Infrastructure Investment Plan

A
Review of BME Research Reports on the Black Minority Ethnic Voluntary Sector

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Contents   **Page**

Review of Research Reports on the BME Voluntary Sector

Introduction

The Nottinghamshire Black Partnership through its participation in developing plans for an infrastructure for the Voluntary Sector took a lead role in commissioning a review of research undertaken on the BME Voluntary Sector (BMEVS). The aim of this piece of work was to get a picture of the BME Voluntary Sector at present in order to feed the specific needs of the sector into any plans developed by undertaking the following:

- Collation of research on capacity building in the BMEVS in order to capture central issues in relation to infrastructure development.

- Read and extract issues and recommendations.

- Presentation to key stakeholders.

- Production of a report to the Voluntary Sector Consortium.

Despite the comments relating to the BME population suffering from consultation fatigue there was not a great deal of material readily at hand that looks at the BMEVS specifically. Time allowing other material particularly reports that are not electronic and are held by organisations may give more of a historical background to the development, growth and services delivered by the sector.

Research Reports

Of the reports collated the following are key and present information that is essential to planning infrastructure development. (For a full list of research reports collated please see appendix a).

Mapping the BME Voluntary & Community Sector in the East Midlands (2002), Voice East Midlands.

Summary of Findings

A Profile of the BME Voluntary and Community Sector in the East Midlands

The report outlines the following profile of BME organisations across the East Midland region:

- It is estimated that there are approximately 7000 – 8000 BME groups in the region which equates to 20% of the sector.
- The regional voluntary sector employs approximately 28,000 full and part-time paid staff, with BME organisations employing between 2000 and 3000 paid staff, which is less than 10% of the total number of employed staff within the voluntary sector as a whole.
- The voluntary sector has approximately 327,000 volunteers, with 70,000 of these volunteers being attached to BME groups, which equates to 22% of the total number of volunteers.
- Compared to the rest of the voluntary sector, the BMEVS has considerably less paid staff and is disproportionately more reliant on the goodwill of volunteer help.

Appendix B shows the breakdown of BMEVS Service Provision for Nottinghamshire taken from the report.

Regional Funding

The estimate from EMDA regarding funding income for the East Midlands voluntary and community sector was approximately £5m. In view of the above figures the equivalent income for the BMEVS should be approximately £1m which would equate to £12,500 per year, per group.

The mapping exercise revealed that for the majority of BME groups in the region, their annual income from grants or the public sector is well below £12,500 per year. Over 90% of the groups participating in the exercise reported a desperate lack of funding.

East Midland BME Voluntary & Community Sector Regional Funding Breakdown

Self Funded/Donations   36%

Local Authority	30%
Community Fund	2%
SRB	5%
European	2%
Art	2%
Community Foundations	2%
Sport England	2%
Other	12%

The report showed that as a result of the above that more BME organisations were dependent on self-funding & donations than a recognised funding source. The numbers of BME organisations accessing funding was poor and there was a serious lack of awareness of funding programmes together with a need for developing skills in fundraising.

The exercise also found that mainstream agencies such as Local Authorities, CVS's, Local & Regional Funders including European funding agencies often failed to meet the needs of the BMEVS in the region. The report highlighted that in the previous 7 years the Community Fund had awarded grants to 1,100 voluntary sector organisations in the region and only 61 were to BME groups which is less than 6% of the total grants made in the region.

Awareness/Involvement in Local, Sub-Regional, Regional Partnerships and Initiatives

- Approximately 75% of BME organisations were aware of the above.
- 75% of BME organisations were unaware of the BME Compact Development.
- The lack of awareness and involvement excludes the BMEVS from contributing to the development of regional social and economic policy. This impacts locally as BME groups are not part of the strategic development of their own communities.
- **The report outlined that this rate of exclusion could offer insight into the continued high levels of social deprivation in BME communities.**

