

Voluntary Action Research

Paper No. 5

Encouraging Signs?

**A Report on a Survey
of Black Participation
in Voluntary Organisations**

The National Coalition for Black Volunteering
and The Volunteer Centre UK

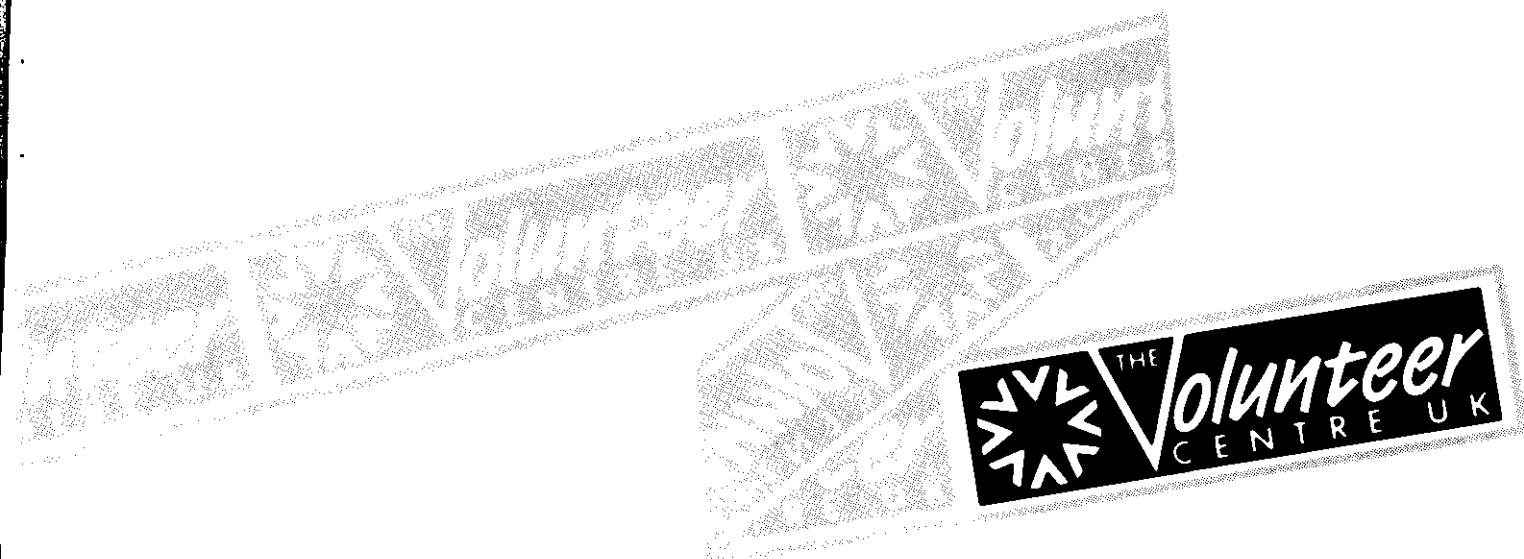


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The Resource Unit to Promote Black Volunteering

This study was commissioned by The National Coalition for Black Volunteering and The Volunteer Centre UK. The survey was carried out by a research working group, whose members were: D Tychus-Lawson; David Obaze; Rodney Hedley and Justin Davis Smith. Analysis and commentary in the report is by Rodney Hedley.

The National Coalition for Black Volunteering has set up a 'Resource Unit' with the help of a grant from the Home Office, which aims to promote volunteering in the black communities and provide training and consultation on black volunteering issues. As the National Coalition has not yet obtained its independent charitable status the Unit is being co-managed by The Volunteer Centre UK, which is also administering the Unit's finances.

Preface

This Report of a survey of 91 volunteer involving organisations was carried out by The National Coalition for Black Volunteering and The Volunteer Centre UK in 1990. The aim of the survey was to examine the involvement of black people as volunteers, as paid staff and as volunteer members of management committees. The survey also looked at the approach of volunteer involving organisations to Equal Opportunities Policies and Codes of Practice.

In a multi-racial society like Britain today, it ought not to be necessary to have to look at the involvement of black people in mainstream voluntary organisations. After all, black people have been living in London and elsewhere in Britain for more than 500 years.¹ However, it is a sad fact that for most of these years, black people have been under-represented in society – socially, economically and politically, and the voluntary sector is no exception.

This is not to say that black people do not volunteer. Nothing could be further from the truth. A survey carried out by a group of black researchers in 1986 demonstrated the wealth of volunteering taking place within the black community.² What the survey also showed, however, was that black people were getting few opportunities to volunteer within the traditional, mainstream voluntary sector. The research in 1986 led to the formation of the organisation now called The National Coalition for Black Volunteering, with the aim of promoting the involvement of black people in volunteering and community activities.

This report suggests that there is much work for the Coalition to do. There are encouraging signs. The survey found that nearly two thirds of agencies had some black involvement, although the level of involvement was very low; and that seventy per cent of organisations had an Equal Opportunities Policy. However, this still means that over a third of organisations in the survey involved no black people whatsoever. The survey underlines the need for agencies to prepare and implement equal opportunities policies and to regularly monitor such policies. The survey found that those organisations with an EOP Policy were more likely to involve black people as volunteers and as staff members, than those with no such policy.

This is an important report. As well as raising awareness about the under-representation of black people in voluntary organisations, it provides a number of helpful suggestions as to how black involvement can be increased. It should be required reading for all policy makers in the voluntary sector.

