

Putting Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot Achievement on the Agenda

Islington hosts a national conference on exploring cultural identity and finding common ground.

Over seventy professionals from London and beyond attended the Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot conference at the Islington Barnsbury Centre on the 5th December. The focus of the day was supporting and challenging the achievement of Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot pupils. The participants enjoyed a packed, interesting day which included challenging speakers, a student and parent panel, new research, interactive workshops, traditional dance and delicious Turkish food.



Cem Evi performing a traditional Turkish dance

Councillor Meral Ece, who expressed a personal interest in the work done to support these students, opened the conference after which Graham Smith, who leads the Islington Ethnic Minority Achievement Team, used data to show the trends and issues affecting this group in Islington and nationally.

One of the highlights of the day was the impassioned keynote address delivered by Dr Mehmet Ali Dikerdem from Middlesex University who spoke about the controversial representation of the Turkish speaking community in the national press and raised issues about perception and reality.

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**NATIONAL EDUCATORS'
CONFERENCE**

JULY 2nd 2008

Pupils of Bangladeshi Heritage:
Identity and Achievement

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Ann Jones, Senior Secondary Consultant working in Islington, delivered revealing new research about identity, aspirations and constraints. The study of Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot girls in Islington showed fascinating insights into schools' and parents' aspirations and perceptions about education.

Participants attended a wide range of practical, interactive workshops. These covered topics such as working with parents, what supplementary schools can do to help students, first language GCSE's, Maths and family learning, practical strategies for secondary schools and supporting the foundation stages. One workshop discussed a controversial bilingual teaching experiment and looked at the theory behind it.

The teaching professionals who attended particularly valued the opportunity to question a panel of students and parents led by radio broadcaster, Kelamie Dedezade. The panelists talked about their personal experiences of the British education system. They discussed the issues they faced, what helped them and the importance of education for their success.

There were some lovely treats throughout the day for those who attended the event such as a delicious lunch of Turkish food, Turkish delight



Cem Evi

with afternoon tea and the visual spectacle of the traditional dance at the end of the day. Cem Evi, a group of 20 primary school aged students from the local area, performed a traditional dance based on folk stories. Everyone enjoyed their vibrant costumes, the fabulous dancing and the live music.

The stimulating day left participants thinking about the identity issues that students face and what can be done to support their achievement. Many successful strategies were showcased and discussed and professionals left the day with new ideas and approaches to the situations they face in education.

EGA Girls in Essex

During the half-term holiday, when most people were relaxing, a group of 14 students, their teacher, Sophie Wales and myself were participating in a number of activities, including Low and High ropes, orienteering and obstacle course along with catching up with GCSE coursework at Danbury Outdoor Centre in Essex. This activity was part of an ongoing programme that focuses on raising and maintaining academic levels of Year 11 African Caribbean girls at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Language College.

The girls participated in a full programme that included:

- outdoor education activities – these activities encouraged teamwork and cooperation
- coursework catch-up/Study skills – the girls had the opportunity to work intensively on outstanding coursework. We also had a visiting English teacher, Damian Muirhead, who led a session on poems from other cultures, in preparation for the English Literature exam
- personal development sessions which allowed the girls to discuss issues that affect them and their education

It was definitely a worthwhile experience that all girls benefited from. Feedback from the girls included: they least enjoyed the food and racism in the town. They most enjoyed the outdoor activities, the English preparation session and the discussion session. Overall, this activity provided the girls with an opportunity for them to really 'enjoy and achieve'.

Yvette Allen - Consultant for African Caribbean Achievement



EGA girls on the ropes at Danbury

The Congolese: A Learning Conversation

This important event was for educators and others working with communities from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo). It was attended mainly by participants from across London, but it was very pleasing to welcome delegates who had made the lengthy journey from as far away as the north west and north east of England.

Our visitors came to engage in a learning conversation entitled, 'Working with Congolese Pupils and Families in Schools'. The occasion was planned and organised by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Team, Light Project International Congolese Community Organisation and colleagues at the Evelyn Oldfield Unit.

Following registration and coffee we were welcomed to the Barnsbury Centre by Graham Smith, Head of Achievement and Diversity for Cambridge Education @ Islington. Following on directly from Graham's warm welcome we were very fortunate to have two well known and distinguished members of the UK based Congolese community to address the audience and lay the foundation for what proved to be an exciting and varied day.

Firstly, Dr W G Pambu talked on 'The Congo and the Congolese'. This proved to be a real lesson for those of us requiring much needed background on DR Congo and Congolese issues past and present.

Dr Pambu's presentation was extremely informative and

thoroughly engaging, prompting many requests from delegates for additional information and clarification on a number of intriguing aspects of the talk.

