

# Ethnic Minority Women and Access to the Labour Market in Somerset

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## Foreword

### Gender Equality

Somerset County Council has worked in close partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, and eleven other local authorities over the last three years to take part in the national *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets Programme* (GELLM).

In taking part, Somerset County Council has committed to disseminate and implement the research findings by engaging with key stakeholders at significant stages of the project. The findings will form a critical part of the way Somerset County Council understands the impact of its services and partnership working on Somerset's diverse communities. Each and every County Council service is responsible for delivering gender equality in their Service Plans.

Through active participation in this research project, Somerset County Council is well prepared for its new legal responsibility for implementing the 'Gender Duty' requirements of the Equality Act 2006 in all key service areas, and to effectively address gender inequality throughout the county.

**Alan Jones**  
Chief Executive

**Chris Bilsland**  
Corporate Equalities Champion

**Cllr Sam Crabb**  
Member Champion for Equalities



# Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Ann Copsey at Somerset County Council, Rukia Khan, Lata Walter, staff at Somerset County Council Adult Learning and Leisure and Somerset Race Equality Council (SREC) and Ali Chapman (community artist) for their support and contributions to this study.

We are also very grateful to the women who took part in the arts workshops, who cannot be named for reasons of confidentiality, and to the local organisations which provided additional documentary evidence for the study.

**We would like to give special thanks to Ali Chapman, the community artist, who sadly died in May 2006. Ali gave much to the project and contributed her time and energy way beyond the brief and contract we gave her. She brought real quality and integrity to her work and to us as a team.**

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## Key findings

This study has explored the situation of ethnic minority women in Somerset - particularly those who are resident in Mendip, South Somerset and Taunton Deane - in relation to their access to the labour market.

The study has used a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, and has built on other research. This report presents its findings, noting that:

- A range of national policy initiatives have been developed to tackle the inequalities faced by ethnic minorities in relation to education, training and employment. These include *Aimhigher*; the work of the *Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force* and the *Ethnic Minority Outreach scheme*; and the *Fair Cities Programme*.

In the South West region and in Somerset, a number of strategies, policies and initiatives focus on increasing the number of women, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups in education, training and employment. These tackle barriers in accessing skills, affordable childcare and transport, all important issues affecting access to paid employment.

Detailed analysis of the 2001 Census reveals that:

- Somerset has a small but growing ethnic minority population, almost half of which is included in the 'White Other' category.
- Rates of full-time employment for women were similar across the different groups of women studied, but in most parts of the county Chinese and White and Asian women were significantly less likely than White British women to have part-time jobs.
- Among economically active women, rates of unemployment were significantly higher for the groups of ethnic minority women studied than for White British women.

The study's arts-based workshops with a small but diverse group of first and second generation migrant women show that ethnic minority women's disadvantage can be related to the following factors:

- migration history
- language, qualifications, skills and experience

- aspirations and confidence
- infrastructure of the local area
- limited range of job opportunities
- cultural/family expectations/circumstances
- discrimination and racism

The workshops could not explore the views of all ethnic minority women in the area (and should not be taken as a basis for generalisation). However they gave voice to many issues important to those involved, and identified a number of key issues.

## Introduction

This report presents research undertaken as part of the *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets* (GELLM) research programme (Appendix 1). Parallel local research studies on women in ethnic minority communities have also been conducted in four other English local authorities (Newcastle, Leicester, Camden, and Southwark), and these are reported separately. A synthesis report of the findings from all five areas is also available (Stiell et al 2006). The *Gender Profile of Somerset's Labour Market* (Buckner et al 2004) provides the additional county-wide statistical evidence and context for the study. This study is one of three local research studies relating to Somerset; the others are also available as separate reports (Escott et al 2006; Yeandle et al 2006). This study aimed to:

- Research the skills, achievements and aspirations of ethnic minority women in selected localities.
- Investigate mismatches between skills and employment opportunities.
- Identify the support needs of ethnic minority women which need to be met if they are to overcome barriers in accessing the labour market or progressing within it.
- Provide opportunities for empowering and confidence-building activities for women from ethnic minority groups.
- Make recommendations about ways of supporting ethnic minority women in entering /progressing in the labour market.



The study included:

- Detailed analysis of 2001 Census data for ethnic minority women living in Somerset, and comparisons with England as a whole.
- A review of existing local information and data on these issues.
- Qualitative evidence gathered during innovative arts-based workshops with a diverse group of first and second generation migrant women living locally.

The workshops were developed in close collaboration with local authority officers and a community artist.

The study explores differences in labour market patterns and experiences for ethnic minority women in selected Somerset districts (the numbers of ethnic minority women are too small to allow for ward level analysis in Somerset). The study was chosen by Somerset County Council because there was limited existing research on this topic in a predominantly White, rural county.

This report, which relates specifically to Somerset, outlines the national and local policy background in this field as it affects statutory and voluntary sector organisations, and highlights the main findings from the research.

## **Ethnic minority women and the labour market: national and local policy developments**

### ***National policy***

Across England there are complex variations in levels of labour market participation and achievement among men and women from ethnic minority groups. Although a high proportion of people from ethnic minority groups enter post-16 education and training, many face barriers to learning, gaining qualifications, and finding and progressing within employment (PIU 2002; Barnes et al 2005; TUC, 2006). Muslim women - mainly those from Pakistan and Bangladesh - have the highest rates of economic inactivity and unemployment, and suffer the greatest employment penalty of any ethnic group (Twomey 2001; Lindley et al 2004; Berthoud and Blekesaune 2006). Whilst differences between first and subsequent generations of Muslim women have been identified (Dale et al 2002),

the employment rates of female Muslim graduates still lag far behind those of their male counterparts, and of other female graduates (Steer 2005).

The labour market disadvantage of ethnic minority groups is a major policy concern for government, and has resulted in a number of national policy initiatives relating to education, skills, training, employment and social inclusion, including:

- The *Aimhigher* initiatives, which seek to increase the higher education participation rates of under-represented groups by raising the aspirations and motivation of young people.<sup>1</sup>
- The *Learning and Skills Council's* equality and diversity strategy, which includes initiatives aimed at ethnic minority learners and staff (Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant; Adult Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant; Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities; Black Leadership Initiative) (LSC 2004, 2005).
- The *Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force*, set up to deliver the recommendations of the 2003 Strategy Unit report, *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market*.<sup>2</sup> The Task Force focuses on: *building employability*, to improve education and skills; *connecting people to work* in the most disadvantaged areas with limited support services; and *equal opportunities in the workplace*, to tackle employer discrimination. Its strategy highlights the importance of English language skills, noting that three-quarters of Bangladeshi women aged over 25 are unable to speak English fluently, and the need to better understand the demand for ESOL<sup>3</sup> training (EMETF 2004:27).
- The Department for Work and Pensions' *Ethnic Minority Outreach* (EMO) schemes, which report to the *Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force* and operate through Jobcentre Plus, working through private and voluntary sector organisations to attract job seekers into the mainstream labour market. The EMO schemes have been successful in increasing ethnic minorities' awareness of employment and training opportunities, especially among Indian and Pakistani

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<sup>1</sup> [www.aimhigher.ac.uk](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [www.emetaskforce.gov.uk/summary.asp](http://www.emetaskforce.gov.uk/summary.asp)

<sup>3</sup> English as a Second Language.

women, where the language and outreach skills of EMO staff have been crucial in reaching these groups (Barnes et al 2005).

- o The employer-led *Fair Cities Programme*, which highlights the barriers to employment often faced by ethnic minorities in urban areas, including: low levels of basic and workplace skills; their disproportionate concentration in localities with poor employment opportunities; and the relatively weak social networks available to help people from ethnic minority groups gain access to employment<sup>4</sup>.

Refugees are now among the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market (Bloch 2002; Barnes et al 2005). The causes of their flight, their first language literacy skills and English fluency, as well as their country of origin, education, age, social class, household composition, cultural norms and religious beliefs vary greatly, and are key determinants of their economic activity, with important variations by gender (Bloch 2004; Kirk 2004). The removal of asylum seekers' employment concessions in July 2002 further reduced their employment prospects.

Gypsies and Travellers are also an officially recognised ethnic minority group who experience high levels of unemployment and discrimination, yet few initiatives or schemes have been set up to specifically tackle this. The Commission for Racial Equality is attempting to address these issues through its strategy.<sup>5</sup>

Following the disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in 2001, the *Community Cohesion* strategy rose up the national government agenda and has become a key priority for local government delivery. Its focus is on making communities safer and stronger, through local partnerships and engagement with communities and faith groups. Critics of the cohesion agenda point to a lack of clarity in the use and meaning of the term, however, and a tendency to overlook issues of racial inequality. The Home Office's *ChangeUp* framework for capacity building in the voluntary and community sector (VCS) also aims to mainstream diversity issues for rural areas, women and ethnic minorities.