Regional Socio-Economic Development

The mapping exercise was also able to consider the awareness of the BMEVS in relation to regional development initiatives or regional economic strategies. **The results of this were that BME groups had a serious lack of awareness of how they fit within the broader regional context and little awareness of the long-term value of working in partnership as well as the overall regional economy.**

Training/Skills Needs

Skills shortages were identified in the following areas:

- **Management Skills** – committee member training/financial management skills, business planning.
- **ICT** – use of IT skills, access to IT, IT communication, internet, email etc, acquisition of IT equipment.
- **Fundraising Skills** – awareness of funding programmes and developing skills in applying for grants.
- **Support Services** – improving support services for newly established or existing community groups. For example, if a project is failing at an early stage, there are no support services available from funders other than the usual monitoring procedures.

It was pointed out that a lack of the above places further restriction on BME organisations in their ability to carry out their work.

Research and Development

Under this heading the mapping exercise found that

- There is a serious lack of knowledge of the state of the BMEVS in the East Midlands both past and present. The report acknowledged that this finding may be seen as one of the most surprising as the existence of BME communities in the East Midlands is not recent or new.
- BME communities have had a visible presence in the East Midlands since the 1950's and 60's and, as a result, a growing BMEVS as people began to organise and develop community projects and self programmes to improve their situation and their communities.
- A strong, vibrant and experienced BMEVS exists today with ability to provide a wide range of services both to the BME and wider communities.
- The impact of the lack of information and data on the regional BME sector is that any research or policy development on BMEVS inclusion has to start from scratch. There is a serious need to address the situation in order to have up-to-date, useful and available data on the BMEVS.

Consultation with Black and Minority Ethnic Families in Nottinghamshire (2003) Ajamu and Nottinghamshire Children's Fund.

This report was the result of a county wide survey to ascertain what the Children's Fund could do to improve the lives of children aged 5-13 years old. A range of black and minority ethnic families were consulted including the following:

Black African
Chinese
Irish
Greek
Portuguese
Spanish

German
Arab
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Dual Heritage
Black Caribbean
Travellers

Families were consulted on experiences of living in the county, ideas for activities in the local area and school and issues relating to their specific communities.

There are numerous findings as a result of the consultation with families but for the benefit of this piece of work the key issues raised from this report were:

- The mapping exercise identified 8 organisations run by BME organisation in the county, each serving a specific community. There is no umbrella organisation or mechanism that brings the organisations together.

- Under 'Challenge of Accessing Hard to Reach Groups' the report raised two areas of concern.

  1. The lack of BME self-organisation in the County.
  2. The lack of contact between the wider Voluntary & Statutory Sector with BME communities.

- There were no BME organisations in the Districts of Bassetlaw, Gedling, Rushcliffe and Newark.

Nottingham's Afrikan Caribbean Voluntary Sector – a snapshot of current issues and dilemmas, (2002) – Nottingham Association of Afrikan Caribbean Voluntary Organisation (NAAVO).

This report is a result of a mapping exercise to ascertain the following:

- Groups involved in strategic planning with the city.
- Groups receiving funding and the sources of that funding.
- Identification of problems areas within groups.

Summary of Key Findings

Information was gathered via questionnaire and interviews with 17 organisations.

General Organisation Information

- 35% of organisations interviewed operated from more than one address.

- 76% had email addresses, with only 24% having websites.
- 35% were registered charities.
- 35% were unincorporated.
- All organisations had mission statements and published aims and objectives.

Organisation Management

- Governance was through a Board of Trustees or Management Committee.
- The majority of Board members were male and aged 36 - 49.
- Average membership of boards or committees was 6.
- 20% of Board members had experience of working in the voluntary sector.
- Most members gained their experience and skills through their main employment.
- 71% of organisations stated that they provided training for their board members and indicated that this was important.
- 59% had an induction period for members lasting 8-12 weeks.
- 59% produced an induction pack for new members.
- 94% met monthly
- 6% met annually
- 29% had sub groups to conduct specific areas of business.
- 76% received monthly reports
- 12% received quarterly reports
- 12% received annual reports

