BLACK TO THE FUTURE: A SANKOFA APPROACH TO EXCHANGE YOUTH WORK PRACTICE

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The Ubele Initiative (TUI), the lead partner, is a not-for-profit social enterprise that is engaged in the development of leadership potential, youth and community work activities and social action. TUI's core values are built on collaboration, co-operation, community building, creativity and valuing all voices, and as such, works with established as well as newly arrived communities.

VJAAD e.V. Migrafrica (hereafter Migrafrica) is an association of young Africans and Afro/Germans who actively assist and support young fellow African migrants in Germany with the aim of enhancing their social, economic and political participation in Germany. In recent times, the organisation has been tackling issues related to social exclusion, youth unemployment, Africa/Europe youth relations.

Stichting Interlock is a relatively new Dutch NGO, formed in 2016 by the former Deputy Director of Swazoom, works specifically in Amsterdam South East. Interlock brings together the extensive skills and experience of youth workers and staff in Amsterdam South East into to one organisation concentrating on activities that focuses on planning and implementation of international youth exchanges and strategic partnerships within the Erasmus+ programme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey could not have been completed if not for the collaboration between all partner organisations who gave so much time, effort and commitment to the process; the quality and range of cultural experiences would never have been possible were it not for their professionalism.

To the participants who persevered and those who were not able to sustain the programme, we wish to extend our appreciation and best wishes for the future. Without you there is no us. So, thank you for being prepared to subject all your years of experiences to the scrutiny of others and for the willingness to share those experiences. We feel richer for the sharing.

The next step belongs to the next generation and in the words of perhaps the youngest participant in the group, the 'story' of those from the African diaspora communities *"… should be something from us for us" – Tari, Migrafrica)*

The Project Team:

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INTRODUCTION

"We only exist because of each other." [Ubuntu definition]

This report sets out the underpinning principles and approaches that is at the heart of the Ubele approach, capturing both the 'process' as well as the 'impact' of the '*Black to the Future -a Sankofa approach to Exchange Youth Work Practice'* programme (hereafter BttF) on participants, the organizations involved and future directions. BttF is a practitioner focused intergenerational youth and community development programme focused on the needs of practitioners working with the African Diaspora communities in Amsterdam (Netherlands), Cologne (Germany) and London (United Kingdom).

Black to the Future was a 20 months ERASMUS+ Key Action 2 funded[1] project led by The Ubele[2] Initiative (TUI). The European Union's *Erasmus+* programme is a funding scheme that supports activities in the fields of Education, Training, Youth and Sport**.** The Programme is essentially made up of three 'Key Actions' (and two additional actions: Jean Monet and Sport) that is managed through delegation at the national level by National Agencies (i.e. within respective countries) and partly at the European level through the *Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)[3].* The actions under KA2 makes it possible for organisations from different participating countries to work together, to develop, share and transfer best practices and innovative approaches in the fields of education, training and youth. It supports a range of short and long term mobilities including exchanges, training courses, job shadowing and visits as well as the production of learning resources and the wider dissemination of emerging practice.

Ubele and its partners[4] secured funding to deliver *Black to the Future,* which sought to deliver the objective of *'Capacity Building in the field of youth supporting cooperation with Partner Countries'.*

The programme comprised transnational intergenerational[5] practice and study-visits of between 15 - 30 youth workers and managers aged 21 years and over, built upon opportunities to share contemporary youth and community development work practices with African Diaspora youth and communities across the three major cities in scope to the project via the partners. The expected outcomes of the programme were identified as:

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[1] Key Action 2 - Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices: Capacity building in the field of youth supporting cooperation with Partner countries.

[2] *Ubele* in Swahili means 'The Future'.

[3] The European Commission is responsible for Erasmus+ policies and oversees the overall programme implementation**:** https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/homepage_en

[4] The partnership consists of Stichting Interlocken (Amsterdam), Migrafrica (Cologne) and Ubele (London).

[5] The international definition of intergenerational programmes suggests that they "...are vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits." (cited in Springate,I, Atkinson,M.and Martin,K.(2008).

1. Enabling youth and community workers to develop and share effective methods in reaching out to marginalised young people, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; and
2. Through professionalising youth and community development workers, develop their competences to help them set quality standards.

How 'black communities' have been received, and the subsequent 'space' they occupy within the three cities across the three countries that comprise the projects' partnership, forms the back-drop of this evaluation report. This is further set within the professional boundaries of youth and community work. The focus of this project, therefore, was to look at the concerns of migrant communities through the lens of youth and community professionals across the three cities recognised as having large African Diaspora communities by building on intergenerational perspectives reflective of Ubuntu and Sankofa principles.

Section 1.0: Definitions, concepts and context

What do we mean by the term 'African Diaspora'?

The term diaspora originates from the Greek '*diaspora'*, meaning "scattering", which gained popularity in English with reference to the Jewish diaspora before being more broadly applied to other populations (Shepperson, 1966; Safran, 1991; Parekh, 1993). The phrase *African diaspora* was coined during the 1990s and has gradually gained common usage over the last decade, especially as part of the social and political lexicon on communities and inclusion. Brubaker (2005), for example, makes the point that "... as the term has proliferated, its meaning has been stretched to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas in the service of which it has been enlisted." This referent now means that the term has become synonymous (and in some cases replaces) languages such as "immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-workers, exile community, overseas, ethnic community" (Tololyan, 1991). It is this understanding that propelled the African Union to define African Diaspora as referring to "...those people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality..."[6]

At the *ILegend* youth development conference in September 2017, participants came up with a graphic representation of the definition of 'diaspora'[7] (see diagram), which, within the context of the African Union's definition, provides us with our working definition. The African diaspora, as we define it in this report, refers to the scattered communities throughout the world that have their ancestry in Africa, many of whom were as a result of slavery, and though many have been assimilated, they are still conceptualised as 'immigrant' groups of a particular cultural heritage: African.

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[6] The African Union (AU) is a continental union consisting of all 55 countries on the African continent, extending slightly into Asia via the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. It was established on 26 May 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and launched on 9 July 2002 in South Africa, with the aim of replacing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) established on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, with 32 signatory governments.

[7] University of youth development: seminar on diaspora as agents of inclusive societies, September 2017. The seminar was part of the iLegend project: Intercultural Learning Exchange through Global Education, Networking and Dialogue co-funded by the Council of Europe and the Civil Society and Local Authorities Programme of the European Union.

Ubuntu and Sankofa

At the centre of Ubele's approach to community empowerment and development are the concepts of 'Ubuntu' and 'Sankofa'; both of which provides the driving force for understanding how Ubele engages with and perceive social action and practice.

Ubuntu has its roots in humanist African tradition where the word means 'humanity to others': "…*I am what I am because of who we all are."* This can be translated as *"human kindness"* in the way we look at life on people's allegiances and relations with each other. The word has its origin in the Bantu languages of southern Africa whose meaning is much expansive in scope than the mere words— it embodies the ideas of connection, community, and mutual caring for all.

As a concept, it conveys:

1. an idea of distinctiveness;

2. contrast to the Western idea of individualism; and

3. the idea that old, lost or forgotten wisdom is better.

In defining Ubuntu, Louw (1998), suggests that the concept defines the individual in their relationships with others within the context of religion. For Louw, this African philosophy and way of life called Ubuntu (humanness) significantly overlaps with a decolonised assessment of the religious order.[8] He states that while the Zulu maxim umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu ("a person is a person through (other) persons") may have no apparent religious connotations in the context of Western society, in an African context it suggests that the person one is to become must do so by behaving with humanity which will garland respect and veneration from their ancestor. Those who uphold the principle of ubuntu throughout their lives will, in death, achieve a unity with those still living.

This view of a religious interpretation is not commonly held though it's social and political connation is perhaps more widely formed in the West largely through the writings of Desmond Tutu, who ironically was, the archbishop of Cape Town and a leading figure in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Tutu chaired South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which sought to come to terms with the human rights offenses of the apartheid regime. In his memoir, *No Future Without Forgiveness,*[9] Tutu wrote, "Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, 'Yu, u nobunto'; 'Hey so-and-so has *ubuntu*.' Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, 'My humanity is

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[8] http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriLouw.htm
[9]*No Future Without Forgiveness*, 2000; see also *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, written by Michael Battle, 2009

inextricably bound up in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life…. A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are."

In an interview in 2006, Nelson Mandela was asked specifically how he defined the concept of Ubuntu. Mandela replied:

> *"In the old days when we were young, a traveller through a country would stop at a village, and he didn't have to ask for food or water; once he stops, the people give him food, entertain him. That is one aspect of Ubuntu, but it will have various aspects. Ubuntu does not mean that people should not address themselves. The question therefore is, are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you, and enable it to improve? These are important things in life. And if you can do that, you have done something very important."*

It is this underpinning notion of 'helping others' to enable the 'community' to 'improve' that is at the core of Ubele's approach to community and youth development. In addressing that question, a key plank within the delivery approach is recognising that: "*Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi*" - which translates as: "It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten."[10] In other words, Sankofa principles.

Sankofa principles are well known and respected within African Diaspora communities but not so overtly used in mainstream youth and community work more generally and therefore is relatively new and untried. The project sought to develop the African Sankofa process which encourages the transfer of youth and community development knowledge, skills and values through looking back, identifying best practice and then creating building blocks on which to inform future youth and community development work practice. It is this 'looking back' approach, one that harnesses 'intergenerational' thinking and approaches, that links the 'beneficiary community of interest' (level 2) to the work of the 'facilitators' (Level 1) and the wider social action change outcome at Level 3. The Ubele delivery approach is perhaps best summarised in Fig 1 below which covers three core features of the Ubele approach to working with African Diaspora communities, who, after all, are the primary objects of their social action programmes. It is this value system that lay at the heart of establishment of the Ubele Initiative, delivering projects based on this underpinning value system to evince social change through action.

