers to Scotland.

### **2.3 The context for the voluntary sector**

The Scottish voluntary sector is a rapidly-growing area of society, with a substantial – though still inadequate - amount of funds and other resources becoming available to the sector. The MEVS in Scotland is growing even more rapidly, despite the fact that the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector Organisations (MEVSOs) have only really emerged in Scotland over the past 10-15 years and are therefore in a very early stage of evolution. Funding for minority organisations is even more limited, as we shall see.

From the evidence of this study, the MEVS within Scotland appears to be more of a conceptual entity than an entity that operates in a consistent and uniform way at a practical level. There are at present, as we shall see, very few common traits that can be detected amongst the organisations operational within this sector. The sector is on the whole made up of a large number of small independent organisations that are providing services to their particular communities or groups of interest with very little collaboration or co-ordination amongst them. In short, there is very little to unite these organisations into a sector. Much of the research summarised above tended to focus on surveys or discussions held with minority ethnic individuals and very little research has been done to date on the scope of the minority ethnic voluntary and community sectors as a whole. Such research as has been undertaken on the minority ethnic voluntary sector all points to the facts that its potential strengths lie in:

- its ability to effectively represent the cultural needs of minority groups;

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<sup>12</sup> Blake Stevenson, 2003, *Focus groups with minority ethnic communities*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

<sup>13</sup> Although to date less than half may decide to stay in Scotland. See 'The hostility begins to melt', *Community Care*, 16 October 2003: 60-61.

## *Strengthening Communities*

- its importance in reducing the isolation of minorities;
- the potential role that it can play in providing accessible services; but
- that it is underfunded or, as one report puts it, 'inadequately supported, maintained or expanded'.<sup>14</sup>

The research all points to the need for a coherent and sustainable strategy for funding the minority ethnic voluntary sector.

At the moment there is also an unusual amount of uncertainty and upheaval within the MEVS with the Commission for Racial Equality reviewing the delivery of local racial equality services in Scotland under the banner of a "Modernising Agenda". As part of this agenda the Racial Equality Councils (RECs) are being reviewed and modernised. A considerable number of MEVSOs are affiliated to the RECs and turn to these organisations for guidance especially in the more rural areas where there is an even more pronounced lack of other support systems for these organisations. The context in which these organisations are operating is thus constantly changing and they are not always aware of the consequences of these changes, if they are in fact actually aware of the wider context in which they are operating at all.

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<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Patel, N., 1999, 'Black and minority ethnic elderly: perspectives on long-term care' in S. Sutherland, (ed.) *With respect to old age*, London: the Stationery Office; BEMIS, 2000, *Listening to the voice: feasibility report*, Edinburgh: BEMIS; Reid-Howie Associates, 2001, *Funding the black voluntary sector*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

## **3: The Scottish minority ethnic voluntary sector**

### **3.1 Problems of definition**

There are several major problems of definition that are essential in trying to understand the complexities of the voluntary sector and the various different contexts and dimensions in which this sector operates. This is not a problem limited to defining the sector in Scotland and for many years researchers have grappled with the problem of analysing what has been described by one researcher as a 'loose and baggy monster'. First, there is the general question of the overall boundaries of the sector, i.e. what should and should not be encompassed by this concept of the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector (MEVS). This is an issue especially relevant to the current situation throughout the UK as a whole with an ever-increasing number of minority-ethnic focused projects emerging as part of what are predominantly white voluntary organisations. In certain situations, these projects are headed and led by minority ethnic people, but technically these projects cannot be considered minority ethnic organisations in their own rights and they also have support systems and procedures that independent MEVSOs may not have.

This situation raises the issue of institutional racism. Increasingly, minority researchers and activists are asking if it is possible to meet the needs and requirements of minority ethnic communities within an overall structure and pattern of organisations designed primarily for and by, white western ideologies? Even where these projects do exist, are they getting the support and resources they need to operate effectively and efficiently from their parent organisations and are they attracting users from minority community groups? Alternatively, are they just tokenistic measures to attract more funding and to act as 'proof' of the progress these organisations have made on the 'race' issue? This issue has been addressed by Daniel Silverstone, Director of the London Borough Grants Committee, who comments more generally on the tokenistic involvement of minority ethnic people within white voluntary sector organisations. He observes:

'I don't feel that the sector has really grasped the issue of diversity ... Just pick any large major charity and look at how many Black trustees they have. Often it's the case that they recruit people but they don't support them once they're in. The culture of the organisation doesn't change and so they lose Black and Minority Ethnic recruits.'<sup>15</sup>

This also raises questions regarding the positions that minority ethnic people are being recruited into: the more general inequality of opportunity for and lack of progress of certain groups. The 'Glass-Ceiling' is very much a hurdle for people from minority ethnic communities not just in the voluntary sector, of course, but also in all the other sectors of society and is reflected in the lack of representation of these communities at national and local government level, especially in influential decision-making positions within these bodies.

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Janet Snell, *The Guardian* - 5<sup>th</sup> April 2000

Although minority ethnic projects run by white organisations are not, in our view, minority ethnic voluntary organisations in their own right, their work and input to the sector is valuable and difficult to disentangle from the sector as a whole. This is why, for the purposes of this study, this was not a distinguishing factor in the selection of the sample of respondents to interview. However, because some of these projects are connected with or supported by well-established voluntary organisations, they are not facing some of the initial problems faced by certain newer MEVSOs that are trying to set up and establish themselves as organisations. It is also fair to assume that these former projects will have, to a certain degree, the support of their white counterparts whereas other organisations may have to struggle for any sort of approval or support. Having said this, though, it is important to assert that these projects face problems too. On the whole these kinds of projects tend to receive short-term funding, e.g. for 1-3 years; in certain circumstances, this funding may be renewed, however this is not always or even usually the case and when this happens, these projects disappear. Not only is the sustainability of these projects restricted, but once their funding has expired, the impact of these projects on the organisations themselves has been minimal. There is very little integration of their work or of the initiatives of these projects with the core work of the organisations. This is a key point since many respondents to the study carried out with focus groups referred to above (see footnote 12) identified the need for mainstream organisations to change their practice to meet the needs of minorities, as much as a need for specialist organisations for minorities.

### **3.2 Inactive organisations**

The second main problem in trying to define the MEVS is that there are currently rather more organisations operating in name than there are operating effectively in practice. Several organisations that were set up and had titles listed in several of the sources consulted turned out, on investigation, not actually to be active; they did not provide any services to the communities and made no contribution to the sector, yet are still recorded in the databases of organisations that constitute the MEVS.

Groups or organisations that are only partially active further complicate this situation. That is, they do come together on odd occasions, but not frequently enough to be truly active. When they do come together it is to raise their voices against a certain issue or to celebrate a certain event. In certain instances this could be as infrequently as once every couple of years. It is clear that the fragility of the sector as a whole contributes to this problem of lack of activity since many of these organisations have been through a period of activity but are latent because of funding and organisational difficulties.

### **3.3 A unitary body?**

Another key problem, touched on above, is in describing the MEVS as a unitary entity: the voluntary sector as a whole includes a vast number of groups and organisations from very diverse backgrounds covering reasonably funded groups with paid staff (a relative few) through to much smaller representative community organisations with little, if any, funding (the majority of groups identified). These groups have very different needs and identify themselves in a variety of different ways. Furthermore, the communities they represent are facing different problems

depending on how and when they emigrated from their countries of origin and how established they are within Scotland as a whole.

There may indeed be certain commonalities across these groups – the experience of racism and discrimination being an obvious example - however there are many more points of departure as well as some grounds for conflict. By using an all-encompassing term like the 'minority ethnic voluntary sector', the danger is that all these groups with greatly differing demands and needs will get treated in the same way in terms of policy and service responses. This problem has been recognised in recent years in social policy research with minorities in England where it is increasingly acknowledged that the focus has to be as much on diversity and difference within the minority ethnic 'community' as much as on the notion that there is such a thing as a homogeneous minority community whose needs can be contrasted with that of the majority community. The recognition of difference is also important in terms of voice, as groups with the greatest populations are more likely to be heard whilst the smaller groups will feel further marginalized or outvoted or squeezed out further to the fringes of society, their voices ignored or conveniently lost. There are hierarchies of need and support within the minority ethnic groups: in short, minorities within minorities.

### **3.4 A brief profile of the sector**

There are, on the basis of this study, around 450 Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector Organisations (MEVSOs) in Scotland. Trying to categorise these organisations was extremely difficult, due to three reasons common to all studies of the voluntary sector:<sup>16</sup>

- their geographic dispersal;
- their thematic differences (i.e. differences in their main focus of activity);
- the variety of activities that are carried out by single organisations.

To provide a rough analysis of what these 450+ organisations are doing, it was however necessary to create some broad-based system of categorisation which is shown in Table 1 below in terms of the main focus of activity of the group, as defined by themselves.

A large majority of these organisations are concentrated in either Glasgow or Edinburgh. Most of these organisations do not have premises and are operating from people's homes. A selected few have paid staff but most of them exist with minimal resources. Some of these organisations are collecting funds and other resources from their members, others are making do with the little resources they have managed to accumulate. This points to the fact that, in terms of valuing the contribution of the voluntary sector, there are some very dedicated people working within the sector that are putting in a lot of time, effort and energy to provide some basic services to their communities, having to put in their own resources along with their time and commitment in order to exist. The value and importance of

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<sup>16</sup> see for example, SCVO, 1997, *Head and heart* (The Kemp Report), Edinburgh: Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations for a review of the difficulties in defining the sector as a whole.

**TABLE 1: The Scottish Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector: categorised by main focus of activity**

<b>TYPE OF ORGANISATION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Arts and Culture	9 %
Community Care and Development	6%
Children's/Youth	2%
Education, Employment and Training	10%
Elderly	3%
Faith	25%
Health	3%
Housing	2%
Legal, Advice, Advocacy	4%
Women's	8%
Miscellaneous	27%

volunteers in the MEVS cannot be emphasised enough. Without the dedication of these workers the sector would cease to exist. Other studies have attempted to place a value on the contribution of the voluntary sector to local social and economic life<sup>17</sup>; the very heavy dependence in Scotland on volunteer help suggests that it would be difficult at present to replicate this kind of approach here.

There are of course a few organisations that have applied for external funding and have been successful in securing it. Nevertheless, even in these instances, relatively few of these organisations have enough funding to have premises or paid staff, and are still operating with the assistance of unpaid volunteers, generally struggling to keep afloat. More and more organisations are becoming aware of the need for these resources that will enable them to progress the objectives of their organisations and operate more professionally.

Most of the organisations that have achieved this level of support are located in the major cities, once again mainly in either Glasgow or Edinburgh. There are fewer and fewer organisations away from the Central Belt of Scotland; other cities such as Dundee and Aberdeen do have organisations that have their own premises but once again they are few and far between. The further north in Scotland you move the fewer organisations there are and the less support they feel they are getting.

The resourcing problem is even worse for organisations that are operating from rural areas in Scotland. They are, without a doubt, in the most difficult situation; here the communities are so small that they rely on the support of these groups, but the groups themselves have very little support and do not know where they can go to get any help or support they may need. Some of these groups are not even aware of how or where they can apply to for funds or that they are organisations that can apply for funding. Some basic statistics of how these organisations identified themselves, and a summary of their key concerns (gathered through the questionnaire survey), are included as Appendix 2.

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<sup>17</sup> E.g. NYFVO, 2001, *Valuing the voluntary sector in North Yorkshire*, Thirsk: North Yorkshire Federation of Voluntary Organisations.



