A Place to Call Home 2.0:

Benefits and value of owning cultural and community assets

2.0

THE UBELE INITIATIVE

Contents

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To those individuals who participated in the 1-2-1 interviews, completed the survey questionnaire, who participated in the focus groups and the 'Lisbon sessions', we are truly blessed to have engaged with you all. We hope you can hear your voices coming through. Without those voices, we would not have been able to understand the challenges being faced and therefore be able to offer approaches that could support your journey.

A special thanks is extended to Yvonne Field, for first asking me to be involved with the 2015 report and this follow-up. Her indominable and infectious energy in striving to address social and racial injustice knows no bound. I will be forever in her debt for the faith and confidence she has shown over the years – and long may it continue.

Finally, the sense and views expressed in these pages remain those of the author on behalf of The Ubele Initiative (Ubele); if there are any misunderstandings, it's our interpretation of what we thought we heard.

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The Ubele Initiative CIC is an African diaspora led, infrastructure plus organisation, empowering Black and Minoritised communities in the UK, to act as catalysts for social and economic change. To achieve this, Ubele works with community leaders, groups, and organisations in the UK and beyond to strengthen their sustainability, resilience, and voice. Ubele is taken from Swahili meaning 'the future'.

Introduction and context

Introduction and context

The Ubele Initiative (hereafter Ubele), with support from Locality, published A Place to Call Home: Community asset ownership Initiative in the African diaspora community (2015), which sought to provide an important overview of community asset ownership within the African Diaspora Community in England. The publication focused on the ownership (or barriers to ownership) of community assets, primarily those secured during the 1980s and often after periods of social unrest, predominantly secured by and for the Black African Caribbean communities. This is no longer the imperative as the communities have morphed and changed significantly to the extent that we can no longer talk about the Black African Caribbean communities in isolation from assets owned by those of African birth; instead, we must reflect all owners of community assets from the African Diaspora. This marks a shift from the 'Windrush Generation' focus of the 2015 publication to a more embracing and wider capture of Black and racially minoritised communities' ownership of community assets[1].

A Place to Call Home (2015), through stories, case studies and analysis, provided insights into the state of community asset ownership by the African Caribbean Diaspora communities across some of the major cities in England. The main thrust of the 2015 report indicated:

- A number of organisations had 'owned' community buildings for more than 20 years, though many were based on short leases or on 20-25 year leases which had by then expired. Landlords, often local authorities, were not too keen on extending or renewing leases to organisations, even if they had a track record of providing services to the community for more than two decades.
- A growing number of African Diaspora organisations were facing an uphill struggle to identify and develop new organisational leadership of those aged between 23-40 years, exemplified in that the leadership of those organisations interviewed were between 50 and 80 years old.
- Succession and legacy expectations needed younger people with

1 We recognise the diversity of individual identities and lived experiences and understand that the use of the short form BAME – *Black, Asian and minority ethnic* - is an imperfect term that does not fully capture the racial, cultural and ethnic identities of people that experience structural and systematic inequality. While, from time to time we may use the term BAME it is used largely to reference the language used in any particular report or as described by responders. Ubele prefers the term 'Black and racially minoritised' and as such, we use this term rather than the abbreviation BAME.

the prerequisite skills, attitude and values to breathe new life into struggling organisations. Though the older generation provided a rich source of experience and repository of knowledge, it was evident that there was a need to build a new cadre of community leaders.

- The type of social business model that existed required new skill sets of board members and senior staff who could understand and successfully navigate the world of commissioning arrangements and social investment, rather than an overreliance on local authority grant aid, which marked the relationship between communities and community assets. Linked to this, evidence indicated that these organisations needed to be able to respond to local demographic changes and emerging needs, as many were disconnected from the communities they sought to serve.

The report's significance not only stems from being the first major attempt to capture stories from around the UK where African diaspora communities are to be found, but it sought to address topical community conversations around sustainability, presence and identity. Today, eight years on, the conversation has become more pronounced and louder, thanks partly to the Black Lives Matter campaign[2] that recognised and acknowledged the existence of institutional racism, and simultaneously, partly to the work of organisations like Ubele (amongst others) since the publication of *A Place to Call Home* in 2015. Consistent with the key findings of the report, The Ubele Initiative have been involved in discussions and direct delivery of programmes and opportunities at both a political and strategic level with policy makers as well as initiating and implementing programmes on the ground within the African diaspora

communities. Some of the key and most relevant examples include:

- At the strategic partnership and influencing policy level, they have been involved in:
- National mapping of community assets and presenting at Locality National Convention
- Just Space – A community led Plan for London
- Community Rights/Our community with Locality and Community Development Foundation.
- Development of the Wolves Lane Horticultural Centre in partnership with Organic Lea in Haringey[3].
- Proactive research and studies conducted in supporting the recognition, development and sustainability of Africa diaspora communities in the UK, especially during the pandemic and the effect on Black and racially minoritised led community organisations[4].

2 In response to the 2020 Black Lives Matters movement, following the death of George Floyd, the 'world-wide' protest brought into sharp focus a 'desire' to address the systemic racism and discrimination that has for long underpinned community conversations around presence, identity and sustainability.

3 Ubele, along with Organic Lea, are legal partners and 'stewards' of the 3-acre site. The Wolves Lane Centre, as it is known, is a thriving space in North London for sustainable growing, education, social enterprise and community engagement (see The Ubele Initiative - Wolves Lane Centre).

4 For a glossary and identification of the key reports undertaken since 2015, please refer to The Ubele Initiative - Research & Reports. References in relation to the work of Ubele during the pandemic is well documented and is captured in the 'Reference' section of this report as well as those appropriate and relevant points throughout the report.

At the level of knowledge generation and learning initiatives focused on the needs of the African diaspora communities, they have directly led on projects such as:

- First Steps[5], Our Place and the Community Ownership and Management of Assets (COMA)[6]
- Mali Enterprising Leaders programme (MEL)[7]
- Erasmus leadership and training programme initiatives. These comprised a range of leadership programmes working with European partners targeted to Black and racially minoritised voluntary and community led organisations from across the UK between 2016 and 2023[8].
- Incubating local social enterprises to become independent and self-sufficient (e.g. Leading Routes, BUDS, Urban Dandelion, BAMEStream/Bayo, Lloyd Leon Community Centre, Black Rootz, 81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance and GIDA Co-operative)
- Mapping the children and young people's health and well-being support services in North Kensington (post-Grenfell)

In revisiting the 2015 report, not only were we minded asking what has happened since the publication of the report, but we sought to ask additional questions to those then posed; to shine a light on the impact the report had more widely beyond the work of Ubele since 2015. The principal question that this body of work is seeking to answer is best summed up as: *What are the benefits and value of cultural and community asset ownership and what are the implications of Black and racialised led organisations owning their own assets?*

In the writing of this report, we wanted to allow the reader to move from the general to the specific, to be able to dip in and out of sections as appropriate, depending on their interest and proclivity. For example, in the road testing of aspects of the report with funders and stakeholders, the range of interests varied significantly. Some funders were interested in the approach adopted, the reach, the challenges and the solution – and not necessarily in that order; researchers in the field, on the other hand, were interested in the methods deployed and the challenges associated with the approach as well as the consistency between evidence and findings; while those directly embroiled in trying to secure and/or retain their community asset, were principally concerned with how they could overcome barriers, secure funding and be sustainable over time, especially in securing a lease or freehold. For infrastructure organisations working with racialised community organisations, there was an emphasis on how best to support learning and capacity development to ensure they are sustainable. As a result, the report covers the following sections:

Section 1: Methodological approach

Section 2: Challenges, context and connections: review of the literature

Section 3: Key findings: views from the ground

Section 4: Discussion and opportunities

Section 5: Conclusion.

5 The First Steps programme was managed by the Community Development Foundation (www.cdf.org.uk), and delivered in partnership with other organisations. It enabled 115 small, often hidden groups across the UK, to create partnerships or stakeholder groups around an asset - a building, open space, park, shop, or even a major event which has local economic benefits such as a national Carnival (see The Ubele Initiative - About The First Steps programme by Yvonne Field).

6 In 2015/16 Locality delivered the Community Ownership and Management of Assets (COMA) programme on behalf of the DCLG. This supported 52 partnerships between local public bodies (predominantly local authorities) and community groups (including parish councils) to develop multiple asset transfer or single, more complex and ground-breaking, asset projects (see Locality-Places-and-spaces-report-final.pdf)

7 The Ubele Initiative - Evaluation report for Mali enterprising leaders (MEL)

8 The Ubele Initiative - Research & Reports

Section 1: Methodological approach

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The approach adopted did not seek to replicate the 2015 research but to build on that foundation and explore new ways of community-focused engagement through the lens of participatory action research (PAR). As the term suggests, PAR encompasses a methodological approach that links practice and research in the form of social interaction. It directly engages with the audiences of the investigation as part of their lived experience (e.g. language and culture, power relations, values and norms and so on, at both the individual and societal levels).

A crucial and important underpinning principle is to provide opportunities for feedback, reflection and for acting in the light of the process. Significantly, action research is about engaging in situ with those who are the object of the investigatory process. It's not a stagnant nor passive form of research that acts upon the participants, but rather the participants are very much part of the emerging understanding, outcomes and solution.

The methodology took on board the principles outlined by Bailey et al (2009). This is reflected in Fig 1 right.

Fig 1: A simplified conceptual model of conducting PAR

The benefits of conducting the research through these lenses were:

- A strong association with a social action agenda and focus; it speaks to a bottom-up and grassroots 'community empowerment focus';

- Relevance for those grappling with blockages with respect to the systemic erosion of rights and opportunities (e.g. discriminatory practices and disadvantages arising from structurally constructed narratives and practices 'articulated in dominance' (Hall, 1984).
- Delivers practice through a reflective and iterative process, in which the researcher is part of the solution, in contrast to being perceived as an externalised observer.
- Engages the community affected directly using tools and processes that put them at ease, reflect the challenges that they are facing and facilitate the surfacing of their voices to inform solutions and decisions that affect them and their future prosperity. That is, to see that they too have the means to address the concerns they are principally invested in resolving.

In the 2015 research we conducted:

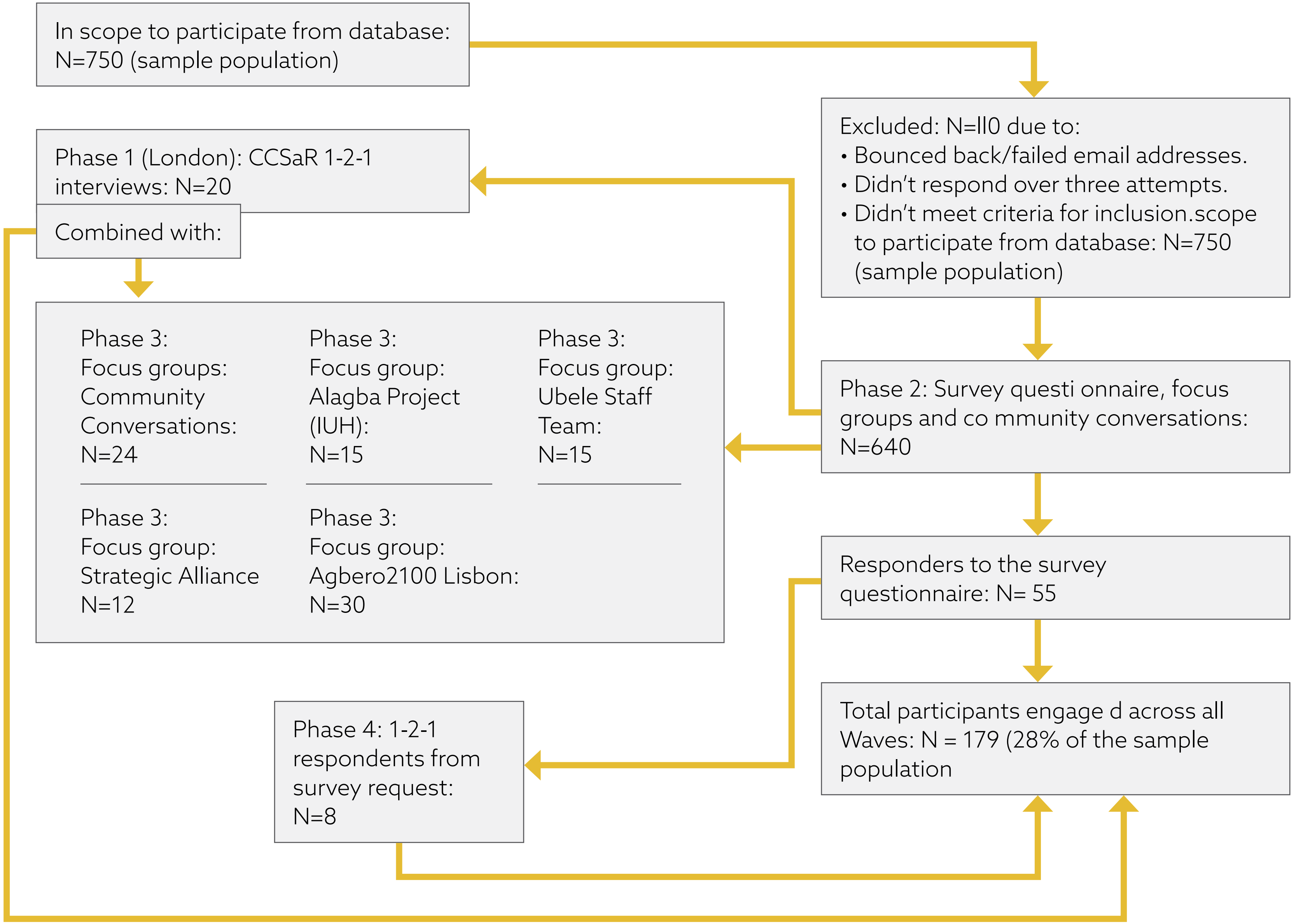
- in-depth interviews with organisations;
- community conversations with notable community 'leaders' actively involved on the ground in respect to the 'Black problematic' (Murray 1986), listening to and reflecting their voices and stories;
- produced case studies which explored some of the challenges Black African Diaspora communities were then facing as they sought to secure community assets;
- produced an interactive Google map which captured 150 African Diaspora community assets across England which were then currently in existence, had been closed or were then under threat of closing.

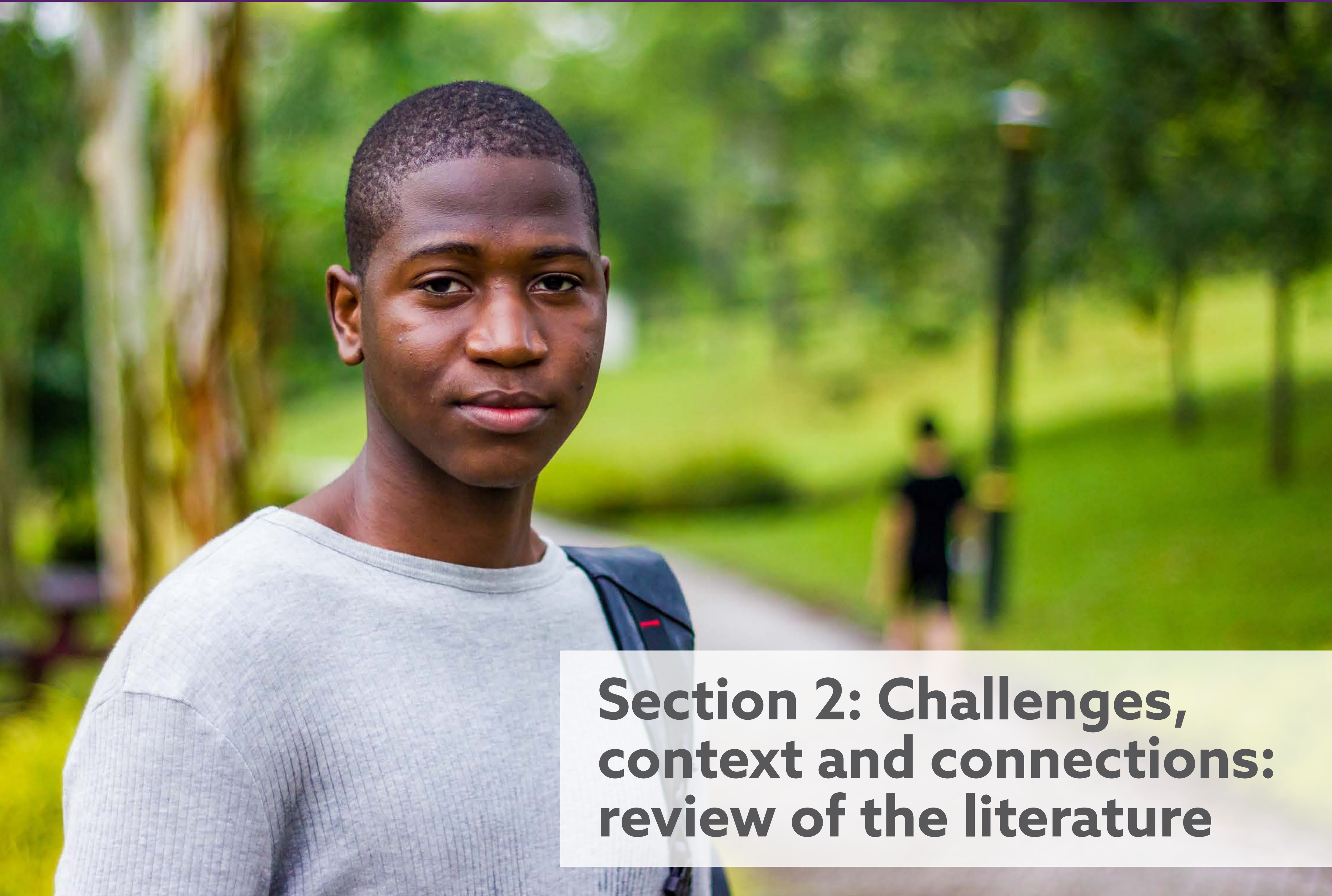
For this research, as Fig 2 shows, we engaged 179 participants directly through a range of participatory processes, which represented 28% of our sample population (n=640) identified at the *Problem identification* stage. Of this number, we received 55 responses to the online survey questionnaire; 28 were involved in the 1-2-1 interviewing processes while 96 were engaged across a range of participatory workshops, dialogue and focus group sessions.

From this approach, some summary headlines:

50%	50% of the sample population (n=640) were **based outside London**, with the largest number of participants coming from the Northwest, Manchester in particular.
45%	45% of respondents to the survey questionnaire (n=55) were **registered charities** while 45% comprised social enterprises, incorporated as either Community Interest Companies (CIC) or Company Limited by Guarantee (10% were unincorporated or unspecified).
10%	10% of respondents to the survey questionnaire (n=55) indicated **owning their own assets**, 62% were renting or leasing under 5 years lease arrangements while 18% were leasing for up to 10years from private landlords and local authorities.
38%	The majority of organisation's **charitable purpose** was **'The advancement of citizenship or community development'** (38%) and 'The relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage' (21%).
33%	The overwhelming majority of users of the **community assets** were **children and young people** (33%), unemployed/low waged (17%) and those living with a disability (15%)
48%	48% of organisations **employed both full-time and part-time staff** with a staggering 93% engaging volunteers (virtually all responding organisations were reliant on volunteers to lesser or greater degree).

Fig 2: Summary overview of participants directly engaged.





