

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Bradford</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C19</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> TUC develops engagement projects with minority ethnic and new migrant communities</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Research at Bradford identified barriers encountered by trade unions when recruiting black and minority ethnic (BME) and migrant workers within Yorkshire and the Humber. Specific recommendations were made which influenced the Trade Union Congress (TUC) policy on BME recruitment, community engagement and anti-fascist campaigns. Several affiliated trade unions adopted research recommendations to develop community approaches. The recommendations were subsequently integrated into a national TUC policy document, Swords of Justice and Civil Pillars, resulting in a policy change at national level in respect of community engagement.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Building on established reputations with the TUC, Dr Rob Perrett, (Research Assistant 2004-2007, Reader 2007-present) and Miguel Martinez Lucio (Professor 2003-2007) were awarded grants by Yorkshire and Humber regional TUC between 2005 and 2008 to research how unions could improve representation of BME and new migrant workers amongst their staff. The initial research incorporated a survey of voluntary community groups to establish three things; first, where did BME and migrant workers go to for employment advice; second, what was their view of trade unions and; third, what was the potential for building alliances between trade unions and community groups. The surveys were complemented by qualitative interviews with directors and project workers from BME and community groups. A research report entitled “<i>Trade Unions and BME Communities: Employment Representation and Community Organisation in a Context of Change</i>” was published and widely distributed. The findings were that, even though trade unions were still perceived as ‘white’ workplace based organisations they were not viewed negatively and there was real potential for collaboration and community engagement (1,2).</p> <p>The research findings led to a second project which was commissioned to identify and publicise best practice cases where unions were working with community groups. This report entitled “<i>Social Inclusion and Representation Strategies in the Workplace and Community: BME workers and innovative trade union responses</i>”, recommended continued support for anti-fascist groups, community advice centres and community learning centres (3,4).</p> <p>The final project commissioned by Yorkshire and the Humber TUC aimed to identify the benefits trade unions had generated by providing training or, for example, language skills, to migrant workers. Again the research (5, 6) recommended continued collaboration and engagement beyond the workplace. The research was published as a TUC research monograph entitled <i>Migrant Workers and the Recognition of their Qualification and Skills</i> and a different report published as a Unionlearn (autonomous education division of the National TUC) research paper entitled <i>Migrant Workers in the Labour Market: The Role of Unions in the Recognition of skills and Qualifications</i>.</p> <p>The research showed that, in order to effectively engage with a diverse workforce, a different strategy was required and identified five recommendations which were made to the Trade Unions Congress (TUC). The recommendations in the research report were disseminated to trade unions in various ways. They were initially presented to regional general secretaries affiliated to the TUC through the Executive Committee of the regional TUC as well as the Regional Council at the Annual General Meeting. Presentations and specific collaborations were undertaken with individual unions through work with the TUC’s Racial Awareness and Equality Forum. The recommendations proposed a move from workplace-based recruitment strategies towards collaboration with community and faith groups, learning centres and the wider community in addition to broadening links with BME communities and developing effective partnerships within the region.</p>

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The recommendations were adopted by unions including UNITE, the GMB, the BFAWU and Community (the union).

### 3. References to the research

1. Martínez Lucio M, Perrett R. (2009) Strategies in search of structures: The real world of community unionism in relation to Black and Minority Ethnic communities in eds. McBride, J. and Greenwood I. *Community Unionism: A Comparative Analysis of Concepts and Contexts*, Palgrave MacMillan. 75-92.
2. Perrett R, Martínez Lucio M. (2008) The Cult of Learning, Trade Union Renewal and Social Inclusion in a Marketised Regulatory Context: A case study of a learning centre in the UK. *Employee Relations* 30(6): 623-639.
3. Martínez Lucio M, Perrett R. (2009) The Diversity and Politics of Trade Unions' Responses to Minority Ethnic and Migrant Workers: The Context of the UK. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 30(3): 324-347.
4. Martínez Lucio M, Perrett R. (2009) Meanings and Dilemmas in Community Unionism: Trade union community initiatives and black and minority ethnic groups in the United Kingdom. *Work, Employment and Society* 23(4): 693-710.
5. Perrett R, Martínez Lucio M, McBride J, Craig S. (2012) Trade Union learning strategies and immigrant workers: Policies and practice in a neo-liberal environment. *Urban Studies* 49(3): 526 – 544.
6. Perrett R, Martínez Lucio M. (2009) Trade Unions and Relations with Black and Minority Ethnic Community Groups in the United Kingdom: The development of new alliances? *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(8): 1295-1314.

All five journal references have been published in peer-reviewed journals including some with 3\* and 4\* ABS ratings.

The following grants also evidence the quality of the research:

British Academy (Mid-Career Fellowship): 2012-2013, £90,036, PI Perrett  
 TUC: 2005-2008, *TUC labour representation and ethnicity project*, £7,504, PI Martinez Lucio

### 4. Details of the impact

This research has demonstrated impact at the micro, meso and macro levels of the labour movement; first in terms of individual union projects within communities; second through the development of regional alliances and projects with the Yorkshire and the Humber regional TUC; and finally by contributing to the development of National TUC policy towards engagement with migrant workers and a community engagement approach.