Service Provision

Organisations identified the following as problem areas:

- Finding culturally appropriate resources.
- Recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills & qualifications often due to lack of resources.
- Lack of finance to adequately meet the current and future needs of clients.
- High demand for services but an inability to respond due to the lack of funding.
- The need for staff training.
- Most organisations used volunteers to assist in service provision.
- 3 groups functioned solely from the input of professionals, including financial support from membership fees.
- 76% worked jointly with other organisations to provide services - mainly referrals to statutory providers.
- 82% worked with other African Caribbean organisation to arrange events i.e. family and cultural.
- There were few planning events that involved other organisations.

- It was perceived that there was no strategic or cohesive planning for the future of the sector.
- Organisations tended to operate totally independently of one another.

Client Group

- 46% of organisations stated that their main client group were young people.
- 22% provided services to a range of clients.
- 3% of organisations providing services to young people involved people on their Boards or Committees. There was a need to address this in order that services meet needs.
- The main requirements of service users were advice and support, educational and training support services.
- 70% stated that over 200 people had used their services over the last year.
- 24% stated that over 1000 people had used their finding last year.
- A variety of methods were used to monitor service users.
- 70% had undertaken an audit of needs.

Funding

- 29% of organisations estimated the cost of annual service provision would be £100,000 to £250,000, the majority of costs being for staff.
- The majority of organisations fundraised through social events. These events did not generate enough revenue to fund activities.
- Many groups relied on applying for funding from a variety of funding providers.
- Most organisations had extensive knowledge of initiatives locally.
- 54% had submitted more than 6 applications to a variety of funding providers.
- In most organisations the fundraising was part of the manager's role.
- 53% of organisations were aware of the local CVS and other organisations (Nottingham City Council) that could help with sourcing funding.
- Only 35% used the above sources.
- 70% stated they would consider using an external organisation to assist with sourcing funding.

HR Issues

- The majority of organisations employed 5 – 20 members of staff.
- 18% employed no staff and were dependent on volunteers to provide a service.
- In total the research showed that of those interviewed there were approximately 235 staff members broken down as follows:

  81 full-time
  82 part-time

72 volunteers

- 58% of workers were female, however when looking at Board and Management Committee members more males were in positions of responsibility.
- 53% of organisations did not have a dedicated member of staff to deal with the personnel function.
- The majority of those who had a dedicated member of staff for the personnel function were referring to the manager.

Staff Training

- 86% of organisation had a structured training plan.
- 57% had a training budget to support training.
- Most organisations assessed training needs during supervision.

Marketing and PR

- 53% of organisations used their annual report solely as publicity.
- 78% designed ad produced the majority of publicity materials in house.
- 43% used the internet to publicise their services.
- 76% used the internet to research new initiatives.
- Of the organisations that had websites a member of staff usually maintained these in house.
- Most organisations did not have a website.
- 71% would welcome advice on marketing.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- 24% indicated that this was funding driven.
- 47% indicated that these were related to the objectives of the organisation.
- 53% stated that their systems were PC based – of these 35% had developed the systems in house.
- 47% stated that it would be useful to have an independent organisation to assist with monitoring their services.

Awareness of New Initiatives

- 65% of organisation stated that they were involved in local planning contributing through the following:

  Area Committees
  New Deal for Communities Consultations
  Local Area Partnerships
  Learning & Skills Council
  Local Strategic Partnership

- Others indicated contribution through Nottingham Black Partnership and Voice East Midlands.
- 71% would welcome forums or seminars to advise and update on local planning issues.

Working with Faith Communities (2004), Nottingham Community Network. (Interim Report)

Summary of key findings

- Faith groups provide many services and activities crucial for community-based regeneration using their own resources and funds.
- Faith groups are keen to be self-financing and self-supporting in the long term but often need some initial help.
- Through use of their faith buildings to provide services and activities they add value to the neighbourhood renewal process but this often goes unappreciated or unacknowledged.
- Most faith communities lack capacity and resources to extend provision
- Many faith groups receive little or no financial assistance.
- Majority of faith groups believe there is a need for a Faith Officer who could act as an advisor, provide information and networking, be a link with and voice to One City Partnership Nottingham, facilitate training for faith groups and help with capacity building.

