@bmeskillwales #bmeskills2020

BME Skills Project Seminar Report

'Innovation, Resilience and Sustainability: BAME sector in Wales'

Thank you to everyone who attended the End of Project Seminar on Zoom. The event was a chance to have a look back at the project and the work that has been undertaken. Were also able to look current situation and think specifically about the impact of COVID-19 on the BAME sector in Wales and look at how we can move forward

We were delighted to be joined by Jane Hutt to help us launch the 'Innovation, Resilience and Sustainability: BAME sector in Wales' Report which was written by Karl Murray and supported by Dr Roiyah Saltus. The report highlighted the challenges of that the BAME Sector has faced during the ongoing pandemic.

We were also able to have 4 Break out sessions to have some lively debates on what the next step could be in a number of different areas that could support BAME organisations on their development path.

Opening Statements

Rocio Cifuentes EYST CEO welcomed everyone to the seminar and explained the plan for the day. She discussed the inception of the project and gave an overview of the project (Please see below for more information)

The BME Skills Project

BME people have the skills and expertise to help themselves, they just have to matched and supported to help each other!

The BME Skills Project is a unique collaboration between four organisations, EYST, C3SC (Cardiff), SCVS (Swansea) and AVOW (Wrexham). The project aims to support the growth of BME community groups by matching them with skilled volunteer mentors from professional and student backgrounds. The Project is a 3-year project led by EYST and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, through their Third Sector Skills Programme.

The BME Skills Project started in January 2018 and set out to recruit and support BME community organisations on their development journey. In order to do this Project officers employed by and based at each CVC would support organisations to undergo an organisation health check, modelling best practice within the third sector. The health check enabled organisations to identify areas of need, from which they could be matched with skilled volunteers to help support with specific areas or act a critical friend for the organisations.

During the last three years we supported a total of 48 organisations with a variety of topics including Governance, funding, policies (including Safeguarding) and outreach.

As a result of the Covid pandemic the project had to change its model to provide organisations with more bespoke support with their more immediate needs. This included a weekly project update including the latest information about funding and training opportunities, regularly zoom training sessions, inviting a range of expert speakers on a variety of topics to help the groups in their development, including Environment Impact, Third Sector Quality Marks, Motivational Theories, Anti-Racism

And Trustee Behaviours. 23 organisations benefited from this online support and we had some very good feedback on the sessions.

Some of the groups who have taken part in the programme include: African Community Centre (Swansea), Polish Integration Support Centre (Wrexham); Cardiff Kurdish Community (Cardiff); Women Seeking Sanctuary Support Group (WSSAG) (Cardiff); Iberian and Latin American Association Swansea (Swansea). And many more! **@BMESkillsWales**

'The BAME Sector in Wales: State of the Sector Report – Launch

We were very excited to be joined by Dr Roiyah Saltus who introduced Karl Murray the author of **The BAME Sector in Wales: State of the Sector Report**
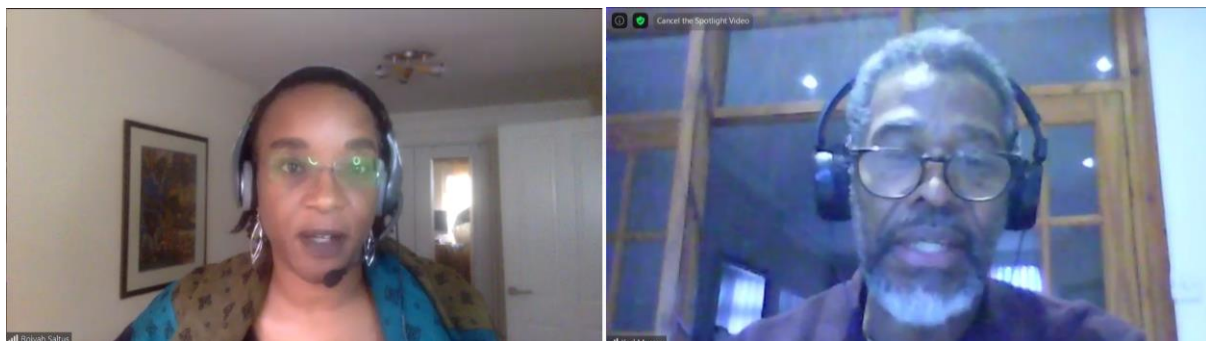
Karl gave an overview of the report, including the key finds and methodology

