Is there need for an umbrella infrastructure organisation for Oxfordshire’s Black, Asian and other minoritised ethnic Community Groups and Organisations?

The numbers:
- Did you know that Oxford has higher than the national average of Black, Brown and other ethnically diverse people as a percentage of the national population? The national average is 13%, compare that to Oxford’s staggering 22%
- And did you know that in 2018 more than half of all the babies born in Oxfordshire in that year (59%) had parents who were born overseas?

The Problem:
Many studies have found that there has been a “historic under-investment in black and minority ethnic-led organisations” nationwide. The studies also show that there are regional inequalities in funding, most notably in the Midlands and South East. These regions received a disproportionately small amount of funding when compared to their black and minority ethnic population size.

The high proportion of Black and Brown population in our region is making a bad problem worse. Where nationally Black and Brown groups and organisation already receive less funding in our region, because of the higher numbers, the funding has to stretch further. We posit that this issue of scarce funding is a matter of racial justice.

The Urgency:
We are coming out of an unprecedented pandemic caused by COVID-19, whose impact in all areas – be it fatality, financial losses, and other social impacts – was greater and more extensive for black and brown people, again compared to the wider population. The ONS (Office of National Statistics) reported that “mortality for people of Black African or Black Caribbean ethnicity in the first half of this year was two-and-a-half times higher than for people of White ethnicity.”

It therefore follows that this community would need urgent, targeted and culturally coherent support to supplement state interventions within their community.

The Call To Action:
In trying to redress this imbalance, in response to the Covid19 pandemic, the National Emergencies Trust created specific funds for BAME-led organisations only. Unfortunately, despite our high proportion in the Oxfordshire population, we did not have a BAME-led infrastructure organisation to collect and disburse these funds.

In July 2020, our local Community Foundation (OCF) invited as many BAME leaders to discuss this issue and try to find a solution to our Oxfordshire situation. A total of 17 BAME community leaders and 4 leaders of supportive organisations held an online meeting to discuss this issue. The outcome was that 7 individuals from the BAME leadership agreed to form a Working Committee.
THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH EITHER BY FILLING IN THE FORM OR DISCUSSING WITH ONE OF OUR COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS.

Over the course of the summer, we contacted many of you to participate in answering these questions, through filling out a questionnaire or discussing the questions with one of our Community Researchers.

AIMS OF THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH
1. To share some information and experiences in leading or participating in your community groups including any challenges and successes.
2. To create a county-wide umbrella organisation with the sole aim of positioning BAME-LED groups and organisations in Oxfordshire to access funding from the National Emergency Trust and other government funding.
3. To work together to remove the practical barriers that prevent our groups and organisations from accessing substantial funding by mobilizing our voice and increasing our capacity for advocacy and delivery.

RESPONDENTS

- **84 INDIVIDUALS**
- **40 GROUPS**

We received a total of 84 responses from a cross section of 40 Groups.

The cross section of respondents varied from Volunteers, members and Group Leaders.

The groups comprise of Volunteer Groups, Social Enterprises, Community Interest Groups Charities (including those in the process of becoming Charities).

The earliest one of these groups was set up was 2000 and the most recent 2020 - so some more established than others.

OVERWHELMINGLY - IT SEEMS THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE COMMUNITY GROUPS IS ON WOMEN’S SUPPORT AND GENERAL FAMILY SUPPORT.

Other focus:
- Physical Exercise & Wellbeing
- Adult Education & Training
- Adult Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Cultural & Social Education
- Children’s Education
- Food, Diet & Nutrition
- Child Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Cultural Identity & Heritage

Lower focus
- Health & Social Care
- Advocacy
- Men’s Support
- Religious Groups
- Financial Education & Empowerment
- Elderly Support
GROUP ACTIVITIES DONE BY THE GROUPS (AS REPORTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS)

Community Outreach/Work/Support
General Good work
Wellness & Mental Health
Education/Coaching/Mentoring
Empowerment for women
Helping Women & related opportunities
Social Gathering Activities
Supporting Refugee Women
Voluntary & Charity Work

Most mentioned Group Activity - COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SUPPORT.

Other group Activities as mentioned by respondents,
- Food distribution,
- Heritage Initiatives,
- Advocacy,
- Activism for FGM and Domestic Abuse,
- Therapeutic recovery
- Bereavement Support.