Nottingham's Chinese Community 'Quality of Life' Survey, September 2002, Nottingham City Council

The Chinese community in Nottingham were surveyed to obtain their reflections on issues that relate to their quality of life in Nottingham. Information was obtained from 620 people of Chinese origin.

There were numerous findings in this research but for the benefit of this piece of work the following were extracted.

Summary of Key Findings

Issues in the Context of Culture, Education, Leisure and Other Opportunities

- 61.7% of respondents lived within the City of Nottingham boundaries.
- 54% of respondents were aware of the East England Chinese Association, which was the most well known Chinese group.
- 36.1% of respondents attended the Nottinghamshire Chinese Welfare Association and 34.1% attended the East England Chinese Association.
- When asked about attending and awareness of different types of courses and functions, 34.4% had attended festival celebrations, 24.9% had visited the Chinese literature section at Angel Row Library,

- 16.1% attended English Language courses and 11.2% attended computer courses.
- Awareness varied according to the type of course or activity but was generally higher among older respondents.
- Respondents wish to see further types of facilities/services offered, with 32% wishing to see Mandarin language courses, 29.4% translation services, 29.2% welfare and health advice/talks.
- Older respondents require translation services, welfare and health advice, whilst British respondents are most interested in learning Mandarin language.
- 63.1% stated that lack of time is the main barrier preventing access to opportunities.
- 17.8% stated that having to look after children is a barrier to opportunities.

- 61.6% were only willing to travel up to 2 miles to access facilities generally.

Language Issues

- At home 50.6% of respondents use Cantonese followed by Mandarin 33.1%.
- Most respondents 58.7 do not have access to an interpreter. Those who do are most likely to have access through family members.
- Most respondents have a command of English that varies from 'satisfactory' to 'very good' for spoken, written and reading English – 74.8%. 72% and 74.8% respectively. About a quarter of respondents indicated a 'poor' or 'very poor' grasp of English.
- 29.3% of those with a 'very poor' grasp of written English did not have access to an interpreter.
- 27.1% of those with a 'very poor' grasp of reading English did not have access to an interpreter.
- 26.8% of those with a 'very poor' grasp of spoken English did not have access to an interpreter.
- 41% of those with problems reading English do not have access to an interpreter.
- English is the language mainly used in a work context by 56.9%.
- Command of English declines with age. Females have a better command of reading, writing and comprehension of the English Language.

Issues relating to Racism

- 24.5% of respondents indicated that they have been racially abused in the last two years, with 31.9% of respondents under the age of 18 experiencing abuse.
- Males are likely to be victims of racist abuse than females.

- Those in employment also indicated greater abuse, suggesting racism in the workplace. Homemakers, part-time students and those temporarily unemployed experience the lowest levels of racist abuse.
- 69.9% do not report racist abuse, 14.7% report abuse to the police and 6.6% to local Chinese groups.
- 54.9% indicated that the main reason for not reporting incidents was the perception that nothing will be done about it.
- 20.9% stated that communication problems are responsible for 20.9% for incidents not being reported.

Health issues

- A high proportion of respondents appear to experience communication problems when accessing health facilities, this varies from 60.8% in the case of opticians and 72.1% when accessing doctors.
- Communication problems when accessing health facilities increases with age.

Quality of Life

- The most common suggestions made by respondents to improve the quality of Chinese peoples' lives in Nottingham was to have more social events 16%, followed by community centres 14.4% and council help/translation 9.5%.
- **No flashcards or other visual stimuli were used when asked the question 'What do you think could be done to improve your quality of life in Nottingham? Yet almost one in seven respondents stated that the introduction of a Chinese Community Centre would improve their quality of life**.
- 2.5% indicated that they would like political representation/councillors.

