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We want to change, and they have the power[1]

Findings of Bristol BAME sector review
Final Report for Power to Change
by Black South-West Network
Bristol, 28th September 2018

BSWN
Working for race equality

Contents

[1]Interview with Malcolm X Community Centre.

Executive summary

- This report presents findings of a review of the BAME-led voluntary and community sector in Bristol. Its methods included survey and interview research with BAME-led organisations. Participants were also involved in a series of consultative roundtable meetings.
- The legacy of austerity and enduring underinvestment – which stems form lack of equity in funding and procurement – have left Bristol's BAME-led sector wounded. Survival has become the key measure of success, and most organisations rely on tight budgets and depend on voluntary work in order to survive.
- Out of 33 organisations surveyed, 42% have no paid staff and fully rely on volunteers to deliver their activities and services, whereas only one, or 3%, does not rely volunteers at all. Further, 30% of these organisations operate on annual budgets below £5,000, and additional 18% has annual budgets between £5,001 and £25,000.
- Underinvestment continues to cripple business development capacity of BAME-led organisations, and the funding squeeze keeps putting a strain on collaborative modes of working. Finally,

the Black component has been removed from infrastructure support in the city's community sector and lack of trust is an issue.
- BAME-led organisations have a strong sense of identity and a strong desire for autonomy. They accept change is inevitable but it needs to be managed in an inclusive and respectful manner.
- There is a need for infrastructure support to foster a BAME-led sector that is well connected and appropriately resourced.
- Incoming investment is the only way to deflate the tension between competition for funding and the pressure to collaborate.
- Collaboration needs to be seen not as a starting point, but as an outcome of process of fostering connectivity. This needs to be linked with building trust and building capacity within and amongst BAME-led organisations.
- Recommendations include proposals to: (1) work towards equity of funding, (2) create parallel networks for BAME-led organisations and funders to foster connectivity, (3) implement an intensive and collaborative capacity building programme, and (4) invest in supported and collaborative asset transfer strategies to acknowledge that rebuilding the sector is a long-term process.

1. Introduction

"Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector organisations have taken a battering in this city… We are wounded. We're wounded as a sector. There is a desperate need for investment and ideas." This is how Nilaari described the state of Bristol's BAME-led sector. Others consulted for this report agreed, and linked this state of affairs with the impact of austerity and the sector's disconnect from power. They also identified a need for strategic investment and infrastructure support to effect positive change within the sector.

This report presents findings of a review of the BAME-led voluntary and community sector in Bristol. While it draws on the term "BAME" to align its findings with broader policy discourses, the term itself is problematic and was rejected by some of the research participants, who self-identified as "African heritage" and "Asian" rather than "BAME".

The research was commissioned by Power to Change and conducted by the Black South-West Network (BSWN) between May and September 2018. Its overall aims of the project were to establish:
- the size and make up of the BAME voluntary and community sector in Bristol;
- the opportunities and obstacles faced by community anchors and organisations in BAME communities in Bristol in achieving greater sustainability;
- the type of infrastructure support needed to foster a resilient community businesses and organisations.

The report is structured as follows: firstly, it outlines research methods to substantiate claims to the validity of findings presented here. Secondly, given the absence of BAME-led community anchor organisations in Bristol, it profiles 10 organisations that partly fulfil the definition of a community anchor used by Power to Change ("organisation that often own and manage community assets, and support small community organisations to reach out across the community"). Thirdly, it provides a granular overview of Bristol's BAME-led sector through a focus on its overall structure, enduring underinvestment, ongoing transitions, investment opportunities, and future strategy. Finally, following concluding remarks, follows a set of recommendations for the sector and its funders whish aim to address funding inequity, foster greater connectivity, promote capacity building, and support asset transfer.

2. Research methods

The project was designed as a mixed-method study comprised of a quantitative survey of the city's BAME-led organisations during the first phase, and a series of qualitative interviews with key actors involved in the sector during the second phase. In addition, three roundtable events with representatives of BAME-led organisations were held on 17th April, 5th June, and 25th September 2018. Alongside survey and interview data, records of roundtable discussions also fed into the findings and recommendations of this report.

To provide a granular overview of Bristol's BAME sector, BSWN designed a survey comprising 23 questions that fell into four broader categories:

- organisation details (name, postcode and contact details);
- size and reach (employees, volunteers, activities and key groups worked with);
- assets and finances (budget, income generation, assets and loans);
- challenges and opportunities (views on strengths, opportunities, challenges and support needs).

The survey was advertised and completed online, using the Survey Monkey platform. It went live on 25th April 2018 and closed on 30th May 2018. All responses were collected using the same website link distributed by email and through social media, which was shared by a number of accounts with significant BAME following including Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees, his Deputy Asher Craig, and many others, as well as sent directly via WhatsApp to community leaders and key actors.

The survey was open for over five weeks, a week longer than it was initially planned, to ensure all community organisations and businesses known to BSWN have a chance to complete it. The final response rate was good but a number of groups had to be directly invited to complete the survey, often repeatedly. For smaller groups in particular

it was a considerable time commitment. While the survey could be completed within 10-12 minutes by a person familiar with their organisation's finances and legal status, and with a good level of IT literacy, the average time to complete the survey varied considerably and grew from the initial 16 minutes for organisations following link distributed through social media, to 23 minutes once organisations that had to be chased also participated. To illustrate the extremities, a community anchor organisation that employs dedicated business development officers completed the survey in 11 minutes, while a grassroots organisation took 1 hour and 16 minutes to complete it. For groups that struggled to complete the survey online, there was also an option to complete it with BSWN researcher, but this resource remained underutilised.

Overall, the survey attracted 37 responses. Of those, three were invalid as they came from groups that are not BAME-led, and one was a duplicate and hence was also removed. The number of valid responses was therefore n=33, and the names of participating organisations are shown in Appendix 6.1. Amongst those, there were organisations that identified themselves as community anchors (n=4), community organisations (n=23), social enterprises (n=9) and community businesses (n=2). Several (n=4) described themselves as other: registered social housing provider, building businesses (construction and renovation), youth and family charity, and simply LGBT. Answers amount to more than 33 as respondents were allowed to select more than one option.

The organisations types were defined in the following way:
- Community anchors: often own and manage community assets, and support small community organisations to reach out across the community.
- Community business: shops, farms, cafes, or any other businesses that are accountable to their community and aim to generate positive local impacts.
- Community organisations: not for profit, voluntary and community groups formed by people who want to influence public

life or address specific issues of concern.
- Faith-based organisations: values and mission based on particular faith or religion, and most often drawing their activists from a particular faith group.
- Social enterprises: businesses that have a social impact (financial, social, or environmental wellbeing) as well as maximising profit for shareholders.

No faith-based groups responded to the survey, despite it was advertised through the Multi-Faith Forum as well as promoted directly with BAME-led places of worship known to BSWN. It is possible these groups did not see our research as directly relevant to their work. To a degree, interviews findings corroborate that interpretation. They shown that while faith groups engage in collaboration with other community organisations, this is often limited to a narrow range of neighbourhood initiatives, for example litter picks or religious celebrations such as the Grand Iftar. Otherwise, they reportedly remain focussed on their religious function. For example, Bristol Somali Forum said: "mosques are always in their nutshells, they always want to do things in their own way". Overall, interviews implied the interests and ability of faith groups to work collaboratively within the broader sector is limited.

