

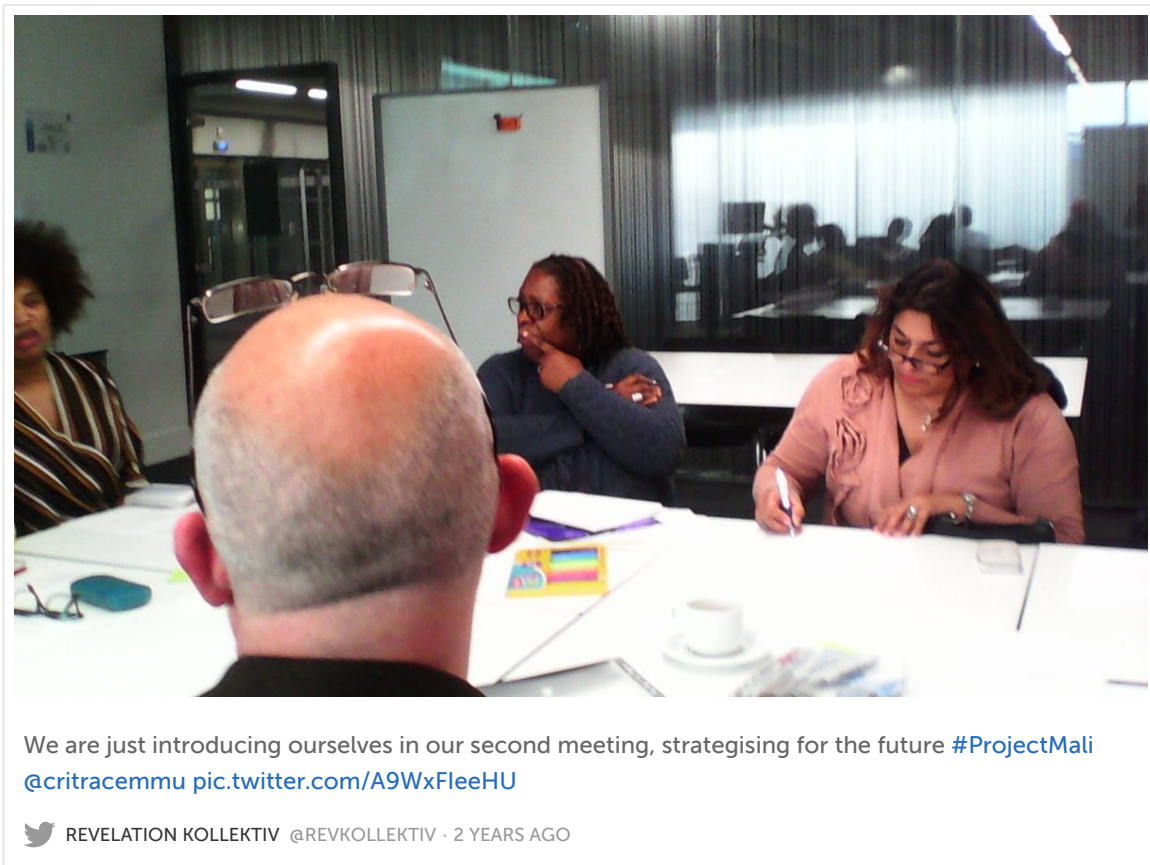
by Revelation Kollektiv · 2 years ago

Project Mali, Manchester 7.4.16

Critical Race and Ethnicity Research Cluster, MMU

In our first meeting on March 8th, we hosted a reception event where Yvonne Field from the Ubele Initiative introduced the findings from their Locality-commissioned report [A Place to Call Home: Community Asset Ownership in the African Diaspora Community](#). Yvonne introduced some of the structural challenges faced by African Diaspora community groups, which included trying to secure grants/council funding, trying to win council or public sector contracts via local authority micro commissioning and also trying to win contracts for council asset transfers.

As a result of this initial meeting we decided to meet again to decide what we wanted to do. We also invited a wider range of stakeholders this time. In this session, we discussed what our mission and vision as a forum would be.



We introduced ourselves to each other and shared news about our work or just our aspirations for our work in the community:



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We have members of the BME network. Members have acquired assets. They have awareness of the challenges. Capacity builders. #ProjectMali

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Atiha Chaudry and Fiona McInroy (BME Network). Angel is really called Angela Ankeli (Legacy FM)!



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We also have Colette Williams from PAC45 and Angel from Legacy FM and Mrs D's supplementary school #ProjectMali

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We also had Barbara Lawrence and Marsha Ali from WIOCC (West Indian Organisation Coordinating Committee).



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We also have Jay who has just arrived. #ProjectMali

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Jay McCorkle is from the community group, TAP (The African Pot)



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Dan Aris from First Cut Media, Hartley Hanley from Windrush Millenium Centre, Prince Odunze Enabled Media #ProjectMali

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Hartley's org is the only black-led organisation that exists without government funding. #ProjectMali

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Prince Odunze: Bringing ppl together from other community orgs, especially b/w African and Community members #ProjectMali

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Prince's share was very interesting, as this later prompted discussion around the terms Afro Caribbean, African Caribbean, Caribbean Diaspora and African Diaspora. We problematised the term African Diaspora, as some in the group thought that it did not automatically recognise the distinct heritage and history of the Caribbean Diaspora (whose connection to Africa can only be recollected and mythologised at best through hybridised traditions because direct linkage and record of African descent has been destroyed). Other members of the group said that this sentiment had been echoed in their local Caribbean Diaspora community groups. Prince said that there was a tension between African and Caribbean Diaspora communities which needed to be healed. I would suspect that part of the tension is generated by the lack of specific acknowledgement of the unique hybrid nature of Caribbean heritage, as, in some quarters, it is subsumed into a wider African heritage or history.