Outcomes of Infrastructure Investment Plan BMEVS Consultation Group Event held on Friday 11th June 2004

The following information was collated following the presentation of the work undertaken to review research reports.

What are the issues and dilemmas for developing an infrastructure plan that includes the BME Voluntary Sector?

- Diversity must be taken into account because of the differences in the communities in the BME Voluntary Sector e.g. Indian community.

- There are variations geographically in relation to how BME issues are dealt with.

- Time – in this country has a bearing on how BME communities are able to work within the systems, structures etc.

- Integration – some organisations want to stay independent and not stand under the multicultural umbrella. There needs to be a common understanding of the bigger picture and a democratic process to enable this need to be realised.

- Take account of intergenerational issues.

What would you like to see in the Infrastructure Plan?

- Access to IT and cultural sensitive training (also aids access to information).
- Credible Infrastructure Organisation
- Process for nurturing new groups
- BME and rural proofing
- Volunteering - small scale, links with students and Universities.
- Progression from volunteering to paid work
- Skills swap placements with other sectors
- Social Enterprise
- Community Development
- Priority funding perhaps ring fenced. A commitment to long term funding so that organisations can make medium to long term plans and sustainability.
- Quality Assurance
- Recognition of the importance of faith in BME communities.

Outcomes of the Infrastructure Investment Plan Consultation Group Event held on 6th September 2004

The following information was collated following consultation with participants from across the Voluntary Sector.

- Generalist or Specialist? This is a feature of BME groups that want to do everything – support and advice is needed to help groups focus down to particular tasks that they can achieve well.
- Support to be given to local communities to enable them to carry out their own consultation.
- BME groups need to network more – mainly white groups should not decide what BME needs are.
- There is a need to build trust and share resources between the BMEVS and mainstream infrastructure.
- Further research required in the county particularly North Nottinghamshire to ascertain BME needs.
- A poorer level of funding application is submitted from the BMEVS sector (funder perspective) which restricts the ability to access funding for those for who English is a second language as plain English is the main presentation.
- Pooling ICT resources for hire.

Issues and Recommendations

The most common issues and recommendations were those which came under building the capacity of organisations and the required investment from decision makers and planning at a local and central government level. The main areas were as follows:

- Information
- Funding
- Training
- Marketing & Public Relations
- HR Issues
- Governance
- Engagement in Local Planning

1.0   Information

This area was two fold in terms of working towards the development of an infrastructure. First, organisations suffer from a lack of information in a range of areas such as funding initiatives (local, regional and national), training, support services, good practice. Second, there needs to be structures or systems set in place where sound, up-to-date information on the sector is available to decision makers and those responsible for planning.

In order to respond to this there needs to be considerable work done to collect information held by different agencies, create an information pool that can be examined for gaps and only then should further research be commissioned. The information can then be held centrally for agencies at every level to access.

2.0   Funding

Following on from raising the profile of BMEVS with key stakeholders at local, regional and national levels Voice East Midlands recommends that financial investment is needed so that the sector can operate effectively and at full capacity and on the same funding level as the mainstream voluntary sector. Also recommended is that significant additional resources are needed to build both infrastructure and capacity to respond to local issues and work strategically when called upon.

Also raised was the importance of the ability to fundraise. Recommendations were made about the development of training courses in fundraising and compiling funding strategies particularly to help organisations with the quality and consistency of services.

A few of the funding providers hold occasional funding workshops on the grants available. Given the findings of the report it would seem that these should be more regular, more accessible to the BMEVS in relation to venue, time and cultural sensitivity. Consideration should be given to the

development of affordable and accessible fundraising courses, and to challenging funders to think about acceptable presentation, particularly with regard to plain English when for some communities English is a second language.

3.0 Training

NAAVO report highlights the issue of training for Board and staff members. Training needs to be recognised as an essential requirement to the running of organisations in order to aid future development and needs to be structured rather than ad hoc. Also recommended was a focus on quality standards such as Investors in People and PQASSO. Management training and ICT were also recommended as key areas that need addressing.