Following his colleague's presentation, Mr Mao Zakuani took the floor and talked with great knowledge and experience of the education system, past and present, in DR Congo. He amused us all with delightful stories about his own school days 'back home' and drew many comparisons with the education system of his youth with that experienced in the UK today by young Congolese in our schools. This fascinating presentation prompted a lively response from the audience, many of whom had information to add, questions to ask and opinions to voice.

Mr Mao's presentation was followed by a short 'question and answer' session with the audience. He was joined by Dr Pambu and Micheline Ngongo, Chair of Light Project International. As well as responding to an array of questions, Micheline took the opportunity to talk enthusiastically about the work of her organisation within the Congolese community, especially the work of the Saturday homework club, (funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service), in supporting the educational, cultural and social development of her primary and secondary aged pupils.

A group of these children then delighted the audience by performing a lively Lingala dance to a rousing background of traditional music. Several

of the children then introduced themselves and spoke to the audience about their lives and educational experiences in DR Congo and England. This provided a fascinating insight into the past, present and future expectations of young people within a growing community.

The afternoon's group discussions have been variously described as lively, interesting, challenging, informative, enjoyable and sometimes controversial. In fact real learning conversations!

The talk and networking continued over lunch where traditional Congolese regional dishes were presented and served by the wonderful Jean Claude and Liliane, who for the benefit of those being introduced to Congolese cooking for the first time, gave full explanations of the ingredients and cooking methods used.

I think the day was summed up by one of our guests who commented, '... lovely food, good company and what a wonderfully informative time I've had.'

DO YOU WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Anyone interested in learning more about the event can contact **Abed Moftizadeh** on (t) 020 7527 8687 or (email) abed.moftizadeh@camb-ed@islington.gov.uk

Early Years News

Boys Project

Between now and the end of the summer term we are piloting a very small scale action research project (4 reception classes) aimed at raising the attainment of boys in the Foundation Stage, particularly in PSE and CLL.

It involves carrying out an audit of current practice and identifying areas for development with a view to reducing the gap that exists between the attainment of boys and girls at the end of the Foundation Stage. There is scope for schools to focus on their own particular issues as well as discussing and sharing good practice with others.

We are hoping to develop a project model that can be successfully rolled out to further schools during the next academic year.

Would you like to take part in this project in September? If you are interested in better meeting the needs of boys in your Foundation Stage class, please contact us to discuss it further.

Equalities Audit and Action Plan

We have developed an audit to support EYFS practitioners assess equalities practice and provision. It covers four areas; working with parents, first languages and cultures, resources and planning and interactions. It can be used as a tool to help prioritise equalities work over the year as well as supporting practitioners in planning strategies to improve their equalities provision.

The audit is free and can be obtained from anyone in the EY EMAS team. It will also be included

in the revised and updated Equalities pack, which will be re-issued later on this year.

ESL in the Mainstream for the Early Learner

All members of the Early Years EMAS team are qualified tutors for this professional development accredited course, spread across nine modules.

Participants would extend their skills and understanding in working with children aged 3-7 from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. It is most useful when members of staff teams attend together.

If your school is planning to do the LILAC course (or even if they're not) and you would be interested in the early learner modules then please contact us to discuss your needs.

Valbona Aliaj

Valbona has worked with the EMA team for five years now, and currently carries out two roles. She is a Bilingual Community Officer for the Albanian community, and also does some ICT-based work with the central team for half a day a week. Valbona has also just changed her name after her recent marriage, from Asllani to Aliaj.

During her two days a week as a BCO, Valbona is based at EGA school on a Monday. Here she works with individual girls, supporting their academic work as well as personal development. She linked with the Albanian Charity Organisation "Shpresa Programe" who set up an Albanian Dance Project at EGA, but this has now come to an end. However, the picture on the right shows two girls performing an Albanian dance for an assembly at the school.

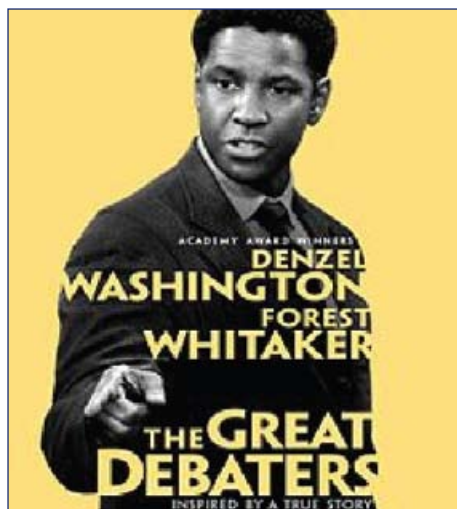
Valbona also works at two primary schools, Duncombe and Montem, where she enjoys working closely with families and children. She says that she has really noticed a change in the families' relationship with the schools over the period she has been working there, commenting, "parents are much more confident now. They know much more about the education system here." Valbona herself has really contributed to this increased knowledge and confidence.

