



A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Community Asset Ownership
in the African Diaspora Community

Produced by Yvonne Field, Karl Murray
and Dr. Diane Chilangwa Farmer

October 2015



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Source: Digital Asset Mapping 'Community
Conversation', Bernie Grant Arts Centre,
September 2014

The Ubele initiative is a national not-for-profit organisation which seeks to develop and implement local innovative action-learning interventions based upon leadership development, community enterprise development and social change for African and Caribbean communities within the UK. The process and approach is the modelling of methodologies for addressing highly complex and socially challenging problems within and across the worlds of social business, government and civil society.

First published: October 2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research and final report would not have been possible without the support and seed funding provided by Locality, the national network of ambitious and enterprising community-led organisations, working together to help neighbourhoods thrive. Without their belief, support and commitment this first phase of Project Mali would not have happened.

Special thanks must also be extended to everyone who contributed to the project through sharing their stories, helping collect them and map them, as well as analysing the data. We are also indebted to those who assisted by facilitating community connections and providing feedback on the report. These people include:

Margaret Adjaye (Locality), Donna Alexander (The Ubele Initiative), Dr Kehinde Andrews (Organisation of Black Unity), Hilary Banks (Malcolm X Centre), Louisa Barker (University College London - UCL), Ezra Blondel (The Ubele Initiative), Andy Chapman & Michael Meaney ('Change the Conversation'), Michelle Charters, (Kuumba Imani Millenium Centre), Makeda Coaston (The Ubele Initiative), Saqib Deshmukh (Voice4Change) Hazel Ellis (Claudia Jones Project), Professor Gus John (Education Consultant), Vivienne Hayes (Women's Resource Centre), Sister Hiikmah (Africa Centre Rise), Barbara Gray (The Ubele Initiative), Meaghan Kelly (UCL), Richard Lee (Just Space) Iris Lightfoote (The Race Equality Centre, Leicester), Selina O'Dwyer (Independent Researcher), Deborah Owhin, (Made Equal), Isabel McCagg (UCL), Ketki Mudholkar (UCL), Elisa Roma Nesi Pio (Independent Researcher), Santa Pedone (Just Space), Aisha Sharif (The Ubele Initiative), Stephen Rolph (Locality), Grace Salmon (Positive Network Centre), Ade Sawyer (The Ubele Initiative), Dee Searle (Independent Journalist), Drew Sinclair (Odd Zebra), Priya Thamotheram (Highfields Centre), Chloe Tregar (UCL), Philip Udeh (Community Builders), Patrick Vernon (Every Generation), Louise Winterburn (Locality), Wenjun Xu (Independent Researcher).

A special mention to Steve Wyler, who realised that there was a story to tell, listened intently and supported our quest for it to be captured and shared.

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FOREWORD

Tony Armstrong, CEO, Locality

This is a very timely and important report which Locality is pleased to support. It represents an important first step in revealing the scale of the issues facing many BAME communities and a set of recommendations for central and local government, Locality and African Diaspora community organisations.

The report reveals a story of inspirational leaders and the determination of communities to establish and retain important places to meet, to support, to work, to learn, to celebrate and mourn. It also illustrates the scale of the challenge with hard struggles, losses and fears for the future raised by the contributors to the research.

As the network of ambitious and enterprising community-led organisations, we believe that a strong asset base can be fundamental in ensuring the long-term sustainability of community organisations and ensuring that communities can thrive. Locality already works with a number of leading BAME-led organisations, including the Highfields Centre in Leicester, who feature in this report. However, it is clear that examples such as the Highfields Centre are still unusual and there is an urgent need to find a way to address the 54% of respondents who stated that the future of their buildings were “insecure”.

It is clear that the difficulties and insecurities facing many BAME-led organisations trying to safeguard community assets is not due to lack of ambition, interest or demand for services. Indeed, there is evidence of increasing demand for services, especially in relation to meeting the needs of an ageing

population. There is capacity for some organisations to grow to meet this demand in their existing buildings, with two-thirds stating that they could offer alternative activities in their buildings and 50% of respondents saying they underused their space. There is also evidence that due to increasing up-scaling of contracts to deliver important services, such as supporting the elderly, or youth services, BAME-led organisations, like many other community-rooted organisations, are losing vital funding and finding the “replacement” services don’t meet people’s needs.

The report recommends additional targeted support which builds on the existing expertise in communities. We know that there are a number of external agencies and organisations working to address race inequalities; our aim is to share the findings from this report with as many of these as we can – and with funding agencies. Through our engagement activities, we will encourage them to play a more prominent role in campaigns such as Keep it Local, which highlights the increased cost, financial and personal, of replacing local service delivery by community-led organisations with services delivered by national organisations removed from local communities they serve.

The research also provides an important opportunity to gain some understanding of levels of awareness of the new powers under the Localism Act, which potentially enable communities to take more control of the issues that matter to them. Seventy-five percent of respondents said they were aware of the rights, with 19% saying they had used them. An important start in ensuring that all communities are able to take advantage of the new powers but, as this report powerfully states, there is a real need for Locality and our partners to “lead by example and from the front” to ensure that the My Community support programme, as well as other national programmes, reach BAME communities.

We want to see a real difference to BAME community assets and will work with the Ubele Initiative, and our members such as the Highfields Centre to give them a voice, to inspire community action and bring change into their communities.

FOREWORD

Patrick Vernon, OBE, Founder, Every Generation and Project Mali Champion

I welcome this report as part of an evidence-based journey, capturing the impact of the legacy of the Windrush Generation in acquiring community assets for cultural, social and political empowerment.

The report highlights some examples of best practice and community leaders who are making a difference, particularly women. However, the report generally paints a bleak picture of the failure to build on the struggle for social justice and race inequality in post-war modern Britain. On a positive front, the picture might be different if the report included faith-based buildings like Black Majority churches, which have been an important backbone in the community.

The report's analysis also highlights the vulnerability of the community in the buildings we have lost over the years and the ones that we may potentially lose in the future. What has evolved is a complex picture of the impact of gentrification, changing agendas in how central government and local authorities treat or perceive the black community and 'race' issues in general. This has to be set against how we ourselves have failed to be strategic and work collegiately to create a future in this society even though we have at least four different generations of African diaspora communities reflecting different social, aspirational, political and religious perspectives.

Without community buildings and assets (including night clubs, record shops, restaurants, bookshops, general retail outlets and social housing) we will have limited foundations or basis to build and support a strong network of self-sustaining, independent and financially viable organisations.

Although issues of internal leadership, management, political and financial struggles have surfaced and at times undermined our community, this is no different to other communities or even mainstream institutions such as banks or government departments. The difference is that we started from a lower base, which reflects the wider issue of the impact of enslavement and colonial history. When things go wrong in the community we play this out in the public domain which gives the impression that black people cannot run or manage buildings.

Looking ahead over the next 20 years we need to build strong community organisations that own buildings and tap in to a growing pool of graduates and young professionals to establish a network of future leaders who can navigate the potential opportunities under the Localism agenda.

We also need to effectively build a support base within the community where individuals will volunteer their time or make regular donations to the up-keep and development of community assets and where organisations are more transparent and accountable for their actions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ubele Initiative, which seeks to promote intergenerational leadership, community enterprise and social action, secured seed funding from Locality¹, to undertake research into the capacity and presence of African Dispaora community assets. Locality is the national network of ambitious and enterprising community-led organisations, working together to help neighbourhoods thrive.

This report is a result of the research undertaken under the title of Project Mali² and provides an important overview of community asset ownership within the African Diaspora community in England. The report's significance not only stems from being a first major attempt to capture this story from some of the major cities in England, but also because it addresses a highly topical community conversation. This conversation, which has been surfacing over the past few years, centers on the current and future ownership of community assets, primarily secured during the 1980s, and often after periods of social unrest.

Five key themes were explored through a range of quantitative and qualitative processes, which captured data from a total of 150 organisations. Research processes used included desk research, two online questionnaires and one-to-one structured interviews with a range of people, from on-the-ground practitioners to nationally known social and community commentators. The evidence collected suggests that targeted, intensive and sustained support has not been offered to declining BAME organisations, many of which still remain under the radar of programmes, even those with a local reach. As a result, organisations such as The Ubele Initiative and Voice4Change³ have had to step in, often at very short notice and usually at times of near crisis.

¹<http://locality.org.uk/about/>

² 'Mali', a Swahili word meaning 'an asset or wealth' (www.africanlanguages.com/swahili) and which we have for the purposes of this mapping exercise used to describe, 'someone or something of value to our community'. Project Mali is part of 'The Ubele Initiative' (www.ubele.org) a new organisation which aims to create sustainable African Diaspora communities through intergenerational leadership, community enterprise and social action.

³ www.voice4change.org.uk

The outcome of this exercise, in summary, has resulted in:

- **The production of this report**, which provides insight into the African Diaspora community asset story across some of the major cities in England including in depth data from 27 organisations
- **Eight community leadership stories** and the 'voices' of a number of other professionals who have extensive experience of this particular issue
- **Three case studies** which explore some of the challenges BAME communities have faced in their quest to secure community assets
- **An interactive Google map**⁴ which captures 150 African Diaspora community assets across England which are either currently in existence, have been lost or are currently under threat. As this is a changing picture, the map can be added to and /or refined further, over the coming years
- **An interactive 'audio' map**⁵, "London BAME community assets" which captures the stories of 13 BAME led community assets located in London, four of which have now closed.

Some of the details behind the headlines indicate:

- A number of organisations have 'owned' community buildings for more than 20 years. However many now remain with short leases or with 20-25 year leases which have actually expired. Landlords, often in the form of local authorities, appear not to be keen to extend or renew leases to organisations, even if they have a track record of providing services to the community for more than two decades. Increasing pressure on

local council budgets, local 'development plans' in partnership with private developers, alongside changing demographics, has led to struggling African Diaspora community centres either being closed, transferred to other organisations, sold off or razed to the ground. Once lost, it is almost impossible to secure comparable alternative spaces for the tenants (who hire the space) and/or actual centre users.

- Important lessons learnt from organisations which have survived despite the odds. We found examples of existing community asset dilapidation and /or available spaces not being fully utilised due to lack of financial investment for refurbishment or redevelopment. This appears to be the case where buildings have been secured on a permanent basis or for a long period of time. During the research we only found one example of a lease being renewed for a period of 25 years and this was after having been given several annual leases.
- A growing number of African Diaspora organisations are facing an uphill struggle to identify and develop new organisational leadership from within the 23-40 year old age group. They need younger people with the pre-requisite skills, attitude and values to breathe new life into struggling organisations. The current leadership was on average in their late 50s to early 60s. Though nearing or post retirement, they are also a rich source of experience and repository of knowledge which could be utilised to help build a new cadre of community leaders.

⁴To access map go to link: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zup46mBv1M1c.kowQ4ZxRSCvs>

⁵To access the audio map go to link: <http://spsmaps.github.io/Ubele-map/>

- The type of social business acumen now required of board members and senior staff to firstly understand and then successfully navigate the brave new world of commissioning arrangements and social investment rather than grant aid, was found to be in seriously short supply. The need for these skills and experience sits alongside a necessity to diversify services and programmes in order to respond to local demographic changes and newly emerging needs.
- Only a few centres had paid staff and the vast majority employed them on a part time basis. Centres were more often than not run by either small or quite large teams of dedicated volunteers; many of whom are in semi or full retirement. It is clear that a strategy is needed to recruit, develop and retain significantly younger volunteers to support any sustainability plans.
- Most of the current social business models and development opportunities tend to support individuals or small groups, often of young people, to set up local enterprises. Some might take over previously empty or even derelict property and transform these spaces as part of their business plan. However, this approach is wittingly or unwittingly missing out the long established community-based organisations which could be given support to develop and run a number of community enterprises from within their own centres, as well as in the wider community. They were often 'space rich', but lacked many of the other ingredients necessary to bring new life to these community assets for a new and often younger generation.

The report analyses a rapidly changing situation which has up until now been primarily anecdotal. The findings should increase the awareness of national policy makers, planners and programme designers to some of the major community asset challenges being faced by groups with the least power and / or influential voices in society. A range of recommendations have, therefore, been put forward as a result of the findings directed at four change levels: government, Locality, local authorities and organisational level. In broad terms:

Central government

- 1) **That African Diaspora and other BAME communities are made aware of the refreshed Community Rights programmes** being implemented in 2015-16 from the outset, and are supported to access and utilise them for their community asset development journey.
- 2) **There is the need for a shift from the 'first come, first served' policy** for Community Rights support and African Diaspora and other BAME communities are proactively identified, targeted and supported to apply.
- 3) **An 'SOS urban communities' programme** could be supported bringing together lead national organisations involved in the promotion of leadership development, community enterprise, social investment and social action to target specific culturally diverse neighbourhoods, communities and struggling BAME community centres, which reaches and engages with 'unusual suspects'. Such a programme could usefully link with some of the recommendations below for community organisations.

Locality

- 1) **A Board-level commitment** be made to ensure that the key lessons learnt and recommendations made are incorporated into Locality's Equality Strategy and Action Plan and shared with its members and national partners.
- 2) **A communications campaign** is developed and appropriate materials produced about Localism and opportunities available to change the character of local neighbourhoods through Community Rights, which targets African Diaspora and other BAME communities.
- 3) **Follow up the African Diaspora community organisations** identified during the mapping as having secured assets (buildings owned outright or with long leases), with a view to exploring some of their support and development needs and to consider creating individual plans to assist them.
- 4) **Monitoring and evaluating service delivery to BAME communities since 2011.** This should include the geographical spread and level of engagement of African Diaspora and other BAME communities including which types of services are accessed and the outcomes of engagement. This information should be used to set targets and monitor performance for the new 2015-16 programme.

Local authorities

- 1) **Local authorities should be encouraged to publicise their corporate asset management strategic plans** and lists of assets available for transfer to local community organisations including BAME organisations.

- 2) **BAME organisations should be skilled up, and facilitated to access the 'Right to Bid' scheme**, as well as the other key features of the Community Rights agenda, in order to create a more level playing field. Local authorities should seek to ensure local BAME organisations and communities are in a position to 'bid' for assets and to engage fully in the Community Rights agenda and that any perceived or real inequalities in current local systems are identified and proactively responded to by local authorities in partnership with local voluntary sector infrastructure organisations.

African Diaspora community organisations

- 1) **More intentional intergenerational programmes and relationships** need to be developed so that the 'baton can be passed' with confidence, thereby leading to the creation of stronger, younger and more sustainable leaders and organisational management boards.
- 2) **The creation of a new generation of African Diaspora community leaders** as the next generation of skilled, creative, entrepreneurial and brave individuals join existing and /or create new organisations so that they access emerging opportunities and make a lasting difference in their communities.
- 3) **Capacity building opportunities** to be offered in management, governance, social entrepreneurship and social change skills to ensure that boards, staff and volunteers are equipped to create and lead community assets fit for the 21st century (e.g. ensure that volunteers are given adequate on-going professional development and support; skills to develop fund-raising capacity of

organisations to include applying to funding opportunities available through social investment, the Big Lottery 'Reaching Communities' buildings programme or charitable trusts that grant or loan funding for capital projects).

4) Update current models of entrepreneurship which have been used for decades to run African Diaspora community-based assets to incorporate new thinking about community enterprise development (e.g could include exploring other types of assets such as purchasing of pubs, libraries, post offices etc. which could be supported by new forms of community finance such as community share offers, amongst others).

5) Develop regional and local strategic hubs and action plans to secure and redesign community centres and other community assets for the African Diaspora living in areas alongside newly arrived communities.

The African Diaspora is a highly diverse community, and in many instances is now in its third and fourth generation in Britain. Counter to some beliefs, they came to England from the Caribbean and Africa with a strong entrepreneurial spirit and flair. Small businesses established included hairdressers and barbers, clothes, record and book shops, restaurants, nightclubs, market stalls, alongside more 'community based' ventures such as church buildings and housing stock, social clubs, sports fields, shop fronts used for advice centres and community and youth centres. All of these 'enterprises' have contributed to creating a vibrant asset base, significant community wealth and a system of self reliance, culturally sensitive services and local support. The total net value of these different types of assets has never been assessed. Therefore without even a basic analysis of their fiscal and social value, their true worth and contribution to the social and economic well-being of British society over decades will continue to be undervalued. This needs to be the subject of further research.

Section 1:

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

For more than six decades, Black African Diaspora⁶ leaders and their supporters have successfully contributed to the development of their communities. This has been achieved through the establishment of grassroots organisations, the design and implementation of innovative culturally appropriate programmes and interventions, and in many cases, the acquisition and utilisation of local community buildings and other assets of community value (ACV) (Community and Local Government, (2011:6)⁷. Such groups, representing communities of interests have played a pivotal part in promoting community cohesion and integration in most urban

cities and in many cases they provided a 'home from home' for these newly arrived communities back in the 1960s – an important role that many still play today in terms of hosting large gatherings for significant rites of passage and other cultural events and rituals.

However, relatively little is known about the history or stories behind these community spaces or the pioneering individuals who were, or are still, at their helm. Furthermore, it is unclear the extent to which the landscape has changed under different political regimes.

⁶ The term 'Black African', when used in this report, describes persons who identify themselves as Black British, African, Caribbean or other ethnicities with African ancestral origins. Additionally, at times where the distinctive 'stories' need to be highlighted we will make reference to Africans and Caribbeans to refer to those who are specifically from or whose parentage is from either the Caribbean region or the African continent.

⁷ Communities and Local Government (2011). A plain English guide to the Localism Act, November, 2011. Cited on 7 July, 2014

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf

The African Diaspora population in the UK

According to the 2011 census report, 8 million or 14% of the UK's total population belongs to a minority ethnic group. Of the total five largest Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups in England, Black African and Caribbean are the third and fourth largest populations. BAME groups account for 80% of the UK's population growth with Black Africans being the fastest growing distinct minority ethnic group when compared to the Caribbean population, which remains the slowest growing group (Sunak and Rajeswaram, 2014).