The full list of organisations that took part in the survey is provided in Appendix 8.1. With the exception of faith groups, BSWN is aware of nine BAME-led organisations that did not take part in the survey, despite being repeatedly invited to do so. One of them, the Rose Green Centre, subsequently took part in an interview. Survey research is often described as inaccessible for BAME communities, and this may well have been a factor that affected the response rate here.
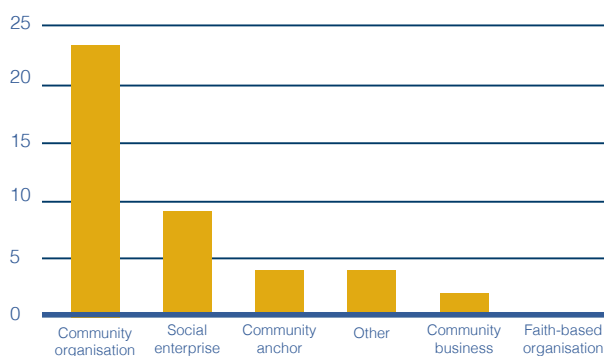
Following an analysis of survey findings, BSWN proceeded with the second, qualitative phase of the research and interviewed representatives of Bristol's BAME-led organisations and other key actors involved in the sector. While the online survey engaged 33 BAME-led organisations, interviews at the second phase aimed to contextualise its findings through in-depth reflection about opportunities and challenges facing the sector. They were carried out between June and September 2019, and the list of interview participants is shown in Appendix 8.2. All interviews followed a topic guide shown in Appendix 8.3. They were semi-structured, which means they had an orderly but open format. This ensured each interview covered the same topics and was similar in scope and focus, but it also allowed participants to express their thoughts and reflections freely.

All interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically using nVivo, qualitative data analysis software package. This analysis was supplemented with thematic analysis of notes form roundtable discussions held in April, June and September.

Fig. 1: Respondents (n=33) by organisation type.

3. BAME-led community anchors?

In the course of research no BAME-led organisation was found to fully meet the twofold criteria of community anchor: managing community assets on the one hand, and supporting smaller community organisations to reach out across the community. Further, the validity and utility of this category in relation to BAME-led organisations is limited, given community anchors serve geographic communities, most often hyper-local, and BAME-led organisations serve communities of interests, which may be geographically dispersed. Further, our research participants repeatedly said in interviews and roundtable discussions that the notion of assets understood solely as real estate is limited, and stressed the importance of seeing social networks, or relationships of trust, as community assets. For that reason, we provide profiles of ten organisations: four that own or manage a physical asset and aspire to the role of support organisation but require support themselves at present; two that own or manage a physical asset but do not aspire to the role of support organisation; and four that aspire to the role of support organisation and already perform it, at least partially.

3.1. Support organisations with assets

Malcolm X Community Centre

The Centre was established in 1982 and it is a Company Limited by Guarantee. It has four staff members, supported by ten volunteers. It describes its key aim as "community empowerment" and its main activities include work on community cohesion, education, wellbeing, and hire space. The key group the Centre works with is the African and Caribbean community, and its annual budget is £50,001-£100,000. It mainly relies on income from assets (the building in owns in St. Paul's ward of Bristol), trading, and member's subscriptions.

The three main challenges Malcolm X is currently facing are:

- insufficient capacity in fundraising and business development;
- difficulty in securing political support / voice in policy discussions;
- volatile operating environment which undermines long-term sustainability plans.

Full Circle @Docklands

The organisation, which described itself as a community anchor and a youth and family charity, was established in 1980 and it is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It only has one paid staff member, and twenty volunteers. It describes its key aim as to "raise aspirations and achievements of young people" and its main activities include running youth clubs, sport clubs, and holiday activities. The key group the Docklands work with are BAME communities, mainly from St. Paul's ward and the inner city, and it has particular interest in girls' groups, women's groups, men's groups, and young people's groups. Its annual budget is £100,001-£200,000. It mainly relies on income from assets (it leases a building from the City Council and hires rooms), grants and individual donations.

The three main challenges the Docklands are currently facing are:

- difficulties in securing core funding;
- difficulties in securing funding to employ people for specific projects;
- insufficient capacity in fundraising and business development.

Kuumba

Kuumba, which was established in 1974 and operates as a Company Limited by Guarantee, owns a building in St. Pauls but does not consider itself a community anchor. It has no paid staff and relies on the work of seven volunteers to deliver on its aims, which are to "provide affordable office spaces and the entertainment hall for community use. To

create new services for children and families, and to support the growth of health and wellbeing services". It works locally in Ashley ward and St. Pauls specifically, to provide partnership services: children, healthy eating and lifestyle programmes, and I.T. afterschool support cafe for young people. Kuumba's turnover is, however, very modest and stands below £5,000, and it's main source is trading and loans.

The key challenges identified by Kuumba are:

- insufficient capacity in fundraising and business development;
- other – insufficient support from others in the community.

Phoenix Social Enterprise

Phoenix Social Enterprise was established in 1991 and its current status is Company Limited by Guarantee. It relies on six paid staff and nine volunteers to deliver on its main aim, which is "education, employment and training" for all BAME groups and other disadvantaged groups such as older people and young working class. It works locally, nationally and transnationally and draws on EU funding. Its main activities include creating employment opportunities, educational work with schools, colleges and universities, and training with teachers, young people, and professionals in diverse settings. Its annual budget is £100,001-£200,000 and it is generated through commissioning, income from assets, trading, and grants. Phoenix owns the building where it is based.

The three key challenges Phoenix identifies for its operations are:

- difficulties in securing core funding;
- difficulties in securing funding to employ people for specific projects;
- insufficient capacity in fundraising and business development.

3.2. Other organisations with assets

Nilaari Agency

Nilaari was established in 1999 and its status is Company Limited by Guarantee. It has 10 paid staff, and it is also supported by 11 volunteers. Its overarching aim is to "raise awareness of mental health issues" and its main activities are to provide social support, counselling and equalities training. It engages a diverse group of BAME users across the whole city. Its annual income is £100,001-£200,000 and it is generated through commissioning of mental health services, trading, and income from assets. Nilaari owns the building where it is based.

The two key challenges Nilaari identifies for its operations are:

- volatile operating environment undermines sustainability plans;
- other – changing needs of clients due to benefits changes.

Rose Green Centre

Rose Green Centre has not completed the survey, but at the interview stage advised it was originally established in 1963 as a cricket club, and it operates as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Its turnover is £260,000 a year and aside form a building and cricket / football grounds it also owns a nearly four-acre parcel of land that is not currently utilised. It generates income through trading, membership and hire of the buildings, grounds, and community hall. It employs one permanent staff member to do administrative work, and a number of casual staff for the bar and during events – but largely relies on voluntary work of club members. The Centre is mainly used by cricket and football clubs, and currently does not aspire to become a community anchor organisation.

3.3. Support organisations without assets

Ujima Radio C.I.C.