The report in full can be accessed in the link below

[The BAME Sector in Wales: State of the Sector Report](#)

Key findings

Against the aims of the survey, based on the evidence of those who responded, our key findings are:

Aim 1: To build a more accurate picture of the growing concerns and impact of the pandemic, during and as lock down measures begin to ease.
a) Over two-thirds (68%) of respondents felt anxious about the impact COVID-19 was having on their personal lives.

b) Responding organisations were concerned about the likelihood of a mental health crisis emerging as a result and consequence of the 'lockdown' measures that had been put in place. Respondents' 'stories' captured well how COVID-19 was impacting on beneficiaries; indeed, they echoed very much the outcomes from the EYST discussions that had taken place in April and as such, this is an area of need that is likely to be with us the longer the crisis deepens and is protracted.

c) The reach of organisations should not be ignored as the loss of service delivery due to the cessation and/or closure of projects will have major impact on beneficiaries. As the survey did not seek to understand the services being delivered by organisations, we were not able to assess or provide a determination of the impact of service delivery on beneficiaries; however, the range of services provided offered an indication of possible and/or potential reach, which should not be ignored as any loss of service delivery will have noticeable impact for those beneficiaries being supported.

d) Seventy percent (70%) of respondents indicated that they did not have any reserves or sufficient funding to last for up to 3mths. This suggests that the longer the crisis goes on, the more likely that more organisations will be badly affected, with BAME led organisations more likely to be worst impacted due to the fact that the majority tend to be micro or small sized organisations.

e) One of the challenges that the 'third sector' faces, is that of an agreed definition. This suggests that infrastructure organisations, such as WCVA amongst others, may wish to develop a clearer definition of the sector and organisational size that better reflects the BAME sector profile in Wales, which could be used to determine priorities for support, especially with respect to micro and small organisations.

Aim 2: To capture the ways in which BAME community groups and organisations are working innovatively.
a) BAME organisations were able to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic which reflected: 1) Innovation
2) Resilience
3) Sustainability

b) Organisations were adapting well to new approaches in order to better serve and support their clients/beneficiaries though also wanting to understand what the new normal would look and feel like. Despite the challenges facing individuals and their organisations, respondents highlighted areas of creative practice in 'coming together' as communities sharing a common concern. Many respondents indicated that they were working in partnerships with other organisations as they now found themselves in the same position: *"We have already started to form partnerships with EYST, Race Council Cymru and REF, but we are more active with the medical school at the moment so would love to develop skills."* [respondent]

c) Access to and an ability to engage with digital technology was an area of support that respondents indicated they needed. An illustrative comment stated: *"BAME groups are used to face to face support as it builds the trust between the service provider and the client. The impact is that we now have to overcome IT barriers."*

b) Evidence showed that organisations sought non-financial support such as advice, information and guidance from a range of infrastructure bodies on matters relating to the challenges being faced as a result of the pandemic and the longer-term sustainability of their organisation. The three main infrastructure support bodies where respondents sought advice and support were:
1) EYST (53%),

2) WCVA (41%); and

3) Local Authority (29%).

c) Respondents were clear about the types of support and development opportunities that they would like to see in place going forward. The following eight areas of needs were identified:

1) A targeted approach to the sector, which might mean targeting support specifically at micro and small organisations;

2) Capacity building support programme or approach

3) Fundraising generally and specifically (i.e. emergency funding and reporting flexibilities from funders);

4) Networking and collaborative partnership working;

5) Information, advice and guidance support;

6) Support work around policy and campaigning;

7) Support work with mental health challenges;

8) Research and evaluation support.

d) Many organisations (56%) did not have in place a business continuity plan, which suggests further work may be required in supporting organisations to consider continuity and contingency planning objectives for their organisations. Given that the majority of responding organisations were 'medium size' according the NCVO's definition (i.e. £101,000 to £999,999), it was surprising that less than half had in place contingency and preparatory plans, especially given the funding range indicated.