Like all BAME groups in the UK, the Black African and Caribbean groups remain highly concentrated in just a few very large cities: namely London, Greater Birmingham and Greater Manchester. While these regions collectively account for over 50% of the UK's entire BAME population, over 50% of the UK's Black population lives in London (Sunak and Rajeswaram, 2014).

Recent studies⁸ on the use of the term 'Diaspora' in the United Kingdom indicate that it describes people who have roots and heritage in other cultures. These individuals are not strictly first generation migrants as their families may have been living in the UK for some time. They may describe themselves as British citizens but may also have dual nationality and retain identification with their families' countries of heritage. Lonescu (2006)⁹, for instance, defines African Diaspora affiliates as "members of ethnic and national communities, who left, but maintained links

with their homelands". As the African Diaspora community in the UK is made up of African and Caribbean individuals, they are the focus of the Project Mali process and therefore the focus of this report.

Project Mali was created as a starting point in the unearthing of these stories by collecting data and stories on these assets. Project Mali is part of 'The Ubele Initiative'¹⁰, a new organisation which aims to create sustainable African Diaspora communities through intergenerational leadership, community enterprise and social action.

The aim of this first phase of Project Mali was to take a very broad brush stroke to understanding the 'stories' and in so doing, uncover a significant amount of data. During one-to-one interviews and group sessions, we also unearthed a level of criticism from those who felt that members of the African Diaspora community had mismanaged opportunities and had themselves to blame for not securing assets on a permanent basis for future generations.

⁸ <http://www.build-online.org.uk/documents/Diaspora%20visual%203.pdf>

⁹ Lonescu, D. (2006). Engaging Diasporas as Development Partners for Home and Destination Countries: Challenges for Policymakers. Geneva: International Organisation for Migration.

¹⁰ www.ubele.org

Engaging the African Diaspora community

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are often described by public and private sector organisations as 'hard to reach'. However, approaches which adopt a 'one size fits all' method inevitably miss opportunities to harvest the richness and diversity of experience found in such communities. Although we did not find the African Diaspora community 'hard to reach', we encountered challenges in actively engaging them in completing the questionnaires.

Using a range of quantitative and qualitative processes¹¹, this phase of Project Mali focused on five key areas of enquiry:

1. The geographical spread and types of community assets
2. Service provision and take-up
3. Ownership/Management and leadership
4. Support and sustainability strategies
5. Future development opportunities.

The approach included conversational-style dialogue as well as semi-structured interviews, a 'Digital Mapping' event and a 'Skills and Knowledge' exchange visit, all of which enabled us to collect a large amount of data, allowing us to begin to identify past, present and emerging issues and concerns pertaining to asset ownership and/or lack thereof.

The data collected from this first phase approach has enabled us to build a picture of the range, nature and scale of different buildings used by individual African Diaspora community organisations in some of the major UK cities namely Bath, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, London and Manchester. As such, Project Mali is a work in progress and as the outcomes are shared with others, especially amongst members of our community, other stories will inevitably unfold.

The report is divided into seven sections that move from the general to the specific as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction and context
- Section 2: Community assets: The African Diaspora as a 'community of interest'
- Section 3: Does community asset transfer promote equality?
- Section 4: Results and analysis: What did we find out?
- Section 5: Telling our story: A space for introspection and learning
- Section 6: Case studies
- Section 7: Conclusion and recommendations

¹¹ Appendix 1 provides further details of the research approaches utilised in the production of this report.

Section 2:

COMMUNITY ASSETS: THE AFRICAN DIASPORA AS A 'COMMUNITY OF INTEREST'

Buildings and other amenities within neighbourhoods, towns and villages play a vital role in local lives. In addition to communities and buildings located in specific geographical areas, we need to acknowledge and recognise the gathering of people that share a common interest, bond or identity which generates a feeling of attachment which can be viewed as 'communities of interest'¹². The London Assembly recognises the importance of such groups and as part of their scrutiny exercise on The Localism Act, 2011, they asked for feedback on the importance '....of assets on the basis of communities of interest rather than communities of locality.' (London Assembly, Planning, 2014:30).

Although communities of interest are not necessarily defined by space, they often take part in the community activities in identified buildings, which become synonymous over time with a sense of 'home'. In the case of many African Diaspora-led organisations these spaces include community centres, book and record shops and church buildings. They are not only used to develop and deliver a wide range of community-based services, talks, political, spiritual and social support, they are also used for funeral wakes, weddings, christenings and other rites of passage events and activities, with multiple generations of the same family often sharing stories about having used these spaces, sometimes over decades. The London Assembly review of the Localism Act, 2014, suggests that there is significant work still to be done to ensure that assets of London-wide importance can be adequately covered by available guidance.

¹² www.wikipedia.org/Community_of_interest

For example, The Africa Centre¹³ formerly based in King's Street, Covent Garden, London is an important example of an asset which could have been registered by trustees and recognised by Westminster Council 'an asset of community value'. The building, which was a major landmark representing global African social and political struggle for almost 50 years was most likely, due to its central London location, our community's most expensive physical asset. However, it was sold recently to a multinational company under a 125 year lease and the organisation is now being housed on a temporary basis in an arts centre in Shoreditch. The Africa Centre organisation still retains the lease and several issues arising from the sale of the building, including the sale itself, are part of a national campaign.¹⁴

Why focus on community asset ownership within the African Diaspora community?

We focused on the African Diaspora community as it is one of the most longstanding and established Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in the UK. It also has a significant and substantial tradition of community asset ownership in this country. By putting the spotlight on this particular group, it should help us better understand what is happening in the whole area of Community Rights and BAME communities in England and should shed light on some of the areas in need of particular attention.

Wade (2014) suggests that the BAME voluntary sector in general has been weakened, with organisations interviewed focusing less on influencing policy and practice and increasingly on core service provision such as advice work, and the provision of health and social care or education. He states:

'They are experiencing a reduction in funding and resources, and felt there was less commitment to racial equality from the current government. The Single Equality Act was perceived to have further weakened the sector, by reducing the ability to challenge policy on race specific issues'.

Some of the other key reasons for focusing on this particular community include:

- Post war migration from the Caribbean and (to a lesser extent) Africa from the 1940s onwards, where direct experiences of racism and discrimination pre mid-1970s was widespread, leading to personal and community asset acquisition as a survival mechanism.
- There is a significant history of self-help and entrepreneurship through ownership of local businesses, nightclubs, record and bookshops and other spaces leading to the provision of our own community-based support systems and services.
- The provision of central and local government financial support from 1970s onwards led to the decline of self-help initiatives. This has led to an over reliance on government grant aid as the primary financial system of support for the design and delivery of much needed local services.
- The professionalisation of 'human services' including youth and community development, social work, community-based education and mental health services in the 1970s and 1980s which created a Black professional class.
- Uprisings in urban areas such as Brixton, Toxteth, Bristol, Handsworth and Tottenham, from the early 1980s onwards, led to the emergence of new community organisations and spaces being leased to African Diaspora community leaders for up to 30 years. However, a lack of renewal of these

¹³ www.africacentre.org.uk

¹⁴ Africa Centre Rise is the campaigning group seeking to empower African Diaspora through creating assets for the community.

leasing arrangements over the past 5-10 years has left African Diaspora communities without the community assets they originally 'owned'.

- Evidence of social and economic deprivation supported by national data continues to highlight institutional racism with for example, higher than average levels of educational under-achievement, unemployment, mental health diagnosis and an over representation in the criminal justice system.
- Increasing gentrification of urban areas where African Diaspora and other BAME communities have traditionally lived has displaced what were 'traditional' geographical communities of interest environments, ushering changes that are altering cultural landscapes and opportunities.

Vivienne Hayes, CEO of the Women's Resource Centre, sums this up aptly:

'A very good example of gentrification impact is Brixton, which has become gentrified. What we can see is Black people moving out of Brixton and the businesses changing in Brixton. Brixton market has a long history of serving the Black community. What we are also seeing is businesses closing and changing, as rents are all going up. It looks like there is a drive to cater for the White middle classes and their cafes, their leisure activities. The thing is that I do not think there is any impact assessment done by the council on the changes and how they affect; discriminate against a group of people on the grounds of race, gender, ethnicity and class. I do not think there is anything positive about that'.

This research focus will be valuable in informing the wider debate about community asset ownership and BAME communities. For example, it will contribute to helping to shape Locality's Equality Strategy and work to develop a more inclusive movement¹⁵ as well as informing local and regional strategy for 'Community Rights' and 'Community Asset' development plans.

What are the changes affecting African Diaspora community asset ownership?

There are a number of factors behind the significant change in the level of African Diaspora community asset ownership over the past decade. From drastic reductions in available national, regional and local funding to support community-based initiatives and asset development, high cost of land and buildings being sold off to private developers, a lack of legal knowledge and process concerning asset transfer (which are in fact not new), through to a lack of willingness of local authorities to work with communities of interest.

Other reasons include:

- Changing demographics in major cities with newer communities also requiring space for their community activities. The 2011 census data, for instance, suggests that the almost doubling of ethnic minority communities in Britain from 8% to just under 15% consists of people from the Middle East and Africa and the Greater London Authority (GLA) population projection between 2011 to 2041 suggests that the greatest relative growth is projected to occur in the Black Other, Other Asian, and Other ethnic groups¹⁶.

¹⁵ <http://locality.org.uk/our-work/policy/inclusive-movement/>

¹⁶ GLA Intelligence, Update 12-2014: 2013 Round Ethnic Group Population Projections; August 2014

- An ending of 25-30 year (full repairing) leases, with some organisations unable to pay large bills for dilapidation, and in some cases outstanding rents on buildings which has led to non-renewal of leases by the local authority.
- Internal management conflict leading to organisations becoming overly focused on managing 'internal politics', and as a result, not effectively responding to external challenges and opportunities.
- Ageing African Diaspora leadership with few strategies in place to create a new generation of community leadership, to whom the baton can be passed, and for them to bring creativity, energy and a much needed new lease of life to some of these spaces.
- Relatively few community-based models of social entrepreneurship development being offered in urban areas/settings which can help create viable community spaces for the next 25 years.
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of some of the new forms of social investment finance available to support community asset development and social enterprise development and / or how to access them.
- Previously undesirable urban areas being gentrified leading to the creation of new middle class, professional neighbourhoods
- A decrease in available land and affordable social housing set within a context of a sharp increase in the availability and high cost of new private housing.
- Community Rights support system delivered by Locality, offered on a 'first come, first served' basis which relies on or assumes a level of existing knowledge about the 'rights' agenda.
- Lack of practical 'hands-on' support on Community Rights from existing local, regional and national voluntary infrastructure organisations, exacerbated by significant budgetary reductions and those agencies' physical distance from disadvantaged communities and groups.
- A low level of targeted outreach to deprived communities about the 'Community Rights' agenda, which exacerbates existing inequalities and disadvantage in the system.

It is clear however, that some of these factors are also impacting negatively on other ethnic minority communities and that lessons learnt through this exercise could also be shared with them. Despite this negative impact, the exercise revealed extraordinary stories of community resilience through campaigns and other strategies, in some cases spanning decades, the results of which have been some significant assets secured for future generations.

For example, this phase of Project Mali, being a broad brush stroke, noted, but did not capture, data on the very significant rise in the level and / or size of asset ownership by African Diaspora Pentecostal and other faith communities. These groups have built, in what might to some appear to be a relatively short period of time, an impressive portfolio of assets including former churches, cinemas and other community spaces, all contributing to creating a significant level of 'faith community' wealth. We believe this to be a critical next phase imperative, given their impact and potential influence within the African Diaspora communities.

Section 3:

DOES COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER PROMOTE EQUALITY?

The Localism Act 2011 provides a platform and greater flexibility for voluntary and community groups to have their voices heard, and where needed, challenge local authorities to get things done, and achieve ambitions for their communities through securing community centres, sports facilities, libraries and other assets.

The Act has however been viewed by some as “a double edged sword for equality” (McCarvill, 2012). On the positive side, it provides a welcome move towards decision making that is embedded in local communities. It is also perceived to be more responsive to community members’ requirements and wishes, delivering public services which theoretically should better reflect the requests of groups and communities across the equality agenda. On the adverse side, decentralised decision making and delivery, if left unchecked, has the potential to overwhelmingly disadvantage different groups and

communities by reinforcing current inequalities of access and influence (McCarvil, 2012).

The ‘Community Right to Bid’ under the Act, enables communities to nominate sites for listing by local authorities as ‘assets of community value’ and if these assets come up for sale, communities can potentially be given time to prepare bids for purchase. The ‘Community Right to Challenge’ gives groups, parish councils and local authority employees the authority to express an interest in taking over the running of a local authority service (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2011:8).

There are a number of equality concerns associated with localism and the devolution of power to localities. One major concern being the risk that the Act effectively institutionalises what is now commonly referred to as ‘postcode lotteries’; that is, outcomes associated with where you live in

the country and a local authority's willingness or lack thereof to enter into negotiations with local organisations concerning the transfer of assets. Another issue of concern is that by handing power and control to local communities, there is a risk of strengthening the positions of those "who shout the loudest at the expense of those groups and communities that have traditionally been most marginalised." (McCarvill, 2012:21) Furthermore, the Act depends to a large extent on a cadre of local volunteers with sufficient capacity (knowledge, skills, networks and substantial amounts of 'free' time) to be able to comprehend the opportunities available via the Act, to campaign (if necessary), to organise around local community rights and to then drive the agenda forward.

For example, senior officers from the London Borough of Merton publicly stated in 2014 that their council policy is not to transfer assets. Their policy states that "...as a principle income producing property will be retained where the return on capital employed justifies its value for money."¹⁷ Elsewhere, in another part of the country the Department for Communities and Local Government's recent Transformation Challenge (2014) funding for transforming government services awarded Durham County Council £1.4m to support groups and volunteers through an initiative called 'Durham Ask'. The purpose of this initiative is to develop the necessary skills, experiences and resources to take over community centres and libraries assets where there is a community interest.¹⁸ A local community's success or otherwise with asset transfer, as mentioned earlier, can depend on a local authority's willingness to engage. Engagement is often

partially influenced by the relative cost of land and assets which often sit alongside regional plans to develop or 'gentrify' some of the country's poorest neighbourhoods. Available evidence suggests there is much less willingness, in London for example, for outright transfer of assets to communities due to a number of factors including relatively high property and land prices when compared to the rest of the country.

In 2011, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) with the aid of a team from the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) conducted research into a range of community-based organisations that own and manage assets across the UK. Based on their research findings, the JRF cautioned that while the Localism Act is part of the current government's Big Society agenda more support is needed if this agenda is to succeed (Aiken et al., 2011). The report further stated that without the right conditions in place, asset ownership/management will face tremendous difficulties in achieving positive results for all. The JRF report found that community organisations should remain mindful of all the risks and costs involved, stating that:

- Assets can potentially become liabilities that subsequently undermine community aspiration
- Government should take note of the obstacles that hinder disadvantaged areas which may lack capacity and opportunities to create additional revenue from community assets
- Government must ensure both time and support is given to community groups who require assistance in managing assets effectively.

¹⁷ www.merton.gov.uk/corporate_asset_plan-2011-2015

¹⁸ www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-awarded-to-improve-local-services-and-save-over-900-million

A lack of comprehensive and robust equality data on which BAME community organisations have been able to successfully utilise opportunities under the Localism Act 2011 is one of the most important elements missing when attempting to evaluate whether the Localism Act, and community asset transfer in particular, promotes equality or not. Without such evidence - including specific minority communities and organisations, where they are located, which assets they have / are trying to secure etc, being collected and analysed on a regular basis and then shared with key stakeholders responsible for driving this agenda forward - we will only be able to second guess how well the Localism Act is doing in reaching disadvantaged communities throughout England and Wales.

Analysis of relevant services delivered through Locality over the past three years could provide some interesting data and an important contribution to this equality question. Despite the above criticisms, the Localism Act, 2011 remains an important piece of legislation to those communities continually threatened with the loss or closure of assets of community value.

This study seeks to determine how much these challenges impact on African Diaspora communities across major UK cities. As Dobson (2011) states, *All community organisations are not equal and do not necessarily share the same worldview, needs or capabilities. Community assets are not a magic potion to be applied indiscriminately, but a complex matrix of opportunities and risks to be weighed up in the light of an organisation's aim and abilities (p4).*

Section 4:

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

The following section provides the main results from the mapping of 150 African Diaspora community-based organisations. As indicated in Appendix 1, they were identified using a variety of primary and secondary data sources, entered onto an Excel database and Survey Monkey and finally onto the interactive Google map. The data collected was then analysed against five themes, which has provided us with an interesting picture including which assets are still open, under threat and closed (see Appendix 3). The five key areas of enquiry were:

Theme 1: Geographical spread and type of community assets:

- Where are or were, the key African Diaspora community assets located in England (i.e. regionally and locally)?
- What type of assets are they (e.g. community centres, shop fronts, playing fields etc)?
- What level of resources did they have access to (e.g. type of rooms, activity areas/spaces, disability access etc)?

Theme 2: Service provision and take-up:

- What do they currently offer (or what did they offer) to African Diaspora and other local communities?
- Which groups are targeted (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age etc) and to what extent do they use the provisions?

Theme 3: Ownership/management/leadership:

- What is the nature of the tenure of those spaces (e.g. ownership, closure etc...)?
- What are the management and staffing/volunteer complements?
- What are the key leadership and management challenges facing African Diaspora organisations with community assets?

Theme 4: Support and sustainability strategies:

- How are the buildings financially resourced (e.g. through local authority grant-aid, charitable funding, community use room hire, private functions etc)?
- The extent to which organisations had heard of Community Rights or Locality? And if so, to what extent have they received any support from them?