Different unions implemented the five recommendations resulting from the Bradford research in different ways with the overarching goal of building alliances within the community and establishing community links. The research report and recommendations led to UNITE employing a full-time community co-ordinator based in the Yorkshire and the Humber region. This co-ordinator set up branches and is currently collaborating with regional Citizens' Advice Bureaux. As a result of this research, the GMB within the region recruited a part-time officer to implement these changes within the region. Using information and recommendations from the research report, 'Leeds Trades Union Council' held a stall at the 'Leeds West Indian Carnival', to disseminate information and build community links. This impact was replicated at the 'Bradford Mela' and 'One Sheffield Many Cultures' (a).

The second and third research reports had considerable impact at the meso level as the regional TUC took forward proposals in terms of regional level alliances led by the TUC and alliances around anti-fascism campaigns within the region. The report entitled "*Social Inclusion and Representation Strategies in the Workplace and Community: BME Workers and Innovative Trade Union Responses*" forms part of the regional TUC's strategic policy work-plan (May 2013). It has been, and continues to be used to provide the basis for an innovative collaboration between the regional TUC, Leeds Citizen's Advice Bureau and Leeds Credit Union (a), to provide alternative financial assistance and information to the local community, so that the TUC can help those most adversely affected by cuts, especially BME groups and young people. The TUC are planning similar projects for other localities within the Yorkshire and Humber region.

In terms of anti-fascist campaigning, the regional TUC used the lists of potential collaborative partners and best practice case studies presented in the reports as a basis for involvement and initial contact with a range of community groups. A Black Workers' Forum convenor has been appointed to take the 'anti-racist work' forward and develop links between the forum members, anti-fascist groups, community learning centres and other regional communities. This has led to high profile marches and demonstrations around the region.

Research recommendations also informed specific projects around anti-racism. For example, the Black Workers' Forum Convenor connected the BME community in Leeds with the Professional Footballers' Association to promote links between the trade unions and BME communities through 5-a-side football teams. A presentation by 'Show Racism the Red Card' was given on behalf of the forum at the Black History Month event in Leeds in 2012. Finally, as a result of the project research findings, the regional TUC became involved with 'The Citizen's League', co-ordinated by a former MP for Leeds West. The regional general secretary of the TUC says, "*The results of the [research] reports have been especially useful to this Forum in developing this work and its promotion across our regional communities... The findings have been invaluable in enabling the TUC in Yorkshire and the Humber to re-establish community links; to promote the work of individual trade unions within the region and to introduce new members*" (a).

Finally at the macro level, reports were presented to the General Secretary of the National TUC. The reports produced national impact by informing national policy. Recommendations were incorporated in a national policy document designed to change the labour movements' approach to engaging with minority ethnic communities (b).

Reflecting on the 'Swords of Justice' document the Senior Policy Advisor for the TUC states that, "*there has been a long-standing positive impact of the academic work of Dr Rob Perrett and Professor Miguel Martinez Lucio on building the capacity of the TUC and the wider union movement to improve its representation of black and minority (BME) members and to increase union involvement within the BME community. This has positively impacted on TUC policy and practice in this sphere at both the regional and national level*" (c).

As a result of their research, in 2012, Perrett, Martinez Lucio and others founded the Voice and Equality Research and Action Network (VERN) with the aim of providing a democratic and radically innovative space for debate on the collective dynamics within BME communities, bringing together academics, government and trade unions (d).

The research at Bradford has also had a significant influence on learning opportunities for BME communities provided by the TUC, and on the recognition of the skills, qualification and experience of migrant workers, through reports containing specific recommendations (e). These recommendations have significantly influenced the policies and practice of UnionLearn, the organization established by the TUC to provide ongoing support for union-led learning in England (e).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- a. Testimonial 1 –TUC Regional General Secretary, Yorkshire and the Humber
- b. TUC (2010), *Swords Of Justice & Civic Pillars: The case for greater engagement between British trade unions and community organisations*, (November). Published by the Trades Union Congress, London WC1, (November), Printed by Mastercolour.
- c. Testimonial 2 – Senior Policy Advisor, the TUC and Unionlearn
- d. Voice and Equality Research and Action Network (VERN) (<http://vern.org.uk>). The web page provides a repository for relevant research reports and includes those outlined above in section 2 and 3, as well as work from the national equality and human rights advisory organisation BRAP (The Birmingham Race Action Partnership). <http://vern.org.uk/documents/research-documents>
- e. Unionlearn ([www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)) is the learning site of the TUC. The integration of ethnic and migrant communities research into their learning materials and building the capacity of the TUC is corroborated by papers featured in their Research Series, including reports: Martínez Lucio M, Perrett R, McBride J, Craig S. *Migrant Workers in the Labour Market*. Available at: <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/about/research-into-union-learning>

Martínez Lucio M, Perrett R, McBride J, Craig S. (2008) *Migrant Workers and the Recognition of their Qualifications and Skills: Engaging the vulnerable workforce and extending the learning revolution to the question of qualifications and experience*. The TUC. Available at: <http://vern.org.uk/documents/research-documents>

Martínez Lucio M, Perrett R, Craig S. (2008) *Trade unions and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers: Organising through learning and inclusion strategies – Cases from the North West of England*. Bradford University School of Management and the TUC. Available at: <http://vern.org.uk/documents/research-documents>