In her time with the central team, Valbona takes care of the BCO website. And in fact, if you think you might have interesting contributions to this website, do let her know!



Albanian Dancers at EGA School

The Great Debaters Similarities with the REAL Gifted & Talented (G&T) Mentoring Project



After the first session with my mentee he started making positive changes towards excelling at school... within one week he had received his first certificate for hard work and concentration in class." Male mentor in an Islington school.

When I reflected on the above comment from one of our mentors and others that have been made, I could not pass up the opportunity to make a comparison between the project and a film I watched recently. The film, *The Great Debaters*, starring Denzel Washington is inspired by a true story and chronicles the journey of Professor Melvin Tolson (Denzel Washington), a brilliant debate team coach who uses the power of words to shape a group of underdog students from a small African American college into a historically elite debate team. Professor Tolson challenged the social norms of the time and in the pursuit for excellence his debate team receives a groundbreaking invitation to debate Harvard University's championship team.

Just in case you have not had the opportunity to see the movie I won't spoil the ending for you.

However, during the film, Professor Tolson challenges his young team of the need to change their mindsets in order and excel against in spite of the low expectations surrounding them. In effect, that is what we are seeking to do through the mentoring project. No, the mentors are not recruited for their debating abilities and they are not facing a potential lynching (as was the reality for Tolson and his students) but, what they share in common is the challenge to change their mindsets to excel in life – we believe that this is what makes our mentoring project different.

You see at a time when our young people are highlighted in the media for issues around crime, gang related violence and anti-social behaviour, underachievement and unemployment etc. it is a pleasure to write about a group who are, like the great debaters, changing the pervading negative narrative surrounding young people. In order to challenge the status quo, our young people need to first think of and see themselves differently – there is a sense that if all they hear about and see are the negative stories then there is a danger of living a self-fulfilling prophecy.

When I met with parents to talk to them about the mentoring project, I overheard one of them say to her son (a younger sibling of one of our mentees aged about 7 yrs), "Look at all of these successful students – when you are older maybe you can be a mentor like one of them." The REAL G & T mentors are Islington's highest achieving students of African Caribbean heritage currently doing their A

Levels in sixth forms or at colleges, who have been carefully selected after interviews to find out the key factors in their own successes. They meet either weekly or bi-weekly with a student (mentee) in year 10 and are currently working at EGA, Holloway, Islington Arts & Media and Mount Carmel schools. Funding for this project comes to an end this year, but the contribution of this outstanding group of young people has not gone unnoticed. One teacher has said, "I have been involved in many mentoring projects over the years and the mentors on this programme are the best we have ever had."

A good practice toolkit and DVD are being produced by the London Gifted and Talented team and will be available during the summer term. These will provide you with information on how to set up your own project and showcase the positive impact that the mentoring project has had on both mentees and mentors.



Cassius and Vanessa Francis with mentors at a Bristol LEA conference

If you would like to find out more please email cassius@acec.org.uk or alternatively, you can log on to <http://www.londongt.org/real/>

Cassius Francis

Planning For Your Child's Success: Black Pupils Achievement Programme (BPAP)

On the evening of Tuesday, 4th March 2008, the EMAS department hosted an African Caribbean parents and pupils event in conjunction with the government's national Black Pupils' Achievement Programme and the MERLIN Project (**M**inority **E**thnic **R**ole-**M**odels for **L**earning and **I**nspiration) an initiative of BiTC (Business In The Community).

The evening aimed to: (1) Raise awareness of the valuable work the Black Pupils Achievement Programme is doing both nationally and locally (the programme was rolled out in four schools in September 2005 - Highbury Grove, Holloway, IAMS, Islington Green), with 100 pupils; (2) Inspire parents (and pupils) to aim high when planning for their child's future.

After a tasty Caribbean finger buffet, Sharon Webley, the Regional Advisor for the BPAP, opened the evening's speeches with an in-depth introduction to this government programme to raise the academic attainment of African-Caribbean pupils across the country.

This was followed by a succinct update on the work of the EMAS department and the achievement of pupils of African Caribbean heritage in the borough by the head of the EMAS service, Graham Smith.