Aim 3: To inform funders and policy makers on responding to the crisis as it impacts on BAME communities and organisations.

a) The evidence suggests that support to organisations fell into one of two broad support categories:

1) Support from and through infrastructure supporting bodies; and

2) Support from and through funders targeting resources to fledgling charitable organisations.

b) Organisations were facing a significant degree of precarity and uncertainty, with respondents highlighting their deep concerns over their inability to sustain the organisation beyond the minimum charity commission's three months sustainability threshold. An implication for funders is perhaps best summarised by the following comment: "*For some of our online youth education provisions, we have had to use the 'normal grant' funding to continue to pay the youth workers. When this runs out, unless we can secure additional funding, the normal youth club programme will need to end.*"

c) The flexibility and emergency support provided by funders - national and local - was recognised and appreciated by respondents. As one respondent explained: "*...flexibility from funders has been provided from day 1, which is extremely helpful. Flexibility from funders is key and lack thereof by many funders is one of the most debilitating things for the third sector in general.*"

d) Forty-seven percent (47%) of organisations received short term 'Emergency COVID-19' related funding while 41% saw no decrease in their funding overall with only 12% experiencing delay in the 'main funding' programme decisions. On the whole, the emerging picture was that funders were seen as flexible and cognisant of the challenges being faced by the voluntary and community social enterprise sector in particular BAME organisations. However, some respondents indicated concern over guidance and the application process and whether some of the flexibilities applied to them:

"*There should have been some clear and easy to access funding avenues available for places of worship organisations like ours to apply for resilience funds, but unfortunately we have been left to fund ourselves using our reserves.*"

e) Respondents indicated that partnership and collaborative working may offer sustainability going forward. An implication is that funders perhaps should be looking at opportunities that could support local partnerships or collaboratives. This respondent makes the point succinctly: *"In partnership with other local charities we organised a Covid19 Food project with Butetown Community Centre where we requested food donations from local businesses. The community responded very well to this and the project is up and running whereby food packs are delivered to some of those who are vulnerable, elderly and those in isolation once a week. However, there are still many vulnerable people who need more help. Better links with like-minded organisations will accomplish more together."*

Deputy Minister & Chief Whip Jane Hutt

We were very happy to Welcome Deputy Minister & Chief Whip Jane Hutt to join our Seminar and help us launch the report. We were encouraged to hear about the ongoing support and effort the Welsh Government is putting in for both BAME Communities and organisations and we are excited to see how this plays out in both the long and short term.

BME Skills Overview

Lloyd Williams BME Skills Project Co-ordinator highlighted the work of the project in more detail. For the first 2 ¼ years of the project a model of support was provided to BME organisation based on groups going through an organizational health check with the support of Project officers then being matched with volunteers to support on their needs identified in the health Check.

The project model has shifted due to pandemic to offer more bespoke support based on a centralized model of Weekly/Bi- Weekly Zoom session delivered firstly by the team then secondly but external experts. This was supported by a weekly project update that shared

news about funding, training opportunities and other forms of COVID-19 support that was available

The slideshow in full can be viewed in the link below

[BME Skills Project Overview Presentation](#)

Break out Sessions

1. What can/ should Funders do to support BAME Community Groups? (Lead by Alison Pritchard WCVA Sustainable Funding Manager)

   Discussion included the following ideas

- Funding panel do not having knowledge about different BME organisations doing the same thing, but are different in cultural perspective.
- Languages barriers and the need for gate keeper organisation representation on panels
- Diversifying funding panel to help them understand the context and content of application submitted
- The need for one to one support for BAME organisation leads to help them understand funding criteria.
- The need for additional support to complete funding applications, such as open days and presentations to help understand what funders want
- Application guidelines can be a barrier, as there are lot of jargon and could be written in a different simple format.
- BME organisations must be allowed to apply for any funding whether it is for 'mainstream' or 'equal opportunity'.

  LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION
- Lloyd Foundation is on a learning journey and tries to address complex social issues across BME lead organisations. Its trustee board has appointed two individuals with BME background as consultants to advise and support the foundation in teams of training, racial barriers and awareness of what BME charity groups face when applying for funding. This is because the foundation received fewer funding application during pre-covid and has to change its strategy. To promote racial equity the foundation invited BME lead organisations to understand their challenges and made sure that organisations applying for funding have more 60% of their trustees from black communities.
- Lloyd foundation is targeting BME group who have never received funding from them.

- To be eligible the group have to show that their work fit in the complex social issues such as mental health, homelessness, sexual abuse, falls in line with Lloyd 11 complex social issues and across any charity working within BME communities.
- They also recognise all strategic work that other organisations are doing to provide support to excluded communities, in terms of tackling hate crimes and other issues prevalent in that community.
- The foundation has supported asylum seeking/refugee BME organisation and at the moment has 12 Wales charities going to panel
- New roles has been created to support funded charities with the first 12 months in developments programme, and the recruitment process targeted individuals from BME communities but most are less successful.
- Webinars are run to help groups/organisation understand and complete funding applications.