The Radio was established in 2008 and it is a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee. It has five staff members and eighty volunteers. It describes its key aim as "to provide a platform for BAME talent and creativity as well as a platform to raise awareness of BAME issues." Its main activities include broadcast media, collaborative arts projects, and organising events. It engages a diverse range of BAME individuals and collectives, as well as White British, and it is active citywide. Its annual budget is £100,001-£200,000. It mainly relies on income form grant funding and assets (broadcasting equipment).

The three main challenges Ujima is currently facing are:

- difficulties in securing core funding;
- difficulties in securing funding to employ people for specific projects;
- insufficient capacity in fundraising and business development.

Bristol Somali Forum

The Forum was established in 2010 and operates as an Unincorporated Association. It has no paid staff and relies on the work of nine volunteers. Its key aim is "voice and influence" for its members, that is grassroots Somali community organisations. Its main activities include promoting a united voice of the Somali community and representing it in the city. Given they are a membership organisation which plays an important role in terms of public engagement, the Somali Forum can be classified as a support organisation. Its annual budget is relatively modest at £10,001-£25,000 and it is mainly generated through loans, tithes and donations, followed by grant funding.

- lack of space to operate from, such as offices or drop-in space;
- difficulty in retaining volunteers.

Bristol Somali Resource Centre

Somali Resource Centre is a Community Organisation which was established in 2008. It has two staff members and three volunteers. Its key aims is ensuring "equal access to mainstream services and equal treatment for BAME community in Bristol" and it is specifically focussed on the Somali community. Its main activities include providing information, advice and guidance to individuals, running advocacy and awareness raising activities and, finally, engagement and representation of BAME communities. Given the volume of their work and their role in awareness raising and public engagement, Somali Resource Centre can be classified as a support organisation. It engages Somali and Muslim communities with the wider public of Bristol. Its annual budget is £25,001-£50,000 and it mainly relies on grant funding and, to a lesser extent, individual donations to generate it.

The three main challenges the Somali Resource Centre is facing are:

- difficulties in securing funding to employ people for specific projects;
- lack of space to operate from, such as offices or drop-in space;
- other – Brexit.

Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group

Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group was set up in 1989 and it has the status of Unincorporated Association. It employs 16 staff and has 10 volunteers. Its aim is to "support grassroots Chinese community" and its main activities include practical support for the Chinese community and carers in the wider region. Given the volume of their work and their importance to the Chinese community, the group can be classified as a support organisation. Its annual income of £100,001-£200,000 is generated through grants, commissioning, and members subscriptions.

The three main challenges the organisation is facing now are:

- difficulties in securing core funding;
- insufficient capacity in fundraising and business development;
- volatile operating environment undermines sustainability plans.

Dhek Bhal

The organisation was set up in 1986 and operates as a Company Limited by Guarantee. It employs 55 people and has four volunteers as well. As for its aim, Dhek Bhal "exists to promote the health and wellbeing of older people and carers" and primarily works with the South Asian community of Bristol and South Glos. Its key activities include home care, day care, and trips and activities for services users. Given the volume of their work and their importance to the South Asian community, the group can be classified as a support organisation. Its annual budget is

above £500,000 and it is generated through commissioning, subscriptions, grants and donations.

The main challenge for Dhek Bhal currently is:

- difficulties in securing political support / voice in policy discussions.

4. Understanding Bristol's BAME-led sector

As shown in the previous section, a focus on community anchors is not the most productive approach when analysing the most immediate needs of the BAME-led sector in Bristol. While some organisations do aspire to such status, and more might do so in future, not a single organisation researched for this review appeared ready to become a community anchor. This indicates a need for extensive investment, capacity building, and fostering collaborations before BAME-led community anchors can emerge in the city.

The section that follows further elaborates on these themes. It provides a detailed overview of survey, interviews, and roundtables data to generate a sectoral overview of BAME-led organisations. Firstly, it starts with a review of its overall structure. Secondly, it describes the enduring effects of austerity and underinvestment, which cripple the sector. Thirdly, it moves on to discussing the ongoing transitions taking place in the city and within the sector. Fourthly, it looks into income generation strategies. And finally, it outlines a vision for a connected, capable and resourced BAME sector. After this section, concluding remarks follow and the report moves on to discussing practical recommendations.

4.1. Structure, size, and aims of the sector

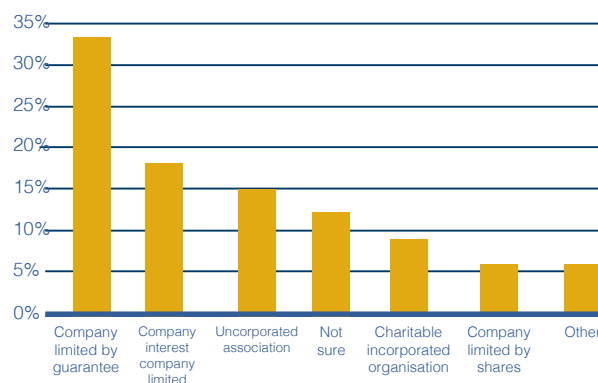The table below shows legal status of the organisations, which took part in the survey.

Fig. 2: The organisation's legal status (n=33)

The third of all organisations surveyed had the status Company Limited by guarantee, and almost one in five had the status of a Community Interest company. Only one in ten had charitable incorporated status, and no organisations reported to have a legal status of a Community Benefit Society, a Trust, a Co-operative Society or a Community Interest Company Limited by Shares.

The surveyed organisations were relatively small: 42% have no paid staff and are entirely reliant on volunteers to deliver their activities. Just three, or 9%, of organisations employed more than 10 staff. On the other hand, just a single organisation, or 3%, did not use volunteers; 66% had 1-10 volunteers, and a third relied on more than 10 volunteers to deliver its mission.

Fig. 2: Number of staff (n=33)t

0	42%
1-5	36%
6-10	12%
10+	10+

Fig. 3: Number of volunteers (n=33)

0	3%
1-5	33%
6-10	33%
11-50	24%
50+	6%

Bristol's BAME-led organisations have various aims. Respondents were asked to define the main aim their organisation is seeking to achieve in an open way, and the most common key words are shown in fig. 5 below. It is striking how the main themes cluster around knowledge transfer, awareness raising, and practical support, race and ethnicity, and voice and influence.

When analysed thematically, rather than by occurrence of key words, race equality as such dropped in significance and instead the focus was on community development and cohesion, arts, culture and creativity, and voice and influence – which were most often oriented towards empowering activities and aimed to foster exchange across cultures, and to strengthen BAME voice in through that. Support work with children, young people and families, and around mental health and wellbeing, was also a prominent set of aims. There was also substantial clustering around the themes of environment, health, and wellbeing, sometimes in connection with food and healthy eating. There were also several intersectional BAME organisations engaging with the issues of gender and sexual equality – as shown in fig. 6.[2]