Most policy developments relating to ethnic minority issues have focused on communities in

urban areas. Policy initiatives such as Defra's *Rural Strategy 2004*, for example, make few links to the issues facing ethnic minorities, although Defra's strategy acknowledges the existence of racism, and that some areas have benefited from the *Rural Racism* project and *Race Equality Grant* funding. The focus of Defra's 2005 *Diversity Review* is on encouraging under-represented groups to visit the countryside, rather than tackling the issues faced by those living there<sup>6</sup>.

Defra's *Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Social Inclusion* initiatives and the new *Rural Social and Community Programme* are intended to change the way the rural voluntary sector and the government work together to tackle social exclusion, for example by supporting local transport schemes, which may benefit diverse groups. It falls to the new *Commission for Rural Communities (CRC)*, however, to act as an independent watchdog, monitoring and reporting on the delivery of government policies at all levels, with a focus on the needs of disadvantaged groups. How much consideration will be given to the specific needs of different ethnic groups through these initiatives, particularly in education, transport and employment, remains to be seen.

These developments at national level have occurred in the context of over 30 years of equalities legislation, including the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975*, the *Race Relations Act 1975* (and its subsequent amendments), and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*. The recent enactment of the *Equality Act 2006* will in 2007 establish a *Commission for Equality and Human Rights* and a new duty requiring public bodies to promote gender equality. This will require service providers and public sector employers to design their employment and services to meet the needs of different groups of women and men, and to take action to meet equality goals in consultation with their service users and employees.

The *Women and Work Commission* has recently reported on its investigations<sup>7</sup>, although some feel more emphasis could have been given to the situation of ethnic minority women<sup>8</sup>. The *Equal Opportunities Commission* is currently undertaking an investigation into the participation,

<sup>4</sup> [www.nationalemploymentpanel.gov.uk](http://www.nationalemploymentpanel.gov.uk).

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.cre.gov.uk/policy/gypsies\\_and\\_travellers.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/policy/gypsies_and_travellers.html)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/strategy/rural\\_strategy\\_2004.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/strategy/rural_strategy_2004.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/publications/](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/publications/)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.blackbritain.co.uk/news/>

pay and progression of ethnic minority women, which may help raise the profile of these issues<sup>9</sup>.

### **Strategies and policy responses in Somerset and the South West region**

At the local and regional level, local authorities and partner agencies have developed many of their key policies and initiatives to be generally inclusive of, or targeted at, the needs of their diverse residents (including ethnic minorities and women). These include the following linked strategies and schemes:

- *Somerset County Council's Equalities Scheme and Corporate Equalities Plan 2005-2008*, which aims to improve the representation of ethnic minorities and disabled employees, women and men at all levels and in all occupational areas.
- *Somerset Equalities Vision and Community Cohesion Strategy, 2004-2014*, which sets out the aims, long-term outcomes and measures for the Strategic Partnership, including equalities data sharing protocols<sup>10</sup>.
- *Somerset Strategic Partnership's Vision and Community Strategy*, which includes actions and targets relating to ethnic minorities and women.
- The *Economic Strategy for Somerset*, which highlights a number of equality-based actions.
- The *Somerset Crime Reduction and Drug Strategy 2005-08*, which includes objectives to address high levels of harassment/racial incidents (including in the workplace) and to develop staff training within local agencies<sup>11</sup>.
- *Somerset Learning and Skills Council's Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMS)*, which are monitoring a range of targets<sup>12</sup>.
- *The Monitoring Group's Rural Racism Project*, which is addressing growing levels of racist violence and harassment in counties in the South West.

The *South West Regional Development Agency's Race Equality Scheme (Draft May 2005)*, supports its 10 year *Regional Economic Strategy*, and aims to identify relevant functions and policies, and to conduct impact assessments. Its '*Constructive Somerset*' project, for example, aims to ensure that the construction industry provides opportunities to encourage more women and ethnic minorities to begin careers in the industry<sup>13</sup>.

Other local partnership initiatives include ViSTA's (Somerset Voluntary Sector Network)

development of a *Somerset Black Development Agency (SBDA)*, which includes 19 ethnic minority community groups in Somerset. Its activities include: information, advice and guidance; skills development training; mentoring opportunities for SBDA members; and resources and support to establish a communication and networking facility. The *Work Based Learning* project (a collaborative venture led by Avon Vale Training, in partnership with Yeovil College and Accountancy Plus Training), is supported by Connexions Somerset and Somerset Racial Equality Council. This offers 'taster days' where young ethnic minority adults can learn more about different careers through interactive, hands-on activities, as well as visits to local employers.

Despite these developments, a recent research review on diversity issues in the countryside concluded that there is a significant discrepancy between the aspirations of policy makers and the reality of implementation for these groups at a local level, reflecting '*a deep-rooted lack of operational coordination in cross-cutting agendas*'. The review maintained that these agendas are rarely effectively embedded beyond the influence of a committed manager, department or project (CA 2005). Recognising, addressing and mainstreaming diversity is challenging in urban areas, but even more problematic in rural localities. Evidence about the impacts and outcomes for local ethnic minority women is outlined later in the report.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.eoc.org.uk>

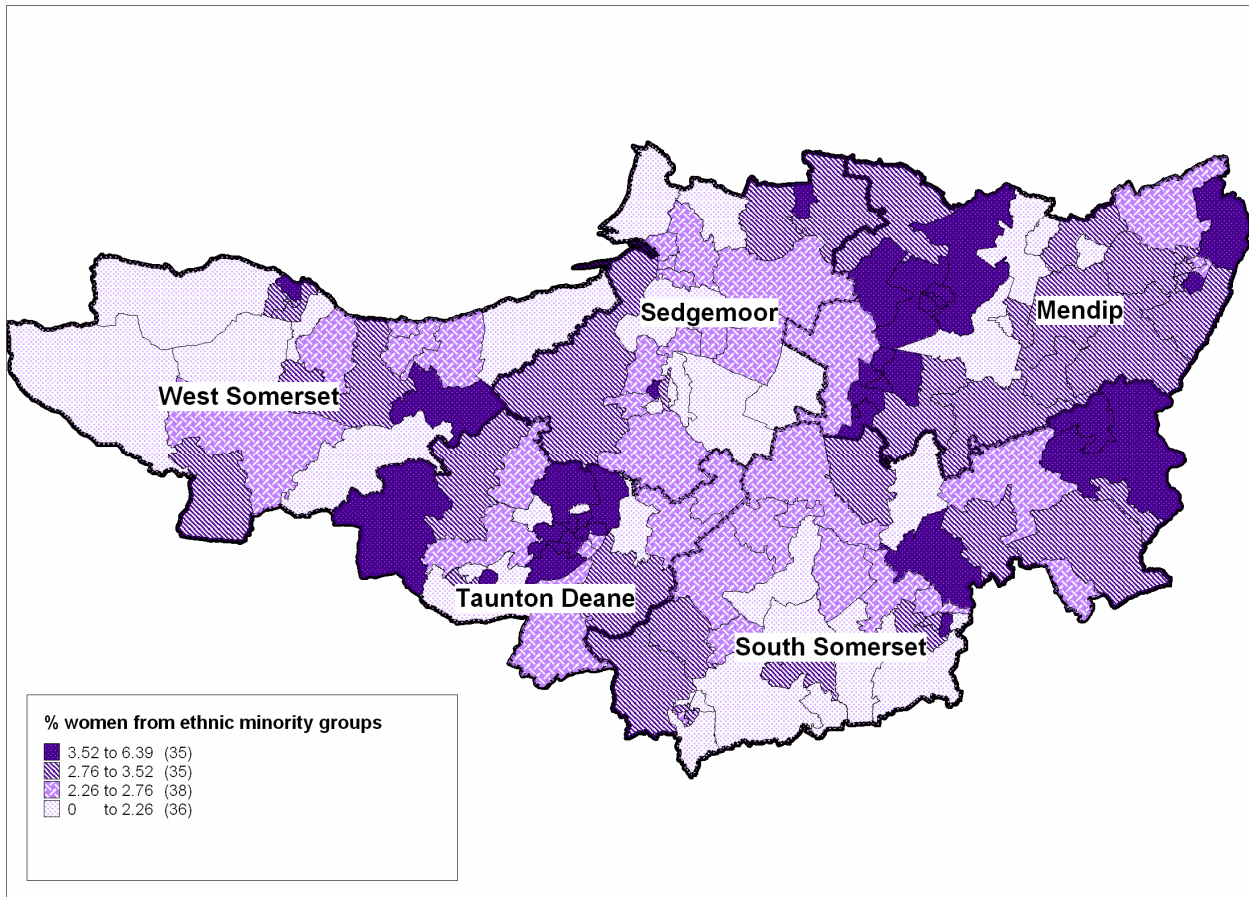
<sup>10</sup> <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/somerset/Corporate/default.htm>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/>

**Figure 1 Distribution of ethnic minority women (non-White British) in Somerset's wards (2001)**



Source: 2001 Census Areas Statistics Theme Tables, Crown Copyright 2003, 2001 Census Output Areas, Crown Copyright 2003. This work is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is Copyright of the Crown.