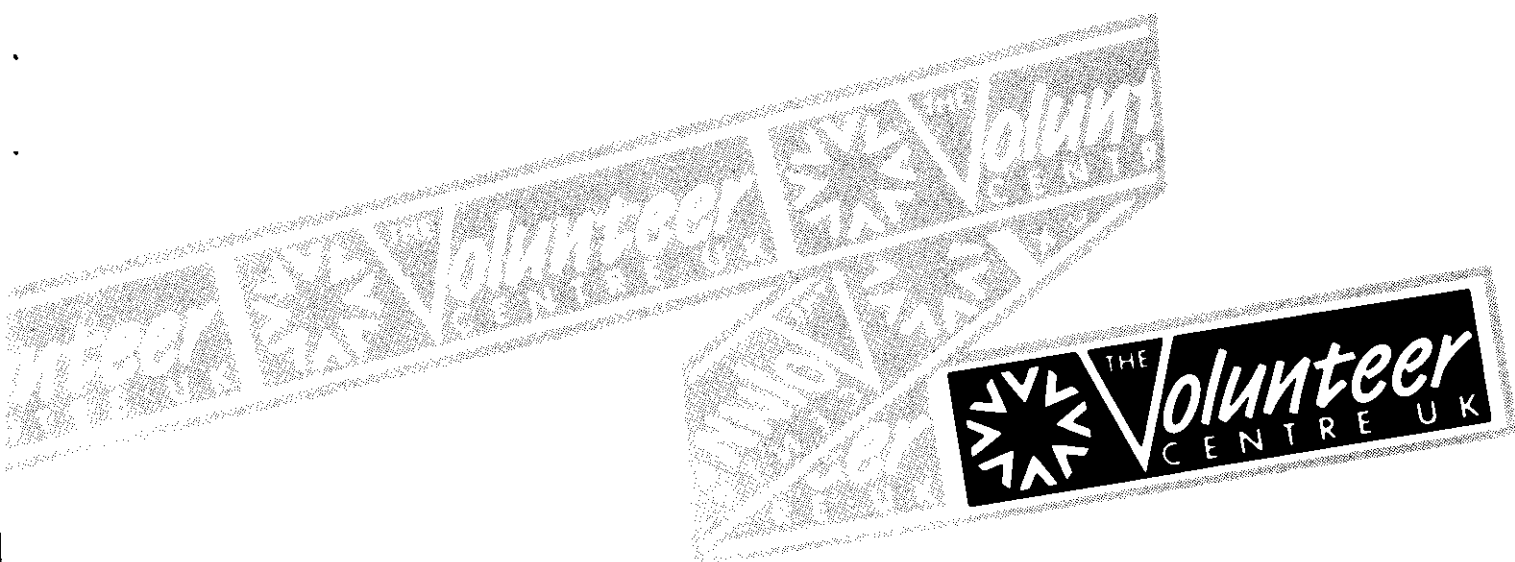
David E.R. Obaze,
National Development Officer,
The Resource Unit to Promote Black Volunteering.

¹ *A History of the Black Presence in London*, Greater London Council, 1986

² *Black People and Volunteering*, Black Perspectives in Volunteering Group and ADVANCE, 1988

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Summary of Findings

Black Involvement

The survey found that:

Sixty Three per cent of agencies had some level of black involvement.

Forty Six per cent of agencies involved black people as volunteers.

Thirty Five per cent of agencies employed black staff.

Twenty One per cent of agencies involved black people on their management committees.

A third of agencies, however, involved no black people whatsoever. Moreover, black people made up only three per cent of volunteers.

Training and Supporting Volunteers

The survey found that:

Eighty Six per cent of agencies provided expenses to volunteers.

Eighty Seven per cent of agencies provided training to volunteers.

Very few agencies (4 per cent), however, provided training on equal opportunities and on methods of increasing levels of black involvement.

Few agencies (16 per cent) provided training especially geared to the needs of black staff, volunteers and management committee members.

Equal Opportunities Policies

The survey found that:

Seventy per cent of agencies had an Equal Opportunities Policy.

One half of the agencies with an EOP Policy backed it up with a Code of Practice.

Agencies which had an EOP Policy and a Code of Practice were more likely to involve black people than those which did not have a Policy or Code.

Agencies which had links with black groups were more likely to have black involvement than those with no such links.

Resourcing and Developing Black Involvement

The survey found that:

Forty per cent of agencies were taking steps to involve more black people, and over fifty per cent were planning to act in the future.

Lack of resources was the main barrier to developing an equal opportunities policy.

Steps taken (or planned) to increase black involvement included the increased use of the ethnic press for recruiting volunteers and staff members and the forging of closer links with black groups.

1. Background to the Survey: Black under-representation

The Legal Context

The 1976 **Race Relations Act** prohibits direct or indirect discrimination by organisations offering employment or providing services. There is, however, still a "grey area" with regard to voluntary bodies which by their very nature operate like private clubs. A case under the 1976 Act was taken to the European Commission of Human Rights in 1990:

"When one member of a group is singled out as a 'black lad' and is refused entry to a private club for the purpose of collecting money for charity on the same basis as white members of the group, that does not constitute racial discrimination under the Race Relations Act 1976, nor does it amount to a violation of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."

**European Commission of Human Rights, Strasbourg,
Hector v the United Kingdom (Case No 14818/89).¹**

The Research Evidence

The last major survey of volunteering was undertaken by MORI for The Volunteer Centre UK in March 1990. In all 1,938 adults aged 15 and over were interviewed. The survey found that 39 per cent of the adult population had taken part in some form of voluntary activity in the previous year.² The survey showed that those most likely to volunteer were in the middle age range and from higher socio-economic groups, a finding consistent with a major enquiry into volunteering in 1981.³

The MORI survey also found that **black people were under-represented as volunteers**. This echoed the 1981 research findings.

The most comprehensive study of black volunteering we have to date was published in 1988 by the Black Perspectives in Volunteering Group. Entitled *Black People and Volunteering*, the study reported on a survey, by personal interview, of 162 black people living in Greater London, and looked at their volunteering activity.

To quote from the Report:

"All the research data shows that black people are less likely to volunteer than people who are white. At first sight it appears that volunteering, like many aspects of British society, is another white preserve. Yet black people do get involved in a host of community activities, and the black voluntary sector is booming . . . the findings show that there is much willingness by the black community to volunteer, but the interests of volunteer using organisations are not always relevant to black needs, and the ways that established agencies operate makes black people wary of getting involved."⁴

Black People and Volunteering showed that black voluntary activity is not recognised. Black people have to become involved in "black" projects because white agencies are not responding to black needs.