[2]Data is not presented as percentages here because respondents were asked to order answers in terms of their importance, and then scores were assigned based on that.
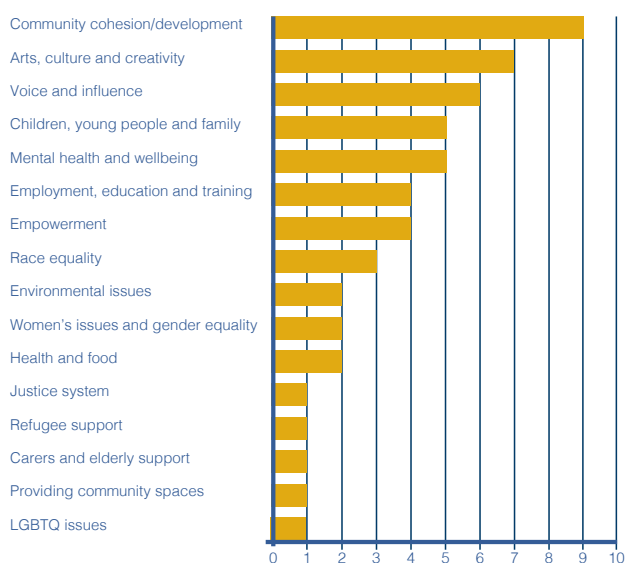

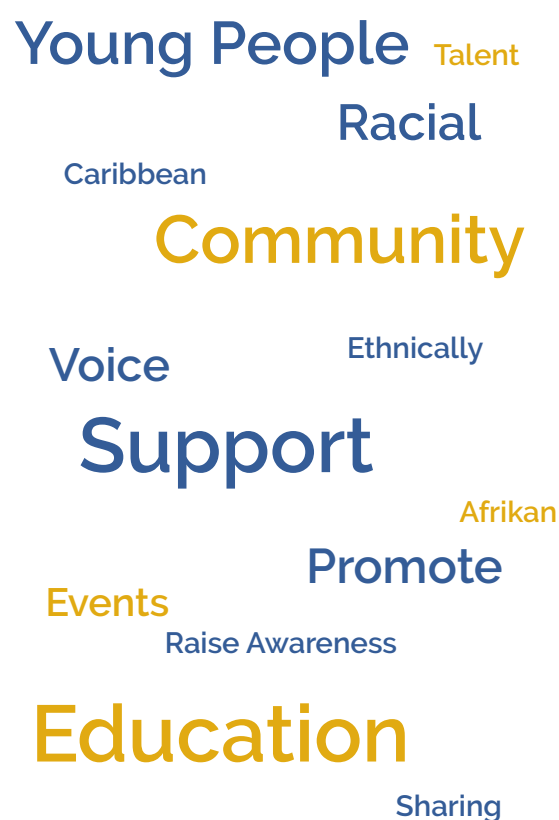Fig. 6: Main aims that BAME organisations seek to achieve: themes

Fig. 5: Main aims that BAME organisations seek to achieve: words

Over 90% of respondents identified specific ethnic groups they work with, usually either BAME in general, or African and Caribbean heritage specifically. Three-quarters identified a specified geographic area but of those, the majority stated "citywide." Of note, a number of organisations stated they work nationally and transnationally as well. A small proportion had an area of benefit mainly restricted to parts of the city, mostly Easton, Lawrence Hill, St. Paul's and Ashley wards. Just over a half identified specific interest groups, such as: women, families, young people, sexual minorities, as well as those with physical disability or mental health issues. While also just over a half stated they engage with religious groups, the vest majority here stated "any and all."
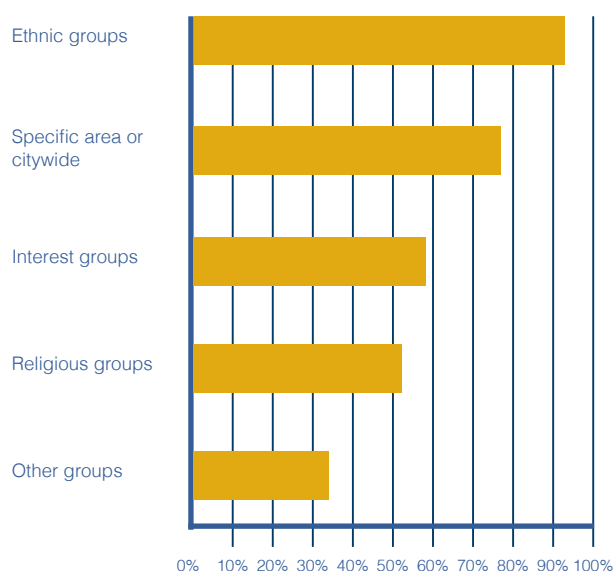

Fig. 7: Types of groups Bristol's BAME organisations work with

4.2. Enduring austerity, underinvested sector

Our research shows that the impact of austerity decimated BAME-led organisations in Bristol and these effects are ongoing. While spending cuts affected the whole city, there was a widespread view amongst research participants that **the BAME sector was disproportionately affected, because it entered the period of austerity from a position of disadvantage and vulnerability**. This, to some extent, explains why the sector may now be seen as failing. Locality said: "Some organisations, they've got a bit of fat –

so they can take one or two, or three punches and they're still standing. Other organisations without that resource may be are a bit more fragile. And then, people will look at that and make a judgement about why Black organisations aren't as good".

The withdrawal of funding from 2010 onwards was often abrupt and unexpected for BAME-led groups, even those which own assets. Full Circle @Docklands said: "funding was cut and we thought we were going to go under. Literally everyone took a cut in pay. We had to cut wages, worked one day less, worked for free in some cases to get us back on an even keel". Furthermore, the effects of austerity are enduring. Bristol Somali Forum said that "businesses are not thriving as they used to… Why? Because of the cuts, because of austerity". This led the sector to a position where merely hanging in became a mark of success. Asked about their main achievement in the last ten years Ujima, an award-winning community radio, said: "still being here today… Survival".

Interviews painted similar stories of the loss of funding, fragmentation of the sector, and an urgent need for investment and support, but there was much discontent with this state of affairs. Organisations aspired to more than mere survival. For Ujima, for example, "economic empowerment is the key way of getting out of some of our struggles." In their view, such empowerment is perfectly achievable given "the vast economic wealth that we have in this fantastic city, so for a little we can do a lot" (Ujima). There was a clear sense across interviews that surviving alone is not good enough for the BAME-led sector, and that investment is needed to allow it grow.

The need for investment in the sector is driven by the enduring legacy of austerity, and the effects of lack of funding equity. The fact that many BAME-led organisations in Bristol are entirely voluntary-led, as reported above, corresponds with their financial position.
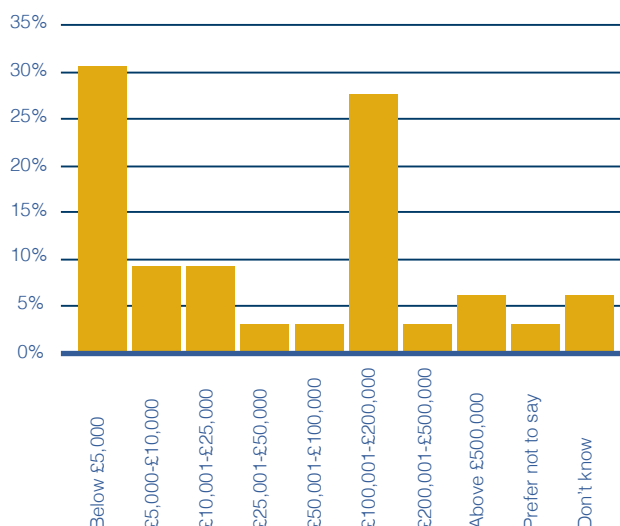
Fig. 8: Budget, or turnover, in 2017/2018 financial year.