## Ethnic minority women in Somerset

### Ethnicity in Somerset

Because the Census of Population provides the most reliable source of information on ethnicity and the labour market, we begin this part of the report with a summary of the data about Somerset's ethnic minority women, as reported in the 2001 Census.

In 2001, Somerset's residents included just over 248,000 White British women and girls, and fewer than 8,000 women and girls from other ethnic groups. The latter included:

- about 3,400 women and girls from the 'White Other' group
- almost 1,400 White Irish women and girls
- about 1200 women and girls of Mixed ethnic background : White and Asian (425), White and

Black Caribbean (331), White and Black African (133) and 'Other Mixed' (310)

- about 600 women and girls of Indian (269), Bangladeshi (164), Pakistani (110) and other Asian (95) backgrounds
- about 460 Chinese women and girls
- almost 370 Black women and girls (161 Black African, 164 Black Caribbean and 42 Other Black)
- about 340 women and girls from other ethnic groups

Taken together, the three Somerset districts which have been the focus of our analysis (Mendip, South Somerset and Taunton Deane) had just over 183,000 female residents, including small numbers of women from most of the ethnic groups mentioned above. Appendix 3 to this report contains further detail about women and the labour market in these districts for those ethnic groups where numbers are sufficiently large to justify statistical presentation. The figures presented in Appendix 3 thus draw on data for

female residents in the three Somerset districts as follows:

- All women and girls (183,408, given as a reference point)
- White British (177,503 women and girls)
- White Other (2,677 women and girls)
- White and Asian (322 women and girls)
- Chinese (385 women and girls)

In all other ethnic groups the total female population across the three districts was less than 150, and in some cases very small (e.g. Mendip had only 6 females of Pakistani origin in 2001) (Figure A1).

Compared with the South West and England as a whole, Somerset has a very small ethnic minority population: 2.8% of men and 3% of women are from groups other than White British (Buckner et al, 2004). Although still small, Somerset's ethnic minority population has more than doubled since 1991. Ethnic minority women (14,568 were recorded in the 2001 Census) are dispersed throughout the county, with higher concentrations in particular wards in the Mendip, South Somerset and Taunton Deane districts (Figure 1).

Within the county, the largest ethnic minority group is the 'White Other' group (44% of ethnic minority women in Somerset). This includes Romany Gypsies and Travellers, Turkish Cypriots, people from the former Yugoslavia, and other people of Eastern European origin as well as people from other European countries, South Africa, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The White Irish population represents 18% of Somerset's ethnic minority women. Of the non-White ethnic groups, all of which are very small, the Chinese are the largest, followed by the 'Mixed' groups (e.g. White and Asian and White and Black Caribbean), which are larger than the Indian (the biggest Asian group) and Black Caribbean groups.

The geographical distribution of the county's population of ethnic minority women is shown in Figures 1 and 2. Of all the Somerset districts, **Mendip** has the highest proportion of ethnic minority women, most of them in the 'White Other' (993 women), and White Irish (324 women) groups. **Sedgemoor** and **West Somerset** have the smallest ethnic minority populations.

In **Taunton Deane** (where 3.5% of women are from ethnic minority groups) there are small groups of Chinese (153 women) and White and

Asians (105 women); **Comeytrove** in Taunton Deane (with almost 6% of men and women from ethnic minority groups) has the highest ethnic minority population.

**South Somerset**, with under 3% of women from ethnic minority groups, includes groups of Chinese (142), Other Mixed (106) and White/Asian (102) women.

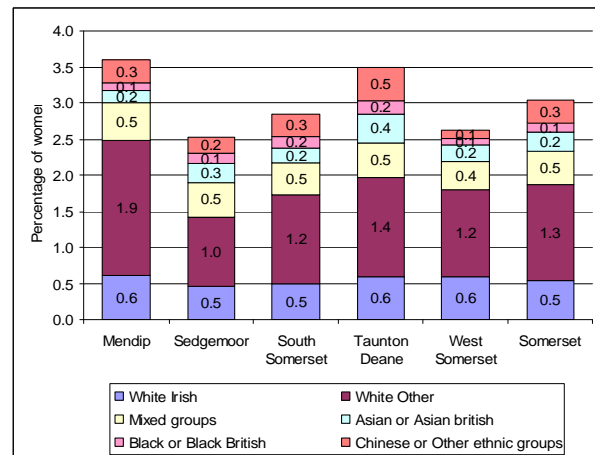
Of the five Districts, Mendip experienced the largest increase in its ethnic minority population between 1991 and 2001. Between these dates, the total population in Mendip increased by 8%, but the very small Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian groups more than doubled in size<sup>14</sup>.

#### Country of birth and age profile

Most (81%) of the 'White Other' group living in Somerset were born abroad, mainly in EU countries, North America and Oceania. These women have a considerably older profile than other female residents, with 32% above retirement age (compared with 20% of White British women in the county). 63% of this group are women of working age.

The White/Asian group in Somerset is predominantly second generation and British-born (73%), with a much younger age profile. 63% of these women are under the age of 25. While only 48% of White/Asians are women of working age (48%), this figure will increase as the population ages.

**Figure 2 Ethnic minority women in Somerset's districts**



Source: Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003. Crown

<sup>14</sup>236%, 231%, and 131% respectively (Williams, 2004).

Nearly three quarters (73%) of the Chinese community are first generation immigrants born in China and the Far East. This group is also relatively young, with 57% under 25, and 76% of working age.

Because 40% of Somerset's White British women were aged over 50 in 2001, this small but growing number of younger women from ethnic minorities is likely to become a more economically significant source of labour in Somerset in the future. More detailed information is provided in Appendix 3.

### ***The employment status of ethnic minority women***

In Somerset just over 30% of all women are in full-time employment. This figure is similar for Chinese and White Other women. Much lower levels of full-time employment are found among Mixed White/Asian women in the Taunton Deane district, however, where only 21% of these women are in full-time employment. White/Asian and Chinese women in Somerset are significantly less likely to work part time than other women (18% and 14% respectively, compared with 27% for all Somerset women) (Figure 3).

Chinese and White/Asian women living in Somerset are much more likely to be students than White women: 31% of Chinese women and 19% of White/Asian women, compared with 5% of all women in the county.

The 'White Other' group of women is slightly more likely to be looking after home and family full time (14%) than White/Asian (10%), Chinese (11%) and White British women (11%) in Somerset.

Although rates of unemployment are low in Somerset compared with the national figures, there are higher rates of unemployment among the county's economically active White/Asian and White Other women (Figure 4).

- In Taunton Deane, 12% of economically active White/Asian women were unemployed, compared with just 3.4% of all economically active women in Somerset.
- In Mendip, 7.8% of economically active women in the 'White Other' group were unemployed.

Chinese women in Somerset have particularly high rates of full-time self-employment (21%), compared with 4% for all women in the county (4%). They are also much more likely to work in

the wholesale, retail, restaurants and hotels sector, and to be employed as managers and senior officials.

The 'White Other' group of women in Somerset work across rather more varied sectors: one in five is employed in each of the education, health/social work, and wholesale, retail, restaurants and hotels sectors. However, this group is less likely to be employed in administrative and secretarial work, or in sales and customer service occupations.

### **Local knowledge of the issues faced by ethnic minority women**

To ensure that our study was also informed by up-to-date local knowledge, requests for information were sent to all local statutory and voluntary sector organisations that provide services for ethnic minority women in Somerset. An internet trawl was also conducted to gather further information.