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So far clusters around unifying our own comm, healing divides, community leadership. We need2 recognise our rich histories #ProjectMali

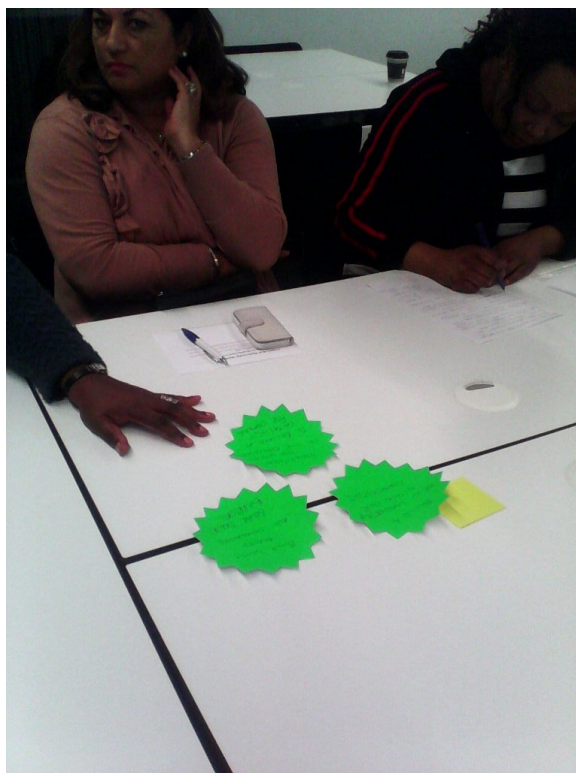
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Small discussion around what we want to achieve from the group? We also have Deyika. What will be helpful to Manchester? #ProjectMali


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#ProjectMali Gathering our thoughts about what we want. Making clusters of our thoughts.
pic.twitter.com/fbRSxzn4F2

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The discussion we had about building unity between communities and also within communities was continued:

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We need2 recognise our histories, we need to document our practice of community leadership, oral histories, building alliances [#ProjectMali](#)


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This discussion about preserving our histories and heritage was represented by exploring intergenerational work in the community, which the group thought was much needed:


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Elders not supporting younger ppl? The dynamic of intergenerational work is complex. We need to learn from each other [#ProjectMali](#)

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Younger people not respecting history and contributions of elders. Elders can b encouraged2 hold the space for younger ppl [#ProjectMali](#)

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We need work out 'how to pass the baton' to the next generation. Elders have seen defeat and are sometimes worn down [#ProjectMali](#)

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If we can recognise our elders then they will be more likely 'pass the baton' to the next generation [#ProjectMali](#)

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This idea of recognising our elders' knowledge and experience as a valuable resource also led the group to think about creating a knowledge hub, where the knowledge contained within the community was captured and put in one place:

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We need to capitalise on our 1st generation of professionals who can help to build our social capital [#ProjectMali](#)



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However it was suggested that

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We need2 put some trenches in whilst we defend ourselves& come together. We're journeying towards a collective vision as a group [#ProjectMali](#)



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Community knowledge for strategic planning:

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One cluster thought. Assets. The need for training. We often hear news too late of the demise of community assets. [#ProjectMali](#)



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If you are suffering organisation, at what point do we bring in external help. [#ProjectMali](#)



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We need2 share information2see what's going on - BME network- council work in age friendly mcr- funding4intergenerational work [#ProjectMali](#)



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How do we share information. Redefining communication channels-BME network [#ProjectMali](#)




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Angel- we need to recognise our social networks of knowledge. Amass our knowledge. Sometimes knowl not always forthcoming [#ProjectMali](#)


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Our three main themes from which to build our mission and vision statements




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3 themes - physical assets, building internal communities, building with other communities [#ProjectMali](#)


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Leadership and Strategic Planning in the Community




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Hartley- we need to define our own leadership instead of being designated leader by power brokership [#ProjectMali](#)


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This was an interesting point that observed that only certain people or organisations seem to be recognised as community representatives to the exclusion of other equally important groups. This was a particularly important point in the context of a perception of a 'divide and rule' strategy that appears to be adopted by some powerful stakeholders, which serves to keep the community fragmented. This observation was a continuation of the sentiment that both inter and intra community and trust building was necessary, if as an African (and Caribbean) Diaspora we are to move forward. It was decided by the group for its focus to be specifically on the African and Caribbean Diasporas as these groups were perceived to be neglected in wider community asset building.




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We all need to take leadership and followership in our communities. Hartley- how can we build relationships with black churches [#ProjectMali](#)


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But




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Activities for the future- developing ownership to transform to leadership. Building trust in the communities. #ProjectMali


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And



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Church groups can be seen as more acceptable but they have their own assets. How can we develop this. #ProjectMali

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Angela used her mum's community building practice as an example of information gathering from other communities - sharing best practice:




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Angel- process of community asset building using her mum as an example. Asking Asian communities about their developments #ProjectMali


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We discussed the need to strategise the use of our spaces in terms of short, medium and long term:




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The need for forward planning and strategy. Meanwhile spaces, the pop ups. How can we transit them2 long term spaces #ProjectMali


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Interestingly from an MMU perspective



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Hartley- what the university plans for the future in terms of their development. We need2 know so that we strategise and plan #ProjectMali

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The beginnings of an Action Plan



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Summarising our drafts of mission and vision statements. Will develop over email group.

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We discussed looking at funding bids to help us assemble a participatory action research project that constructed a map of local community assets both tangible and intangible



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Future- participatory research from the forum. Knowledge co-production. [@critracemmu](#)

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Future- UN decade for people's African descent, funding. Lottery funding for knowledge mapping? [#ProjectMali](#)



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