The survey showed a willingness of black people to become volunteers, but suggested that there were obstacles in the way, such as the lack of relevant opportunities, fears over the financial costs, feelings that individual needs would be ignored – where volunteering is often hailed as meeting such needs, and experiences of black people being made unwelcome or uncomfortable. Although it should be noted that the survey found no examples of overt racism.

Recent studies have **reinforced the under-representation of black people in a range of activities.**

For example, a study by Liverpool University of voluntary health groups in the city, found that as a whole 98.7 per cent of management committee members were white, and only 1.3 per cent black; indeed 95 per cent of all the committees reviewed had no black members whatsoever. Looking at the use of volunteers only 10 per cent of the agencies had black volunteers on their books. Overall only 0.9 per cent of the total number of volunteers active in voluntary health groups were black. Yet Liverpool has a black population of around 8 per cent.⁵

Under-representation was also noted last year in a review of school governing bodies, showing how few black governors there were, and in 1988 by a study carried out by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (CRE/SCVO) of 318 voluntary agencies.⁶⁷ The latter found that only 17 per cent of agencies had any black volunteers; that only 9 per cent had any black management committee members; and only 6 per cent had black staff. The CRE/SCVO Report commented:

"Voluntary organisations have often led the way in terms of equal opportunities and many voluntary bodies in Scotland are operating under formal equal opportunities policies. However, few people of ethnic minority origin are to be found on management committees or staff (paid or unpaid) in the voluntary sector and few bodies have taken positive action to change this situation." ⁸

2. The Survey: Aims and Response

Aims

Following the publication of the report *Black People and Volunteering* in 1988, a research working party was set up consisting of members of the National Coalition for Black Volunteering and The Volunteer Centre UK. The Working Party decided that a survey of 'volunteer involving' organisations was necessary to complement the evidence of the black volunteering study. The aims of the survey were to discover:

- a) the extent to which a cross section of volunteer involving agencies were involving black volunteers, black staff and black management committee members.
- b) the extent to which black populations and black client groups/ services were identified by volunteer involving agencies.
- c) the extent to which a cross section of volunteer involving agencies were operating an equal opportunities policy (EOP); how these policies were resourced; and what range of "pro-active" methods were being used to facilitate the recruitment of black people as volunteers.
- d) issues in black and ethnic minority involvement that volunteer involving agencies felt needed addressing by both policy-makers, and the new umbrella group, **The National Coalition for Black Volunteering**.

Definition of Black and Ethnic Minority

The study followed the methodological approach of the *Black People and Volunteering* study in defining black and ethnic minority by reference to three broad black groupings:

African
Afro Caribbean
Asian

The questionnaire allowed respondents to refer to "other ethnic groupings" through open ended questions.

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was drafted by the Working Party. It was then piloted to twenty local and national voluntary organisations. Following feedback, amendments were made and questionnaires were sent out in the Spring of 1990 to 600 voluntary organisations, selected to provide a broad cross section with regards to function, size and geographical location.

A follow up request for information was put in The Volunteer Centre's journal *Volunteers* during 1990, and a closing date was set for January 1991. As of 14 February 1991 100 questionnaires had been returned: a response rate of 16 per cent.

Of the 100 replies, 91 questionnaires were usable for analysis. Noteworthy is that 40 (44 per cent) of the organisations were willing to be involved in follow up interviews, although resources did not allow this option to be pursued.

The Sample

For the analysis which follows the prime sample is 91 completed forms. However, for analysis of particular trends sub-samples considerably less than this figure have had to be used. In the tables and commentary which follow the sample or "n" number from which deductions are made is given, or is shown under the "all" figure. Please note that because of "rounding" sometimes percentages will not add up to 100 per cent. Some tables refer to multiple responses, hence more than 91 replies are referred to.

3. An Analysis of the Sample

Voluntary Organisations

The first question to be asked is whether the questionnaires received represented an adequate "cross section" of volunteer involving organisations.

Let us consider some of the characteristics of the organisations included in the sample.

If we consider the structure of the organisations we find that 73 (80 per cent) of the sample were independent voluntary organisations **with their own management committees**. Seventeen (18 per cent) were branches of other organisations, **where management was the ultimate responsibility** of the parent body. And only one statutory body was represented – a volunteer bureau type service based in a Scottish local authority. Therefore, the first thing to note is that the survey was about the experience of voluntary organisations which involve volunteers.

Table 3.1: Structure of Organisations

	No.	%
Independent Agencies (of which 37 are affiliated to national bodies)	73	80
Branches	17	18
Statutory body	1	1
n=91		

While the majority of the sample were independent organisations, half were affiliated to national bodies. We shall consider later whether this affected their attitude to EOP and to the recruitment of black people as volunteers.

People Served and Service Area of Agencies

Classifying voluntary organisations is fraught with difficulties, especially given the impressive range of functions they undertake.⁹

The task of classification was no less difficult here, despite a question asked specifically about the "function" of the organisation.

In terms of classifying the sample the approach was to consider the organisations by looking at:

- a) the people served – the type of people, or agency, to whom the organisation was open for its main service; and,
- b) the service provided.

Summaries are shown in Tables 3.2 and 3.3.

Table 3.2: People or Agencies Served By Organisations

	No.	%
Open To All Types of People	23	25
Elderly	18	20
Servicing Organisations	18	20
Victims	8	9
Range of Illness/Disability	6	7
Families	5	5
Women	5	5
Children	4	4

Table 3.3: Service Offered By Organisations

	No.	%
A Range of General Services	28	31
Support	20	22
Health	11	12
Conservation & Environment	6	7
Care	5	5
Housing & Homelessness	5	5*
Education	3	3
Volunteering	3	3
Community Initiatives & Development	2	2
Advice	2	2
n = 90**		

* Two housing organisations were offering housing to ethnic minorities

** Four organisations reported "fund raising" as a function alongside other initiatives. The approach here was to incorporate fundraising as appropriate into the above categories.