Theme 5: Future development opportunities:

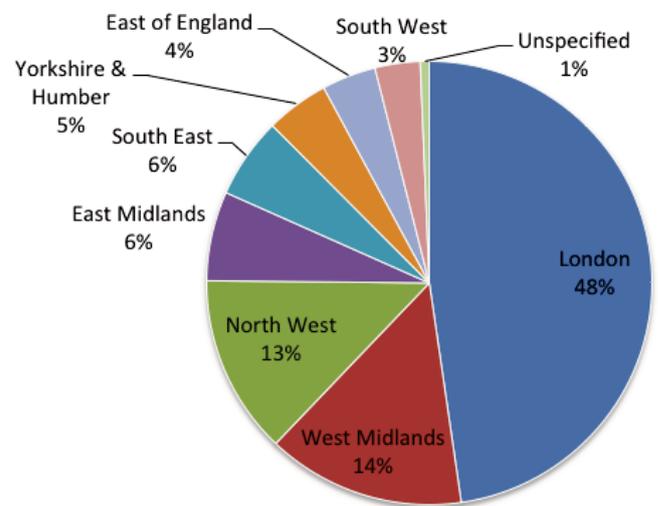
- What have we learnt and where are the findings directing us as to future support and development needs and opportunities for some African Diaspora community assets?

Theme 1: Geographical spread and type of community assets

1. Where are (or were) the key African Diaspora community assets located in England by regional responses?

The majority of the 150 assets mapped were located in London 48% (73), West Midlands 14% (22) and North West 14% (20). Email and telephone based outreach activities were conducted to all the major cities in England to try and increase completion rates and spread of assets. Despite this, London became the primary focus due to the relatively high number of African Diaspora organisations with assets in this city, as well as the physical location and the 'local community reach' of Ubele (Chart 1).

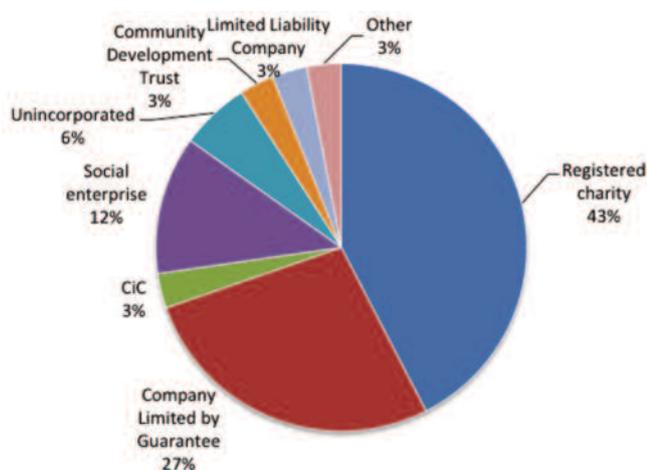
Chart 1: Location by regional breakdown of the key African Diaspora community assets in England



2. What type of assets are they (e.g. community centres, shop fronts, playing fields etc)?

Only 33 organisations responded to this question, of which 43% were 'registered charities', 51% were 'social enterprises/not-for-profit'¹⁹ with only 3% classified as an Limited Liability Company (LLC) and 3% 'other/unspecified' (Chart 2). Social enterprises are businesses with primarily social and/or environmental objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community. According to the Coutts Philanthropy report (2011), there are around 62,000 social enterprises in the UK, contributing more than £24bn to the economy and employing approximately 800,000 people²⁰.

Chart 2 : Legal organisational structure of respondents



3. What level of resources did they have access to (e.g. type of rooms, floors, disability access etc)?

88 responses were received to this question, from which we were able to discern at least 116 different types of assets either leased or owned outright by the organisations (Chart 3). Interestingly, 4% of those who responded to this question indicated that they were 'operating' from a residential building; that is, their 'home'. However, these largely reflected responses from 'Unincorporated' organisations. In many cases assets are combined, such as community centres and a sports centre, or a multi-floor book shop and an archive.

As Chart 3 shows, by far the most popular type of community asset was the community centre (44%: 51) which, because of their wider community facility potential, provide a unique opportunity for Locality and other local, regional and national organisations and agencies concerned with the support and development of community assets to proactively widen their reach and engagement of African Diaspora organisations in urban areas.

The majority of community assets were 'leased' or rented (see Theme 3 discussion below). We were able to discern the proportion of space utilized by organizations which, as Chart 5 shows, reflect less than half of all responding organizations owning their own premises as indicated by having access to all floors (43%). Collectively, 28% has access to either ground and/or first floor access and useage. Clearly, access to space is likely to impact on programme development and effectiveness as well as sustainability.

¹⁹ The term social enterprises, in our study, is used as an 'umbrella' term for not-for-profit organisations that are not registered charities, and as such, we wanted to understand the range of organisations that could be classified as 'not-for-profit'. In our figure of 51% 'social enterprise/not-for-profit' we have combined Community Trusts, CiC, Unincorporated, Company Limited by Guarantee and Social Enterprise, with the majority being 'Company Limited by Guarantee (27%)'.

²⁰ Coutts Philanthropy (2011), Inspiring local philanthropy: Making a difference in local communities, in association with New Philanthropy Capital and Community Foundation Network; Autumn 2011

Chart 3: What type of building or space was or is it?

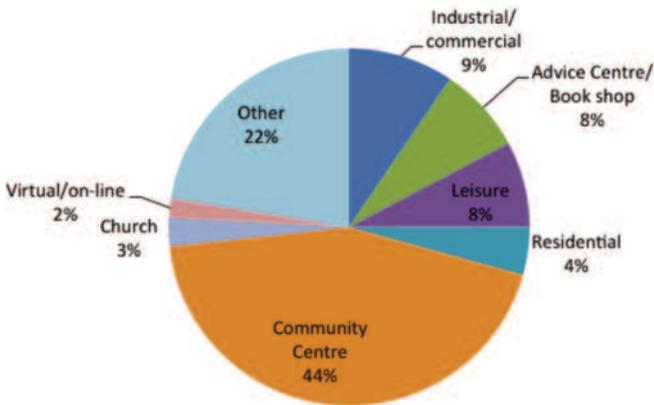
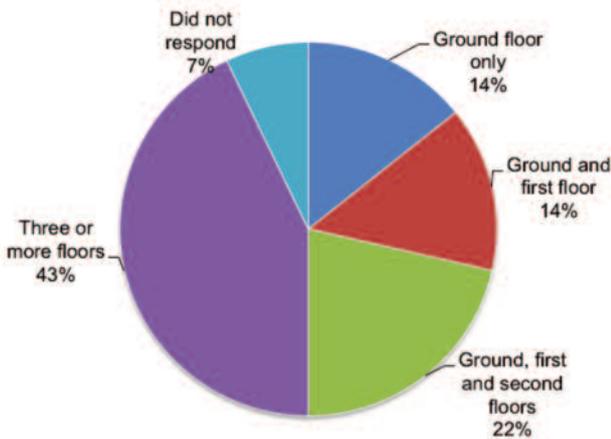
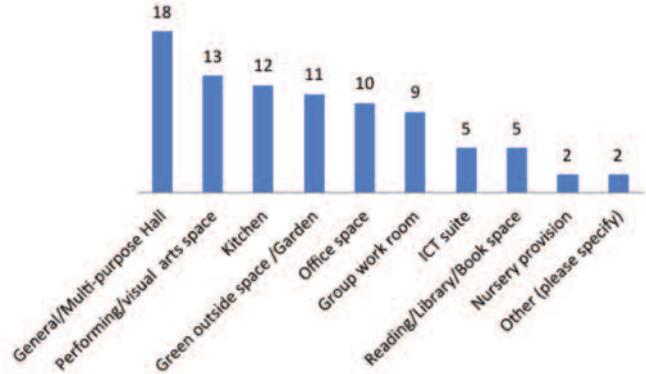


Chart 4: Proportion (%) of space at the disposal of organisations within buildings leased, rented or owned outright.



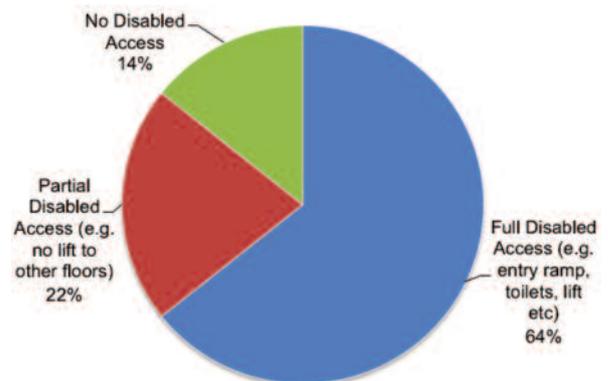
Linked to this theme, we asked what access organisations had to resources within their provision. As Chart 5 shows, the majority of organisations had access to a general or multi-purpose hall (18 organisations), which represents 21% of the 88 responses received followed by dedicated areas catering for performing and visual arts (N = 13 or 15%).

Chart 5: Access to spaces and activity areas within provision



Given the need to ensure disability access, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they complied with or had taken measures to ensure the widest accessibility possible. As Chart 6 shows, more than half (64%) of the 88 respondents to this question said they had 'full disabled access', which we defined as having in place entry ramp, disabled toilet facility and a lift. Those that did not have a lift were categorised as having 'partial disabled access', a category which included 22% of respondents. Taken as a whole, it would be fair to say that the overwhelming majority (86%) of organisations who responded had good disabled access. There is, therefore, further work required to identify and work with those organisations without disabled access (i.e. 14%).

Chart 6: The extent to which responding organisations had disabled access



Theme 2: Service provision and take-up:

1. Which groups are targeted and to what extent do they use the provisions (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age etc)?

Of the 14 organisations that completed the longer questionnaire, we found that just under two thirds (64%) of respondents had a membership system (Chart 7). However, as the research was less about the benefits derived by beneficiaries, the extent to which the members benefited from the provision is not clear. Their views on the strength and weaknesses of the provisions will be invaluable in understanding the efficacy of the assets. What is clear, however, is that a membership scheme offers organisations a ready-made pool of participants and, over time, could become the backbone of the organisation’s sustainability strategy. This may be a development need as well as a reflection of the size of the organisation, especially as indicated in Chart 3 above, that at least 4% of ‘business’ is conducted in ‘homes’ (i.e. residential) or virtually, online (2%). With respect to those who had a membership scheme in place from our targeted cohort (N = 9), as Chart 7 shows, 85% of them had membership in excess of 50 and upwards to 500 (14%). These organisations are likely to benefit, in the longer term, from a strong participation platform so long as they are able to meet the needs and being an efficient and well managed organisation.

Chart 7: Organisations with a membership scheme in place

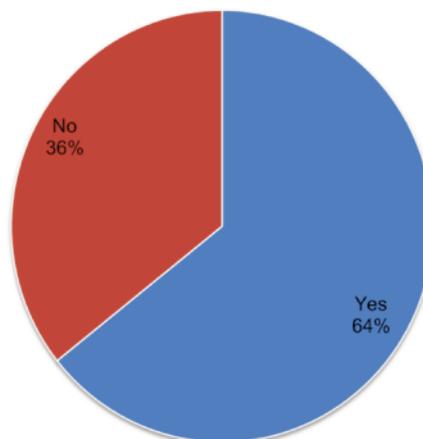
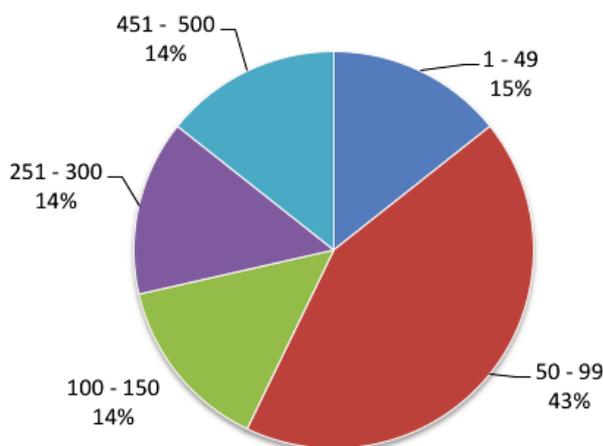


Chart 8: Proportion (%) of organisations with a membership scheme by membership range



In terms of gender of service users, the data from 57 organisations suggested that more women (53%) than men (47%) were accessing services (Chart 9). The age groups reached were fairly evenly split, given that the African Diaspora community is still a relatively young population. Out of the 43 organisations whose data was collected in answer to this question, 52% targeted under 25s and 48% targeted those aged 26 years and over (Chart 10).

However, given Britain’s ageing population, and the significant level of change in the arrangements governing the provision of health and social care services, there is scope for some African Diaspora community organisations to consider how they might develop appropriate services to meet the need of the growing number of elders within their community. Consortia arrangements could offer useful service development models and opportunities; however it is not usually a level playing field, even between voluntary sector organisations.

A women’s organisation with two secure assets (a large multi-story building and a shop front) has a considerable track record in providing such services. However they reported that some larger mainstream voluntary sector organisations with a more sophisticated infrastructure appear to be poaching groups of elders from African Diaspora organisations now that they have begun to recognise some of their emerging needs and a potentially new and lucrative market. They also reported that elders were returning to much smaller, under resourced African Diaspora organisations, for more ‘personalised’ matters such as financial advice and assistance. Trusting relationships, usually built up over several years were regarded as highly significant when providing this type of support to African Diaspora elders.

Chart 9: The proportion (%) of service users by gender

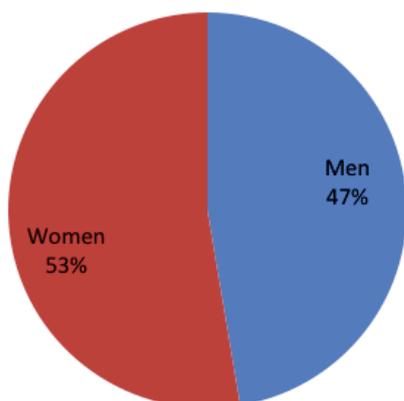
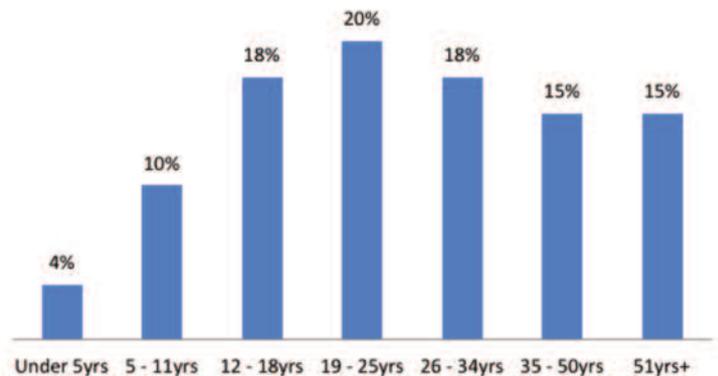
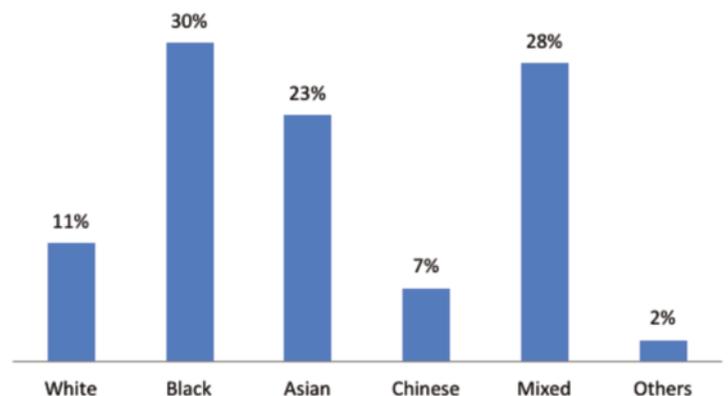


Chart 10: The proportion (%) of service users by broad age range grouping



As Chart 11 shows, almost 90% of the responding organisations offered services to BAME groups with 81% working with people in communities who describe themselves as ‘Black’ (i.e. African, African Caribbean and Black UK), Asian or Mixed heritage).

Chart 11: Proportion (%) of service users by broad ethnic classification



2. What do they currently offer (or what did they offer) to African Diaspora and other local communities?

We collected data on the services offered by 115 organisations. As Chart 12 indicates, the vast majority of them (92) were offering services to children and young people between 5 - 19 years. In particular, arts, cultural provision, festivals and events featured very highly with a total of 112 organisations offering these four types of activities to their local communities. Given the significant shift towards commissioning and consortia arrangements as well as social business investment, such organisations will probably also require considerable support to develop alternative business models to continue to deliver local service provision.

Over half (53%) of organisations opened for 6 – 7 days per week (Chart 13). These were largely those organisations that owned their own premises, which adds further weight to discussions on why many organisations would prefer to own rather than leasing or rent.