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[10] *Sankofa* is a word in the Twi language of Ghana that translates to "Go back and get it" (*san* - to return; *ko* - to go; *fa* - to fetch, to seek and take), which is represented by a bird with its head turned backwards carrying a precious egg in its mouth. The Sankofa bird has been adopted as an important symbol in African Diaspora context to represent the need to reflect on the past to build a successful future. For further information, see https://www.berea.edu/cgwc/the-power-of-sankofa/

Wantani: guardians/facilitators

Mantani: community of interest (African Diaspora communities)

Systems and institutions: wider societal interface
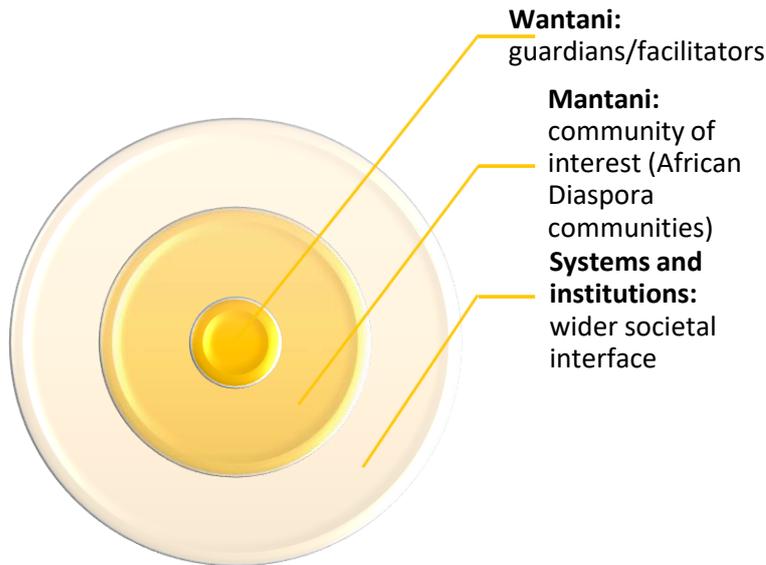
Fig 1: The Ubele delivery model and approach to social action

The delivery approach is mediated at three levels of interaction, all of which need to be brought together and considered within discourses and not treated as a singular distinct sphere of concern that has no connectivity to others:

- o Level 1: Agents of change and facilitation (Wantani: social facilitation agents)
- o Level 2: Beneficiary community of interest (Mantani: African Diaspora communities)
- o Level 3: Wider social, economic and political systems and structures.

Intergenerational approach

The Sankofa principle is one of *'taking from the past to inform the future'*, which is best reflected in '*intergenerational practice'* as the delivery vehicle. Intergenerational practice is gaining momentum as a tool within social action discourse as the approach supports the changing of attitudes through a process of exchange, dialogue and action such as, for example, working to address racial tension and development of cultural understanding; working with young people who are experiencing difficulties at schools and working with older people in care homes[11].

In their definition of what is meant by 'intergenerational practice' the Beth Johnson Foundation offers the following:

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[11] Granville G (2002), A Review of Intergenerational Practice in the UK; London, The Beth Johnson Foundation; Community Education Development Centre (2000), Inter-generational Learning: A Training Manual, Coventry: CEDC;

"Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities promoting greater understanding and respect between generations and contributing to building more cohesive communities[12]."

According to this definition, intergenerational practice:

- Brings people together in purposeful mutually beneficial activity;

- Promotes greater understanding and respect between generations;

- Contributes to building more cohesive communities.

Granville (2002) identified a number of components that appeared to be necessary for effective practice delivery:

- It is essential that participants are clear about what the programme intends to achieve for the young and old participants.

- Thorough project management needs to be applied, consisting of clear objectives, target setting, monitoring and evaluation.

- In projects where the older and younger generations are brought together for greater understanding, preparation need to be carried out with the generations separately and clear ground rules established.

- Preparation is essential with other partners who may be indirectly involved in the work.

- All projects should be evaluated, both in terms of the process undertaken and of the impact of the intervention.

The authors of '*Learning through Intergenerational practice*' (2017) provides a useful typology on some key principles which should be taken into account when adopting an intergenerational approach[13].

As intergenerational practice covers a wide range of activities undertaken with the aim of bringing generations together, the opportunity for generations to interact and become engaged in the issue or activity together from which - intentionally or unintentionally - learning will take place. That is, *'taking the best from the past to inform the future'*.

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[12] The Beth Johnson Foundation, Centre for Intergenerational Practice: https://tinyurl.com/ycsgqe5m
[13] This typology forms the canvas against which we have approached intergenerational work development and practice.

Youth work theory and practice

The context within which the Key Action 2 priority is couched, and for which the Black to the Future project has been developed, relates to youth and community development practice. Specifically, working with practitioners who are working with young people and the wider communities from the African Diaspora (i.e. migrant background).

Despite the many papers written on youth work and its practice, ambiguity of purpose and practice still abound[14]. The European Commission's report, *'Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union'* (2014)[15], makes the point that the term 'youth work' describes a *"diverse range of activities, topics and measures provided by a range of actors in assorted fields and settings."* At the centre of the youth work practice lies *"three core features that define it as youth work"* in contrast to other methods of working with children and young people (for a contrasting view see Jeffs and Smith, 2008[16]):

1) a focus on young people,
2) personal development; and
3) voluntary participation.

However, notwithstanding the European Commission's definition, not all countries have the same interpretation or see youth work in the same way. Based on a comparative analysis of different approaches internationally, the Commission's Report (2016) identified some frequently cited characteristics to describe youth work, which is presented as Fig 3. Across the three partners in scope to the **Black to the Future**, while youth work is understood as fitting into the above definition and exhibiting the characteristics indicated in the typology at Fig 3, there are differences in 'practice' across the three countries.

How youth work is defined presents many challenges within and across nation states with some countries having in place national policies to support youth work delivery while others have left delivery to market forces. Studies continue to show young people's experiences are being formed by an environment characterized by significant disruptions, uncertainties

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[14] In the introduction to *'The History of Youth Work in Europe: Autonomy through dependency – Histories of co-operation, conflict and innovation in youth work'* (2016), *Lasse Siurala* wrote: "After reading everything about youth work, we (still) don't understand what we are talking about."

[15] Allison Dunne, Daniela Ulicna, Ilona Murphy, Maria Golubeva (2014), Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union, European Commission, February 2014

[16] *Tony Jeffs and Mark Smith (2008)*, for example, argue that for any work with young people to be termed 'youth work', five elements must be present: (1)That the young people choose to engage *voluntarily; (2)* That the work has a focus on the *education* and *welfare* of young people; (3) That the work focuses on the *young people* and the work remains *age–specific; (4)* That the work encourages young people to come together, with a focus on *association* and *relationship; and (5)* That workers are *friendly, accessible, responsive* and act with *integrity (pp: 277-279). Their contention is that youth work is* distinctive only when all are present; if one were to be removed then, though still working with young people, is not youth work. *Jeffs, T. & Smith, M. (2008) 'Valuing Youth Work', Youth & Policy, No. 100, Summer/Autumn, pp277-302.*

and risks that require them to be enterprising[17] and mindful of falling prey to gang related cultures and activities[18] and at the same time perceived as ill-prepared for transition into adulthood. These seemingly intractable stressors characterize much of the underpinning challenges that many national youth policies are trying to ameliorate. In some cases, even where there are national youth policies, there is no statutory base for youth work within those nation states which belies the intention behind youth work development, practice and support strategies.

Added to this, for those young people from a 'migrant background', the issues are further complicated and compounded through attitudes and practices, largely discriminatory in scope, that places them at even greater disadvantage. This is particularly the case across the partner countries in scope to the project: United Kingdom, Germany and Netherlands.

Fig 3: Characteristics of youth work practice

Youth work offers young people meaningful activities based on young persons' needs and interests. Key features of the methods used by youth work are:			
Non-formal and informal learning	Participation and/or experiential pedagogy	Relationship-based activities (learning as a social activity with others)	Mentoring and/or peer support

Youth work aims at young person's personal development in particular it leads to:			
Self-determination	Self-confidence	Self-esteem	Socialisation

Personal development should lead to:			
Empowerment	Emancipation	Tolerance	Responsibility

| These should in turn result in:		
Participation in democratic societies	Prevention of risk behaviour	Social inclusion and cohesion

Source: Allison Dunne, Daniela Ulicna, Ilona Murphy, Maria Golubeva (2014), *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*, European Commission, February 2014

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[17] Foundation for Young Australians (2016), *How Young People are Faring in the Transition from School to Work*; Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne; Pearson et al (2016), *The Future of Work: Setting Kids up for Success;* Regional Australia Institute.

[18] Within the UK the recent spate of knife related homicides has made links to lack of youth work provision and the rise in gang related incidents which has prompted the Mayor London to establish a range of funding opportunities to tackle what is now being called a 'epidemic' (The London Knife Crime Strategy 2017)

Youth policies and concerns with reference to immigrant/African diaspora communities

Across the three countries in scope to this project - the UK, Netherlands and Germany - concerns about the treatment and place of migrant communities as been a concern of respective the national governments for decades. Immigration is not new; it is not a 21st century phenomenon and it impacts on those emigrating as well as the society receiving. The reality is that it will continue to be the case so long as people have the ability and capability to travel and develop their mind beyond the environment they have been born into.

History tells us that mass immigration often accompanies situations of natural disaster (e.g. evacuation of Monserrat, for example, in 1997, following the vulcanic eruption), war ravaged situations - as in Serbia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Somalia - and economic opportunities, such as with the post-war redevelopment policies of *'guest worker'* policies and practices that epitomised the period following the end of the Second World War. Whatever the underpinning 'push' and 'pull' factors of immigration, the impact on society is immense. Furthermore, those from African diaspora communities have found themselves at the sharpest end of discriminatory practices[19]. What marks them out from other 'non-western' migrants (as in case of Netherlands), is that they are a racially identifiable community; they are racially of African descent and this marks them out more visibly than most other immigrant groups. This adds further to the pressures and concerns of the young people from these communities. Despite being born in the adopted country of their parents and grand-parents, generations of people from African heritage background are still perceived as 'immigrants'. An understanding, therefore, of the context and impact of immigration across the three partner countries formed a common learning thread in how the programme was designed, planned and delivered.

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[19] In the UK, the arrival of HMS Windrush in July 1948 heralded a new period in British history in how society embraced (or not) immigrants who were from non-western civilisations. In Germany and Netherlands similar issues were encountered as communities from Turkey (Germany) and Suriname (Netherlands) became the 'guest workers'.

Section 2.0: Methodological approach and process

A one size fit all approach, when it comes to evaluating a piece of work, does not work. The route chosen by the programme designers will vary depending on the stated aims of the programme, on the time and resources available for evaluation, and on the organisational and socio-political setting. It will probably be necessary to combine elements and approaches for different performance areas into an overarching monitoring and evaluation plan, and some projects or programmes may need to take a more experimental approach. Fundamentally, and this is where evaluations stand or fall, the aim should be to design an approach that fits the overall direction and intentions of the programme, and that adds value to it. Watts (2005), for example, suggest that when putting together an evaluation plan, the value is enhanced when the focus is just as much on learning as on accountability. He states:

> *"… Involving staff members, partners and beneficiaries in the evaluation process allows them to reflect on their work, revisit their understanding of the project's goals and activities, assess their effectiveness and take ownership of the evaluation findings. The knowledge created, and the lessons learned through evaluation, subsequently provide a basis for better project planning and implementation."*

It goes without saying that if beneficiaries and stake-holders are engaged in the monitoring and evaluation process, rather than judging them (especially from an external observational stand-point), they are more likely to participate in the process and more likely to use the lessons that come out of the process. His typology (presented below) provided the framework against which the approach adopted for the evaluation of the Black to the Future programme was developed. For this particular project we sought to strike a balance between the need to *evaluate for accountability*, especially as funding necessitated providing a report that would go to the 'lead body's' accountable agency (i.e. The British Council, in turn reports to the National Lead Agency, which, in the UK's situation, is the Department for Education) and the need to *evaluate for learning and development*, given the objectives established in supporting the improvement and development of practitioners working in the field of youth and/or community empowerment.

