



Project Mali

Someone or Something of Value to Our Community

The Ubele Initiative – *The Way Forward*

- ❖ Emerged over 5 years – Future sustainability question for African Diaspora communities
- ❖ Registered in May 2014
- ❖ Local action influencing national policy
- ❖ Created an intergenerational community of 12 Change Agents and Facilitators
- ❖ Focuses on community asset development (*intergenerational community leadership, developing community spaces and social enterprise development*)
- ❖ Does its own local and national projects as well as supports other BAME organisations (infrastructure support)
- ❖ Uses creative processes such as Facilitation, Dialogue, Change Lab methodology, Open Space, World Café etc.
- ❖ Our activities include:
 - ❖ Community Rights projects such as ‘First Steps’ and ‘Our Place’ *in partnership with Community Development Foundation and Locality*
 - ❖ Project Mali
 - ❖ Supporting local community asset campaigns e.g Chestnuts Community Centre in Tottenham
 - ❖ Social Enterprise development for emerging BAME leaders – Elevate Learning
 - ❖ Heritage Projects e.g. African Diaspora Change Agents over the age of 50 years
 - ❖ Partnerships with Voice4Change, Locality, Just Space, CDF, Our Tottenham etc.

BACKGROUND TO PROJECT MALI

- ❖ Anecdotal stories of loss of African Diaspora assets nationally
- ❖ Several campaigns to save assets under threat:
 - ❖ Africa Centre (Covent Garden)
 - ❖ Welbourne Centre (Tottenham)
 - ❖ Centerprise Bookshop (Dalston)
 - ❖ Chestnuts (Tottenham)
- ❖ Approached Locality (November 2013) to ask what they had noticed
- ❖ Needed to look at what is happening and extent of loss and instability in order to develop a series of recommendations and strategy going forward
- ❖ Learning could be applied to other established BAME communities
- ❖ Launched Project Mali in July 2014

WHAT DID WE DO?

- ❖ Recruited a team of 15 volunteers via Just Space /UCL; Black Studies Group and other networks
- ❖ Collected data from 27 questionnaires which provided in depth analysis through charts and narrative of individual community assets – *ownership, management arrangement, space available, facilities, activities offered, challenges being experienced and sustainability plans*
- ❖ Produced 3 case studies – Leicester, Liverpool and Tottenham,
- ❖ Individuals interviews about what they felt has happened – introspection and *learning*
- ❖ Collected 8 stories of community leadership (intergenerational)
- ❖ Produced 100 page report
- ❖ Collected information on almost 150 community spaces (open, closed, under threat of closure) and created interactive Google Map
- ❖ Created audio map of 13 Community Stories (*Just Space / UCL*)

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

- ❖ Research showed that that African Diaspora managed knows as 'Black centres' offer services and programmes to a diverse community
- ❖ A number of organisations have 'owned' community buildings for more than 20 years
- ❖ Many now remain with short leases or with 20-25 year leases which have actually expired
- ❖ Community asset dilapidation and /or available spaces not able being fully utilised due to lack of financial investment for refurbishment or redevelopment
- ❖ Lack of support, even where buildings have been secured on a permanent basis or for a long period of time.
- ❖ Targeted or 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
- ❖ Local authorities, not to be keen to extend or renew leases to organisations even with a track record of providing community services for more than two decades

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

- ❖ Local 'development plans' with private developers and changing demographics, has led to struggling African Diaspora community centres being closed, transferred to other organisations, sold off or raised 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
- ❖ Long standing BAME community spaces that could be transformed through support, development and social enterprise are being overlooked / missed out
- ❖ We only found one example of a lease being renewed for a period of 25 years after having been given several annual leases.
- ❖ Where buildings had been secured it was women who had done that – Karibu (Brixton); Claudia Jones (Hackney) ; Positive Network (Merton)
- ❖ Need new younger leaders under 40 with the pre-requisite skills, attitude and values to breathe new life into struggling organisations
- ❖ A real desire to secure 'rights' for the benefit of their community, of 'place' and/or of 'interest'

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS.....

❖ An 'SOS urban community' programme bringing together the national players involved in supporting community enterprise, leadership development and social action to target specific culturally diverse neighbourhoods, communities and struggling BAME community centres (*not the usual suspects*)

(Central Government, Power to Change, Big Lottery etc.)

❖ Follow up 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

❖ BAME communities should be supported to better understand and access their Community Rights (Assets of Community Value, Neighbourhood Planning etc.)

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS.....

❖ Local authorities should openly advertise their corporate asset management plans containing lists of assets available for transfer with local community organisations including BAME organisations.

❖ They should actively encourage local voluntary infrastructure organisations to provide targeted support to those BAME organisations interested in asset acquisition or in need of assistance / advice / support with struggling assets

❖ Intergenerational leadership programmes be developed so that the 'baton can be passed' in earnest

❖ Capacity building opportunities be offered in leadership, management, social entrepreneurship and new creative social change agency skills

❖ Support needed to assess the impact and value added by African Diaspora led services within local communities

(African Diaspora community organisations)

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS.....

- ❖ Need to engage

- ❖ They should actively encourage local voluntary infrastructure organisations to provide targeted support to those BAME organisations interested in asset acquisition or in need of assistance / advice / support with struggling assets

- ❖ Intergenerational leadership programmes be developed so that the 'baton can be passed' in earnest

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- ❖ Support needed to assess the impact and value added by African Diaspora led services within local communities

(African Diaspora community organisations)

NEXT STEPS.....

- ❖ Strategy and Action Plan for key recommendations – *August – Oct 2015*
- ❖ National launch - September 2015
- ❖ Community launch – October 2015 (*London and Manchester*)
- ❖ Implementation of Action Plan – September 2015 onwards

THANK YOU.....



THE UBELE INITIATIVE
639 ENTERPRISE CENTRE
639 TOTTENHAM HIGH STREET
TOTTENHAM N15 5DN

www.ubele.org

info@ubele.org