



Recruiting, Training and Retaining African, Caribbean and Asian Teachers – An Initial Response.



N INITIAL RESPONSE TO GABRIELLA'S REPORT

Gabriella's academic research gives us evidence of the barriers that African, Caribbean and Asian people face before, when and as they apply for Initial Teacher Training. It's not a report that tells us what to do; it's a report that tells us what the problems are and it offers us a challenge.

Now that we have the evidence it supplies, those of us who run schools and other education organisations need to consider what we are going to do with it, and what kind of changes we need to make to bring the barriers it articulates down. Clearly, doing nothing is not an option. The status quo is far from acceptable. But, more than that, the changes required will need time and thought as well as action.

Seeking change at the heart of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) is about organisations **understanding how racial and other injustices intersect, it's about removing organisational obstacles that block opportunity and about how our organisations can learn to be truly inclusive of all.** Seeking change, the report indicates, starts with the empathy to listen to others long enough to hear their voices, imagining the world from their perspectives and

: The report takes place in a context in which structural racism and intersectional injustice exist. What is really meant by these words and phrases?

Structural racism is what it says it is: a structure (in our case a school or organisational structure) that is organised in such a way that it excludes substantial numbers of people from minority backgrounds from taking part in it.

Intersectional injustices are injustices which combine to create layers of disadvantage. This means that real solutions must take into account all aspects of oppression (e.g., history, race, gender, economic, education) as well as the systems that produce and perpetuate that oppression. Only in doing this can we understand how those forces intersect to create insidious, deep-rooted barriers to justice. This is a big task which will take time but it's important to acknowledge that the issues of exclusion and under representation are multi layered.

Then, let's get over ourselves: The problem with such a statement about structural racism is that white people often experience a sense of guilt when it is pointed out that many of the structures they populate are mostly made up of white people and, intentionally or unintentionally, have excluded people from other backgrounds. Our

