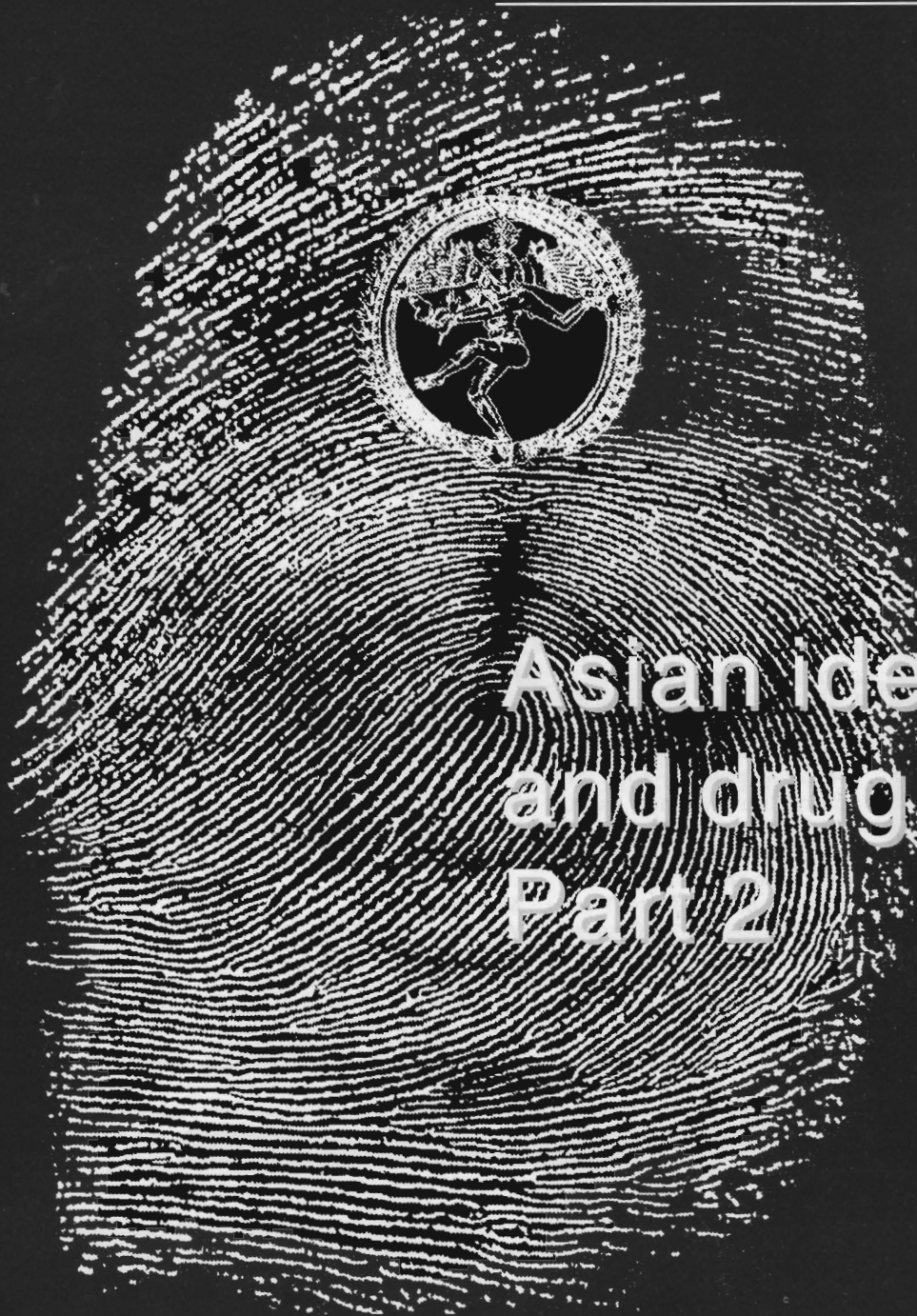


The
BLACK DRUGS WORKERS FORUM

BDWF *news*

No.4



**Asian identity
and drug use
Part 2**

Inside: we continue to discuss Asian drug use by interviewing Mucksood Shaikh co-ordinator of the Asian Drugs Project.

Plus: itmes from around the Black drugs field.

A word from the BDWF

In order for this publication to effectively reflect the diversity of development and passion amongst black professionals in the Drugs Field, it must receive input from you!

Please send us articles, letters, news and views about what's happening in your locality and what you think of the newsletter. Don't allow yourself to think what you are doing isn't of interest or use to anyone else, it is.

We all want to know what our brothers and sisters are doing in order that we can lend our support and also replicate good practice in our own areas. At the moment this publication receives no outside funding what-so-ever, so, not surprisingly, it needs all the support, critical feedback and encouragement it can get. Don't just sit on the fence and watch, take part!