Chart 12: Proportion (%) of activities and services delivered in the building or space

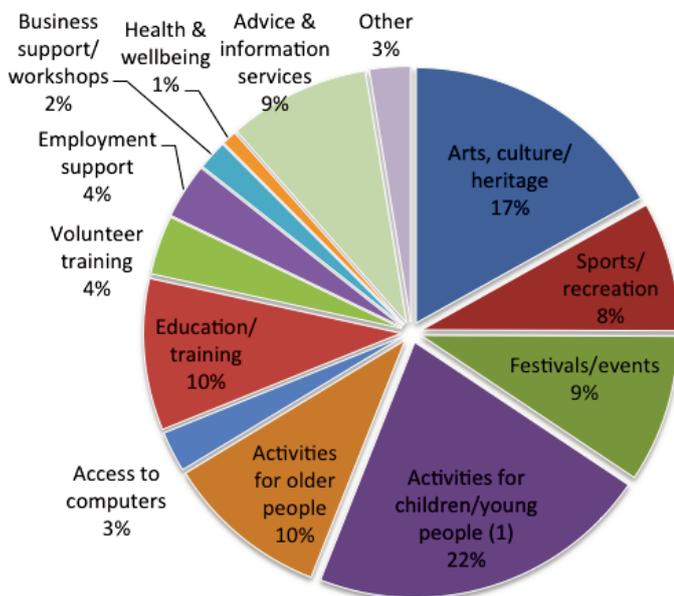
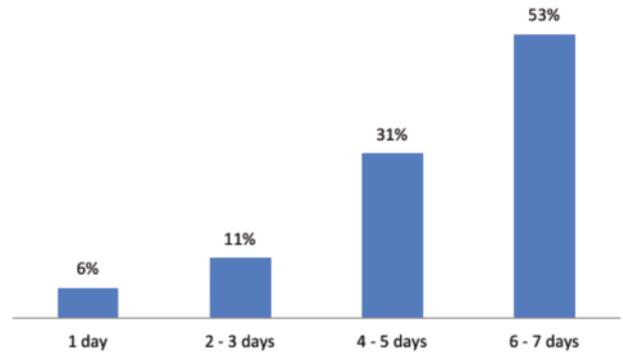
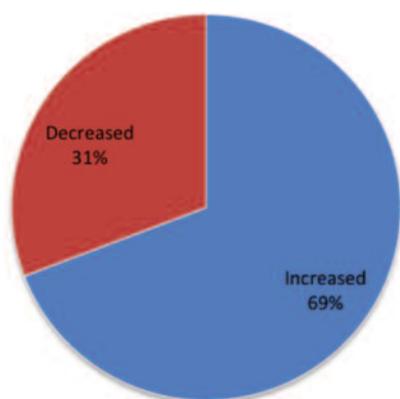


Chart 13: The number of days per week the building or space was used



We asked the targeted 14 organisations the extent to which they have witnessed either a decrease or increase in participation/usage level over the previous three years. Of those who answered this question, 9 (69%) indicated that they had seen an increase over that time (Chart 14). However, it is unclear as to whether this reflected a surge due to, say a number of deaths and therefore funeral arrangement requirements for 'hall' and such like spaces, as indicated in Chart 5 above (e.g. 21% of provision having access to multi-purpose hall spaces) or other factors such as wider programme development and take up. This further adds to the point earlier made regarding the lack of engagement with users as to the benefit derived through accessing provisions, which may reflect effectiveness and quality of service provision or a 'blip' based on seasonal or occasional opportunities. Further work is needed to unpack why this is the case.

Chart 14 : The extent to which participation and useage had increased or decreased over a 3 years period

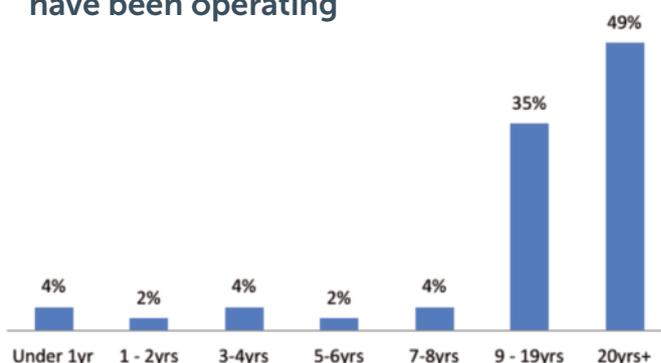


Theme 3: Ownership, management and leadership

1. What is the nature of the tenure of those spaces (e.g. ownership, closure etc...)?

Chart 15 provides data for between 36 and 115 organisations that responded, and they illustrate some interesting trends. For example, 84% of the 51 organisations which responded to the question about the length of time they have been operating, have been operating for 9 years or more, with 50% (25) of these organisations having done so for more than 20 years; which, given their continued existence in such challenging times, is itself a significant achievement. Stories from these organisations need to be captured and the learning shared with a range of audiences.

Chart 15: Length of time organisations have been operating



150 responses were received to the question of whether or not their provision was closed, open or under threat of closure. Of this number, as Chart 16 shows, worryingly, only 50% (76) said they are open and likely to be so for the foreseeable future. The implication for the indicated 25% (38) who responded as being 'under threat and/or closed' is a cause for concern, especially if those provisions are catering for a significant proportion of the community. There is a considerable amount of work still to be done to ascertain the stability or otherwise (and the potential support needs) of the 38 buildings that are under threat or status unknown.²¹ Chart 17, for example, indicates that 62% of those 'closed' shut down due to lack of funding (62%) and 28% to what we collectively refer to as 'management associated issues'. Major sustainability issues featured even for those organisations which were open at the time of the exercise. This is explored in more detail below as it seems important to also identify those organisations with 'secure' buildings which still might be struggling to maintain services within them due to significant reductions in funding for service provision, for example.

²¹ Because the level of non-response is so high (25%) caution is advised in drawing conclusion as to the level of buildings due to be closed and/or opened.

Chart 16: Is the building open, closed, under threat?

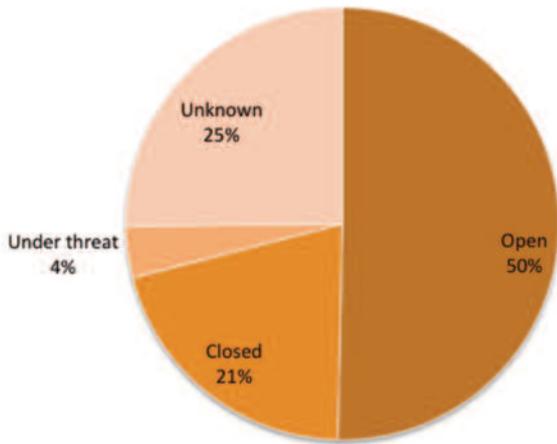
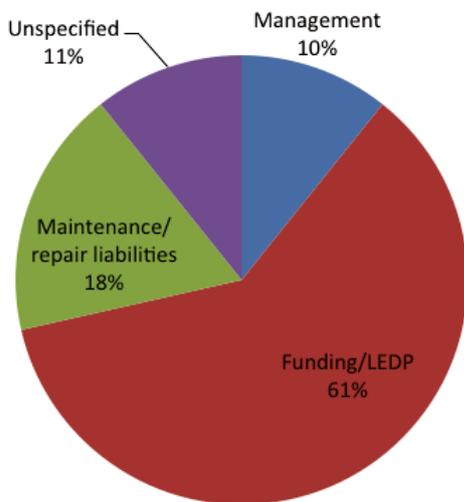
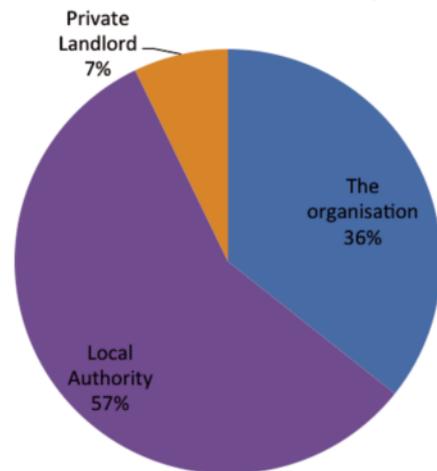


Chart 17: If the building closed, please state the main reason(s) for closure.



Charts 18 – 23 are based on our targeted and focused survey and interviews with 14 organisations. From this, 64% (9) respondents indicated that their buildings were owned either by the local authority or a private landlord (Chart 18). The remaining five are owned by the organisations themselves. In fact one women’s organisation owned two separate buildings outright.

Chart 18: Ownership of building



Half of the 14 respondents were operating from community centres which are more likely to be owned by local authorities (Chart 19). Other forms of assets such as shop fronts with accommodation on upper floors as well as private dwellings were more likely to be owned by the organisations themselves. This is important to note when considering seeking and /or creating future asset provisions.

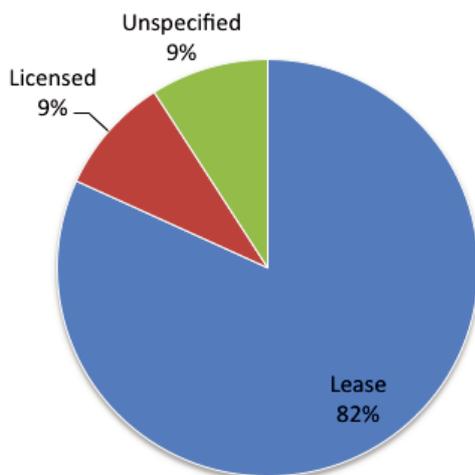
One respondent (who is part of an organisation which owns its building) commented on the benefits of ownership compared to leasing. She stated:

‘We need security. Leases do not offer security. Council changes the policies, priorities and reduces funding and destabilises communities.’ (Bookshop/ Archive)

Chart 19: Type of buildings utilised by 14 targeted organisations

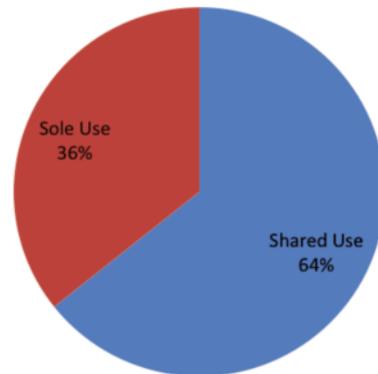


Chart 20: If you don't or didn't own the building or space, what were/are the arrangements for its use?



Eleven (11) organisations responded to this question, the majority of whom 'leased' (82%) their provision, which is not surprising given the number that actually owned their asset outright (Chart 18). In keeping with this trend, shared use is a common practice (Chart 21) with 64% indicating that they share provisions.

Chart 21: The proportion (%) of organisations that have sole or shared use arrangements in place.



2. What are the management and staffing/volunteer complements?

All of the 14 organisations were highly dependent on small numbers of part time staff with two organisations having almost 26 part time staff out of a total of 55 paid staff across the 14 organisations. Overwhelmingly, all 14 organisations interviewed had a higher proportion of volunteers to 'paid staff': 254 volunteers compared to 33 paid staff. Given the high level of charities and social enterprises that had been identified through the process (Chart 2), this is not too surprising and is a feature of the voluntary and community sector arrangement.

The volunteers recruited were reported as being highly skilled, experienced and dedicated individuals, putting in numerous hours each month to keep community centres and other spaces open and contributing to the delivery of essential local services. There was a clear need articulated for on-going professional support to volunteers as often they are forgotten in development opportunities. It was also suggested that there is a need for recognition of this contribution from within and outside of the African Diaspora community. Many of these centres and other spaces would have ceased operating without this level and quality of 'in-kind' support.

3. What are the key leadership and management challenges facing African Diaspora organisations with community assets?

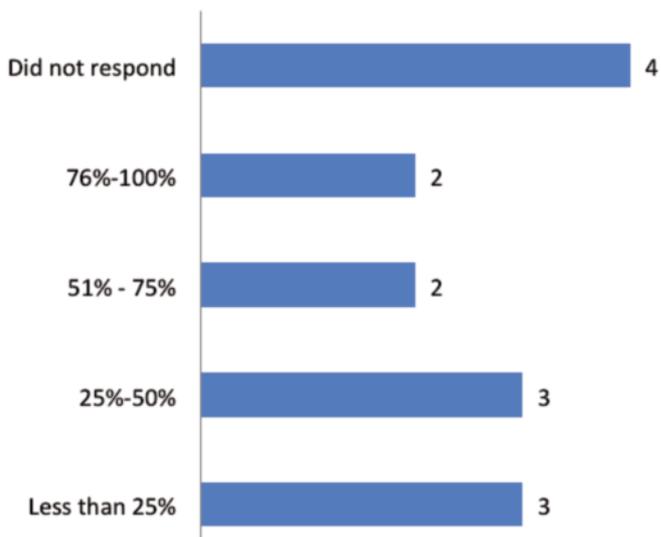
As shown in Chart 17, overwhelmingly, lack of funding and/or pressures due to local regeneration planning (61%) were cited as the major reasons for closure. However, if we take that the ability to pull down funding is a 'management and leadership' imperative, conjoined to functions such as repairs/ maintenance liabilities (18%) and general 'management leadership' (10%), then we are looking at 89% of reasons for closure being down to 'management and leadership' concerns.

At another level (Chart 22), 29% (four) organisations stated that they were only using 50% of the physical space in their premises or even less for a variety of reasons including dilapidation, lack of suitability for activities, partial or no accessibility for disabled people etc.

Two thirds of respondents stated that they could offer additional activities and/or facilities in their buildings. Suggestions included a supplementary (Saturday) school, fitness activities, outdoor activities, arts and cultural activities and large functions. Just over a third of the buildings (36%) were for sole use by the organisation and over 50% of income is generated through hire of space to other not-for-profit organisations and private lettings such as weddings.

Given this, and available space and usage, there could be scope to review use of space and the subsequent redesign of the delivery of some services and activities so as to maximise available space and in some cases include full disabled access. This could open up opportunities to generate new income streams as well as access to spaces for new groups including more recently arrived communities.

Chart 22: Physical space being used in the building



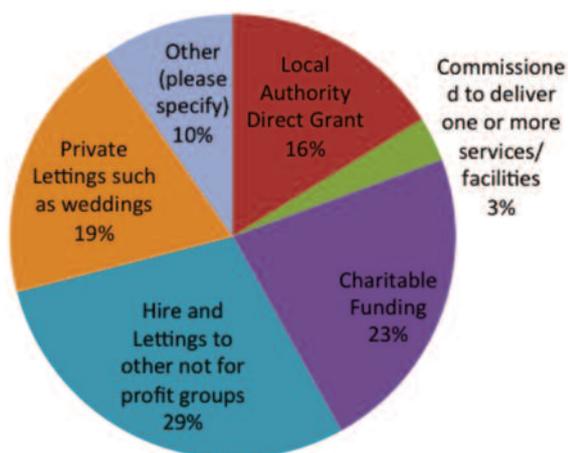
Theme 4: Support and sustainability strategies

1. How are the buildings financially resourced (e.g. through local authority grant-aid, charitable funding, community use room hire, private functions etc)?

With respect to funding strategies, some organisations are opting out of new arrangements and /or going it alone as they make decisions not to jump through large hoops for relatively small amounts of funding, whether as direct providers or at the bottom rung of big consortia arrangements. However, this does raise the question as to where and how are the existing needs of some of the most vulnerable members of the African Diaspora community being met within the current system?

In trying to better understand the sustainability of the organisations, we sought to understand the financial/funding profile of the 14 organisations. Chart 23 shows that those organisations with their own asset secure the majority of their income through hire and lettings (29%) and 23% through charity giving foundations and trusts. Interestingly, only 16% were received through the local authority grant schemes, which may reflect local authority 'cuts', posing a great challenge to the sustainability of most organisations.

Chart 23: Major funding sources of organisations



Despite significant challenges being faced, organisations reported a number of major achievements. These need to be acknowledged and profiled by government departments, national agencies responsible for development of voluntary sector policy and programmes, as well as local authorities, funding agencies and the wider community. As a number of organisations told us, they have:

'Helped secure and transmit cultural heritage of people of African origins in Bristol and proudly transmitting African culture to a wider audience so as to raise awareness and broaden understanding more generally across society.' (Community centre)

'...survived despite the odds; empowering and creating experiences for the young people beyond their perceived capabilities ; raising young people's aspirations and horizons' (Education centre)

'...provided quality educational support including the development of a full-time college for students 14-19 and provided a focal point for representation.' (African Diaspora community college)

'...stopped the council selling off the house, they have started to build the heritage potential of the site. We have worked with a diverse group of stakeholders both within and outside of the black community.' (Historic house)

One organisation stated that their biggest challenge was however:

'Keeping the cultural identity of the centre as well as financial sustainability and effective management' (Community centre, Bristol)

When asked how secure the future of their buildings was, 13 responses were as follows:

- Six (46%) secure and very secure
- Seven (54%) insecure and very insecure

The six organisations which stated that their buildings were either secure or very secure had managed to either purchase or have very long leases of at least 15 years and above.

Conversely, those seven organisations which stated their buildings were insecure or very insecure were either under threat of closure or had very short leases (with three having less than five years left), with no clear arrangements in place as yet for their extension.

However the complexity of the situation is echoed by two organisations which have secured their buildings:

'We are not a funded organisation, our income is based on services sold to users such as 11 + classes/homework clubs/summer schemes/dance workshops/box office income for shows/hire of the Albert Hall/grants from trust and foundations for specific projects/loan funding etc'. (Community centre)

'The future of the building (a bookshop and archive) is very secure. However we are thinking about adapting to changing situations and trading conditions with Amazon etc. This is an iconic building but not ideal for its current use. We are looking at different options.' (Institute and bookshop)

10 (83%) out of the 12 organisations which answered this question stated that they needed support developing a number of ideas, including:

'Research and collaboration with other third sector groups to identify the optimum range and levels of services that could achieve the sustainability of a third sector enterprise operating in a deprived community. This would clearly have to be context specific'. (Community centre)
'Site transformation that saves and generates energy. Consider mixed housing / community centre development that would enable investment in the redevelopment of community facilities. We are interested in the community led green agenda amongst BAME groups and working with offenders in a leadership capacity that brings groups together...'. (Community centre)

'Recruit more Trustees to build a strong Board with younger people and complete a community asset transfer of the building from the Council to the community'. (Community centre)

'We get some support but we need more as we are reviewing our strategic plan. Looking at emerging needs of the community. Trying to develop intergenerational connections to create a legacy. We need to co-opt younger people onto the organisation'. (Education centre)

Five (36%) of organisations stated that they had a succession strategy for board level and / or senior staff leadership in place. However eight (57%) did not have one or did not know and all 14 organisations stated that they needed assistance to develop one.

2. The extent to which organisations had heard of 'Community Rights' or 'Locality'? And if so, to what extent have they received any support from them?

The mapping exercise identified a number of assets which appear suitable for targeted development opportunities through, for example, Locality support and / or from different types of social business investment, charitable and other forms of funding. Such organisations should have secured their assets on a permanent basis or have long leases of at least 15 years left.

The following responses relate to organisation's awareness of the Localism Act, 2011 and of their knowledge of Locality and any support received. Responses to this section of the questionnaire were extremely low (N = 27) and as such raises questions to whether the high level of non-responses should be treated as a negative response. In the final analysis caution is advised as to any wider interpretation of the data beyond its reporting.