### **3.5 General problems**

The previous sections have indicated why research like the present study is so complex; different organisations have different levels of operation, different ways of understanding their own role and function and the people within them have different levels of awareness and understanding. These organisations carry out a wide range of activities but they all have very separate needs and different perceptions of what constitutes a professional organisation.

In trying to support these organisations then, it is important to consider the individual needs of each separate organisation and help and support them at the level of their own needs and requirements. Concepts like 'Capacity Building', now much used in a general sense within the rhetoric of government, need to be sensitive to the vast spectrum of the needs of BME organisations. It also needs to be acknowledged that not all of these organisations will be aware of what their needs, requirements or shortfalls are, or even how professionally they are or are not operating. Additionally, in comparison with the white or mainstream voluntary sector, the organisations constituting MEVS face problems such as institutional racism, defined by the Stephen Lawrence enquiry as:

*'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes attitude and behavior which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.'*<sup>18</sup>

Besides facing institutional racism, the MEVS is competing for resources with their white, more experienced counterparts in a situation where funding for the voluntary sector as a whole is limited. The MEVS in Scotland is fairly new and evolving; on the whole it is quite an inexperienced sector and ill-equipped to compete with its white counterpart for resources and finances. Equally, it does not seem to be attracting new people with the right type of skills and experience and this further hinders the progress of the sector.

Minority ethnic people on the whole remain – for reasons of culture and because of institutional racism - restricted to certain professions and are, as we have seen (footnote 7) therefore also restricted from certain arenas of life. People from some minority ethnic backgrounds show a distinct preference to careers like medicine, engineering, law and this is reflected in educational and employment attainment levels, for example, young people of Indian and Chinese origin who consistently outperform their white counterparts.<sup>19</sup> There is, on the other hand, a very limited few that are choosing to study arts or social sciences; there is very little status attached to careers in these fields and parents discourage involvement in these areas at further or higher education level. This is perhaps one of the reasons why skilled and highly qualified minority ethnic people are less likely to engage with the voluntary sector as professionals or as volunteers.

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<sup>18</sup> Sir W. McPherson, 1999, *The report of the Enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence*, London: The Stationery Office.

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. Modood, T. *et al.*, 1997, *Ethnic minorities in Britain*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

## *Strengthening Communities*

There is therefore in general, and in comparison with the mainstream, a shortfall of skilled individuals entering the sector; this leads to a lack of new ideas, new experiences and new skills in the sector. All of this results in a sector that is not always able to play an appropriate role in the social and economic life of the country.

This demonstrates the multi-faceted, multi-dimensional, complexities faced by the MEVS, whose problems are in no way simple and operate on many different levels. There are problems faced by individual specialist organisations, which may be different from the problems faced by the whole sector; certain minority organisations indeed are not even familiar with concepts like institutional racism or social exclusion. To complicate the situation further, there are problems caused by the size of certain groups in certain areas (such as divisions within larger groups and a lack of organisation in small widely-spread groups). The more rural the area in general, the smaller the groups and the less aware they are likely to be. The problems faced by minority ethnic communities in rural areas are, as noted earlier, an especial issue for Scotland where, on the whole, the size of minority communities are smaller and more likely to be widely spread over large and sparsely-populated geographical areas.

This outlines some of the most key concerns for the MEVS in Scotland. An organisation like CEMVO Scotland will thus have to take a multi-dimensional approach. It will have to approach and deal with the problems of individual organisations at a level that is suitable to that specific organisation. In addition, the needs and demands of specific areas in Scotland are remarkably diverse and CEMVO Scotland will have to meet the challenge of being able to meet the needs of these separate areas.

## **4: The research process**

Some of the difficulties in determining the boundaries of the study have been described earlier. Other methodological difficulties are important to acknowledge since these, in part, are reflected in the fact that there still remains, as we have noted earlier, a lack of adequately robust data about the sector as a whole. In carrying out the research study, the researcher came across many problems that were not necessarily obvious to the organisations that operate within it, but are still problems that others on the outside of the sector are likely to face in trying to engage with it. This is almost as important as the problems that the organisations themselves suggested they were facing, as it may be these reasons that are slowing down or hindering the progress of the sector. It is worth exploring these issues in detail since they will face other researchers attempting to explore Scotland's minority ethnic communities. Indeed, there can be little doubt that the difficulties represented here often present a substantial barrier to such research even taking place.

Before the research process was initiated, a mapping exercise was carried out, as noted above, by cross-correlating existing directories and other resources. Several local directories existed for Glasgow and the West of Scotland and the Racial Equality Councils – where they existed – held lists of the minority ethnic voluntary organisations and projects in their areas. Besides this, a snowballing technique of research was adopted.<sup>20</sup> As each organisation was interviewed and consulted, they were asked for the names and contact numbers for other organisations that they felt CEMVO Scotland should be consulting. These organisations were also added to the database of organisations that was compiled.

One of the reasons for compiling the database of organisations before starting the consultative process was so there would be a concise, comprehensive list of organisations available to the researcher that could then be worked from. However once the consultations were underway it soon became evident that this would not be a successful approach to this task.

The first key problem encountered was the number of 'paper' organisations that existed; these were organisations that, as we described in the previous chapter, were not active but were still listed as existing. In some cases there were no contact names or telephone numbers for these organisations and only residential addresses were provided – if indeed any information was provided at all. It was an extremely difficult and time-consuming task to try and filter these organisations out.

Another key hurdle that was not immediately obvious was the fact that most people working within the MEVS were involved in more than one organisation. In some cases people were involved in up to twenty-plus organisations. This was particularly an issue where a single person was a key member of several organisations and was therefore representing them all. This made it even more difficult to work through a list of organisations or to work in terms of organisations at all. To overcome these difficulties, every person that was engaged in the consultative process was asked for the names of people they perceived to be 'key' contributors to the sector and the research was progressed and developed in this manner.

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<sup>20</sup> Lee R.M., 1993, *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics*, London: Sage.

Several problems had been anticipated before the research was carried out. It was understood, for example, that in some instances this would be an extremely sensitive topic of research, especially when it came to people identifying and discussing problems within their organisations. People are quite likely to feel protective of their staff, their management committees and their own structures and operational procedures. This can make them defensive and less likely to open up to an outsider about the nature of the problems they are experiencing in operating within their organisations. In some instances this proved to be the case, in other instances people clearly avoided certain issues or just did not identify certain matters as posing problems within their organisations. On the whole, respondents – where they commented at all - tended to be very complimentary of their own staff, their management committees and their procedures.

Besides this, other problems were anticipated and predicted and therefore prepared for. Language was an obvious barrier that was identified before the research process was initiated. The researcher was fluent in certain South Asian languages and prepared to use them. However, as the sample group included people speaking a wide variety of languages, translators/interpreters were hired where appropriate. However, this had other implications for the research data. Due to the differences in culture and the interpretation of key concepts, and also due to key differences in conceptual frameworks, certain points may have been lost in the translation process. There was also the issue of whether the translator/interpreter had a background in the voluntary sector that would give them a basic understanding of the issues and concepts involved. If this were lacking then the impact or the true implications of what was being said by either party would also be lost in the translation process. These issues have long been identified as difficulties for those working with interpreters.<sup>21</sup> The research process was even more complex for this particular study as the subjects were using various languages that were then open to my own interpretation in the translation process. Even when the subjects were speaking in the English language, their grasp of the language varied immensely depending on the subjects background and experience, therefore the researcher had to end up recording the consultation, filling in the gaps but trying to use the subjects own words as far as possible. This was further complicated by the fact that people who are multi-lingual tend to mix languages and move quite easily from one to the other colloquially, but this wasn't possible in the recording process, making it even more susceptible to the interpretation of the researcher.

With a Scotland-wide remit for this project, extensive travelling was foreseen and accepted. To exacerbate this difficulty, it had also been agreed at the most preliminary stage of this project that wherever possible the researcher would travel to meet respondents wherever and whenever it was most convenient for them. This posed several problems: firstly there were many organisations that did not operate from a premises, but were a group of people that got together at different venues to carry out different pieces of work. This made it quite difficult first to make contact with these people and then to arrange a meeting. Consultations in such instances were carried out either at the researcher's office-base or on neutral territory, at a Café or a Bar. On the whole these people were full-time professionals who were

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<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Bloch, A., 1999, 'Carrying out a survey of refugees: some methodological considerations and guidelines', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 12, No.4.

working during the day and their time was heavily committed to various engagements. This all made it extremely difficult to arrange some time with them.

Even once the time had been arranged and a schedule produced (which was particularly critical given the large distances travelled for consultations), respondents not infrequently would have to cancel appointments at very short notice because of other pressures on their time. These are not uncommon problems for qualitative social researchers but were accentuated in this study because of time and distance.

As CEMVO is a young organisation, we encountered some difficulties in arranging times for consultation, as there was an uncertainty in the intentions of the research and the company sponsoring the study. Time is such a finite commodity in the voluntary sector, that even where organisations had their own premises and had paid staff they were reluctant to give this piece of research any of their time. Ironically, there was almost a general attitude of *'not more research!'* (reflecting the fact that a very few people were called upon to respond to a range of studies, not necessarily to do with minorities). People were reluctant to give up their time for an organisation that they had not heard of and, ironically, to a person who was not one of 'the usual suspects.' This made it very difficult to get inside the MEVS, to penetrate the cliquy nature of the voluntary sector as a whole, and to get to issues that were beneath the surface. This also affected the way people related to the researcher and made it extremely difficult for the researcher – who was unknown in many areas - to earn people's trust and confidence.

Although the respondents who engaged in the consultative process were assured that any points or issues discussed as part of this research would be highly confidential and the research would not be presented with either the names of the organisations or the people involved, some people were still hesitant and found it difficult to talk openly. To try to overcome these problems, certain interviewing techniques were used to try and make the people more comfortable. Sometimes this might be as simple as talking to them in their own language and in other cases it was slightly more complicated and involved using techniques like picking up on the other person's own terminology, repeating their expressions and asking them to clarify their meanings. It might involve asking them specific questions relating to their organisations.<sup>22</sup> There are other methodological questions which are beyond the scope of this paper but relate, for example, to the extent to which a researcher committed to the development of the organisation might be able to remain entirely objective in the analysis developed.

Despite all of these methodological problems, it is important to emphasise at this point that this was the most effective and practical way to gather information about the concerns of the MEVS whilst at the same time distributing information about CEMVO and the EMF. With the diverse range of organisations operating within this sector and the vast spectrum of activities that they undertake, not to mention the huge geographical variations, it was always expected that the research process undertaken would have to be flexible and adaptable to a very large number of different situations.

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<sup>22</sup> Robson C., 1993, *Real World Research: a Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, Oxford: Blackwell.

## *Strengthening Communities*

In order to mitigate these various difficulties, it was decided that a semi-structured interview process would be the best method that would allow for the level of flexibility essential to this research. Certain pieces of information were needed from all the organisations visited; for example, the name of the organisation, the address, telephone/fax number, the person's position within the organisation and the type of organisation. Beyond these fixed areas of data, the direction of the consultation depended on the subject. There were certain very broad areas that were kept in mind during the consultation and information was split according to these categories. These were the key concerns faced by the organisation; their perception of the key problems with the MEVS; and what they felt was the best course of action and the way forward. The raw qualitative data was recorded on Meeting Forms devised specifically for this process.

To complement the qualitative data gathered from the interviews and to assist in the analysis of the data, a standard structured questionnaire was also devised. This short questionnaire was only distributed to the MEVSOs and acted mainly as a comparison mechanism. It was also useful in providing some statistical data to highlight certain points and gather information specifically related to funding. A copy of the questionnaire and a summary of data obtained are included in this report as Appendix 2.