As one would expect organisations open to all types of people, and those offering a range of general welfare services were in the majority – 25 per cent and 31 per cent of the sample respectively.

The elderly client group, and servicing organisations, were the next largest categories, at 20 per cent. Interestingly "support" emerged as the next largest category, at 22 per cent, and is accounted for by the number of victim support schemes, and "crisis helping" agencies for women and families (e.g. Rape Helplines) which took part in the survey.

Comparing these tables to those from major surveys of volunteering we would have to note omissions relating to organisations working in,

- sport and leisure
- religion
- youth and children activities
- politics
- and organisations with an ethnic minority focus.

Nevertheless, the survey was successful in obtaining a **good spread** of organisations covering health, social welfare, housing, environment, personal advice and support.

Ethnic Minority Focus

With regard to the issue of ethnic minority involvement in terms of **service and people served**, 30 organisations (33 per cent of the sample) said they had black clients; two said they had a declared brief for the black community; and five organisations said they were embarking upon special black projects. The word "special" may be revealing.

England, Scotland, and Wales

Of the 91 organisations 78 (86 per cent) were based in England; nine (10 per cent) were based in Scotland and four (5 per cent) were based in Wales. This pattern fits in with relative population size.

It was disappointing to have no returns from Northern Ireland where other forms of equal opportunities are an issue. It should be noted that the sub samples for both Scotland and Wales were too small for any meaningful conclusions to be drawn concerning national trends.

Catchment Area of the Organisations

It was felt important to have details of the geographical "catchment" with regard to the organisation's services. Although the recruitment of black staff and volunteers is likely to be locally based for the majority of organisations, management committee members may travel many miles for meetings of national bodies. The catchment area in this survey referred to whether the organisations had:

- * a local brief (usually the local authority district area)
- * a countywide or regional brief
- * a national brief
- or,
- * an international brief.

Table 3.4 shows the results.

Table 3.4: Catchment Area of Organisations

	No.	%
Local	53	58
National	21	23
Countywide/Region	14	15
International	2	2
n=90		

This Table shows a reasonable mix of local, national and countywide/ regional organisations. Having 58 per cent of the sample represented by local organisations was useful in ensuring a good range of data on the involvement of black people as volunteers in local communities.

Funding of Organisations

Questions were asked about the principal source of funding of agencies. Organisations were asked to give mutually exclusive answers to pre-coded questions on this but in the outcome two thirds gave more than one reply. Allowing for multiple responses, the following pattern emerged, as Table 5 shows.

Table 3.5: Funding of Organisations

	No	%
By statutory funding	60	66%
By self funding	43	47%
By private sources (trusts etc)	16	18%
By other means	5	6%

The Survey found that two thirds of the sample relied on some form of statutory funding. Almost one half of organisations relied on fundraising activities, and a fifth on funding from charitable trusts.

4. Aspects of Volunteering

Volunteer Activities

What were volunteers doing for their organisations? Table 4.1 gives a breakdown of volunteer activities reported in descending order. In line with other surveys of volunteering, fundraising was the most reported task, at 76 per cent, followed by service provision, 71 per cent, and management committee work, 68 per cent.

Table 4.1 Volunteer Activities, By Organisation Catchment

	County	Catchment			ALL
		Inter	Local	National	
Fundraising	12	1	38	17	69 (76%)
Service Provision	10	1	42	11	65 (71%)
Committee Work	8	1	35	17	62 (68%)
Administration	8	2	28	12	51 (56%)
Advocacy	3	0	16	8	28 (31%)
Campaigning	5	1	16	6	28 (31%)

Volunteer Recruitment

Table 4.2 provides information on how volunteers were recruited. The pattern again follows other surveys with "word of mouth" being the most quoted method.

Interestingly, only 10 per cent of organisations used the ethnic press to recruit volunteers. Three organisations commented that "there is no ethnic press in our locality."

Table 4.2: Volunteer Recruitment

	County	Catchment			ALL
		Inter	Local	National	
Word of Mouth	14	2	51	16	84 (92%)
Local Press	13	2	40	10	66 (73%)
Local Radio/TV	10	2	27	7	47 (51%)
Open Days	8	1	26	4	40 (44%)
Newsletter	5	1	21	7	34 (37%)
Ethnic Press	2	0	6	2	10 (11%)

Training of Volunteers

Table 4.3 shows that the vast majority (87 per cent) of organisations gave training to their volunteers. However, only 4 per cent of organisations especially referred to training in equal opportunities.

Table 4.3: Volunteer Training Provided By Organisation

	County	Catchment			ALL
		Inter	Local	National	
Training Given	13	2	45	18	79 (87%)
EOP element stated	1	1	2	0	4 (4%)

A question was asked with regard to the provision of specific training for black staff, volunteers and management committee members. Only 16 (18 per cent) of the 91 organisations offered such training.

Volunteer Expenses

The Black People and Volunteering Survey reported that a number of black respondents were worried about the cost of volunteering. In this survey the majority of organisations provided expenses – although a few qualified their answers by referring to “giving or offering” expenses to “some” types of volunteers, as Table 4.4. illustrates.

Table 4.4: Organisations Providing Volunteer Expenses By Catchment

Expenses	Catchment				ALL
	County	Inter	Local	National	
Given/Offered	12	2	43	16	74 (81%)
Given/Offered to “Some”	0	0	2	2	4 (5%)
All Expenses	12	2	45	18	78 (86%)

5. Equal Opportunities Policies and Codes of Practice

The Context

Glance through any list of job advertisements in the national press and the reader will find a good number of advertisements with the somewhat appealing phrase:

“We are an equal opportunity employer. . . applications are welcome from”

There is much cynicism expressed by the black community concerning the real commitment of white agencies to equal opportunities. ¹¹ “Words cost nowt,” so goes the phrase, and the research to date on paid jobs shows that words mask inaction.