  Alison advised that group/organisations should read funding application guidelines and contact funder representatives for support.

2. What can/should Welsh Government do to support BAME community Groups (Lead by Ginger Weigand – EYST Research and Policy, All Wales BAME Engagement Programme)

Notes from Discussion

Samina: WG needs to demonstrate awareness of the needs of the BAME communities- which needs are **being** met, which ones **can be** met, how to use the information to allocate funding to identify needs that can be met

Deb Cooze: Funding does not necessarily imply **understanding** of the issues- for example, despite allocation of funds to families for laptops to promote digital inclusion during pandemic, needs were not met due to various reasons (some schools did not have list of students without access to laptops at home, some families did not have broadband)- needed CYP Team to point out these gaps to local authorities- important to understand is the funding filtering to people who needed it

Samina: Certain services and needs can only be met by 3rd sector due to their closeness with communities while others met best by statutory bodies- public and 3rd sector both need to work with a focus on **outcomes**

Roiyah: Ways of looking at 3ʳᵈ sector need to be revisited, need an equal platform- models of care, expertise (need to be showcased?)

Debanjali: During pandemic, many community-based organisations seem to have lost contact with their clients, e.g., in the field of domestic violence perpetrators and victims were together at home, leaving little opportunities for victims to seek support; these victims have little permission to go out on their own, have limited access to phone/ data, had no chances of taking children to school or attend GP appointments.

Deb Cooze: 3ʳᵈ sector organisations are sometimes competing with each other

Samina: Need to work in **collaboration**; WG should not decide which 3ʳᵈ sector organisation should stay, a framework is needed...statutory framework might...

Roiyah: WG needs to ensure every organisation that is funded by it has an **equality** agenda- there needs to be **monitoring** in place

Sorupa: **Accountability** is important

Samina: Organisations do not have enough monitoring

Deb Cooze: The fora during pandemic has been helpful for organisations to form new **networks and partnerships**, this should not be lost

Recap from Ginger:

- WG needs to understand which needs can be met by voluntary sector
- There needs to be accountability for how money gets spent
- Dichotomy between statutory and voluntary sectors
- Take into account models of care and delivery that are in place
- How to build networks + consortia – WG should not decide which groups last

Samina: Criteria for WG funding vs outcomes and outputs (qualitative + quantitative); there needs to be **models of delivery** that BAME organisations can offer

Eleri: Pandemic has been an opportunity to do things differently; says she is hesitant for having in place 'statutory requirements' on partnership working - from own her own experience she says it can bring people together but can also be challenging

Roiyah: Reflecting on "Communities First" – role of small groups (on issues such as loneliness) that acted as glue for community and provided preventative services- need to bring back understanding of **community wellbeing** in society; with respect to funding, we need to include in the criteria for funding, **social justice** and ..... community development principle

Ginger: Making funding available for **micro-organisations**

Deb Cooze: Groups in Cardiff applied to WCVA but got no reply, they do small, very **targeted** work, bigger groups such as WCVA seem to be very far away for such very small groups

Eleri: Can WCVA hand hold small organisations, help in drafting bids?

Roiyah: Small organisations might not even consider submitting an application due to the amount of paperwork involved; there needs to be innovative ways of reaching out to people to enhance community well-being e.g. small festivals that need small amount of funding – funding bodies need to "**re-dance** to the tune of small organisations" instead of making them dance to their tunes!

3. What can/should Third Sector Infrastructure Bodies to support BAME Community Groups? (Lead by John Gallanders AVOW CEO)
   Notes from the Discussion

1. What can/should Third Sector Infrastructure Bodies to support BAME Community Groups

   What is the infrastructure organisation? Not necessary on the front line, But supporting

   What groups? Infrastructure is building, creating?

   Is anyone feel part of Infrastructure? Yes

   Councils, Voluntary organisations,

   Have structure to make training, point in the right direction,

Providing a range of information, signposting, establish networks, leading to other organisations, not only providing but also training,

Do you feel you get support? Are they providing all support that they are promising?