#### ***The local cultural and public sector context***

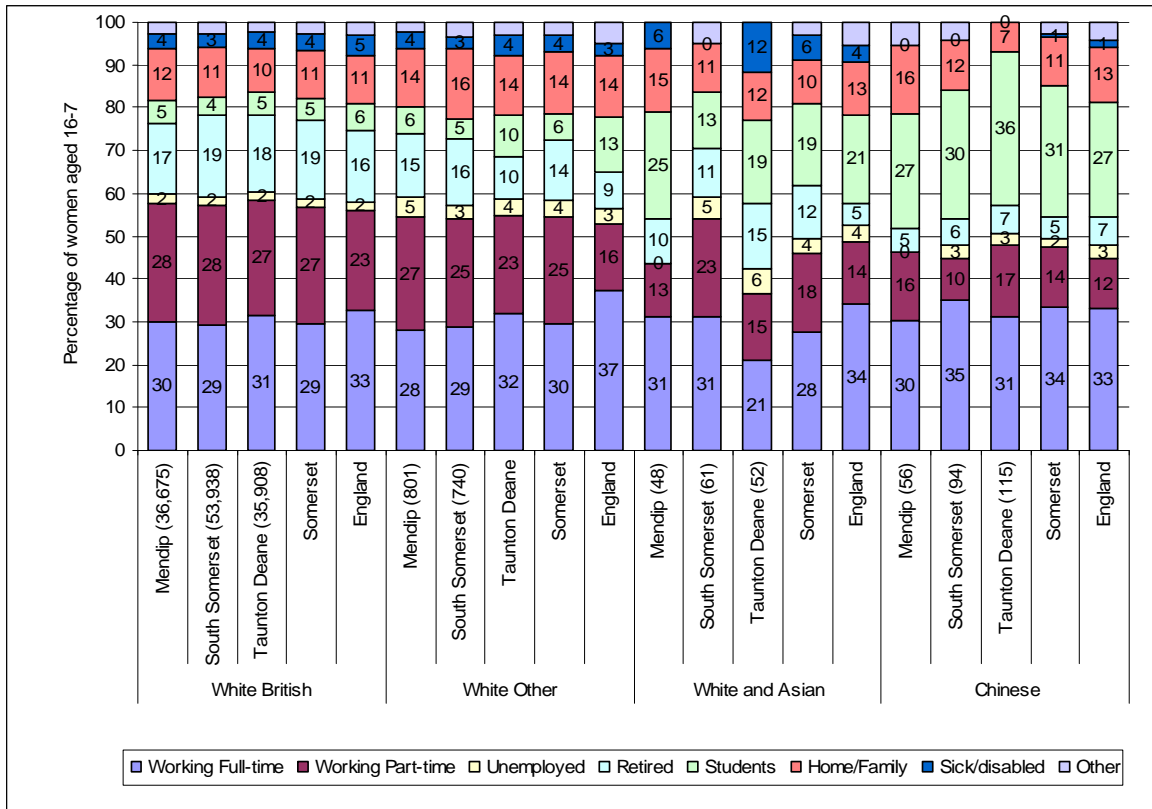
A number of the available reports point out that, despite national policy developments relating to equality, diversity, social inclusion and community cohesion, rural counties like Somerset have been much slower to adopt and embrace these perspectives. This tends to be the case at service delivery levels and for the general public, who may prefer to maintain a 'rural idyll' image of Somerset, denying the existence of social exclusion. Thus other reports note a prevailing view that these issues are urban problems, invisible and irrelevant to local agencies and residents alike (Kenny 1997; SCC 2004a, b).

The Somerset District Councils were assessed at Levels 1 and 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government<sup>15</sup>, although none had carried out an impact assessment in relation to this. Lack of a dedicated budget for equalities means some

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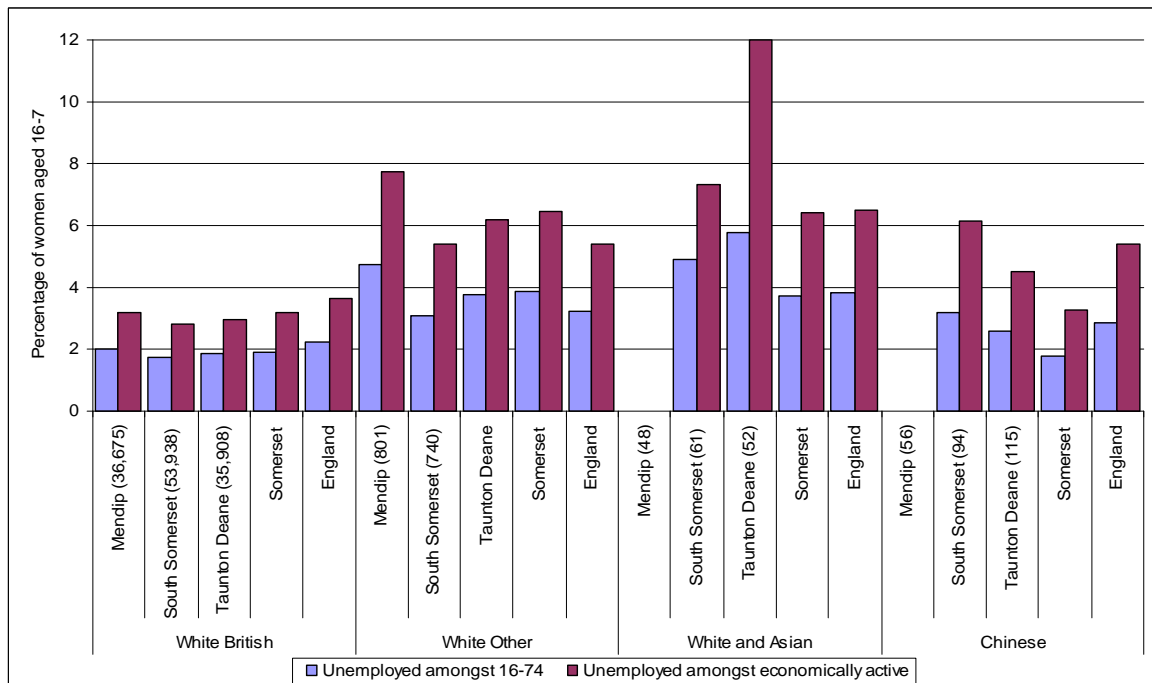
<sup>15</sup> The Equality Standard provides a framework to help the Council provide fair and equal treatment through all the services it provides, and to all its employees. There are 5 different levels to work towards and specific criteria have to be met to move up a level. The 5 levels are:  
Level 1: Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy  
Level 2: Assessment and consultation  
Level 3: Setting equality objectives and targets  
Level 4: Information systems and monitoring against targets  
Level 5: Achieving and reviewing outcomes

**Figure 3 Economic activity status of women aged 16-74 by ethnicity (selected groups)<sup>16</sup>**



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

**Figure 4 Unemployment among economically active women aged 16-74, selected ethnic groups**



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Gender and ethnicity disaggregated ward level data on economic activity rates, are only available for 16-74 year olds, and not for the working age population.

District Councils have no officer in post to drive the corporate agenda (SCC 2004b).

In Somerset attention has nevertheless been drawn to concerns about Portuguese migrant workers, on-going tensions in relation to Gypsies and Travellers, and resistance to Asylum Seekers, Refugees and 'newcomers'. Reports suggest there is little recognition of the cultural exclusion and persistently high levels of harassment and prejudice experienced by people from a range of different backgrounds, including ethnic minorities (SCC 2004a). Basic diversity awareness remains a key priority (CA, July 2005).

Until very recently, there was very little data and information available on ethnic minorities, and even less on ethnic minority women, at a local level. More recently, a number of agencies have begun to address this problem. The LSC, Health Sector, Social Care Services, Libraries and other local services have all begun, in the last 2 years, to collect better information about the county's ethnic minority population.

### ***Migrant workers in the South West***

Many of the European workers arriving in the UK from EU accession countries (after May 2003) are thought to have settled in rural areas and small towns. Since 2004, Poles are thought to account for 58% of the total migrant workers arriving in the South West. Most of this incoming workforce is young, with 88% estimated to be in the 18-34 age group, and 94% having no dependents (TUC SW 2006).

In *Who Makes Up the South West?* the TUC South West noted that these workers are vital to the region's growing economy: as seasonal agricultural workers; student workers (particularly in tourism and hospitality); skilled workers in the public sector (teachers, health workers, etc.); skilled workers in the private sector (IT specialists); and as general labour (in the food and drink, construction and agriculture sectors). Detailed information remains inadequate, but it is thought that many of the new workers in the region are over-qualified and skilled beyond the jobs they are doing, with reports of doctors and teachers doing unskilled work. Agency exploitation, problems with the recognition of non-British qualifications, inadequate advice and guidance, and lack of good English, have all been cited as barriers holding this group back. There is also some evidence that some of these workers are mistreated and denied basic employment

rights. Little is known about the numbers and specific experiences of migrant women workers.

### ***Traveller communities***

Gypsies and Travellers are an important part of the White Other group, and constitute 5% of the South West region's ethnic minority population. This is a highly heterogeneous community with clear sub-groups of Romany, English, Welsh and Scottish Gypsies. There are many complexities in dealing with these communities, where exclusion is not only a reaction to discrimination, but also central to their identity. Very few are employed in the formal labour market, and there are known to be low levels of school attendance and adult literacy, especially amongst women (SWPHO, 2002). Detailed information at the county level was not available.

### ***Somerset's refugees and asylum seekers***

The numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in the South West region are very small, and falling. In January 2006, the number of asylum seekers had fallen to just 1,117. The majority were living outside the county, in Bristol, Plymouth and Swindon. Across Somerset the local authority has run a number of training and employment related projects for this group, operated in partnership with other agencies and voluntary sector organisations. Although projects are aimed at disadvantaged groups, including ethnic minorities and women, no additional information was found about the gender and ethnicity of beneficiaries.

### ***Racism in Somerset***

Somerset County Council has already identified the experience of prejudice, harassment and discrimination as 'the absolute key issue' for ethnic minorities in Somerset, including Gypsies and Travellers (SCC 2004b). A separate national risk assessment showed Somerset ranking 8<sup>th</sup> highest for the number of reported racist incidents in relation to the size of its ethnic minority population (Observer 18.2.01).

A study by Somerset's *Racial Equalities Council* (SREC) found that 78% of the 145 ethnic minority people surveyed had experienced some form of racial discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment over the previous two years. Experiences of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour were common, although many were reluctant to report incidents to the police. Most threatening behaviour and abuse occurred near the home, with other incidents happening in town, at school and at work. Ethnic minority



respondents identified public transport/traffic, criminal damage and racism, and the jobs market as the three things they most disliked in Somerset. In this study, the victims were predominantly male, particularly business owners.