For instance the *Equal Opportunities Review* in 1988 reported that 933 advertisements were carried in the *Guardian* newspaper in June of that year with the following breakdown:

Number of Advertisements	Organisation Type Placing Them
437:	Public Sector
342:	Voluntary Sector
154:	Private Sector

The good news was that of the public and voluntary sector organisations 50 per cent of advertisements carried EOP statements or declarations, whereas only 10 per cent of private sector organisations carried such riders.

Yet when the researchers made further enquiries to 168 of the agencies with such declarations a **fifth** could not supply any EOP statement, and a **further fifth** had statements which were little more than the few sentences which appeared in the advertisements.

The researchers also found that a number of organisations which had spelt out policies had simply copied them from other agencies without thinking through the process, and were even inept at editing out basic inconsistencies. For example, the researchers quoted Carlisle Council where the policy read “Company Ltd” throughout, as it had been taken from a private firm!

The Equal Opportunities Commission surveyed 446 local authorities in Great Britain in 1988 and found that 46 per cent had no equal opportunities policy. ¹²

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Equal Opportunities Commission brought in **Codes of Practice** in 1984 and 1985 respectively for employers to adopt and develop as “good practice” in implementing their EOP policy. The codes were designed to create a positive attitude for equal opportunities and to give an action framework.

“More and more organisations are describing themselves as Equal Opportunities Employers. What does this mean? Employers have found by putting equal opportunities policies into action they have the benefit not only of compliance with the law, but also enjoy a number of other advantages including:

- * Making full use of the talents of all members of the work-force.**
- * An improvement in motivation and performance, which in turn, can reduce turnover levels.**
- * A broadening of the ‘talent base’ which develops people’s abilities faster and further and opens up the potential for new and flexible approaches.**
- * Better two way communications.**
- * An improvement in the external view of the organisation, so that talented people outside will want to join it.**

Employers have also found that, by focusing attention on the treatment of all staff at work, the implementation of equal opportunities stimulates a healthy and more productive atmosphere and creates a better quality of working life. Management and employee relationships have improved and industrial relations have been enhanced. All employees can benefit from an Equal Opportunities Policy. For all these reasons, it is no longer sensible to regard equal opportunities as being a luxury.

Taken from *Guidelines for Equal Opportunities Employers* published by the Equal Opportunities Commission, 1990.

A CRE survey in 1986 found that of 899 employers, only 2 per cent had read the Code of Practice Guidelines, and that of 144 EOP policies examined, 88 per cent were little more than a simple statement of intent. The CRE found that personnel officers were largely ignorant of, or misunderstood the purpose of, codes of practice.¹³

Equal Opportunities Policies and the Voluntary Sector

The most comprehensive study of voluntary agencies and EOP that we have is the CRE/SCVO study referred to previously.¹⁴ This found that of 295 voluntary agencies giving information 59 per cent had an equal opportunities policy.

The Findings Of This Survey

Table 5.1 shows that 64 agencies or 70 per cent of the sample had an EOP policy.

However, only 32 or 35 per cent operated a Code of Practice. Although looking at that figure another way, one half of the agencies with a policy backed it up with a Code.

Table 5.1: EOP Policies and Codes of Practice

Catchment Area of Agency	Percentage	
	With EOP Policy	With EOP code
Local n=53	73%	40%
National n=21	81%	24%
County n=14	50%	36%
International n=2 n=91	50% 70% n=64	50% 35% n=27

The Survey found that only five (7 per cent) of the 64 agencies which had a policy dated it from before 1982, and only two of the agencies which had a Code dated it pre 1982. This suggests that the **vast majority of agencies** adopted policies in the 1980s, when guidelines were first available.

In this respect it is also noteworthy that in the CRE/SCVO survey 26, or 40 per cent, of the agencies with an EOP policy had adopted it since 1988.

Factors Linked with Equal Opportunities Policies

A number of factors were considered to see whether certain types of organisation were associated with having an EOP policy or Code of Practice. No significant trends emerged – but there were hints.

* **Affiliation:** voluntary agencies affiliated to national bodies were **no more or no less likely to have an EOP Policy or Code** than independent groups. Seventy one per cent of affiliates and 65 per cent of branches had EOP policies compared with 75 per cent of independent agencies.

* **Geographical Location:** organisations in rural areas were slightly less likely to have an EOP Policy than those in urban areas. Sixty one per cent of rural organisations had policies compared with 77 per cent of urban organisations. (Note: agencies responding were classified as either urban or rural depending upon their geographical location by reference to CIPFA population ward density.)¹⁵

"People are portrayed in a negative and stereotypical manner, and denied social interaction that others take for granted. Discrimination manifests itself in various ways, both directly and indirectly. Voluntary organisations have a responsibility to oppose discrimination . . . Voluntary groups have a role to play in highlighting injustice and promoting good practice. As part of these obligations every group should develop, and keep under review, an equal opportunities policy, the aim of which should be to help both staff and management committees eliminate direct and indirect discrimination in decision making, employment practice and service provision. Organisations should avoid simply adopting an existing equal opportunities policy. . . the process of developing policy involves increasing awareness of the different forms of discrimination and how these are expressed."

Taken from *Voluntary But Not Amateur*, 1990 published by the London Voluntary Service Council.

* **Existence of Black Population:** sixty three per cent of agencies which said there was "no significant black population" had EOP policies, whereas 74 per cent of organisations where a black population was identified had such policies.

* **Type of Funding:** the type of funding of an organisation appeared not to make any difference to whether EOP policies were adopted. While 71 per cent of statutory funded organisations had an EOP policy, the percentage for self funded organisations was 65 per cent and for trust funded organisations 69 per cent.

6. Black Involvement

Black Participation

Black participation was measured by whether the agency had:

- * any black staff
- * any black volunteers
- and,
- * any black management committee members

“Black” was extended to any other ethnic minority involvement.