As Table 1 shows, the evaluation approach adopted, sought to achieve what we term 'process evaluation' and 'impact evaluation', which reflects the following key objectives in line with the project's aims:

1. *Process evaluation*: the approach sought to explore what worked well and what did not in relation to the programme; to identify areas for improving the implementation of the programme viz 'intergenerational community leadership' (i.e. the learning and improvement dimension);

2. *Impact evaluation:* the approach sought to assess the changes arising from the intervention and that can be attributed to the programme. This approach sought to

answer the question as to what extent the perceived outcomes were achieved and whether this could be attributed directly to the programme/intervention (i.e. the accountability dimension).

Table 1: The evaluation principles and attributes – the overview

Key features	Objectives of evaluation between evaluation for accountability and evaluation for programme improvement	
	Evaluation for accountability (Impact)	**Evaluation for learning and programme improvement (Process[20])**
Main purpose	Accountability	Learning and improvement
Focus of questions	Were goals achieved?	What worked, what didn't, why, so what, what next…?
Stake-holder roles	Provide information and feedback	Engage actively in all stages of the evaluation, incl. information and feedback
Outcome assumptions arising from the evaluation process	Impacts can be attributed directly to the programme/intervention	Impact related to interlinked factors some of which can be attributed to the programme others that may lay outside the programme (i.e. the end results cannot be attributed specifically to the intervention/programme)

Source: Adapted from Watts, J (2005), Learning-oriented evaluation

Impact evaluation

The term 'impact' is used in different ways (Hovland, 2007). It can be seen as the broad, longer-term effects of your work, or an organisational change that has been brought about as a result of the programme/intervention (i.e. in some cases it may attest to policy changes). For this particular programme, we take it to mean the outcomes achieved for the immediate beneficiary and/or their organisation as a direct result of the programme at either the personal and/or professional level. The crucial distinction to be made is between what the programme set out to achieve (i.e. outputs and opportunities offered) and what was achieved (i.e. outcomes evidenced through changes that resulted from what was offered).

In the ideal situation evidence of changed outcomes relies on comparing the situation before and after intervention activities (i.e. control group approach), even with good outcomes information, it may be difficult to demonstrate that the outcomes are as a result of the intervention. To overcome this absence, we built into the process a pre-and – post programme questionnaire to help assess the quality and impact of the programme over the

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[20] In contrast, Lipsey et al (2009) makes the distinction between process and impact evaluation. By comparing and contrasting the two thinking on evaluation and hybrid typology was derived that provided a useful starting point for our methodology.

period of the engagement. We also made use of other instruments such as sessional feedbacks, structured interviews with a sample drawn from participants based on *'purposive sampling technique*[21] *and* self-reflection based on 'diary journal' that all participants were introduced to.

Purposive sampling methods were applied in the selection of participants to be followed up to undertake the structured interview. As Saunders (2012) explains, it is important that selection is based on the maximum variation based on judgments against particular characteristics to ensure the presence of variability.

Challenges and limitations
It is not always possible to capture all aspects of any evaluation process other than to do the best one can with the resources at hand. The *Black to the Future* was a 'pilot' programme, designed to look at a particular training model for those working with young people and communities from the African diaspora. Some limitations were inherent in both the design and the implementation of the programme from the get-go, in that the evaluation process was determined to a large extent by the type of programme to be evaluated and the resources available (i.e. transnational with an in-built difficulty around language and culture).
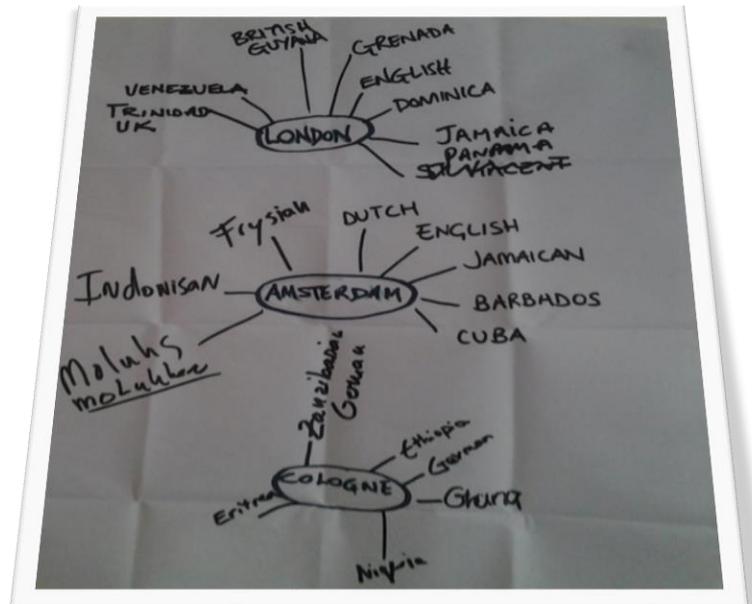
What then were some of the challenges and constraints?

Against this backdrop, those areas most worthy of note were:
1. *Scope and characteristics of participants:* The scope of the project was dependent on volunteers coming forward who had an interest and were active youth and/or community empowerment practitioners across the three cities, all of whom spoke different languages, whose knowledge base and conceptualisation of youth and community empowerment work differed. This was further compounded by the age differentials across the groups as well as recognising the different 'ethnic and cultural' backgrounds that were present (e.g. Caribbean born and raised, Surinamese, Ghanaian, Somalian, Dutch, German and British born of

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[21] Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method which is characterised by "selecting elements for the sample" based on judgment of the evaluator/researcher. This method is one of the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling methods available and is usually undertaken where there are only limited number of primary data sources contributing to the study.

Caribbean/African heritage). Though the majority spoke English, none of the British participants spoke any of the partners' language and all participants came into the process from a very varied personal and professional background (from students in training to long standing professional senior practitioner). While these differences existed, the project had minimal difficulties in 'managing' the process as partners were very proficient in both written and spoken English. This enabled potential language confusion to be diffused and/or translated.

2. *Responsiveness to requests:* Information on outcome and impact was normally collected from beneficiaries through whole group exercise, individual feedback surveys (e.g. questionnaire) or participatory methods (e.g. flip charts, Brick Wall exercises etc). Collecting post programme information directly from individuals proved difficult and challenging, however. So, a Whatsapp group was established that enabled quick and speedy communication and follow up. It was also helpful in sharing journeys and opportunities – some relevant to the process others not so, but nevertheless facilitated a 'network' amongst the participants, which is still on-going, months after the programme had formally come to an end.

3. *Interpretations of responses*: instruments which are traditionally used to collect data such as questionnaires and structured interviews needed to be sensitive to differences in interpretation, especially where an unfamiliar language structure is being used. The understanding and meaning of some constructs may not be shared within the 'sample population' which made understanding difficult.

4. *Dropping out and irregular attendance:* With all the best intention, not everyone who started the programme stayed the 'course'. The UK registered 9 participants but by the end of the programme they had lost almost 50% leaving 5 core regular participants. This was, in part, due to other commitments and changes in personal circumstances which made it difficult for them to continue on the programme. New members were recruited as appropriate.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Overall, 26 youth workers and managers took part in the project, of which the main characteristics were:
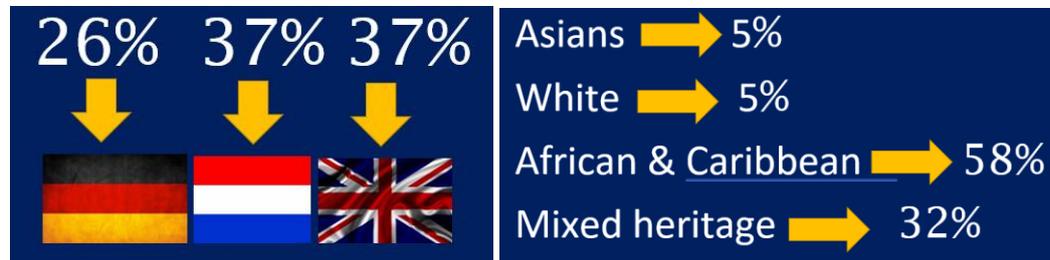
Employment type and status varied across the participants[22]. Fig 4 shows that 58% were in full-time and part-time employment[23]. More people worked with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities generally (61%) while 11% indicated working specifically with refugees/migrant communities (Fig 5).

Fig 4: Employment status of participants

Fig 5: Disadvantaged groups worked with

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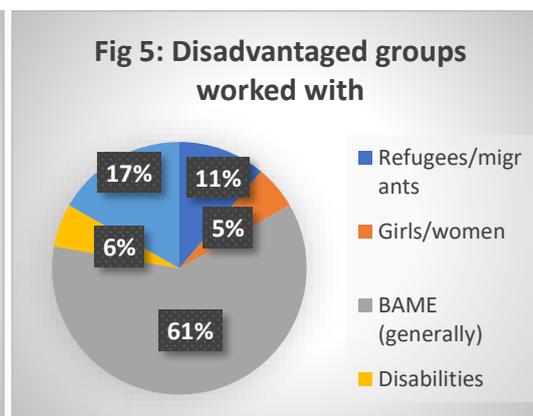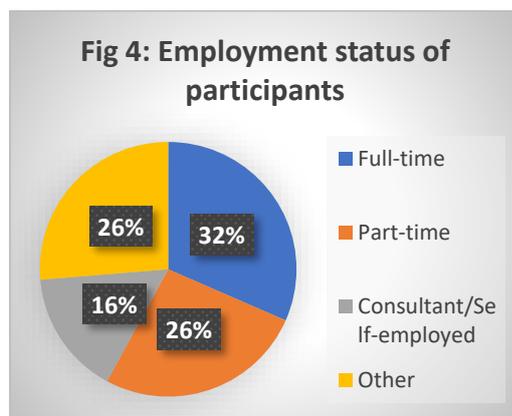
[22] A range of titles and occupational areas were identified: Cultural Youth worker; Singer/performer (Surinam slavery history researcher, online marketing and public relations); Support worker; Finance Manager for Youth NGO; Part time youth worker and mentor; unemployed.

[23] Part-time workers reflected participants on the programme who were students at university.

Section 3.0: Programme content and delivery

Though the Sankofa principles are well known and respected within African Diaspora communities, the overt use of Sankofa principles in youth and community empowerment work is relatively new and untried. The BTTF project sought to facilitate the development of practitioners working with African diaspora communities through a Sankofa process to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes of practitioners delivered through intergenerational practice: '*looking back, identifying best practice and then creating building blocks to inform future youth work practice'*.

