



## Community Action Researchers and Reporters

A case study highlighting the work already being done by community groups in Nottingham to tackle heart health in Black and Minority Ethnic communities

June 2011



Bright Ideas (the Nottingham organisation behind the Hearts & Minds Conference) and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) East Midlands (the region's leading voluntary sector provider of adult learning) have been training local people from the city's black and minority ethnic communities to become 'community action researchers and reporters'.

The aim of the training is to give local people the skills and experience they need to really make a difference in their communities, whilst gaining a greater insight into community views on issues such as heart health.

Ten people are on the training course at present, which is called 'Get On Up: Community Action Researchers and Reporters Programme'.

The course has involved local people working alongside Bright Ideas staff, so they can learn how to engage with local people and find out about the issues that affect them.

### **Lisa Robinson from Bright Ideas explains:**

"Because our community researchers and reporters are local people and already well known in their communities, they are ideally placed to communicate with those communities. People often feel more comfortable talking to other community members, rather than talking to organisations or 'professionals' – especially when it comes to personal issues such as heart health.

As a result of the course, our community researchers and reporters have given us an amazing insight into how heart health is viewed in different ethnic communities in the city. For example, they've helped us find out what barriers people face when trying to access health information or health services together with what would motivate people to do more to look after their hearts."

The community researchers and reporters meet every Wednesday and Thursday at the John Folman Business Centre on Hungerhill Road in St Ann's as well as working in the community.

To tackle the issue of heart health in their communities, the community researchers and reporters developed and conducted their own community research survey.

They will be presenting the results of that survey at the Hearts & Minds Conference on the 30th June, to leading decision makers and service providers including Chris Packham, Nottingham's Director of Public Health at NHS Nottingham City and Ali Orhan, Project Manager – BME Communities at the British Heart Foundation.

By doing so, they will ensure that local people's views and experiences are not only heard, but that they will influence and help shape the way that heart health is dealt with in Nottingham in the future.

### **Shazia Khan from Bright Ideas and the 'Get On Up' programme co-ordinator says:**

"I'm really excited to be part of such a vibrant group of individuals who are passionate about making changes in their communities. It's a privilege to be accompanying the community researchers and reporters to the conference to share the great work they've been doing with other local people and service providers like NHS Nottingham City."

## **Mel Lenehan, Regional Learning Manager for the WEA East Midlands says:**

“It’s really important to the WEA to ensure that we continue to make our courses relevant to all sections of the community. The ‘Get On Up’ project is just one of the ways that we respond to community need, by putting on courses that diverse communities can benefit from. Tackling inequalities in areas such as heart health is everyone’s business and it’s good to see that this course relates to a very real and pressing issue affecting black and minority ethnic communities here in Nottingham. I very much look forward to seeing the community researchers and reporters presentation on the 30th June.”

As well as helping tackle heart health in Nottingham’s Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, the ‘Get On Up’ course has also benefited the participants individually. For example, it’s helped people back into work or further education and training, plus it’s helped them to make new friends and develop new interests.

## **Community researcher and reporter Danielle Laeky says:**

“The project has given me the confidence to create change in my community.”

## **Fellow researchers and reporters also have lots to say about the training:**

“It’s been great to meet lots of new people and to learn about different subjects like intercultural working skills.”

Bushrah Malik

“It’s been a real revelation being a part of this group. I live alone and it’s brought me out of myself and given me a new sense of freedom.”

Tony Delamotta

“After today’s session from Anna from Change Makers I am more aware of my health than before. I used to think heart health matters were for old people and overweight people! Now I know more about what I need to do to look after myself.”

Parveen Begum

“I now have more information on how to get involved in the NHS. This course also gives you more confidence and new skills and support with exploring work opportunities.”

Shamim Akhtar

“After coming to Bright Ideas and the WEA I am getting more aware about all the volunteering opportunities that are out there.”

Kiran Sahlta

“I just like what Bright Ideas and the Community Action Researchers and Reporters course stands for – the positivity of it all.”

Somia Mir

Bright Ideas and the WEA East Midlands will continue to train people as community researchers and reporters in the future so watch this space for more!

*The course is being funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government’s Tackling Race Inequalities Fund.*

**To find out more about the work being done by the community researchers and reporters on heart health, or for more details about the course itself, please call Shazia Khan from Bright Ideas on 0115 837 9474 or email [shazia@brightideasnottingham.co.uk](mailto:shazia@brightideasnottingham.co.uk)**