Overall nearly two thirds of the sample – 63 per cent – had some kind of black involvement. Or to put it another way, 33 organisations or 36 per cent of the sample had no black involvement. With regard to the type of black involvement the following counts were obtained:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 63 per cent of organisations had some kind of black involvement

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 46 per cent of organisations had black volunteers

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 35 per cent of organisations had black staff

XXXXXXXXXX
 21 per cent of organisations had black committee members

The CRE/SCVO survey found that only 17 per cent of agencies had black volunteers; only 9 per cent had black staff; and only 6 per cent had any black committee members. Hence this survey shows a significant increase. A breakdown of black involvement in voluntary organisations by catchment area is shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Black Involvement in the Sample of Agencies

Aspect of Black Involvement	Catchment				
	County	Inter	Local	National	ALL
ANY Black involvement	8 (57%)	2 (100%)	35 (66%)	13 (62%)	58 (63%)
Black Volunteers	8 (57%)	0 (0%)	28 (53%)	6 (29%)	42 (46%)
Black Staff	4 (29%)	2 (100%)	16 (30%)	10 (48%)	32 (35%)
Black MC Members	2 (15%)	0 (0%)	13 (25%)	4 (19%)	19 (21%)

Note: Black involvement was looked at concerning relative African, Afro Caribbean and Asian differences, and also at gender differences between ethnic groups, but smallness of sub samples meant that no trends could be established.

Numbers of Black Volunteers

The questionnaire asked organisations for the numbers of volunteer helpers and management committee members involved, and for numbers relating to black involvement. There were problems with the returns given.

Firstly, some countywide/regional agencies, and international/national agencies gave details relating to the operation of their headquarters, thus inflating the figures. Secondly, for averages to be calculated by the actual black contact, meant relying on small sub-samples.

The approach taken, therefore, was to analyse a sample of 43 agencies with voluntary helpers numbering no more than 500, and which had some kind of black involvement. The results are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Volunteer Helpers and Average Numbers of Black Volunteers

Number of Volunteers	Number of Agencies	Average Number of Black Volunteers
1- 100	35	2.4
201- 300	2	4.5
301- 400	4	1.5
401- 500	3	7.6

n=43

This table shows that the number of black people involved as volunteers in the organisations was low, averaging less than 3 per cent of the total volunteer force. The figure for the black population in the UK is estimated to be 5 per cent. Although a number of agencies were operating in districts with an ethnic population much less than 5 per cent, a number were operating in districts with populations much higher. For example, Greater London, where the average rate is around 15 per cent.

For organisations with black management committee members, the average involvement was only 0.7 in a average committee of 12 members.

7. Black Involvement and Equal Opportunities

EOP and Black Involvement

Does an equal opportunities policy make any difference to the involvement of black people? Several of the organisations which reported they had no EOP policy, said that no such policy was necessary because:

“we are open to all people anyway.”

However, Table 7.1 shows that organisations operating an EOP policy **were more likely to have black involvement** than those not operating such a policy. Seventy four per cent of agencies with black involvement operated an EOP policy.

Furthermore, 68 per cent of agencies with an EOP policy had black involvement as opposed to 56 per cent of those without.

The same association was found with regards to black staff, volunteers and management committee members, as Table 7.2. shows.

Table 7.1: Agencies With EOP and Any Black Involvement

	With EOP Policy		
	No	Yes	All
Agencies With Policy	27 (30%)	64 (70%)	91 (100%)
Agencies With Code		32 (35%)	91 (100%)
Any black involvement	15 (26%)	43 (74%)	58 (100%)

Table 7.2: Agencies with EOP and Types of Black Involvement

	With EOP Policy		
	No	Yes	All
Agencies With Policy	27 (30%)	64 (70%)	91 (100%)
Black Staff	6 (19%)	26 (81%)	32 (100%)
Black Volunteers	12 (29%)	30 (71%)	42 (100%)
Black MC Members	4 (21%)	15 (69%)	19 (100%)

EOP and Black Population

The survey looked at the agency perception of black populations to be served. Organisations were asked:

Does the geographical area in which you operate include a significant population of people from black and ethnic minority communities?

Of the 84 organisations which answered this question 54 or 64 per cent said they served a black population. Table 7.3 shows that these organisations were more likely to have an EOP Policy; were more likely to have black involvement; and were more likely to have links with black organisations.

Table 7.3: EOP and Black Populations

	Agencies with "Significant" Black Population		
	No	Yes	All
Percentage of Agencies with Significant black population	30 (36%)	54 (64%)	84 (100%)
Agencies With EOP Policy	19 (32%)	40 (68%)	59 (100%)
Agencies With EOP Code	10 (30%)	20 (66%)	30 (100%)
Agencies having any black involvement	10 (33%)	47 (87%)	57 (100%)
Agencies having links with black groups	4 (12%)	30 (88%)	34 (100%)

Linking Up with Black Organisations

The survey looked at the extent to which organisations made links with black groups.

Over the whole sample 35, or 38 per cent of organisations, said they linked up in some way with black agencies.

There was some evidence that those agencies with links were more likely to involve black people. Over four-fifths of the agencies which had links with black groups had black involvement or operated an EOP policy. The CRE/SCVO study reported that 34 per cent of a sample of 309 agencies had such links.

8. Making Equal Opportunities Policies Work – Work Better

Lack of Resources

The questionnaire included a number of questions about the way equal opportunities policies worked, and how they might be improved.

Nearly **two thirds of the sample said that they did not have the resources to develop advertising and training** with regard to EOP and black issues. Agencies felt better equipped with regard to translation, but still a third reported they had resource problems.

EOP: Recruiting Black Staff

Asked about what action was being taken to recruit more black staff 37, or 41 per cent, of agencies said some action was being taken. Summaries of the replies include:

* we are **making attempts to make policy meaningful**

“We encourage the involvement of black people, our advertisements carry EOP declarations, we are beginning to learn how to monitor.”

