We have based our response on our work at grass roots level with women and girls form the Sikh community in Edinburgh and also some women from wider ethnic groups who have accessed our services over the past 25 years.

**Employment support and advice**—

- **what provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minorities to access employment support and advice;**

  There are no measures being taken at present that are visible from the services that are within schools. There needs to be more cultural awareness delivered to the learning and the wider community to raise knowledge of the issues of young people from the Sikh Community. Ethnic Minority young people should have the same opportunities with careers advice in school as their peers.

- **what provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others;**

- **Are there any innovative approaches being taken to address the challenges some people from ethnic minorities may experience in trying to access employment advice and support?**

**Recruitment, retention and promotion**—

- **what evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish workplaces;**

- **What are the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation)?**

  - Girls from the Sikh community may not get the same opportunity as their peers as they may not be allowed to go onto further education or employment. Many young people are not allowed to gain access to further education due to cultural restrictions. For some sections of this community only certain jobs are allowed to be accessed such as beauty and childcare, this is because many parents don’t want their girls mixing with men.

- **Promoting positive action**—

  - **what measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation;**

  - **is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers (a “double tick” scheme for example);**
what are the examples of good practice that have improved outcomes, and if so what has been the key to their success?

Training, Employment and Volunteering - Sikh Sanjog has worked in collaboration with others and have facilitated employment opportunities for individuals from the community who took part in our training and development plans. We have built a system that includes essential work-related skills, techniques and knowledge, taking a positive progressive approach to developing good practitioners. We focused on enabling learning and development for people as individuals - extending the range of development beyond traditional work skills and knowledge. This has created an exciting, liberating and motivational opportunity - for both the young people and for potential employers. We have delivered action learning sets, project working, personal and organisational performance and self-directed learning.

Sikh Sanjog are now developing a strategic plan for its youth provision programme. In light of the success of the collaboration with the Royal High School in Edinburgh together, we aim to pioneer a curriculum movement that ensures inclusion and high achievement for all, developing awareness and opportunities to create a positive start in the transitional period of young lives across Scotland.

In a more general response we would like to add the following statement.

Under-achievement and poorer outcomes are not specific to the Sikh community in Leith, and should not be defined as issues or consequences of "ethnicity" or "race". One is generally referring to under-achievement and unhappiness experienced by women and girls living and being raised in any environment where their voices and aspirations are not listened to, and where to be seen as assertive is regarded as an undesirable characteristic. These environments engender a fear and unwillingness to interact directly with males, and to defer at all times to males, or to elders. This inevitably results in loss of confidence, and it gives no opportunity to develop skills required to survive in the wider world and in the workplace.

Such a holding back of the advancement of women is, in this day and age, an infringement of human rights and as such resources should be put in to supporting girls from the outset, in their school environments and in their families. Examples of where resource could be placed are in assertiveness training, building confidence in girls to challenge the status quo, mentoring girls to understand that they have human rights, and working with individual families to help them understand that entrenched attitudes have a very negative impact.

Ultimately, it is grass roots change by individuals which effects real progress. Lumping the challenges under the heading of "ethnicity" and "race" are outmoded and irrelevant."

Trishna Singh OBE
Director
Sikh Sanjog and Punjabi Junction Social Enterprise Project
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