FUNDING

- Access to funding was sighted as one of the biggest barriers to the groups and organisations achieving their aims.
- And one of the biggest reflections of the racial injustice and inequity between white-led and black-led third sector groups and organisations.
- The largest amount received by any organisation in this research was £20,000.00; with most groups only averaging £7,000.00 per year.

SUCCESSES AND BARRIERS

Successes:
- Providing regular food parcels to the community, particularly during the height of the pandemic.
- Ensuring some of the most neglected people getting help, particularly as members of our community will not ask for help easily.

Barriers:
- 25 respondents stated that they struggle to find volunteers.
- 39 struggle with writing bids and proposals and failing to access funding to run projects.
- Others barriers mentioned include
  - Covid pandemic.
  - Burnout and
  - lack of premises.
YOUR THOUGHTS IN FORMING AN INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATION.

Only 3 participants did not support the formation of a B.A.M.E-led infrastructure organisation.

Do you think it necessary for Oxfordshire to have an infrastructure (Umbrella organisation) supporting other BAME groups and organisations?

- Yes: 70.3%
- No: 26.8%
- Maybe: 15.9%

These are some of the most pertinent comments you made agreeing on the need for an Infrastructure Umbrella organisation:

- To consolidate the voice of BAME led groups and organisations/Gives a voice to the minority.
- I think it will be really helpful to come together and helping other organisations, especially those who have been struggling to continue because of the difficulties of finances or other issues like lack of staff.
- I think it’s a very good idea. My generation, especially the BAME group are struggling so much. We need unity and start up groups like me have no one to ask for advice. I saw that my community was struggling and blindly went in, learning along the way as an 18 year old. I wish I had a mentor or some support. (I do now).
- Unity for support.
- It is critically important to have this umbrella group for BAME-led organisation because we need to access government and other funding. At the moment Oxfordshire Mental Health Services have £3M to transform our Community Services. Not one BAME-Led Organisation is taking part and we need to be in order to reduce the health outcomes inequalities.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

69% of you are happy to be contacted again, that is why we are happy to report back these findings to you.

The current email address oxfordshireonepeople@gmail.com remains in use. we will soon launch social media platforms.

Do you give us consent to contact you again and update you on this project; as well as invite you to meetings?

- Yes: 69%
- No: 26.8%
- Option 1
Some members pulled out (of doing group work) due to family pressures.

I am a student, and I have everything from my own pocket, as well as my amazing volunteers donating money to fund the projects.

We have around 50 volunteers for help the world Oxford and 100+ Members for Oxford sisters.

We are doing our monthly contribution, but we will love to have some funding in order to maintain and move the group forward, as most of us are not working due to the pandemic. Thank you.

Thank you for my women’s group. A great support and knowledge giver.

Please support our Group.

We need help volunteers.

We need more funds to pay our volunteers.
We need more support.

We need more funds.

We need more support from the City Council.
Lack of support.

It’s good to have project meeting with different people with different views.

Funders don’t know about African philosophies, Afrocentric and Black Feminist Thought and Experiential knowledge is not valued so makes it impossible to get funds using the above diversity of thought and knowledge production.

Help us where possible.

We would like to live in the community as one.

I am volunteering and I like joining groups.

Thank you Syrian Community Oxfordshire.
Don’t know the way to get the funds.
1. The issue of low / lack of funding for our projects is a social justice issue.
- You said that it was not just a mere coincidence that black-led groups were the ones poorly funded, rather it was evident that racism meant that your projects were not viewed favourably, nor considered to fit into the “white-charity” idea of of a group (charity) activities.

- You said that as most of your group activities were self-help, it was assumed that “goodwill” would sustain the projects, yet when other demographic groups did these same activities, they were financially appreciated, and considered to be doing “valid charity work”.

2. A lot of training and support given to community groups took place in the working day (daytime hours), yet for many of you, the community support activities took place in the evenings and at the weekends. This factor further served to exclude you from being eligible for funding and other networking opportunities.

3. For many of you, you expressed ‘Research Fatigue’. Many of you said that there have been several other research such as this one in the past, yet with no visible / lasting changes; and you wondered how different this research was going to be.

- Indeed the community researchers reported that many community members declined to participate in the process, citing “research fatigue”.