A scheme offering support to families in the Midlands.

* we are **using positive advertising**

“We are advertising a post in the ethnic press with a clear statement about under representation.”

A mental health group in Greater London.

* we are **targeting resources** – setting up special projects

“We are employing an Asian worker.”

A community development project in the North West.

EOP: Involving Black Volunteers

Asked about involving more black people as volunteers, there was a similar pattern, with 36, or 42 per cent, of agencies saying some action was being taken. Summaries of the responses are:

* we are **making attempts**

“We are adopting recruitment and interview techniques.”

A Prison Aftercare Service in London

* we are **advertising – using appropriate languages where relevant**

"We are advertising in Asian languages and use posters."

An Age Concern Group in the North East.

* we are **targeting resources**

"We have set up an information network."

A child care group in Wales.

Next Steps

The survey asked agencies "what steps are you planning to take to encourage more black people to be involved?" Fifty two (57 per cent) of organisations reported that they were planning to take further steps:

*we are **making attempts, getting our policy right.**

*we are **making links with black agencies.**

*we are **really trying – hope to get a black worker.**

*other **methods mentioned included:** obtaining bi-lingual staff; setting up internal working parties; setting up projects relevant to ethnic minorities; carrying out research; showing that positive action was being taken.

Being Pro-active

The Survey asked organisations for their views on adopting a pro-active policy in the following areas: recruitment; support; training; and translation.

Recruiting More Black Volunteers

Of the 31 replies to this question, better use of the ethnic press with 13 replies, was seen as a way forward. A number of references were made to making advertising material more relevant and accessible to black people, and to linking up with black groups. Some organisations favoured the setting up special projects to involve more black people as volunteers.

"Get black faces on our leaflets."

A housing association in the North West.

"Put on an exhibition celebrating black culture."

A child care group in Greater London.

Supporting Black People Already Involved

Of the 24 replies to this question the most common method referred to was setting up support groups either of black staff/volunteers/management committee members within the organisation; or networking with other agencies with black staff/volunteers/management committee members. It was also felt important for agencies to show that they were challenging racism:

“Respond to any racist comments in the local press – write in and put the record right.”

A women’s counselling group in East Anglia.

Providing Training For Black People

Of the 23 replies to this question, eight organisations suggested a range of training methods related to equal opportunities and to the needs of black people as volunteers and paid staff. Anti-racist training was quoted by three agencies, as one respondent, an Age Concern group in East Anglia commented:

“We don’t see black people in this town – prejudice is rife.”

It was noted by another respondent that women trainers/development officers were needed for certain ethnic groups. Groups said that a real commitment had to be demonstrated:

“Offer special classes, go to the mosque, show you want to develop services.”

A family support group in Scotland.

Increasing Translation

Of the 29 answers to this question, 11 supported the idea that more facilities were needed for translation. Making leaflets and advertising generally bi-lingual was seen as important. Getting young people involved was also seen as a way forward:

“Use schools, young Asian volunteers may be very keen.”

A generalist welfare agency in the South West.

9. A Role for The National Coalition for Black Volunteering

A question was asked about what assistance the National Coalition for Black Volunteering could give groups to promote black participation.

Fifty three agencies, or 58 per cent of the sample, gave suggestions – only one group saying clearly “we don’t need it!”

The suggestions can be summarised as follows:

* Provide Information

Provision of information was seen as an important role.

“Give us a list of journals and newspapers we could use to advertise in.”

A victim support scheme in the North East.

“Regular information sheets with advice, make us aware.”

A MIND group in Scotland.

* Provide Training and Workshops

A training role was clearly identified by the survey:

“A series of workshops which challenges our own prejudices – please!”

An Age Concern group in the Midlands.

“Help with institutional racism.”

A conservation group in the North West.

* Help Us Network and Link Up with Black Groups

A number of organisations saw The National Coalition as a way of allowing them to make links with black groups. One group saw the Coalition having a volunteer bureau function.

“If black volunteers approach NCBV first and then you pass them on to us, it would be very helpful.”

A family support group in the West Country.

*** Help with "thinking through issues:"**

A number of organisations wanted the Coalition to help them think through issues to do with equal opportunities and the recruitment of black people as volunteers.

"We need guidance on developing our EOP, there are no local resources available."

A co-ordinating group in Wales.

*** Other tasks for the Coalition mentioned were:** help with anti-racist work; providing speakers; assertiveness training; consultancy; advertising; running seminars; videos; help with translation.

10. Conclusion

Encouraging Signs?

The Survey found that nearly two thirds of organisations involved black people, either as paid members of staff, as volunteers, or as volunteer management committee members. This is a higher figure than was found in the CRE/SCVO Survey in 1988 and can perhaps be taken as a sign that voluntary organisations are becoming more responsive to the needs of black and ethnic minority communities. However, a word of caution. The Survey found that the extent of black involvement was low, with black people making up only about three per cent of the total number of volunteers.

The Survey is 'encouraging' in another respect. Sixty four out of 70 per cent of agencies in the sample had an Equal Opportunities Policy, and there was supporting evidence in the answers that most of these agencies were trying to make the policy work.

Indeed looking at the 27 agencies without a policy, 11 said they were taking steps to produce one, and several of these gave suggestions for increasing the involvement of black people as volunteers and paid staff.

The agencies with little to say on the subject, and stating in effect "its not really an issue" were around 15 per cent of the sample. We can gauge the flavour of their replies:

"There are hardly any black people in this area..."

"They don't come forward..."

"We're open to all but we don't see them..."

"Perhaps the Coalition would please tell us where the black people in ... are, we don't know."

"Favouring one section of the community will discriminate against other sections."

Two organisations, which said they were open to all, made the point that volunteers were elected quite strictly by abilities and qualification. Too great an emphasis on formal qualifications may in itself act as a bar to participation by some sections of the community.

Attitude and Awareness

The handful of agencies that said that EOP was not really relevant were perhaps a little smug...there were no black people in their area, therefore it was not an issue. The sociologists call this the "colour blind" phenomenon.¹⁶ Clearly there is much work to do to open their eyes.