Patrick Clarke

The evening's two main speakers represented two of Britain's highest achieving professionals in the corporate sector. Both Patrick Clarke (Director of HR and Communications at EDF) and Sandra Glenn (Consultant, ADTR), shared their story of success with the eager audience of pupils and parents. Both are members of MERLIN, an initiative that promotes Ethnic minority members of the corporate sector visiting inner-city secondary schools to inspire Black Minority Ethnic children.

Patrick and Sandra's inspirational stories of starting life from humble beginnings with no family history of outstanding academic or financial achievement captivated the audience. This led to great applause, and a range of questions from parents, about how to plan for the success of their children in the parent seminars that followed the main plenary.



Sandra Glenn

After the speeches, whilst the parents attended workshops (themes included: Setting and Achieving Goals in Families and Promoting Positive Parenting), the children were given a private audience with Patrick and Sandra. They were given an opportunity to quiz them on their life and work.

The evening ended with the parents being given an inclusive opportunity to question the main speakers about how to plan for their child's success after school.

The feedback from parents after the event was they needed more time and thus another opportunity to extend the evening's conversation.

Watch out for news on the forthcoming 2008 African-Caribbean Parents Conference in the summer term, where parents (and pupils) will be given an opportunity to do just that.

Course Flyers

In order to promote our ever increasing number of courses, we are developing a set of flyers – one for each course. The courses range from Supporting Beginner Learners of English in Mainstream Classes (primary and secondary), LiLAC, Fast track Literacy, Data as well as new ones such as Feelings Language: Emotional Intelligence for Academic and Social Success, African Caribbean Achievement and Advanced Learners of English as an Additional Language amongst others. The courses vary in length, but all are offered to schools to be delivered on site. Delivery times and schedules are flexible.

David Davies



It is with great regret that I write these few lines on David's leaving. David and I have been colleagues for thirteen years.

He is probably the most humane person I have ever worked with, as the many Islington people who have benefited from his knowledge and encouragement will testify.

There are the pupils who, arriving in Islington schools in difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances, have blossomed under his care and encouragement and managed to turn their lives around. There are the families who trusted David to help them to understand the complexity of life in London. There are the teachers who learnt so much from his training and

the community groups to whom David reached out and involved so well in steering our work. I know because I have met many of them and they told me so.

We will all miss David. As a colleague, David has had to put up with a lot. At times he has been the only bloke in our team – being an 'honorary woman' can't have been easy, and the office just won't be the same without his Friday afternoon singing 'in the club style', his quiet muttering of oaths over the computer. I wish him a great time out there and feel privileged to have worked with him.

Sara McLaughlin

I've worked with David for the last seven years, and it has always been a pleasure. I would really like to say how much I relied on his

help and advice in setting up the Bangladeshi Education Forum in 2003. The fact that the Forum is thriving five years later is partly attributable to this good start and David's continued support.

David was also invaluable in planning the two Bangladeshi conferences, making sure that I did not overlook important details like how many rooms we actually had available and ensuring that the catering was generous enough!

This year, I'll miss his calmness on the day and readiness to do all sorts of last-minute emergency jobs like collecting a troupe of Bangladeshi dancers from EGA. Not to mention losing the only other Welsh EMA consultant ...

Ann E. Jones

*(Senior Secondary Consultant,
and editor)*

NATIONAL EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE - A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

PUPILS OF BANGLADESHI HERITAGE: IDENTITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Wednesday 2 July 2008 - 9.00am - 3.30pm

Venue: Barnsbury Centre, Islington, London N1 1QF

SPEAKERS/PRESENTATIONS:

Dr Jon Wilson (UCL) on the evolving identity of young Bangladeshi people in Britain

Headteacher Abdul-Hayee Murshad on the successful involvement of Bangladeshi parents in school

Panel - successful role models, including Leepu Awlia, Bangladeshi car designer

(currently appearing on the Discovery Channel)

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Senior and middle managers, teachers and all educators in Primary, Secondary & Special Schools

To reserve a place now please contact Joan Clarke, EMAS, Cambridge Education @ Islington
(T) 020 7527 5899 or (E) joan.clarke.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk

COST: In Borough £60.00 Out of Borough £175 FULL CONFERENCE BROCHURE DUE OUT IN LATE APRIL

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Najuuma Ali	Bilingual Community Officer (Somali)
Valbona Aliaj	Bilingual Community Officer (Albanian)
Rakhia Ismail	Bilingual Community Officer (Somali)
Parbin Miah	Bilingual Community Officer (Bengali)
Silvia Hunter	Bilingual Community Officer (Spanish)
Habiba Hirsi	Bilingual Achievement Officer (Somali)
Reba Rahman	Bilingual Community Officer (Bengali)
Nazma Khatum	Bilingual Community Officer (Bengali)

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