Section 2: Challenges, context and connections: review of the literature

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Some definitional challenges

The first challenge is to define the context within which this research sits. For this, we need to define what we mean by 'community asset'. Additionally, the word 'cultural' is often tagged onto the front end of the word 'community' to create 'cultural community' or 'cultural and community' when we speak of 'community asset'. It is therefore important that we are clear how we will be using the term(s) as this will aid understanding greatly.

As definitions go, they are broad. A community asset (or community resource), is yet another term to describe community assets), is simply anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life. This means:

- It can be a *person:* residents can be empowered to realise and use their abilities to build and transform their community (in this sense we are using community in a geo-spatial sense in contrast to 'community of interest' which is not spatially bound or specific and refers to those coming together around a specific issue or concern that is usually much broader than is identified within a spatial area).
- It can be a *physical structure or place:* a school, hospital, church, library, leisure centre, social club, community centre, youth club, a landmark or symbol and so on. It could be a public space which has been created with the 'community' in mind, such as a playground on an estate, a wetland, or green space (e.g. Windrush Square in Brixton[9], the Mary Seacole statue in the gardens of St Thomas's Hospital[10] and the Windrush Monument at Waterloo Station[11] among many other similar examples around the country).

9 Windrush Square is the public open space in the heart of Lambeth, opposite the Edwardian town hall. Part of the historic Rush Common, it was formed by the amalgamation of Tate Library Gardens with the adjacent old Windrush Square (History of Windrush Square – The Brixton Society)

10 On 30 June 2016, the memorial statue of Mary Seacole was unveiled by Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE in the gardens of St Thomas's Hospital; the UK's first in honour of a named black woman (Mary Seacole Statue - Mary Seacole Trust, Life, Work & Achievements of Mary Seacole)..

11 The monument shows a man, woman and child standing on top of suitcases and pays tribute to the thousands of people who arrived in the UK from Caribbean countries between 1948 and 1971 [National Windrush monument unveiled at London Waterloo Station - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)].

- It can be a *service* that makes life better for some or all community members: public transportation, pre-school and early years provision, community recycling facilities, cultural organisations and provisions for the elderly and infirmed, among others.
- It can be a *business* that provides jobs which support the local economy, such as social enterprises[12].

'Cultural assets', on the other hand, reflects assets that have specific and/or binding socio-historical relevance and meaning, often with reference to specific community groups. However, the term itself is contentious and is not as clearly defined nor understood merely by stating that it is 'cultural' when, in fact, culture is a dynamic and ever changing notion. Mulhern (2009), for example, in reviewing and revisiting Raymond Williams' work on 'culture and society' (1961), makes the point that that work had 'stood the test of time' and what made it possible was the underpinning principles of culture embodying continuity, tradition and customary differences. That is, seeing culture as something that a people (or community in this case) can become 'accustomed to' while recognising that 'others are not'. This allows for the creation and/or recognition of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups'. This reading of culture is important if we are to fully understand and grasp what is meant by 'cultural and community assets' within the approach adopted for this research. For us, it is simply that *"both parameters ['custom' and 'difference'] are essential"* (Mulhern, 2009).

Within the context of racialised minorities, who Stuart Hall (1984) refers to as living in 'society structured in dominance', it becomes vitally important for groups who feel they are 'outsiders', especially when they are actors, agents of change and co-constructors of the same 'dominating reality' within said societies. For them, to be able to identify with certain customs (or anything resembling and generally accepted as custom) over 'other modes of social validation', is critical and affirmatory. These differences become very important

as reference points for those striving for a sense of 'belonging and identification' in an environment where their presence is depicted as invisible or non-existent. It is therefore important that we try to understand what 'community' means to such groups and what, specifically, community asset ownership means for the longer-term embodiment of and recognition of social groups who feel they are un-recognised and underrepresented.

Referencing community spaces as 'cultural' (grounded in customs and differences) recognises those assets as pertinent to particular 'cultural community groups', in terms of buildings, locations and

12 Social enterprises are businesses which trade for a social or environmental purpose [All about Social Enterprise | Social Enterprise UK].

other features considered historically or socially significant. For the purpose of this research, we speak of *'cultural and community assets'* as a single term to refer to those objects, traditions and practices that assist in the continued socio-historical development of racialised communities. By conjoining 'cultural with community assets', we recognise assets that make a positive contribution to shared human experiences of the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities across the United Kingdom (UK).

Context and connections

There is a wide body of evidence that demonstrates the importance of cultural and community assets. For example, a systematic review by the *What Works Wellbeing Centre* (2018) highlighted the contribution community hubs make to a broad range of health and wellbeing outcomes while Locality's, *Places and Spaces* (2016) focused on the importance of cultural and community spaces being central to people's sense of identity and how they feel about the places they live, their culture and local heritage. In addition, there are growing bodies of evidence demonstrating the impact community-owned and managed spaces have on the local economy, often helping to counter economic decline in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.[13]

A Place to Call Home (2015) sought to bring to the fore concerns about access to and support for the sustainability of 'hard fought for' community assets in the 1970s by the Black African Caribbean communities. The evidence obtained then through the community conversations centred very much around sustainability, presence and identity, all of which are central concerns of this follow-up research. The publication then focused on the ownership (or barriers to ownership) of community assets, primarily those secured during the 1980s, often after periods of social unrest, and which were predominantly secured by and for the Black Caribbean communities; commonly referred to as the Windrush Generation[14]. The challenges faced by those arriving from the Caribbean from 1948, with the landing of the ship Empire Windrush, had a profound impact on place and spaces within the UK, as sites of major disturbances and community reshaping over the decades that followed.[15]

Some of the key reasons underpinning the strong cultural significance and identification with cultural and community assets within the Black African Diaspora communities can be best summarised in the following ways:

- 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;
- A significant history of self-help and entrepreneurship through the ownership of local businesses, nightclubs, record and bookshops and other spaces leading to a 'community owned' support system and services (e.g The Africa Centre, New Beacon Book Store, The Headstart Book Shop and so on);
- An increase in central and local government financial support from the 1970s onwards in the form of grant aid and 'peppercorn' rent arrangements led to the decline of self-help initiatives and an over-reliance on local government, especially Labour run councils, as the primary financial system of support for the design and delivery of much needed local services;

13 See for example Power to Change (2019) Our Assets, Our Future. www.powertochange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Assets-Report-DIGITAL-1.pdf; Locality (2018) Powerful Communities, Strong Economies. locality.org.uk/about/key-publications/powerful-communities-strong-economies-report

14 Windrush Foundation | Remembering a generation

15 See in particular The Tottenham 3: the legacy of the Broadwater Farm riot – The Justice Gap; List of protests in the United Kingdom - Wikipedia

- The drive towards greater professionalisation and statutory youth and community development, social work, community-based education and mental health services in the 1970s and 1980s created a Black professional class distanced from the voluntarism and community-based driving force that challenged many of the discriminatory practices and social injustices that the Small Axe drama series by Steve McQueen so eloquently and visually brought to the screens in 2021[16];
- Uprisings in urban areas such as Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and across London such as Brixton, Hackney, Lewisham 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 (e.g. Leeds West Indian Cultural Centre, Moss Side and Hulme Development Trust, Lloyd Leon Community Centre, Karibu Centre, West Indian Cultural Centre and Welbourne Community Centre, to name but a few high-profile examples). In addition, specific events led to the creation of many cultural and heritage events and opportunities, such as: the Notting Hill Carnival, from the civil disturbances of 1958; Moon Shot theatre in Deptford, in the aftermath of the 1981 New Cross Fire; the Brixton Recreation Centre and Lloyd Leon Community Centre and West Indian Cultural Centre in Haringey, after the 1981 riots; the Leeds West Indian Community Centre, arising from the 1981 riots in Leeds; as well as those in Bristol, Manchester, Coventry and Birmingham[17].
- The over-reliance on local authority grant aid has meant many of these provisions were never renewed, which has seen some of those early gains taken back into local authority control and subsequently replaced by housing stocks, such as with the Welbourne Community Centre (Tottenham) and new third party arrangements entered into by others, such as with the Lloyd Leon Community Centre[18] and Leicester West Indian Cultural Centre[19]. While still others continue to struggle to remain relevant, as they strive to ensure financial viability in the face of inadequate funding and investments as with centres in Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Leicester, to name but a few. A recent report, published by Power to Change (March 2023), underscored this point:

> *"Persistent and severe underinvestment into community businesses and organisations supporting people experiencing marginalisation, alongside the impact of austerity measures and increased demand on stretched services has resulted in community businesses and organisations struggling with financial sustainability, dependent on volunteers and small teams, and ultimately striving for equity." (Locality and Spark and Co, 2023).*

The impact and implication has left African Diaspora communities without the community assets they originally 'owned', which reflected a sense of identity and belonging, and with their demise, a sense of loss and belonging. Interestingly, the Millennials and Generation Z no longer see those spaces as cultural identifiers. Maintaining and ensuring they continue to exist as cultural sites for identification forms part of the challenge that this research is seeking to explore.

In addition, it is important not to overlook the wider impact cultural and community assets have on the economy and wider civic concerns. In July 2018, Power to Change and the Ministry of Housing,

16 *Small Axe* anthology film series, created and directed by Steve McQueen, consisted of five films that depicted lived experiences of African-Caribbean communities in London in the 1960s to 1980s.

17 See Olusoga, D (2016), Black British: A forgotten history, Macmillan Press; Fryer, P (1984), Staying Power: The history of Black people in Britain, Pluto Press.

18 The Ubele Initiative entered into a formal arrangement with Lambeth Council in 2020 to support the development and delivery of services from the Lloyd Leon Community Centre in Brixton. Due to the pandemic much of that support had to be suspended and restarted in 2022.

19 See case study #4 below

Communities and Local Government commissioned the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR), at Sheffield Hallam University, and the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) to provide an economic assessment of the assets in community ownership sector in England.

The outcome from this research was the report, *Our Assets Our Future* (2019), which found that the community ownership sector was not only growing fast but was making a significant contribution to the UK economy as a whole. For example, the report showed:

- there are more than 6,300 community-owned assets in the country, contributing nearly £220 million to the UK economy every year;
- despite limited resources, three-quarters of community-owned assets were said to be in good financial health;
- nearly a third of all community-owned assets came into community ownership in the last decade[20].

The COVID pandemic brought other challenges that many Black and racially minoritised led organisations have had to face. The seminal work by Ubele during the pandemic highlighted very early the dire predicament many Black-led organisations were facing and ushered in new funding streams which for the first time specifically recognised the funding gap that Black and racially minoritised led organisations were facing.[21] Reports during the early phases of the pandemic identified substantial inequalities across protected characteristics and socio-economic position in relation to the impacts

of the coronavirus pandemic. These included a heightened risk of COVID-19 infection, complications and mortality, and the negative economic, social and psychological consequences of Government policies to mitigate the health impacts of the pandemic.[22]

20 Power to Change Research Institute Report No. 21; pp.3

21 [Impact of Covid-19 on the BAME community and voluntary sector]

22 ONS (2020) Evidence for ethnic inequalities in mortality related to COVID-19 infections: findings from an ecological analysis of England. BMJ Open 2020;10:e041750. doi:10.1136/ bmjopen-2020-041750; ONS (2020), Deaths involving COVID-19, England and Wales: deaths occurring in April 2020; www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingcovid19englandandwales/deathsoccurringinapril2020; See also, GLA (2020) Rapid Evidence Review - Inequalities in relation to COVID-19 and their effects on London. data.london.gov.uk/dataset/rapid-evidence-review-inequalities-in-relation-to-covid-19-and-their-effects-on-london. This identified "substantial inequalities across protected characteristics and socioeconomic position in relation to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic."

The Mayor of London's Rapid Evidence Review (September 2020), which involved The Ubele Initiative as co-authors and researchers working with the University of Manchester, indicated that the role of voluntary and community sector organisations was crucial during the height of the pandemic, especially in being able to mobilise local volunteers and in providing advice, information and support. As the report puts it:

> *"...the advocacy and service provision activities that VCSE organisations have been involved in have served to mitigate any aggravation of inequalities experienced by those with protected characteristics. Understanding their role is an important element of understanding the patterning of inequalities during the coronavirus pandemic and how policy responses might be developed."*[23]

It is clear that cultural and community assets – people and physical spaces – played vital roles during times of crisis, to ensure that those challenges were minimised or mitigated as much as possible.

Governance and leadership challenges

While the role of voluntary and community organisations do provide a strong basis for engagement and involvement, it is not automatic that all community organisations (charities and social enterprises in the main) are effective. One of the challenges that the 2015 report highlighted was the absence of strong management acumen among those who were managing the cultural and community spaces within local areas. The report spoke about "passing the baton" and "evolving the next generation of community leaders". It stated: *"the 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."*

There are marked differences between 'leadership' and 'management', and some of the issues identified in the report were largely 'management-related'. With hindsight, the report did not explore some of those nuances, which was outside the scope of the initial need to surface key and emerging issues and concerns. Eight years on, it is an area worthy of exploration which we have built into the exploratory approaches of this research.

The premise in the 2015 report was to focus on 'leadership' as an overarching and embracing language of transformation. It was therefore limiting in that it focused (rightly) on activism and leadership from a visionary perspective; that is, what we would want to see happen in contrast to what we need to do now. This premise led to recommendations that focused on 'leadership capacity development', which takes us into the realm of taking a birds' eye and wider panoramic view on life, when in fact, what may be needed are skills in maintaining a building with all that requires. In other words, we needed an introspective glance at deficiencies associated with management and operational considerations. An exploration of leadership and management styles may open up different perspectives that could unlock some of the challenges of long standing ineffective organisational management of assets. For example, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) report (Aiken et al, 2011), working with the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR), cautioned that the right conditions needed to be in place to make the 2011 Localism Act a reality on the ground. Asset ownership and management face tremendous hurdles and the report cautioned that community organisations must at all times be mindful of the risks and costs involved: *"...assets can potentially become liabilities that subsequently undermine community aspiration."* In the 2015

23 GLA (2020) ibid. See also the Ubele Report, which formed the basis of the voluntary sector voices which informed the report: [The Ubele Initiative - Rapid Review Of The Impact Of COVID-19 On Those With Protected Equality Characteristics In London]

report I proffered the following observations born out of decades of engagement with voluntary and community organisations around governance and organisational development:

> *"There is an internal conversation that needs to be had with these organisations [those struggling] .... we have to start re-educating managers of centres to look at the [organisation] as a growing concern, as a business and not just a hobby or entitlement.....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: "...if you can't manage your asset why should we fund you?"*

"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 Place to Call Home, pp. 43)

There is therefore a clear need for us to look again at what it means to not only acquire an asset but how to effectively manage and ensure its sustainability. This inevitably engaged us in looking at internal management processes and potential conflicts within organisations. But to do justice to the process and the action research methodological principles which underpinned the research, it was necessary to look at those challenges; what we sometimes refer to as *internal politics*. This is something we were able to do through the range of participatory processes that had been put in place; to hear from those directly on the ground managing organisations and/or vying to secure community assets.

How has a review of the main challenges guided the research?

In her literature review on cultural and community assets, Lessard (2021), identified six 'challenges' to emerge from the literature she examined:	
1	Planning frameworks and planning culture (length and expertise)
2	Consultation processes (adequacies/inadequacies)
3	Group-based barriers (e.g. intra-community considerations)
4	Impact of gentrification and regeneration practices (dislocation, diversification and high costs)
5	Structural governance and macroeconomic challenges (politico-economic conditions)
6	Development practices/culture and management (dysfunctional and inadequate leadership arrangements)

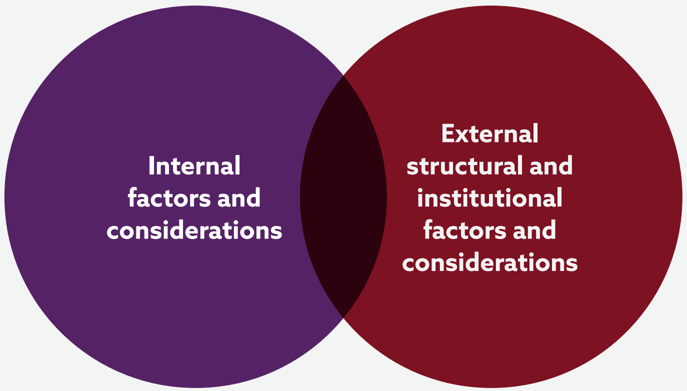
Lessard's six challenges suggest two broad factors: (a) *external factors* linked to policy and decision-makers (i.e. law makers): planning frameworks, consultation processes, impact of gentrification and regeneration practices; (b) *internal factors*, which links back to organisational practices and leadership: group-based barriers, structural governance and development practices, culture and management. The classification provided did not seek to address nor acknowledge the presence of structural and institutional factors that may exist.

From interviews, survey responses and focus groups, the challenges faced by many Black and racially minoritised community groups trying to secure cultural and community assets were seen to coalesce around two overlapping spheres of concerns (or factors): external and internal factors.

'External factors' are decisions made by politicians and decision-makers that have implications for society as a whole, but which could have unintended consequences for some communities. Included within this sphere of considerations are *structural and institutional factors*. Some practices are obvious and overt and can be identified and *'called out'* for what they are (i.e. overt discrimination), while others are embedded in approaches and thinking and are therefore more challenging to identify, despite having a damaging effect.. These embedded concerns tend to reproduce themselves over a sustained period (i.e. decades) and create sites of conflict, challenges and counterchallenges.

'Internal factors', relate to the organisations themselves and how they manage or see the world, especially with regard to governance and leadership (i.e. competence and capability of organisations to manage and sustain cultural and community assets). These factors can be illustrated by a Venn diagram (Fig 3 below) and were also present in the 2015 report, illustrating their resistance to change.

Fig 3: Conceptualisation of the challenges arising from the GLA Barrier project (London)[24]



In Fig 4 overleaf we have clustered the challenges around five interrelated themes that were explored through the six questions indicated in Section 1: Methods. These are further explored in Section 3 through the voices and reflections of respondents engaged in the research process. The broad areas and their constituent themes are:

External structural and institutional factors and considerations:

- Regeneration development policies and opportunities (e.g. local authorities and private developers);
- Physical asset ownership (asset tenure and sustainability: freehold, lease, rent and consortia options)
- Structural and institutional discriminatory practices

Internal factors and considerations:

- Connectedness and engagement (e.g. opportunities and initiatives)
- Governance and leadership (e.g. accountability and management)

External factors

a) Regeneration development policies and opportunities

Over the last two decades we have seen high land values, increased business rates, redevelopment pressures for more and more housing stock, exacerbated by the recent COVID 19 pandemic, which has partly led to the current 'cost-of-living crisis'[25]. These factors challenged even the most well-established spaces, let alone small voluntary and community organisations within the Black and racially minoritised community sector. These organisations are often established in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, specifically in inner city areas.

High land values is perhaps greatest in London and other metropolitan areas including Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol. In London, for example, the Mayor's Cultural Infrastructure Plan stated: *"over the*

24 This overview is an adapted revisualisation of the challenges identified through that project.
25 The war in Ukraine and Brexit have both played a part in the increased cost of living over recent months as well as the impact and implications of the pandemic.

last decade London has seen some of the highest land values in any global city ... As well as restricting the opportunity to buy property, this has brought higher rents and an increased chance of land being redeveloped, whether in town centres or former industrial sites".[26]

Flowing from this we found that:

1. There is often limited scope for landlords – whether public or private sector – to offer reduced rents to cultural and community organisations, due to commercial pressures to maximise land values; and when rents rise, so too do business rates, putting additional costs and pressures on organisations.[27]
2. Existing spaces, which have provided long-term homes for important cultural and community organisations, can become subject to commercial pressures, where owners seek to maximise land value through redevelopment.
3. Research by the Co-op Group and Locality found particularly low levels of Community Asset Transfer (CAT) in London compared with other metropolitan areas outside London. CAT is the process through which public bodies transfer ownership of community assets to community groups at less than market value. The research found a direct correlation between areas where land values are lowest, which had the highest CAT rates, and areas like London, which had the highest land values and lowest CAT rates. The research also found that councils in London were less likely than other parts of the country to have a CAT policy, which the research suggests is crucial for local authorities to realise the benefits of community ownership. This poses a particular threat to the sector, given that a high proportion of responders to our survey were from London.