Somerset County Council's *Equalities and Access Assessment* (2004-5) found that despite high profile evidence since the early 1990s<sup>17</sup>, discrimination and racism still need to be acknowledged, addressed and reviewed at a strategic level. The county's small ethnic minority population, and arguments about 'statistical relevance', the lack of data and a 'no problem here' attitude, may explain this weakness, and why some organisations report no race incidents within their service delivery (Dhalech 1999, SCC 2004). As these attitudes are likely to pervade other areas of public life, it can be expected that they will also affect women's access and progression in education and employment.

### **Education**

Although there is some local evidence on ethnic minorities' learning needs, differences between ethnic groups or between men and women are not identified. Somerset's Learning and Skills Council's *Strategic Area Review* and *Annual Plan* 2006-7 gathered data on age, ethnicity and gender, but mostly analysed this separately, producing little information about different groups of ethnic minority women. Nevertheless, it reported that:

- Ethnic minority women are under-represented on some Adult Learning courses, with lower levels of achievement than other students.
- 79% of Adult and Community Learning funded students are female. Only 1.2% are from ethnic minority groups.
- There is a lack of data about the ethnic minority community's access to services, education, training and position in the labour market.
- Among those aged 16-19, 88% of Bangladeshi, 77% of Black African, 58% of Black Caribbean, 66% of Chinese, and 50% of Pakistani young people were in full time education. (No breakdown of this data by gender was given.)
- Although ethnic minority participation in further education is higher among the Chinese, African, and Indian groups, levels of qualification in the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Black Caribbean groups are very low.
- On average, the ethnic minority population is more highly qualified, but less likely to be in employment

and more likely to be unemployed than the White population.

- Few ethnic minority students were choosing Work Based Learning. It was difficult to tell if this was a result of low demand or of barriers to access.

In 2004-05 the Somerset LSC funded 1,172 ESOL<sup>18</sup> learners. Of these, 55% were female (mainly Chinese and Portuguese). The demand for ESOL in the region has risen sharply, particularly with the recent arrival of more Eastern Europeans. There are currently problems in meeting this demand. The LSC estimates that over 2,500 Somerset residents may need ESOL training, many of them already working in care, agriculture, food and drink processing, and hospitality (TUCSW 2006).

The evaluation of Somerset's *Learning Voices project* - an informal learning and skills project for ethnic minority women, particularly those new to the area - found that ESOL learners' lack of confidence in speaking English often stemmed from a fear of being judged, and experiences of hostile and discriminatory attitudes. As a result, many women avoided social situations and few had English friends to converse with. Classes helped overcome isolation, and women gained significant social benefits from the informal learning opportunities. Crèche provision was critical to maintaining attendance. The project was successfully mainstreamed into Somerset County Council's Community Education Service, and is currently active across the county (Chan 2004).

### **Employment**

As shown in the *Gender Profile of Somerset's Labour Market*, by national standards the county has high levels of both full-time and part-time self-employment amongst women (Buckner et al 2004). Women's caring responsibilities, and a lack of childcare, limited public transport, the high cost of private transport, low wages, low confidence and a lack of experience have all been cited as factors contributing to this pattern (Commission for Rural Communities).

- As already indicated, Somerset's Chinese women also have high levels of self-employment. However, while White women who are self-employed in Somerset tend to run part-time rural enterprises, Chinese women are more likely to run town-based businesses.

<sup>17</sup> Sources cited are Jay 1992, Kenny 1997 and Dhalech 1999.

<sup>18</sup> English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Somerset County Council's *Equalities and Access Assessment* (2004) noted that childcare, lone parent issues, the gender pay gap, workplace discrimination, ageism, lack of social networks, and transport difficulties all affected the situation of women in employment. However there was no available data on small ethnic minority businesses. It was also noted that ethnic minorities are under-represented in the public sector, and that UNISON data showed that in 2003, 21 gender discrimination cases (3 race related, and 7 related to part-time work), were brought.

### ***Voluntary sector organisations in Somerset***

A report by the Rural Race Equality project in the South West in the 1990s noted that large sections of Somerset's voluntary sector had not fully recognised race equality issues at a strategic level, although some projects had raised awareness. Rural voluntary sector organisations at that time tended to lack the infrastructure and support mechanisms needed for tackling racism. Furthermore, many Black community agencies operating at national or urban-regional levels had limited understanding of rural issues. This report noted that recommendations based on experiences in urban areas were inappropriate in a rural context (Dhalech 1997). More recent evidence suggests that in rural areas the grassroots infrastructure supporting ethnic minority groups continues to be weak, with minority communities forced to rely on their own resources (Lachman 2004).

More recently, through the Somerset Black Development Agency, and the Somerset Race Equality Council (SREC) some projects have been set up to develop the ethnic minority voluntary infrastructure in Somerset. These focus on improvements in education, training, health, social well-being and the employment prospects of ethnic minority individuals in Somerset.

Apart from SREC, most local ethnic minority community groups receive very little funding from external sources or from local authorities. This limits their capacity to respond to public consultations, and to engage with and monitor services. These organisations thus face major difficulties in meeting local needs, increasing the isolation and 'sense of not belonging' of the groups they represent, and reducing their involvement in community activities and affairs.

The *Hearing Voices* evaluation nevertheless noted that some projects continue to operate with

inadequate organisational support and with project staff working long unpaid hours, tackling a wide range of issues, including domestic violence, discrimination and immigration needs.

## **The concerns and aspirations of ethnic minority women**

To understand more about the complexity of ethnic minority women's circumstances and experiences, we provided positive, arts-based opportunities for a small group of women to reflect on, and represent: their skills and aspirations; their past achievements and experiences; the role of paid and unpaid work in their lives; the mismatch between their skills and employment opportunities; and the support they needed to overcome the barriers they still faced.

Four half-day weekly arts workshops were held in October and November 2005 at a community centre in Taunton. These workshops were developed with and facilitated by a community artist working with the researchers and the study themes. The women produced puppets and/or collages to represent aspects of their past, present and future lives. These workshops are described in more detail in Appendix 2.

### ***Arts workshops***

Twelve women from different ethnic minority backgrounds attended the arts workshops. Transport was provided, as most of the women lived a considerable distance from the venue and none was able to drive. Their backgrounds included Indian (second generation), Chinese, Mixed Heritage, Turkish, Czech, Ukrainian and Portuguese. Their ages ranged from late 20s to mid 50s, and most had arrived as economic migrants, some following their husbands.

Some had experience of mixed ethnic/faith relationships and marriages. Most of the women had experience of paid employment at a range of levels and organisations in the UK and abroad, including in factories, retail, the voluntary sector, care work, finance, marketing, administrative and management roles. Others had not worked since their arrival. Most had experience of education / training in the UK, and a variety of qualifications, skills and abilities. Their fluency in English language was varied.

In addition to the women participants, a small number of project workers, local authority officers

and researchers were present in the workshops. The issues raised by the women during the workshops and discussions are expressed in what follows as quotations. The findings from the workshops reflect the views of those involved, and are not representative of *all* ethnic minority women in Somerset. The study has identified issues that are important to this group of women, and these are reflected in our recommendations.

### **Barriers and sources of disadvantage**

#### *Migration history and settlement*

The period and circumstances of their arrival, and where they settled had an impact on the women's subsequent experiences. The women had arrived in the UK between 35 years and 6 months ago, mainly as economic migrants or dependants (as children with their families; young women following their husbands; and as young temporary migrants from the recent EU Accession States who were learning English to improve their employability on their return home. Two were second generation migrants, born in the UK.

The older women spoke about having an even harder life 20 to 30 years ago in Somerset, and felt that, although racism remains a major issue, 'things have improved'.

The women also talked about the difficulties associated with mixed ethnic relationships and the problems experienced by mixed heritage children (particularly boys) at school and at home, related both to their identity and to racism, one or more generations later.

#### *Language, qualifications, skills and experience*

English language difficulties and lack of confidence in communicating was a recurrent issue and a barrier for some of the women. Access to ESOL training was a major problem for some, as information on courses was scarce, and the travelling distance to learning centres, transport limitations, and the cost of the provision were deterrents. Without basic communication skills, and contact with English speakers in a 'safe' environment, some of the women had become more socially isolated and depressed:

*When I moved to Somerset I didn't speak any English at all. I felt very lonely and frustrated and silly because I couldn't understand anything.*

*Whatever you do, you have to master English, because you live in England. Or you can only work in, for example, Chinese community, or massive factories.*

*I need to learn to speak English better before I can get a job.*

The women had found that acquiring other skills and qualifications was much more difficult without English language and literacy skills. This included learning to drive and passing the driving theory test (which some were currently attempting), particularly important in rural areas. Others had skills, qualifications and experience from abroad that were not recognised here.