A third of organisations surveyed operate on budgets lower than £5,000 a year and half on less than £25,000 a year, which is barely sufficient to appoint one full time member of staff. On the other hand, over a quarter reported incomes of £100,000-£200,000 a year, one (a BAME-led carnival) reported income above £200,000, and two (a social housing provider and a care services provider, which both are BAME-led) reported incomes above £500,000. However, such higher income is not necessarily invested in business development. For example, despite the relatively high budget, the carnival still heavily relies on volunteers, and only in one case (the care services provider) a high budget translated into relatively high proportion of paid staff. Further, **when higher income did translate into higher number of paid staff, this generally funded service delivery activities and even the relatively well-funded organisations reported insufficient business development capacity.**

Further, the loss of funding and enduring underinvestment affected so many BAME-led organisations that from individual these effects became systemic, and impacted the sector as a whole. Existing collaborations and partnerships could not continue, and organisations started to compete for increasingly scarce resources. Participants repeatedly pointed out that **when funding is squeezed, collaborative modes of working are breaking up.** According to Nilaari for example, austerity and underinvestment had

a detrimental effect on BAME-led sector's to cooperate, because this "led to organisations almost fighting with one another to survive".

In addition, as the capacity of BAME–led organisations to cooperate was being eroded, the Black Development Agency (BDA) got closed. Its role was transferred to Voscur, a mainstream agency, and so **the Black component was removed from infrastructure support,** which was previously provided by the BDA. As Full Circle @ Docklands put it: "I remember attending various things at the BDA and getting support from them, and [now] I believe the black fabric came out of that".

4.3. Transition, adaptability and autonomy

Notwithstanding this bleak landscape, participants of the roundtable held in April identified two main **opportunities** for strengthening the city's BAME-led sector. They recognised the need to **rebuild trust and collaboration** between organisations as a priority, followed by a need to **develop a better understanding of the sector's role and its leverage in the city.** On the other hand, key **obstacles** mentioned during that roundtable were associated mainly with **lack of funding** for the sector as an external factor, and **lack of capacity and skills** within it.

Discrimination was also mentioned as an obstacle during roundtables, although research participants acknowledged the change in Bristol's leadership since 2016 as positive. This process started with the election of Marvin Rees as the Mayor and was followed by several high-profile appointments, including Councillor Asher Craig as his Deputy. But the pace of change on the ground is considered slow. For example, Bristol Somali Forum said: "we thought there would be a positive impact on our organisation, but still there is nothing coming". While BAME-led organisations admit they "are definitely being heard", as Ujima put it, some also pointed out the **persistence of institutional racism** around of the Mayor's office. Phoenix said: "discrimination exists at a very, very high level. Although the leadership has changed, they are under constant

pressure from people who simply don't like their skin colour".

Another problem is the **capacity to exercise influence**; many BAME-led organisations, such as the Rose Green Centre, said they "don't have the capacity" to go to meetings, or extensively engage with the city's leadership. There was also a concern that while **Bristol's most senior officials now include BAME representatives, the city is comprised of multiple layers of governance and influence.** Voscur asked: "Bristol University, look at their advisory board, does that reflect the student population? Same with Bristol City College, Merchant Venturers. Let's look at all of these power structures and places, the LEP, WECA… We're not there yet because those structures are powerful and they haven't changed in all these times for a reason". So while **the recent political change was seen as the first step in a broader transition**, it was widely accepted that the BAME-led sector has to transition as well.

The survey yielded similar result regarding the main opportunities and challenges facing the sector. Two-thirds of respondents selected insufficient capacity in fundraising and business development as having a crippling effect on their operations. Over a half mentioned problems with securing core funding. On the other hand, despite heavy reliance on volunteers across Bristol's BAME sector in general, only one organisation stated they had problems retaining volunteers, and this was the least-selected answer option. This shows that the key strength, and the key asset of the sector, are BAME people themselves. Seven respondents pointed to other challenges, ranging from time pressure and complicated, or informal and often obscure networking environment, to constant changes of policy context in which they operate (e.g. changes to welfare benefits), as well as Brexit in general.
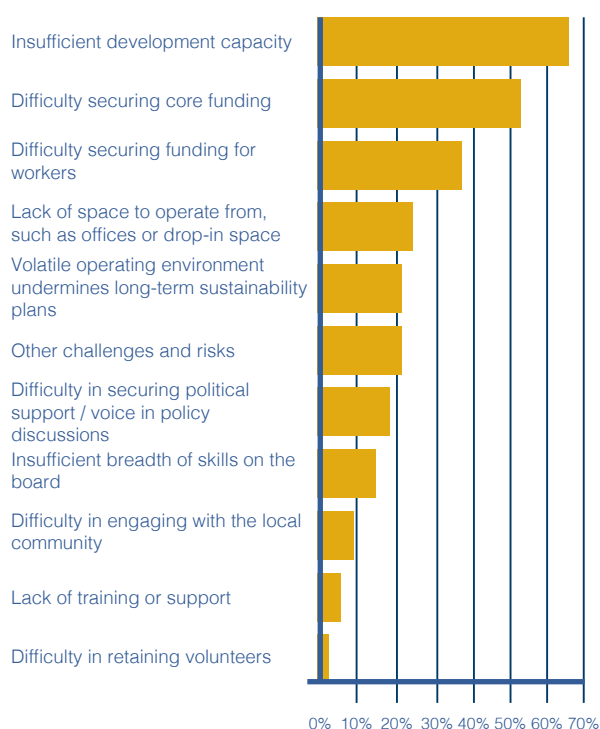
Insufficient development capacity

Difficulty securing core funding

Difficulty securing funding for workers

Lack of space to operate from, such as offices or drop-in space

Volatile operating environment undermines long-term sustainability plans

Other challenges and risks

Difficulty in securing political support / voice in policy discussions

Insufficient breadth of skills on the board

Difficulty in engaging with the local community

Lack of training or support

Difficulty in retaining volunteers

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

Fig. 9: The three main challenges facing your organisation

Asked to identify up to three **key opportunities**, BAME-led organisations referred to their growth needs in three main ways:

- increasing the intensity of their operations: from boosting their business trading or commissioned work to capacity building and asset transfer opportunities;
- widening the scope of their activities: either by serving new groups in the wider community, or through widening the geographic reach of their operations;
- building new collaborations and partnerships.

In the face of multiple challenges, **Bristol's BAME organisations show high levels of adaptability and resilience**. This is also reflected in ways of generating income, which are diverse. Fig. 11 shows the overall scores achieved for each income generation category.

In what links with the above points in terms of challenges, the strengths of the sector were clear and can be reduced to one thing only: people. Asked to freely name their key strengths, respondents referred to two key themes. The first one included intangible community assets such as knowledge, creativity, dedication, self-reliance, skills and the wealth of experience amongst community members. The second theme covered the quality of community relationships of which included reputation, trust, and social networks built over decades of joint work, as well as many organisations being membership-based.