The raw data from the survey and from individual interviews was analysed by using key recurring themes as tools for comparison between organisations and analysing the data using the broad categories in the questionnaire. The next chapter examines some of the key findings emerging from the interviews.

## **5: The views of interview respondents**

Qualitative data was gathered from 120 organisations. This sample included local authorities, Members of the Scottish Parliament and funding bodies. The data collected was then analysed using the key themes as an analytical tool. Certain key issues emerged that were common across the board regardless of the type of organisation or their level of operation.

### **5.1 Funding**

The most frequently occurring theme or concern for the MEVSOs was clearly funding. This was a concern that was a significant part of every single consultation carried out, whether it be not knowing where to apply for funds, or not being able to fill out the forms, or not being able to secure (adequate) funding, or - from the point of view of the funding bodies – concern about the effective distribution of funds. In line with the BEMIS (Black and Minority Ethnic Infrastructure in Scotland) research report *Listening to the Voice* (see Footnote 13), funding was the biggest concern of the MEVSOs that participated in this study. In 1995 BEMIS had found that of all their participants:

*'Ninety percent stated that funding was a major problem. Only one organisation said it was not a problem.'* (p.16)

In the current study, funding was the only concern that was raised by every single organisation that participated. A lot of the more specific, detailed responses within this broad area were similar to the issues raised in the 'Review of Funding for Black and Minority Ethnic Groups in the Voluntary Sector.'<sup>23</sup> That report identifies nine key barriers to funding including: difficulties in accessing mainstream funding; the lack of core funding; provision of short-term insecure funding; disproportionate amounts of funding; and difficulties in maintaining funding as well as not considering issues faced by black and minority ethnic groups when setting budgets.

Most of these issues were recognised by the MEVSOs themselves as creating barriers to them accessing the funds that were available. In most cases people within the MEVSOs had very clear ideas as to why their organisations were not receiving the funding that they felt entitled to. Some of the issues that people raised regarding funding are discussed below. One respondent commented,

*"Lack of funding is more of a problem for black and Minority Ethnic organisations as they are less experienced in securing funding; they also suffer disproportionately due to short-term funding."*

The MEVS is in an earlier stage of evolution as the above quote suggests and individual organisations are finding it difficult to keep up with or compete with their mainstream counterparts.

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<sup>23</sup> Scottish Executive, 2001. *Review of Funding for Black and Minority Ethnic Groups in the Voluntary Sector*, Edinburgh: The Scottish Executive.

## *Strengthening Communities*

*"One of the key problems is that we started after the white voluntary sector, we have to however compete with them for funding and resources. They have accumulated a lot of experience in securing these resources so we are losing out."*

Comments such as *'... we're competing on an uneven keel ...'* or words to that effect, were not uncommon. People felt hindered by their lack of experience in identifying funders and once they had identified funders that might have money available, they were put off by the length, the nature and the complexity of the application forms. They felt themselves struggling to fill out these forms and provide the details required. These respondents were aware that funding was available but couldn't access it.

*"Our major problem is the funding, we are severely handicapped due to our lack of knowledge of funding. We can't write professional business plans and fill out applications like mainstream organisations where they have qualified people with years of experience to do such tasks. We can't compete with their expertise ... [but] ... without the funding we are not able to do anything and we are not getting the funding. We can't make a fuss of the funds not being there, because they are, it is the channelling of the funds that is the problem."*

*"Funding organisations that receive applications from minority ethnic people are suspicious of these applications, they ask for information that isn't necessarily available. It's not that these community organisations don't want to provide the information or that they have something to hide, it's just that they don't have this information."*

The following quotation from a respondent sums up many of the frustrations of those seeking to make funding applications:

*"Groups that most need the funding are the ones least able to make a case for it. This is perhaps why certain organisations continue to gain most of the funding. No funding body seems to recognise the difficulty here. No one will take the risk to try and get these organisations over the initial hurdle."*

This particular respondent continued:

*"There are lots of hurdles for people to cross before they are getting any funding, fancy wording, legal technicalities, lack of skill and knowledge and experience."*

In support of this view, various organisations commented on how they struggled to meet the requirements of funders.

*"The lottery form is really tough, it takes a long time to fill out and we can't do it ourselves, we have to ask our friends to help every time. We have applied to the council for funding but even that was an extremely lengthy application that we had to struggle with."*

*"We have problems in applying for funds, there are too many technicalities, and us Asians never get the proper funding."*



## *Strengthening Communities*

*"Resources are always tight, funding is a key issue, because it is hard to fill out big long application forms that take up a lot of time."*

People were very aware of the fact that it was extremely difficult for them to make the time and spare the resources to fill out lengthy application forms. Their time and energy was also perceived as wasted if the applications were not successful to the point, that for some of the smaller organisations (with ever-increasing workloads), funding was getting pushed further and further down their list of priorities. Alternatively, they found themselves choosing between securing funds or improving their projects and service provision. In such instances the functions that they are there to fulfil then get pushed down the agenda; their sole purpose becomes to exist as an organisation and all their functions suffer.<sup>24</sup>

*"The minority ethnic organisations are getting on with providing the services, they don't have the capacity or the resources to compete for funding, until they hit a crisis, that is, and then funding and resources become a priority."*

*"We are spending too much time submitting and re-submitting applications in trying to meet deadlines. The funders keep changing the criteria of applications and awards all the time so we make an application and then get told that you are no longer covered by this budget you will have to re-submit an application to a different fund or even to more than one fund. It's hard to move forward and develop in any way when you're in a hand-to-mouth situation which has serious implications on how we plan our service delivery."*

*"We are always concerned with funding, spend a lot of time trying to get funding, we can't expand or evolve the project when you are worried about where the funding is coming from for next year."*

Even when applications were made, respondents had very clear perceptions as to why they were not receiving adequate funding.

*"... we're not getting the funding due to racism and a lack of understanding of our unique needs. White institutions hold the funding and create the system, yet we have to operate within it. We have to operate and work according to their rules, their standards."*

*"There is only one problem ... institutional racism is affecting the organisation in two main ways, it prevents our members from going into the mainstream both in the areas of employment and in politics ... and it curtails resources because the majority of the resources are going to white organisations."*

*"We are not getting our share of the funding maybe because we are not represented at local or national government levels, or perhaps we are not playing the system correctly or maybe we're not seen to be as interested as certain other communities."*

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<sup>24</sup> The limited capacity of BME organisations has been the subject of other research, see e.g. Craig, G. *et al.*, 2002, *Trust or contract?*, York: York Publishing Services, for a discussion of how BME groups feel they have inadequate capacity to engage properly with the compact process.

These quotes illustrate the mixed feelings and opinions people have as to why they are not receiving any funding. Generally, of course, these were from respondents who had been refused funding or had been unable to mount bids. However, not all applications were being refused funding, and certain organisations had been able to secure various types of funding. These respondents found that on the whole the financial support they were receiving was inadequate. People in receipt of some core funding find it really difficult to develop their organisations or to initiate new projects because it was too limited to make a substantial difference, for example to be able to employ additional development staff; those who have secured some project funding were finding it really tough to secure any core funding. In general, ME organisations were finding it almost impossible to sustain themselves: organisations were disappearing – or at least becoming latent - as soon as their funding ran out. Once again these findings support previous studies like the Review carried out by the the Home Office in England<sup>25</sup> or the Scottish Executive Report on funding (footnote 22) that stated,

*'...many minority ethnic groups are small and struggling and find it difficult to secure sustained and realistic funding for the work they want to carry out with and on behalf of their communities. Their isolation and perceived weakness can discourage potential funders and can also mean that they are ignored and marginalized by service providers. Groups cannot strengthen their organisation or have their voice heard because they lack the resources to grow.'* (p.10)

Most of the organisations and projects interviewed expressed a clear view that they were suffering due to their lack of funds. In some cases they felt they were unable to do justice to their staff members as they were not able to provide the training and development which these workers required as an essential part of their personal and professional development. A representative from one organisation commented:

*"When we do get grants they are piecemeal, tokenistic grants, not what we are truly entitled to, people think we are making up things, requirements, problems, needs, just so that we can apply for grants because we might not always have the kind of information that they require."*

Others in referring to their specific organisations concurred:

*"In our organisation there is no developmental funding, so new initiatives are extremely hard to set up, we don't have the capacity to do new things. We do need to develop the staff further but there are no resources for personal development in the sector."*

*"Funding is a key issue, we can get project based funding but core funding is a major issue. We spend a lot of time and energy in filling out applications trying to secure core funding."*

*"Long-term funding is really difficult to get a hold of, this affects strategic planning. We receive limited funding for a limited time."*

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<sup>25</sup> Home Office, 2000, *Connecting Communities: Race Equality Support Programme*, London: Home Office.

## *Strengthening Communities*

Some respondents pointed out very intricate issues that went well below the surface of 'the funding problem'. The responses were extremely interesting but pointed towards a distrust of local authorities and funding bodies and their efforts to combat institutional racism. These responses also acknowledged that funders needed to develop a wider strategic response, going well beyond just putting more money into the MEVS and one which recognises the fragile state of the sector.

*"We need to channel the resources, it's not just about putting money in the sector. We need to know the resources are being used for the right purposes and are having the right impact and are actually making a difference."*

*"Funding is a problem, but it is a bit of a vicious cycle, minority ethnic people get the funding but not the support to run the projects, if they succeed the authorities look good and go away thinking 'we've done our duty' but if they fail then the authorities say 'we gave them the funding, they just aren't capable of running their projects so next time we will give the funding to a white organisation to provide these services to black people.' Problems, barriers start arising even before we've even applied for funding – certain political and social considerations are always put forward as excuses for us not getting the funding."*

Representatives from another organisation claimed that funders had a rather superficial attitude to their needs:

*"There also seems to be this 'tick-box' attitude in funders, local authorities and white institutions in general, they think that by allocating and giving a certain amount of money to minority ethnic groups they have filled their quota and fulfilled their responsibilities."*

In going on to reflect on the local council's approach to funding, they commented:

*"If the council is truly committed to developing minority ethnic communities and groups they need to choose whom they want to fund and help them, instead of spreading the funding over lots of organisations just so that they look better and can say we fund 'x' organisations. They need to prioritise."*

Several people commented on how the application process seemed to be getting harder rather than easier:

*"It feels like the authorities and funders are making it harder rather than easier for people applying for funding. They keep shifting the goalposts."*

These quotations confirm the complex, multi-dimensional and stratified nature of the issues related to funding BME organisations. It is not a simple problem so the solutions correspondingly will be in no way easy to derive. To re-contextualise this issue however, it is important to restate that funding is only one problem of many that these organisations face and it cannot be disentangled from the overall picture or indeed from any of the other issues which are discussed below.

## **5.2 Recruitment difficulties**

The MEVS has been unsuccessful in attracting new personnel into the sector. On the surface this may not appear to be a very serious problem, but there are severe consequences of this and implications that may not be obvious at a first glance. Most of the organisations, in one way or another, indicated that there was a lack of new people entering the sector. It was a key concern that emerged in a variety of different ways but from the majority of organisations that took part in the consultative process.