One young Eastern European woman had different motivations for coming to England. She was 'on an adventure' to learn English and hoped to return home with enhanced employment skills. Despite her youth and confidence, and the support of her host family, she still found the language barrier and experience stressful.

Other 'settled' ethnic minority women also faced the additional challenges of social isolation, family responsibilities with little or no support network, and dealing with racism.

#### *Aspirations and/or confidence to face new challenges*

Some women who had no previous work experience in their home country were determined to gain the skills necessary to enter the labour market in Somerset. Many had multiple barriers to overcome, including discrimination and personal difficulties, but remained positive and resolute in achieving their aims:

*You have to keep going, going, and ignore other things like racial discrimination, and just keep going and you'll get there.*

*All my life I have had to be so strong. Not just over one thing – I go up and down. It did shock me, the things that happened in my life.*

*I decided to go and do my GCSEs. It was very hard – 3 days per week but I did it. It took a year – but I didn't give up, I kept going to Yeovil even though it was so far.*

A few wanted to develop their existing skills and experience involving caring, children, or languages, to find paid work. Despite their voluntary experience, gained in schools or nursing homes, their lack of formal qualifications, and sometimes the hours of work available, were holding them back.

*I like to do caring work, not sitting behind a desk. The problem is much caring work is night time work.*

*I am learning English now – I would like to teach Spanish – the hours are difficult though.*

They felt that more opportunities could be developed to assist them:

*I wanted to work in hospital where they would train me and qualify, I would like to work as an assistant and be sponsored through training.*

Other women had chosen to stay at home and care for their family, and were not currently considering employment:

*I like to stay at home; I need time before I start work. My children are 12, 10, and 5, so I will wait until they become independent. I always think it is good for everyone (this way).*

*Local area infrastructure – rurality, poverty, support services, transport and childcare*

The isolation of living in a rural area where they knew very few people was also a significant difficulty. Even those who had spent decades in the area found making friends with English people was harder than with people from other countries who often lived further away.

Poor public transport services, the distances between people, places and services, and the cost and language difficulties associated with learning to drive further exacerbated their social and physical detachment. Accessing information, learning and employment opportunities, and suitable childcare provision to enable them to juggle their responsibilities, also presented significant challenges:

*In rural areas, not like in cities, we do not have many networks to tap into. You have to be on your own. People don't know what's out there.*

Women were aware that some areas in towns or villages were safer, more welcoming places for ethnic minority families, whilst others were more threatening and dangerous, but they needed more information on this and to better understand 'local cultures' to help them assimilate:

*We need more information on cultures of Somerset – areas that are good and bad places to live in – translated. (We also need) geography and living in England culture lessons.*

*Suitable job opportunities*

Many participants felt their choices and opportunities were limited by the practical and psychological problems of overcoming the distances between home, school/childcare, college and potential employer. Breaking this

cycle was difficult, given their sometimes limited skills, qualifications and experience, and the hours available in the jobs they could hope to attain.

**Figure 5 Collage and puppet – bright and colourful futures lie ahead**



Low pay and high costs of living made it difficult for some to accept the work they could do. Some had settled for temporary or seasonal work when this became available. Others were frustrated by the lack of information and guidance for women about job and training opportunities. Some spoke of poor experiences in using local services, including the Jobcentre and benefits agencies.

One woman felt that mentoring networks at work were needed, where women (particularly those from ethnic minority groups) could share experiences, extend their skills, build confidence and support each other.

On-the-job or 'sponsored' training, and opportunities for a paid 'older person's apprenticeship' were also suggested as ways of opening up the labour market for women returners and those with potential, but who lacked relevant work experience and skills.

Others had found it was easier to find work in ethnic minority businesses (e.g. Chinese take-aways and an Iranian restaurant) or community-based voluntary organisations, as there were fewer barriers to overcome in gaining access.

- *Cultural or family expectations and personal circumstances*

The isolation felt by some women led to depression and worsening health problems that acted as an additional barrier to employment. Others were limited by caring for sick and

disabled family members; being lone parents; fleeing domestic violence; bereavement; and financial and housing difficulties.

Cultural and family expectations associated with the woman's role in the home and at work varied greatly, and cannot be generalised along ethnic lines. One woman could not find the legal support and information she needed in Somerset to deal with the problems she was having with an arranged marriage. Yet in another case, an Asian woman was ambitious to develop her skills and go out to work, but was discouraged by her English husband with very traditional views. A number of women described the difficulties they experienced in mix-race marriages:

*Multi-cultural and mixed race families have much more problems; we're isolated and shunned by both sides.*

*I think kids (mixed race) have the worst problems, particularly mixed heritage boys.*

#### *Discrimination, racism and Islamophobia*

This was a very prominent and recurring theme for the women, many of whom had experienced discrimination and racism in Somerset in a variety of situations:

*I was called 'Paki, go back to where you belong', while walking down the street.*

*When I take my child to school the other mums look at me as though I was (could not find a polite word).*

*Since 9/11 and the London bombings we have been in greater fear. People do react to us and say things as if we are the same as the bombers – all Muslims are seen as potential bombers. It feels more fearful; best to stay indoors.*

Women tended not to report these racist incidents, fearful of the response. Their strategies for dealing with them involved ignoring, accepting or avoiding (potentially) threatening situations, sometimes by staying at home and becoming even more isolated:

*Who do I speak to? Will they deal with it properly? I don't want more trouble.*

*I couldn't talk to anyone at first; they ignore me or talk about me. I ignore them and get on with my life.*

*I can go (to school) in a taxi, drop off and pick up my child quickly. I don't need to talk to anyone.*

*Racial discrimination is everywhere. You have to learn to cope with it.*

*It's like being a prisoner in my own home.*

**Figure 6 Puppet representing the fear and negative experiences of the past**



#### **Support and motivation**

Despite the difficulties they had experienced, the women also discussed what had helped them overcome some of the barriers and disadvantages of their situation, enabling them to progress.

#### *Support networks – social contact, advice and information*

Support networks and organisations that meet the needs of ethnic minorities were felt to be essential to the women in overcoming their social and physical isolation. They all reported benefiting greatly from the arts workshops – the opportunity to share their experiences and make contact with others in a similar situation. Even for some of the well-established residents, this was the first time they had attended an event specifically for ethnic minority women in Somerset.

The women felt there was an urgent need for:

- more affordable, community-focused, social or training opportunities
- more informal confidence-building activities that could lead from home towards employment

- approachable, understanding project workers in community-based organisations to advise them about other sources of support/information
- culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive support activities
- more information on services, events, training in community languages

### *Volunteering opportunities*

As well as seeking support themselves, the women were also keen to assist others in similar positions, and become involved in 'self-help' initiatives. They felt few structures and opportunities were in place to enable this. Existing organisations were thought to be under-resourced, and to lack the capacity for further development. Volunteering also offered an easy means of gaining experience and improving their English, before seeking further training or job opportunities.

- *Access to affordable ESOL and other basic skills*

The women felt this was important to enable them to access the skills they need when they are most motivated to learn. They had found that ESOL providers often did not distinguish between differing needs, however. For example different support was needed by European 'temporary workers/students/travellers' and less confident Muslim mothers who needed women-only classes during school hours with crèche provision. There may be scope for linking ESOL provision with other basic skills training, e.g. IT, numeracy, driving skills, confidence-building, care-work, or other local labour market needs.

## **Key points and recommendations**

Our study of the situation of ethnic minority women in Somerset indicates that these women face particular difficulties as a numerically very small, diverse and often isolated group of residents. Within the county, ethnic minority women's disadvantage arises from their:

- *Migration history*: settlement and assimilation patterns, residency status, and whether they are first or subsequent generations.
- *Language, qualifications, skills and experience*: these affect ethnic minority women's confidence, employment aspirations, achievements and ability to access information and support services.

- *Aspirations/confidence*: these were affected by their levels of qualification and skills. The women who participated in the study were keen to improve their skills and to work where appropriate opportunities arose.
- *Local area*: rural isolation, and a poor local support infrastructure, including problems with childcare, public transport and other services, were reported.
- *Suitable job opportunities*: The women found these were restricted, and were affected by the tourist season, their social and professional contacts and networks. They also noted that the location, hours, pay and skills required for jobs on offer were problematic. Some had found paid work through their involvement with voluntary organisations.
- *Cultural and personal/family circumstances*: These are highly variable within and between ethnic groups, and can be both barriers to work and enabling factors.
- *Discrimination and racism*: These were frequent experiences for the women in the study. They included direct verbal and physical abuse, which could occur in the street, at school/college and at work.

