

DIRECTOR'S REPORT CONTINUED

a clear focus on building better relationships and preventing racist incidents.

Our work with new migrants from Eastern Europe and from elsewhere continues on a scale which is very difficult for such a small organisation to maintain. This work included running a very successful short-term pilot in North Aberdeenshire which we hope to be able to take forward in 2006-07.

We also continue to work with those facing increased marginalisation in the workforce with results that have received national recognition.

Our work in facilitating consultation, in interpreting & translation, in communication and presentation, continues to be in great demand. Our approach underlay important national guidance given by Communities Scotland on how to consult with minority ethnic communities.

Our work in interpreting, alongside that of Aberdeen City Council, was part of the reason that our local area was seen by the Scottish Executive as the best served outside of Edinburgh/Glasgow.

We have long appreciated that the quality of appearance is important in communication for our partners as well as ourselves and the deployment of a graphics designer as part of our team has given us a capacity that other organisations in our field lack.

Not only have we committed

to high quality design and publications, but have taken other steps to widen the breadth of GREC's local impact, including plans for early in the 2006-07 financial year to open a Fairtrade Café in Aberdeen's Central Library.

The scale of this work and its close congruence with our Mission, Aims and Values have made this last year at GREC 'the best of times', but what of the future?

At one level, there is still a dense thicket of serious challenges. While the joint efforts of the staff and Committee have ensured a financial under-pinning for GREC for the coming year, the Treasurer will speak in his report of the need for greater security. This may allow the Committee to move forward on issues such as pensions for the staff, and improving working conditions.

The staff, and, we believe, our stakeholders, realise that conditions also have to be made more bearable for our Committee who have had to carry so much responsibility without the support that should have been essential. We also need to pay attention to other things which may have needed to be put at the back of our minds, such as encouraging membership of GREC, paying more attention to the needs of our affiliates, our members, our volunteers, and our supporters.

However, these are tactical issues, however crucial. Looking at the bigger picture, the most momentous event of

the year has been the whole-hearted commitment shown by our local public bodies, led by Aberdeen City Council, to the UNESCO Alliance of Anti-Racist Cities.

Meeting the ten challenges of the Alliance not only marks out an ambitious agenda for the area, but could, if properly managed, be the basis for Aberdeen City and Shire to emerge as Scotland's highly successful Small World City. It could provide a signature for this area as fully open to the world, while maintaining its own strong identity. I very much hope that GREC can be part of this development, a crucial one for the north-east's social and economic survival.

While the year has not been without its stresses, it has been a privilege to help lead a staff so rich in personal resources, so generous in their passion, and so driven by their mission.

All of this also applies to our Committee who, in ability and determination, can have few parallels in the corporate world. It applies with particular emphasis to our Chair who has always found a positive way forward even when faced with the fastest closed door, and a way to optimism in the face of intimidating barriers.

With our staff, our volunteers, and our Committee members, there must be room for such optimism and a space for our continuing operation.

Barney Crockett
Director