(b) Physical asset ownership (asset tenure and sustainability)

Local authorities are often landlords for cultural and community organisations. Councils can implement discretionary business rate relief, where they can top up the 80% charitable rate relief to 100%. They also have the power to grant long leases/tenancies, but the process can be long and drawn out, and subject to changes in political administration, which can set back any early progress. It is not uncommon to hear of organisations in discussion with their local council for upwards of 10 years or more with short term year-on-year or 5-year arrangements in place. The private and commercial sector can be just as challenging, especially as landlords can at short notice give notice.[28] This very rarely results in long term leases.

The other key area of concern is that of financial viability and sustainability of the organisation and therefore the ability to secure and/or sustain the cultural and community asset, where this is in place. Reports by Voice4Change England (2015; 2020), #Chartiessowhite (2020) and Equally Ours (2021), for example, showed how hard it is for Black and racially marginalised community organisations to access funding, both from the public sector, trusts and foundations. The Voice4Change England (2015) report, for example, found that 76% of respondents from Black, Asian and minority ethnic-led organisations felt they had been discriminated against in gaining grant funding.[29] The funding terrain has not significantly changed since this 2015 report. The recent Adebowale Report (2022), which reported on the state of the social investment market, concluded that Black-led social enterprises faced challenges in *"access, securing support, a lack of understanding and diversity*

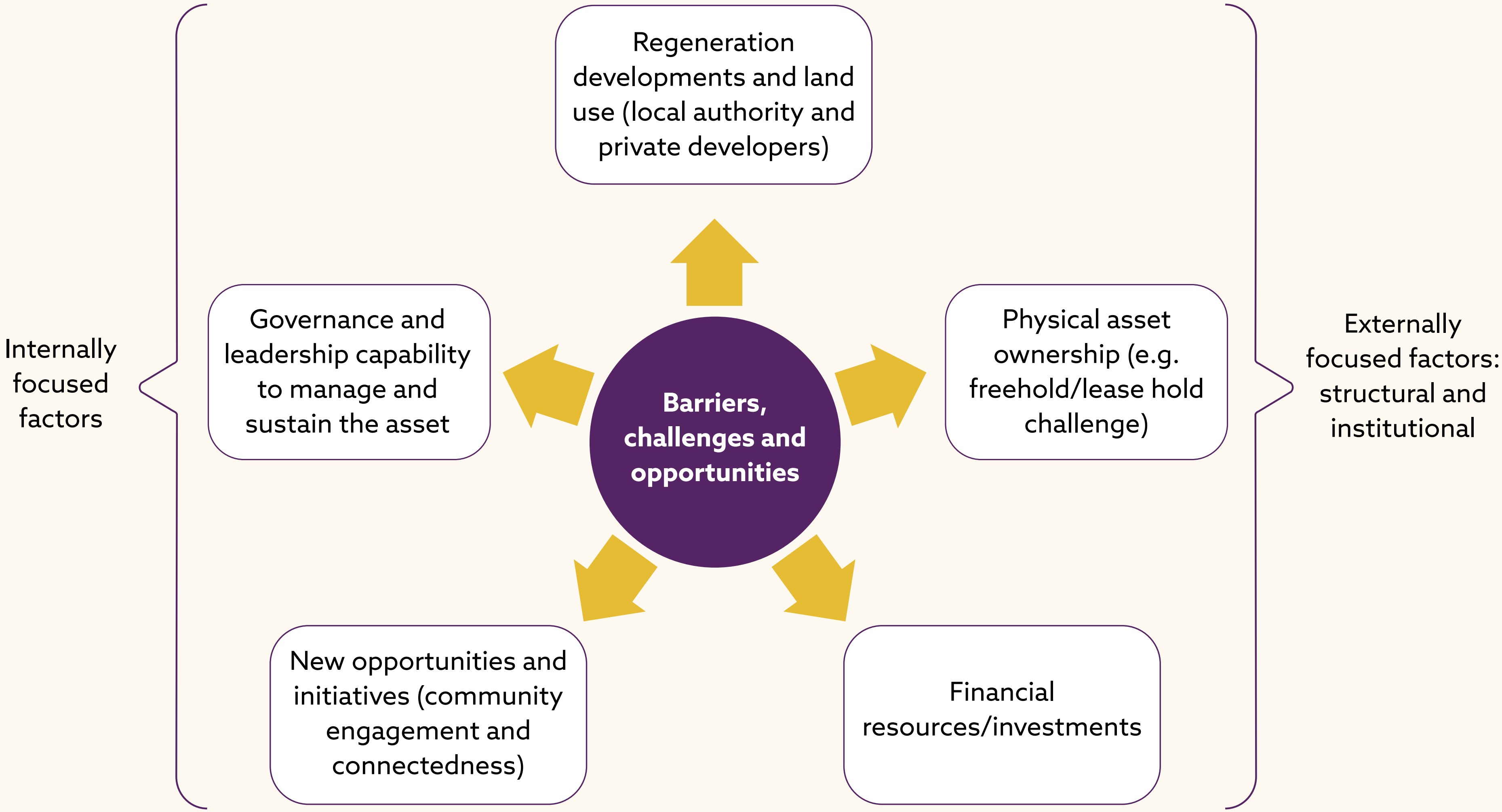
26 GLA (2020) Cultural infrastructure Plan: www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cultural_infrastructure_plan_online.pdf

27 GLA (2020) Cultural infrastructure Plan www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cultural_infrastructure_plan_online.pdf

28 Sheffield Hallam University (2022) Community businesses and high streets: 'taking back' and leading forward www.powertochange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Community-businesses-and-high-streets-CRESR.pdf

29 Voice4Change (2015) Funding for Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Funding-for-BAME-VCOs-Report-July-2015-V4CE-II.pdf

Fig 4: A conceptual representation of the key challenges facing Black and racially minoritised voluntary and community organisation's ability to own cultural and community assets.



within the social investment community." With respect to race inequity, evidence shared with the Commission showed that:

- BME-led organisations identified clear structural barriers to accessing finance, including, 'additional questions, additional due diligence and risk aversion';
- Social investment remains too "white" and this created challenges for Black-led social enterprises who lack the social connections of their white peers';
- Before COVID-19, 'Black and ethnic minority-led social enterprises were applying for and receiving finance at just one quarter the level for the rest of the social enterprise sector';
- Less than 40% of BME-led organisations were deemed eligible for investment, of which even fewer were approved. They apply in smaller numbers, are put off by the barriers they face, and receive significantly smaller amounts.

With less public funding available, there has been a shift towards earned income. However, income generating activities are not highly profitable for culture and community organisations, especially for those led by underrepresented groups.[30] Average annual income for Black, Asian and minority ethnic-led charities is around half the overall average.[31] Furthermore, according to Race Equality Alliance (2021), *"Black and Minority Ethnic VCS groups entered the pandemic under-funded"*. Their business models then faced multiple risks: rising demand for services, declining trading income from room hire in community spaces, and fewer volunteers due to public health challenges.[32] A public indictment of the funding landscape for Black and racially minoritised-led organisations pre-pandemic was set out by *#charitysowhite*, a group of volunteers campaigning to root out racial injustice in the charity sector. Captured in *The Independent*, they wrote:

> *"Many of these funding organisations hide behind good intentions and it can be easy to overlook the biases, politics and institutional racism that operates within senior leadership teams, which are 99 per cent white and unrepresentative of the communities they seek to support.*
>
> *The most powerful of these funders are The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) and National Emergency Trust (NET), whose history of excluding BAME-led organisations showcases why diversity at the decision-making table is so vital. For instance, of TNLCF's largest 50 grants distributed in London in 2019, only 7.74 per cent went to BAME VCS organisations – the BAME population in London is 44 per cent. The picture is just as bleak from our analysis of NET. Their only distribution partner, UK Community Foundations (UKCF), whose Oxford Community Foundation – a city with a 22 per cent ethnic minority population – have only distributed 2.66 per cent of their funds to BAME VCS organisations so far in 2020.*

It is seriously concerning that these are the infrastructures trusted with the power and decisions of which charities get to continue their coronavirus response work and which have to close their doors. Ultimately, they are deciding which communities are left without support. In a crisis where BAME g roups are dying and being left destitute at a disproportionate rate, funds should be channelled

30 Locality (2022) Navigating the Storm locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/LOC-Connect-Fund-Report-2022-MAR-WG05-2.pdf

31 Voice4Change (2015) Funding for Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Funding-for-BAME-VCOs-Report-July-2015-V4CE-II.pdf

32 Ubele (2020) Impact of COVID-19 on the BAME Community and Voluntary Sector static1.squarespace.com/static/58f9e592440243412051314a/t/5eaab6e972a49d5a320cf3af/1588246258540/REPORT+Impact+of+COVID-19+on+the+BAME+Community+and+voluntary+sector%2C+30+April+2020.pdf

through organisations that care to prioritise them."[33]

(c) Structural and institutional discriminatory practices

Discrimination was a feature of the 2015 publication which has not changed for many Black and racially marginalised-led community organisations, which cuts across external and internal factors. The Equality Act (2010) sets out how discriminatory practices, policies and barriers affect different groups with protected characteristics in different ways both "directly" or "indirectly" [34].

The Scarman Report, for example, which followed the Brixton Riots of 1981, provides perhaps the earliest recognition that "complex political, social and economic factors" were present within inner city areas such as Lambeth.[35] Eighteen years later, following the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the MacPherson Report, codified the recognition and admission that the institutionalisation of certain practices have far reaching impacts on the lives of those affected.[36] The report stated that for Black and racialised minority communities these systemic practices and policy design is real and a constant within their interaction within society – irrespective of the institution that they encounter.[37] As a result, discrimination in the form of institutional racism and exclusionary behaviours within local systems and networks undermines support for, and places additional barriers on, Black and racially marginalised-led community organisations.[38] The next section considers some of the lived experiences of organisations on the ground set against these challenges.

33 See [If lockdown continues, nine out of 10 BAME voluntary organisations will close. Who will support us then? | The Independent | The Independent]
34 HM Government (2010) The Equality Act 2010 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
35 HM Government (1981) The Scarman Report onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118663202.wberen102
36 HM Government (1999) The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf
37 Home Office, The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, Cm 4262–I, February 1999
38 See Runnymede Trust (2019), *We are ghosts: race class and institutional-prejudice* www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/we-are-ghosts-race-class-and-institutional-prejudice

Internal factors and considerations

(a) Connectedness and engagement

A key feature of community organisations are their ability to connect with and engage with the communities of interests they are intending to support and service. Yet, there is evidence that many are perhaps not as connected and engaged as we would expect, and this diminishes their reach and likelihood of funding and longer term sustainability.

Local authorities, for example, are often the 'central relationship' for Black and racially minoritised led community organisations. Relationships with councils can impact on a huge range of issues, from service delivery to grant income to community assets. Organisations can face difficulties in participating in planning processes, creating or exacerbating a lack of trust between residents, planning authorities, developers and other stakeholders. This is further compounded by the lack of technical knowledge required to fully understand the intricacies of the planning system, which then adds further to the disadvantage. While engagement with the process could add to the knowledge base of participants – especially where their knowledge is limited or non-existent – this is often not viable for many organisations due to lack of capacity or strategic leadership to take advantage of the opportunities.

(b) Governance and leadership (accountability and management)

The governance and leadership of an organisation is crucial and yet is an area of underdevelopment amongst the Black and racially marginalised voluntary and community sector organisations. Poor governance and leadership is more likely than not lead to an inability to secure the necessary income to sustain both the organisation as well as any physical asset they may have secured. And of course, this assumes individuals have the time available to them to invest in becoming trustees or board directors given the commitment that is so often required. Since the publication of *A Place to Call Home* in 2015, there has been a shift away from grant funding towards service contracts, which has seen small and medium sized charities decline while the income of large charities has increased.[39] Indeed many have 'merged' or have established 'consortia' to achieve economies of scale. These approaches are not so evident amongst Black and racially marginalised community organisations.

Reports by Ubele (2020), Murray (2020) and Sepulveda and Rabbeyag (2021) showed that most organisations led by Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are small or micro in scale and largely volunteer led.[40] Capacity within these organisations is therefore likely to be highly stretched. This often translates into to short-term "firefighting", without spare strategic capacity to devote to developing their business models, especially in influencing key stakeholders and building long-term organisational resilience.[41]

Adding further to this observation is that smaller community organisations lack the experience and expertise to take on assets, despite having this as a vision for many, which raises the question: *Is a physical community asset acquisition the only way to deliver services?* This lack of property expertise contributes to making ownership prohibitive for many groups which are then more likely to be in insecure rental spaces and are therefore less likely to benefit from the advantages of community ownership, compounding pre-existing power imbalances (see above with regards to tenancy).

39 NCVO (2016) Navigating Change: An analysis of financial trends for small and medium-sized charities www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/we-influence/navigating-change
40 Olulode, K. 2020. 'UK BAME Charities: The Covid-19 Challenges', Kol Social. thekolsocial.com/uk-bamecharities-the-covid19-challenges
41 Locality (2022), *Navigating the Storm* locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/LOC-Connect-Fund-Report-2022-MAR-WG05-2.pdf

Section 3: Key findings – a view from the ground

Section 3: Key findings – a view from the ground

In this section we highlight the voices and experiences from interviews, consultation events and survey questionnaire responses. Through these processes we were able to explore the extent to which the three broad factors of challenges indicated in the previous section bore out in reality. That is, to explore and better understand the benefits and value of owning cultural community assets and what it takes to secure, manage and ensure sustainability (i.e. Phases 3 and 4 of the PAR approach).

External Factors

Regeneration development and opportunities: The threat of redevelopment was an ever present concern for the organisations we interviewed and/or responded to the survey, the majority of whom were leasing and/or renting from their local authorities.

Over the period of the research we heard of four high-profile African Caribbean community centres that were under threat of closing, one of which was saved through the CAT process and is now under the 'management' of a new organisation with a five-year lease and 'peppercorn' rent to the council (they will also receive a 'pump-priming' grant of £69,000 for one year)[42]. The other three are still involved in discussions and are based in Coventry, Manchester and London, all in areas facing regenerations.

Not all council regeneration schemes result in the loss of community spaces. This was the case in London with one project that managed to negotiate a deal with the council to rebuild their centre as part of the regeneration plan which will result in an even larger footprint than they previously held. The CEO reported that:

> *"Haringey Council are investing approximately £140 million in the redevelopment of the Selby Centre as it is no longer fit for purpose. The redevelopment plans, which have been coproduced by the Trust and the Council, include knocking down the old school buildings and building 220 housing units to meet the increased housing needs in the area, as well as building a seven-storey community centre with a new sports hall, community hall and outdoor sporting facilities. The new community facilities will be run by the Trust. However, the outdoor facilities will be managed in collaboration between the Trust and the Council. Once redevelopment plans are completed the Trust is aiming to secure a lease of at least 75 years as they are conscious that a*

42 Community group to run Leicester's African Caribbean Centre

> *shorter lease will impact how much funding they can apply for in the future."*

Another respondent reported:

> *"...what has been key to helping AECHO secure their community spaces is building trusting relationships with stakeholders, such as landlords, local agencies and decision-makers in the Council, enabling the organisation to have influence in decisions and policies that affect them. AECHO has often invited decision-makers to their training programmes to improve local services to make them more culturally sensitive. This also provides AECHO with the opportunity to prove their social value."*

Another area of concern expressed by responders in possession of council-owned community assets, especially those on leases due to expire or had ex pired, is regular asset reviews or protracted discussions. These often involve identifying valuable assets for sale or shifting voluntary and community sector (VCS) occupiers onto more commercial terms. The latter situation was faced by the Camberwell After School Project (CASP) and the Lloyd Leon Community Centre (LLCC). The two organisations, in adjoining south London boroughs, had been locked in discussions for many years (more than a decade in the case of CASP). Both operate against a backdrop of repair and maintenance needs, short-term lease arrangements, falling revenue and high programme delivery costs.

Case #1: Lloyd Leon Community Centre (LLCC) experience

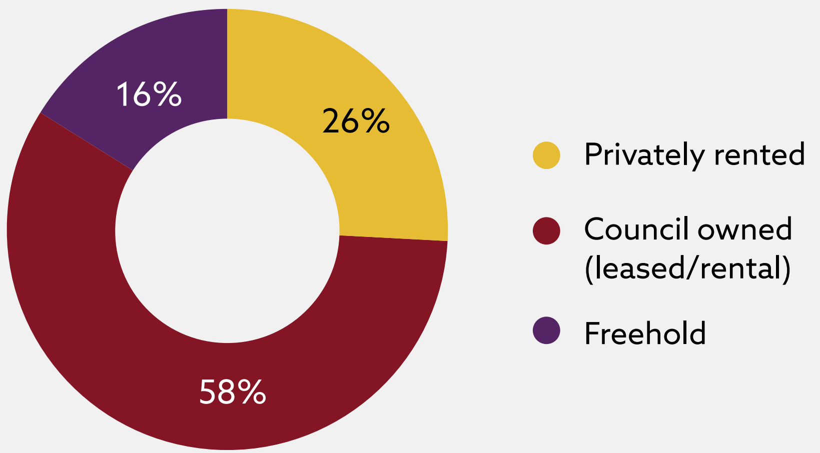
"... With a thriving new community of members, the Domino Club played weekly, allowing both members and one-time players to have fun in a relaxed environment. They also continued to compete in tournaments, nationally and internationally, effectively allowing them to continue promoting the club and recruiting members. The club began to develop a positive reputation for being a huge staple of the community, being well received by local residents and even securing council funding for further development and community events. During this time, South London was high on the central government's agenda and 'efforts to improve Brixton' in particular were echoed by the then-Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine.

The once vibrant community hub, became a hot spot for anti-social behaviour and crime, unfortunately leading to the fatal shooting of a young man outside the club.... The club became a hot topic on the local Council's agenda, but for all the wrong reasons. As a result, the local council hosted a meeting at the Town Hall with management and local stakeholders to discuss its future."

Physical asset ownership (tenure and sustainability)

Security of tenure was a key and recurring theme identified across responders - interviews, focus groups and survey. Short-term rental agreements were seen to be hindering the organisations' ability to build long-term capacity, develop their business models or use their building as an asset to generate income. When we combined the 1-2-1 interview responses and the survey responses (n=83), we found that close on three-in-five (58%) responders were either leasing or renting on an annual basis from the council and that one-in-four (26%) were renting from private or other charitable organisations, such as churches. As Fig 5 shows, only 16% owned their asset outright (freehold).

Fig 5: Which of the below building ownership arrangement best reflects your current situation.



Base n= 83

Asset tenure is attractive for various reasons, such as reducing upfront costs, avoiding depreciation, access to specialised equipment or services and capital development funding opportunities (as well as revenue opportunities). Some of the common types of asset tenure and their advantages and disadvantages are:

Freehold - legal ownership of a property or land. This means that the owner has the right to own and use the property for an unlimited time, without paying any rent or fees to a landlord. Freehold is different from leasehold, which is a contract that grants the right to use the property for a limited period of time. Freehold is generally preferred over leasehold, as it gives more freedom and security to the owner.