Consideration should be given to building the capacity of organisations currently providing management committee training to run more courses and to focus the promotion of these with the BMEVS. Organisations such as Enable can provide support with quality systems and where possible partnership working with a college or First Data could address ICT needs.

4.0 Marketing & Public Relations

Assistance in developing long term marketing and communication strategies was considered important to help increase the image of BMEVS as a reputable provider of services at all levels as well as aiding longer term development.

The need to encourage more young people and women to sit on management committees was also raised as an issue.

Support needs to be in place to offer BME organisations the ability to work in partnership with the business sector which could meet the needs under this head. Help with recruiting volunteers could be sought through NCVS but this would be dependent on a better working relationship with extensive outreach work with the BMEVS.

5.0 Human Resource Issues

Recommendations on the need for support to organisations to develop systems to recruit, manage and retain staff and volunteers were highlighted.

This is not an issue that is confined to the BMEVS alone. Consideration should be given to developing a project that supports organisations through providing HR functions.

6.0   Governance

Reports raised the need to work with managers of organisations in order to address issues in relation to constitutional and the legal status of organisations.

Currently there are a number of providers that can provide support in this area. Consideration should be given to promoting these more effectively and building their capacity to work with BME organisations.

7.0   Engagement in Local Planning

NAAVO recommended that groups require the development of regular forums to enable them to engage in local planning and that there was a need for joint work with agencies to develop a plan for the sector. Organisations need to be encouraged to use the forums open to them such as Voice East Midlands and the Nottinghamshire Black Partnerships so that the voice of the sector is heard.   These forums should be a way of ensuring regular feedback throughout the sector.

8.0   Political Representation

It is clear from this exercise that there are some communities that lack representation in the political arena which affects how their voices are heard and therefore how their needs are met. This is particular of communities that are fragmented living in the county or rural areas including the Chinese and Travellers. Some of these communities have not formed groups or the groups are too small and unable to find support. Any infrastructure developed needs to take account of this and engage in proactive contact with groups.

Conclusion

This report concentrates on the issues and recommendations found in an examination of key research reports undertaken.   These issues and recommendations are not new and are present in reports produced in the 1990s and earlier. What is very clear is that the lack of commitment to take action following the reports has taken its toll on the sector as organisations struggle to deliver services not provided by mainstream provision.   The development of an Infrastructure Plan for the Voluntary Sector is much needed and the involvement, recognition and acknowledgement of the BME Voluntary Sector is crucial.

Recommendation

There is a need for the Voluntary Sector Consortium to take account of the findings of the key reports and include them in the development of the Infrastructure Plan.

This piece of work has not included specific work with Asylum Seekers and Refugees and this is an area of work that is needed and should be included in the Infrastructure Plan.

Appendix A: List of Research Reports

- Mapping the BME Voluntary & Community Sector in the East Midlands (2002)
- Consultation with BME Families in Nottinghamshire (2003)
- Nottingham's Chinese Community 'Quality of Life' Survey (2002)
- Nottingham Association of Afrikan Caribbean Voluntary Organisation (2002)
- The Nottingham Black Skills Audit (1995)
- Communities in Focus – A Study of Housing & Related Needs of BME Communities in South Notts (2004)
- Unheard Voices – A Study of Housing Needs of Asian & African Caribbean Communities (1993)
- Working with Faith Communities (2004)
- Report on the Non-Sustainability of African Caribbean Organisations

Appendix B: Mapping the BME Voluntary & Community Sector in the East Midlands (Voice 2002)

Breakdown of BME Service Provision in Nottinghamshire

Health	19
Education	30
Disability	12
Women	21
Elderly	26
Religious	9
Community Development	23
Youth	22
Arts	12
Criminal Justice	7
Social Care	15
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual	5
Refugee/Asylum Seekers	8
Training	17
Capacity Building	12
Men	20
Sports Recreation	14
Mental Health	9
Employment	16
Business/Economic	6
Environment	7