



Research, policy and practice

The contribution of research to promoting race equality in social care

Inclusion and exclusion

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Jabeer Butt

Deputy Director, REU



Introduction

- Relationship between research on racism and ethnicity, and policy and practice
- Case study 1 – Sure Start
- Case study 2 – Strengthening Families
- Lessons learnt



Research, policy and practice

- Economic and Social Research Council
to advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists who meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life
- Department of Health
The Policy Research Programme aims to help ensure that decision making in the policy domain is informed by all available and robust scientific evidence.



Research, policy and practice

Gus John at the British Sociological Association conference said:

Departments to study the immigrants spring up like mushrooms... Yet the only relationship most of them have with black groups is that of visitors to the zoo. Their findings are never meant to enable the deprived to take action (Bourne, 1981)



Research, policy and practice

Malcolm Cross in 1991 wrote: Even where we have progressed from the crude assumption that the difficulties of integration are caused by the incongruence of cultural values, social and economic policies with any 'race dimension' are often replete with stereotypes that they say more about the definers than the defined... it is time for some humility on the part of social researchers. For many years investigators... have assumed that they knew what the issues were. If the agenda for research and action is to be relevant for the 1990s it has to be one proclaimed by the minorities.



Research, policy and practice

Paul Boateng, MP, commenting on the publication by the PSI of the fourth national survey of ethnic minorities, said:

Accurate information is the first step to effective action. This survey is a vital aid to making a success of our multi-ethnic society. (PSI, 1997)



Case 1 – Sure Start

Sure Start is a Government programme which aims to achieve better outcomes for children, parents and communities by:

- increasing the availability of childcare for all children
- improving health, education and emotional development for young children
- supporting parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment.

This is achieved by:

- helping service development in disadvantaged areas alongside financial help for parents to afford childcare
- rolling out the principles driving the Sure Start approach to all services for children and parents.



What did we do

- Of the 60 trailblazers less than five mentioned 'ethnic minorities' and only three identified services
- We wrote setting out options, and identified our preferred options
- Helped produce Sure Start for All
- Issued to all 69 second wave and subsequent Sure Start programmes



Outcomes

- Over 90 per cent of second wave programmes referred to the needs of local 'ethnic minority' communities
- Majority identified services that they were going to deliver
- Limited evidence from national evaluation



Case 2 – Strengthening Families

- Study of family centres showed little or no use of parent education programmes by black and minority ethnic communities (Butt and Box, 1996)
- Limited or no take-up (Smith, 1996; Grimshaw and McGuire 1998)
- American evidence of use by African-American parents (Alvey, 1994)



What did we do

- Secured funding from Family Support Grant
- Developed a framework to assess parent programmes
- Reviewed programmes operating in Britain
- Identified and secured evidence on American programmes



Outcomes

- Over 1000 parents have completed programme
- 520 facilitators have been trained
- 42 programmes running at present in 12 towns and cities in UK
- Evaluation based on pre and post questionnaire shows change, including in attitudes to smacking



Lessons – researchers

- Active engagement of policy makers and practitioners is not an option but a necessity
- Active engagement of communities
- Not only what change is needed, but how it can be achieved
- Support your supporters
- Wrong to assume that there is support for research



Lessons – funders

- What are the incentives for contributing to change
- Active engagement costs money
- Is dissemination monitored?
- How effectively is training supporting the development of skills in bringing about change



Conclusions

- Research can should play a part in challenging racism and its impact
- In bringing about change in the experience of black and minority ethnic communities, we can actually bring about change in the experience of all communities