This was delivered through a programme comprising transnational intergenerational training and study-visits with frontline youth workers, community development workers and managers aged 21 years and over, sharing youth and community development practices across the three major cities: Amsterdam, Cologne and London. Underpinning the programme was the aim of harnessing the knowledge, experience and expertise of practitioners to inform and create future sustainable and enabling youth and community development practices.

To achieve these aims of the programme, the specific programme objectives sought to:

1. Collect and document good youth and community practitioners practice developed by African Diaspora communities;
2. Identify specific approaches in informal educational practices and learning;
3. Develop two-way transfer of knowledge, skills and experience between older and younger generations of youth and community development practitioners;
4. Utilise online and audio digital technology enabling the global sharing of good youth and community development practice.

What were the key features of the programme?

Specifically, the programme covered:

- 3 x 6 days transnational intergenerational study-visits to each city which followed an agreed format that included skills-based training and learning opportunities:
  - workshops and experiences to share practices and introduce new learning opportunities;
  - tool-kit design and development;
  - monitoring and evaluation;
  - exploration of the history of African Diaspora migration in the countries and cities in scope to the programme (i.e. to better understand patterns and waves of migration and challenges facing those of African Diaspora communities within those cities).

- Using audio digital media and online mapping tools to record and capture the history and stories of youth and community development practice with African Diaspora young people (i.e. to using 'Digital Mapping' to capture provisions across the cities in scope to the project that either reflected the communities or were generally provided)
- Acquiring knowledge about, and use of, creative non-formal educational principles and processes including introduction and understanding of tools such as:
  - 'Ubuntu', 'Sankofa', 'World Café', 'Open Space Technology, U Process and Appreciative Learning approaches
  - Tool-kit design and development: principles and practice.
- Bringing together different African Diaspora youth and community practice organisations to further strengthen national and international networks as well as membership and contribution to the building of new partnerships at home and abroad such as:
  - the African Diaspora Youth Network in European (ADYNE);
  - use of social media platforms such as Skype, Zoom and WhatsApp to create new 'networks' or to plug into existing ones.

Short Term Training Programmes (Learning visits)

The mobility programmes involved three Learning visits to each city of 6 days in duration as follows:

- Cologne (June 2017);
- London (Oct 2017);
- Amsterdam (Feb/March 2018**)**

Learning visit 1: Cologne: 24 May – 29 May 2017

Being the first of the transnational visits, setting the scene, backstory of the genesis of Ubele and locating the Ubuntu and Sankofa principles within the journey, formed the early introduction to the programme. These included presentation and interactive dialogues:

- Sankofa & Ubuntu: an overview
- Workshops:
  - Erasmus +: expectations, processes and systems
  - Mapping: what and how?
  - Blogging and communications strategy: expectations of participants
  - Exploring intergenerational issues: issues and challenges
  - Valuing Difference
  - Future directions: hopes, wishes and expectations from the programme
- Educational and awareness visits: exploring the migrant centre and its role in supporting the African Diaspora in Köln
- Visit to the Documentation Centre on Migration in Germany

Arising from the experience, a short video was made that captured some of the key hopes and expectations of participants arising from being on the programme. This can be accessed via the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=CFcJKb3akxc

As a result of the work undertaken on this first visit, we were able to capture a framework of participant's expectation which helped to create and develop the content of the programmes that followed. Four key imperatives (or areas of explorations) were identified:

The 'horizontal themes' were:

1. Critical youth and community imperatives
2. Comparative understanding
3. Working with African diaspora youth
4. Strategy and policy

Against these, the 'vertical themes' were:

1. The presence of policy directions that exist in relation to working with young people
2. Black history presence across the cities in terms of 'cultural spaces' (i.e. museums and identity)
3. Impact and effectiveness of youth and community work practice
4. Identification and capturing what exist in each city in terms of youth and community provisions

Table 2: What participants said they hoped to get out of the experience[24]

Critical youth and community imperatives	Comparative understanding	Working with African diaspora youth	Strategy and policy
The presence and policy directions in relation to working with young people	Experiencing the differences in countries and how youth work has changed over time.	Recognising those organisations working with African diaspora in terms of role models and community leaders	Understanding of funding for youth provisions over the years - '70s onwards
Black history presence across the cities in terms of 'cultural spaces' (i.e. museums and identity)	Recognising and appreciating the journey early settlers have made to society (i.e. roles, responsibilities and experience)	How to make sense and engage with those from African diaspora who are working in the community (i.e. networking and participation)	What influence strategic decision to close youth work centres (e.g. GLC, LA and Govt)
Impact and effectiveness of youth and community work practice	Hearing the voices of practitioners across the three cities.	What have been the changes brought about through black music, fashion and the arts?	Interview with a Youth Minister to understand the policy drivers to decision making. How is impact measured and accountability?
Identification and capturing what exist in each city in terms of youth and community provisions	How many youth clubs are led and established by young people?	What are the age range of those young people using the youth and community spaces?	What is the funding and investment implications of providing for work with the African diaspora communities?

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[24] From video on http://www.stichtinginterlock.nl/Projecten/Black-To-The-Future-17-18/#next [accessed 19/09/17]

Case Study 1: Multiplikatoren Plus (M+), Cologne

Project Multiplikatoren Plus (M+) is funded by the local government of Cologne and overseen by Migrafrica, the aim of which is to encourage migrants to get involved in the political processes and systems of Germany. The objective is to enable migrants to get their voices heard and for them to believe that they have a voice.

The project has four phases: the first phase involves workshops that looks at some of the main challenges facing the migrants, in particular youth workers and those who run NGOs; the second phase involves training of at least 20 participants to be able to spread the word through their NGOs or other means (i.e. the multiplier effect); the third phase involves those 20 trainees undertaking out reach work through their NGOs and to identify at least 20 more participants; the fourth phase is a national conference where politicians and up to 60 participants, drawn from all walks of life holding senior roles of influence, engage in dialogue, looking at key issues.

The main driver for the programme was against a backdrop of migrants feeling disengaged and out of the political processes; and for many, a disinterest and distrust of the system. Evidence locally showed that there were few people of African descent who are involved at the local and national level. Currently there are at least two people of African descent who hold positions of influence at the local government level.

The target audience for the project are those aged 18 to 30 years; essentially those who are of voting age.

Participants have come from migrant communities such as East Africa, Eritrea and Ethiopia. However, in recent times there are more coming from other parts of Africa such as Ghana. The Turkish community is already well established and they have their own facilities and mechanisms for engaging at the political level.

Some of the challenges faced is with regards to follow-up and support after the event. This is hard as at the workshop stage most participants are interested and motivated but once they go back to their own organisation, that interest seem to wain.

Contact: http://migrafrica.org/2018/04/06/mehr-politische-partizipation-fuer-gefluechtete/

Learning visit 2: London: 11th October - 16th October 2017

The second learning visit brought the groups from Amsterdam and Cologne to London where participants covered a range of topics in workshops and gave participants the opportunity to saviour what London had to offer. In broad terms, sessions covered:

Community engagement:

- o Conversation with Cecil Gutzmore: community activist and pioneer
- o Conversation with Tottenham Hotspur Foundation (Community Development)

Workshops:

- o The Toolkit
- o Monitoring and evaluation
- o Mapping
- o Intergenerational Learning
- o Introduction to Appreciative Enquiry: principles and practice

Cultural and experiential learning visits:

- o Soul of the Nation Exhibition, The Tate Modern
- o Black Cultural Archives (BCA), Brixton
- o African Heritage Tour, The Victoria and Albert Museum
- o Africa on the Square, Trafalgar Square[25]

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[25] Africa on the Square is part of the London-wide Black History programme organised by the Mayor of London to celebrate African arts and culture. The event held in Trafalgar Square on 27 October 2017 included live entertainment in addition to an African market, food stalls, roaming entertainment and showcasing communities from across the continent.

o   The Adoptables, a production byThe Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA)

Tool-kit: issues/barriers facing migrants

This session was led by the Cologne lead partner who took participants through a process of identifying key issues and barriers. Three questions were posed to the group to address:

✓ What are the issues facing migrants?
✓ What services/agencies exist to support them?
✓ What can services/agencies do to help them?

From the process the following overview was produced:

Group/country	What are the issues facing migrants?	What services/agencies exist to support them?	What can services/agencies do to help them?
Germany (Cologne)	Uninformed; unemployment; lack of role models; frustration/disillusionment; identity; lacking self-confidence; language.	Social projects (e.g. women empowerment – International Women's Day); funding towards employment training; history collection projects for migrants; organising protests; language courses/education; migrant supporting migrants projects	Role models: more migrants supporting migrant programmes.
Netherlands (Amsterdam)	Motivation; work; exclusion; stigmatization; poor education opportunities; lacking independence; inability to fully participate; insecurity; no local leaders and successors; uninformed; jobs/applications	Education projects; employment support agencies; information sharing/cultural archives (e.g. the NUC); 1104 Fitclub; BAM; Nederlands Works	Reflect and engender role Models (e.g. the work of 1104 Fitclub and BAM)
United Kingdom (London)	Lack of jobs/careers; loneliness; not enough male guidance and mentoring; housing; mental health issues; culture	Law Centres; Human Rights Agencies; Slavery International; Nation of Islam; Job Centre Plus;	Language Barrier: Nation of Islam – Justice Team; person -ownership;

clash/practice; poor education opportunities; language barriers – religious differences; discrimination; unemployment; trafficking (No Id/passport); lack of benefits; oppression of women; sexual confusions.	Rape Crisis; 100 BMOL; Mental health and other charities; Camden Housewives 4 Women; Camden Islington Crisis Service etc	refugee work; in-built legal team 100BMOL: reach men from across the diaspora; Saturday schools: South London House and Finchley School, Claudia Jones organisation

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This session sought to provide an update and overview of the monitoring and evaluation process within the project as well as more generally, with tools could be helpful within participant's own organisation at 'home'.

Learning Visit 3: Amsterdam: 28 February to 5 March 2018

The third and final Learning Visit took place in Amsterdam in 2018, a cold and near freezing week in February and March.

After the first and second Learning Visits to Cologne and London in 2017 a key feature of the third visit was to 'revisit' key learning points, to share and learn new perspectives from partners in Amsterdam and to better understand the communities the Dutch partners were working with (i.e. the issues and concerns they were grappling with).

The *Interlock Team* had put together a programme that mirrored the format that had been agreed from the outset: facilitating understanding of the history, present and future of youth work in Amsterdam Southeast and the Netherlands more generally.