Strong   Groups

Team   Reputation

Experience

Knowledge

Dynamic

Community

Potential

Commitment

Trusted   Networks

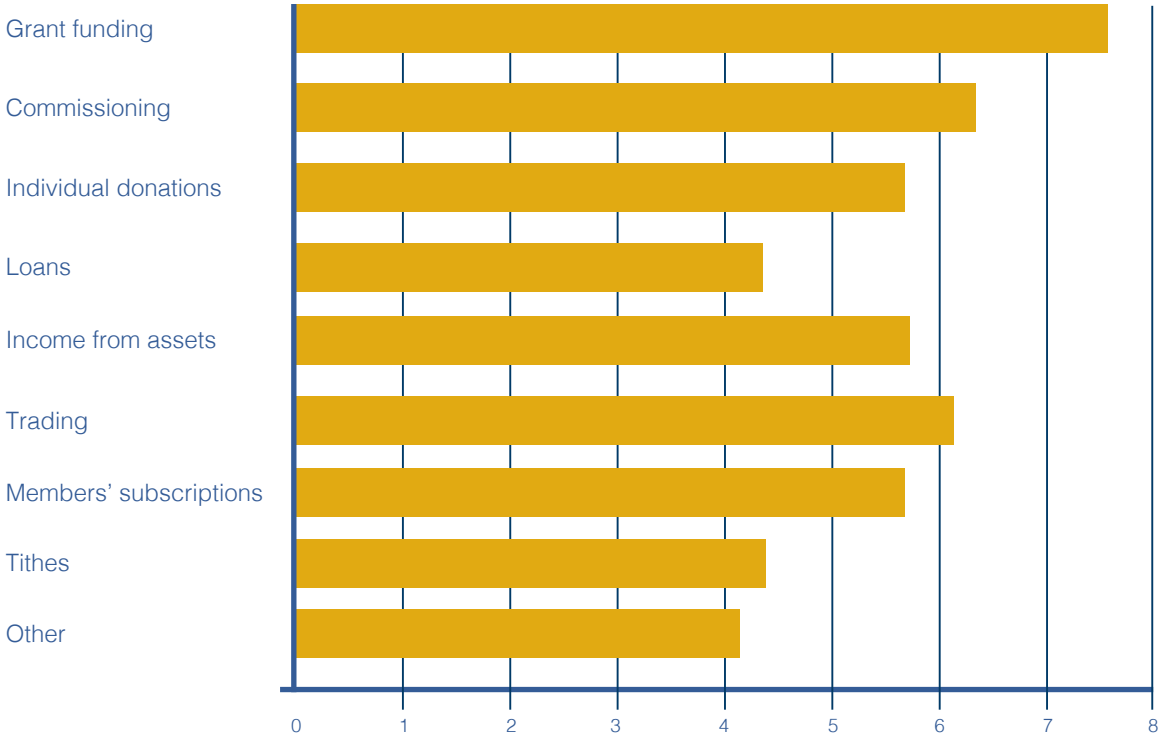Fig. 10: The key strengths of your organisation (words)

Fig. 11: Income generating streams of Bristol's BAME organisations

Grant funding, commissioning, trading, assets, donations and subscriptions are all well utilised as sources of income. In terms of first choices, grant funding was selected by 50% of participants, trading by 24%, and commissioning by 17%. 16% of them primarily rely on individual donations, 13% generate income from assets (this includes both depreciating and non-depreciating assets) and 8% rely on loans.

While surviving BAME-led organisations proved to be adaptable and resilient, they also had a **strong sense of identity** and they expressed an equally **strong desire for autonomy**. Kuumba said "I love us being self-reliant, you know. Even though we struggle, the thought of being self-reliant… I like that". While not change averse, at the same time they displayed little desire for change that would not be in line with their fundamental objectives: "I don't think we should go for funding where it's got red tape and it's got outputs, because then it dictates you what to do, and how you do it. We don't need funding that's going to dictate who were are, and what we do". There was also a concern about honouring the identity and legacy of BAME-led organisations, especially amongst African-Caribbean participants who have operated in the city for decades. The Rose Green Centre said: "the challenge for a lot of organisations like us is how we sustain a legacy". Kuumba expressed a similar sentiment: "this building has been part of the community for over 30 years and I would hate to see it fall into the wrong hands. This is why I stay here to try my best to keep it going."

This drive to maintain autonomy does not, however, preclude the ability to further adapt to an evolving operating environment. Ujima emphasised that many of the relatively successful BAME-led organisations "are now totally different than they were three years ago… We've done the same with Ujima. The others, that have gone by the wayside, haven't done that". **Change is inevitable and BAME-led organisations accept it, but they would like for this change to be managed in an inclusive and respectful manner.** Organisations should not be asked to implement changes, which they are not

ready for, or to change in a way that would undermine their core values.

4.4. Asset transfer, income generation, and loan funding

Four organisations of those surveyed stated they own a building and another eight said they own other types of assets. Their specific types were too diverse to present it quantitatively but included tangible assets: vehicles, technical equipment, event equipment, and in two cases a lease on a building, which then was sublet to generate income. Non-tangible assets – goodwill specifically – were only mentioned by one organisation.

Half of the organisations surveyed stated they were interested in taking on an asset. Of those, four organisations already had an asset in mind: in two cases this was a building, and in one case intellectual property.
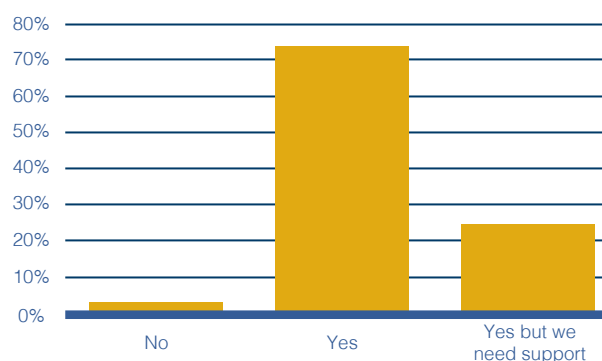
Fig. 12: Do you want to develop business to generate income?

Overall, **asset transfer was seen as a possible, but by no means certain way of ensuring financial sustainability** for BAME-led groups. For example, Kuumba observed that asset ownership may sometimes attract undesirable attention from those who do not necessarily prioritise social outcomes: "too many people come up here, and all they can say is Kuumba, you're sitting on a gold mine. And I don't like that term, because it makes me feel the wrong people come in." Dhek Bhal, which proved highly adaptable during the years of austerity and changed its business model in line with changing funding environment by successfully moving away from grants towards commissioning, said

asset ownership would not be appropriate for them: "We have no aspirations for a purpose-built centre. We have explored that when we were in our earlier days, but eventually decided that we would just stay put. I've spoken to people who have had assets and they regret it. They have now moved into community centres themselves". These comments show that asset transfer should be the outcome, not the starting point, of the business planning process.
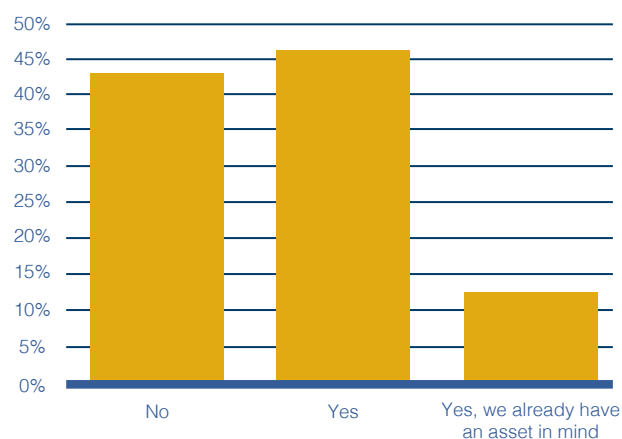