Of the 27 who responded to the question of their knowledge of the Localism Act (2011), 75% reported that they were aware of this particular Act (Chart 24) though only 19% had sought to use the Act (Chart 25).

A similar number of respondents (76%) indicated that they knew of Locality (Chart 26) though only 31% received support from them (Chart 27) and only 36% of respondents were members/registered with Locality (Chart 28).

Chart 24: Have you heard of the Localism Act 2011?

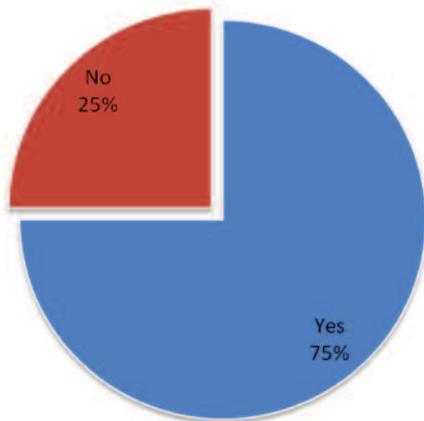


Chart 25: Securing 'rights' under the Localism Act, 2011

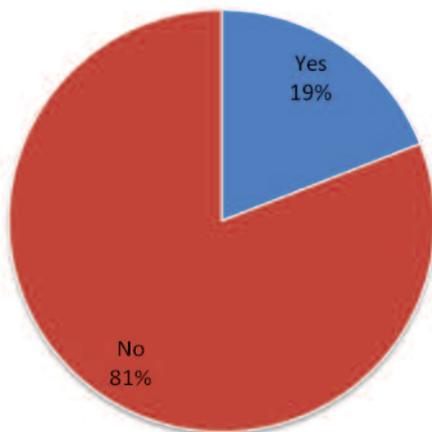


Chart 26: Have you heard of Locality?

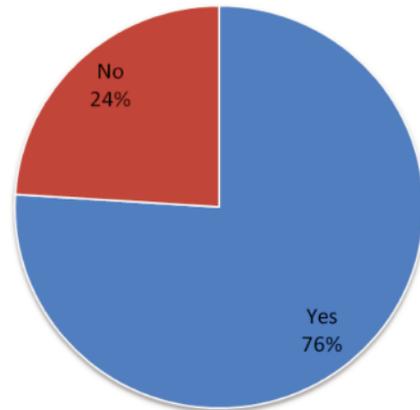


Chart 27: Are you a member of Locality?

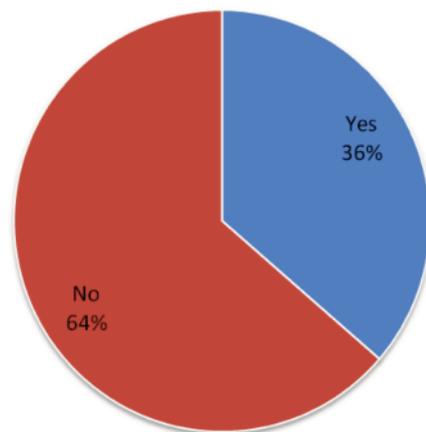
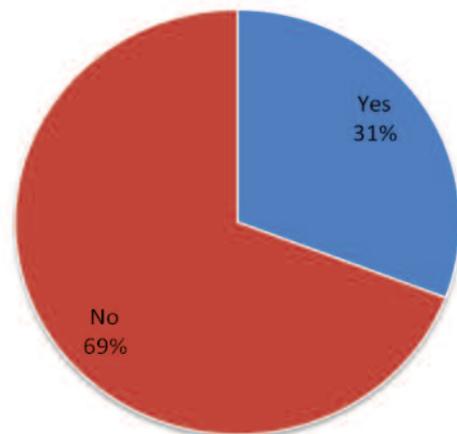


Chart 28: Support from Locality



Theme 5: Future development opportunities

What have we learnt and where are the findings directing us as to future support, development needs and opportunities for some African Diaspora community assets?

Firstly, overall, the majority of the assets captured during this mapping exercise tend to be small and volunteer-led. Primarily leased in the early to mid 1980s as a response to significant urban uprisings, these centres were sometimes 'gifted' for a peppercorn rent, often to charismatic community leaders, while some assets were offered with 25 year leases, significant rental charges and full repairing leases.

Many of these organisations need quality support and development. This is especially the case when one considers the level of financial and human resources that will be required to maintain these assets with relatively little in terms of returns or community benefits from public or private sector landlords. Future research should identify examples where organisations had unsuccessfully attempted to expand their asset base, identifying any barriers they faced and any key learning points.

Secondly, the Google mapping exercise, one-to-one interviews and group conversations suggest that many of the assets are undergoing tremendous changes, with many that would benefit from management support and development. This observation is worrying as the African Diaspora community is one of earliest ethnic minority communities to acquire community assets in England.

Thirdly, the exercise also demonstrated that although two thirds had heard of Locality, only a third of organisations had accessed their services, support or development opportunities. It was not clear from the responses if other agencies had been accessed for support, although anecdotal evidence would suggest this is not the case. Furthermore, the process highlighted that those organisations who had heard about Locality tended not to be members and are in general, unaware of the benefits of membership and its relatively low cost. There is, it appears, considerable scope for Locality to market its services to this new audience.

In the next section we explore further, through qualitative feedback, these and other key sustainability issues presented during the course of the exercise.

Section 5:

SHARING OUR STORY: A SPACE FOR INTROSPECTION AND LEARNING

The following insights were collected through structured interviews with eight (8) individuals who had current and/or previous experience of leading African Diaspora community organisations at some point (present and past) and in the majority of cases, of also managing their assets. Additionally, reflections were also captured during a pan London creative digital mapping exercise held at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre (BGAC), Tottenham, at the end of September 2014. Fifty (50) people from the African Diaspora community attended.

The BGAC event enabled Project Mali to reach a substantial number of other people who did not necessarily have experience of managing centres, but who had substantial experience of supporting and/or using African Diaspora-led spaces for community based activities. The digitally supported conversations were designed and facilitated using iPads and software to capture and then share our collective thoughts and comments in real time. This type of digital experience was a first for the majority of participants. The Ubele Initiative co-designed and co-facilitated this event with the technological platform and support provided by staff from 'Change the Conversation'²².

²² www.changetheconversation.co.uk

The need for community asset ownership

Although a wide diversity of views were shared during the digital mapping session, a common theme which emerged was a desire for the continuation of dedicated meeting spaces for members of African Diaspora communities to help create a sense of 'belonging', a 'home' and a place of safety. Such spaces were used it was reported, for services as well as rights of passage activities. A number of participants made the following compelling arguments that African Diaspora should own these spaces outright, rather than rely on 'others' to provide them for the community:

"We need to have a space where our people can get together and talk about issues as we are here today. In such spaces there can be a common goal and we can meet like-minded people, network and have a dialogue. There are so many people doing things. Let's come together and share the resources we have." [Participant: Digital mapping event]

"We host independent gatherings that are sometimes shunned by other venues; we are more comfortable in our own spaces. There are no arguments in terms of the people using the space, excluding any management issues. There are no clashes on a cultural basis." [Participant: Digital mapping event]

"If we had the opportunity to independently own large spaces it would give us the opportunity to evaluate our skill set in terms of organisation. However, it's also been noted that when opportunities of greater responsibility do come, we haven't done well in the past due to mismanagement. We need empowerment to be able utilise whatever opportunity regardless of independent ownership, i.e. rented space that have little involvement from the council." [Participant: Digital mapping event]

Similar sentiments were expressed during individual interviews:

"Where I come from in Guyana, people like to own their properties. Even when our elders came here, they owned their own properties. It's just unfortunate that they had their vision of going back home... after five years. So they never invested in the community buildings. They focused more on buying houses, sending money back home, but most of them are here, with grandchildren, great grandchildren, they are here... some have passed away. I mean, I'm not going anywhere. When I get pensionable age, I would like to come to a building like this where someone is making my food, making me feel comfortable, happy... you know, passing the time. So I've got all this to think about the future. The other members also need to think about the future because the type of history that we have, is being lost as our elders pass away." [Grace Salmon, Positive Network Centre]

Loss of community assets

On the issue of the gradual loss of some of these buildings and spaces used by members of the African Diaspora over the years, Dr Kehinde Andrews suggested that this is partly due to bad management and lack of organisational strategy on the part of owners or managers of these buildings. He argues that many of these buildings have subsequently become dilapidated and goes on to state:

"I think it was just a lot easier to be given buildings back in the day and a lot of people got buildings but then didn't have plans on what to do with them going forward. The Mohamed Ali Centre (Birmingham), was a nice space, community centre but it became derelict because nobody used it. There is an obsession with keeping buildings but the truth of the matter is that there are those who have no idea what they want it for or how they are going to run it. Therefore, you find that they acquire a building, and then two years down the road lose it because they have no idea of how to run it or use it. That happens. There are between five and ten buildings in Birmingham that have fallen into disuse due primarily to misuse and bad management. It is probably the reason behind every building that we have lost.

At some level, Black organisations do not get a decent enough time to turn things around. You will find other communities get an additional year to turn things around, we cannot. However, having said that, some councils do want to help. The Harambee Organisation for example (Birmingham), where the council tried to assist particularly with this asset transfer but failed because of a lack of organisation from the organisation itself. The council bent over backwards. It is not the same in all cases though." [Dr Kehinde Andrews, Organisation of Black Unity]

Professor Gus John, Educational Consultant and renowned national commentator on critical issues affecting the African Diaspora community observed:

"I am sure you will be discussing (at the digital mapping event), the threat posed to long established community venues that are located or were purposely built in areas where no one would be affected by noise pollution, but are now finding that property developers are buying up land or adjacent buildings to create student accommodation or other rental accommodation and complaining about the activities of such community venues, lobbying to get their music licenses rescinded, or otherwise harassing the community organisations. Sadly, it cannot be taken for granted that the community which those venues have served for decades would mobilise themselves to face down such opposition; opposition which is more often than not a manifestation of rampant racism and an obscene expression of that 'in your face' white 'entitlement' that assaults black communities daily."

Professor John reflects on the situation at Chestnuts Community Centre and Community Arts in Tottenham, which was due for closure by Haringey Council until a last minute reprieve averted the eviction of more than 40 small community organisations, mainly BAME groups. He says:

"I have huge respect for that dedicated group of staff (mostly women) who have provided essential services to the community there over the years; especially at a time when community education/adult education and community development provision in Haringey was contracting at a high rate. It is indeed a huge worry that our communities seem to take so much for granted, the fact that those facilities exist and are kept going through the dedicated

efforts of a few, that they do not see themselves as having a responsibility to sustain them. And then, they suddenly find that there is nowhere for us to hold our naming ceremonies, our wedding reception and anniversaries, our after-funeral celebrations, our Spoken Word events and all the rest of it. When one considers the number of events ('black tie' and otherwise) we organise every year (especially Independence celebrations) in hotels that we don't own and for which we have cover charges ranging from £65 to £125 per head to go and eat food of questionable quality and be patronised by staff who see and treat us as 'not belonging', it is quite mind-boggling that we don't do the Maths and think of finding a better way."

The need for more creativity

Extending the line espoused by Professor John, concerns have also been expressed about the lack of creativity and proactivity within the African Diaspora communities. These concerns reflect both a strategic as well as operational development and implementation imperative.

"African Diaspora community organisation need to incorporate the needs and desires of the young generation and utilise the assets of technology to unite us with the global community." [Participant: Digital mapping event]

"When I worked in Cambridgeshire, I was responsible for establishing a senior citizen (Golden Age) project, aimed at the Caribbean community, to be based at the then Marcus Garvey Centre²³ in Peterborough. We established the Golden Age Association, which was eventually relocated within a new building as part of an asset transfer process. I went back after many years and not much had changed, despite being located in a new building. Many elders sitting around, mostly men, playing dominos, have the occasional dance and meetings. I asked about the financial state of the centre only to be told: "Ah we are still struggling for funds..." So even when we talk about owning assets, having got it, the only idea or scope to raise money is dances, which brings about income. There is therefore a vacuum in creative thinking and especially in relation to strategic income and management processes." [Karl Murray, Independent Consultant]

A new community based model: fit for purpose

Although the need for new social business models was reported on a number of occasions, entrepreneurial models are currently being used to generate income to cover overheads and to provide services. In many instances it was found that the hire of community space for funerals and other rites of passage type events were the primary form of income and were keeping centres afloat. There is very little evidence of local authority support remaining – most has already been withdrawn or in process of being transitioned out.

²³ See for more details on centre <https://www.opencompany.co.uk/company/IP27102R/marcus-garvey-social-club-limited>

Weak governance models were found to be incongruent with the current direction of travel and demands upon the not-for-profit sector. Several organisations were being run by too few board members and/or were lacking essential skills, some of which resulted in internal conflicts and power struggles and taking the eye off wider organisational needs as well as external demands and emerging opportunities. Some of the comments on this included:

"A more entrepreneurial model is required, possibly Community Interest Companies (CIC), which can be led and managed by a small committed group which cannot be usurped. A model of acquiring property outright is preferable to leases." [Linford Sweeney, African historian, Author and Life Coach]

We need to "...review board membership to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the local community including the age range to be involved, the skills and knowledge mix shared etc. There needs to be a time limit for committee members so that officers are rotated." [Participant: Digital Mapping Event]

"There is the internal conversation that needs to be had with these organisations. I get the sense that there are not enough of these conversations going on. I think they just do what they have always done. So there has got to be something about taking more notice of these businesses. It is very much the norm in the business world to listen to your customers. I think we have to start re-educating managers of centres to look at them as a growing concern, as a business and not just a hobby or entitlement. I think we need to take up the negative and turn it around. The question of whether Locality (or other funders) will invest in any enterprise will be based on management competence. If they see

poorly managed assets they will no doubt come to the conclusion that: "...if you can't manage your asset why should we fund you?" [Karl Murray, Independent Consultant]

He goes on to explain:

"I think that there has been a tradition amongst community-based providers of not wanting to think business-wise. In fact, they are businesses and I think therein lies a community development challenge for all community asset owners because all communities (i.e.the Irish, Turkish etc), if they do not try to adopt a business-like model, they will go by the wayside. A lot of Turkish, Greek and Irish facilities ownership, for instance, when compared to the African Caribbean, have a more business-like approach to running their centres. I know people will be saying: "...Ah but they have more money!" People will spend their money in a way they feel will benefit them no matter who you are. There is no easy answer but if this is the case, let's be upfront and say there are some good practices taking place somewhere, but there are some negative ones, especially regards asset management. We need to identify those good practices and build on them. It may be that these things may well be echoing and re-enforcing what a lot of people have been saying though thinking no one is listening." [Karl Murray, Independent Consultant]

Female leadership

Although the need for new strong leadership was cited on a number of occasions, Project Mali unexpectedly uncovered a previously hidden and powerful story of female leadership and entrepreneurship which has achieved a significant scale of success in securing community assets for future generations.

As Vivienne Hayes, CEO of the Women's Resource Centre commented:

"Often when research studies like ours are conducted, issues concerning women are not highlighted enough. They are less visible. I want to see that this does not happen with this project and that you take a more gender sensitive approach."

Although the following comments are not about female leadership per se, but are about younger leaders, they are the voices of two women leaders – one who is an elder and one a younger woman.

".....at the time I thought, I am part of the next generation. There was some in-fighting... between them and us ... if you were a younger person, they did not look at you.... So I learnt from that example. We were at Eagle House, an historic house, but because it was off the beaten track, people were not so keen to come out there. So when I came here twelve years ago, I loved it. So I brought the elders here and they also loved it." [Grace Salmon]

And another commentator chimed:

"I think that there is a gap in between those who are more experienced and those who aren't. I feel like you have young professionals looking to acquire more knowledge from the more seasoned, who are still holding onto their knowledge, power and influence. Although they talk a

lot about mentoring and things like that a lot, people aren't really willing to do it because generations are living and therefore working a lot longer. Maybe ten, twenty years ago people would retire at 60, however I work alongside people who are now in their eighties. There is a part of me that thinks you need to hand over this."

"Friends of mine work in different professions in Ghana and Nigeria and have close mentoring relationships. I think that's because there aren't so many restrictions. You can allow someone to be part of your personal life back home, whereas people here are very reluctant to be part of your personal life. Like at home, someone would say, "Oh come to my daughter's wedding or fiftieth birthday party..." People here who are senior management would not invite junior management so you end up having very limited interactions." [Deborah Owhin, Director, Made Equal]

Project Mali only surfaced one example of 'Community Developers' that is, organisations with more than one building and which is part of a model cited in the above JRT research (2011), on community assets. Project Mali found two separate buildings in North London which are owned by a women's organisation. It is also noted that African Diaspora women were often at the forefront of keeping community spaces operational on a day-to-day basis, even if they were not members of the Board of Trustees. The net contribution of women from within the African Diaspora in community supporting community spaces clearly needs more exploration and could be the subject of further research about women leaders. Female leadership is explored further in one of the case studies below.

Succession planning

An ageing leadership was identified, with the average age being late 50s to early 60s. There was, in some instances, evidence of a lack of willingness to 'pass the baton' on, and some current leaders perceived as being 'stuck' around leading and facilitating the organisational change required to ensure future sustainability.

Relatively few active sustainability strategies are being designed, or are in place, to pass the baton, which is impacting negatively on the future viability of individual organisations.

Young people are emerging as potential new leaders, but they need to be given opportunities, with professional training and support to step into leadership roles. They often bring new energy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, the use of technology and social media – when interwoven with an understanding of community development and social business processes these skills could provide a much needed boost to struggling community organisations and asset development.