But there is another kind of smugness. One agency which showed that it had an excellent EOP policy and was recruiting "half of its staff and volunteers as black," said everything was fine and they didn't need any more help or advice. Black involvement, like white involvement, is an ongoing process which **always needs developing.**

References

- ¹ Quoted in *The Guardian*, Law Report 6 April, 1990.
- ² MORI, *Voluntary Activity: A Survey of Public Attitudes*, Voluntary Action Research, Paper No. 1, The Volunteer Centre UK, 1990.
- ³ Julia Field and Barry Hedges, *A National Survey of Volunteering*, Social and Community Planning Research, 1984.
- ⁴ *Black People and Volunteering*, Black Perspectives in Volunteering Group and ADVANCE, 1988.
- ⁵ Liverpool University, *Voluntary Organisations and the Black Community in Liverpool*, Liverpool University, 1990.
- ⁶ Community Development Foundation and National Consumer Council, *Minority Ethnic Communities and School Governing Bodies*, CDF/NCC, 1990.
- ⁷ Lucy MacLeod, *Irrespective of Race, Colour or Creed? Voluntary Organisations and Ethnic Minority Groups in Scotland*, CRE/SCVO, 1988.
- ⁸ *Ibid*, page 39.
- ⁹ See S. Hatch, *Outside the State, Voluntary Organisations in Three Towns*, Croom Helm, 1980. Although ten years old this is still the best discussion of the issues involved in classification.
- ¹⁰ MORI, *Voluntary Activity: A Survey of Public Attitudes*, Voluntary Action Research, Paper No. 1, The Volunteer Centre UK, 1990.
- ¹¹ See David Obaze, 'Black People and Volunteering', in Hedley, R., and Davis Smith, J. (eds) *Volunteering and Society*, Bedford Square Press, 1991.
- ¹² For a review of EOC studies see, J. Owusu-Bempah, 'The New Institutional Racism', *Community Care*, 14 September 1989.
- ¹³ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁴ Lucy MacLeod, *Irrespective of Race, Colour or Creed? CRE/SCVO*, 1988.
- ¹⁵ CIPFA, *Local Authority Comparative Statistics, 1988*, CIPFA, 1990.
- ¹⁶ D. Bronley and C.F. Longino, (eds), *White Racism and Black Americans* Schenkman. Cam. Mass, 1972. An early but thorough study, and still, alas, very relevant.

Appendix 1

Organisations Taking Part in the Survey*

Abbeyfield Bristol Society Ltd
 Abbeyfield Great Wall Housing Society Ltd
 Abbeyfield Mangrove Society Ltd
 Adult Basic Education Service Northants
 Age Concern Bexley
 Age Concern Blackburn
 Age Concern Camden
 Age Concern Cheshire
 Age Concern Clacton
 Age Concern Colchester
 Age Concern Essex
 Age Concern South Lakeland
 Age Concern Maldon
 Age Concern Manchester
 Age Concern Newcastle
 Age Concern Plymouth
 Age Concern Thameside
 Age Concern Thamesdown
 Baldock and Letchworth Home Start
 Barnardos Harrogate
 Barnardos Scotch House
 Barnardos
 Barnardos Family Link
 Birmingham Victim Support Scheme
 British Dyslexia Association
 British Red Cross Cumbria
 British Red Cross Ross and Cromarty
 British Red Cross Northumbria
 British Red Cross Reading
 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (Cornwall)
 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
 Cambridge Home Start
 Cardiff Women's Aid
 Cardiff City Farm Trust
 Cheltenham Victim Support Scheme
 Chest Heart and Stroke Association Volunteer Stroke Scheme
 Chorley Gateway Club
 Citizen's Advice Scotland
 Community Service Volunteers
 Devon National Trust
 East Newcastle Victim Support
 Employment Initiatives Unit
 Greater London CAB Service
 Home Start Charnwood
 Homes for Homeless People
 Homestart Havant
 Imperial Cancer Research Fund
 League of Friends Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre

Leighton Linlade Home Start
Manchester Council for Voluntary Service
Manchester MIND
Manchester Rape Crisis Centre
Marie Curie Edenhall Hospital Hospice
MIND Blackpool
National Deaf Children's Society
National Eczema Society
National Library for the Blind
National Schizophrenia Fellowship
National Trust
Newport MIND
Norcare
Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust
Oxfam
Oxford Cyrenian Community
Phobic Action Waltham Forest
Ramblers Association Manchester
REACH
Redbridge Victim Support Scheme
Rochdale Victim Support Scheme
Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Save the Children Scotland
Scottish Council for Disability
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Scottish Society of Mentally Handicapped
Society of Voluntary Associates
South Essex Rape Crisis and Incest Line
South Riverside Community Development Centre
St John Ambulance
Stockport Victim Support Scheme
Urostomy Association
Victim Support Scotland
Victim Support Somerset
Voluntary Community Service
Volunteer Centre Kirkcaldy
Welsh Women's Aid
Wigan and Leigh Pensioners Link
Women's Health and Information Mobile
Women's Royal Voluntary Service
Women's Voluntary Service Lancashire
Wythenshawe Victim Support Scheme
Youthlink

* People completing questionnaires in some cases abbreviated the title of their organisations, or used a short-hand form. The list is based on replies given.

Appendix 2

Useful Addresses for Further Information

The Resource Unit to Promote Black Volunteering and the
National Coalition for Black Volunteering
Unit 119 , Brixton Enterprise Centre
Bon Marche Building
444 Brixton Road
London W8 8EJ

Organisation Development Unit for Black and Ethnic Minorities
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
26 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3HU

Equal Opportunities Commission
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester M3 3HN

Commission for Racial Equality
Elliot House
10/12 Allington Street
London SW1E 5EH

The Volunteer Centre UK
29 Lower King's Road
Berkhamsted
Herts HP4 2AB

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