People were aware that even the people that were entering the sector were not necessarily equipped to meet the shortfalls in the sector in terms of skills and experience. In trying to explain the reasons why the voluntary sector was so unattractive to young professionals, respondents stated:

*"There is a lack of staff. It's really hard to get new blood into the sector, we need people, but not just people, people with the right skills and genuine things to offer as well as a commitment to this type of work. There seems to be a perception that jobs within this sector aren't real jobs, people aren't treated seriously or fairly, because of this once they do get involved it's hard to get out, once working in the MEVS, it's hard to get a job anywhere else."*

*"There is a severe skill shortage in the sector but this is our problem as communities, we cannot blame anyone else for not being able to make presentations, for not knowing where the funding is available, for not being able to access these funds. We need to find these resources from within our communities, at the moment where these skills do exist, they are not being put into the voluntary sector but into the public sector or the private sector, into medicine and engineering or law. We need to get our acts together and prepare people who are able to provide the skills we need to undertake such jobs."*

*"There is a lack of resources in this sector, very few new people are entering the voluntary sector especially people with the skills and know-how ... once again this could be the money thing. We have to keep in mind that most of the communities that are here came here to make money, to get a better standard of life ... most of them intended to go back ... people don't and won't volunteer because they came here to make money and the voluntary sector doesn't involve much of it."*

Whether the 'myth of return' has any substance to it, there is little doubt that the focus for many migrants has not been to work within a poorly-paid sector or as volunteers. As the above quotes illustrate, entering the voluntary sector is not seen as a good or progressive career move by a lot of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. There seemed to be a general consensus around this issue, which also tied in with some of the funding issues above, especially issues about the lack of resources to train and develop staff, not to mention the fact that wages on the whole tend to be lower in this sector. It is well-known of course that the voluntary sector as a whole pays poorer wages and offers fewer opportunities for well-paid careers, but these problems are exacerbated for the MEVS.

## *Strengthening Communities*

*"It's harder to get professionals into the voluntary sector from minority ethnic communities due to the higher pay and opportunities in the private and public sectors, there is more security out there for young people...At the moment there are more under-skilled people coming into the sector rather than the professionals."*

*"The voluntary sector needs a more professional approach and the ability to compete with the private sector in terms of training, wages and development of staff, at the moment it is not an attractive option for young professionals."*

Smaller organisations referred to their specific experiences of trying to recruit younger new personnel into their organisation's management committees or into their organisations as volunteers.

*"Not able to attract much youth into the organisation or the committees, even our own children, we haven't been able to do much for them, to get them involved, hard to determine what exactly the problem is but the sector is not attracting younger people."*

*"We try and get young people onto our committees but we are lacking the motivation and dedication from them that it will take to make voluntary organisations a success."*

*"Hard to get young professional people from Chinese communities involved because they don't have the time and because people aren't attracted to the prospect of doing voluntary work ... because manpower is such a key issue it is getting harder and harder to provide the services we set out to provide and to meet the needs of our affiliated organisations."*

The respondent cited above went on to explain some of the implications of not getting enough people involved, arguing that the quality of service that these organisations are able to provide is likely to suffer significantly if they did not have enough human resources to provide the services that they set out to provide. Furthermore it seemed, from the responses of many interviewees, to be the same people that are involved in a lot of the organisations leading to their time, their effort and energy to be widely but thinly spread across the sector.

*"Expertise is a key concern, people who are involved are too involved, and this means that all the people that are here are spread over so many different committees that there is very little overall work being done."*

Besides the thin distribution of such resources in this manner, the over-involvement of key individuals had other implications too in terms of organisational development:

*"It is the same people doing all the work, but if the same person is running say 10 organisations, this person cannot bring in the experience or expertise of 10 individuals, so in the end it will be the same individual using the same ideas and concepts in all 10 organisations so we may find ourselves going around in circles for a while."*

This is not to say that one individual cannot make a valid and deep contribution to more than one organisation, but clearly problems begin to arise when a person,

however competent and committed, is spread over so many organisations that s/he cannot make a valuable contribution to any. Problems also arise if there is a conflict of interest amongst the organisations that s/he is involved in.

The converse problem also appeared in the comments of respondents, that of people finding it difficult to become incorporated into the sector. They are faced with a variety of barriers that they feel are distancing them from involvement.

*"The MEVS does not have much guidance or direction ... the sector is still dominated by the older generation, this has to be one of the key problems. We are not progressing in the right direction, there are a number of things that the younger people can bring into the sector but aren't able to because their communities are holding them away."*

*"On the whole it tends to be the grandfather figures of our communities that are dominating the sector. The younger generation here aren't getting involved, they aren't going to make a difference very quickly, partially because there is a strong element of parental control."*

These comments did not appear to arise from hostility or resentment of older generations or the contribution they have made. On the whole they are about differences in opinions and of approaches to certain issues. The younger generation having grown up in a western system cannot always empathise with the way their elder generation operates. However due to certain cultural sensibilities that dictate unconditional respect for their elders, younger people are moving away from organisations and their communities rather than to cause this type of conflict that can be difficult to deal with.<sup>26</sup> The following quotes illustrate the dynamics of this situation.

*"Most of the volunteers that are working in [large city] are from the older generation, very small population of younger people involved ... when we come together, we do have a common vision but there is a lot of conflict, there is such a disparity in the way we do things. There are no easy answers but it is extremely difficult to reconcile these differences."*

*"The older generation migrated here so their grasp of the English language and their proficiency in it is not always up to scratch. This affects the way they do things and what they take into account for instance...we have a development worker at Organisation X who wasn't really all that capable, his grasp and understanding of the language leaves quite a lot to be desired, to me this goes a certain amount of the way to explaining the current state of affairs: the mess the organisation is in. I feel the management committee haven't done their job properly in recruiting this person, at the time there was a certain amount of conflict surrounding this issue but the elders stuck together ... I do realise that on the whole we do have to make do because we don't get the level of response we would like to advertisements for any given*

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<sup>26</sup> The question of leadership amongst minority communities has become a difficult area. One commentator has argued that the so-called 'riots' in the Northern cities of England in 2001 were in part an expression of frustration by younger minority members at the 'incorporation' of their older community members into the agencies of the state. See Manawar, J-K, 2003, 'The right to riot', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1.

*positions, but on the whole this isn't good enough. It's kind of a Catch 22 situation."*

This quote also outlines some of the problems that people are experiencing in trying to recruit staff and touches on the problems that others interested in the sector face in trying to get involved and with their involvement that might lead to them withdrawing. One of the most serious implications of not being able to recruit new staff into the sector is the fact that the sector is missing out on a vast pool of resources and skills that are desperately needed within the sector. Furthermore, this leads to the inability to build the capacity of the sector. A solution to this problem is for organisations and community groups to exchange knowledge, skills and resources through a centralised pool of volunteers, so that the capacity of the sector can be increased.

### **5.3 The sector's capacity**

"Capacity-building" has become a buzzword in relation to the MEVS. As a sector, Black and minority ethnic organisations are aware that MEVSOs suffer disproportionately from difficulties such as lack of funding, that they are not progressing as speedily as they could be and are not always aware of the social structures they are operating within or the processes they are engaging with. It is undeniable that MEVSOs are providing valuable services to their communities but they are not necessarily working officially, and they do not always understand the technicalities of funding regimes or the finer administrative details of the funding and support systems. These organisations often started as community groups or as a small group of people with similar political stances. In their earlier phases, they did not need formal procedures to fulfil their purpose, and it is only as these groups began to grow and increasing demands were put upon them that they expanded and became more recognisably voluntary organisations. They now needed greater resources and structure in order to meet the requirements of their communities and in order to acquire these resources they needed a basic knowledge of the needs of the administrative and funding system in which they were operating. Whilst some of the organisations were able to get this information and train themselves to use it, others, probably the majority, are still struggling. This is not a new problem.

The need for capacity-building in this sector is not a revolutionary finding; it is one that is outlined by the 'Review of Funding ...' produced by the Scottish Executive and by the Home Office (see Footnote 22). As part of the development required, this Review outlined, there was a requirement for:

*'resources to allow capacity building in black and minority ethnic organisations to be more able to represent members and to allow participation.'* (p.11)

The report went on to say:

*'The need for capacity building was also recognised by respondents to the Home Office consultation, emphasising the need for specific practical support to black and minority ethnic groups at a local level. It was noted that there is a need for assistance with the development of community networks (particularly in Scotland) and for work to increase overall representation of black and minority ethnic groups and their involvement in civic society.'* (p.12)

## *Strengthening Communities*

Respondents to interviews in the present study had various different concerns, varying ideas on what was involved in capacity-building and what was actually lacking from the organisations that operated within the sector. Some respondents offered very simple comments about the lack of support or training, the need for validated capacity building processes, whilst others had more complex theories and hypothesis as to exactly what the problems were. In general, the picture painted is one of a systematic lack of support, both financial and resources, in part due to structural forms of racism, which impacts in terms of the capacities and confidence within the sector.

*"There is no support system for Minority Ethnic organisations this far north,"*

*"We are unable to access any sort of capacity building devices and resources that will enable our organisations to operate better in a professional context, such as quality management systems, which are often too expensive."*

*"We should be given more training than the white sector because we need it more but we aren't getting any, never mind getting what we need."*

*"We need training on how to effectively run these organisations, it is crucial. We have learned through experience but we are still making mistakes that we really can't afford to make. We are finding it difficult to materialise our ideas, due to the lack of finance and expertise."*

*"Although there is more value based on communities especially in certain communities, there is no mechanism to serve these communities even where there are organisations. The lack of capacity and knowledge means minority ethnic people are missing out on certain types of funding and also on certain initiatives."*

*"Even when an organisation is up and running, they are not running very professionally, they are not recording issues, taking minutes, that kind of thing, you will find the same issues discussed at each meeting, there is very little progress. Having said that, organisations need money even before they have started, a lawyer will charge up to £2000 to draft a constitution. But people are not willing to share their knowledge and expertise; they won't even help their own families out, when they clearly can. Knowledge is the best-kept secret in the sector."*

*"We are not operating very professionally as a sector, there is a lot of talk of capacity-building and stuff but very little action and therefore very few outcomes. If we think about the sector and the organisations around here very few organisations are successful, on the whole they aren't making any real impact."*

*"... the structure in which we are expecting minority ethnic people to operate in is unfair, people don't speak the language, and they're not equipped to deal within the existing structure."*

The following quote comes from a respondent who outlined what he perceived to be the problem, as well as touching on why he thought it was important that MEVSOs



## *Strengthening Communities*

built up their capacity. This strongly emphasised the need for single voice to speak on behalf of the Black and Minority Ethnic Sector as a whole.

*"There is a need for a lot of capacity-building around the sector, the needs of the MEVS and its members are always ignored by the mainstream service providers including the white voluntary sector, as a sector we are extremely divided, but if we don't come together we will remain where we are and be continuously discriminated against. We need to learn from each other rather than fight each other. We need to build our capacity to the extent so that we are thinking beyond policy-makers, we need to think ahead of them so that they are not designing our policies for us, so we are telling them the policies we need rather than just passively being and under the influence of the ones they decide to pass."*

Another representative took this issue a step further in trying to explain why minority ethnic voluntary organisations are ignored by their white counterparts.

*"There is institutional racism on the part of statutory organisations. A general attitude, feeling that white organisations can do it better, an attitude that they know best. They show a general distrust towards the management committees of these organisations, it's as if they are unable to manage their own affairs. There is a dual standard here, if these organisations are less able to run their own affairs due to a lack of training, surely they should be provided with training. We can't have equal opportunities or provisions if white organisations have all the power and control."*

This was an issue that certain people felt very strongly about. Once again it was closely linked to several other issues and was extremely difficult to detach from the contexts people were using. One of the reasons why people did have such strong feelings about capacity-building was because, despite the lack of experience, resources and expertise in some of these organisations people still had very high expectations of them. These expectations they felt unable to meet; in some instances they were being *'set up to fail, that no matter what they could not win.'* This respondent also emphasised that the magnitude of the task was growing as the needs of BME communities in Scotland were growing.