If you would like to contribute to the Newsletter or make comment please contact:

Geraldine Nolan
Chair
BDWF
c/o 42B Mount Pleasant Road
London N17 6TN

All Quiet on

I've been interested in ADP (Asian Drugs Project) for quite some time, ever since its inception. Not least because it's the first service of its kind and it's in Tower Hamlets an area with many problems in terms of racial tension and lack of services for what is a very large Asian population.

Viv Ahmun talks with Muksood Shaikh

VA

So Muksood, how long have you been involved with ADP?

Muksood

It all started off about 4 years ago with Asian professionals in the Tower Hamlets area like myself. We noticed that a lot of the young Asian men we were coming into contact with were using heroin. We were quite concerned simply because a number of them were 14 or under, and when we asked them if they had been to any of the drug agencies, if they'd been down there for any support, if they had been helpful. The first question just eliminated the rest. Most of them had never been to a drug agency and didn't know of one. We went to the drug agencies and asked them if they knew how big the problem was in our community when it came to Class A drug use, and most of them were unable to tell us. What we then started to do was to question how they were working, like how many Asian drug workers were there? None. How much research was being done around Asians use of Class A drugs? None. They had addressed the EOP issue in their organisations when it came to gender balance and sexuality but when it came to Asian workers they all of a sudden became 'colour blind'.

We carried on like this for 2 years, asking them to employ Asian workers and look at the Asian perspective in the drugs field and they carried on ignoring us and closing the doors tighter, so in the end we set up the Asian Drugs Project. We had to lobby the Health Authority for the funding to carry out a needs assessment of the local community, funding was given for 1 year.

in terms of getting them into detox. In the space of 3 months we were able to get 22 young Asian men into in-patient detox. Once they noticed how many people we were getting through the system they started to slow it down, which created a waiting list. When a Class A user comes up and says "I want to come off today Muksood" what do you do? You say hold on, stabilise, reduce a little bit, but then some of our clients were waiting up to

They had addressed the EOP issue in their organisations when it came to gender balance and sexuality but when it came to Asian workers they all of a sudden became 'colour blind'.

VA

What was your priority back then?

Muksood

We had already built up a relationship with young Class A drug users in our community and once I was in post we went out actively trying to reach them, to see what we could do

2 months. So we set up an informal detox where they would stay for 2 weeks with an informal structure and support.

VA

What other issues did you encounter in the early days of ADP?

Muksood

apa

apa reduces the harm caused by drugs and alcohol in communities.

apa is a rapidly expanding national charity providing quality culturally sensitive services to drug users. The Open Doors Project is based in central Nottingham and occupies 2 sites. The innovative Outreach Team deliver a comprehensive service in the community particularly focusing on the needs of crack cocaine users. With funding from the National Lotteries Charity Board we wish to create the following new post.

Female Outreach Workers • Salary £16,500 + benefits

Applications are invited for the post of Female Outreach worker to join the team at Open Doors.

The successful applicant will have:

- a minimum of 2 years experience working with drug users particularly women.
- proven experience of working with stimulant users.
- knowledge and experience of the issues facing drug users.
- knowledge and experience of working to a harm minimisation model.
- ability and willingness to work unsocial hours.

THIS POST IS ADVERTISED UNDER SECTION 7(2)(E) OF THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT AND BEING A WOMAN IS A GENUINE OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR THIS POSITION. For further information and an application form please contact Claire Savage at apa Central Office, 67-69 Cowcross Street, Smithfield London EC1M 6BP 0171 251 5860 (24 hour answerphone of Fax 0171 251 5890).

Closing date for receipt of complete applications is Friday September 20th 1996

the Asian Front ?

Some GPs were telling young Asian users "No you can't take your methadone home with you, you have to drink it on the spot". One agency referred a client to a GP who made the young kid drink his methadone in the chemist and he just fainted.

A user has got his/her own way of using Methadone, so we talked to some GPs to try and get them to let the users have their methadone weekly, on condition that it was stored and administered by ADP when the client required their dose, between 9am and 9pm. But we were aware that there could be problems with this arrangement.

VA

How did that leave you feeling?

Muksood

ADP wasn't institutionalised, wasn't controlled by white bureaucracy, it was on a ground level. Drug agencies in the area where saying "you can't talk to the parents, you mustn't talk to the elder brothers and sisters". But they were coming to ADP, mums and dads and older brothers, coming to talk about their young children or their brothers, Kadeja would go and meet the parents.

VA

You mean Kadeja your Chairperson ?

Muksood

At that point she was a volunteer worker. She went into the parents' homes explained what addiction was, what withdrawal symptoms were, and what they could do to support and understand the situation, so when the user came in there wasn't a closed door, there wasn't aggression there wasn't a lack of understanding, there was knowledge and information. Kadeja developed a unique style of work, encouraging mothers to discuss their childrens drug use in a safe women-only environment.

VA

What happened to the research you were originally funded to do?