Leasing - a contract between a lessor (the owner of the asset) and a lessee (the user of the asset) that grants the lessee the right to use the asset for a specified period of time in exchange for periodic payments. One of the benefits is flexibility to change or upgrade assets as needed. However, it could mean a higher total cost than purchasing over the long term, limited control over the asset, and possible penalties for early termination or damage.

Renting - similar to leasing, but typically involving shorter-term and more flexible agreements. Renting is often used for assets that are needed temporarily or occasionally, though with both council-owned and commercial assets they have tended to be on a renewable yearly basis. Some of the benefits of renting include convenience and accessibility, no commitment or responsibility for the asset. Some drawbacks can be seen as higher per-unit cost than leasing or purchasing, no equity or ownership rights, possible additional fees or charges, and uncertainty or inconsistency of rental increases dictated by market forces.

Sharing - a collaborative model that allows multiple users to access and use a particular asset, either simultaneously or sequentially. Some of the benefits of sharing include reduced environmental impact and resource consumption, increased social interaction and trust, enhanced access and affordability, improved utilisation and efficiency. Drawbacks include reduced privacy and security, increased coordination costs and time, potential conflicts or disputes among users and dependence on the reliability and availability of others.

Not all these options are suitable for every organisation as one organisation found to their cost, as this responder explains:

"We had to relocate several times. The first as a result of decommissioning, when we lost funding and had to downsize, which meant making staff redundant with the implication that the charity that owned the building withdrew their support, as we could no longer pay the rent. The next venue we had to leave, again renting, was as a result of mistreatment from the landlord and the condition of the building. Adding to this we were constantly at loggerheads with the landlord over what we saw as our values and what they saw as their right as landlord. For example, the landlord did not communicate with the organisation in a timely fashion, giving us time to find somewhere, and just kicked us out; we were given one week's notice. This was not enough time to secure another location which resulted in the organisation squatting in a local hotel until we managed to rent a floor in another building in the area.

The instability of renting is problematic. It is hard to offer continuity in support when continuity in space is not promised. Promises of belonging and inclusivity become empty when there is no physical space for people to take up."

Case # 2: Golden Opportunity Skills and Development (GOS&D)

"Golden Opportunity Skills and Development (GOS&D) is based in Southall, Ealing and was founded in 2003 by three friends from challenging backgrounds with the aim of providing an outlet for other young people to express themselves. Most importantly, to provide a platform where they could engage in positive activities and so provide support to marginalised and disadvantaged groups in the community.

GOS&D has over the last years delivered innovative projects such as its first anti-knife and anti-gang projects, which in 2005 was tackling issues that are now becoming mainstream concerns of key stakeholders such the government and local authorities. This is one example of how GOS&D translates stakeholder needs through person and asset-based approaches to develop relevant and impactful projects. Past and present projects have ranged from FGM work with men from practicing communities, digital and financial inclusion programmes to advocating for BAME children with special education needs.

GOS&D's Resource Centre is a portacabin-style building which is currently rented from the council, and in a good proximity to most deprived parts of Ealing. The building is shared with three other small BAME-led organisations.

So far, GOSAD has been able to extend its lease for another 5 years, but that is not sufficient to be able to bid for any capital funds to support any refurbishment needs."

Case # 3: The Osmani Trust

"[We are a] a youth and community organisation based in Tower Hamlets, formed in 2009 by two organisations with similar values and a common goal of serving young people and residents at risk. Prior to being established in 2009, the Trust has roots linking back to the 1970s in East London, where Asian families moving into the area experienced severe racism which they had to navigate. This led the Bangladeshi community to create safe spaces in the form of youth clubs for local teenagers and young adults at risk in the community.

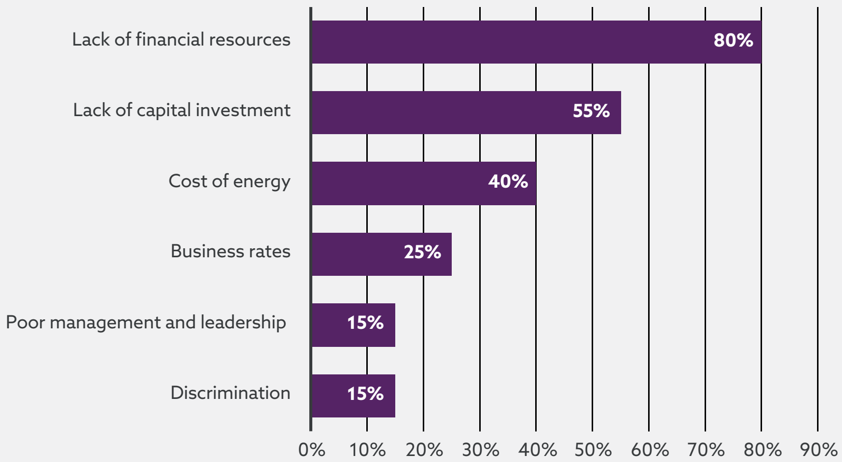
The Osmani Trust, in collaboration with the local council, obtained a long lease to their 3-storey building in the heart of their community. The Trust received financial relief from the council in their first 4 years which meant that they did not have to pay rent. Since then, the annual rent for the building including overheads is £150k. The Trust has sole lease ownership of the building and is responsible for the management and maintenance of the building. The council invested in the Osmani trust building because there was a need for a physical hub within the community to address the social issues affecting young people at risk. Collaborating with The Osmani Trust meant that the Trust could have a building where they housed their staff to deliver core services to meet the specific needs of local people. The space is also used by other community groups and people who rent out the facilities for their use. This allows the Trust to generate some well needed revenue through renting out spaces for private hire. However, the relationship between internal and external service users has to be carefully managed to avoid conflict over the use of space."

Financial resources (funding landscape)

Funding and sustainability considerations were areas of greatest challenge for the vast majority of responders to our survey (80%) as shown in Fig 6. All the organisations interviewed expressed concerns over the funding landscape: what it looks like and the opportunities to secure long term multi-year funding. For the vast majority of organisations there is an unhealthy financial and unsustainable over-reliance on grant aid; in particular, local authority grant. For example, one organisation based in London talked about their need to secure some form of grant aid from the local authority in order to attract other grants from Trusts and Foundations. For them, as they saw it:

> *"...our plans going forward are dependent on reaching an agreement with the council, which will enable us to obtain future funding. We are aware of the eligibility criteria needed for funding and by the end of 2023, if we do not secure the funding, we will have spent our reserves and be at significant risk of folding. We are aware of funding opportunities, however the discussion with the Council about the lease agreement is one of their main blockers to progressing forward with our capital development plans specifically."*

Fig 6: What barriers (if any) has your organisation faced (or is still facing) in accessing support to developing and maintaining your community space?



And another, this time from the north of England, indicated that while they have secured some in-kind funding, they have yet to attract significant funding in their own right. They are therefore lurching from one support opportunity to another in the hope that they will secure something by *"putting ourselves' out there, so we can be seen for the work we are doing."*

And yet another, this time based in the South East of England, talked about having come through the pandemic with increased income as a result of the 'emergency funding programmes', but that they only represent short term emergency funding to deliver services. Despite this, they lack the capacity to really make inroads into securing significant funding:

> *"... despite all that we have done over the pandemic period, no one seems to want to put their money where their mouth is. We hear a lot about wanting to support Black-led community organisations and when we approach them, they say they can see what we are trying to do; they 'get it'. But then when it comes to doing something about it, they do not respond."*

Still another voice from the South East of England explains that while they have received some in-kind support as part of a Levelling Up application to use a creative space, they have not in their own right received any funding to support their project and that no financial support has accompanied the Levelling Up funding received by the lead organisation. Most poignant about this particular case was that the Levelling Up grant 'built' on the back of the Black Lives Matter campaign and the 'need locally to be seen to be responding…'. Herein lies one of the concerns of organisations: that they risk being used by 'white-led organisations' attempting to address issues and concerns around race and institutional racism in particular (this is further discussed below).

We sought to better understand the depth and degree of challenges within the voluntary and charitable sector around funding, especially given a key finding captured in the research report published by Ubele in April 2020[43]. In that report, we found that at the outset of the national lockdown in 2020, *"9 out of 10 BAME micro and small organisations are set to close if the crisis continues beyond 3 months following the lockdown."*[44] The findings from the report, which had surveyed over 400 BAME-led VCOs across the UK to assess the impact of COVID-19 on their work and sustainability, highlighted the

43 See Murray, K (2020), Impact of COVID-19 on the BAME Community and Voluntary Sector static1.squarespace.com/static/58f9e592440243412051314a/t/5eaab6e972a49d5a320cf3af/1588246258540/REPORT+Impact+of+COVID19+on+the+BAME+Community+and+voluntary+sector%2C+30+April+2020.pdf

44 The Ubele Initiative - 9 out of 10 BAME micro and small organisations set to close if the crisis continues beyond 3 months following the lockdown.

resilience and innovation of these organisations, alongside the urgent need for more recognition, resources and representation from the government and other funders. Some of the key findings from that report are as much pertinent three years on as they were in 2020 (and indeed 2015):

87% of BAME-led VCOs reported an increase in demand for their services since the start of the pandemic, mainly due to the disproportionate health, social and economic effects of COVID-19 on BAME communities.

72% of BAME-led VCOs reported a decrease in their income since the start of the pandemic, mainly due to the loss of trading income, grants, donations and contracts.

50% of BAME-led VCOs reported having less than six months of reserves left, putting them at risk of closure or insolvency.

42% of BAME-led VCOs reported having to reduce their staff numbers since the start of the pandemic, mainly due to financial pressures and furlough schemes.

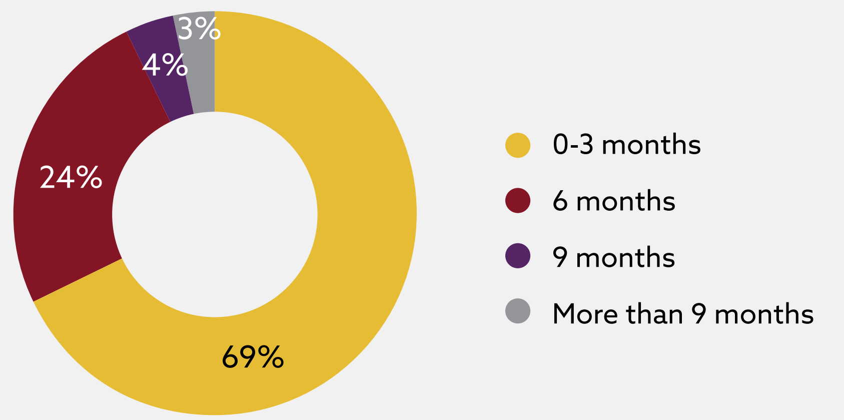
38% of BAME-led VCOs reported having difficulties accessing government support schemes, mainly due to eligibility criteria, application processes and lack of awareness.

35% of BAME-led VCOs reported experiencing racial discrimination or bias from funders or commissioners since the start of the pandemic, mainly due to stereotyping, tokenism and exclusion.

In the survey for this research we asked responders a range of questions to determine their state of financial sustainability as well as to 'check' if their circumstances had changed three years on from the findings of the then seminal report. The responses further illustrate the precarious positions many are in and adds further to the voices captured in the report cited above (Murray, 2020).

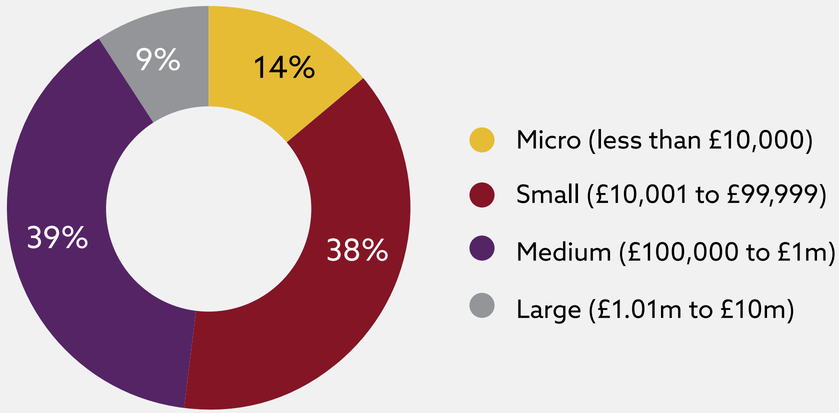
Coming into the 2022/23 financial year, of the 29 respondents to this question (Fig 7), 93% held less than 6 months reserves, with the vast majority (69%), holding zero to 3 months reserves, of which 42% had no reserves at all. As Fig 8 shows, 52% of responding organisations were either micro or small organisations. This therefore suggests that it's not only micro and small organisations likely to be operating without reserves (or low level at least) but some larger organisations. From a sustainability perspective, this cannot be tenable and further attests to the difficulties the vast majority of organisations will more likely face when trying to convince an investor, grant foundation or donor that their 'investment' (fund) is secure. This will no doubt work against them being able to secure the sort of tenure they would like – certainly not likely to be anywhere near securing any freehold opportunities.

Fig 7: Coming into this financial year (2022/2023), does your organisation hold any reserves?



Base n=29

Fig 8: Please tell us the size of your organisation by average total annual income (i.e. averaged over the last 3yrs)



Base n=44

Given this scenario, it is perhaps not too surprising to hear these organisations expressing concerns and despondency about their situation. For example, comments about the *"...lack of sustainable core funding,"* (or similar) was a common refrain:

> *"Constantly fundraising to cover core costs, such as rent. Project-related grants are often short-term."*
>
> *"Successful in raising funding for a redevelopment but finding difficulty in managing the complex funder expectations/ requirements."*
>
> *"Need funding to keep on top of their high mortgage payments and to carry out refurbishment/expansion of their building. We are struggling to enlist new trustees to run and manage the centre, in particular young people."*
>
> *"We are forecasting that we will use up our minimum financial reserves by the end of 2023; we therefore desperately need funding. A lack of funding and commitment from the council also compromises our security to operate."*
>
> *"We need funding to maintain our current services and to open additional hubs in the borough."*

The size of the funding secured provided another angle as to the size of the organisations identified in Fig 8 above. Respondents were asked to indicate their average level of funding secured over a 5-year period (Fig 9). This revealed that:

- 50% of grant secured were within the £10,000 to £100,000 range and compares positively with the 48% of those organisations defined as micro to small in Fig 8 above.
- 41% of those securing £100,000 to £500,000 is proportional to those organisations defined as medium (39%)
- 4% of those securing £500,000+ were deemed large organisations.

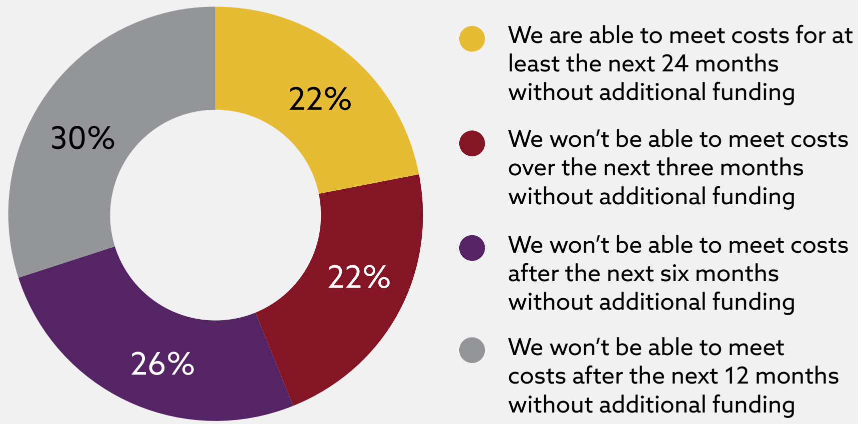
This would suggest that an organisation's size makes a difference to how organisations saw their ability and chances of funding, which could explain to some degree the generally low level of funding sought by many Black and racially minoritised-led organisations. There would seem, therefore, the need to raise the aspiration as well as ensuring other aspects required to attract funding levels that match aspiration rather than maintenance of the status quo. A framework that could identify organisation's size and aspiration (or gaps thereof) may offer a starting point.

Fig 9: Averaged over the last 5yrs, which of the below funding ranges best describe income received by your organisation?

When asked what their current ability was to meet operational costs over the upcoming 24 months without any additional funding/ resource, 22% of responders said they would not be able to meet costs over a three month period while 26% indicated not being able to do the same over 6 months (Fig 10). Taken as a whole, this equates to just under half (48%) not being able to meet operational costs for up to 6 months, while only 30% indicated that they would be able to over the full 12 months period, with only 22% indicating having the financial capacity to cover 24 months. Some of the comments shared included:

> *"We have grown from a micro organisation to a medium size one, and despite that, we have very low reserves."*
>
> *"We are able to meet costs until the end of the financial year (March 2023) without additional funding."*
>
> *"We are able to meet costs, however the need to build and maintain reserves covering 6 months remains a challenge."*

Fig 10: What is your current financial ability to meet your operational costs, without any additional funding/resource over the next 24 months



Base n=23

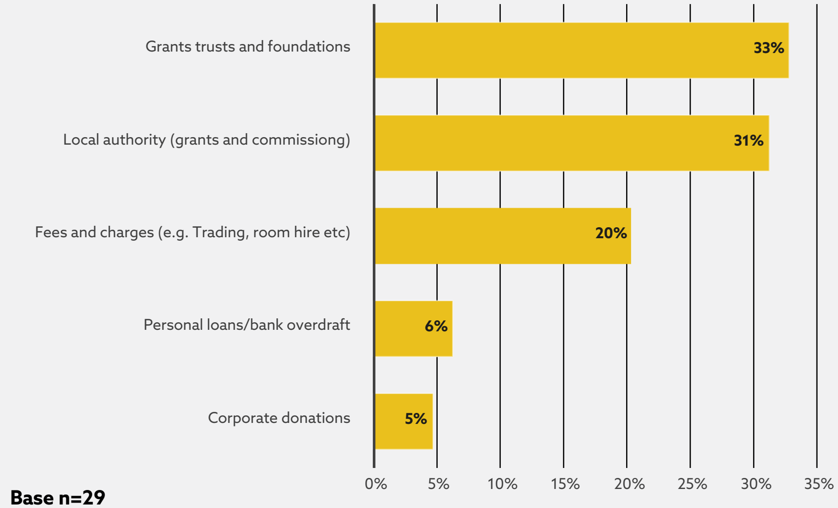
The greatest proportion of organisations' income, as Fig 11 below shows, is through grants from Trusts and Foundations (33%) and Local Authorities (31%) – together making up 64%. As can be further seen, corporate donations are very low (5%), as is income generated through fees and charges for services or products (20%) – this is perhaps not too surprising given that only 16% owned their premises and were likely to be able to have a more diversified income stream. Organisations believe that without the physical asset to help generate income through hire charges and so on, they are unable to reduce their reliance on grant aid. The implication is that not being in a strong financial position means they present a weak case for loans (which was seen as a source for 6% of responders: Fig 11) and in applying for significant multi-year funding to meet core costs. This partly goes some way to explain the 'micro to small' funding levels that the majority of Black and racially minoritised-led organisations find themselves.