Volunteers, essential support is providing, so much from Council support and people, the recent development of funding, support creating more event platform, more welcome, unified place to be and work, knowledge is providing with quality standards,

Is support providing enough support for BME?

a) What is an Infrastructure organisation – CVC, WCVA, TSSW, EYST, RCC?

Significant variations of organisations and structure

Collective support network

Is any specific network / specific organisations for BME?

EYST,

Need for the national organisation but all organisations that participate, support BME is creating sort of that structure, the 'pockets' of support and structure is creating

Funding is important

Connectivity how we cooperate that in the future BME led organisation how they can be supported and these that need developing and support. How services adapt to BME People

b) Do you currently engage with them – if so what support do you obtain?

Swansea provides support in Swansea, feeling allies, work harder to work to serve and learn through the project like BME Skills. Some partnerships are tangible to other partnerships

c) If you do not engage with Infrastructure Groups any reasons?

To receive support

To give support

d) What do you need from the Infrastructure?

Any specific support that can be provided in the future?

One thing that could be done differently?

Existing Knowledge Hubs

The managing level - can be improved in housing

Recruitment on management level

Financial security of BME organisations, insurance that org can be and will be supported

Any burning issues regarding Infrastructure?

Do you think that infrastructure groups should campaign more for the government?

It is essential to be on that level; customers use our services, to be able to communicate to Welsh Gov. we have a direct voice, security past 31 March is crucial, the security of funding and partnership on a local and national level, what will happen in next 12 months, middle organisation, mid-size org need to keep campaigning, we need to utilise the voice of org, increase funding, linking up organisations that contact us for support and pass the financial support to support smaller org and national org should support local organisations

Support and ally third sector

Chat box:

In Swansea we also have some local, Covid19 specific informal partnerships including both BAME and supporter organisations- our Sanctuary Seeker emergency support group has been really important, I think people come together around different issues, communities of interest and identity

From Rob Milligan - Tai Pawb to Everyone: 12:02 PM

https://www.taipawb.org/resources/deeds-not-words-pledge-to-action/

Hi all please see the details of the pledge above

4. What can BAME Groups do ourselves? (Lead by Rocio Cifuentes EYST CEO)

Notes from the discussion

GL- Been involved with the sector for years and feel conflicted. Systems we work in are based on masculinity and EU models. The people who work in them are not. People are put into boxes, what can we do to change this? I would like to offer a different model of management. Develop a model that shows a journey of the people we support. A model that better reflects the people we work with.

RC- How do we challenge that?

KM- How to BAME groups measure outcomes? How do we talk in a community setting, its about articulating voices. Whose voice is being heard and what is being done?

GL- The concept of community leaders is left over from colonialism. There are two aspects, being proud of your job and second, using colonial words. People will always go to the same people. People come to me and I say go look for people. We should not perpetuate it.

SH- We should play back against the system. We seem to want to ascribe roles to people. We are often both, community members and community leaders. I am a professional black person. We need to realise when we are talking to a black

person or about them. It's a different thing. I couldn't sit in a room and represent men because I am not one. We need to own where are in the dialogue and buy into it. There is a dialogue about how we frame BME communities. If your business is academia, then that's what you'll do. Certain communities are not inherently more business focused they just follow routes and patterns that they have been doing. Until we get a handle on the education system and it truly reflects British history, we need to push against it and not play into it.

RC- This is a huge conversation. Us as Black and Minority Ethnic organisations and how we play into it. The diversity in this room spans continents.

GL- We are not just volunteering, we give service. We need to develop a model that takes on board what Sheila said. WAG is looking at the curriculum, the report I am part of regarding slave trade will link in. Look at what we do in different ways, its got to catch up. We need to come up with a new model.

SH- We need to reown community action and community activism.

RC- What can BAME groups do ourselves to expand capacity?

JD- A lot of my work is grassroots. What we go in Girl Talk should be replicated in the community. It should not be internal. We should be empowering people to be creating these themselves rather than people waiting for us to approach it. We think we are doing a great job but are we? The people living in the community live in a community that doesn't relate to them.

KM- The conversation relates to reach and impact. We need to accept some things and move forward.

RC- Five minutes left, lets talk about solutions.

HS- I want to add... in my experience. I was sent to ACC and it allowed me to build my confidence. I attended the Human Rights Advocacy Forum and it opened my mind. Once it was done all the people who had completed went and got careers. Lets not forget to involve people in the solution we are creating.

RC- Practical opportunities for people to become empowered and involved in the solution.