Fig. 13: Is your organisation interested in taking on an asset

The organisations surveyed were significantly keener to improve their income generating capacities in general – only one was not interesting in developing business to generate income. Eight mentioned various support needs to be able to generate income, and this included help with fundraising and building capacity within organisations. In a single case, financial help was needed to pay fees for networking events.
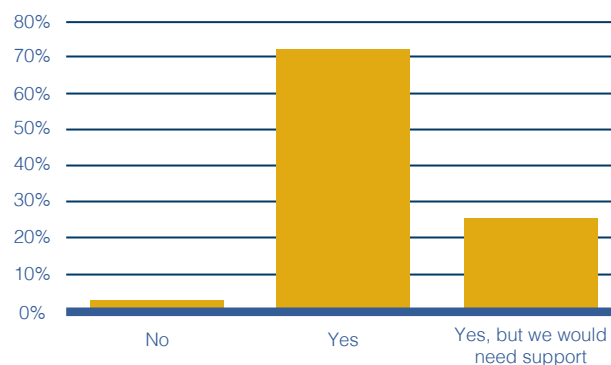

Fig. 14: Do you want to develop business to generate income?

There was, however, much reluctance in accessing loan funding. Many respondents answered "no" to an open question about

their interest in taking a loan, and one even said "Hell NO". Others further qualified their reluctance, saying their organisations are too small, or too new, and a loan would be a risk factor. Some also pointed out loans are haram, or said they would only consider halal loans. Further, some commented that they would only consider a loan because their funding position and austerity more broadly leave them no choice at all but to lend money. Another respondent said: "Our sectors has been severely effected by austerity and we reach out to all… We are working towards being sustainable and I don't believe a loan would serve us best now."

Some respondents were cautiously interested in loans to invest, especially if it was "low-interest, less pressure loan - seed capacity for trading" or a funding stream that could help with "restructuring our organisation." Other also simply said yes. While the picture here was mixed and only about a third of organisations were interested in a loan, it seems this may be a viable option for some.

4.5. Towards a connected, capable and resourced BAME sector

Given relatively widespread mistrust in the system, which badly failed BAME communities, and African heritage communities in particular, **fostering connectivity and developing capacity within the BAME-led has to start with rebuilding trust. Nilaari said: "we need some sort of expert to come in and work with us, and to build us up again. To build our confidence to trust** each other and say how we can work together. Coming in, flying in, giving a piece of work and saying do something for a couple of years is the biggest waste of time. What we need is a real investment… We're talking a minimum of five years upwards".

The role of BSWN as a potential broker of partnerships and as an infrastructural organisation that can build or provide capacity recurred in interviews. Bristol City Council said: "we don't need another Black Development Agency because we already have BSWN so all you need to do is.. to identify what those needs are and to ensure

that [BSWN is] sufficiently supported to enable [it] to provide the kind of support that those organisations need". The importance of trust was also often underscored in relation to BSWN. Nilaari said: "Black South West Network, they've been around for a while so organisations will trust them. I trust them".

Roundtables showed **a need for infrastructure support to foster a BAME-led sector that is more connected and better resourced**, with a concurrent need for more accountability in procurement and funding, more transparency in decision-making, and a safe and facilitated environment for collaboration within the sector. A number of discussants also mentioned a need for BAME-led hub, or business incubator, to foster a vibrant and strong sector. This was reflected in the survey, which identified fundraising, marketing, collaborations, networking, accessing investment, business planning, and political influence as priority areas for infrastructure support.
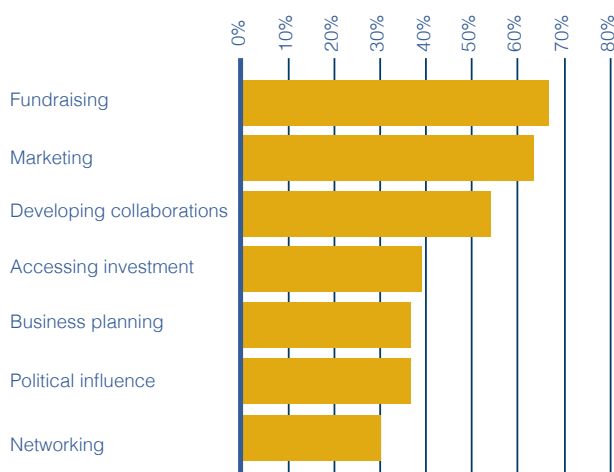

Fig 15: Five key areas for support needed for your organisation.

Going forward, three key points emerge form the research.

The first point is **the tension between the sector's need to compete for funding on the one hand, and the external pressure on it to collaborate on the other**. The very scarcity of resources, which drives the need for external investment into BAME-led organisations, partly hinders opportunities for collaborative working – so there is a need for investment to better connect BAME-led organisations in the

first place.

The second point relates to **capacity-building as a two-way street**. Locality asked: "where is the diversity in [donor organisations]? All of these organisations are themselves as well part of the problem. And it's not just a question of recruiting more black staff, it's also about taking on board the culture, the thinking, the challenge for the BAME organisations". The funders strategy has to be "really empathetic and consider the reality of working in that space, not an assumption that you are able just to drop everything you do, go to a four hour meeting with no consequences for you and your organisation".

The third and final point relates to asset transfer: while many organisations acknowledged it as a means of income-generation, our interviews also identified numerous concerns related to running and maintenance of community buildings as by no means problem-free, thus underscoring the need for **focus on asset utilisation and supported asset transfer.**

5. Conclusion

The research engaged an estimated three-quarters of the city's BAME-led sector in the survey, interviews, and roundtable discussions, thus raising the profile of Power to Change amongst local organisations. However, it also has raised expectations about the possible outcomes. As one of the respondents put it in their survey comments:

"I genuinely hope this research will enable us to identify what the sector needs, and to work with Power to Change and others, [so we can] secure and [allocate] resources in order to build a relevant, vibrant, flexible, agile, and responsive BAME sector capable of adapting to change and delivering the change needed on the ground to address chronic, systemic inequality."

These outcomes can be delivered through a focus on four key aspects: equitable funding, collaboration, connectivity, and assets.

Collaboration is an outcome of a lasting and reflexive process of fostering connectivity. Locality said: "you have to sit back and think about it, start to work on how you work in partnership with other organisations. Start to think long term". Nilaari warned against assuming that collaborations will just spontaneously emerge: "just because organisations may have been around doing wonderful work, been around for donkeys' years, got a great relationship with the community, doesn't necessarily mean that they're able and ready to go and enter into a collaboration".

Fostering connectivity within the sector should be linked with building trust, and building capacity within and amongst BAME-led organisations. Nilaari suggested the sector needs "almost some sort of expert to come in and work with us and to build us up again. To build our confidence to trust each other and say how we can work together. Coming in, flying in, giving a piece of work and saying do something for a couple of years is the biggest waste of time. What we need is a real investment… We're talking a minimum of five years upwards".