Linked to this finding is the question of where specifically funding is coming from. Fig 12 shows some broad sources of funding while Figs 13 and 14 offer some insights into which organisations were providing funding during and after the COVID 19 emergency. What this shows is that:

- By far the two most accessed emergency funding programmes were Comic Relief (7) and the Phoenix Fund (5) – Fig 13. Perhaps the model of distribution, using intermediary 'BAME-led infrastructure' and large organisations played a role, or perhaps the new 'focus' on BAME-led was the difference. This seems to have ushered in a change in approach by some funders; it remains to be seen if this will continue well beyond the immediate recovery phase we now find ourselves in.
- An analysis of 23 organisations where data existed of income in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic position) revealed that the smallest funding secured was £54, the median being £107,400 and the largest being £1.1m. However, when we contrasted the same organisations' position in 2021/22 (recovering phase), we found that all the organisations had benefited by 71% overall from the targeted approach (the largest increase was 2,361% and the smallest was 5%). There were some reductions, particularly among organisations working with children and young people, which suggests that those organisations were not able to pivot sufficiently during this period to be able to access emergency funding. These findings further add to the wider discussion around investment readiness, especially with respect to periods of disruptions that may adversely affect stability and sustainability. This further attest to questions of the realism of 'small' organisations' capacity to effectively manage and/or secure physical assets where maintenance costs will be high.
- External to our survey, the National Emergency Trusts' (NET) emergency funding targeted to BAME led organisations offers some further insight as to the level of funding sought and secured. Table 1 below shows that 60 BAME led organisations were funded through Community Foundations across the UK during the pandemic emergency funding period under this specific support programme. The average sum awarded was £15,245, with a median of £18,806; the maximum permitted award was £20,000. This data reinforces the emerging finding of the unrealistically low level of funding (often short-term and/or project-based) being sought by Black and racially minoritised-led organisations who are striving to secure expensive physical assets. This was an emergency funding programme, so the small sums available is understandable. However, the data does provoke a thought as to whether there are 'funders' in the system that would offer large 'development' funds to enable sufficiently well-established organisations resources to prepare for building acquisition. However, the question still remains, how 'prepared and ready' are such organisations given that they are likely to be micro and small sized organisations? These are questions we will come back to in the next section.
- As we moved into the recovering phase, the majority of funding was through local authorities grant programmes alongside the National Lottery Community Fund (Fig 14). This further reinforces earlier points raised about the reliance on local authorities and the National Lottery.

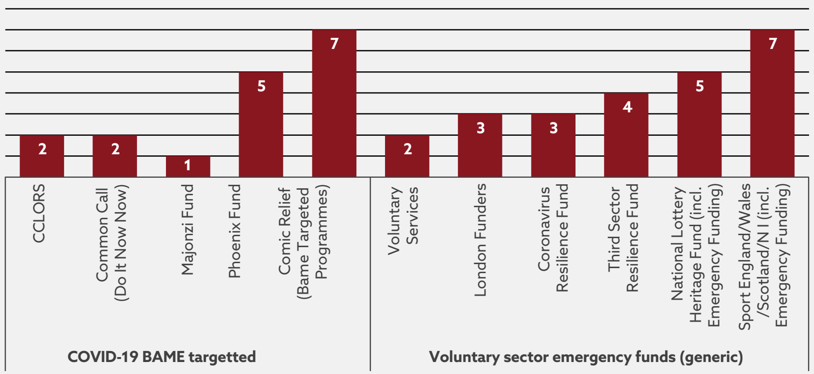
Given that the majority of organisations we engaged with want to secure a physical asset, all the funding programmes indicated are revenue directed with perhaps the exception of the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), which only one organisation secured any funding through (Fig 14): "*We have secured a development grant from the AHF to kick start a significant refurbishment of a Grade II listed building... Our intention is to develop this into a modern community facility.*"

Fig 12: Please indicate the primary sources of income that your organisation relies on to remain in business



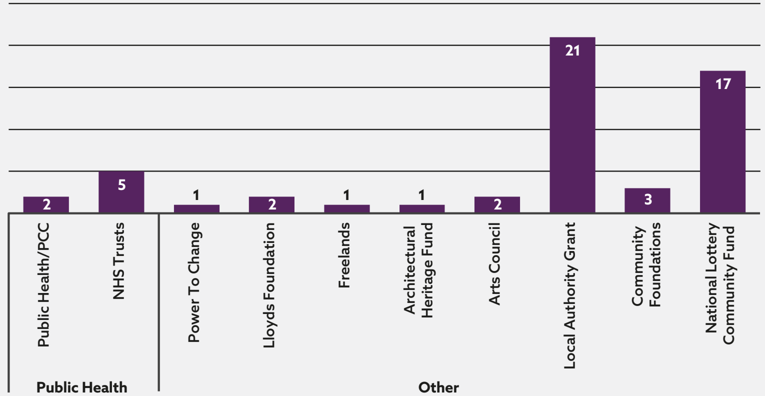
Base n=29

Fig 13: Please indicate the COVID-19 Emergency Funding programmes that you secured funding from (actual)



Programmes Base n=41

Fig 14: Please indicate the funders that you had successfully secured funding from since the ending of the COVID-19 Emergency Funding programmes



NHS Base n=54

Table 1: National Emergency Trust BAME targeted COVID-19 Emergency Fund (via Community Foundations): 2020-2021 [45]

	Requested	Awarded
Average	15851	15245
Median	19060	18806
Smallest	5000	1250
Largest	20000	20000

Base n=60

With respect to income streams of organisations, our findings showed that access to funding and the size of the funding secured is inadequate for facilitating the acquisition of a physical asset. We explored thoughts around alternatives to grant aid, as many

45 Our commitment to sharing data (ukcommunityfoundations.org)

organisations were almost wholly dependent on grants from their local authority, trusts and foundations. Specifically, we explored through a series of online conversations the question of whether Black and racially minoritised-led organisations were setting their sights low when applying for funding. What emerged was revealing:

The idea of social investment using flexible finance was new to half those participants who took part in the online conversations (n=12). As one participant said: *"...interesting match funding a loan, what a pleasant idea."* The social investment 'part-loan-part-grant' programmes appeared not to be avenues many had considered.[46]

Community shares consideration was not something participants had heard about let alone considered: *"...Very interested in the development programme and growing one's business; I will be exploring this with my board."* And another participant offered: *"... I appreciate the large volume of work required and really like the equity basis which I think will give Black communities and those on a low income a chance for genuine influence."*

The topic of loans as a form of income was raised but quickly dismissed as participants, on the whole, felt it was too risky for their organisation. They would prefer, instead, to consider loan applications as part of a consortium and with better governance structures in place. One participant said *".... organisations would benefit from more support in becoming 'investment ready' through advice, tailored support and access to 'development grants'."*

Participants felt that rigid amounts of funding that do not change with inflation are incredibly restrictive and could put immense stress on their organisation: *"...to make up the extra money needed to maintain service provision. As a whole, we would apply for at least 10% above what we believed we would need to account for inflation. Funders were basing their figures on this year to fund work in the years to come, which poses a challenge and a risk to us as an organisation."*

What was revealed through the focus group sessions was the lack of information about what options exist other than traditional grant aid, often through Local Authorities and the National Lottery Community Fund (see Fig 14). Though flexible finance loans and community share options may not be for everyone, what the conversations revealed was the need to have more of these types of conversations about non-traditional opportunities to securing assets. More importantly, the conversations revealed an opportunity to explore further the notion of 'investment readiness' of Black and racially minoritised-led organisations: *how investment ready are they?*

Structural and institutional discriminatory practices

One of the underlining barriers identified in the unpublished work conducted by Locality and Ubele (2022) as part of the GLA's Barriers project, was that of racial discrimination. Through the processes employed we sought to ascertain the degree to which this played an obvious and direct role in organisations being able to secure a physical community asset. We particularly wanted to explore the extent to which organisations felt (or experienced directly) instances that could explain institutional and/or systemic discrimination. This was happening even after the George Floyd murder, and the ensuing Black Lives Matter global outcry – and despite the much vaunted outrage and indignation voiced by many leading lights from government to multinational bodies. Some of the evidence from the

46 Flexible Finance is a partnership between the *Social Investment Business (SIB), Access – the Foundation for Social Investment*, and The Ubele Initiative. It supports organisations that are improving people's lives or the environment they live in, and it is making loans more accessible for charities and social enterprises led by people from Black and Minoritised Ethnic communities. Over the past year since the programme began, 26 applications were received with 10 (38%) being approved: the lowest value of funding approved was £50,000 while the highest secured was £250,000, with the median value being £110,000. For further details see: The Ubele Initiative - Applications are Open for Flexible Finance

1-2-1 interviews suggest that there are clear and present barriers to Black and racially minoritised-led organisations being able to secure community assets. This was something we wanted to explore further across the wider community responses (i.e. online survey).

Two definitions were provided to aid responders to better understand the question. They were:

> *Institutional racism: "The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people"*[47].
>
> *Structural racism: "...a collective practice that exists in workplaces and in wider society, in the form of attitudes, behaviours, actions and processes. It is the exertion of power and privilege based on race and class."*[48]

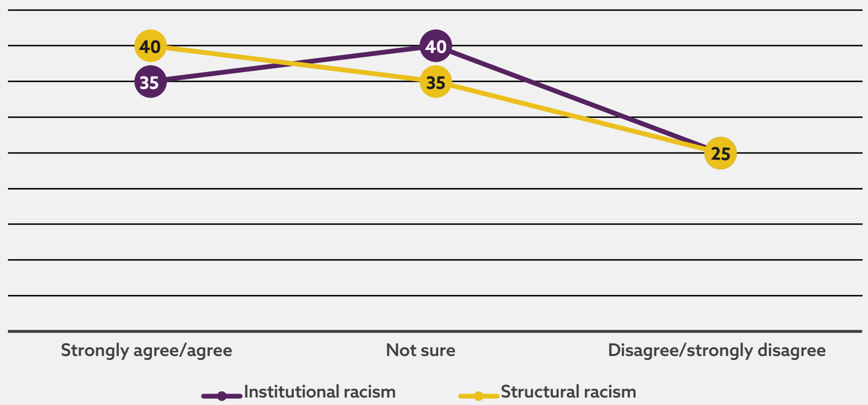
Responders were asked:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the definition of institutional racism was evident in your experience in developing or securing your community space over the last five years? And

To what extent do you agree or disagree that structural racism, as defined, explains the challenges you have experienced over the last five years in developing and/or securing your community space?

From the responses, as Fig 15 shows, one-in-three (35%) responders indicated that institutional racism, as defined, was a barrier to them acquiring a physical asset while two-in-five (40%) felt that structural racism was more a barrier needing to be overcome. This suggests that responders were seeing structural racism (or inequalities) as the stronger factor of the two forms of systemic racial discriminatory barriers that they were facing. This would suggest that institutional factors – perhaps policies, attitudes and behaviour – are more receptive to change over time than deep rooted structural and systemic practices borne out of perception and the widespread practices upon which institutions have been built.

Fig 15: Institutional and structural racism explored



Respondents offered some thoughts and evidence as to the presence of racial discrimination preventing them from being able to acquire community assets. They include:

47 Home Office, *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny,* Cm 4262–I, February 1999. The report found the investigation into Stephen Lawrence killing had been "marred by a combination of professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership". A total of 70 recommendations designed to show "zero tolerance" for racism in society were made. They included measures not just to transform the attitude of the police towards race relations and improve accountability but also to get the civil service, NHS, judiciary and other public bodies to respond and change.

48 Hussain R, *Shining a spotlight on structural racism in Britain today*, March 2018 (Shining a spotlight on structural racism in Britain today | TUC

> *"We operate from a community building owned by [name of council withheld], despite the volume of our activity and repeated requests for extra space, we have been continuously declined. We have sourced space from [name of council withheld] to operate from an unused office, but this is a tenancy at will. We can be given a week's notice. This has meant that we have already moved twice within the space of 2 years. Our accommodation issues reflect the housing needs of our communities."*
>
> *"Despite been in [name of council withheld] for over 20 years and been the longest service BAME led organisation in the borough, we have never succeeded in receiving grant for the local authority."*
>
> *"It took Black Lives Matter and Covid 19 for system partners in [name of council withheld] to acknowledge that [name of council withheld] is 17% black and minoritised ethnic populations requiring resources to support their communities. [name of organisation withheld], despite being active since 2013, was only acknowledged as an infrastructure organisation post 2019. [name of council withheld] previous funding allocations are a testament to its racial bias."*
>
> *"The local authority was very slow to act on problems with the building that we have been repeatedly reporting. It is only when a black councillor intervened and compared the speed of action compared to speed of response with a white led organisations was the work completed."*

Internal Factors

Connectedness and engagement

Community engagement is a term that covers various participatory processes where the public (or beneficiaries) are involved as stakeholders in the outcomes, such as health, education, environment, etc. The intention is to incorporate the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of those who are likely to benefit, which could include reference to policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment – and much more besides.

It was stated earlier that a strong feature of community organisations is their ability to connect and engage with the communities of interests they are intending to support and service. While there is some evidence of this being the case, for a vast number of organisations, there appears to be a disconnect between the espousal of the intent to connect with and engage the 'communities of interests' they are supporting, and what actually occurs in reality. We found in a good many of the interviews, focus groups and conversations, that there is a disconnect between being connected and offering a reflection because you 'happen' to share the same socio-cultural environment and conditions of some of those being supported. With only a few exceptions, very few websites contained any specific evidence of when and how they engaged with the communities of interest they were working with.

Responders have told us that they do not have the capacity to undertake 'consultation' due to a lack of funding. Yet this lack of engagement is perhaps what has meant they are unlikely to be funded. For example, when Ubele conducted a series of consultation events with users (and potential users) of the Lloyd Leon Community Centre (LLCC), based in South London, we found responders being very upbeat about the role and significance of the building (and the fact they were being asked their views). Some of the comments provided useful insights that we were able to share with the local authority, which owned the building and had been debating a lease extension for many years before our involvement in 2019. Responders offered the following observations:

> *"It's a community centre that people regularly come to and have a place to be together and we have elderly and young people coming."*
>
> *"The soup kitchen is here and providing the homeless with food; It's helping people in the domino club learn more compassion for the homeless!"*
>
> *"It is the diversity of the place, as it's different to what the wider community does in Brixton. They have a good vision. I like what the soup kitchen does and the new edge it needs. I like the social aspect and the small entities that use the place. We think that everyone is welcome. It's in Brixton which is a diverse community."*

Prior to Ubele's intervention, there was very little (if any) evidence of the community's voices coming through the work of LLCC – after nearly three decades operating.

Impact and effectiveness

One-to-one interviewees were unable to share any direct evidence to demonstrate community engagement nor impact as a result of their work, which was even more disturbing when many had been operating for more than 10 years. For example, of the organisations interviewed (n=28):

- 79% were not able to share any evidence of consultation conducted or of the voices of beneficiaries;
- One-in-five (21%) were able to point to online annual reports and/ or current evaluation reports (i.e. under 3 years).
- All talked about 'reflecting' or 'representing' the needs of their community;
- Very few ever took part in local consultation events due to capacity.

Building a strong positive relationship with the council/landlord to emphasise an organisation's wider social value contribution to an area can help negotiate secured leases on favourable terms from the outset. Owning an asset can offer access and flexibility for people within a community, but as a statement of ownership it speaks of a place for the (often) displaced. And it is precisely this connectedness, which symbolises and provides one insight into an organisation's impact. As one respondent observed, *"the sharing of information remains a challenge, in terms of language, format, site(s) of sharing and messaging."* While this is true, 68% (n=19) of those organisations we interviewed had a website and only 37% (n=7) contained evidence of impact reporting, which would suggest this may be an area of capacity under-development (or prioritisation) within organisations.

Building on the notion of connectedness being seen as important leverage to understanding of organisation effectiveness, one London based responder remarked *"...we have a good relationship with [name of council withheld] and they have treated us fairly... they understand and know about our work."* Such a relationship was also seen as enabling the organisations to negotiate flexibilities in difficult times. Mutual trust is an important foundation for strategic relationships, and the increased precarity of culture and community organisations led by underrepresented groups makes this harder to establish. The below case examples illustrate the importance and significance of community (beneficiary) engagement as well as highlighting some of the challenges and barriers.

Case # 4: The case of the African Caribbean Centre, Leicester (East Midlands)[49]

A recent consultation on the centre, in Maidstone Road, Highfields, found that people would like to see it run by a community organisation. It is currently owned and managed by the city council.

The consultation ran from 12th October until 21st November 2021, with people able to share their views either online or through paper questionnaires, which were available at all Leicester City Council libraries and community centres.

A total of 352 responses were received. The majority of respondents, 84%, were African Caribbean Centre users. The consultation confirmed that the centre is highly valued by users, with some commenting that they have used it since childhood. Visitors to the centre live across the city and many said they use the centre for cultural reasons.

The majority of respondents who expressed a preference (53%) said they would prefer community organisations to be given the opportunity to take on the lease and running of the centre. As a result, the city council will now explore options to take this forward.

Assistant city mayor for neighbourhoods, Cllr Kirk Master, said: *"We know that our community asset transfer (CAT) programme has been very successful in other areas of the city. It's where we offer community groups the chance to lease some of our neighbourhood buildings, if they are considered suitable for this and if there is likely to be some interest from local groups.*

> *"The aim of our consultation was to find out if this was something users of the African Caribbean Centre would like to see. We'll now look to explore options with local groups who could potentially run the centre."*
>
> *Cllr Sue Hunter, said: "It's clear that this centre has a special role, attracting people from across the city and people who use the centre throughout their lives. Currently 45 partners and organisations are registered to deliver activities at the centre, with more than 125,000 visitors each year.*
>
> *"Now we can move to getting the community even more involved and invested in the running of this centre so th at it continues its important and valued role in the diverse life of our city."*

49 This example was taken from: [African Caribbean Centre could be run by community (leicester.gov.uk)]

In the case of the Leicester African Caribbean Centre, the centre was saved from closure with a new organisation given responsibility to manage the building with a 5-year lease and a 'pump priming' grant in the first year. This case study demonstrates the power of connecting with the stakeholders and beneficiaries to effect change and influence.

Case # 5: Impact Hub Bradford

Impact Hub Bradford is a social enterprise established in 2017 but joined the 'Impact Hub Network' in 2020. It is a co-working and event space in Little Germany, Bradford and focuses on tackling inequalities, and providing social innovation and enterprise through a range of programmes, events and support. They are currently undertaking a major refurbishment of a Grade II listed building in a heritage conservation area – Little Germany and, when completed, will offer 1,100 sq feet of new co-working, incubator and studio space for underserved and minoritised communities living and working in the area.

With support from the Architectural Heritage Fund's (AHF) viability grant and partners such as Leeds Beckett architecture undergraduates and Bauman Lyons Architects, they conducted a series of consultation events and workshops to develop the design (n=124).

The lessons and insights gained as a result of their consultation process offers something that other organisations could benefit from:

> *"We've undertaken consultation over many months with responders feeling disappointed that not much has happened since their engagement. It can be demotivating and the willingness to engage can be affected; especially if we go back out. Some people have had bad experiences in being involved with planning and consultation processes where they have not received any response. With little feedback there comes the likelihood of people not wanting to get involved. For want of a better phrase, they experience 'consultation fatigue'.*

For us, consultation was not a one off iterative process, especially around the internal reconfiguration of the building. We want to build on this and the previous ones so as to align those with any recent consultation with stakeholders. We need to keep the consultative feedback process updated and we need a mixed approach. We need to make sure that as the environment changes – and they do so quickly – we are able to respond."

Governance and leadership

In today's complex and dynamic world, organisations face many challenges and opportunities, and how they respond to these depends largely on their structure, leadership and governance. These three elements are interrelated and influence each other in various ways. Within our community conversations, 1-2-1 structured interviews and focus groups, we explored this theme, why they are relevant and how they can affect the performance and sustainability of organisations.