*"We do need to have a higher level of professionalism when we are set up and established because we have a bigger point to prove, but it is harder for us ... We haven't really moved forward at all in the past 10-20 years, we've planned; we've researched; but we've seen very little results, next to no impact for our organisations. We're not getting any more help or support, just more to deal with. The media doesn't help our case either, they seem to hype up certain angles/issues more than others, for instance if an ethnic group fails it is a big hoo-haa creating a miniature-mass-hysteria but if on the other hand a white group does it's just one of many and things like this happen all the time, it's part of the learning curve. We have to struggle a lot harder so they can't turn around and say 'I told you so!'."*

This respondent captured the tensions well:

*"It's a bit of a Catch 22 situation, people expect a higher level of professionalism from minority ethnic organisations yet we are not provided*

*with the staff or resources to provide it. It is not that we are unable but on the whole we are unequipped to meet peoples expectations."*

In this section of the report, respondents have touched on the divides within the sector and how these divisions were preventing progress. The next section will examine some of these divides more closely.

## **5.4 A divided sector**

As described earlier, the MEVS is not a unitary body but contains within it a vast spectrum of different organisations with different aims and purposes. These organisations meet some of the requirements of people from a large variety of different backgrounds. Even within this sector there is a hierarchy of needs, just as there are within Black and minority ethnic communities more generally, with certain communities being more disadvantaged than others.<sup>27</sup> It is perhaps, then, inevitable in a context of limited and inadequate funding resources, that there is conflict and competition. It is also important to keep in mind that some of these communities come from extremely politically-charged backgrounds, which have a long history of political and social unrest between or within them, such as the disputes over Kashmir or within Sierra Leone, the Congo, Uganda, Iraq and Afghanistan. These differences are mirrored in tensions within the BMEVS here.

As well as these divisions driven by ethnic differences, there are also many structural divisions within the Scottish MEVS. For example there is the rural/urban divide; the north/south divide and, mirroring the long-standing competition for resources between organisations based in between Edinburgh and Glasgow, there is the east/west divide. Finally, mirroring the kinds of conflicts and tensions one finds within the voluntary sector as a whole, there are many religious divides, divides within cities, divisions within organisations and amongst organisations. All of these divisions are over and above the common social stratification that already exists within society, of 'race', class and gender.

People working within the sector are very aware of these divisions, but it is an unfortunate reality that whilst some people are striving to eliminate these divides others are almost promoting them. One of the most interesting points to have emerged from the consultations in this study were many people's perceptions that local authorities and statutory bodies were often also seen to be promoting these divides.

Perhaps because the sector is smaller, the divisions seem to be more obvious and more pronounced, but in considering the overall picture, these divisions have more serious implications for the MEVS. Once again, on the whole, workers within the sector were very aware of these various divisions.

*"As the sector has emerged the divides in it have been reinforced and have become more visible."*

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<sup>27</sup> For example, research has consistently demonstrated that, in terms of economic and social trajectories, members of Indian and Chinese communities do better than their white counterparts and those of African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities generally do worse, although these distinctions are also cross-cut by gender differences.

## *Strengthening Communities*

Besides funding, another respondent more worryingly remarked:

*"Most of the other problems stem from the divisions within the sector."*

People strongly associated these divisions with structural reasons, and, in particular, the lack of progress in the sector.

*"There are a lot of divides in the communities, a lot of animosity, there are groups within groups everywhere ... as long as we are divided we won't be strong and people will take advantage of our differences ... we would be able to achieve bigger things if we were all united, we would be able to move things forward."*

*"The sector is heavily divided along religious lines and there is a lot of politics going on, however it has to be acknowledged that there is almost a hierarchy of disadvantage even within the MEVS. Certain groups are more disadvantaged than others and need more help than others, but each man is out for their own, no one seems to be working for a greater good."*

In comparing the Scottish MEVS to the English one, someone who had worked in both these environments commented:

*"Scotland is too divided, people are unwilling to work with each other and are on the whole working against each other, especially when it comes to funding...Down south the MEVS pulls together to bring about major change in political opinions or to bring about social change but over here people move as smaller bodies working for the good of specific communities rather than pulling together for a greater good."*

Respondents were able to relate their personal experiences in having to deal with these divides, commenting in particular on how the lack of rewards for hard work also increased feelings of competition. The small size of many organisations also meant that individual personalities might have a disproportionate effect on their performance:

*"...the same discrimination, prejudice and politics exists in every organisation I have been with. This is why I have withdrawn from all the organisations besides this one and the only reason we have been able to keep these problems at bay in this organisation is because the community is so small. We are more like a big extended family, but on the whole, it's all about money and power and publicity for individuals. Everyone wants the credit but no one wants to do the work."*

*"It can be quite demoralising trying to work within this sector, it's not always easy to get beyond the politics and the bad blood or even the conflicts between people and organisations. All this makes it even harder to remain professional and rise above the politics."*

*"I try and keep out of all the politics and conflict, we are all, or should all be trying to reach the same aim: to make society more aware and to help our communities but sometimes this gets lost and it becomes a conflict between organisations or between separate people."*

Certain organisations also commented on specific divides. Organisations that were not situated in the Central belt of Scotland felt excluded from the sector and were very aware that there was a discrepancy in the level of support they received. This of course is not an unusual problem.

*"All the events, all the projects and the majority of funding in Scotland are concentrated in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Very little progress gets made up here."*

*"Most minority ethnic organisations up here feel excluded, you are the first minority ethnic organisation that has come all the way up here to contact us and ask us our opinions ... All major UK work is done in London and all Scotland work is done in Glasgow or Edinburgh."*

In commenting on the social and cultural divisions within the sector as well as the lack of success in trying to bring about change in these areas, a representative from a cultural organisation noted rather pessimistically

*"People are very culturally sensitive and feel very strongly about certain issues like Kashmir or the Partition, they have very fixed positions. It's very hard to even begin to tackle such divisions. People have carried their prejudices from their backgrounds all the way around the world to here, they have almost nurtured these prejudices and divides. Furthermore the councils have taken advantage of these differences and perpetuated divides. These divisions are the result of over 200 years of socialisation. We won't be able to eradicate them. Several ideas and concepts have come into fashion and gone back out making very little difference, multi-culturalism, integration, the newest being social inclusion. They haven't worked."*

Another respondent elaborated on the role of local authorities in (sometimes inadvertently) perpetuating these divides:

*"Local authorities have almost promoted the religious divides by funding very specific, particular interests, the funding patterns are favourable for certain religious communities but not for others. I think this is partially because the council doesn't understand exactly what racism is, so they are funding the most powerful projects, projects that have the support of the most powerful people. The council is scared of being labelled racist."*

Although there was a consensus that it would be mutually beneficial for organisations to work together and pull in the same direction, there are clearly many unresolved issues in this area, which is perhaps inhibiting progress regarding this particular issue and this would be a major task confronting any organisation seeking to build a united voice for the sector.

*"This sector should be more united than any other as it should be about the common good of the communities that are suffering an obvious disadvantage, yet the divisions and political agendas in this sector are hindering the progress if anything."*

*"There is a reluctance for organisations to work together, people are threatened by each other. Rather than working in the best interests of their communities, in some cases they are working for the best interests of their organisations, this is bad but it is even worse when people are working for their own personal interests."*

The following quotation seems to summarise this situation aptly:

*"We do have potential as a sector but we are not working together to move things forward in the right direction."*

## **5.5 A lack of co-ordination**

One of the reasons the MEVS is not seen as a unitary entity appears to be the lack of co-ordination in the sector. This sector encompasses almost 600 voluntary organisations, but it is not clear whether there is a need for them all. The question might be posed: are these organisations all carrying out different work in different areas or is the wheel being recreated over and over again? Certainly, it is reasonable to ask, that if there are few links between these organisations, then how can they communicate with each other, learn from each other's experiences, or even come together to organise around bigger issues? This issue has been addressed historically within the mainstream voluntary sector by having co-ordinating or umbrella groups; for example at a local level, Councils of Voluntary Service or Action co-ordinate the voluntary sector in urban areas, Rural Community Councils in many rural areas, and similar structures have been created at a national level in Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland through, for example, bodies such as the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.

In order to move in any positive direction at all as a sector, co-ordination appears to be essential. Yet from the consultations carried out within this study, there appeared to be very little co-ordination taking place. It was not even evident who or what exactly should be responsible for keeping the sector co-ordinated and within the mainstream voluntary sector there appears to be a lack of a sense of urgency that such a serious issue should be addressed. Yet, without any coherent structure within the sector, there will be no way to trace the progress that is made, not to mention being unable to sketch out the distribution of resources, or being able to identify gaps in funding or service provision and policy initiatives. This will lead inevitably to certain services being duplicated over and over again and others will be left un-addressed; in short, there is at present, despite some of the recent reviews, little strategic oversight of the sector.

Although some people were extremely aware of the problems that a lack of co-ordination was causing in the sector, others did not bring this issue up as a major factor affecting their organisation. This may simply point to the lack of understanding of the strategic context on the part of some of these organisations. Indeed, certain respondents went so far as to say the MEVS did not even exist as a sector.

*"The MEVS is very lowly-rated, it's very informal, it's not clear and is extremely unplaced. Who is it? Where is it? There are disparate groups from all over the place that are spreading like mushrooms but they are not emerging as an overall sector."*

This, however, was an extreme opinion of the problem and on the whole people recognised that there was a recognisable sector but that there were indeed problems in terms of co-ordination within the sector. One respondent explained exactly what was keeping the sector together and why it was an entity. This was:

*"... the common experience of racism and limited access to mainstream opportunities in the form of jobs or other services is holding the sector together. They are also bound by similar aspirations to alleviate the problems faced by their communities. And by the fact that they are fellow strugglers for scarce funding. Sometimes this is the source of divisions and conflict amongst them. They see each other as competitors that these people and organisations are fighting for the same crumbs."*

On the whole, respondents were less able than this respondent to provide such a clear-cut analysis but outlined the problems in their own ways, often pointing to symptoms rather than the causes of these difficulties. The issue of the lack of co-ordination, and the failure to have a single powerful voice, was often pointed to:

*"The MEVS is extremely fragmented."*

*"There is a definite lack of infra-structure. The MEVS in Scotland is short-sighted and lacks a cohesive vision, it doesn't seem to be able to pull together, and perhaps this is because it is in its infancy."*

*"There is a lack of co-ordination between organisations that could be helping each other, people are very suspicious of each other and there is a lack of trust."*

*"There are a number of different projects in different areas but there is little linkage between the projects, it's extremely poorly co-ordinated. Each project is too busy looking after their own little corner rather than collectively looking towards developing the sector."*

*"Small organisations feel that they are competing, we need more partnerships where organisations will work together organisations should be complementary rather than competitive so that we can avoid things like duplication as far as possible."*

*"There are too many organisations with very little unity, partly because people tend to go to organisations that cater for their narrowly defined interests. These organisations then see themselves competing for limited resources, so not much collaboration goes on."*

*"Because of the stigma attached with the sector it is not attracting new-blood and people are getting their families and friends involved, they are building up their own personal networks rather than working for the good of the sector. These networks don't come together in any synchronised way, it's like someone has mixed up the pieces of different jigsaws and now they won't fit."*

## *Strengthening Communities*

*"Individual community organisations are acting in their own little areas without sight of the overall picture. Some individuals have used the sector to service their own personal interests. This prevents collaboration between organisations in this sector."*

Another respondent outlined why this was such a serious problem that affected the whole sector:

*"The minority ethnic voluntary sector does exist, although not in a unitary form. Its potential to act as a force that can make an impact is considerably undermined by the lack of co-ordination and collaboration amongst some of its members."*

Some people commented on the attempts that had been made to try to resolve some of these issues, going on to suggest what was needed in the way of a solution.