Asset transfer is a possible, but by no means certain way of ensuring financial sustainability. As Full Circle @Docklands put it: "Yes, it's an asset, and we know that, but you've got to have the money in the first place to do anything with it". This reflects findings of the survey, which shows 42% of organisations are not interested in taking on an asset at all, compared to just 3% not interested in income generation, and only 15% pointing to asset transfer as one of their key support needs.

A clear picture has emerged from the research: Bristol has a sizeable, diverse, and vibrant BAME sector which already has its crown asset: its people and their goodwill, passion, creativity, knowledge, and trust. However, this sector has been decimated by austerity, and suffers from enduring underinvestment. To truly flourish, it has to be adequately resourced, financially sustainable in the long run, and it has to have a strong voice in the city where despite decades of good work, "chronic, systemic inequality" still persists. We suggest this would be best achieved by implementing a set of recommendations, which follow.

6. Recommendations

Evidence accumulated in the course of this research process points to a need for a step change approach to effect positive change in BAME-led sector. Overall, Power to Change should invest in a process that will foster connections and build capacity within the sector, rather than seek short-term solutions. Specifically, we recommend the following actions:

1. Equitable funding

1.1. Acknowledge unfairness and lack of equality are embedded in the current funding, investment and procurement streams.
1.2. Commit to levelling the playing field for BAME-led organisations, which will require systems change.
1.3. Prioritise areas currently underrepresented in Power to Change portfolio, and race equality in particular, for investment.
1.4. Distribute leadership for equitable funding and work towards systems change jointly with the BAME-led sector.
1.5. Develop a diagnostic tool and monitoring processes to identify root causes of inequitable funding and mitigate against them.

2. Connectivity

2.1. Invest in a network of BAME-led organisations to meet quarterly and work on emerging areas of income generation and collaboration (including sharing resources and assets, and limiting duplication of services and activities), and to strengthen the sector's voice and influence. This network would be facilitated by BSWN and member organisations would be funded to attend its meetings and engage with its work.
2.2. Organise a network of local funders to meet quarterly and focus on addressing the underrepresentation of BAME-led organisations amongst their beneficiaries. This network would be facilitated by Power to Change.
2.3. Ensure both networks have clear strategic aims, that they are connected to one another, and that their representatives work together towards common outcomes.

3. Capacity

3.1. Recognise that traditional models of capacity building focussed on training only are inadequate given the level of support need.
3.2. Invest in a bespoke, intensive, outcome-oriented capacity-building programme whereby cohorts of around six organisations work jointly with a business development specialist to:

- pool resources
- explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership
- build capacity at individual organisation level
- strengthen governance at individual organisation level
- provide practical support such as funding applications
- facilitate knowledge transfers
- facilitate business planning

3.3. Organise this capacity-building programme in line with business incubation models, where a period of intensive support (3-9 months) would be followed by a period of mentoring (12-36 months) while the next cohort is enrolled in the intensive programme.
3.4. Prioritise anchor-type organisations – that is, organisations with the strongest potential for collaborations and sharing skills and capacity with others in their networks – for capacity-building support.
3.5. Invest into a transparent process for identifying and prioritising BAME-led organisations to benefit from capacity building support, to ensure enrolled organisations are ready for it, to involve all groups and especially young people, and to maximise benefits.
3.6. Demand that first organisations to benefit from the capacity-building programme share their skills and knowledge with smaller community organisations.

4. Assets

4.1. Prioritise asset utilisation, and support maintenance and development of existing community assets so realise their full potential, over asset transfer in the mid-term.
4.2. Build capacity in the BAME-led sector to enable sustainable asset transfer in future
4.3. Consider strategies for collaborative assets transfer and supported asset transfer, where asset transfer is part of the wider plan to capacity build BAME-led groups and incentivise them to collaborate.

7. Acknowledgements

8. Appendices

8.1. Survey participants

The following organisations completed the survey:

1. 2WaySt
2. ACH: Ashley Community Housing
3. African Voices Forum
4. Afrikan ConneXions Consortium
5. Aspiration Creation Elevation
6. Autism Independence
7. Babbasa
8. Black2Nature
9. Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group
10. Bristol Caribbean Roofing & Capentry.
11. Bristol Somali Forum
12. Bristol Somali Resource Centre
13. BSWN: Black South-West Network
14. Cognitive Paths
15. Dhek Bhal
16. Full Circle @ Docklands
17. Growing Futures UK C.I.C
18. Integrate UK
19. John Lynch Afrikan Education Programme
20. Kiki Bristol
21. Kuumba
22. Malcolm X Community Centre
23. meMaps Network
24. Nilaari Agency
25. Ovaherero Nama Genocide U.K.
26. Phoenix Social Enterprise
27. RiTE DiREKSHON
28. Somali kitchen
29. St Pauls Carnival Bristol C.I.C.
30. The BME Collective
31. Tribe of Doris
32. Ujima Radio C.I.C.
33. Urban Word Collective

8.2. Interview participants

1. Deputy Mayor Asher Craig, Bristol City Council
2. Sandra Meadows, Voscur
3. Paul Hassan, Locality
4. Abdulkadir Sheik Hussein, Bristol Somali Forum
5. Abdullahi Farah, Bristol Somali Resource Centre
6. Ann-Marie Lewis, Full Circle @ Docklands
7. Clement McLarty, Phoenix Social Enterprise
8. Jean Smith, Nilaari
9. Kassim Hanid, Rose Green Centre
10. LaToyah McAllister-Jones and Roger Griffith, Ujima
11. Primrose Granville and Madu Ellis, Malcolm X Community Centre
12. Rosa Hui, Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group
13. Torkwase Holmes and Nwanyi Aduke, Kuumba Centre
14. Zehra Haq, Dhek Bhal

8.3. Interview schedule

Section 1 - Introduction

What is your role in the city, and in your organisation?

Section 2 - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic sector

What has been the impact of austerity and funding cuts on your organisation, and Bristol's BAME voluntary sector, in the last 8 years? (Please speak about challenges, but also opportunities.)

What are the strategic priorities of your organisation, and of the BAME voluntary sector in the city?

What are your views on the potential of partnerships (long-term) and collaborations (short-term) within the sector?

Section 3 - External Environment

Does the current policy / political environment in the city benefit the BAME voluntary sector? Please explain with reference to Bristol specifically, in particular with leadership and One City Plan in mind.
Do you feel your voice is being heard? Do you feel connected to the decision-making processes?

BAME-led organisations are underrepresented amongst applicants for funding, such as that offered by Power to Change and other capacity support programmes. Why do you think it is?

How could BAME-led organisations better connect with the funders and support providers, and how could funders better connect with BAME-led organisations?

Section 4 - Community Leadership and the BSWN role

How can infrastructure organisations better design and communicate their programmes of support so they reach into BAME communities, helping to address some of the long term inequalities in these places with appropriate capacity building support?

How can the capacity of BAME organisations and leaders be developed? What should this capacity building focus on? (For example: driving change, growth, ensuring compliance and accountability, community engagement, voice and influence?)

What role can BSWN play in such capacity building, and in supporting the BAME-led sector specifically?

What messages would you like to see BSWN take back to Power to Change, the funders of this research?

Do you have any other comments, or questions?