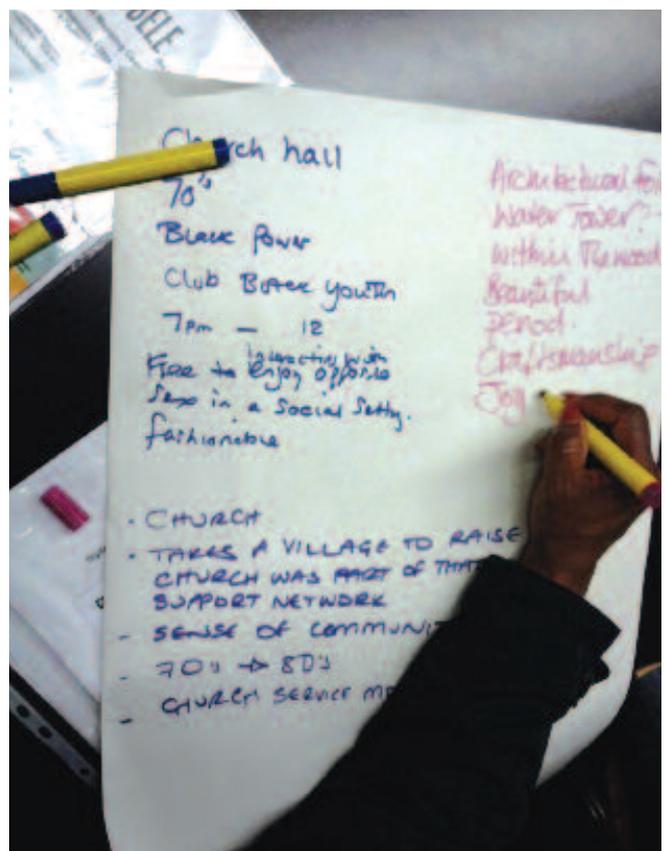
"Some of the issues that are affecting sustainability of organisations and buildings stem from rather out-dated governance models. Also '...internal power struggles, a dwindling membership and lack of creativity in programmes on offer with some of the older generation not wanting to make way for new younger leadership to come through." [Linford Sweeney]

In relation to the younger generation who now want to have access to buildings and spaces in their own communities, Kehinde suggests that:

"...although many young people have a clear idea about how they want to use them, they simply cannot gain access to a building."

Philip Udeh is in the process of establishing a 'Friends' group to support the future development of Lord Morrison Hall (LMH), as this centre in Tottenham is under threat of closure. He says:

".....there is the need for new younger leadership to be created from within the African Diaspora which are facilitated to become the 'legal guardians' of such spaces leading on the creative redesign of them through innovative and entrepreneurial practices which create a real legacy for the next generation." [Philip Udeh, Director, Community Builders]



Section 6:

CASE STUDIES

The following three case studies have been included to illustrate emerging stories and trends with regards to BAME community asset development and transfer.

The first case study, which focuses on Tottenham (London), suggests a story of uncertainty due to a local authority-led review of community centres which commenced in 2012, but which has yet to report. Despite this and very limited, and in some cases no council financial support, Tottenham still has vibrant community centres providing high quality services to deprived local communities.

The second case study focuses on a story of female leadership which has created a state of the art, entrepreneurial and thriving community centre meetings the needs of people living in some of the most deprived districts in Liverpool.

The final case study highlights what can happen when a culturally diverse community in Leicester works together and campaigns for more than 20 years to secure an asset of community value.

Case study 1: A learning journey for BAME-led community centres – the Tottenham experience

Tottenham, second only perhaps to Brixton, is an area in London which is nationally and even internationally known as a place of long standing African Diaspora presence. The magnetic draw to an increased diversity of ethnic communities makes it one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the country (Hudson et al, Rowntree, 2007).

Although changing quite rapidly, Tottenham has not as yet been gentrified beyond all recognition. Tottenham has however been included in the London Plan (2014), creating three designated Opportunity Areas: Tottenham Hale, Northumberland Park and Seven Sisters and a number of development sites.

Haringey Council have been criticised for being slow in grasping real community engagement opportunities and as a result the 'Our Tottenham' campaign²⁴, a coalition of 50 local community organisations, was established in 2012, calling for 'community-led regeneration'.

²⁴ www.ourtottenham.org.uk

What is the story?

The Ubele Initiative spent six weeks during summer 2014, on an extended 'learning journey'²⁵ visiting, listening and engaging in dialogue primarily, but not exclusively, with African Diaspora-led community centres around Tottenham. Centres²⁶ visited were:

- a) The Bernie Grant Arts Centre
(www.berniegrantcentre.co.uk)
- b) Chestnuts Community and Community Arts Centre
(www.chestnutscommunitycentre.org.uk)
- c) The Dream Centre
(www.dreamcentre.org)
- d) Lord Morrison Hall, in Bruce Grove
- e) Lordship Rec Hub
(www.lordshiphub.org.uk)
- f) The Selby Centre (www.selbytrust.co.uk).

What learning emerged about BAME community centres in Tottenham?

The story that emerged during the learning journey was one of significant community effort led by a large cadre of volunteers – David Cameron's 'Big Society' in abundance. However, at the time of the learning journey only two of the five centres visited had any full time paid staff – neither of these were specifically African Diaspora-led.

The voluntary effort observed ranged from organisations being run by full time volunteers through to regular sessional volunteers and those who offered support on an ad hoc basis. No external funding had been secured from public sector, charitable

or other sources to support the delivery of local services by the two remaining African Diaspora-led organisations.

It was also observed that these community centres were rather isolated with their own organisational struggles and challenges. Available capacity building and other support mechanisms were extremely limited and not focused on individual centres, as the local voluntary sector council has been weakened as a result of budget reductions. Such organisations clearly need intensive support to widen their reach and even transform as local communities change.

Chestnuts Community Association, known as 'Chestnuts People', a new local community-led group which includes centre users, is being facilitated by The Ubele Initiative. It is already emerging as an effective local voice and aims to create a community-led plan to support the future running of the centre. A last minute reversal of the decision to close the centre at the end of December 2014, by Haringey Council, will now mean user groups can remain at the centre. The Council announced that interim management arrangements would be provided by Bridge Renewal Trust²⁷ established as a result of the New Deal for Community (NDC) and which is located next to the Centre. Although this was not a popular decision in some quarters, Chestnuts People continue to meet to outline a plan for the centre, which could potentially involve a strategic partnership proposal. The group is part of the pilot 'Emerging Potential' programme

²⁵ Learning Journeys are used within 'Theory U' as part of its social innovation processes. Through learning journeys individuals and groups suspend judgement whilst 'sensing' the system they are immersing themselves in so as to facilitate transformation change. (Otto Sharmer, 2009)

²⁶ Another community hub, The Welbourne Centre, which was established during the 1990s to meet the needs of African Diaspora elderly, closed its doors in 2012 despite new management in place and a robust business plan. The building was razed to the ground and the land is earmarked for luxury flats. This council owned building, similar to the other centres, was run for more than 20 years without any local authority financial support. The site and 'story' surrounding this facility was also visited though not forming part of this learning journey.

²⁷ www.bridgerenewaltrust.org.uk

which is supporting very small community-based organisations to develop community action plans for their local neighbourhoods. From April 2015, this approach will be rolled out as 'First Steps' which will bring a much needed boost and practical support to grass roots organisations similar to Chestnuts People.

Despite real challenges observed in some of the organisations, Tottenham's BAME centres are adopting extremely entrepreneurial approaches through, for example, the hiring out of rooms and other spaces to community based organisations and private businesses, as well as individuals either on a long-term lease basis, full or half day sessions and on a one-off and /or hourly basis.

Community cafes offering high quality and reasonably priced ethnic and non-ethnic food daily were available at three of the centres visited. Income from such sources is used to cover centre overheads as well as to deliver much needed local services.

There is however, a real and urgent need for a more co-ordinated high level collaborative strategic intervention to help secure inward investment for these and other centres in Tottenham through for example, social business loans and capital funds, Big Lottery funding and existing and new social enterprise development funding opportunities. Tottenham's community centres are exploring the possibility of creating a local network in order to ensure that the needs, views and aspirations of local centres have a collective voice and are adequately represented across the area.

There is also a need to assist these centres to assess their social impact and social value so they and the local authority, in addition to other stakeholders, are clear about the contribution these organisations make to the social, health and wellbeing of local communities, as well as the economic contribution which social and community enterprises make to the local economy.

Case study 2: A case of African Diaspora women's leadership – Kuumba Imani, Liverpool

The vision of Kuumba Imani, Liverpool²⁸ was conceived and developed by Liverpool Black Sisters (LBS), an organisation that was set up in the early 1970s by a number of local black women to highlight the lack of childcare facilities and lack of support in dealing with a number of highly sensitive issues including immigration / nationality, mental health and the ad-hoc selection and recruitment of black foster carers, domestic violence, racial harassment and the under representation of black women in professional employment. Central to all of these issues were racial discrimination, sexism and classism, which black women, significantly experienced.

LBS identified the need for a local family centre through a process of continuous community consultation. In the late 1990s LBS commissioned research within the Liverpool 8 community, with existing users of LBS and with those who had not yet had contact with the organisation.

LBS identified that a new, more wide-ranging service was needed to improve and support black women and their families into mainstream living. The organisation had operated from the basement of the Liverpool 8 Law Centre since the early

²⁸ www.kuumbaimani.org.uk

1980s, establishing itself as a successful, high quality, child-care and training provider. It was the first organisation in Liverpool to register an 'after school' service in 1993 and its staff were the first to complete the NVQ Level 3 in Play Work in the North West. The portfolio of services and support delivered from this limited space is impressive and the organisation has built on its reputation to realise the dream of the Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre (KIMC).

KIMC secured £3.1 million of capital funding from the Millennium Commission and ERDF in 1998 for the design and build of a centre of excellence, which is a beacon within the community and a resource for the Liverpool 8 and surrounding areas (Liverpool 1, 3, 7, 15 and 17). The Centre opened its doors to the community in 2004.

Kuumba Imani is also a social enterprise combining social objectives with commercial and trading activity as part of an overarching enterprise solution to social and economic deprivation. Income is re-invested in the company to improve existing services and develop new ones for the local community.

Initially KIMC was set up as a separate company from Liverpool Black Sisters to enable LBS to retain its core value as a women's organisation, developing and delivering services for women and children. In December 2006 it was agreed that LBS would cease trading and that its assets and liabilities would be transferred to KIMC and all of its activities would be delivered by KIMC with the dream being realised of one centre, one mission and recognised quality provision with both being under the same roof and same name.

Over the years hundreds of local women and men have worked tirelessly to ensure that the KIMC mission is realised and that the many individuals, groups and organisations from all sectors benefit from this quality provision.



Case study 3: Communities working together at Highfields Centre, Leicester

The Highfields Centre²⁹ in Leicester, serves local people and has demonstrated for more than two decades that the staff and local community are not afraid to take on the challenges presented to ensure their sustainability. They have utilised community campaigns of various kinds, petitioned meetings, marches, rallies and have, for example, taken the county council to court, won a judicial review, and come within a whisker of winning another judicial review against the Electoral Commission.

²⁹ www.highfields.ac.uk

Twenty years ago, when the local authorities were pushing them to merge with another centre, they mounted an 'Anti-Merger Funday' where they had bouncy castles, face painting workshops, music and sports. They understand that the waves they sometime make might not particularly endear them to the local authority and other stake holders, but that you can work with other groups to create consortia which can identify local needs, generate new ideas and design new responses and service developments as well as collaborating for new funding proposals.

They have also been able to create a stable group of committed people and kept them on board. The current centre Director Priya Thamotheram, plus three members of the current staff team have each been working at the centre for more than 30 years and two of their ex-Chairs of the Association have each served 10 years. They are continuously exploring how best to bring more young people on board as part of their development and succession plans. Highfields is a culturally diverse community and services are funded to meet the needs of the whole community. A clear message is that it does not matter if you are from the Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Iraqi or Somali community, for example, as long as you are a member of the local community, people and their families are able to engage with the centre's services.

The staff also reflects the local diversity, for example in 2015 they were drawn from the local Asian, African Caribbean, White UK as well as other communities.

Their success has been achieved through a clear strategy and hard work for more than 20 years. They now have a 25 year lease on the building with an option of another 25 years. The extremely challenging process of securing the building spanned a period of almost 14 years and has been captured in their film 'Journey to Community Governance'.

On reflecting on the hard work that has gone into the successful development of Highfields Centre, Priya Thamotheram comments:

'We are prepared if need be, to work 'till four or five in the morning and be in the court room by 9:00am. We will and have done that!'



Section 7:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Mali is the first ever attempt to collect national data and real life stories about 150 African Diaspora community organisations that own assets in England.

There were inherent challenges involved in trying to capture data about community assets from across such a large geographical spread and from differing types of African Diaspora and community organisations. As a result the project necessarily focused on where it would be able to obtain support and where its strengths were (i.e. London). As a result we adopted a very broad brush approach and a mixed research methodology (See Appendix 1).

Despite this, Project Mali provided a unique opportunity which begins to offer a baseline which can be extended to include additional African Diaspora organisations and other BAME communities, if further resources are made available.

The data provides compelling evidence of longstanding African Diaspora community ownership of differing types of spaces with a predisposition towards the leasing of community centres (50%). Precise reasons for this are still unclear but could include for example, a relative ease of initial access to these spaces post periods of social unrest during the 1980s (as has been suggested), or the need to secure larger spaces to offer particular types of community based activities, or a combination of these and other reasons. This relative success is set against 25% of assets which have been lost and are under threat in addition to the 25% currently categorised as 'unknown' (Chart 16).

Open buildings and spaces may mask the reality of the challenges organisations face to maintain buildings, develop and implement robust business models and to create new younger leadership. Buildings that were 'open' at the time of the mapping should not be confused with the relative few which we identified as having been secured for African Diaspora communities

on a permanent basis. Those organisations which were identified by desk research or as a result of community contacts and information will need to be contacted directly to verify or confirm their current status.

Individuals who participated in the mapping exercise spoke candidly about their perceptions of what has transpired within African Diaspora community organisations themselves.

Factors cited as contributing to the loss or future sustainability of community assets included:

- Ageing leadership and few opportunities for younger people to assume leadership roles
- A lack of ability and / or willingness to adapt to internal as well as external changes such as the shifting demographics of local communities
- Business models which do not meet the needs or demands of today's community spaces
- Access to programme capacity during the daytime and / or midweek opportunities
- Weak financial management systems
- An inability to deal effectively with internal management and / or wider community conflict which can result in available time being diverted from core responsibilities and functions

Individuals and groups expressed views about some of the external factors affecting assets which could lead to further losses. These included:

- Short leases on remaining assets without plans in place for their renegotiation
- An unwillingness, by some local authorities, to transfer public assets to communities due to high land and property prices

- Local authority expenditure reductions disproportionately affecting the BAME voluntary sector (Birmingham University, 2014) with more severe budget reductions being implemented over the next four years
- New commissioning arrangements which unwittingly exclude smaller BAME-led organisations
- Local service reviews which lead to service reductions including community centre closures
- Insufficient funding being made available to BAME organisations not only from local and central government agencies, but also from within the charitable and social business (loan) sector.

The stories (which are still emerging), about the current state of assets point to a complex combination of factors disproportionately affecting African Diaspora communities nationally. The variety of ways in which the same story emerged from across the system mapped, provide sufficient evidence to support most of the above propositions.

It is also important to note that the picture presented here might have been somewhat different, if the faith community had been included in Project Mali. However, the mapping necessarily focused on buildings and spaces with open access to all communities regardless of religious affiliation or interest. We would recommend that assets held by faith communities should be the focus of another research project.

This project has resulted in the beginnings of a national picture which can now be extended. There is the need for this work to continue, and to include honest and open dialogue and strategic leadership with key stakeholders working in tandem and making a clear commitment to action.

It is clear from the evidence provided that the professional expertise, support and financial support available through Locality and its strategic partners is much needed but has not reached the African Diaspora community and indeed other BAME communities in England and Wales.

However, Locality, along with its partners, now has an opportunity to lead by example and from the front. The next period of support, services and specific programmes need to make a real difference to BAME communities and their assets and demonstrate a clear commitment to make a difference - it should not simply be left to chance.

The African Diaspora is a highly diverse community, and in many instances is now in its third and fourth generation in Britain. Counter to some beliefs, they came to England from the Caribbean and Africa with a strong entrepreneurial spirit and flair. Small businesses established included hairdressers and barbers, clothes, record and book shops, restaurants, nightclubs, market stalls, alongside more 'community based' ventures such as church buildings and housing stock, social clubs, sports fields, shop fronts used for advice centres and community and youth centres. All of these 'enterprises' have contributed to creating a vibrant asset base, significant community wealth and a system of self reliance, culturally sensitive services and local support. The total net value of these different types of assets have never been assessed. Therefore without even a basic analysis of their fiscal and social value, the true worth and contribution to the social and economic well-being of British society over decades, will continue to be undervalued. This needs to be the subject of further research.

Project Mali is very much a work in progress - there is more information to be collected and a considerable amount of work still to be done as part of the unfolding BAME community asset stories. In going forward, The Ubele Initiative plans to:

- Continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the Localism agenda in England and Wales
- Undertake further mapping and story telling of BAME (including, but not exclusively, African Diaspora) community assets (people and spaces) over the next six months through the Just Space Network ³⁰co-ordinating University College London (UCL) Bartlett School of Planning post-graduate students
- Design and pilot a new pan-London social business leadership programme for BAME communities linked to strategic community assets that need new leadership and succession plans – it is hoped that this will be in partnership with government agencies, other national key stakeholders, local authorities and local communities
- Continue to identify specific local BAME-led community spaces which need support through a process of transformation and change and to explore the continuation of their 'community of interest' status as well as meeting the needs of changing local demographics
- Develop an intergenerational proposal to collect more in-depth stories surrounding up to 12 strategic community assets we uncovered during Phase 1, particularly those people and buildings that played significant roles in urban communities during periods of social unrest.

³⁰ <http://justspace.org.uk/>

In addition, not only do we believe there is a clear role for the Ubele Initiative, but also that there are roles that other, more influential agencies of change should be playing. We offer, therefore, some tentative recommendations, that we feel could make a difference as a result of this first phase approach.