Muksood

We finished it. 3 months ago we got a letter from our funder, the Health Authority, saying they were dismissing the report because it wasn't factual. Turns out they'd had two letters of complaint. These two organisations didn't write to us, the authors, or challenge us. If we were wrong we would have changed it. Instead, they wrote to our funders. We

asked our funders to show us the complaints, but they said they couldn't because they didn't have permission. We still haven't heard anything from either of the projects yet. We met with the Health Authority and were informed that they were dismissing the complaints and as far as they were concerned our research was fine.

VA

What did that whole episode tell you?

Muksood

What it showed me is that white agencies can make a complaint about us to our

Kadeja developed a unique style of work, encouraging mothers to discuss their childrens drug use in a safe women-only environment.

funder without even consulting us and based upon these 'complaints' alone, our funder would be willing to throw away a year's work, and the potential for developing an effective service for the local Asian communities. →

Crack

The Blenheim Project

Day Programme

● who is it for ?

The programme is open for anybody whose main drug of use is Crack or Cocaine, who wish to stop using. You need to be over 18 years of age and resident within the London area.

● how long does it last ?

The programme runs from Monday to Friday and lasts a total of 12 weeks, starting at 10.30AM and finishing at 4.00PM. We can work with parents who have child care responsibilities and there is also an after care service.

● what's on offer ?

ALTERNATIVE DETOX, HELP AND SUPPORT, ACUPUNCTURE, COUNSELLING, LIFE SKILLS HOMEOPATHY, ART, RELAPSE PREVENTION, DETOX TEAS

● how to make a referral ?

You can refer yourself by telephoning us on- 0181-960-5599

Or come into the Drop-in service which runs from: Monday-Friday 12.00PM -3.00PM

There is no obligation. You can speak to someone to find out what's on offer.

NATIONAL OUTREACH WORKERS CONFERENCE

Liverpool

2-5 September 1996

Further details and registration available from:

The conference takes place at
Liverpool University's
Carnatic Hall

John Newcombe
Merseyside Drugs Council
27 Hope Street
Liverpool L1 9BQ

The full programme includes
presentations, workshops and
exhibitions

Tel: 0151 708 6626
Fax 0151 708 7603

All Quiet on The Asian Front ? part 2 contd.

VA

What do you think is the difference between a traditional drug service and the ADP?

Muksood

Our management is made up of the community it serves. They know the needs just as well as the co-ordinator, because they live on the estates, they demand a certain amount and quality of work, and this is reflected in our work with clients and with other agencies, through developing EOPs and

community workers and individuals coming down from Leeds, Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester and Bradford. We've had people from all over the place, asking what the formula is. The formula is pro Black.

VA

What percentage of the Tower Hamlets population is Asian?

Muksood

Its about 43%.

VA

Where are Asian women in all of this and how do they figure

VA

How would you reach Asian women?

Muksood

Through Asian women workers, building up a relationship with the women out there, I don't think a man can do that.

VA

How many paid members of staff do you have?

Muksood

There are 2 of us, myself and Shak and we get funded for

work, youth work and drugs work. I've enjoyed it. 10 years ago I'd go into a meeting and be unsure of myself.

VA

I think it is fair to say that there are many agencies across the country who would fall over themselves to have your focus and commitment pushing their agenda forward.

VA

I'd just like to conclude this interview by saying that I think ADP is an important project, that has broken new ground. Thank you Muksood, for giving

I think it is fair to say that there are many agencies across the country who would fall over themselves to have your focus and commitment pushing their agenda forward.



encouraging anti-racist practice.

VA

So would it be fair to say ADP is a culturally specific project that is truly community based?

Muksood

Yes.

VA

Can you think of any other areas in the country that would benefit from a service like yours?

Muksood

Yes, we've had Asian

in your services?

Muksood

To be honest, when it comes to the day-to-day work, to going out there and reaching out we don't have any female workers. We can go into schools and youth clubs and get across the knowledge and information around substance misuse, but we do need Asian women workers in order to develop work with women. Until we've got an Asian woman employed we can't even think about doing quality work for women drug users, family members and friends.

our wages, but we have to fundraise for all the other running costs through projects such as drugs literature and the development of CD ROM programme for school children on drug abuse.

VA

Where do you think the ADP will be 2 to 3 years from now?

Muksood

I hope I'll still have my positivity, If I've got my positivity it won't really matter where I am. I wish I could say I'll still be in Tower Hamlets, in the last 12 years. I've done outreach work, education


up your time to let people all over the country know what it's like for a Black manager running a Black project on the front line of one of the most historically racist boroughs in Britain.

Muksood

I would like to thank all those that have supported me in Tower Hamlets and the Black Drug Workers Forum.

In the next issue we will be talking to Kadeja about some of the issues affecting Asian women.





The BDWF now has a pool of highly qualified Black counsellors, trainers, consultants and researchers all of whom are eager to meet your needs.

If you are having difficulties recruiting quality Black workers or producing 'Black centric' material give us a call and let us take the headache out of your work.

Call: Geraldine Nolan 0181-801-9266



sensual Design Co. Ltd

Designers of the BDWF News
Creators of quality designs for quality issues

0171 278 5133 Tel. Fax, Modem