



Plain English Summary:

BARRIERS TO COMMUNITY LAND OWNERSHIP FOR BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN SCOTLAND

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*** FEARANN COMMUNITY *
COIMHEARSNACHD LAND
NA H-ALBA SCOTLAND**



What is this research about?

This report looks at why many Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups in Scotland find it hard to own or use land and buildings in their communities. Even though Scottish laws give communities the right to buy land or take over buildings, most BME groups haven't been able to use these rights.

The research focused on five BME-led organisations in the central belt of Scotland. These groups are doing important work to support their communities but often struggle because they don't have a space of their own.

Why is land important?

Land and buildings help community groups provide services like food support, childcare, education, cultural events, and safe spaces. Having a permanent place makes it easier to run these activities and plan for the future.

But BME groups often:

- Rent expensive spaces
- Lose access to venues suddenly
- Can't find suitable buildings
- Are told they should partner with white-led groups to succeed

These problems make it very hard for them to grow and help more people.

What did the research find?

BME groups face three big types of barriers:

1. Structural Barriers

These are problems caused by deeper systems of inequality:

- Lack of knowledge about land rights
- Legal language is hard to understand
- Not enough support or funding
- Racism and lack of trust from public authorities

2. Legislative Barriers

These are problems with how the laws are written:

- To use the Community Right to Buy, you must prove your group is based in a small local area.
- BME communities often don't all live in one place. They are spread across cities.
- Some people, like asylum seekers, can't vote, so they can't be counted as part of the 'community' under the law.

3. Procedural Barriers

These are problems with how the process works:

- It's hard to find out what buildings are available.
- Local councils are sometimes unhelpful or unfair.
- Paperwork takes a lot of time and energy.
- Some groups were left out after being encouraged to apply.

All these issues cause burnout and disappointment. Groups spend lots of time and money without getting results.



Real Life Examples

One group tried to get a building for over a year. They were told it was available, then told it wasn't. Later, another group took it. This left them feeling ignored and discriminated against. One person said, ***"How did I spend a whole year trying to run after this building that didn't even come? I was not paid for doing any of that."***

Another group had been working with the council to get a local building for 18 months. After repeated meetings and no updates, they suddenly saw the building being refurbished — for other, larger, white-led organisations. They were never told it had been reassigned. ***"It tells you that somebody somewhere knows people that are able to get that kind of space, and we weren't even informed."***

A third group was encouraged to apply for a building alongside a local partner. After a year of work, the partner group applied on their own and got the building. The BME-led group was left out, even though they started the process. ***"If you don't have space, there is no sustainability,"*** they said. ***"You get tired of pushing for something that never moves."***

What Needs to Change?

The report makes suggestions to fix these problems:

Fixing Structural Barriers

- Talk more about racism and fairness in the land sector.
- Make information easier to understand.
- Offer workshops, mentoring, and peer learning.
- Pay BME people fairly to help improve the sector.

Fixing Legislative Barriers

- Allow land rights for groups based on shared identity, not just geography.
- Create special legislation to support BME groups.
- Research how laws affect different types of communities.

Fixing Procedural Barriers

- Make local councils treat all groups fairly.
- Make it easier to find and apply for buildings and land.
- Review funding rules to make sure BME groups aren't left out.
- Provide new funding that doesn't require being tied to one location.



Why this matters

Land reform in Scotland is meant to create a fairer country. But if the rules only work for the least marginalised groups, then they aren't really fair. BME communities face extra challenges, and land reform must take this into account.

Including BME voices and removing barriers will make land ownership in Scotland more equal and just for everyone.

Conclusion

BME communities in Scotland have ideas, energy, and need for space. But the current system makes it very hard for them to succeed. The land reform sector must listen, adapt, and take action to make land rights truly accessible to all.

This research is a first step towards that change.

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