The visit was kicked off with a welcome dinner in a Surinamese-Javanese restaurant followed by a programme that included workshops and visits to cultural spaces:

- **Workshops:**

  o Developing the Tool-kit: initiating discussions and work
  o Monitoring and evaluation: update and next steps
  o Quality standards initiative: an initiating discussion
  o Capturing and presenting data using creative approaches

- **Cultural visits and learning opportunities**
  o Black Archives/New Urban Collective
  o University of Amsterdam: Mahutin Awunou - "Dear White HvA"
  o Bijlmer Tour/Bijlmer Museum
  o Troopen Museum
  o The Slavery Monument
  o Bijlmer Park Theatre

- **Intergenerational learning experiences**
  o UNTOLD: Youthwork 2018 and story about Winti
  o Bonte Kraai Community Center
  o 1104Fitclub

The first study day started with a visit and presentation at the Black Archives. Participants were taken through the stories and history of the genesis of the Black Archives, which was very inspirational, with participants acquiring knowledge about the history of Surinam and the Netherlands.
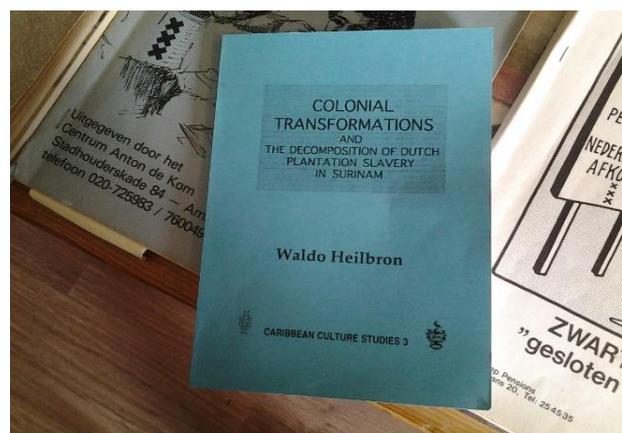
DEAR WHITE HVA

- Inadequate educational support from teachers
- Missing: sense of belonging
- The lack of a diverse educational staff
- Eurocentric curriculum
- Social inequality in education and working field
- **TRAILER – DEAR WHITE HVA**
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfTRrS2ql5Q

Challenges that the black students faced

- How to increase a diverse staff?
- Students are well educated on the topics of diversity, how to involve the teaching staff on a micro level?
- Research! How to describe our methods and the effects on sense of beloning and study succes?
- How to create support within the board, programme managers, teachers, professors of the University?

 A full day's workshop included updating and undertaking work around the development of the 'Tool-kit', updating on the monitoring and evaluation process, the exploration of an emerging theme of developing 'quality standards' specifically focused on the needs of migrant and refugee focused organisations and using creative approaches to capture data, making them come alive from standard 'numbers' (i.e. infographics).

The Cologne group: Tool-kit exercise

The Amsterdam group: Tool-kit exercise   **The UK Presentation**
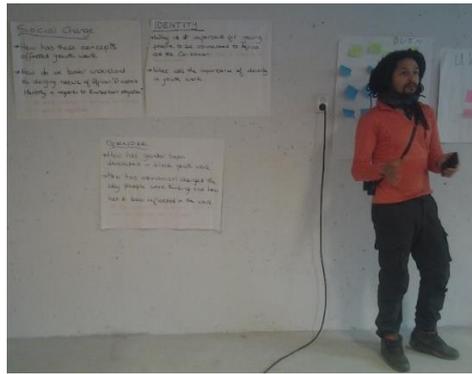
Quality standards initiative: an initiating discussion

Arising from the London visit (12th October 2017) feedback and analysis indicated that if *'migrants were to take responsibility'*[26] for their own solution, an idea in developing a quality standards framework for those organisations working with migrant communities for them by them was explored.

The diagram overview below provided an analysis of what came out of the London visit with a challenge as to how to fill the void we called 'space of discovery - taking responsibility':

Youth led projects across the partnership: some examples (October 2017, London)

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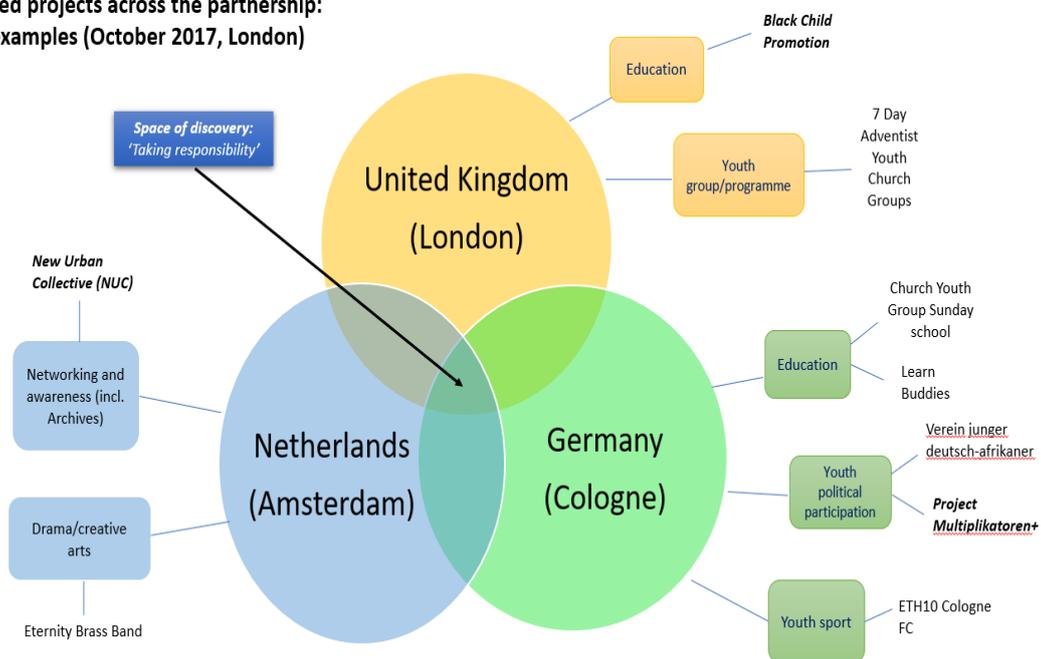
[26] See COLL, Tracking the development of the Black Community in the UK: www.reachsociety.com

Case Study 2: New Urban Collective/Black Archives, Amsterdam

The New Urban Collective

New Urban Collective (N.U.C.) is an association of students and young professionals with the mission to empower young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. N.U.C. aims to strengthen the position of migrant young people by stimulating their personal development, raising their self-awareness and advocating on their behalf. They organize symposia, conferences, debates and mentoring programs in the area of education, career, cultural diversity and anti-racism.

In recent times the NUC have been engaged in raising awareness around two principle issues:

Spreidingsbeleid' or 'spreading policy'

The 'spreidingsbeleid' or 'spreading policy' was an informal (covert) policy of the 1970s, in cities such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam, that actively excluded Surinamese from certain neighbourhoods. This had the effect of preventing Surinamese, Turkish or Moroccan families from inhabiting certain apartment blocks. Against this practice, the Surinamese emancipation movement arose in the 1970s and 1980s to organize against racism and inequality and, among other things, squatted a flat in the Bijlmer. The NUC now exhibits an share the history and stories of the era as part of the Black Archives programme of awareness and understanding to the community, professionals and students alike.

Zwarte Piet

In recent years there has seen an increase racism across Europe and with that an increased presence and awareness of anti-racism movements. One such movement has arisen around Zwarte Piet, which is seen as a product of the "actively forgotten" colonial and slavery past, but reflects the underlying institutional racism, discrimination and inequality in contemporary Dutch society. Activism against Zwarte Piet has gone as far as the highest office in the land, with calls for it to be banned though rejected by the ruling elite. However, slow as it may seem, through demonstrations, sharply-divided public opinion, public debates, petitions, litigation, and more, it seems the tradition is slowly changing, with the capital choosing to say goodbye to the racist caricature.

Contact: http://nucnet.nl/

Approaches in informal educational practices and learning

In between the Learning Visits, monthly workshop sessions were held as part of the informal learning component within the programme. These included sessions around skills and techniques that could be utilised by participants. Included within this approach were activities associated with the 'common project' of capturing youth provisions across all three cities using digital mapping technique and the development of a tool-kit. Thus:

1. Mapping of youth provisions: digital mapping
2. Tool-kit development
3. Learning opportunities (facilitative and learning opportunities)

Mapping of youth provisions: African Diaspora spaces

As one participant said after the Amsterdam visit: *"…the visit to Amsterdam was like a piece in the puzzle that made everything make sense. There are definitely some clear comparisons to be made between these three vital European cities and African diaspora communities."*

Participants across all three cities worked on a common project of trying to identify and map youth and community spaces, such as youth centres, community centres and arts related provisions. The 3 city maps have now been completed, which include all the places visited over the three visits. The process and the end result provide a picture of the African Diaspora provision - a sense of how many spaces exist for the African Diaspora in each city, such as archives, university, museum and other cultural spaces we visited in each city. This project arose from the first session held in Cologne, with one of the participants wanting to identify where these facilities were and the stories behind their genesis (and/or their demise) – see Table 1 above. These spaces had a big impact on all of those who took part in the Learning Visits.

Based on the mapping programme used - Kumu and Googlemap programme – these maps can be accessed on-line using the links below:

- London youth clubs and cultural spaces: https://tinyurl.com/yclmo4vp
- Koln Youth and cultural spaces: https://tinyurl.com/y92wvxs5

- Amsterdam youth and cultural spaces: https://tinyurl.com/ya93s57d

The following screen shots below provide a quick at-a-glance capture of the mapping outcome – greater details are captured in the on-line versions.