*"It's unclear who's responsibility it is to co-ordinate the sector, the funders or the fundees?"*

*"White-led councils for the voluntary sector have not managed to co-ordinate the MEVS successfully."*

*"MEVS needs to be more focused, there is a need for an umbrella organisation that will represent the various organisations and get them to pool resources, to streamline and identify services and explore ways in which they can be delivered with the co-operation of each other."*

*"There is a major need for an umbrella organisation that will co-ordinate and pull together the sector."*

Clearly these respondents did not perceive that existing mainstream voluntary sector umbrella organisations such as the SCVO would be able to undertake this task. It would, however, be unfair to say no progress has been made to date in trying to address these problems of infrastructure or co-ordination. BEMIS (Black and Minority Ethnic Infra-structure Scotland) is an independent organisation, with SCVO backing, that has emerged in Scotland over the past four years. Consultations with the minority ethnic sector began about 4 years ago, culminating in funding from the Scottish Executive to employ staff and secure premises in 2002. BEMIS currently employs a number of staff, including a Chief Executive Officer and national development officers to support the minority ethnic voluntary sector. As part of its work programme, it is seeking to build an infrastructure in Scotland and to provide capacity-building support to MEVSOs. It is also seeking to overcome the north/south divide and address both rural and urban minority ethnic issues. As we note below, and based on responses from interviewees for this study, this work has yielded valuable results, however we suggest the need for BEMIS and CEMVO Scotland to work closely together in the future to expand the scope of its current activities.

Although BEMIS has been able to secure funding from the Scottish Executive, as an organisation it is still very much in the preliminary, developmental stages. It seems to be struggling to secure long-term funding along with most of the other organisations operating within the sector. It is aiming to undertake a vast area of work and address a lot of the problems within the minority ethnic voluntary sector as

well as act as a 'bridging organisation' that will link this sector to the Scottish Executive.

## **5.6 Other issues**

A range of other comments and remarks were made regarding further issues, but on the whole these issues came up a lot less frequently. However, although they were raised less frequently, they were clearly important for some organisations. In some cases, of course, organisations which had little overview of the sector as a whole, lacked the analytical tools to contextualise their own difficulties and link to a wider view of the needs of the sector. The more significant of these other issues are outlined below.

### *Unrealistic expectations*

Various respondents commented on the unfair and unrealistic expectations people from the majority population had on MEVSOs and on people working within the sector. However, it was also acknowledged that even people within the sector were sometimes being a little unrealistic about what they might be able to achieve.

Some respondents felt further disadvantaged now that a lot of white-led organisations were creating minority ethnic projects that were competing with them for resources. This trend is a consequence, ironically, of a growing requirement that all organisations pay attention to the needs of minority populations and the creation of earmarked funding streams for them.

*"White organisations are setting up minority ethnic projects, which is causing a certain amount of controversy in the sector. Minority ethnic organisations that have been set up are at a definite disadvantage, in the whole frame of things, they are newer with less experience but they are having to compete for bids with these well-established organisations."*

*"Groups from the wider community win bids on the strength of their tokenistic minority ethnic workers. They employ one or two ethnic minority workers and use them to put in bids for black projects. It is frustrating that they will get bids on this basis when a minority ethnic-led, minority ethnic-run organisation that is totally focused and empathetic to certain problems are missing out on these opportunities. It's even more frustrating that white organisations are immediately resourced and supported while we are having to fight even to set up the most basic facilities that we need to operate effectively."*

The pressure on workers from MEVSOs was also seen to be greater and again slightly unrealistic, particularly for locally-based community organisations which might have only one full-time paid staff member at most.

*"When minority ethnic projects are set up and funded there is no lead-in time, the project workers are required to produce the goods straight away with little preparation or time. The expectations of locally funded projects are unrealistically high."*



## *Strengthening Communities*

*"The pressure on MEVSOs is phenomenal; the worker is the administrator, the co-ordinator, the project manager, the marketing and PR person and the outreach worker. The expectations of those involved in working for the MEVS are horrendous."*

*"The expectations of what a worker should and will do are totally unrealistic. The worker is expected to take the whole load while the management committee takes a back seat. People seem to forget that the worker is a human being doing a job and will only be working set hours. There is an attitude that the worker will take care of everything."*

The unrealistic expectations on workers is probably another factor that makes this sector so unattractive to potential employees. Multi-tasking is a key part of any profession in the current climate, but what warrants specific consideration in this situation is that with so much at stake, the employees that are being recruited may not be properly prepared, trained or equipped to handle the amount of stress and pressure that their jobs will create, or to carry what will often be a very heavy work load. Most organisations within this sector are indeed lucky if they have one full-time worker; on the whole the majority of organisations in the MEVS are run by volunteers who have full-time day jobs and struggle to put in the amount of time, effort and energy it takes to run an organisation, in their spare time.

### *Tokenism*

Many respondents expressed their distrust for white organisations, statutory bodies and local authorities. Most commonly this was expressed quite simply through using terms like 'them' and 'us' or by using polarising language like 'black' and 'white', often in an explicitly hostile fashion. Some respondents went further, feeling quite strongly that any efforts made by these institutions were a 'tick-box' exercise or tokenistic gestures to make themselves look egalitarian or 'race'-aware.

*"We are too dependent on organisation X up here perhaps due to the lack of minority ethnic support, but this is a white-led organisation and will inevitably have other agendas. This dependency is not letting us progress."*

*"Local authorities and bigger organisations have tokenistic black workers that are assumed to be representative of their communities."*

*"Tokenistic gestures from local authorities aren't allowing the actual problems to be tackled or resolved."*

*"With 'X' Council it is like a hype, at the moment it is fashionable to be racially aware or multi-cultural, but it's scary because it will end after a while and where will that leave us?"*

*"Tokenism is also a problem, the council is using symbolic gestures in trying to get away from their responsibilities to our communities ... we are not seen as an integral part of the community. Our demands are shunted around and we don't achieve anything. Agencies and establishments need to reciprocate our effort before we can make any real progress or headway."*

## *Strengthening Communities*

*"The work of minority ethnic officers isn't really taken on board by the council, their work isn't integrated into the services of the council. It's just a tick-box exercise, they have their own jobs and then they are required to do any race related work too, their work with their communities isn't seen as part of their overall work but more of an after-thought, an add-on."*

When white organisations were seen to be consulting minority ethnic communities, they were said to be consulting with community 'leaders'. There was a strong feeling that these community 'leaders' were not necessarily representative of their communities, so any research or consultation that was carried out might be a waste of resources (see Footnote 25). It was perceived to be another tokenistic gesture to make these organisations feel better. Some respondents clearly felt quite angry about this particular issue.

*"People who are representing their communities to white institutions are not really representative, although they are connected with the communities they don't always know what the issues are for these communities."*

*"Authority figures, community representatives think that they speak for the young but the ideas and views of the young are very different from the ones they are representing."*

*"The people who have created these established channels have become gatekeepers and cobblers of the system because they are the people who are consulted regarding all matters to do with their communities yet they are not representative of these communities. These people are also given credibility in trying to find solutions therefore it is no surprise that their solutions haven't delivered and have alienated the young."*

### *The voice of the minority ethnic voluntary sector*

As part of the Questionnaire referred to in Appendix 2, the subjects were asked whether they thought the MEVS had a voice in Scotland. As shown in the analysis of the responses in Appendix 2, 72% of the subjects felt that the MEVS had no voice within Scotland and only 28% of the subjects felt that MEVS did have a voice in Scotland. This is an extremely important finding for two reasons. First, because this demonstrates how the organisations actually operating within the sector perceive themselves and the sector. Secondly, because it highlights the lack of morale and lack of confidence that these people feel in the sector.

Some of the reasons that were given for the subjects' responses in response to this question are outlined below. There was a general consensus that one of the key reasons why the MEVS lacked a voice was due to the divisions within and between the communities.

*"We are not united enough to have a voice. It is difficult to mobilise issues that are divided by social, religious, backgrounds, geographical locations, etc, etc. All these impact on the divides and reinforce them."*

*"There are too many divisions in our people, so who's voice is going to be the voice of the sector? Besides this we don't know where to raise our voice or who is listening?"*

## *Strengthening Communities*

*"I have not seen any major representation of the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector. There is lots of conflict and nothing gets done. They all want to be leaders. Who is the voice?"*

*"There is a lack of cohesiveness amongst the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector."*

Other respondents again pointed to the lack of co-ordination and unifying structures, as well as to the possibility that small organisations which are poorly-funded and not secure, may depend too much on the influence of individuals.

*"Small organisations have been set up but there is no umbrella organisation, no collective voice."*

*"There is no collective voice to represent the voice of our organisations."*

*"Any service provided by government and local authorities is lip service, they aren't really interested at all. There is a lack of political representation. Also too much politics is involved, we don't have any unity or even a united front."*

*"We don't have a voice because of institutional racism and due to the lack of representation of the minority ethnic voluntary sector."*

*"Because of individual and institutional racism that has manifested itself everywhere from pubs, to schools, to local and national government levels. There is a lack of co-ordinated action for our cause."*

*"We are not professional enough to organise ourselves, we don't seem to work the way white organisations do, and we are promoting ourselves rather than our organisations."*

*"Our voice, when it is represented, is represented by certain individuals that are not necessarily representing the problems and issues faced by our communities. These people are involved on more than one board and seem to be at the forefront as our voices. The establishments see them as the experts but unfortunately this is not always the case."*

Most of the people who thought the MEVS did have a voice agreed that it was weak and fragmented, raised generally through minority ethnic councillors or MPs.

Besides the key concerns discussed above, most of the other issues raised by voluntary sector organisations were either specific to certain organisations or seemed to stem from personal differences rather than more general or strategic concerns.

However, it is clear that there is a vast spectrum of problems and concerns that were raised by the people participating in this research. These problems might reflect difficulties at different levels or for different sizes or types of organisation and some are more specific to certain types of organisations than others. However, there were clearly three key issues which were highlighted consistently across all the parts of the sector which took part in this study.

## *Strengthening Communities*

1. the fragmentation of the MEVS and the need for some unifying identity;
2. the need for greater support to assist the professionalism and general development of this sector; and
3. the need for greater resources (fiscal and personnel) to develop the sector.

These are themes which have been highlighted by a series of earlier studies and, we would argue, suggest that the need now is not for further exploration of these difficulties but for political and policy responses to them.

## **6: Conclusions**

This report outlined what people within the MEVS perceive as being the major concerns and problems that they face in the day-to-day running of their organisations. The main finding of this study is that the single most important problem facing the MEVS is its lack of cohesion. In particular, too many small organisations are competing for the same funding in order to address the needs of their communities, leading to several groups aiming to provide a similar service for similar people within a similar area and applying for the same funding. There is also a lack of awareness and definition within the sector: many of the organisations involved, particularly the poorly-resourced ones, were not able to define their aims and objectives in any clear fashion. The lack of resources available to the sector overall, and a combination of downwards pressures for government (at both local and central levels) and upwards pressures from communities meant that they were trying to deal with every matter brought to their attention. Additionally they were not networked well enough to make referrals to each other or to other bodies that may hold specific expertise. The combination of these pressures means that organisations are in direct competition with each other. This creates an atmosphere of conflict and resentment which inhibits growth and progress, whilst at the same time discouraging participation from those people that the organisations need the most, i.e. minority people with skills and professional expertise.

