

Why do ethnic minorities volunteer?

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Why do ethnic minority women volunteer?

- Ethnic communities are crucial to the development of their migrant members – collectivist societies
 - Less likely to access mainstream statutory services due to cultural/ religious beliefs
 - Small scale project interviewing 9 formal community workers from ethnic community organisations
 - Look at challenges faced by minority women when accessing services
 - Consider how voluntary organisations are culturally adapted
 - Experiences of working in the community
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Ethnic minority women and the community sector

- ▶ Ethnic members have experience and knowledge which helps build community organisations – specifically helping disadvantaged women to share best practice.
- ▶ Increasing their awareness and creating changes through their local communities
 - ▶ Increase employability
 - ▶ Increase in opportunities that add value
 - ▶ Empower women i.e leadership roles
 - ▶ Challenge stereotypes



Findings: Accessing mainstream services

- Women tended to have lower status roles in the community which were more informal compared to men, who were key people in their communities – unequal dynamics.
- Immigrant women found it harder to become active citizens in the mainstream due to family roles, language barriers and lack of education and literacy.
- Suspicious attitudes towards mainstream services: fear that their culture will not be understood
- Lack of culturally sensitive treatment
- Fear of disapproval of their way of life, or being influenced to change their religious/cultural beliefs



Findings: Working in the community

- ▶ Low Barriers to Working in the Community – migrant women specifically
 - ▶ Lower qualifications
 - ▶ Cultural similarities
 - ▶ Literacy/language barriers
- ▶ Voluntary work adhered to women's religious beliefs
- ▶ Experience of working in the community was significant
 - ▶ Desire to help others
 - ▶ Virtues such as justice, humanity were strengthened
 - ▶ Enjoyment and feeling good about their work



Importance of community engagement

- ▶ Knowledge enhanced when actively involved with community
- ▶ Women were more engaged, developed interests outside
- ▶ Gave them motivation to continue
- ▶ Women realised the need for activism
- ▶ Community workers adapted projects to include cultural and religious practices. This can include working around religious holidays.
- ▶ Women collaborated with the elder community members to ensure that their work adhered to cultural values
- ▶ Minority women view themselves as members of a community whereby family and community are central.



Next steps..

- ▶ To facilitate the development of new skills within the minority women to enable them to take on community leadership roles
- ▶ To enable groups of participants to work together to put their learning into practice:
 - ▶ Assessing local needs
 - ▶ Identifying the differences between women - age/ generation
 - ▶ Completing social action projects in their local communities
 - ▶ To become more active and aware 'citizens' through 'learning by doing'