Organisational structure refers to the way an organisation arranges its people, tasks, resources and processes to achieve its goals. It includes aspects such as division of labour, coordination, communication, authority, control and flexibility. Organisational structure can have a significant impact on the efficiency, effectiveness, innovation and adaptability of an organisation. For example, a hierarchical structure may facilitate clear roles and responsibilities, but also create silos and bureaucracy. A flat structure may foster collaboration and empowerment but could also lead to ambiguity and confusion.

Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve a common vision and goals. It involves setting direction, motivating, inspiring, coaching and developing people. Leadership can have a profound effect on the culture, values, behaviour and performance of an organisation. For example, transformational leaders may create a shared vision and foster a culture of learning and change. A transactional leader may focus on tasks and rewards and maintain a culture of stability and compliance.

Governance is the system of rules, policies, procedures and practices that guide and regulate the decision-making and actions of an organisation. It includes aspects such as accountability, transparency, participation, ethics and compliance. Governance can have a crucial role in ensuring the legitimacy, integrity, quality and sustainability of an organisation. For example, a good governance system may enhance stakeholder trust and satisfaction, ensure compliance with laws and standards, prevent corruption and fraud, and enable continuous improvement.

As we can see, organisational structure, leadership and governance are relevant for any organisation that wants to survive and thrive. They are not static or fixed, but rather dynamic and evolutionary. They need to be aligned with the vision, mission, strategy and goals of the organisation, as well as with the external context and stakeholder expectations. They also need to be reviewed and adjusted periodically to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. Based on our process, several issues and concerns were raised by participants around governance and leadership of their organisation – something that the 2015 report had indicated was a deepening concern, with respect to 'passing-on-the-baton'. This led us to ask the following question of participants: *Do organisations have the right organisational structure and leadership to secure a physical asset?*

In responding to this question and line of discussion, we found that organisations that were in a good position to warrant capital and/or development investment consideration had a strong and effective board of trustees/directors, while those that were struggling, were experiencing difficulties in the recruitment of board members as well as commitment in the form of attendance and contributions when (and if) they met. For example, the common feature among organisations with effective governance was that many had a secured asset coupled with mixed income streams, including corporate donations, and were employing a Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent), met regularly with good attendance, engagement, demonstrable results of impact and effectiveness and took a long term view. Said one participant:

> *"In terms of governance and leadership of the organisation we have four board members who are proactive and very supportive of the strategy going forward and of our programmes more*

> *generally. The chair is a developer based in Leeds and is very much interested in community assets and especially around buildings and their development."*

Another offered the following observation:

> *"Our chair is very good. He is passionate and very active, taking a strong leadership role within the organisation. He is able to provide capacity support and has been instrumental in brokering opportunities and relationships with actual and potential funders. He is a chartered accountant and not sure if that helped us when we were negotiating access to the building we now have and when we secured our development fund.*
>
> *We have been able to establish working groups and task-and-finish groups as the need arises. These sub-groups allow us to really grapple with the issues at hand to enlist experts where none exist on the board. The board is very vibrant and has a business approach to conducting affairs; they are not in any sense of the word stuck-in-old-traditional ways."*

On the other hand, participants in organisations that reflected having poor or ineffective governance structure able to command resources to be able to secure physical assets, indicated having a 'lack of confidence' in their board which was affecting the aspirational journey of the organisation. One responder commented:

> *"...more support from the board. I look at our board and wonder if they have capacity to handle large amounts of money or the challenges we are trying to address. The team is trying to improve the board structure with skills' assessments and recruitment drive, in an effort to make sure at least some of our board members have experience in finance and money management. We have spoken about exploring having a patron and forming informal collectives."*

Another participant, reflecting on a poorly managed organisation that is holding a lease with the local council, extolled concerns about what they called the *'friend of a friend'* approach to the appointment of trustees/directors. He said:

> *"...they have no business sense and are friends who were known for many years and asked to stand for board position. Some of them do not have any commitments; and are therefore ineffective. There is no point having people on your board just because they are a friend, and they don't say anything!"*

And further, this participant reflected on a previous regime where the organisation had not held their AGM for close on 20 years:

> *"Constitutional challenges still remain with a need to increase the involvement of trustees. Some trustees stepped down after seeing the enormity of the work ahead and what they need to do: the progress that needs to be made. We now have four trustees with the original trustee still involved and two other involved trustees."*

Case # 6: Moss Side and Hulme Community Development Trust,

As a result of an interview with a project based in the Northwest, we were prompted to look at a report from the Charity Commission based on an investigation that was reported on in 2022. This arose from conversations around challenges that some organisations were facing in tackling poor stewardship of the community asset. The organisation in question was the Moss Side and Hulme Community Development Trust, Manchester. Following the investigation from an 'intervention' by the Charity Commission, the two named trustees no longer play a role in the organisation's new governance structure. This case study illustrates the vitally important role that trustees/directors play in ensuring the objectives of the organisation are well managed. Specifically, the concerns raised were poor governance and leadership. The report was published on 3 August 2022 with the following recommendations[50]:

> *"The charity's governing document states there must be a minimum of four and a maximum of 17 trustees. According to the charity's accounts, the charity had not had the required number of trustees since 2009... This order required them [trustees at the time] to:*

- *pursue recruitment of new trustees*
- *advertise and hold an annual general meeting ('AGM')*
- *review the charity's decision-making procedures*
- *review the charity's processes to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities concerning the timely submission of the charity's accounts*
- *produce new policies and procedures that ensure conflicts of interest are avoided and managed*
- *review the charity's activities*
- *ensure that there was no further unauthorised trustee remuneration."*

50 [Charity Inquiry: Moss Side and Hulme Community Development Trust - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)]

A critical point that the Charity Commission made in relation to Case #6 is worth repeating in full as it might help other organisations struggling with an ineffective governing body:

> *"Charity trustees must comply with orders and directions of the Commission. In some circumstances it may be a criminal offence (or contempt of court) for a charity or a trustee to not comply with an order or direction of the Commission.*
>
> *Charity trustees must comply with all their legal obligations. An important part of their duties is following their charity's governing document and the wider law. Not complying with the legal requirements may be regarded as misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity and prompt regulatory action by the Commission.*
>
> *Charity trustees are the people who share ultimate responsibility for governing a charity and directing how it is managed and run. They are the representatives of the charity in the charity sector. The conduct of trustees can be a key driver of public trust and confidence in the charity sector. When the conduct of trustees*

> *falls below the standards expected there can be damage to the reputation of individual trustees, the charity and possibly the wider charity sector."*

Sharing (or consortium working), alongside merging with one or more similar organisations operating in an area, offer creative opportunities. Yet many trustees and directors had dismissed it as an 'unworkable solution'. This area of exploration could be said to be one of those 'conversations' you stay away from. Among the arguments against a merger was the loss of 'independence' and organisational history. One refrain was, *"the struggle that got us this far will be lost and all that we fought for will be taken over by [people] who were not part of the fight to get us what we want and have. Despite struggling to get the council to give us a longer lease than 5 yearly renewals, we would rather keep fighting on."*

Most participants would not entertain the thought of merging with another organisation, let alone discuss it with their trustees or directors: *"why should we, we fought to get this building."* However, participants were more open to consortia possibilities. One commentator stressed: *"How can we come together as consortiums and buy these buildings?"* The suggestion was that similar organisations, rather than duplicating resources in an area, could come together based on borough boundaries: *"...this would give funders confidence that we have a strong structure and can sustain the ownership of a community asset."*

Still further, respondents such as the below speaker, talked about what would need to happen in order for consortiums and sharing to be effective:

> *"I think in terms of collaboration, bringing several groups together to create a legal body to go for an asset transfer, needs really great and consistent leadership at a local level. It also depends on the view of the organisations - we can't forget the desire for autonomy."*

Another respondent offered what for them was a solution going forward targeted at Ubele and how they, and similar infrastructure organisations, could perhaps support them in such an endeavour:

> *"...our organisation needs independence, sustainability, control of how we use the building and the ability to shape how we adapt to the needs of our service users. For a consortium to be effective, we would need to have in place clear democratic processes to make decisions and to be fast paced because of ever changing demands of the service users. Perhaps this could be something that Ubele takes on board to kickstart conversations?"*

In 2015 this was not an area of exploration which then evoked much consideration, certainly not amongst those then interviewed. Given the age profile then (senior leaders and activists over the age of 60), it was perhaps a view from a particular generation. Respondents to the current research were much younger and reflective of the 1990s rather than the 1970s (or earlier). This generational difference provides a strong perspective on how times have changed and reflects positively on how the generations that followed those early pioneers (i.e. the activists of the 1970s and '80s) have embraced new possibilities which were not so visible in the 2015 report. This may well open up the transformational 'revolution' within the sector that the 2015 report was only able to surface and hint at.

Section 4: Discussion and opportunities

Section 4: Discussion and opportunities

The principal question that this body of work sought to answer was: **What are the benefits and value of cultural and community asset ownership and what are the implications of Black and racialised-led organisations owning their own assets?**

In this section we seek to pull together some of the learning coming out of the process by way of synthesis against the five secondary questions identified to 'road test' some of the emerging core themes. Those questions and themes form the key headings of this section. They are:

1. Why is it important to acquire a physical 'community asset'?
2. What other options other than to own a physical asset exist but have not yet been explored or tried?
3. Is the organisational structure and leadership the right one for driving the vision and do they have the right skill set to deliver the objectives? What is the financial sustainable position of the organisation?
4. How connected and engaged are organisations to the communities they are striving to serve?
5. To what extent is structural and/or institutional racism a factor in securing and retaining community assets?

Why is it important to acquire a physical 'community asset'?

What is community wealth building?

An implied underpinning objective of the 2015 Research was the notion of 'community wealth' building, something that has gained popularity as a fundamental objective in directing the work of organisations, especially infrastructure organisations such as Ubele. In the 2015 Report this was referenced in the following way:

> *"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, 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."*[51]

The idea and principles of community wealth building, as it is now being articulated, is an innovative approach to local economic development that aims to create more inclusive, democratic, sustainable and a transformative economic environment of community ownership. However, as indicated in 2015, we conceived it in a more embracing, transformative and community self-reliant manner. The underpinning leitmotiv is that communities can harness their own assets and resources to generate wealth and prosperity for everyone, not just a few[52].

Community wealth building challenges the conventional model of economic development which has tended to rely on attracting external investment, promoting growth and creating low-wage jobs. Instead, it focuses on building local economic power and resilience by:

- Supporting diverse forms of ownership and enterprise, such as cooperatives, social enterprises and community-owned businesses.
- Leveraging the spending power of anchor institutions, such as local authorities, universities, hospitals and housing associations, to procure goods and services from local suppliers and create local jobs.
- Promoting fair employment and just labour markets, such as paying living wages, ensuring decent working conditions and providing opportunities for training and progression.
- Developing community banking and financial institutions, such as credit unions, community development finance institutions and public banks, to provide affordable and accessible finance for local businesses and individuals.
- Utilising land and property assets for social good, such as creating affordable housing, community facilities and green spaces.

Over the last 12 months, in particular, there has seen many discussions around what we call 'community empowerment

51 A Place to Call Home (2015), pp.53

52 Community wealth building is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but a flexible and adaptable framework that can be tailored to the specific needs and opportunities of each place. It draws inspiration from successful examples around the world, such as the Cleveland Model in the US, the Mondragon cooperatives in Spain, and the Preston Model in the UK. The Ubele Initiative, with funding from Oak Foundation, is currently exploring and developing a range of metrices and information around what 'community wealth building' could look like over the decades to come. Three key strands in this work is the Gida Housing project (The Ubele Initiative - Gida Housing Co-operative), the enterprise support and development programme (The Ubele Initiative - The Black and Minoritised Communities Enterprise Development Programme) and flexible finance support programme (The Ubele Initiative - Flexible Finance)

discourse' accompanied by different delivery models being shared. These have included, for example:

1. Community wealth building consultation in Scotland: policy and strategic drivers[53]
2. Dormant asset consultation and response from the government[54]
3. Community Funding programmes such as the Recovery Loan Fund and in particular, the Flexible Finance programme through SIB[55]
4. Community shares through Power to Change (P2C)/Cooperative initiative[56]

Community wealth building is therefore not only a long term economic strategy, but also a political and cultural one. It aims to shift power from corporations to local communities in ways which foster a sense of collective identity and purpose among people who share a common place and destiny. This is therefore not a quick fix or a silver bullet, but a long-term and transformative process that requires vision, commitment and collaboration: public sector organisations, private sector businesses, civil society groups and residents. More than anything, as this research suggests, it involves challenging existing structures, systems and mindsets that perpetuate inequality, poverty and environmental degradation – as well as being locked into a mindset of not being able to see a way through.

One of those 'structural' mindset challenges is internal and potentially 'game changing'. The previous section mentioned consortia and/or merger arrangements, something nearly all organisations we spoke to were against, though at the same time acknowledging that there is something in such a consideration.

The critical concern was around governance and leadership capacity and skills. Were we to get this right, such a movement will change the social and community wealth landscape for generations to come. In the same way, prior to the pandemic, Black and racially minoritised-led organisations struggled to be considered worthy of being 'intermediary grant makers' and now, due to a crisis situation, we have found not only are they being considered as partners to distribute grants, but they are themselves grant givers in their own right (e.g. BAOBAB). The changes may appear small, but they are changes, nevertheless. If corporations routinely merge to create economies of scale, why couldn't Black and racially minoritised-led organisations?

Responders were very clear about the purpose and benefits of owning a cultural and community asset, and how this would be able to contribute to the longer-term community wealth building aspiration. `the acquisition of such assets is far more than a 'luxury' or short-term benefit. For the vast majority of responders, the benefits of owning physical community assets fall under the following key headings:

- *Sustainability* – to enable and facilitate increased trading opportunities for the organisation as well as local communities and enterprises;
- *Independence* – to enable organisations to offer wide range of activities and to set out a local empowering vision of the presence within the local area without being circumscribed by landlords and others;
- *Security and resilience* – to ensure organisations reduce their focus on short-term fundraising through being able to generate income other than grant aid (i.e breaking dependency and overreliance)
- *Community confidence, pride and dignity* - to inspire a community sense of confidence in having their own space: 'A place to call

53 Building community wealth: consultation - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
54 Consultation on the English portion of dormant assets funding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
55 Our partnerships | Social Investment Business (sibgroup.org.uk)
56 Power to Change - Strengthening communities through community business

home' and something that is theirs;
- *Community development and community legacy* - controlling community assets is about legacy, collaboration and cultural networks: *"... I want to create something my children can utilise. A future for our people"*.

A community asset is therefore more than a physical site/building. Communities can be formed with many cultures, so understanding place-based, group-based and system-based barriers is an important starting point in how we conceive 'community wealth' and therefore how we 'build' the wealth over time of the 'communities' of interests: people, cultures, homes and space/environment. Social and cultural values require consistent resourcing, nurturing, support and development to sustain and regenerate (or re-invigorate). Owning an asset offers access and flexibility for people within a community, but a statement of ownership also speaks of a place for the (often) displaced. It is a space or home that can represent communities, identities, cultures and the potential for individuals to connect and grow with other people towards community with cultural agency.

Participants who were renting talked about owning the lease of the property they were renting with the ultimate goal of owning the freehold. Their reasoning for this was:

- They would have the ability to rent the property to other communities on their terms;
- They would have control over the different ways they could generate money through the use of the property: "if we had the ability to rent out rooms, this would be another financial benefit that stays circulated within our community."

They would leave behind a 'legacy' that recognises their work, especially where it spanned decades: *"...over the 9 years of engaging with young people, we have significantly grown the number of people we are work with. Today, we are servicing over 170 young people and as such, we are facing the challenge of outgrowing the current physical space we rent; this limits our growth and development as an organisation. Moreover, the rent we are paying is crazy, and there ought to be a way to keep money in house."*

What other unexplored options exist other than to own a physical asset?

Throughout the range of conversations, responders were challenged to think out of the box, to embrace the 'unthinkable', especially about whether ownership of a physical asset was essential or if there was an alternative to achieving the aspirations they believed ownership would confer. The first observation is that asset 'acquisition' (or tenure) should not just be a preoccupation about freehold ownership but can (and should include) arrangements that allow individuals or entities to use, control, or benefit from an asset without owning it. Asset tenure can be attractive for various reasons, such as reducing upfront costs, avoiding depreciation, or accessing specialised equipment or services.

Second, and flowing from the first, is that there are different forms of asset acquisition (or ownership). The most familiar is leasing: a contract between a lessor (the owner of the asset) and a lessee (the user of the asset) that grants the lessee the right to use the asset for a specified period of time in exchange for periodic payments. Some of the benefits of leasing include:
- Lower initial investment and maintenance costs than purchasing
- Flexibility to change or upgrade assets as needed
- Potential protection from obsolescence or market fluctuations.

Some of the drawbacks of leasing include:
- Higher total cost than purchasing over the long term
- Limited control or customisation ofr the asset
- Possible penalties for early termination or damage
- Dependence on the lessor's availability and service quality.

Another common form of asset ownership is renting. Renting is similar to leasing, but typically involves shorter-term and more flexible agreements. Renting is often used for assets that are needed temporarily or occasionally. Some of the benefits of renting include:

- Convenience and accessibility
- No commitment or responsibility for the asset
- Ability to test or try before buying.

Some of the drawbacks of renting include:

- Higher per-unit cost than leasing or purchasing
- No equity or ownership rights
- Uncertainty or inconsistency of availability and quality.

A third – and uncommon - form of asset ownership is sharing. Sharing is a collaborative model that allows multiple users to access and use a common pool of assets, either simultaneously or sequentially. Sharing can be facilitated by platforms, networks, or communities that connect asset owners and users. Some of the benefits of sharing include:

- Reduced environmental impact and resource consumption
- Increased social interaction and trust
- Enhanced access and affordability
- Improved utilisation and efficiency.

Some of the drawbacks of sharing include:

- Reduced privacy and security
- Increased coordination and communication costs
- Potential conflicts or disputes among users
- Dependence on the reliability and availability of others.

These are some of the main options and choices beyond outright freehold ownership, some of which would offer some organisations the opportunity to grow their organisation and delivery as well as contributing to the wider community wealth agenda. Asset ownership – in its various forms as indicated above - offers different benefits and challenges for different users and situations, so it is important that organisations weigh them up carefully before making their decision – asset ownership is not for everyone.

As some participants reflected, it was clear not everyone wanted to acquire a community asset in terms of freehold ownership, though that wouldn't be ruled out were the conditions and circumstances favourable. As one respondent told us: *"...we may have offered a different answer to the question prior to the pandemic, as during the pandemic we saw that we were still able to deliver services online without the use of a physical space. What this showed us was that what we really need is access to technological 'property' such as a website or similar online platforms."*

Another participant pointed out: *"we need to be hybrid (online and physical) because some people are scared to come out of their house. We should have a permanent safe space for people to feel comfortable to come to and that may be online or combination. We may therefore not need a permanent physical fixed site to operate from."*

Is the organisational structure and leadership the right one for driving the vision and do they have the right skill set to deliver the objectives? What is the financial sustainable position of the organisation?