The need for the increasing professionalisation of the MEVSOs is crucial to alleviate the problems identified above, which arise due to a lack of widespread expertise persisting in the administrative and financial workings of these organisations. Problems with filling in application forms for funding; in drawing up mission statements, constitutions and business plans; in administering meetings and so on, were among the most commonplace problems faced at an organisational level. The eradication of such problems would increase the development and effectiveness of the MEVS and could be as simple as the input of trained personnel. However, it is important not to fall into the trap of blaming the victims. These problems arise because of the historic neglect and under-funding of the sector by government and other funders, including local government, charitable trusts and health bodies, and are not due to some inherent inability on the part of minority communities themselves which are struggling to deliver programmes and services in a context of overwhelming demand and few resources to meet them.

In order to make the MEVS operate as a sector with many complementary elements, as opposed to a mushrooming mass of organisations with relatively little clarity or sense of direction, a robust capacity-building programme is desirable. This could be best achieved by providing and implementing a training programme which would equip organisations with the necessary skills to identify and solve their own problems. Not only would this develop autonomy, it would enable the organisations to compete with all voluntary sector organisations on a more level playing field. As a consequence, the MEVS would become more efficient and the services, which it provides, would be vastly improved. It would also act as a stabilising force that would strengthen the sector and increase sustainability.

Time and time again organisations complained about a feeling of isolation, arguing that the major initiatives focused on the problems within major cities, e.g. London, Glasgow and Edinburgh. This itself creates a sense of division and it is clear that any

## *Strengthening Communities*

such capacity-building programme must have an explicit focus on other areas in Scotland, the other cities and the rural areas as well as giving further support to ongoing developments in the Central Belt. For a sector which is scattered and in some instances, highly isolated, emphasis should also be placed on the use of ICT and electronic technology, such as the use of email lists; this would help the capacity-building process to be an active one that was easily accessible to all at their own convenience.<sup>28</sup>

The prejudices and conflicts that exist within the communities and amongst them are not as easily resolvable. However with increased interaction, communication and less competitiveness, such problems might be significantly diluted. A programme of workshops, seminars and high profile conferences, appropriate structured, can provide a basis for beginning to address these difficulties.

The wider social problems that exist, like institutional racism and the lack of political representation at all levels for these communities, are a challenge for us all. Hopefully the development of MEVSOs will help to redress the balance towards equality. But most of all, the sector needs a clear and coherent voice, a third-tier structural organisation that will provide a framework for MEVSOs to operate within, as well as offering a strong element of continuity, leadership and expertise, and a voice for the sector to challenge the continuing racism within Scotland.

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<sup>28</sup> There is evidence worldwide of the way in which information technology can be effective in helping individual community groups and networks build their capacity. See, for example, M.Scotts and G.Craig, 2003, *Community development and information technology, Case Studies, Volume One*, International Association for Community development and University of Hull, Hull: University of Hull.

## **7: CEMVO in Scotland: a prospectus for development**

What is CEMVO and what can it do in Scotland? This final chapter provides an outline of CEMVO's work across the UK to date and offers insights into the kind of work which CEMVO is already or could undertake working with the ethnic minority voluntary sector in Scotland. CEMVO is a third tier national organisation that originally established itself in England to develop an infrastructure for supporting and strengthening the MEVS. However, it has always had a UK-wide remit and is now progressing to develop its successful track record in supporting and building the capacity of the minority ethnic sector throughout the rest of the UK. CEMVO established an office in Scotland (Glasgow) in April 2003 after appointing a Director in March 2003. There are already plans for an office to open in Wales at the end of 2003 and one for Northern Ireland in early 2004, which will truly make CEMVO a unique minority ethnic organisation in terms of its size and capacity to support the sector.

CEMVO's main aim is to help, support and enable MEVSOs to become more focused, targeted and effective in the delivery of services to the disadvantaged minority ethnic communities in the UK. CEMVO was originally established by the Ethnic Minority Foundation (EMF). The unique relationship between the two organisations needs to be appreciated. The Foundation has been set up specifically to raise and disburse resources that will help and support MEVS. All its administrative costs are borne by its partner: CEMVO.

CEMVO undertakes a wide range of activities and is able to tap into major sources of funding and undertake contractual arrangements to engage in projects supporting the sector. MEVSOs have for too long been characterised as 'fragile' and consequently 'unreliable', but as we have shown, these perceptions derive from the fragile funding base of the sector and its consequent lack of sustainability and expertise. In order to tackle and overcome such issues and misconceptions, CEMVO seeks to build up long-term resources to stabilise and strengthen the sector through medium- to long-term development programmes.

CEMVO aims to bring increasing resources to the MEVS through the following:

- Encouraging the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector to bring in professionals as trustees, committee members, advisors and volunteers;
- Encouraging Minority Ethnic professionals to participate in policy debates;
- Encouraging Minority Ethnic professionals to mentor young people as role models;
- Directly supporting and building the capacity of MEVSOs
- Campaigning for more effective support for the sector from major mainstream funding sources: CEMVO's work should not be seen as supplanting the responsibility of these other funders but as complementing it.

### **7.1 CEMVO: Work in progress**

CEMVO has started taking pro-active steps in addressing the problems within the MEVS in the UK by setting up projects such as the following.

1. Millennium Commission Awards Scheme £2.3m - Maximising Minority Ethnic Volunteer Potential

CEMVO has been successful in obtaining £2.3m to enable 325 minority ethnic volunteers in Greater London to realise their potential and increase the contribution they can make to their local communities. Awards between £3,900 and £6,900 have provided opportunities for personal growth and training in practical topics such as charity law, accounting, fundraising and project management, thereby creating a pool of award winners who will contribute to the strengthening of their communities by building the capacity of local Minority Ethnic groups and organisations. Award winners also received support as they devised and implemented their own community project, for example a community newsletter, or working with excluded pupils in local schools.

2. SRB Round Five Bid - Minority Ethnic Capacity-Building Programme: £2.5m

CEMVO secured £2.5m in 2001 for a London-focused 'minority ethnic capacity building programme' from the Single Regeneration Budget Round 5. The purpose of the bid was 'to strengthen the Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector and build social capital in the minority ethnic communities of London.' CEMVO's aim was to lay the foundations of a new commitment to minority ethnic residents of the capital and help them play a fuller role in all aspects of London's society. By enabling the ethnic voluntary sector and communities to become stronger and more effective, the minority ethnic capacity-building programme enabled a supportive infrastructure for disadvantaged Minority Ethnic communities and individuals to participate in economic and civic life and add to the capital competitiveness.

In practice, the Capacity-Building Programme involves CEMVO sponsoring 15 minority ethnic professional people onto, and completing, an MBA programme and employing them as capacity-building officers (CBOs) for up to three years upon completion of the degree to directly build the capacity of MEVSOs. Individual CBOs are allocated up to 15 MEVSOs a year to support. A specific diagnostic tool-kit has been designed by CEMVO (which includes areas such as strategic planning, business planning, finance, governance and fund raising) to assist CBOs in undertaking this very structured capacity-building programme.

The Capacity Building Programme has proved to be successful to date (an evaluation is ongoing at the time of writing), and further funding has been secured to roll the programme out to the rest of the UK. Another 30 minority ethnic professional people throughout the UK have been successfully recruited onto a new MBA programme that started in October 2003. Three out of the 30 people are from Scotland, and upon completion of the MBA in May/June 2004, these 3 people will be employed by CEMVO Scotland as Capacity Building Officers to directly work with minority ethnic organisations throughout Scotland.

3. Community Assets and Core Grants Programme



EMF/CEMVO in partnership with various funders have developed a unique community assets programme. EMF/CEMVO purchased Boardman House in East London for £6M and uses the asset to directly support MEVSOs. MEVSOs are for example, able to access free capacity skills training organised in-house by CEMVO, as well as free rooms for meetings, events, etc. More importantly, a core grants programme has been established where rent free office accommodation is provided to MEVSOs within the community asset (Boardman House) along with the provision of a salary for their chief executives.

The community assets and core grants programme has proved to be a highly successful model in building the capacity of MEVSOs and is currently being rolled out to the rest of the UK - CEMVO North-West office for example, bought a building in Manchester in 2003. CEMVO Scotland is planning to develop a community asset and core grants programme in Scotland in 2004.

#### 4. Health Advocacy Network

In 1999, the King's Fund commissioned a mapping exercise of health advocacy projects for minority ethnic communities within London. One of the main conclusions arising from this exercise was the need for a support network led by minority ethnic communities for health advocates working with minority ethnic communities. CEMVO successfully tendered for this work and was awarded a five-year contract to develop a minority ethnic health advocacy network.

The Health Advocacy Network brings together commissioners of services, practitioners, researchers, policy-makers, and others within both the statutory and voluntary sectors to share ideas and experiences, to promote the sharing and learning of good practice, to lobby for more effective health policies and to develop advocacy services on a pan London and national level. The Network has also received funding from the European Social Fund to commission providers to train health advocates within minority ethnic communities.

#### 5. Partnership working with Inland Revenue

CEMVO has been working in partnership with the Inland Revenue to address poverty issues amongst minority ethnic communities through the running of child and working tax credit surgeries and training events throughout the UK (including Scotland). A series of training events, surgeries and road shows have already been undertaken in 2003, and more have been planned for early 2004.

#### 6. Partnership working with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

CEMVO Scotland has been successful in securing partnership funding from the DTI to develop good practice guidance in religion or belief for voluntary sector (and in particular, minority ethnic voluntary sector) employers. The process will involve faith groups and statutory bodies in the publication of good practice guidance in this new area of equality which will be promoted through launch events in both Scotland and London. CEMVO is a minority ethnic organisation leading on policy debates that affect the MEVS and the partnership project with the DTI is just one example of CEMVO's work in the area of policy and research.

#### 7. Volunteering Programme

CEMVO has been implementing a National Volunteer Recruitment Programme to encourage skilled minority ethnic personnel into the MEVS. The objectives of the programme are to provide mentoring, advice and support to MEVSOs and to the individuals working with them, and to assist in the further development of the MEVS through the recruitment of 100,000 professionals over the next 10 years.

## **7.2 A structure for CEMVO Scotland**

In line with the work being carried out by CEMVO in England, outlined above, CEMVO Scotland could help begin to address some of the problems that exist within the Scottish BMEVS. It will be a third tier organisation that will provide resources and support to the sector. In the current climate of devolution, it is important that CEMVO Scotland has a strong degree of autonomy, and to emphasise that autonomy the relationship between CEMVO and CEMVO Scotland would be a federal one.

This will allow CEMVO Scotland the flexibility to plan and decide its own work programme in response to local circumstances whilst being able to access certain national – UK based – resources. CEMVO Scotland will be led by its own Executive Committee which will consist of members representative of the diversity of local communities as well as of the disparity in geographical locations. The Executive Committee will have the role of supporting and developing, as well as promoting and enhancing the profile of the organisation. It is proposed that there should also be up to four (the number can be decided after consultation) Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) consisting of up to 6 members representing different minority ethnic groups that bring to the attention of the central Executive Board the needs, concerns, and issues affecting BME organisations and communities in different geographical regions in Scotland. A member of the Executive Committee should chair these RACs individually so as to provide a direct link between the RACs and the Executive Committee.

Seats on the UK CEMVO Executive Committee will be made available to the CEMVO Scotland Executive Committee where they will be able to raise any Scotland-specific issues on this board. This will also act as an avenue to share experience and encourage development in a mutually beneficial direction. Above all it will promote and allow integration at the UK level and, through examples drawn from best practice, at the Scottish level.