Recommendations

For Government

- 1. That the new Community Rights programmes** being implemented during 2015-16 need to ensure that African Diaspora and other BAME communities are aware of them from the outset, are supported to access and utilise them for their community asset development journey
- 2. There is the need for a shift from the 'first come, first served' policy** for Community Rights support – the African Diaspora and other BAME communities should be proactively identified, targetted and supported to apply
- 3. An 'SOS urban community' programme** could be supported bringing together the national leaders involved in community enterprise, leadership development and social action to target specific culturally diverse neighbourhoods, communities and struggling BAME community centres and which reaches and engages with 'unusual suspects' – such a programme could usefully link with recommendations suggested below under the Community Organisations section
- 4. Lessons from BAME community organisations** which have been in existence for 20 years or more and have secured assets need to be captured and shared on a national basis.

Locality

- 1. A Board level commitment** be made to ensure that the key lessons learnt and recommendations made are incorporated into Locality's Equality Strategy and Action Plan and shared with its members and national partners
- 2. A communications campaign** is developed and appropriate materials produced which target African Diaspora and other BAME communities about Localism and opportunities available to change the character of their local neighbourhoods through Community Rights
- 3. Follow up the African Diaspora community organisations** identified during the mapping as having secured assets (buildings owned outright or with long leases), with a view to exploring some of their support and development needs and to consider creating individual plans to assist them
- 4. Future research is needed to identify** where BAME organisations had unsuccessfully attempted to expand their asset base, identifying any barriers they faced and other key learning points
- 5. Monitoring and evaluating** service delivery to BAME communities since 2011. This should include the geographical spread and level of engagement of African Diaspora and other BAME communities including which types of services are accessed and the outcomes of engagement. This information should be used to set targets and monitor performance for the new 2015-16 programme.

Local authorities

- 1. Local authorities should be encouraged to openly advertise their corporate asset management plans** containing lists of assets available for transfer with local community organisations including BAME organisations
- 2. They should actively encourage local voluntary infrastructure organisations** to provide intensive support to those BAME organisations interested in asset acquisition or in need of assistance / advice / support with struggling assets
- 3. BAME organisations should be skilled up, and facilitated to access the Right to Challenge** scheme in order to create a more level playing field. Local authorities should seek to ensure local BAME organisations and communities are in a position to 'bid' and that any perceived or real inequalities in current local systems are identified and proactively responded to by local authorities in partnership with local voluntary sector infrastructure organisations.

African Diaspora community organisations

Although the following recommendations result from the identified needs of the African Diaspora community in England, they can also be used for the benefit of other BAME communities in England and Wales:

- 1. Create a process to recognise and celebrate** the contribution of the first and second generation of community based leaders. Utilise their skills and experience for the benefit for future generations through mentoring and coaching opportunities followed by a subsequent 'passing of the baton'
- 2. More intentional intergenerational programmes and relationships** need to be developed so that the baton can be passed with confidence, thereby leading to the creation of stronger, younger and more sustainable leaders and organisational management boards
- 3. The creation of a new generation of African Diaspora community leaders** as the next generation of skilled, creative, entrepreneurial and brave leaders and with real opportunities to make a lasting difference in their communities
- 4. Capacity building opportunities** be offered in management, governance, social entrepreneurship and social change skills to ensure that boards, staff and volunteers are equipped to create and lead community assets fit for the 21st century (e.g. ensure that volunteers are given adequate on-going professional development and support; skills to develop fund-raising capacity of organisations to include applying to funding opportunities available through social investment, the Big Lottery 'Reaching Communities' buildings programme or charitable trusts that grant or loan funding for capital projects)
- 5. Engage in community dialogue** to facilitate learning from the stories shared (including those of female leadership and entrepreneurship) which could lead to the creation of new models for asset development
- 6. Update current models of entrepreneurship** which have been used for decades to run African Diaspora community-based assets to incorporate new thinking about community enterprise development (e.g could include exploring other types of assets such as purchasing of pubs, libraries, post offices etc. which could be supported by new forms of community finance such as community share offers, amongst others).

- 7. Develop regional and local strategic hubs** and action plans to secure and redesign community centres and other community assets for the African Diaspora living in areas alongside newly arrived communities
- 8. Professional advice and support to assess the impact** and value added by African Diaspora-led services to local communities
- 9. Better use of space** – There is scope to review the use of space and the subsequent redesign of how some services and activities are delivered in some of the buildings so as to maximize available space. This could open up new opportunities to generate much needed income as well as facilitating access to community spaces for new groups and communities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Facilitating social change through community activism and leadership

Dr Kehinde Andrews, Birmingham



Dr Kehinde Andrews is in his early 30s and a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Birmingham City University.

He is also a community activist and one of the founding members of the Organisation of Black Unity (OBU) (www.blackunity.org.uk) in Birmingham. Established in 2014 as an umbrella organisation, OBU aims to unite and work with individuals and existing groups within the Black community in their bid to develop education, health, business and other areas of activity within society.

OBU is involved in the restoration of the Marcus Garvey Nursery in Birmingham. Initially opened in 1976 in Handsworth, Birmingham, the nursery school aimed to provide a space where Black children could not only learn the necessary pre-school skills for entry into primary school, but a place where they could also gain a better understanding of their Black heritage and community. The nursery closed for refurbishment in the late 2000s and this work was not completed.

Today OBU, in collaboration with the Harambee Organisation, which founded the nursery are determined to re-establish the Marcus Garvey Nursery. They have formed a new nursery company which is financially supported through the sale of company shares to the public. As Kehinde explains:

"We have about £20,000 now, but we are trying to raise another £10,000 just to get the ground floor open not as a nursery but as community resource... we are selling shares. We have sold about £1,200. We need to raise about £10,000. Once the ground floor is established, we have to find funding to rebuild the whole building as a nursery".

Kehinde is keen to stress that accessibility to affordable nurseries is a key priority in the Black community. Black women, who are often single parents or primary caregivers, need these facilities in order to go to work and service their families and communities.

Kehinde is also a Director of the New Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and involved in the development of Black Studies in the UK. He and his colleague Dr Lisa Palmer at Newman University, Birmingham, organised the first national Black Studies Conference, 'Blackness in Britain' in September 2013, which attracted 150 delegates and presented 40 papers. They are now working with other academics and practitioners to establish the 'British Black Studies Association' which will continue to support the growth of Black Studies in the UK.

Hilary Banks, Bristol



Hilary Banks, Chief Executive of the Malcolm X Community Centre in Bristol, came to the UK in 1967 and was resident in London until a few years ago.

In a career spanning over three decades, she has worked across all sectors, principally to combat disadvantage and create opportunities to improve the quality of life for people living in deprived, urban areas.

Hilary moved to Bristol in 2004 to become the Director of Bristol Racial Equality Council. Here, her leadership responsibility was twofold. On the one hand, it was to support legal compliance with the Race Equality Duty and on the other, to foster active participation in civic life and to build strong cohesive communities. After leaving the Racial Equality Council she became more closely involved with local groups in the African Caribbean / African community in Bristol. These included the Consortium of Black Groups, 'Signpost' and 'Rite Direkshon', whose roles are to improve the lives of people of African Caribbean heritage and

the 'Ackee Tree', set up to achieve improved quality of life for people of African descent in the city of Bristol. She also spearheaded the media strategy of the campaign by African people in the city in 2007, against Bristol City Council's Abolition 200 programme to mark the abolition of slavery. Her fundraising skills helped Ackee Tree to secure Heritage Lottery funding in 2008 to run a very ambitious multi-generational programme over 14 weeks to mark the 60th anniversary of the HMS Empire Windrush arriving at Tilbury docks.

In more recent times Hilary joined the Board of Malcolm X Community Centre in St Pauls and in July 2014 became the Chair of the governing board. Hilary is also a radio broadcaster presenting a show called 'Fiwi Sintin' ('it is our own thing') on BCFM, an award winning community radio station since 2009, which targets a predominantly Caribbean audience.

Malcolm X CC is prominently located in the heart of St Pauls, where immigrants from the Caribbean settled back in the 1940s and 1950s. Malcolm X CC functions as both an organisation and a community centre and has provided services and facilities for over 30 years to meet the social, recreational, educational and entertainment needs of the African Caribbean/African community.

MXCC was built in the 1980s as a direct result of the riots in April 1980 which sparked nationwide rioting. At the time of it being built in the 1980s, it was called "The Community Centre" but this was not acceptable to local community activists and it was boycotted for some years whilst negotiations continued with the local authority for its independence. In July 1988, following extensive renovations and further building works; "The Community Centre" was transformed into a community resource facility and became known as the Malcolm X Community Centre.

Michelle Charters, Liverpool



Michelle Charters is the CEO of the Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre (www.kuumbaimani.org.uk) in Liverpool. It was established in 2000 and is a company limited by guarantee, a registered charity and a social enterprise.

Michelle has over 25 years' experience in community development work and has been involved in other key organisations in the role of board member and Chair of the Liverpool Black History Month Group (now known as the Merseyside Black History Month Group from 2003 until 2009), she was the first black female board member of the Everyman and Playhouse Theatre and a board member of South Liverpool Personnel (Liverpool's only black employment agency).

'Kuumba' means thinking of ways to make our community better and 'Imani' means believing in ourselves and the worth of our people. Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre was named by the children of the afterschool project of Liverpool Black Sisters. The Liverpool Black Sisters Group began work in the 1980s to address the social, economic and educational exclusion of the black community in Liverpool.

The Centre opened its doors to the community in 2004 and provides a multi-cultural, multi-purpose resource to support and encourage the economic development, health and wellbeing, regeneration and sustainability of a neighbourhood, which has suffered from years of under-investment and social exclusion. The Centre provides a range of community services, including a café and nursery area, as well as conference and meeting rooms, plus serviced offices to a range of tenants, who provide services for the local community.

However, key to their success has been their legacy and ethos of maintaining a truly multicultural service. They use unique approaches as well as the local community knowledge they have and the diverse cultural sensitivity to consistently push for and create opportunities for all. In 2015, they plan to develop further community services so that they can provide the axis of community innovation through new projects which can generate new income streams.

Hazel Ellis, London



Hazel Jones has been involved in the development of Claudia Jones organisation (www.claudiajonesorganisation.org.uk) in the London Borough of Hackney, since its inception in the early 1980s. She started working as a volunteer and as the organisation grew, she eventually became the organisation's Director.

Though their services have been reduced due to reductions in government funding, Claudia Jones and its sister organisation, Ackee Housing Project, both run by women, for women, both own their own buildings.

Hazel, now semi-retired, continues in this role on a part-time basis, alongside 'caring up' for her elderly parents and 'caring down' for her four granddaughters. She is also currently on the board of the West Indian Cultural Centre in Haringey.

Hazel's involvement in community development started as a teenager in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean where she was involved youth activities. Once in England, she continued supporting her community through the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Association. As their Youth Officer she was involved in facilitating international youth exchanges.

Hazel also worked for the former Ujima Housing Association which, at its height, was the biggest African Diaspora-led housing association in the UK. Hazel was involved in setting up a building co-operative which renovated houses on Broadwater Farm and other short life housing stock.

Hazel believes that the African Diaspora community needs to take the lead on deciding their needs and then developing and implementing their own responses to them. She says:

"..... Our community needs to tell its own history and not wait for the host society to tell it for us!"

Deborah Owhin, London



Deborah Owhin is a second generation Black British Nigerian who was born and brought up in West London. Aged 29 years, she is the eldest of three girls and now lives in East London and is a psychology graduate of Spelman Women's College in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Deborah, a committed Christian, is also a gender equality consultant and violence against women specialist. Working through her church and through her own organisation, she is an activist, influences national and international gender based policy as well as undertaking community based work with young women and with men.

Her own organisation, 'Made Equal' (www.madeequal.org) has undertaken a number of high profile activities including partnering at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence and Conflict in London in 2014 and through one of her most recent programmes, 'Because we have daughters' aimed to support those at risk of sexual violence.

One of her other areas of interest is how people of the African Diaspora can remain in the forefront of 'development' work. She has noticed and is increasingly frustrated by the low number of members drawn from the African Diaspora in development in conversations. She believes that if we really want to end poverty and world hunger, it could have been done.

Deborah says:

"I think it is about having a view that there is also another world and not just England... I have a sense of belonging when I am in Africa: when I am in Nigeria and Ghana I am surrounded by my heritage and I enjoy that.

African descents need to claim back our land, our heritage and not allow people from around the world, China, America etc. to do so. We need to claim it as our own."

Grace Salmon, Merton, Surrey



Grace Salmon, Director of the Positive Network Centre, (www.positive-network-centre.com) runs a multi-cultural and inter-generational community centre in Figges Marsh, an area of high deprivation in the London Borough of Merton, Surrey.

The Positive Network Centre is a registered charity, and social enterprise which aims to improve community cohesion, support ageing well and educate others to create a brighter future for all. Older people can share their life experiences with those younger than themselves thereby helping to pass on cultural heritage, life experiences and specific skills. It is also a hub for local businesses.

Grace started as a part-time youth worker and went on to professionally qualify in the 1980s. She worked as a full-time youth worker in Bermondsey and Merton before taking redundancy. However, she came back into youth and community work after recognising a lack of after-school provision for her daughter and friends.

Following council reductions and a plan to close the Positive Network centre five years ago, the council unexpectedly gave them the keys to the building along with an annual renewable lease.

Twelve regular groups now use the centre and between them they offer mental health services, a Muslim Saturday School, Tamil welfare services, Christian and Muslim faith groups, a catering service for the Polish community, keep fit classes, after school facilities, councillor surgeries and tenants' association sessions, plus a recording studio. The centre also hosts local funerals, 'Nine Night' ceremonies, weddings and parties.

The Centre has gone from strength to strength with the support of Voice4Change (www.voice4change-england.co.uk) and The Ubele Initiative (www.ubeleinitiative.org). They recently submitted a proposal for feasibility funding, negotiated a new 25 year lease, and the council agreed to undertake major building repairs.

Grace says:

"Never give up the fight as success can be achieved and keep raising the issue of ethnic minority groups and their right to secure assets which meet the needs of diverse communities."

Linford Sweeney, Manchester



Linford Sweeney was born in Jamaica and moved to England as a child, where he has lived for the past 50 years. He has been involved in voluntary community work since 1976. And has had several roles in business, management and marketing. He teaches and researches black history and genealogy; is a Life Coach and published 'At Peace with Myself' in 2011. He is planning to publish a book of Jamaican short stories 'Dreams of Freedom' in 2014/15.

Linford has been a Non-Executive Director on a number of Boards, including North West Arts Board, Pit Prop Theatre Company, Nia African Cultural Centre and most recently Peace FM Radio in Manchester.

Linford was one of the founding members and Directors of the Nia African Cultural Centre in Manchester. Nia means 'Purpose' in Ki-Swahili. The development of the Nia Centre started in 1982, and it opened in 1991 as the largest Black cultural centre in Europe with a staff team of 20 after attracting development costs of over £2m.

The vision for the Centre was to offer educational programmes and performing arts, including Carnival Arts, dance, drama and music. The Moss Side Arts group, which Linford had started in 1982, amalgamated with Nia Centre in 1985 to become one organisation with a joint aim to secure a fully-equipped and staffed building capable of bringing the arts and culture of Black people to the community.

However, the original vision of the Nia Centre appeared to have been lost early on - it became a space for social activities rather than focusing on the arts. Also new residential developments located close to the centre threatened its survival. The Nia Centre closed its doors in 1995.

Linford is currently exploring the possibility of establishing a heritage centre in Manchester. He is also developing an 'Achievement and Coaching' service. He says he is motivated to continue working with his community due to his '*...love of educating his people.*'

Philip Udeh, Tottenham, London



Philip Udeh is in his early 30s, and was born in South London of Nigerian parents. He was brought up in Brixton and then Tottenham, North London and has a background in international development and race equality. He graduated in Economics from London School of Economics and completed a postgraduate qualification in Finance.

Philip established Community Builders (www.communitybuilders.org.uk) in 2011, as a youth-led organisation focusing on the promotion of African Caribbean history and heritage in Britain, youth employment and enterprise development.

He started his career in the world of international development, but left as he felt that many development projects were making a significant impact, but rather perpetuating 'jobs for the boys'. He also felt that the 'Make Poverty History' campaign was not achieving its aim of promoting trade, not aid.

Philip is motivated to support young people in his community develop. He has encountered numerous young people whilst growing up in Brixton and Tottenham who did not have similar opportunities to him to go to top universities, even though they were highly intelligent.

Whilst working for Race Equality Action Lewisham (REAL), he ran a successful Youth Forum and developed partnership work with schools and police. The young people he works with use performing arts and music to express their views. The sell out 'Ignorance is Bliss', show at Catford Theatre, is an example of his work.

Philip has been an active supporter of Lord Morrison Hall (LMH) in Tottenham for the past eight years through its martial arts programme. He is committed to supporting the development of this community hall due to its history of being led by members of the local African Diaspora community and serving its needs for more than 30 years.

Appendix 2: Methodological approach: a synthesis of traditional and creative approaches

Given the diversity within African Diaspora communities we sought to solicit views from a wide a range of organisations (small and large) as well as individuals. The mapping exercise designed consisted of a number of differing methods and approaches undertaken between July and November 2014 generating a significant amount of material and data.

The approach, overall, was somewhat time and labour intensive, though yielded the best results. This mixed methods design enabled the researchers to create “multiple ways of seeing” the social world (Creswell, 2011:4). It also allowed for the bringing together of an interesting mix of more formal as well as creative research and design methods. According to Green (2007), the method “actively invites us to participate in dialogue about multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the social world, and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued and cherished.” (Green, 2007:20)

The data collection process not only allowed us to capture data on the presence and to some extent, quality of some community assets, it also allowed us to collectively begin thinking about how we might redesign spaces that meet the needs of the African Diaspora community whilst taking into account the rapidly changing demographics now being experienced in the majority of our urban areas. To accomplish this, we adopted a quantitative and qualitative methodological approach.