The majority of participants made references to the effectiveness of their boards and their limitations in providing direction and support. Some indicated a 'lack of confidence' as the reason they do not aim higher with funding applications, which they believed with greater support they would be willing to try for: *"I look at the board and wonder if they have capacity to handle large amounts of money"*. The majority of participants were 'founders' of their organisations who felt that more is needed to improve the quality and commitment of board members through skills assessments and recruitment, to make sure at least some have experience in finance and money management. One participant was exploring other governance structures like patrons and forming informal collectives with like-minded organisations delivering similar if not the same purpose.

Case #6 of the Moss Side and Hulme Development Trust spoke directly to concerns around and the importance of the roles and responsibilities of trustees and directors. The Charity Commission's findings on the two trustees is not uncommon, as we saw in the case of Kids Company and other organisations investigated by the Charity Commission over many years[57]. While these are high profile cases, and not reserved to the charity and voluntary sector, they point to the importance of good and effective governing structures. This is especially critical with respect to finance.

As stated earlier, some organisations rely on '*friends of a friend*' for board composition, who in some cases are only doing them a 'favour' and do not genuinely get involved, which then puts pressure on those remaining and active board members. This leaves the organisation vulnerable. Linked to this is the capacity and inability to be able to deliver a service alongside developing the strategic direction (or sustainability) of the organisation. During the 1-2-1 interview phase of the research of the 28 respondents interviewed, only 25% indicated having in place a board of trustees or board of directors that were fully in place, having 3 or more board members that met regularly, the majority of which were Community Interest Companies and Companies Limited by Guarantee (without share capital).

A particular challenge highlighted in our findings is the difficulty organisations were finding in accessing funding. Participants explained that it was impractical to try to write successful bids without time, people or resources, while at the same time trying to deliver services. This is compounded where the frontline operational worker is also 'the board' (i.e. non-functioning board) and directors of the organisation (i.e. single director despite what it says on the registration of incorporation). Participants, under these circumstances, felt they were 'wearing a lot of hats' and that it was a real challenge to do so many things at once. One participant described it as a 'catch 22' situation, where they need more time and money to submit applications but cannot get this time and money without securing the funds. Under these circumstances, participants explored outsourcing their bid writing, but this can be costly. Another reported putting more time into assessing the likelihood of getting grants before applying. Still yet another respondent indicated that funders' criteria make it hard for them to apply for certain opportunities, which often meant setting their sights low.

This notion of 'criteria' and risk assessment associated with determining where to apply and for what purpose led to exploring the notion of a 'preparatory and readiness typology'. This would help organisations assess themselves against key indicators to gauge where they might apply and what they would need to do to develop their capacity.

The preparatory and readiness typology: an emerging support model and approach

The governance and leadership of an organisation is more than its financial viability – crucial as that is. Investors, which include private and corporate investors, stakeholders and grant funders (i.e. local authority and national government), would like to know the wider and longer term outcomes and sustainability of the organisation to assess the risks and benefits of investing. In the case of social and community enterprises, this will be the social benefit (or social value) of the investment. Grant aid is an investment in the achievement of social outcomes as defined by the organisation's priorities and criteria (and their foundation's charitable object).

The preparatory and readiness typology emerged as a developmental approach that organisations could start to use to support their

57 See Charity Inquiry: Keeping Kids Company - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

decision making as well as something trustees and boards of directors could use to support their strategic governance and leadership journey. Arising from a series of 'road testing' sessions, culminating in a joint funder and fundees process with 30 participants, an overarching judgement typology has been developed. This framework considers six areas (or themes) of organisational effectiveness, which is consistent with the key findings from the research. It is against these *'six'* areas (or themes) that judgements could be made. They are:

- Governance and leadership
- Operation and infrastructure
- Financial resources
- Physical asset ownership
- Impact and effectiveness
- Connectedness and engagement.

In testing the practicality of the framework, an analysis of 22 of the 28 organisations interviewed, based on the Financial resources theme, where financial information was available for 2018/19 (pre-pandemic full year situation), revealed that 41% had income of less than £100,000, which would be deemed small according to the NCVO definition[58]. Table 2 provides an overview of the 22 organisations assessed against one of the criteria of *Financial resources* domain. Based on this alone, these organisations would find it difficult to secure freehold community assets, although one of the other alternatives may be more realistic (i.e. renting or leasing). They were mapped against four levels (or stages) of organisational development as shown below:

- Level 4: Highly developed organisation
- Level 3: Developed organisation
- Level 2: Developing organisation
- Level 1: Development phase.

58 [NCVO | NCVO]

Table 2: Investment development levels by likelihood of investment with respect to financial resources

Organisational development levels					
Level 4: Highly developed (>£5001k)			**4**		Lower risk
Level 3: Developed (£1001k to £500k)			**9**	●	
Level 2: Developing £25001-£100k)		**3**		●	
Level 1: Development Phase (£25k)	**6**			●	Higher risk

Less likely — Possible — More likely

Investment likelihood

This is an example of applying just one criterion of one domain within the wider six criteria of the typology. To obtain a more realistic appraisal the organisation would need to assess itself across all of the six assessment typology indicators (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for the full range of the typology and the definitions of the organisational development phases). When we mapped the 28 one-to-one interviewed organisations against the six domains, we found:

- Governance and leadership: 7% (n=2) had a strategic plan or business plan in place.
- Operation and infrastructure: 68% (n=19) had a web presence in the form of up-to-date website (i.e. not Facebook page or similar).
- Financial resources: 60% (n=17) were micro or small, with 32%

(n=9) being micro; 29% (n=8) medium while remaining 11% (n=3) large sized organisation.
- Physical asset ownership: 79% (n=22) were in rented or leased premises (private and council) while 21% (n=6) owned the freehold.
- Impact and effectiveness: 25% (n=7) provided impact reporting/ annual report/blogs (or similar)
- Connectedness and engagement: 14% (n=4) provided evidence of engagement process and reporting (i.e. uploaded onto website).

This mapping sought to show how the typology could be used across a swathe of organisations from an infrastructure support perspective. It also illustrates the likelihood of an organisation being in a position to secure long term funding due to the capacity of the organisation at a given point in time (i.e. their development stage). Armed with this knowledge, an organisation can more effectively target their funding applications, better manage their expectations and possibly increase the likelihood of being funded. In the Table 2 example, nine organisations were assessed at Levels 1 to 2, indicating that their investment chances were low, therefore indicating high risk. This does not indicate that they may not secure funding, just that their aspiration may be circumscribed and possibly only able to attract small grant funding (more likely project funding). Organisations in this category are likely to be attracting funding of between £10,000 to £50,000 per annum (or over two years).

The framework is not perfect, nor does it profess to respond to all the many different scenarios at play in any decision-making process, but it begins to offer opportunities arising from self-assessment approach whereby organisations can start to have internal (and some external) discussions. Some of the benefits further include organisations being able to:

- Assess themselves to determine where they are in relation to where they would like to be;
- Better understand their development needs, especially with regards to capacity and the development support that will enable them to grow;
- Realistically appraise their situation, which should allow organisations to determine which funders they should be approaching and whether they can meet their criteria.
- Third tier infrastructure organisations could use the domain to support self-assessments conducted by organisations to argue for certain types of resources, programme development and delivery.
- Grant funders could frame their capacity support priorities around the domains in ways that would enable organisations to be self-reflective and adopt a developmental and learning approach.

In our exploration of the capacity support perspective inherent in the design of the typology with focus groups, responders were able to offer indications of the sort of support programmes that they felt could be provided aligned to the organisation development phases (i.e. their assessed Levels) and the domains (i.e. against each of the six areas/domains). Organisations indicated that the following support opportunities could make a difference set against each domain (levels at which organisations are assessed would determine the degree and scope of the support input):

Governance and leadership:
- Finding the right people: advisory board relationships (e.g. corporate involvement)
- Roles and responsibilities of board members
- Understanding governance

Operation and infrastructure
- Day to day operational management

Financial resources
- Long term investment funding options
- Fundraising and income generating opportunities

Physical asset ownership
- Working with experts
- Peer-to-peer/coaching organisational support (mentorships)

Impact and effectiveness
- CRM and similar systems and processes etc
- Understanding key impact and assessment processes etc

Connectedness and engagement
- Theory U/social labs

How to engage and facilitate consultative and involvement processes

How connected and engaged are organisations to the communities they are striving to serve?

There are different types of community engagement depending on the level of involvement and influence required. According to Maptionnaire[59], for example, the three types of community engagements are:

- *Informative participation:* This is the most basic type of community engagement, where the public is informed about an organisation's plans and projects but has no direct input or feedback. The purpose of this type is to increase awareness and

59 See Citizen Engagement Platform Overview — Maptionnaire

understanding of the issues and the decisions made (tools for informative participation are newsletters, websites, social media, brochures, etc).
- *Preparatory participation:* This is a more interactive type of community engagement, where the public is consulted and invited to share their opinions, preferences, ideas and suggestions on an organisation's plans and projects. The purpose is to gather information and insights from the public that can inform and improve decision-making process (e.g. the LLCC and Impact Hub Bradford consultative processes which included surveys, polls, focus groups, interviews, workshops, etc).
- *Decision-making participation:* This is the most advanced type of community engagement, where the public is empowered to co-create and co-design an organisation's plans and projects. The purpose is to foster collaboration and partnership between the organisation and the public, and to share responsibility and accountability for the outcomes (e.g., participatory budgeting).

The benefits of community engagement are manifold. For the organisation, community engagement can lead to better decisions that reflect the needs and values of the public, increased trust and legitimacy, reduced conflicts and risks, enhanced reputation and social responsibility. For the public, community engagement can lead to increased satisfaction and empowerment, improved quality of life and well-being, stronger social capital and civic engagement.

Impact and effectiveness

One of the key findings was that not many of the organisations we interviewed, were able to sign post or share insights gained through engagement processes with beneficiaries and stakeholders. They were 'hinted at' but very little evidence were either shared directly or could be seen uploaded on their website. These were opportunities to 'shine' to help potential funders understand the organisation's work and achievements. In broad terms, many organisations are selling themselves short and this failure can work against them when it comes to securing funding, especially for large sums being sought to secure community assets (or other projects). We found that:

- One-in-four (25%) were able to point to online annual reports and/or current evaluation reports (i.e., under 3years).
- All talked about 'reflecting' or 'representing' the needs of their community.
- Very few ever took part in local or national consultations.

Being able to demonstrate impact and the achievement of social benefits will be a factor grant giving bodies are keen to understand and recognise. This includes the extent to which the organisation is meeting the needs of the community (ies) it is serving, illustrated by whether it can 'hear their voices', to the extent to which those voices are informing and influencing the shape and programme being offered. Being able to demonstrate impact and engagement is critical where social impact (or values) are principal outcome aspirations. As one respondent remarked, *"the constant pressure to monitor and evaluate funding streams, whilst also applying for funding extensions and looking out for new funding opportunities, is extremely time consuming and difficult."* This, they add, meant they did not have the capacity to devote to having in place an effective monitoring and evaluation process other than just being able to produce monitoring data, which *"was also a challenge, as we do not always have the records in one place."*

Within the typology noted above, being able to assess the extent to which organisations were making a difference can be determined as an engagement imperative which reflects well on outcomes and impact reporting. Throughout the process the measuring and/or assessment of social impact was raised as both a challenge and a feature of organisation's effectiveness. However, we found that there is no commonly held understanding of what that looks like. A review of practices showed that there is no industry standard for social impact measurement in use by social enterprises, social-purpose businesses, charities or with funders and investors. Instead, a broad range of alternatives exist from defining and reporting on specific social outcomes to sophisticated research and measurement systems.

With so many small organisations wanting to secure community assets, this is a major issue, especially where investors use outcome measures that are defined by a social purpose linked to their specific social mission, which may not be clearly articulated and in most cases consists of output descriptions. Investors are generally not willing to fund sophisticated research and outcome measurements, which favours the larger organisations with resources and capacity. This leaves smaller organisations struggling to show their impact. Therefore, models attempting to assess and determine the readiness of an organisation for investment, must include indicators of impact and effectiveness appropriate and proportionate to the size of the organisation; or in our terms, their '*Level of organisational development*'. Within the typology we have identified '*impact and effectiveness*' as a domain in its own right rather than to subsume under '*connectedness and engagement*'. This will allow organisations to focus and home in on the outcome and impact of their engagement in service delivery rather than just on engagement. As indicated earlier, the impact and effectiveness of the work of an organisation is an area of under-development within organisations, and as such, infrastructure support organisations as well as individual organisations, should be prioritising this aspect of how they do business.

To what extent is structural and/or institutional racism a factor in securing and retaining community assets?

Figs 6 and Fig 15 showed that 'discrimination' was seen to be a barrier experienced by some organisations in securing a physical asset (15% in the case of Fig 6, while 35% indicated that institutional racism was a barrier to them acquiring a physical asset and 40% that structural racism was more a barrier). This suggests that racism was not seen as a major significant barrier as other concerns, such as governance and strategic oversight of the organisation, its work and size - much of which is reflective of a good, effective, resilient and sustainable organisation. Notwithstanding this observation of the data, the fact that one-in-three (35%) believed this to be the case, rather than ignore it, we suggest that work is undertaken to better identify those practices that can be identified as evidentially discriminatory. By clearly identifying those instances, we should be in a better position to campaign for the removal of such practices. Additionally, if racism is not as strong a factor as perhaps first thought, we may need to look elsewhere to ascertain why acquiring (and holding onto) physical community assets has been so difficult for Black and racially minoritised led organisations.

Among the examples respondents offered, the below from the African Educational Cultural Health Organisation's (AECHO) experience goes some way to illustrate some of the challenges being faced:

> *"Specifically, there are multiple challenges currently threatening their community spaces. The first being the high level of competition for spaces in the area, which has become increasingly acute due to the decrease in the number of facilities available to rent from the Council. This causes internal divisions between Black and racially minoritised organisations and communities as they are competing for spaces. In addition, AECHO as a smaller, Black and racially minoritised organisation, is also competing against larger, White-led organisations in the area who tend to get more funding and thus can afford higher rent prices. Although, AECHO have been granted additional funding from the Council for the next year, after this they will need to find alternative sources of funding to pay for their rent. Therefore, the lack of sustainable core funding for Black and racially minoritised organisations is a key challenge for AECHO."*

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of Emergency Funds were established which included for the first time intermediary funding arrangements led by and for Black and racially minoritised organisations (2020-21). They have built on some of the early findings of the 2015 Report coupled with new evidence during the pandemic to bring about some well needed changes. More and more funders, for example, recognised the presence of structural discrimination in their practices and prioritised 'racial equity and justice' work. City Bridge Trust, for example, has acknowledged *"a power imbalance inherent in our own structure and practices and we are working hard to redress it"*.[60] A collaboration of six London place-based giving schemes led by Haringey Giving was successful in winning a grant from the *Cornerstone Fund*, which acknowledged and explicitly sought to address structural discrimination in accessing funding and support for diverse communities in London.[61] In the arts, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation has launched *"Arts Access and Participation"*, to shift power and create *"an ecology of arts provision that works better – individually and collectively – for all kinds of people and communities"*.[62]

In some ways the pandemic was a 'perfect storm', that sped up the refocusing of funding bodies to respond to the long standing call of Black and racially minoritised-led organisations to be better served[63]. The Ubele Initiative (Ubele) has been championing capacity building support for Black and racially minoritised-led community organisations through organisational leadership development programmes such as those delivered through the Erasmus[64] initiative from 2015 to 2023; it has partnered with other organisations to establish the Phoenix Fund and CCLORS during the pandemic and is now spearheading the innovative Phoenix Way participatory budgeting programme through the National Lottery among others.[65] Ubele was not alone in campaigning for new and different funding models to supporting marginalised communities. Organisations such as, for example, Black South West Network, Voice for Change England, Runnymede Trust, Action for Race Equality, Black Equity Organisation and many others, continue to challenge structural and systemic barriers specifically and generally across social, economic and political spheres (Runnymede, 2021).

These changes and opportunities are not of themselves enough to suggest there are no structural barriers. Indeed, the responses would suggest they are very much present and are affecting organisations in some areas more than others. However, organisations do have the ability to address internal barriers, such as governance and leadership challenges, impact reporting and connecting and engaging with beneficiaries, to be in a position to access resources and opportunities. They may find it harder to tackle external challenges, such as local authority planning permissions and regeneration development projects. By getting involved in the consultation processes they will be able to at least get their voices heard. We know from responders that participating in planning processes can create or exacerbate a lack of trust between residents, planning authorities, developers and other stakeholders. Research continues to show how a combination of factors, such as long working hours, language skills and gender roles, combine to place barriers on underrepresented groups when it comes to participating in planning consultations.

60 City Bridge Trust, Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/about-us/diversity-equity-and-inclusion
61 www.haringeygiving.org.uk/news/london-giving-schemes-begin-a-new-partnership-to-address-structural-discrimination
62 www.phf.org.uk/funds/access-and-participation-fund
63 See, for example, articles and writings of #charitysowhite, DiNN (2021) and Equally Ours (2022)
64 As a result of the Brexit decision in 2016 the UK will no longer benefit from the Erasmus programme.
65 See The Ubele Initiative - The Phoenix Way; The Ubele Initiative - Phoenix Way Update - Emergency Round

Section 5: Conclusion

It is not too surprising, given that the intervening years since the publication of the 2015 report were punctuated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of national and world restrictions and practices, that not many of the 2015 recommendations targeted at national government were taken up. In the aftermath of the publication, *A Place to Call Home* (2015), in responding to some of the findings, Locality and Power to Change (2015-16), refocused resources to supporting marginalised communities such as the *Community Ownership and Management of Assets* (COMA) programme.[66] However, very little has changed in respect to the key recommendations around policy changes to Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy in London. Equally, very little has changed with respect to the status of the majority of the organisations identified: those that were at risk of closing had indeed closed (e.g. Welbourne Community Centre), while those that were seen as 'under serious threat' of closure, such as Highfields in Leicester, West Indian Cultural Centre in Leeds and in London, the Chestnut Community Centre and Camberwell After School Project, have either been saved and are now operating under new management arrangements or are still in 'discussions' with their respective local authorities.

Of the 143 organisations identified in the 2015 research, 54% are still operating while 29% have either closed or are under threat of closing with a further 17% whose status is unknown. However, based on our wider analysis of 640 organisations using email and telephone approaches – which included the 143 identified in 2015 - 81% indicated that they are operating, while 12% were under threat or had closed since 2015, with only 7% unknown (did not respond).

Without a doubt, cultural and community space ownership has faced increasing risks over many decades and is not likely to be lessened any time soon. Research has highlighted how the expertise, support and funding available has not reached Black and racially minoritised communities, with insufficient infrastructure support to connect the sector with the support available and provide a strong collective lobbying voice in policymaking.[67] Ubele's own research over the last three years has further added weight to the ongoing body of knowledge and understanding of the impact and implications of the underfunding of Black and racially minoritised

66 See Witter et al (2019), Evaluation Report for Mali Enterprising Leaders: The Ubele Initiative - Evaluation report for Mali enterprising leaders (MEL)

67 The Ubele Initiative (2015), *A Place to Call Home*: static1.squarespace.com/static/58f9e592440243412051314a/t/5dcd70eb44fbbd622c2e4b97/1573744880563/A%2BPlace%2Bto%2BCall%2BHome%2Breport%2Bfinal%2Bversion.pdf

led community organisations. We have highlighted some of the innovative and creative ways that Black and racially minoritised-led community organisations have adapted their services and delivery models to respond to the changing needs and circumstances of their beneficiaries and communities through:

- Developing online platforms and digital tools to provide information, advice, counselling, training and peer support.
- Creating mutual aid networks and partnerships with other organisations to distribute food, medicine, PPE and other essential items over the pandemic period.
- Engaging in advocacy and campaigning to raise awareness and influence policy on issues affecting Black and racially minoritised communities, such as health inequalities, hate crime and immigration.
- Providing culturally sensitive and holistic support to address the mental health and wellbeing needs of Black and racially minoritised individuals and families.