In the short-term, CEMVO Scotland has recruited a Director to initiate and develop the work programme and an Administrative Support Worker to aid the progression of these tasks. The organisation has located professional workspace for its office in a Central location that is easily accessible. The Director of CEMVO Scotland currently has a seat on a CEMVO National Committee which will enable development through the sharing of experiences as well as reinforcing the shared vision of the organisations i.e. the strengthening and stabilisation of the MEVS.

The aim of CEMVO Scotland over the next few years is to initiate similar programmes as those outlined above to help strengthen the Scottish Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector and to empower organisations within the sector. The sole purpose of CEMVO Scotland should be to bring resources to the sector. It should not undertake the work of other organisations – so as to avoid duplication; nor will it attempt to

substitute its own resources for those resources which should properly be made available by other funding bodies. The work of CEMVO should not be seen as an excuse for other funders, including government, to ignore their own responsibilities in this regard.

### **7.3 Priorities for CEMVO Scotland**

CEMVO Scotland, working in the same manner as CEMVO UK, will be able address and tackle some of the issues that were uncovered by this report as well as by previous studies. In its role as a minority ethnic funding body, it will be able to mitigate some of the pressures that are faced by MEVSOs in applying for funding by eliminating some of the competition for resources. Through its funding ability, it will also, to a degree, be able to help examine and remove any wasteful duplication in the sector.

One of the key developments for CEMVO Scotland is in relation to developing and maintaining its networks. Although CEMVO has a database of over 9,000 MEVSOs UK-wide, it is important for the organisation to be in constant dialogue with the sector and to understand its needs, concerns and aspirations. Thus, to be able to represent and support the MEVSOs, once workers are in post, CEMVO in Scotland will undertake a comprehensive programme of one-to-one visits to MEVSOs across all Scottish regions. This process will give CEMVO Scotland good 'local intelligence' of the MEVSOs in terms of the local context that they operate in, the personnel, capacity, funding, partnerships and sustainability of local MEVSOs, and gaps in service provision for local minority ethnic communities. The intention here is not to repeat the study which this report describes but to begin to act on the issues identified by the study.

In fulfilling one of its key aim of increase minority ethnic representation on policy boards and in recruiting minority ethnic professionals that are willing to sit on the management committees of MEVSOs, CEMVO Scotland will also be able to introduce new ideas, new capacity and new skills into the sector. Such skills should be shared within the sector to help build its capacity.

By implementing a capacity-building programme based on the one running in London, CEMVO Scotland will be able to resolve some of the concerns that surround this issue, as well as providing human resources for the sector in the form of the capacity-building officers that will undertake this development programme.

Furthermore, by sustaining an up-to-date database of all the MEVSOs in Scotland, it will hold a resource that other MEVSOs, as well as statutory bodies and funders can use to avoid duplication, and work towards co-ordinating and linking the sector. The progress made by CEMVO in the Information Communication Technology field will also aid in linking organisations and providing a permanent forum of communication.

As a third-tier organisation, it is anticipated that CEMVO Scotland will have a close working relationship with the Scottish Executive as well as the SCVO and other key statutory and voluntary sector bodies. It will be able to provide information and advice on race-related or community-based issues and through this will be able to combat discrimination. In relation to this particular issue, in partnership with the Scottish Executive, BEMIS and MEVSOs, CEMVO Scotland proposes a programme to work towards producing a Compact for the MEVSOs. This Compact should outline a

code for good practice like the English one but specifically relevant to Scotland.<sup>29</sup> This Compact will not only emphasise the Scottish Executive's commitment to working with and empowering the MEVS, but will also help statutory bodies especially in rural areas. It will provide guidelines that are much required and will address the problems identified through this study reflected in comments such as:

*'We would like to consult with minority ethnic communities but we don't know how';*

*'it's hard for us to offer our services to minority ethnic groups as we aren't really sure how to reach these communities';* or

*'we don't really know how to address the needs of these communities'.*

CEMVO Scotland as a third-tier organisation will work in partnership with key stakeholders to introduce some key notions of good practice for other funders. One of the most startling and unexpected findings of this study was the fact that most funders did not record meaningful data on who, what and where they were funding. This was especially true of the local authorities. Since the reorganisation of these authorities in 1996 into 32 smaller bodies, there was no effectively-collated source that outlined the MEVSOs they were funding. Each authority kept its own records, and indeed separate departments within individual local authorities did so. In some instances, these records did not specifically show the MEVSOs that they were funding or the amount of funding that had been received by the various organisations that they had funded. It is also perhaps worrying that there is little systematic record of how many applications from MEVSOs were being submitted to the authorities and how many of these were successful. Not only was there little collaboration regarding these issues across authorities but again also there was a lack of such cohesion across departments of the same authority; therefore whilst certain groups were able to tap into several of these sources, others were not receiving any support at all.

In relation to this specific issue it is recommended that all funders that have resources available to MEVSOs come together and compile a database of funding sources and activities that is accessible to all those operating within the sector. This will show who is getting how much funding and for what purpose; this will allow others to access resources but also create a transparency that is lacking in this area. Once again this might be a project that CEMVO Scotland could initiate in partnership with other funders and funding bodies. There is also a clear need for funding bodies to monitor the projects they are funding, to ensure that the money they are providing is making the maximum impact.

The final recommendation for CEMVO Scotland is linked to the existence of the infrastructure organisation BEMIS. The relationship between CEMVO Scotland and BEMIS should be a mutually-supportive one of collaborative partnership. It is essential for the MEVS in Scotland – a sector that is already infested with conflict – that these two organisations have a healthy working relationship. Anything that creates more conflict would be more destructive than constructive. CEMVO Scotland may in fact be able to invest resources into supporting BEMIS as both organisations seek to address the complex and wide-ranging 'race' equality agenda for Scotland.

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<sup>29</sup> Research on the Compact in England demonstrates that black and minority ethnic communities still feel marginal to the compact process: see for example, G.Craig *et al.*, 2002, *Trust or Contract?*, York: York Publishing Services/Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and G.Craig *et al.*, 2004 (forthcoming), *The paradox of compacts*, London: Home Office.

## *Strengthening Communities*

Ongoing consultation and communications between the two organisations is therefore highly recommended and would be supported by CEMVO.

CEMVO Scotland by representing the interests of all the minority ethnic communities can become the voice, the united front that the MEVS seems currently to be lacking. By servicing the sector through a capacity-building programme in its widest sense, one that would work towards security and stabilisation, CEMVO Scotland will be able to sense and prepare for the future, one where Scotland's minority communities can take a proper place in its governance.

# Appendix 1

## STATISTICS GATHERED FROM the QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

These statistics show how the organisations perceived themselves and what they identified as their key concerns.

When asked:

*What area does your organisation serve?*

- 24%** said the **local area**
- 40%** said the **regional area**
- 28%** said the **national area** (referring to Scotland-wide)
- 4%** said an **international area**

*Which of the following best describes your organisation?*

- 24%** said **community group, club or association**
- 48%** said **a voluntary organisation**
- 4%** said **a self-help group**
- 8%** said **an organisation not for profit concern**
- 4%** said **a statutory agency/project**
- 0%** said **a commercial enterprise**
- 8%** said **a charity**

*What are the key concerns of active governing bodies/staff members/volunteers in carrying out their tasks?*

- 72%** said **Fundraising**
- 84%** said **Finance**
- 36%** said **Supervision**
- 12%** said **Company/Charity/Employment Law**
- 76%** said **Specialised Knowledge**
- 64%** said **Service User Representation**
- 56%** said **Volunteer Representation**
- 16%** said **other** - of which 12% said institutional racism and 4% said lack of political representation

*Have these constitutional arrangement proved satisfactory to work with?*

- 24%** identified **legal institutions/funders** as satisfactory i.e. 76% were not
- 60%** identified the **operational needs** within the organisation
- 72%** identified **community, users, and members** as satisfactory to work with
- 52%** identified other **stakeholders** in the organisation as satisfactory to work with

*For the last financial year, where did you apply for funding from?*

- 52%** said they had applied for funding from the **Local Authority**
- 8%** said they had applied for funding from the **Health Authority**
- 20%** said they had applied for funding from **Central Government**
- 28%** said they had applied for funding from a **Charitable Trust**

## *Strengthening Communities*

**28%** said they had applied for funding from the **National Lottery/Community Fund**

**16%** said they had applied for funding from **other** sources

- Ethnic Minority Grant Scheme
- Unemployed Voluntary Action Fund.
- Home Office

*In the past five years have you experienced a funding crisis?*

**52%** said **Yes**

**32%** said **No**

**16%** said this was **not applicable** to them

*Was this because of... ?*

**8%** said this was due to **project funding coming to an end**

**24%** said this was due to **cuts in core funding**

**8%** said this was due to **cash flow difficulties due to grants not being paid**

**28%** said this was because they were **unable to obtain funding**

**4%** said this was due to **other** reasons

- unable to apply for funding
- they were seen as a political organisation

*Compared with five years ago, do you find obtaining funding?:*

**20%** said **Easier**

**36%** said **Harder**

**12%** said it was **Difficult to assess the changes**

**8%** said it was **not applicable** to them.

*Do you feel that the Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector has a voice within Scotland?*

**28%** said **Yes**

**72%** said **No**

A copy of the questionnaire follows.

**CEMVO**  
**COUNCIL OF ETHNIC MINORITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**  
**Scottish Office:**  
**Wellpark Enterprise Centre, 120 Sydney Street, Glasgow, G31 1JF**  
**Tel: 0141-550-7564**

- 1. *When was the organisation established?***
- 2. *Why was the organisation established?***
- 3. *What services and activities are provided by the organisation?***
- 4. *What area(s) does organisations serve? (Please tick appropriate box)***

- local
- regional
- national
- international
- other (please specify)

- 5. *Which of the following best describes organisation? (Please tick one box only)***

- community group, club or association
- voluntary organisation
- self-help group
- not-for-profit concern
- statutory agency or project
- commercial enterprise
- charity
- other (please write in)

- 6. *What are the key concerns of active governing body/ staff members/ volunteers in carrying out their tasks?***

- |                                       |                              |                             |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Fundraising</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Finance</b>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Supervision</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Company/charity/employment law</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Specialised knowledge</b>          | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Service user representation</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Volunteer representation</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>other please describe</b>          |                              |                             |

- 7. *Have these constitutional arrangements proved satisfactory for working with:***

- |   |                              |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Legal institutions/ funders</b>                | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Operational needs(Within the organisation)</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| <b>Its community, users, members</b>              | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |



and other stakeholders

yes  no

**8. Who funds the organisation, how much, for what and how long is the funding secured for?**

**9. For the financial year did you apply for funding from...**

	<i>was successful</i>		<i>not successful</i>	
Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health authority	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charitable trust	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The National Lottery	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**10. In the past 5 years have you experienced a funding crisis?**

yes  no

**11. Was this because of:**

Project funding coming to an end	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Cuts in core funding	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Cash flow difficulties due to grants not being Paid	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Unable to obtain funding	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Other (please describe)		

**12. Compared with 5 years ago, do you find obtaining funding:**

Easier	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Harder	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
About the same	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Difficult to assess changes	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no

**13. Do you feel that the Minority Ethnic voluntary sector has a voice within Scotland?**

Yes

*If so where?*

*How?*

No

*Why not?*

*Strengthening Communities*

# *Strengthening Communities*

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**CEMVO**

**COUNCIL OF ETHNIC MINORITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**