JD- There was an Oxfam Wales wide project training women to become ESOL teachers so that they were part of the community. We need to build these opportunities into funding applications/

GL- I agree. The training that helped woman and the community they live in. The amount of money you get dwarfs what they are getting. Its not just about what we're doing but its not making enough difference. Things have to change, the model needs to change, the focus.

SH- I agree. Its two way. Influence political thinking and our response to the people in our community. It's about how we connect and address our strengths. There's no wrong way in. People just want to get on with their lives and its about helping them to do that. How strong are we? We need to reframe it, so we focus on the end game rather than getting caught up.

KM- Demonstrate, report and impact. Empowering beneficiaries, accountability and financial scaling. More players than the market place can hold.

SH- People should follow their passion and do what they are good at.

Feedback from the Day

How would you sum up your experience of the Seminar?

"It was interesting to find out about our Black voluntary sector in Wales. It is about time that these issues became public and for others to see what we are living with on a day-to-day basis whilst delivering vital services. I sincerely hope that things will change positively as a result of the morning and the report."

*"Very informative and thought provoking Great speakers and incredibly well chaired"*

Was there anything you particularly liked? Please give examples.

"Learning how the BME Skills Project worked with the organisations through a mixture of quality standard, matching with volunteer mentors and using the existing rescuers available via CVCs that participated. This is something I can take back to my work in Newport."

"The presentation from Karl Murray; the feedback of the various workshops showed people's passion and engagement, as well as constructive criticism in relation to WG funding for 'BAME' projects - and possibly other funders too."

# DID YOU FIND THE SEMINAR USEFUL?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Somewhat

0% 5%

95%
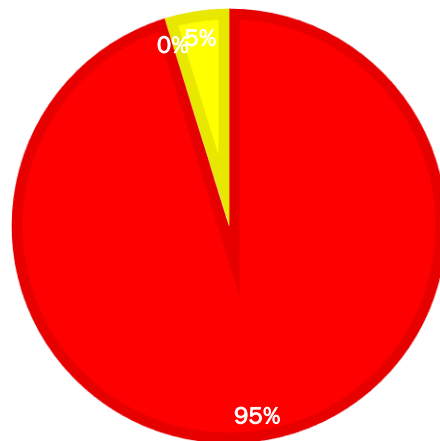
Is there anything in particular you found useful?

"Opportunity for networking and to raise awareness of key people in key organisations that might be interested in further collaboration"

"The inputs on needs and challenges faced by small community-based organisations and how they can be supported through a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach."
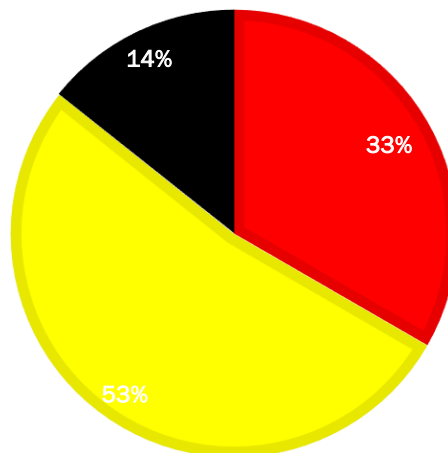
ARE YOU MORE AWARE OF THE CHALLENGES THAT FACE BME ORGANISATIONS IN WALES?

■ Yes a lot   ■ Yes a little   ■ No

- 7%
- 49%
- 44%
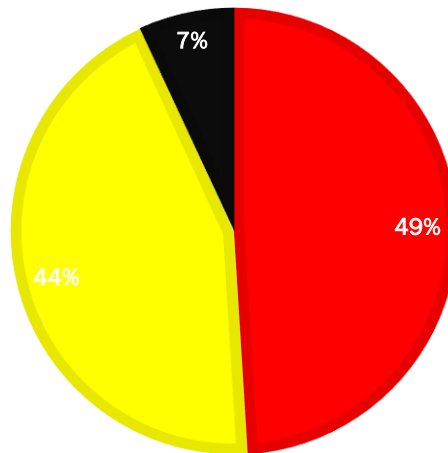
ARE YOU MORE AWARE OF THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO BAME ORGANISATIONS IN WALES?

■ Yes a lot   ■ Yes a little   ■ No

- 14%
- 33%
- 53%

How would you rate the seminar?

8.14/10

Thank you all for attending and reading our report!