Youth provision: London
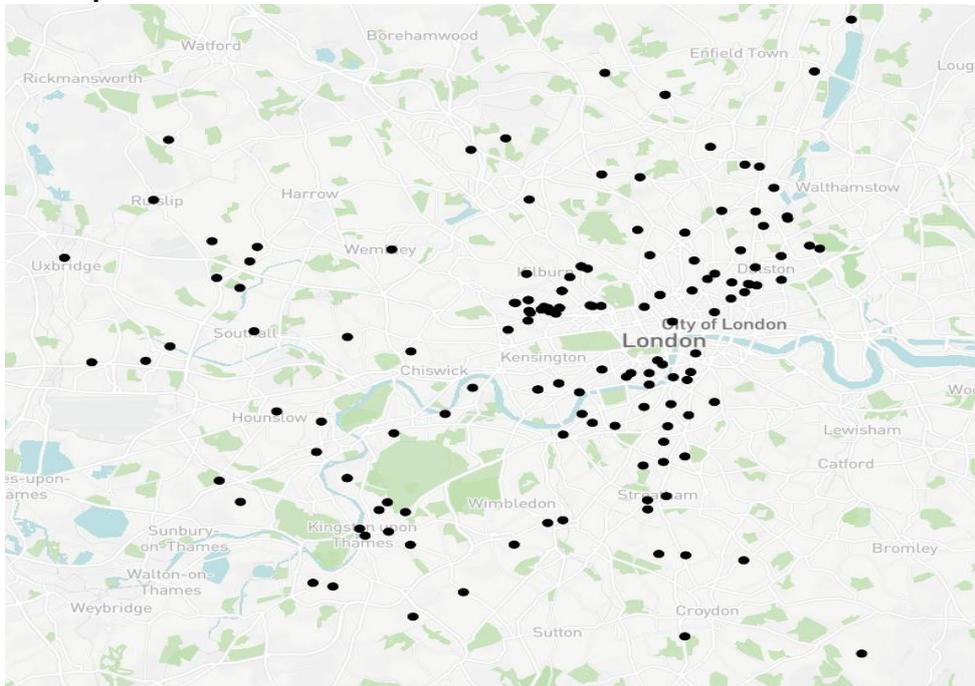
Youth provision: Amsterdam
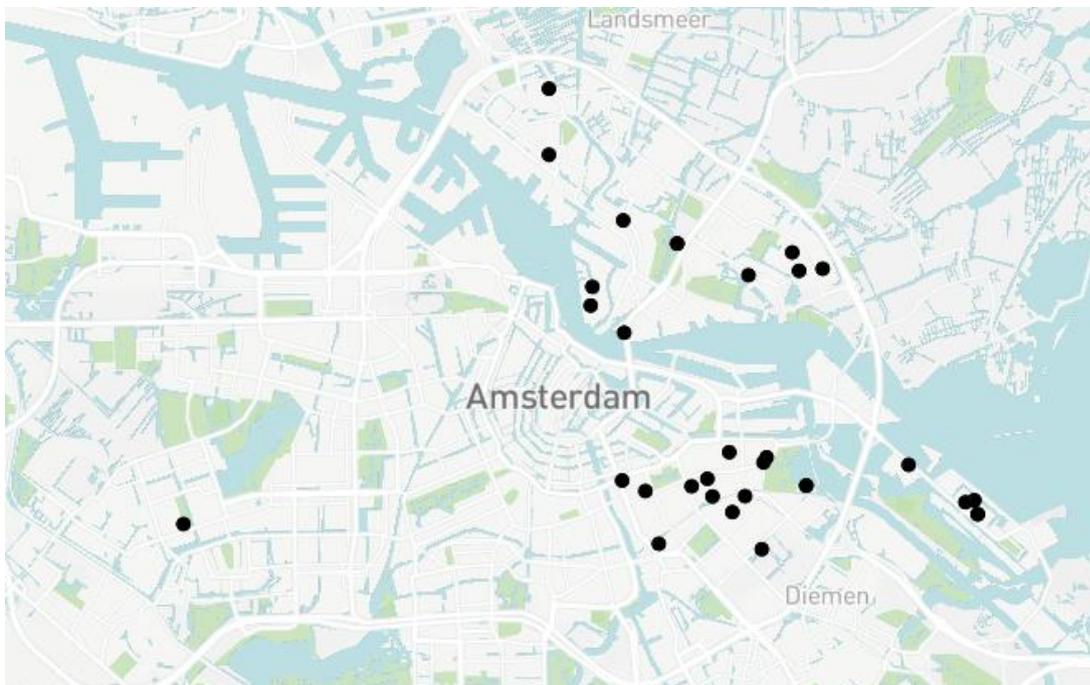
Youth provision: Cologne

Source: https://tinyurl.com/y86wb7cb
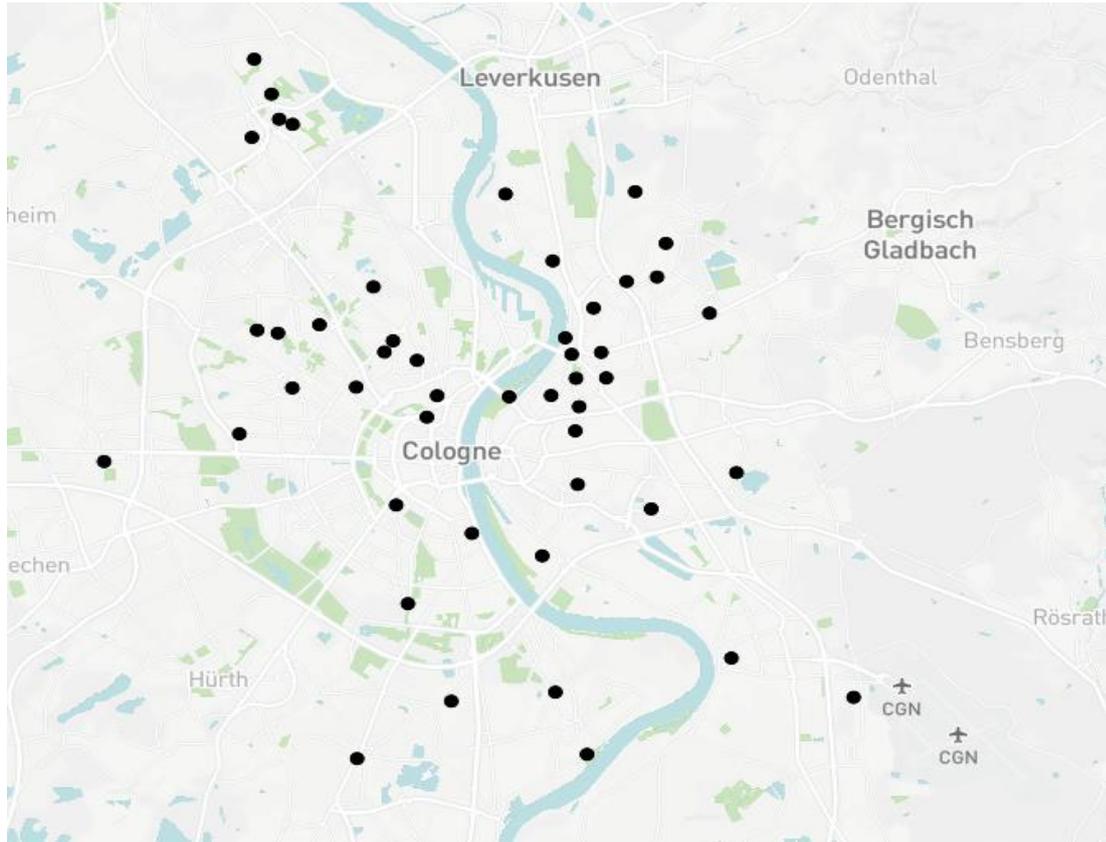
Section 4.0: Impact and analysis

The purpose of the programme was established as enabling youth and community workers to develop and share effective methods in reaching out to marginalised young people, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and, through professionalising youth and community development workers, to develop their competences to help them set quality standards.

Process evaluation: organisational considerations and implications (project staff/partner organisations)

From the perspective of the organisation (including implications for staff in partner organisations) evidence on the delivery of the programme showed that:

- Sessions were coordinated well with facilitators, which was perhaps made easier as many of the sessions were delivered by partners. This not only added value and enabled skills to be developed but it also meant, from an organisational perspective, issues and concerns could be ironed out quickly and easily. Furthermore, it meant planning would proceed with minimal disruptions.
- As the Lead Agency in the partnership, TUI held the reigns through the Project Coordinator and Administration team, who were appointed very early on in the delivery process.
- Careful selection of key staff with the appropriate skills and network helped, especially in pulling together the visits within each country. For example, being able to liaise with targeted organisations in each country entailed having partners willing to go beyond being participants, to be part of the coordinating 'committee' – so to speak – in pulling the visit programme together. Participants in each country were able to identify contacts and liaised with those contacts to enable access to areas of exploration

students undertaking formal youth work training at universities

However, there were some concerns over some aspects of the programme that the partners would need to pay some attention to in going forward:

- The age range being worked with was perhaps too wide and varied. There were a large number of students undertaking formal youth work training at universities on the programme who found it difficult to sustain the programme against a backdrop of university requirements and not having the 'hands-on' experience of working in the field.
- Not all sessions utilised the formal 'feedback schedule' that had been developed which would have enabled capture of how each 'workshop' session went. This is not to say feedback was not undertaken, just that they were usually orally undertaken through interactive exercises, which worked well but did not provide formal

responses that could be analysed, especially as the evaluator could not be at all the sessions in all three countries. This is not a major concern but perhaps one for partners to consider as they develop the programme – or aspects from the programme – going forward.

- For some participants who left the programme after the first few sessions, the programme was said to be too task-oriented and would have benefited from less focus on 'task and product' development and delivery. In going forward, perhaps the programme could be looked at as contributing to some form of personal development linked to core competence requirements of employing organisations with certification that recognises achievement and completion. For those who sustained the programme this might have added some value, and if a student, perhaps adding to 'credits' towards a degree programme, something akin to credit accumulation schemes that operate in some universities in the USA and Canada?

Impact evaluation: systemic, learners (individual) and partner organisations

It was clear and evident from the feedback received from one-to-one interviews, whole group feedback sessions and on-line post-programme survey responses, that the programme had some profound impact on some participants and, overwhelmingly, a lasting impression for most.

Feedback from the on-line post-programme survey revealed that, of those who responded, the majority of respondents reported that they were able to expand and further develop their knowledge and understanding (40%) across a range of competences and learning that they had been introduced to (47%).

With respect to broadening their knowledge and understanding across a range of core programme development and delivery areas, the overwhelming consensus was that they all gained a greater understanding of international exchanges, which is a testimony of the Learning Visits that had taken place. Additionally, the development of some core competences and skills in delivering youth and community work showed improvements.

As Fig 7 illustrates, the overwhelming response was that across the range of skills introduced, respondents felt more competent at the end of the programme.