Although there are strategies and policies in place at all levels, and evidence of some good practice, recognition, monitoring and action are still needed if discrimination and racist attitudes are to be addressed. Although there is some local good practice in supporting ethnic minority women to access the labour market, there is also a need for change in some agencies and service providers in Somerset. Our study suggests that substantial challenges remain for these small (but growing) diverse communities:

### *Voluntary and community sector organisations are important in supporting ethnic minority women.*

- Locally-based and community-focused organisations supporting ethnic minority women need longer term funding to do their work effectively. A cross-cultural focus, bringing together women from different ethnic minorities, may be beneficial, given the dispersed nature of these communities. These organisations can be successful in building social networks, confidence and skills to encourage employability. They do this by providing support or signposting to other services, e.g. legal advice in cases of racial

harassment. Capacity building for these organisations, including staff training and support, is also needed, as local public sector organisations have increased their consultation, engagement and monitoring of services for different groups. *Our study suggests more support is needed as follows:*

- *Information on local organisations and groups: describing the activities, services and support available, in main community languages.*
- *Opportunities for training and progression: voluntary organisations can accredit skills/experience gained in the sector, and provide opportunities to gain professional qualifications.*
- *More ESOL support: Women need free access to courses, in locations accessible by public transport, and offered at appropriate times for different groups of women. Provision needs to be culturally and gender sensitive; and to have on-site crèche facilities. ESOL courses need to provide informal/ non-accredited and formal opportunities to develop skills and confidence, and could be linked with basic skills/IT and driving skills.*
- *More personal development and confidence-building courses and activities: Arts-based/creative activities can be highly positive and empowering, and can encourage communication skills without being verbally demanding. Group activities can further enhance mutual understanding, and lead to further accredited learning.*

*Employers/employers' organisations could do more to support Somerset's ethnic minority women by:*

- *Using equalities, diversity and anti-racist training* - to challenge attitudes, assumptions and practices; and to ensure legislation is understood and implemented.
- *Improving recognition of prior qualifications and skills gained abroad* - by building on existing schemes, raising managers' awareness of these schemes; challenging misconceptions and assumptions; ensuring that prior experience, motivation and potential is taken into account; raising awareness of difference and diversity.
- *Ensuring that vacancies and opportunities are advertised to a wider range of organisations*

and connect with women of all groups. This can be especially challenging in rural areas.

- *Offering work placements and on-the-job training opportunities* - both as tasters of non-traditional opportunities, and as opportunities to gain experience and 'a foot-in-the-door'.
- *Developing mentoring schemes* - to develop ethnic minority women's networks. These could be web-based, with links between voluntary sector organisations and employers' websites/activities.
- *Ensuring that management, career progression and staff development* encourage ethnic minority women, and are sensitive to individual need: e.g. understanding that lack of confidence can hamper performance and progression.
- *Designing local part-time jobs* that fit the availability of working mothers and benefit rules, and the travel times involved in rural communities.

*Jobcentre Plus, Connexions, careers-related services and training organisations could:*

- *Offer improved local information, advice and guidance* - on employment, self-employment, the education system, benefits. etc., in main community languages or with community language support. Further outreach work by JobCentre Plus, working with community organisations, could bring mainstream support, local jobs and information to local women. Recent arrivals may need specific, targeted information.
- *Improve access to careers advice* - advice needs to be tailored to women from different backgrounds, and to recognise that they have varied experience and aspirations. Guidance on short, medium and longer-term goals would be welcomed. Information is needed on employment and training options matched to local skills gaps, employers, and job opportunities.
- *Develop pre-interview/job-preparation support and coaching* in schools, colleges and elsewhere - on job-search skills, CV writing, applications, and interview skills. Recognition that 'self-promotion' in applications and interviews is a cultural barrier for some groups, and may require specific, targeted coaching. Sign-posting to other support / provision.

*Local authorities and other local service providers should consider:*

- *Developing better support to tackle racism and discrimination* - this could involve awareness-raising in schools/colleges, local media and employers, and anti-racist/diversity training for service providers/employers. Further development work may also be needed with other agencies, e.g. Street Wardens, Police, CABs, Victim Support, and the Rural Racism Project.
- *Improving access to childcare* - by offering flexible, culturally sensitive, affordable provision in accessible locations, to support course attendance, training, volunteering activities and paid work.
- *Transport* - regional and local strategies for public and community-based transport should be realistic and sustainable, but need to recognise the additional barriers faced by ethnic minority women. Service providers could explore the need for diversity training for drivers, more accessible information on services, and initiatives to support learner drivers with ESOL needs.
- *Improved monitoring data and targeting of services for ethnic minority women (and others)* - rather than separate data on men / women and different ethnic groups).
- *Develop best practice in mainstreaming equalities/diversity policies* - the new public sector duty to promote gender equality, from 2007, will provide an opportunity for developing this.
- *Encourage ethnic minority women's representation and participation in local decision making and governance bodies* to enable local change.



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## Appendix 1 Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets

The *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets* project was funded, between September 2003 and August 2006, by a core European Social Fund grant to Professor Sue Yeandle and her research team at the *Centre for Social Inclusion*, Sheffield Hallam University. The award was made from within ESF Policy Field 5 Measure 2, 'Gender and Discrimination in Employment'. The grant was supplemented with additional funds and resources provided by a range of partner agencies, notably the Equal Opportunities Commission, the TUC, and 12 English local authorities.

### The GELLM project output comprises:

- new statistical analysis of district-level labour market data, led by Dr Lisa Buckner, producing separate **Gender Profiles** of the local labour markets of each of the participating local authorities (Buckner, Tang and Yeandle 2004, 2005, 2006) - available from the local authorities concerned and at [www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi](http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi)
- 6 **Local Research Studies**, each involving between three and six of the project's local authority partners. Locality and Synthesis reports of these studies, published spring-summer 2006 are available at [www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi](http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi). Details of other publications and presentations relating to the GELLM programme are also posted on this website.
  1. *Working below potential: women and part-time work*, led by Dr Linda Grant and part-funded by the EOC (first published by the EOC in 2005)
  2. *Connecting women with the labour market*, led by Dr Linda Grant
  3. *Ethnic minority women and access to the labour market*, led by Bernadette Stiell
  4. *Women's career development in the local authority sector in England* led by Dr Cinnamon Bennett
  5. *Addressing women's poverty: local labour market initiatives* led by Karen Escott
  6. *Local challenges in meeting demand for domiciliary care* led from autumn 2005 by Professor Sue Yeandle and prior to this by Anu Suokas

### The GELLM Team

Led by Professor Sue Yeandle, the members of the GELLM research team at the *Centre for Social Inclusion* are: Dr Cinnamon Bennett, Dr Lisa Buckner, Ian Chesters (administrator), Karen Escott, Dr Linda Grant, Christopher Price, Lucy Shipton, Bernadette Stiell, Anu Suokas (until autumn 2005), and Dr Ning Tang. The team is grateful to Dr Pamela Fisher for her contribution to the project in 2004, and for the continuing advice and support of Dr Chris Gardiner.

### The GELLM Partnership

The national partners supporting the GELLM project are the Equal Opportunities Commission and the TUC. The project's 12 local authority partners are: Birmingham Council, the London Borough of Somerset, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Leicester Council, Somerset Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Somerset County Council, the London Borough of Southwark, Thurrock Council, Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and West Sussex County Council. The North East Coalition of Employers has also provided financial resources via Somerset Council. The team is grateful for the support of these agencies, without which the project could not have been developed. The GELLM project engaged Professor Damian Grimshaw, Professor Ed Fieldhouse (both of Manchester University) and Professor Irene Hardill (Nottingham Trent University), as external academic advisers to the project team, and thanks them for their valuable advice and support.

## Appendix 2 Research methods

This study used a mixed method research design, incorporating:

- Detailed analysis of the 2001 Census
- A review of local information and intelligence using documentary analysis
- Qualitative research with local ethnic minority women

### Analysis of the 2001 Census

Data from the 2001 Census relating to women resident in the wards were analysed for particular ethnic minority groups. This included:

- Background information - population size, age-sex profile, country of birth, household composition
- Economic activity - full-time/part-time employment, unemployment, economic inactivity, Local labour market - occupation and industry for women currently in employment

Where possible, data are presented for women of working age (16-59), however, in some cases, Census output was only available for women aged 16-74. For level of highest qualification, it was possible to obtain data by age, but not by sex, so information is provided for both men and women aged 16-64/59 combined.

### Review of local information and intelligence

The lead officer at Somerset Council requested relevant information from local statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations that deal with, support or collect data on, ethnic minority women. This mainly consisted of sections of the local authority and some community-based organisations. These sources were supplemented by a trawl of relevant national policy and academic literature, and the internet. These were reviewed for relevant information.

### Qualitative methodology: art-based workshops

These innovative workshops enabled women participants to use a range of art forms to creatively represent images of their lives, whilst evidencing their aspirations, skills and capabilities. The women also identified barriers to employment / job progression which affected them, and their support needs. The workshops produced detailed qualitative data relating to the women's:

- Views, preferences and values regarding child-care, caring, and employment;
- Existing experience, skills, capacities and qualifications;
- Personal choices, and how these are influenced by cultural/ family expectations;
- Local barriers to employment such as transport, childcare, education & discrimination.