You agree that an Infrastructure organisation should be formed.

You say that an Infrastructure organisation will provide "one voice" representing the Black, Asian and other ethnic minority communities in Oxfordshire.

You gave consent to be contacted again for more discussions about this project.

You gave consent to be included in a directory of all Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups.

Thank you for reading this report, we hope you have found it useful, and if you participated in the research, we hope that we have represented your voice well.

We will send out a poll soon to consult with you on how to deliver the next steps and what model the next development should take.

Please email oxfordshireonepeople@gmail.com should you have any questions or comments to make.

Many thanks,

Bid Writing Committee:-
Dianne, Fatou, Hadi, Jacqui, Nicole, Pearline and Yasmin.

Findings Compiled by Jacqui Gitau
A huge thank you to each and everyone of you who took time to respond and share your thoughts and opinions.

These are the organisations you are members of:-

ACKHI
(Afrikan Caribbean Kultural Heritiage Initiative)
Active exercise
AFIUK CIC
African Caribbean Autism Family Support Group
Bakilande
Banbury mosque
BK LUWO
Body wisdom
Coaching2transform
Golden Branch
Green dome trust.
Higher Learning
IRAQ women Art & war (IWAW)
Kama group
Kenyan community
Kenyans in Oxford
Kurdish Women’s community
Kuumba Nia Arts
Major matters for minor mind
Making Space Safe
Melor
Nigerian Community Oxfordshire
Nigerian Muslim Association Oxford (NIMAO)
Oxford Community Action
Oxford sisters and help the world Oxford
Oxford women society
Oxwise
R.A.W.
(Retention of African Wealth)
Refugee resource women’s group
Safe Leys
Somalia sisters sewing group
Syrian Community Oxfordshire
Syrian sisters
Transition Lighthouse Empowerment Space
Ubuntu Wellness and Complex Mental Health Foundation
WOW space
Evolving Belonging offers inclusive participatory programmes in:

- Cultural Mapping
- Qualitative Research
- Decolonising the Education Curriculum and
- Cultural advocacy for a just, humane and accountable society.

www.dianneregisford.com, dianne@dianneregisford.com
**PEARLINE BLACKSTOCK - VISION COUNSELLING**

Pearline Blackstock is a fully qualified Compassion Focussed Therapist (CFT) and registered member of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP). She has over twenty five years’ experience working successfully with a cross section of people from varying cultures, religions, ethnicity, sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, LGBTQI+) and also that reference as non-gender specific.

**Why the BAME Committee?**

Her interest in sitting as a member on the BAME committee is that it supports her belief “together we are stronger”. Pearline feels like many others, there continues to be a need in Oxfordshire for the BAME community to build cohesion between the diverse communities and to build services, structures and institutions that are culturally appropriate and model inclusivity systemically as well as vertically. We cannot afford to ignore the marginalisation control, sexual exploitation, CFT female genital circumcision, Covid-19 pandemic, homophobia, trauma and abuse (impact of BLM).

**YASMIN KADUJI - BANBURY COMMUNITY FRIDGE INITIATIVE**

Several years ago, I started my first voluntary community project with the Banbury Community Fridge initiative, which is based at Banbury Mosque.

I coordinated collections of food donations from local supermarkets with the aim of reducing food waste in landfill whilst also supporting vulnerable individuals and families. During the COVID lockdown, the Fridge had to close however supermarket food donations continued to pour in. I organised fellow volunteers to help with the packing of food parcels to deliver to community members in quarantine. We delivered approximately 2500 food parcels in our town.

Since then, the Community Fridge has gone from strength to strength, it has expanded into a hygiene bank, food bank, pet bank and clothes bank.

Other community projects have also sprung up including a new children’s library at the mosque and new gym enterprise that offers facilities and classes for women in the BAME community.

I have recently qualified as a personal trainer so I am also running some of these gym classes for our community members.

"Banbury Community Fridge - Making Sure No One Goes Hungry"
This project has been funded by:-

- UK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
- OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
- OCF (OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION)
- Active Oxfordshire

OCVA have waived the their Membership and training fees for BAME framework members. Check out the trainings on offer (ocva.org.uk); or email their Training manager - caroline.marquis@ocva.org.uk

If the timings don’t suit you, please let us know and we may be able to negotiate for group training at a time that suits your group.