Fig 6: Knowledgeable & understanding across broad programme areas

Fig 7: Competence in key skills developed
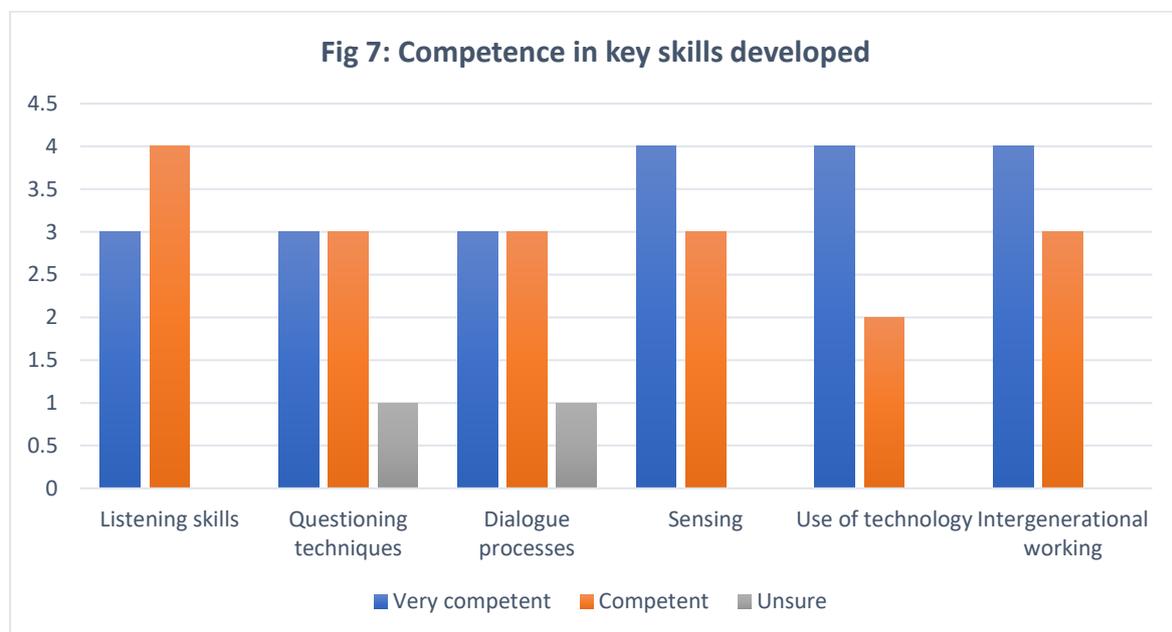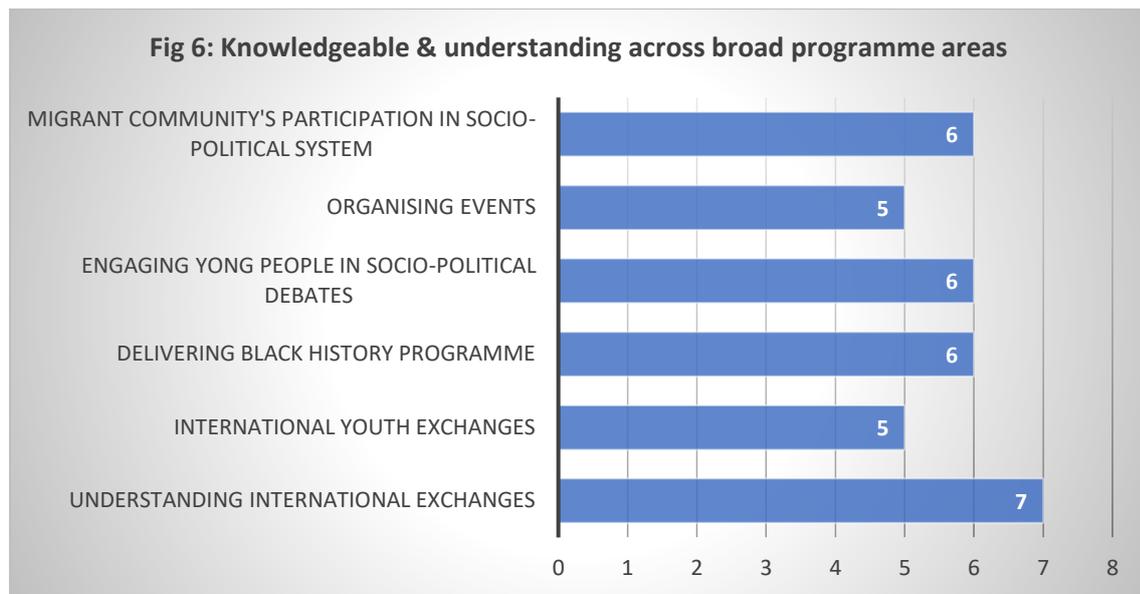
In taking their learning forward, 87% of respondents felt 'more confident' or 'extremely confident' to do so (Fig 8), this was especially the case with regards to intergenerational practice (Fig 9).

Fig 8: Confidence in delivery and practice (%)
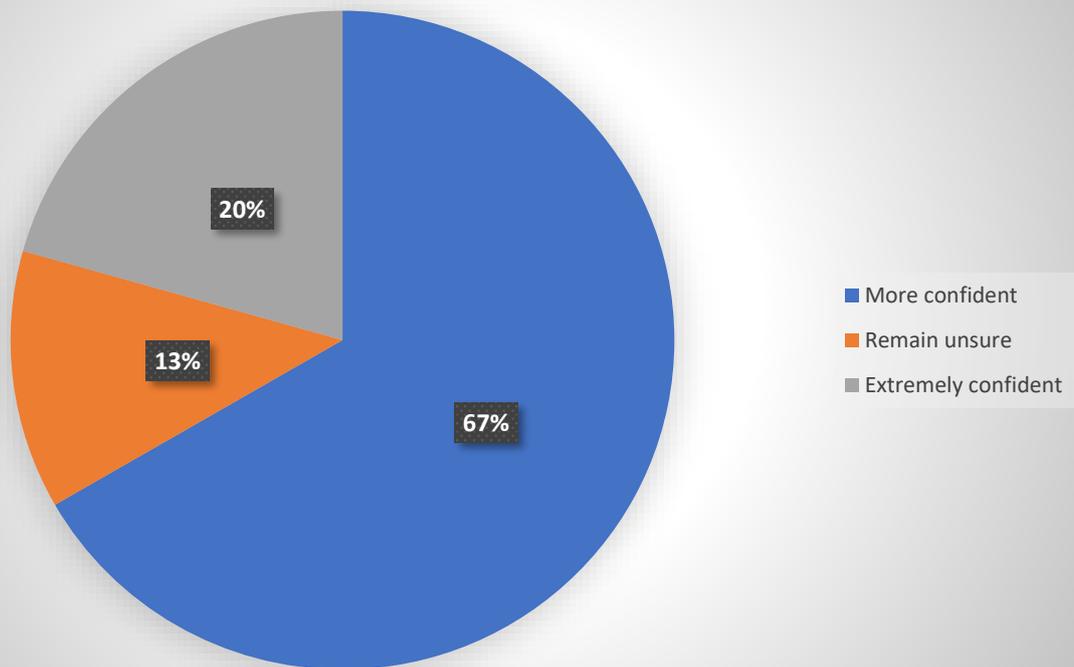
Fig 9: Confidence in delivery and practice
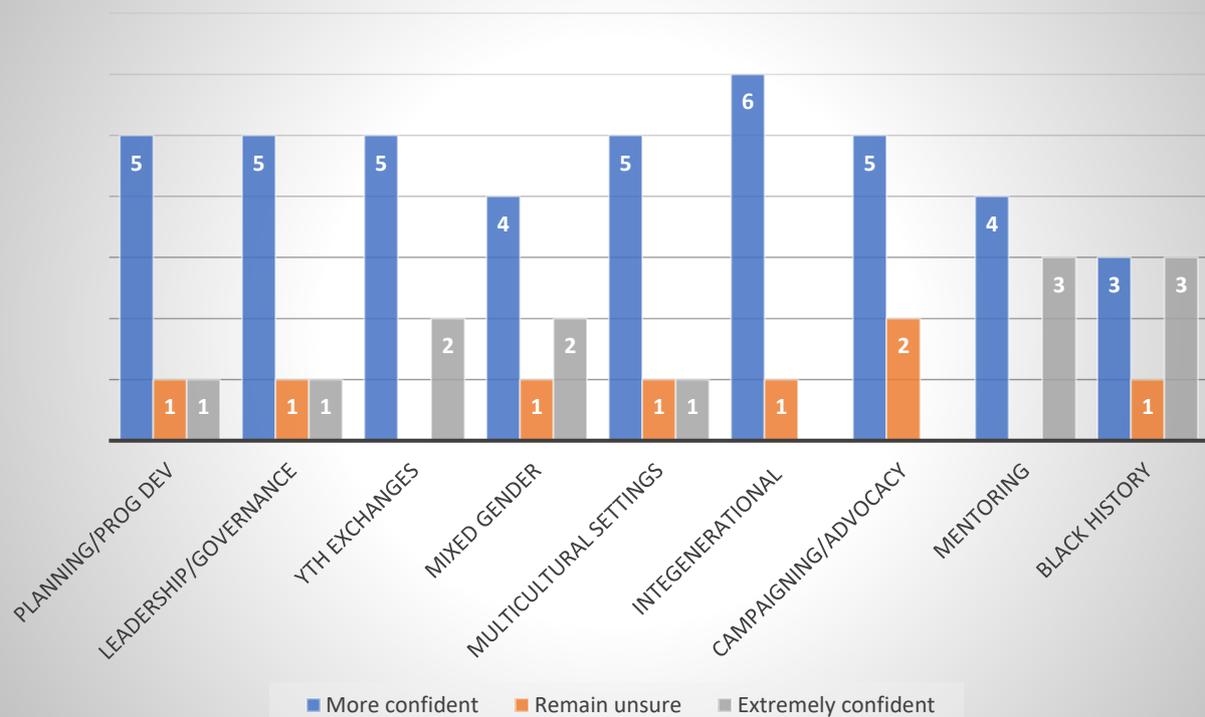
Outcomes and implications

From our evaluative processes, it was evident that the main and overarching purpose had been achieved to a large extent. Direct and explicit comments from participants are captured in the word dump exercise output below, which provides us with d a snap-shot of how far some had travelled (literally) and how the experiences had impacted on them.
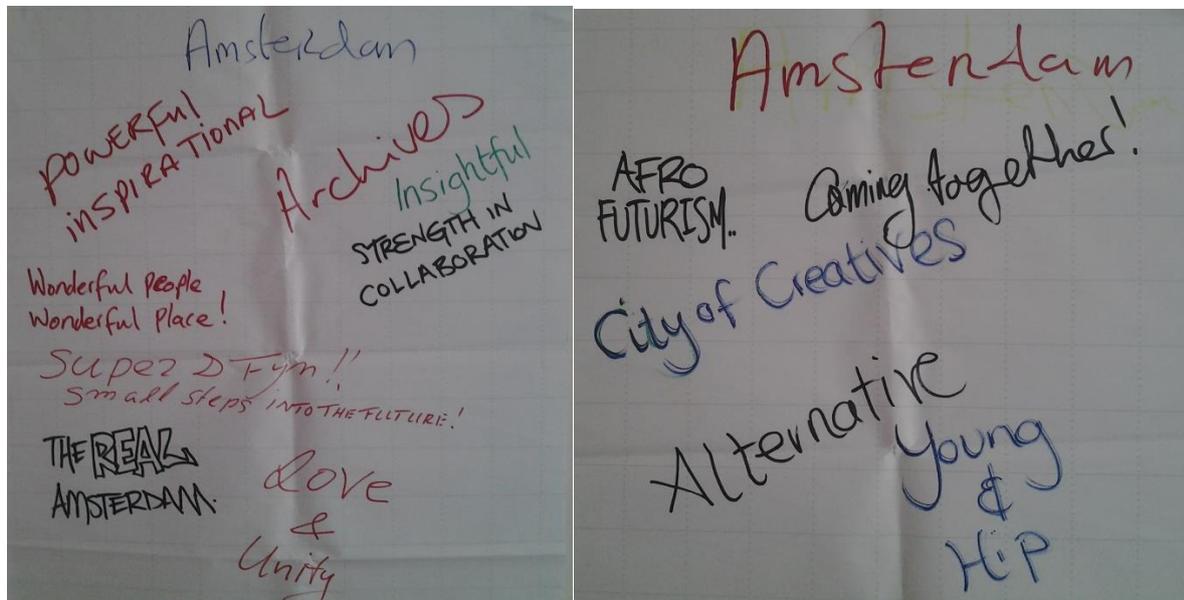
A combined video of all three visits was made by the Dutch partners, which has been uploaded onto their website and can be accessed via the following link: Click to view the video (16-03-2018) of project Black To The Future on our Dutch-page.

