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# Report

# A Preliminary Study of the Needs and Demands of the East and Southeast Asian Communities in the UK

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# 1. Introduction

From 8 to 15 May 2021, the researcher conducted a short [online survey](#) within East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities in the UK. The aim of this survey was to find out about some of the popular ESEA community needs and demands in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic and surging racism against ESEA people in the UK and internationally. The survey took the form of multiple-choice questions, with an option for participants to type in their own answers.

The researcher received a total of 303 responses within the period of one week. These responses represent some of the diverse positions and opinions within the ESEA communities. The researcher wishes to thank all the individuals and community groups who have participated in the survey or helped distribute the survey. Such a study would not have been possible without the support and participation from the communities involved.

The researcher would like to emphasise the following points:

- (1) This is a preliminary study that uses the snowball sampling technique and draws on a relatively small sample (n=303). Although the researcher tried their best to reach as many people as possible in order to capture the diversity of ESEA people's experiences, the short timeframe, the language used in the survey (English) and the online nature of the survey all became delimiting factors. As a result, many people did not have the opportunity to participate in the survey. Also, the timing of the survey, i.e. in the middle of a global pandemic when ESEA people are facing surging racism internationally, can also prioritise some results (e.g. police intervention in stopping hate crimes) over others.
- (2) This is an anonymous survey and It is difficult to ascertain participants' real-life identity although it is emphasised in the survey instructions that this is an ESEA community survey for people who identify as being part of the ESEA communities. This survey therefore reflects the general perceptions of the ESEA people regarding their own needs and demands, rather than those of the general public in the UK.
- (3) The results of the survey are preliminary and should not be seen as definitive. The researcher welcomes individuals and community organisations to make use of the survey results for the benefit of the ESEA communities, but the researcher assumes no responsibility for how the survey results will be used.

The following sections show the key results of the survey, featuring a list of popular community needs and demands, together with a preliminary analysis of these results.

## 2. Key results at a glance

According to the survey, some of the most popular ESEA community needs and demands (followed by the number of responses supporting the demands and the percentage) include:

1. **Establish a Zero Tolerance for Racism policy in police, government and the public sector.** 228 (75.2%)
2. **More ESEA representation on mainstream media.** 222 (73.3%)
3. **Active anti-racism teaching in schools and in workplace.** 215 (71%)
4. **The police deal with hate crimes efficiently and effectively.** 199 (65.7%)
5. **ESEA community centres and organisations work with the police to stop hate crimes.** 190 (63%)
6. **More funding support for ESEA community centres and organisations.** 187 (61.7%)
7. **Teach ESEA history in the school curriculum.** 179 (59.1%)
8. **Teach the history of White colonialism in schools.** 152 (50.2%)
9. **Remove ‘Oriental’ as a term in police, government and public forms.** 145 (47.9%)
10. **Set quota or target for ESEA representation for public-funded media.** 105 (34.7%)

The following charts help visualise these figures:

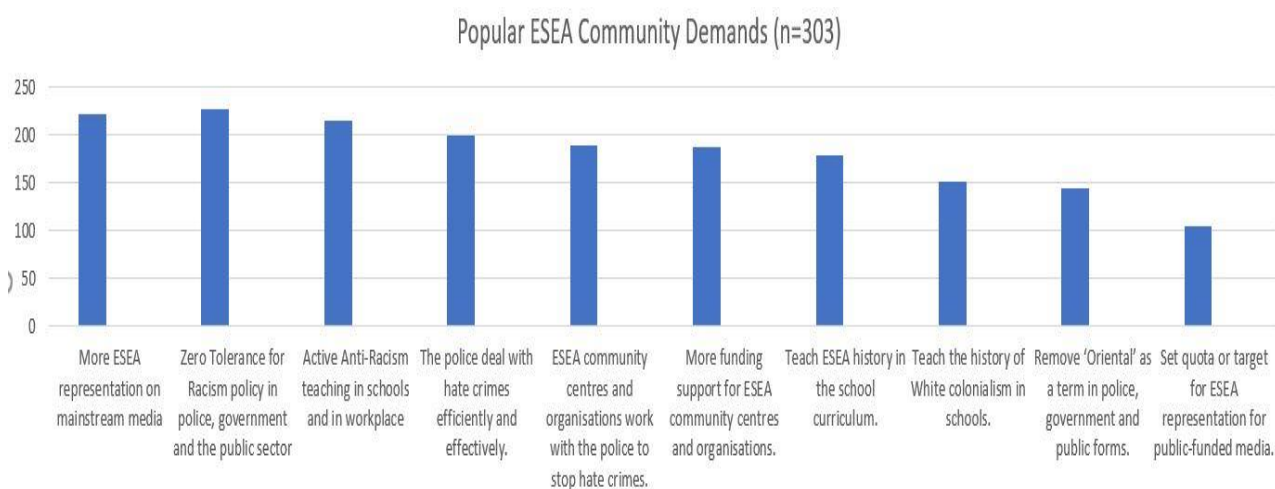


Figure 1. Top ten community demands

## Top 6 ESEA community demands



- More ESEA representation on mainstream media
- Zero Tolerance for Racism policy in police, government and the public sector
- Active Anti-Racism teaching in schools and in workplace
- The police deal with hate crimes efficiently and effectively.
- ESEA community centres and organisations work with the police to stop hate crimes.
- More funding support for ESEA community centres and organisations.

Figure 2. Top six community demands

### 3. Preliminary Analysis

**(1) The results show huge discrepancies between government policies and ESEA people's real-life experiences.**

Despite the existence of some government policies, most participants seem either unaware of these policies or feel that the implementation of these policies in real life is far from satisfactory.

This point is demonstrated by the following figures: Establish a Zero Tolerance for Racism policy in police, government and the public sector 228 (75.2%); The police deal with hate crimes efficiently and effectively 199 (65.7%); Remove 'Oriental' as a term in police, government and public forms 145 (47.9%).

**(2) The results identify the pivotal role of media representation for ESEA people.**

Most participants feel strongly about the lack of representation or even misrepresentation of ESEA people on mainstream media. There is an urgent call for media organisations and professionals to take action to tackle this issue.

This point is demonstrated by the following figures: More ESEA representation on mainstream media 222 (73.3%); Set quota or target for ESEA representation for public-funded media 105 (34.7%).

**(3) The results highlight the crucial role of education, school education in particular, for ESEA people.**

Education, especially school education, is seen as an effective way to raise awareness of and to fight racism. This includes the teaching of anti-racism, ESEA history and culture, and the history of White colonialism in schools.

This point is demonstrated by the following figures: Active anti-racism teaching in schools and in workplace 215 (71%); Teach ESEA history in the school curriculum 179 (59.1%); Teach the history of White colonialism in schools 152 (50.2%).

**(4) The results emphasise the significance of funding and supporting ESEA community centres and organisations.**

The survey results reveal that the majority of ESEA people trust community centres and organisations and hope that they can be better funded by the government and play a more prominent role in stopping racism and supporting the communities they serve.

This point is demonstrated by the following figures: More funding support for ESEA community centres and organisations 187 (61.7%); ESEA community centres and organisations work with the police to stop hate crimes 190 (63%).

The above figure can be contrasted with a slightly unpopular option in the survey: More policing in ESEA communities and neighbourhoods to stop hate crimes 92 (30.4%).

## 4. Conclusion

Overall, the survey results confirm some of the researcher's hypotheses about the importance of media, education and community groups for ESEA people. At the same time, they also reveal huge discrepancies between existing government policies and people's real-life experiences.

The researcher acknowledges the potential limitations of this survey and hopes that future research can build on this study, reach a bigger population and reflect more diverse voices from the ESEA communities in the UK. A comparative study of the ESEA community needs and demands before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic would also be helpful to determine how the current global pandemic may have shaped ESEA people's feelings and experiences captured by this survey.

While it goes beyond the scope of this report to make policy recommendations, the researcher welcomes individuals and community organisations to make positive use of the survey results for the benefit of the communities involved.

The contextual information for this report, including the original survey form, primary data, and participants' free text comments, can be accessed through [this padlet](#), especially in the 'Appendices' document.

This report was drafted on 16 May 2021 by Dr Hongwei Bao, Associate Professor in Media Studies and Director of Centre for Contemporary East Asian Cultural Studies at the University of Nottingham, UK. Contact: [hongwei.bao@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:hongwei.bao@nottingham.ac.uk)