



DISC scicomm workshop Birmingham

1. What are the Barriers to reaching BME groups

- Lack of commitment from organisations (organisational culture)
 - often seen as an 'add on' activity
- Finding role models
- Eurocentric nature of current resources
 - making content relevant
 - getting information in other languages and knowing which languages
- Finding contacts to work with
- Funding
 - funding mostly project based so lack of continuity
 - funding quite restrictive
- Complexity of the range of diversity
 - our lack of understanding of cultures
 - lack of diversity in the workforce/teachers
- Building relationships is very resource heavy
 - time
 - skills
 - money
 - hard work, often disproportionate amount of effort compared to numbers reached
- Our lack of skills and confidence
- BME groups perception of science and different areas of science
- Language of science
- Representation of BME's contribution to science
 - educational recourses
 - museums
- Relationship with BME press
 - press perception of issues
 - us making all science relevant to BME press
- Lack of provision across all ages
 - linking the formal and informal education
 - Intergenerational reachi
- Progress is slow
- Geographical location (of scicomm groups in relation to BME groups)

2. How do we overcome these barriers

After prioritisation of the barriers listed above, four points were chosen to be examined further. Groups were asked to consider ways in which the science communication community could work to overcome these barriers and identify areas where DISC could play a role.

- a) Organisational culture
- b) Linking formal and informal education
- c) Range of diversity
- d) Eurocentric resources

a) Organisational culture

- Set realistic targets and be prepared to lose money/numbers at the start
- Train and educate staff to appreciate the need for diversity
 - allow discussions to be opened up internally
- Have patience and sticking power
- Share good and bad practice, in house and with others. Use other people's examples of good practice to help make a case within your organisation
- Force diversity as an issue. Make it a priority and get high level endorsement

RECOMMENDATION - DISC to map activities across the UK with information on the types of people attending

b) Linking formal and informal education

- Encourage parallel programming
 - children attend with school and then return with their families
- Encourage adults to attend activities by providing single sex activities, childcare, transport and funding to attend
- Make information accessible to adults (language etc) so that children do not show them up
- Deliver specific BME targeted events as well as opening up participation generally
- Link into other initiatives to help eg sure start
- Be open, consult with adults and take ideas on board

c) Range of diversity

- Be strategic. Stop trying to reach everyone.
 - think about who will we start with? How will we develop our programmes over time?
 - take a bite size approach
 - think about what our vision is for 20 years time
- Talk to communities to learn from them and about them. Use this to help us see the purpose and benefits as well as them
- Think about what we mean by different communities
 - Not just a BME category, they are a part of all communities
 - Be more flexible with how we put people into categories, let people self define
- Diversify workforce

d) Eurocentric resources

- Influence government departments and agencies to start from top down eg DFES, DCMS, DTI
 - Campaign for government to take issues on board (through Maria at OST)
- Influence curriculum through science learning and teacher training centres and others writing teaching materials to change resources
- Influence media to explore black science, encourage them to lead science by stories or issue not by the scientist being back (broadcast media in particular)
- Encourage NSW, BA Festival (and others) to look at BME science as a theme
- Encourage sciART schemes to look at art from other cultures
- Get museums to dig out relevant material from their collections

RECOMMENDATION – DISC to work with Maria to help influence cross departmentally

RECOMMENDATION – DISC work with the Science Media Centre to promote more BME stories and scientists in the press