The local authority recruited a community artist by advertising extensively on relevant websites and newsletters. This elicited a very positive response and revealed the extent of interest and potential for developing further consultation work using innovative arts methods, and supporting local artists. Artists made formal applications and were short-listed and invited to interview, before the final appointment was made. The community artist worked with the researchers and research themes to focus the pieces on women's past, present and future lives. During the workshops, the artist helped facilitate the making of puppets and/or collages. The puppets were intended to depict different aspects of the women's past and future (front and back). Different materials, colour, imagery and words were encouraged. Collages were made using images from magazines and other art materials. Many of the participants used the workshops more as an opportunity to meet the other women, and preferred the less intensive collage-making which allowed them more time to talk and practice their English. Researchers participated informally, talking to the women about their pieces and other aspects of their experience. The workshops were relaxed and informal and the focus of each session varied – from ice-breaking discussions, to more emphasis on the art techniques. Trust and rapport developed easily and encouraged everyone to join in. Throughout the workshops, opportunities arose that allowed for impromptu group discussions on the themes of the workshop. A final session was arranged a few weeks later, as an opportunity for the women to further build relationships and meet with project workers, as well as seeing their work displayed and celebrating their achievements. Participants were reassured that their confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained – their work, images or words would only be used with their informed consent. This approach was successful at attracting and engaging the women to a research experience that was also social, confidence-enhancing and interactive, but not wholly reliant on their verbal skills and confidence. It was also an alternative means of tapping into, and expressing, their life experiences and stories.

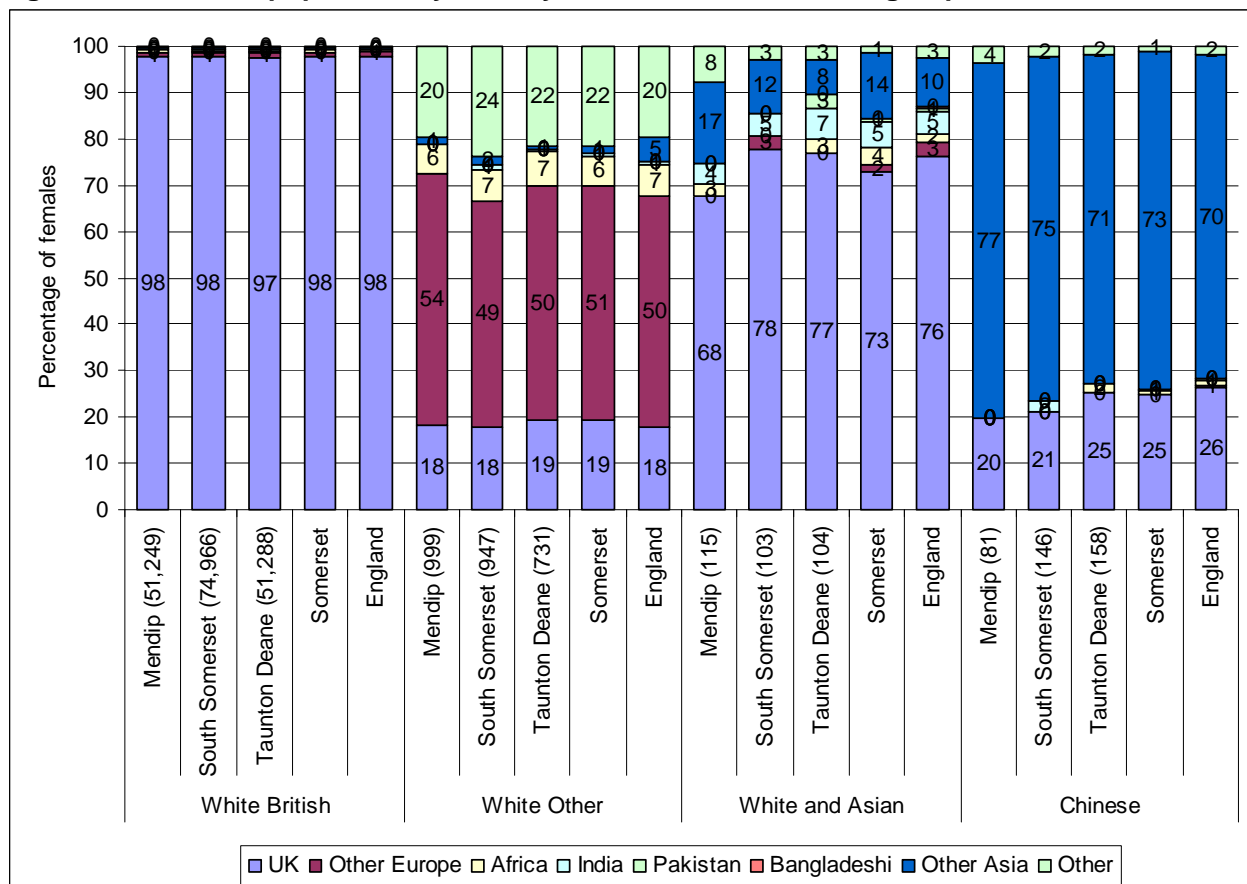
## Appendix 3 Additional informational about ethnic minority women Somerset

**Table A1. Resident female population by ethnicity, 2001**

	Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton Deane	West Somerset	Somerset	England
<b>All</b>	53,155	54,308	77,153	53,081	18,427	256,121	25,216,687
White: British	51,247	52,941	74,962	51,228	17,944	248,322	21,918,492
White: Irish	324	251	384	315	109	1386	330,054
White Other	993	519	942	728	222	3405	699,237
White and Black Caribbean	65	86	99	53	23	331	118,379
White and Black African	34	37	45	22	3	133	38,940
White and Asian	117	72	102	105	22	425	91,414
Other Mixed	60	63	106	77	24	310	78,236
Indian	51	49	68	90	27	269	517,342
Pakistani	6	31	35	34	3	110	348,496
Bangladeshi	22	48	25	53	10	164	136,422
Other Asian	15	14	26	31	3	95	107,672
Black Caribbean	20	39	52	43	6	164	301,365
Black African	34	25	59	51	8	161	246,835
Other Black	0	15	9	9	3	42	50,024
Chinese	84	62	142	153	14	463	114,768
Other Ethnic Group	83	56	97	89	6	341	1190,11

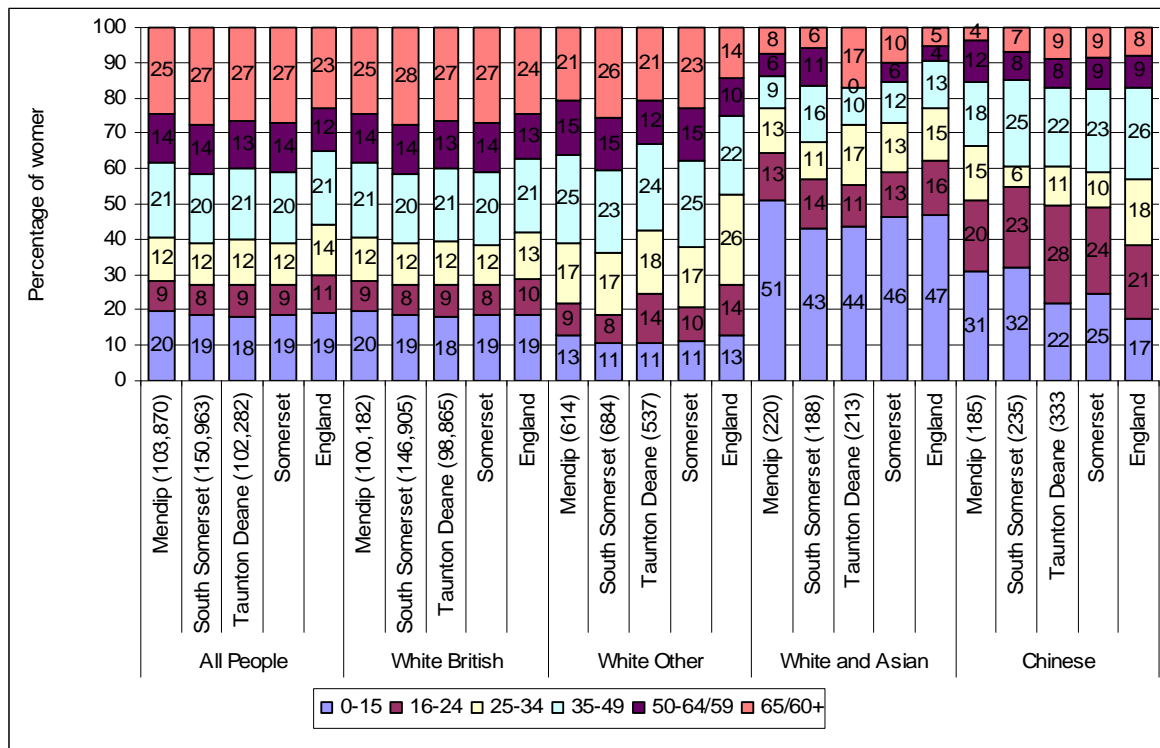
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

**Figure A1. Resident population by country of birth: selected ethnic groups**



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

**Figure A2. Resident female population by age (selected ethnic groups)**



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.