Variously, those reports concluded with a series of recommendations for the government and other funders to support the survival and sustainability of Black and racially minoritised led community organisations in the post-pandemic recovery period. Those recommendations included:

- Increasing the funding available for BAME-led VCOs, especially unrestricted and long-term funding that recognises their value and impact.
- Improving the accessibility and transparency of government support schemes for BAME-led VCOs, especially those that are small or grassroots.
- Enhancing the representation and participation of BAME-led VCOs in decision-making processes and structures that affect their work and communities.
- Addressing the systemic racism and discrimination that BAME-led VCOs face from funders or commissioners, especially by implementing anti-racist policies and practices.

We have witnessed an increased level of awareness and emerging support for intermediary grant giving arrangements with government and grant giving foundations, such as, the National Community Lottery continuing to support an 'intermediary' provider model for the Phoenix Way Funding programme. Coming out of the pandemic we have also seen new and exciting Black and racially minoritised-led funders such as BAOBAB, Equally Ours, BEO, Do It Now Now and V4CE.

Underrepresented and marginalised groups have always sought to create and sustain their own economic and political power through collective ownership and self-determination. The emergence of Black and racially minoritised funders is part of a long history of resistance and resilience in the face of oppression and marginalisation, from the Black co-operative movement to Headstart programmes epitomised through the supplementary school movement in the 1970s, to the current efforts of community-led housing and social enterprises.[68] The emphasis now is seeing the longer term goal of Black and racially minoritised-led community asset ownership as part of a wider community wealth building vision. It was always a journey and not a sprint, dependent on there being critical transformational 'points of crisis'; that point of juxta-positioning of critical mass came about during the pandemic 'lockdown' period with the Black Lives Matter global awakening demonstrations and campaign. The long term journey is to see community wealth as a strategy to empower and uplift underrepresented communities by giving them control and ownership over the assets that are essential for community well-being and development. Assets, as we have indicated in this report, can include land, housing, businesses, infrastructure, cultural heritage, and natural resources. By owning these assets,

68 See About | Community Enterprise Growth Plan.

communities can benefit from the income, equity, and social capital that they generate, as well as to enable them to benefit from regeneration and development opportunities.

However, as we have seen, being able to own cultural and community assets faces many challenges and barriers in the current system. These include systemic racism, lack of access to capital and credit, legal and regulatory hurdles, market pressures, and organisational mismanagement. The traditional approach indicates over-reliance on grant aid with local authorities providing long term pepper-corn rent, Community Asset Transfers (CAT) and long lease agreement to facilitate capital funding. However, other new opportunities have emerged which challenge this traditional approach and focus, ones which Black and racially minoritised led organisations have yet to fully embrace. Some of these alternatives include joint sharing/ownership models with other VCOs, absorption and merger incorporation models and partnerships based on thematic/cluster approach and community business approach (community bond schemes, co-operatives and community shares).

Throughout the process a recurring theme was ever present in discussions around the 'readiness' and capacity of organisations to not only secure, but to maintain and retain the asset when acquired. More than this, the question speaks to the development and sustainability of the organisation per se. If an organisation is not in a fit state of survival and development it is difficult to see how they could command the interest of funders or investors. The emergent 'preparatory and readiness typology' at Appendix 1 was only made possible as a result of the participatory action research approach adopted.

While structural barriers exist, it is clear from the research they are not the only obstacle to overcome. The overview summary indicated as Fig 16 provides a graphic illustration of the key questions that organisations will need to address in being 'ready' to secure physical community assets. The 'preparatory and readiness typology' offers one way of supporting organisations to better understand how developed they are to be in a good position to secure community assets and in sustaining their organisation over time. It is important that organisations seek answers to those key questions, but just as important, be able to act on the results of their deliberations.

To support the acquisition intention, whether renting, freehold or lease arrangements, organisations have tended to focus on revenue funding with low/small grant requests with few public, private and VCO arrangements, joint venture and flexible finance (part grant –part loan approaches) opportunities considered. They need to rethink their approach and vision away from short termism to a more longer-term perspective, one that is perhaps less parochial and introspective to one that is more extensive and embracing. Times have changed since the landing of Empire Windrush in 1948, and much has been achieved against periods of social unrest and overt discriminatory practices. Embracing the struggle that has helped to shape the Black communities, for example, to where they are today requires new approaches and thinking for the next 75 years. There is no magic wand or pill, but to overcome these challenges and support Black

Fig 16: Organisational readiness: key questions with indicative considerations

Physical asset ownership

? Why is it important to acquire the physical asset? Is this the only way to deliver services that communities need?

Sustainability; Independence; Security and resilience; Community confidence; Pride and dignity; Community development and community legacy

Regeneration development opportunities

? What options and delivery models exist and to what extent have they been explored?

Innovative, creative and as yet untried delivery vehicles and arrangements (e.g. co-operatives, community bonds, community shares, consortiums, mergers etc.)

Governance and leadership

? Is the organisation's structure, governance and leadership ready and do they have the right skill set to deliver the objective?

Inflexibility and reluctance to change with ageing leadership

Financial resources

? What is the financial and sustainable position of the organisation?

Over-reliance on grant aid with priorities on revenue and project funding (e.g. averaging <£50K and low reserves). New opportunities emerging not seen as viable (e.g. Flexible Finance, joint ventures etc).

and racially minoritised-led community asset ownership per se, we need to create a supportive ecosystem that includes policy changes, funding opportunities, technical assistance, network building, and public education. We also need to centre the voices and visions of Black and racially minoritised leaders and communities in the decision-making processes that affect their assets and futures. We are advocating a community wealth building strategy that centres economic wealth alongside political and social empowerment. In other words, to transform and re-articulate how the two spheres indicated at Fig 3 influence and impact on the Black and racially minoritised communities through agency: external and internal organisational imperatives and considerations.

In the final analysis, Black and racially minoritised led community asset ownership is not just a means to an end, but part of the wider community wealth building strategy and legacy. It is a way of affirming the dignity, value, and agency of underrepresented and marginalised communities that has historically been denied. It is one way of creating a more just, equitable, and sustainable world for everyone – but it is only one approach and not a panacea. While this research has been able to sketch out some of the challenges, barriers and opportunities, the journey is yet to be undertaken, and that remain perhaps the greatest challenge of all.

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Appendix 1: Preparatory and Readiness Typology: how ready are organisations to access resources to sustain their organisation?

Organisation ready theme/ domain	**Levels of organisational readiness description**			
	Level 1 – Development Phase	**Level 2 - Developing**	**Level 3 - Developed**	**Level 4 - Highly developed**
Governance and leadership	Driven by Founder and almost wholly dependent on an individual with limited board/ trustee support or engagement. Highly dependent on volunteers with board members actively operational. **Strategic planning:** Organisational strategic plan (or Business Plan) is either non-existent, unclear or exists as a set of scattered initiatives.	Formal governance in place but insufficiently robust and strategic, especially in not having systems in place. Though still dependent on volunteers, some project funding attracts short term staffing and delivery personnel. **Strategic planning:** Organisational strategic plan exists, but is either not clearly linked to mission, vision and overarching aims, or lacks coherence, or is not easily actionable.	Board having diverse membership with some focus on planning and longer-term strategic focus – some delegatory powers to an Executive structure (CEO etc in place). Some use of volunteers though not dependent on them and having both paid full-time and part-time staff, with multi-year core funding support. **Strategic planning:** Coherent strategic plan has been developed and is linked to mission, vision and overarching aims and is acted upon by most. The strategy is mostly known with some influences on funding strategy and programme delivery.	Board is more policy and strategically driven with executive powers and accountabilities delegated to an Executive structure (CEO etc in place). Use of volunteers greatly reduced while having significant level of paid staff with CEO and core team in place driving the operational delivery within the organisation. **Strategic planning:** Organisation has coherent medium to long term strategic plan in place, universally known, that are actionable and linked to overall mission, vision and aims that drives the day-to-day operation of the organisation.

Organisation ready theme/ domain	Levels of organisational readiness description			
	Level 1 – Development Phase	**Level 2 - Developing**	**Level 3 - Developed**	**Level 4 - Highly developed**
Operation and infrastructure	No recognised systems for tracking clients, staff, volunteers, programme outcomes with limited financial information systems in place (e.g. no recognised customer reporting management (CRM) system in place) ***Web-presence:* Organisation has no dedicated website nor intention in the short term to develop one.** The organisation does not anticipate legal issues and likely not to be able to pay for legal advice but likely to find in-kind help as and when needed.	The electronic databases and management reporting systems that exist perform only basic functions, are complex and therefore used infrequently. **Web-presence** There is a basic website containing general information, but with little information on current developments (e.g. the site consist of outdated information). The organisation is able to identify legal support that is readily available and able to employ on 'as needed' basis.	Electronic database and management reporting systems exist and is used to track clients, staff, volunteers, programme outcomes and financial information (i.e. a robust CRM system is in place). **Web-presence** There is a comprehensive and highly visible website in place containing information on the organisation as well as updated latest developments and impact reporting (e.g. information is current). Legal support is regularly available and consulted on as appropriate and relevant.	Sophisticated, comprehensive electronic database and management reporting systems exist for tracking clients, staff, volunteers, programme outcomes and financial information; widely used and essential in increasing information sharing and efficiency. **Web-presence** Sophisticated, comprehensive and interactive website regularly maintained and kept up to date on the latest developments and opportunities inside and outside the organisation. Well-developed effective and efficient internal legal infrastructure for day-to-day work.

Organisation ready theme/ domain	Levels of organisational readiness description			
	Level 1 – Development Phase	**Level 2 - Developing**	**Level 3 - Developed**	**Level 4 - Highly developed**
Financial resource	No or very limited financial planning other than the day-to-day finances with high dependence on goodwill and 'self-financing'. Basic systems in place to ensure that incomes are deposited, and bills are paid though having little to no financial and accounting system, policy or procedural guidelines in place. **Fund-raising skills:** Generally weak fund-raising skills and lack of expertise (either internally or externally) - high level of unsuccessful applications compared to successful applications. Organisation highly dependent on a few or single funder, largely of the same type (e.g. particular foundation/trust or local authority - having no fund-raising strategy or plan in place). ***Reserves equate to less than 3mths*** ***Annual income <£25k p.a.***	Limited financial plans, ad hoc update with budget utilised as operational tool to guide/assess financial activities with some attempt to isolate 'project' funds from 'core' organisation budget. Financial activities are documented with restricted funds disaggregated and tracked periodically. **Fund-raising skills:** Main fund-raising needs covered by some combination of internal skills and expertise, and access to some external fund-raising expertise. Organisation has access to multiple types of funding (e.g. local authority, foundations/ trust and other grant giving bodies) with only a few funders in each type/category. ***Reserves equate to 6mths*** ***Annual income >£25k to <£100k p.a.***	Solid financial planning using 'full cost recovery' principles which is regularly updated while budget is integrated into operations, reflecting organisational needs with performance to budget monitoring taking place. Accounting procedures comply with generally accepted accounting principles on an annual basis and provides information needed to make sound financial decisions with all accounts reconciled during monthly closing. **Fund-raising skills:** Regular fund-raising needs are adequately covered by well-developed internal fund-raising skills, occasional access to some external fund-raising expertise. Solid base of different types of funders in place (e.g. government, local authority, corporate, foundations/trusts and other grant giving bodies), with some income streams to edge against market instabilities with a focus on sustainable revenue generating activities (e.g. charity giving, endowments and legacies). ***Reserves equate to 9mths*** ***Annual income >£100k and <£500k p.a***	Very solid financial plans, based on 'full cost recovery' principles, which is continuously updated, developing from processes that incorporates and reflects organisational needs and objectives. All internal and external accounting functions are fully integrated with budgeting, decision-making and goal setting with clear and documented procedures which ensures that all accounts are reconciled and restricted funds are tracked on an ongoing basis. **Fund raising skills:** Highly developed internal fund-raising skills and expertise across multiple funding sources with access to external expertise for additional extraordinary needs. Organisation insulated from potential market instabilities (e.g. fully developed endowments) and/or has developed sustainable revenue-generating activities (e.g. highly diversified funding portfolio across all types of sources). ***Reserves equate to 12mths or more*** ***Annual income >£500k+ p.a.***

Organisation ready theme/ domain	Levels of organisational readiness description			
	Level 1 – Development Phase	**Level 2 - Developing**	**Level 3 - Developed**	**Level 4 - Highly developed**
Physical asset ownership	No formal arrangements for leasing or renting premises over a longer term (3yrs min,). The organisation does not own its premises but hire venues as appropriate and relevant (short term and year on year arrangements). Inadequate physical infrastructure, resulting in loss of effectiveness and efficiency (i.e. unfavourable location for clients and employees) Limited ability or resources to ensure facility safety. Basic understanding of the importance of developing a health and safety plan but lacking any written details. Limited and inadequate overall safeguarding systems and procedures in place (incl. no health & safety policy/ procedures, risk assessments, fire drill record and off-site procedures).	Organisation hire premises suited to their needs over multiyear arrangements though not ideal (<10yrs). Physical infrastructure is made to work to suit the organisation's most important and immediate needs. No good office space for teamwork, no possibility of holding confidential discussions etc). Compliant with most regulatory requirements and building regulations through the landlord. Strategies for improving both exterior and interior facility safety is limited. Basic written health and safety policy and plan in place but no mechanism to monitor or evaluate compliance.	The organisation own, lease and/or hire premises (i.e. freehold/long lease in place: >10yrs). Premises is well-suited to the needs of the organisation with sufficient office spaces and confidential spaces etc. Fully adequate physical asset for the current needs of the organisation in favourable locations for clients and employees. Compliant with all regulatory requirements and building legislations. Basic security measures incorporated into organisations operating procedures. Adequate exterior and interior safety measures in place (e.g. security alarm system in place, adequate lighting, etc). Written health and safety policy and Plan exists, including risk assessments with those plans reviewed annually and serves as a basis for recommending improvements.	The organisation owns (or have long lease at least 25yrs) its physical infrastructure which is well tailored to the organisation's current and anticipated future needs. The physical infrastructure is well-tailored to the organisation's current and anticipated future needs. Well designed and thought-out physical premises that enhances organisation's effectiveness and efficiency (e.g. especially favourable locations for clients and employees). Compliant with all regulatory requirements and building legislations (e.g. Health & Safety at Work standards etc). All components of a safe working environment integrated into the organisations operating procedures and budgeting process. Written documentation of regulatory compliance is maintained for easy reference for all staff.

Organisation ready theme/ domain	Levels of organisational readiness description			
	Level 1 – Development Phase	**Level 2 - Developing**	**Level 3 - Developed**	**Level 4 - Highly developed**
Impact and effectiveness	No clear theory of change or logic relationships between programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives driving monitoring and evaluation processes. Does not have clear performance indicators for the programmes nor systems in place to measure progress. Basic monitoring and evaluation processes and systems in place and no formal reporting or sharing of programme achievements. Expectations are unclear with programme development and delivery ad hoc and reactive. Limited or non-existent reporting of achievements and impact of programmes and/or organisation as a whole.	Some evidence of having in place a theory of change or logic approach linking programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives guiding monitoring and evaluation processes. Have a process for identifying risks, issues and lessons learnt and for ensuring lessons learnt are reviewed to improve practice. Output and outcome indicators identified with limited evidential basis beyond monitoring data (i.e. limited beneficiaries' feedback); Basic data gathering process in place most of which are a collection of monitoring and feedback forms. Output and outcome reports lack analysis and progression indications though offering description of activities and actions.	Strong and clear theory of change or logic framework demonstrating relationships between programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives which is guiding the monitoring and evaluation processes. Have in place a robust monitoring and evaluation approach, which may include using external evaluators. Output and outcome indicators identified and informed by beneficiaries' and stakeholder feedback. Data retrieval system in place (e.g. collection, capture and reports); Analysis and impact reports produced, incorporating data from surveys, interviews with evidence of broad range of stakeholders and beneficiaries' feedback.	Strong, clear and transparent theory of change or logic framework demonstrating the relationships between programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives directing the monitoring and evaluation systems in place. Beneficiaries and stakeholders provide feedback on a regular basis supported by external evaluation of impact and achievements as a result of their experiences. Scheduled review meetings undertaken using a standardised tool. Monthly review meeting conducted. Quarterly programme review and support sessions undertaken.

Organisation ready theme/ domain	Levels of organisational readiness description			
	Level 1 – Development Phase	**Level 2 - Developing**	**Level 3 - Developed**	**Level 4 - Highly developed**
Connectedness and engagement	Organisation's presence is either not recognised or generally not regarded as positive. Few members of the local community constructively involved in the organisation (also poor communication outwards into the community). Limited proactive communication with key audiences. Communications are inconsistent and sporadic. Limited ability to develop comprehensive communication plan (i.e. communication plan does not exist, e-bulletins, newsletters nor promotional materials).	Organisation's presence is somewhat recognised and generally regarded as positive within the community. Some members of wider communities constructively engaged with the organisation. The organisation has a generally positive relationship with its beneficiaries, with views sought. There is a regular exchange of information providing beneficiaries with adequate information on achievements and development. Fairly regular communication with key constituencies but no communication plan or articulated communication strategies in place.	The organisation is reasonably well-known and perceived as open and responsive to beneficiary needs. Members of the wider community (including a few prominent ones) constructively involved in the organisation. The organisation regularly engages and consults with beneficiaries and wider stakeholders and kept well informed about achievements and developments. Ongoing, proactive communication with key constituencies with strong brand management practices defined and applied. Communications generally consistent and coordinated with communication plan and strategies in place.	The organisation is widely known and recognised beyond their immediacy and perceived as actively engaged with and extremely responsive to the needs of their beneficiaries. Many members of the wider community (including many prominent members) actively and constructively involved in the organisation (i.e. on the Board, fund raising etc). Praised for its beneficiary engagement and involvement evidenced through systems being in place to evaluate marketing and communication efforts. Organisation highly adept at getting the right message to the right audience at the right time to achieve the intended effect. Clear, effective, ongoing communication plan and strategies in place which is fully integrated with strategic plan and updated as appropriate with strong recognisable branding in place and consistently followed.

Appendix 2: Definitions of the Levels of organisation development phases

Level 1: Development phase

Organisations that are in their infancy, either recently established and/or having an annual income of less than £25k per annum. Organisation is likely to be 'Founder' dependent and reliant exclusively on volunteers and renting spaces (or provided in-kind) on as-and-when basis (in some instances, working from 'Founders' home').

Level 2: Developing organisation

Organisations that have been established for many years with an income of more than £25k per annum but unable to command income beyond £100k per annum and likely to be renting spaces on annual or shorter basis. Organisation is likely to be 'Founder' dependent with some short term and ad hoc support such as 'project' costed part-time staff and reliant still on volunteers.

Level 3: Developed organisation

Organisations that have been well established and able to demonstrate income between £100k and £500k p.a, with strong governance and leadership in place, with limited influence from Founder alongside some core full-time and part-time staffing that drives the organisation. They are likely to have assets on longer term leases and/or own their assets outright.

Level 4: Highly developed organisation

Organisations that have been established for decades and are able to attract and demonstrate income of more than £500k p.a, with exceptional governance and leadership, strong core full-time and part-time staffing and well recognised nationally and/or internationally. Organisations at this level are likely to have very long leases and/or own their assets outright with strong outward facing persona.

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