Methodological and implementation approach

A total of 150 responses were captured through two primary approaches and then analysed. Twenty-seven (27) questionnaires were completed by individuals who either knew of an organisation and could provide an overview (Questionnaire 1) – of which fourteen (14) provided more in-depth data by way of focused analysis and depth interviews (Questionnaire 2). Questionnaire 2 asked additional questions about achievements and challenges, organisational structure including membership, funding arrangements to support running costs, sustainability issues and future plans. The remaining 126 organisations’ information, identified as a result of desk research, personal and professional contacts and / or local knowledge plus referenced from a database of African Caribbean organisations, were entered in to the on-line survey tool (i.e. Survey Monkey). These organisations’ data was much more limited than that harvested from the questionnaires completed by individuals on behalf of organisations.

The questionnaires were uploaded onto Survey Monkey, which generated a web-link, which was then circulated to over 300 organisations on The Ubele Initiative database, through personal contacts and via a social media campaign. Additionally, the identified community assets were entered on an interactive Google map to provide a useful interactive mapping of provisions³¹.

³¹ The interactive map can be found at: <http://spmmaps.github.io/Ubele-map/>

Running alongside this approach, we undertook extensive desk-based research into the wider Community Rights and community asset transfer policy as well as conducting a series of telephone interviews and 'community dialogue' events as follows:

- Five dialogue interviews³² carried out through a combination of telephone and face-to-face processes
- Six semi-structured interviews³³ carried out through a combination of telephone and face-to-face processes
- Designed and facilitated a London wide 'real time' digital community asset mapping event for 50 African Diaspora participants at the Bernie Grant Centre, Tottenham, London
- Received written comments from individuals in response to the advertisement for the digital mapping event where they could not attend
- A six week learning journey around Tottenham during the summer of 2014, during which we were able to engage in dialogue with key individuals and groups running local community centres about some of the challenges being faced and potential opportunities emerging
- Designed and facilitated a 'Skills and Knowledge' visit to an African Diaspora led community centre in Merton, South London.

In getting the information out so that we attract the widest range of responses and engagement, we disseminated information about Project Mali from late July 2014, through to the early autumn using:

- A newly created 'Ubele Initiative e-zine' (3 editions)
- A social media campaign via Facebook, Twitter etc.
- Existing African Diaspora community based and online networks
- 'The Voice' newspaper
- Local radio interviews
- Professional and personal contacts.

We found the use of Facebook, Twitter and The Voice newspaper and local/ community African Diaspora radio stations to be effective channels for explaining the purpose and need for Project Mali and to help facilitate wider community engagement. However, given our community's use of oral or storytelling methods to share historical as well as contemporary information, 1: 1 interviews, the digital mapping exercise, as well as the Skills and Knowledge visit to an African Diaspora-led community centre in Merton, Surrey, harvested rich, previously untapped material. During the visit, a small group of individuals representing organisations from across London heard first hand about some of the challenges involved in transforming a building into a vibrant culturally diverse community asset, which was originally earmarked by the local authority for closure.

³² 'Dialogue interviews are designed to engage the interviewee in a reflective and generative interview' – Presencing Institute, USA www.presencing.com

³³ 'A semi structured interview is open allowing new ideas to be brought up in the interview as a result of what the interviewee says'. En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-structured_interview

The digital mapping event for 50 people was a first for our community. We used café style small group conversations, with iPads using specialist software which allowed the whole group in the room to see the ideas and suggestions being generated in real time. Emerging themes and connections were then collated across each group and projected on a screen for all to see, using narrative and 'word clouds'.

Lastly, the six week learning journey of Tottenham was completed by the Founder of the Ubele Initiative during which she heard first hand accounts of some of the challenges facing local BAME community centres. Her experiences and learning during this process has been included as a case study in this report.

Some methodological challenges

Questionnaires, though an effective form of data capture, are well known to attract a much more limited response than other research methods. Given the high number of questionnaires originally dispatched (c.300+) and time spent on follow up activities the majority of the data were achieved through face to face interviews, telephone conversations and desk research.

Secondly, there were inherent challenges involved in trying to capture data about community assets from across such a large geographical spread and from differing types of African Diaspora and community organisations. As a result the project necessarily focused on where it could get the most data from with relative ease (i.e. London). This, therefore, is likely to skew the perception. Though not in itself a major problem, this does mean that we would not be able to speculate across a much wider environment. However, emerging patterns could be discerned which may have

applicability across a wider platform, such as, for example, for those in Liverpool and Manchester with respect to concerns such as capacity development and management up-skilling needs.

Thirdly, we noticed that some of the respondents found completing the questionnaires challenging due to the way the questions were worded and their length as well as the applicability of the questions to their own circumstances. As a result some of the questionnaires were only partially completed. One of the respondents, Dr Kehinde Andrews, of Organisation of Black Unity (OBU) in Birmingham, commented on the narrow focus of the questionnaire. He stated:

"It is an important project because we need to know what buildings are around, their legacy, history around them..... One comment on the survey seemed to focus around a specific building. There were many other things I feel I could have said but did not owing to the structure of the survey. It asked about a building, its history etc. so I picked up on one building that we are currently working on and answered the questions based on this one building."

Finally, we found that one of the most effective ways of engaging our community was through the identification and use of 'community guardians' whose personal or professional recommendations opened up doors in order for us to gain the information we were seeking. In several cases, individuals spoken to by us were also asked to recommend other people we should speak to and would often make personal introductions. This cascading principle opened up new channels which largely led to the identification of participants who could be interviewed.

Appendix 3: Project Mali Research Team

This project was conducted by a team of 15 highly skilled, committed and enthusiastic graduate and post graduate individuals, primarily from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community (i.e. senior members of The Ubele Initiative, University College London, Bartlett School of Planning post graduate students and independent researchers – all of whom gave their time voluntarily).

The team was led by Yvonne Field, Founder and now CEO of The Ubele Initiative.

Yvonne has worked as an organisational development consultant, social change agent and facilitator for more than 35 years, with, in and on behalf of deprived communities across England, South Africa and the Caribbean region.

Our collective efforts stem from a real desire to surface a previously untold story and to shift the conversation from anecdotal claims, to begin to create an evidence base about what is happening to African Diaspora community assets in England.

We hope by sharing these interesting stories and making a number of recommendations that we can influence the future national, regional and local policy agenda and strategic plans which promote 'Community Rights' for all and which aim to do this regardless of ethnic origin, social and / or economic position or place of residency in the UK.

Appendix 4 – London Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community assets map

The interactive map "London BAME community assets"

(<http://spmmaps.github.io/Ubele-map/>)

captures 13 BAME-led community assets located in London, four of which have been closed down. For each community asset, we have carried out an interview with one key representative of the space³⁴. The map will be updated with other interviews, as they are finalised, so the number of assets mapped will increase.

There are multiple aims to this map; firstly, the map intends to raise awareness of the extent of the loss of community assets in London, where community floorspace is constantly diminishing; secondly, the interviews aim to provide some qualitative data about the reasons why community assets are under threat and the main challenges faced by community groups in relation to the management of community assets; thirdly, the very act of getting these assets mapped is a political statement of the importance of these spaces and the people who have fought and worked to keep them within the community, so that they have a chance to share their views on a platform, which has the potential to reach a wide audience.

³⁴ List of interviewees: Elaine Holness (Director of Karibu Education Centre); Mike Garrick and Harry Powell (Volunteer Managers of Lewisham Sports Consortium); Devon Thomas (Co-director of Kennington Co-op Centre); Monique Baptiste-Brown (Black Cultural Archives Marketing & Development Relationship Manager); Ego Ahaiwe (Lambeth Women Project Co-coordinator and Youth Worker); Hiikmah (Africa Centre Rise Campaigner); Tony Brennan (Irish Centre Manager, Tottenham); Clasford Stirling (Broadwater Farm Youth & community developer); Mr Pepukayi (Founding Member of Operation Headstart bookshop, Tottenham); Gina Osbourne (Former Manager of Chestnuts Community Centre, Tottenham); Mr Elder Des (Board Member, West Indian Association of Service Personnel); Joseph Oladosu (Director of AfCD); Nuala Riddell Morales (Director of Carnaval del Pueblo).

The map is the result of a joint effort by Ubele and Just Space Network³⁵, which coordinated the work of five UCL planning students, who carried out the interviews with the community groups visible on the map. The lengthy interviews were then edited down to 10 minutes average length to give potential listeners a summarised version of the interviews.

The interviews followed the structure of Ubele's questionnaire as illustrated in this report. However, the focus was on planning policy tools that can help community groups to protect community assets and looking into the main challenges created by the London context of competing land uses.

The findings of this set of interviews confirm the general findings described elsewhere in this report. To summarise, it became apparent that:

Economic sustainability is crucial for all the people interviewed. There is a shared need to establish a model, which makes community-led projects less dependent on funding.

- Community-led organisations are often asked to justify and prove that they are trustworthy every time there is a change of staff in the council. This engenders a feeling of not being able to progress and frustrates aspirations
- Some of the interviewees shared a lack of trust in planning policy tools that can be used to protect community assets. For instance, Ego Ahaiwe from Lambeth Women Project argues: "[...] people can use them, but it really depends if the people with power want to use those tools too". Hiikmah from Africa Centre Rise Campaign asks: "Is policy and legislation just scaffolding that can easily be gone behind?"
- It was suggested that an independent body should oversee applications for assets of community value and ensure that a dialogue with the local authority takes place.
- Community-led projects should be able to access help in order to apply for judicial review if they think their local authority has made an unlawful decision
- Difficulties were found in renewing the lease or getting a long-term lease, which is essential in order to obtain funding
- Long-term strategic thinking is needed with regard to the management of assets, but people are usually too busy in the daily running of the community groups and organisations
- In some cases, the lack of a proper consultation of community asset users led to decisions that completely overlook communities' needs and aspirations.

³⁵<http://justspace.org.uk/> .

APPENDIX 5: African Diaspora organisations with community assets in England

Organisation	Location	Open	Closed	Under threat	Unknown
Afro Caribbean Millennium Centre	West Midlands	✓			
Bernie Grant Centre	London	✓			
Chestnuts Community Centre	London			✓	
Claudia Jones Organisation	London	✓			
Harambee / Organisation of Black Unity	West Midlands		✓		
Lord Morrison Hall	London			✓	
Positive Network Centre	South East	✓			
Bantu Radio Station	West Midlands	✓			
The Dream Centre	London	✓			
The Mandela Centre (managed by the Council)	Yorkshire & Humberside	✓			
Welbourne Centre (knocked down)	London		✓		
Karibu Education Centre (formerly Abeng Centre)	London	✓			
YouthAid	London	✓			
Positive Mental Attitude College	London	✓			
Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust	London	✓			
Black Cultural Archives	London	✓			
Balham Social Club	London				✓
Choice FM Radio	London				✓
The Africa Centre	London	✓			
Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust - Supported Housing for young women	London	✓			
Midi Music – Performing Arts Centre	London	✓			
All Nations Night Club	London		✓		
Nighmoves Night Club	London		✓		
INIVA Building	London	✓			

Organisation	Location	Open	Closed	Under threat	Unknown
Itz Caribbean - Youth and community centres	London	✓			
Lord David Pub	London				✓
Croydon Supplementary Education Project	London	✓			
Mohammed Ali Centre	West Midlands		✓		
ACAFESS - Association for Economic and Social Security	West Midlands		✓		
Harriet Tubman Bookshop and organization	West Midlands				✓
African Caribbean Self Help Organisation	West Midlands				✓
Nu Century Arts	West Midlands	✓			
Summerfield Community Centre	West Midlands	✓			
Oaklands Sports and Social Centre	West Midlands	✓			
Handsworth Leisure Centre	West Midlands	✓			
Wallace Lawler Centre	West Midlands				✓
The Drum	West Midlands	✓			
Black Voices	West Midlands	✓			
Phoenix Social Enterprise	South West	✓			
Signpost & Rite Direkshon	South West	✓			
CEED Centre	East of England	✓			
African Caribbean Association (ACA)	East Midlands	✓			
Gloucestershire Ethnic Minority Businesses	South West			✓	
Marcus Garvey Foundation, Positive Action Training and Recruitment Agency (PATRA)	East Midlands	✓			
Afro. Caribbean National Artistic Centre	East Midlands	✓			
West Indian Community Centre	West Midlands				✓
Derby West Indian Centre Credit Union Limited	East Midlands				✓
West Indian Senior Citizens	East Midlands				✓
West Indian Sports and Social Club	North West				✓

Organisation	Location	Open	Closed	Under threat	Unknown
West Indian Community Centre	North West				✓
Sheffield and District African Caribbean Community Association	Yorkshire & Humber	✓			
Afro Caribbean Community Association	West Midlands	✓			
African Caribbean Leadership Company	London				✓
Lambeth Senior Citizens Day Centre	London				✓
Wellingborough Afro Caribbean Centre	South East	✓			
Winchester Area Community Action	South East	✓			
Organisation for Sickle Cell Research	East Midlands	✓			
Jamaican Diaspora	London				✓
Watford African Caribbean Community Association	East of England	✓			
Nigerian Community Association	North West	✓			
Barnet African Caribbean Association	London	✓			
Jamaica House	North West	✓			
Merseyside Caribbean Community Centre	North West	✓			
Mary Seacole House	North West	✓			
Charles Wootton College	North West			✓	
Yoruba Community Association	London	✓			
Black – E	North West	✓			
Ankh Wellbeing Centre.	London	✓			
Talawa Theatre Company	London	✓			
Mellow Mix	London			✓	
Hackney Caribbean Elderly	London		✓		
Clive Lloyd House	London				✓
Yaa Asantewaa Arts	London	✓			
Sheffield BAME network	Yorkshire & Humber	✓			
Abasindi Women's Cooperative	North West				✓

Organisation	Location	Open	Closed	Under threat	Unknown
Nello James Centre	North West	✓			
The Louise Dacacodia Education Trust	North West				✓
Club Nile Pub	London	✓			
Nile Club (closed 1987)	North West		✓		
Reno Club (closed 1987)	North West		✓		
Strategies to Elevate People (STEP)	North West				✓
Northern Black Business Association (closed)	North West		✓		
The Big Western Club	North West		✓		
Cafe Nubia	North West	✓			
Kajans Womens Enterprise Ltd / Kajans Hospitality and Catering College (KHCSC)	West Midlands	✓			
Malcolm X Community Centre	South West			✓	
Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre	North West	✓			
Nigerian Community	Yorkshire & Humber	✓			
East Africa Centre	Yorkshire & Humber		✓		
Leeds West Indian Cultural Charitable Trust (LWICCT)	Yorkshire & Humber	✓			
African Cultural Education	London		✓		
African Caribbean Elders Services	London		✓		
Merton African Caribbean Association	London		✓		
Kaleidoscope Youth Centre	London		✓		
Vestry Hall Race Equality Partnership	London		✓		
Leicester African Caribbean Centre	East Midlands	✓			
Black Elderly Group (BEGS)	London	✓			
Caribb Youth and Community Association	London	✓			
Bradfield Boys Club	London	✓			
Carl Campbell Dance Company 7	London		✓		
Faith Chapel	London	✓			

Organisation	Location	Open	Closed	Under threat	Unknown
Galaxy Radio Station	London	✓			
Bantu Radio Station	London		✓		
Sojourner Truth Youth Association (STYA)	London		✓		
Unity Centre	London		✓		
Brokey's	London		✓		
The Peckham Literacy Centre: 'Bookplace' and Peckham Publishing Project	London		✓		
Peckham Black Women's Centre (closed)	London		✓		
The Black Art Gallery	London		✓		
Headstart Bookshop (closed)	London		✓		
Mama Afrika Culture Shap/Alkebulan/Soul Force Base	London	✓			
The Nub	London	✓			
Happy People Centre	London		✓		
SCARFA (Stevenage) Stevenage Caribbean and African Association	East of England	✓			
Medway African and Caribbean Association	South East	✓			
Barking and Dagenham Afro Caribbean Association	London				✓
Brighton and Hove Black History Community Base	South East				✓
Kori Arts	London	✓			
Brixton Black Women's Group (closed)	London		✓		
West Indian Family Association	East of England				✓
Black Visual Arts Project (East Midlands)	East Midlands				✓
Croydon African Caribbean Family Organisation	South East	✓			
The Glodwick West Indian Association formerly The Glodwick West Indian Association	North West	✓			
Black Boys Can	West Midlands	✓			

Organisation	Location	Open	Closed	Under threat	Unknown
Kuumba (Arts & Community Resource) Limited	South West	✓			
PLIAS Resettlement	London	✓			
Aldershot District West Indian Assn (ADWIA)	South East				✓
Handsworth Community Care Centre	West Midlands				✓
Nottingham African/African Caribbean Respite Care Project	East Midlands				✓
The Roselle Antoine Foundation	London				✓
Nubian Life Resource Centre Ltd	London	✓			
Leicester Caribbean Business Assn. (LACBA)	East Midlands				✓
Black Health Support Forum	South East				✓
Mooshot Community Centre	London	✓			
Association of Black Social Workers	London				✓
Ebony People's Association	London	✓			
Simba Community Centre	London		✓		
MAA MAAT Community Centre	London	✓			
Marcus Garvey Nursery	West Midlands		✓		
Starlight Music Academy	London		✓		
Teenbash	North West				✓
Karibu	West Midlands				✓
Cambridge African and Caribbean Community Cultural Centre	East of England				✓
The Equiano Society	London	✓			
Family Health – ISIS	London		✓		
100 Black Men of London	London	✓			
Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA)	Yorkshire & Humber				✓
African Caribbean Day Nursery (ACDN)	London				✓
Association of Jamaicans (UK) Trust	South East				✓
The Good Neighbour Centre	West Midlands	✓			
Friends of Fairfield House	South West	✓			
Perpetual Beauty Carnival Association	London		✓		
The Arts	Unspecified				✓

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About Locality

Locality is the national network of ambitious and enterprising community-led organisations, working together to help neighbourhoods thrive.

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