Fig 9 offers a summative overview of key comments from participants showing the interrelationships across the key domains of the intergenerational typology against which our programme was developed: a conceptual overview.

"The sessions confirmed and strengthened my perception that the solution for these challenges has to come from the community itself and that Migrants already have created opportunities for themselves due to their own approaches." [55 – 65yrs -Cologne]

"It made me want to have more conversations with the older generation." (44 - 54yrs Amsterdam)

"I learned a lot on hosting and organising events and international exchanges. I will use this for my oral history project I am currently working at." (44 – 54yrs - Amsterdam)

"The intergenerational aspect of the project really made us realize and appreciate the similarities between the challenges young migrant people faced in the previous generations and now in the African Diaspora community in all of the participating communities." [55 – 65yrs – Cologne]

Mutual and reciprocal Benefits

Participatory and culturally grounded

Cross-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary

Strengthens community bonds and promotes active citizenship)

"Networking on an international level is highly empowering." [44 - 54yrs – Cologne)

"An intergenerational approach is very useful to determine and confront the structural problems by activating all available resources in our communities." [31 – 43 – Cologne]

Fig 9: How participants reported on the intergenerational experience.

"The specific history, differences and similarities of the participating countries and their projects and methods of working with the people they serve." (25 – 34yrs - Amsterdam)

"Given that the landscape of youthwork is different and ever changing, the programme has caused me to reflect on what method we use to reach and guide our youth in the future." (25 – 34yrs – Amsterdam)

Section 5.0: Conclusion

The evaluation strongly indicates that the practice of youth work across the three cities varied with the issues being dealt with varying just as much though with some similarities. Within Germany, for example, the African diaspora communities are, for all intents and purposes, migrants and refugees while in Netherlands and the UK, the communities are fully embedded having been there for generations; they are in fact 'not-immigrants' even though they are being treated as though they are. The ability to visit and experience others' perspectives and culture allowed participants the opportunity to engage around these differences. Based on verbal and written reflections in the 'Diaries, blogs and Whatsapp Group discussions', this has been one of the most eye-opening experiences of the programme and has sustained relationships – and created live long bonds with some.

The BTTF project gave participants the opportunity to directly interact with the 'settings', with those people who are often the objective of social enquiries (migrants, refugees, BAME etc). It was fundamentally about providing tools and concepts that practitioners could take back to their organisations so as to inform practice with young people as either youth workers and/or community development workers. Seeing 'activism' such as Dear White Hva, the struggle in the establishment of the Black Archives and the Zwate Piet campaigns and development in Amsterdam, spearheaded in the main through the efforts of the Surinamese community, is akin to the Caribbean experience om the UK of the 1960s to 80s. This showed that the pace of change has its own momentum and recognises that the cultural environments they are located in are different carrying its own pace of change and discourse.

Participants were asked to capture some of the most memorable and impactful moments from their experience within a 'diary journal'. Some of their comments are worth sharing as they illustrate the impact the programme had on the participants. Examples include:

 "The journey of the African Diaspora is not something that was always at the forefront of my mind professionally, or certainly as much as it should have been, and by way of this programme, I have been able to see how various journeys have contributed to behaviours, characteristics, barriers and influences. It has been invaluable learning from others, finding myself surrounded by a wealth of knowledge."

"I very much enjoyed the discussion in the park where youth work of the 80's was compared to youth work of today. What I found very interesting about that discussion is that although some points did not sound right to me, you can only really go by those that have experienced working with young people at that time. Particular thoughts and processes of today do not necessarily apply to or correspond with youth work of the 80's and this was a debate that I found very interesting and informative."

"My eyes have been opened to an extent that I would like to cascade to those that I work with. As part of being a reflective and developing practitioner, it is integral that we find tools along our journey to inform and influence our practice and this programme has served as an in-depth learning process for me. It almost feels as if I have taken for granted my heritage and the struggles of those who have gone before me and just confined them to a place of memory whereas the aforementioned should always serve as a continuous influence to my work."

"… Learning from the experiences of the other partners who have been in their countries in the 3rd or 4th generation gave me a brief idea of how the future of black people in my country may look like. Also, we were able to learn from their past experience and adapt it to the changes we are going to face in the future."

"The activities with the participants gave me a lot of insight about the similarities and differences of the problems the African diaspora youth and community face in the cities. It was very interesting to discuss and explore about the solutions and ideas for the future.

I also learned to listen and discuss more effectively in a group. In between the sessions we had individual conversations and got to know more about their personal background, live and work. And because all the sessions were in English, my vocabulary and speaking skills improved a lot."

Participants were able to capture those cultural and youth spaces where young people 'hung out', where youth and community development work was taking place[27]. Comments such as the following illustrate aptly the value of undertaking 'Learning Visits':

"Our visit to Etemete e.V. children project gave me the opportunity to appreciate the local initiatives in my city, which I didn't give that much attention to before. The project also helped me to rediscover my community and appreciate the work done so far."

"The session that immediately comes to mind is the final day in Cologne at the family community centre, where they aim to preserve the Amharic Language by teaching it to the children. I was touched by the warmth in which the community embraced us and their sense of pride in keeping their cultural heritage and values alive."

The empowerment of young people from the African diaspora through engagement in formal decision-making processes revealed how unrepresentative young people from these communities were at the formal institutional level, especially within NGOs recognised in Europe. Discussions on 'youth representation' in the decision-making process triggered

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[27] Please note, the object of the programme was not to look at the quality of work being delivered in these spaces but to capture and record them so as to make links and start creating a network.

exploration of the types of representational structures that existed across the cities in scope to the project:

"I have encouraged a number of young people to research the journey of their ancestors and to bear in mind the struggles that we have endured whilst considering options in life such as registering to vote. I have never, ever tried to influence a young person with regards to a particular political disposition, but I do encourage them to vote and have used the journey of the African diaspora as an example of why they should."

The formal influence (direct and indirect) of young people in the decision-making processes across the cities were mixed. From a thought leadership perspective, based on discussions, it was evident that the driving force to engage in the decision-making process in Germany and the Netherlands, in particular, were more prominent than in the minds of those from the UK. An interesting perspective arose from our analysis which showed that the presence of people from African diaspora communities are under-represented on the boards of the NGOs representing each partner country on the European Youth Forum. For example, only 4% could be identified as being of 'black African descent' from a collective board membership of 180 from nine (9) NGOs across the three countries (Fig 10).

Fig 10: European Youth Forum representative leadership by ethncity (% n=180)
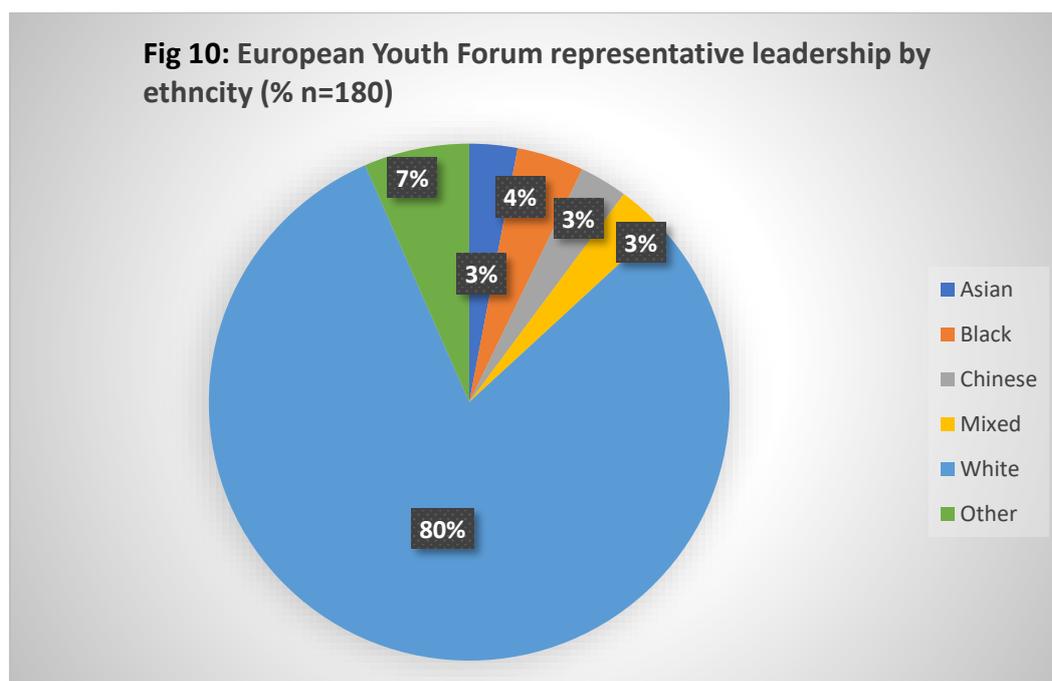
This raises questions about representation of black young people on such decision-making platforms in the UK as well as elsewhere across Europe. As one participant puts it:

"...there is a need for 'migrants to solve their own problems' with 'role models' offering some solution to 'positive contribution' and breaking through the 'glass ceilings' by challenging discriminatory practices and barriers".

What next for the Black to the Future Programme?

Based on the evidence – formal and informal - there is much to applaud the design, planning and execution of the programme. The Diary feedbacks were clear and insightful as to why people came onto the programme, the activities they participated in and some very clear indications of using some of the tools, and in some cases, challenged some taken-for-grantedness about aspects of life. By far the strongest thread running through the analysis was the benefit of sharing across cultures, countries and generation.

If nothing else, the intergenerational golden thread that ran through the programme should be harnessed and further developed, taking into account the age range of participants and the experiences that they bring. It became clear that those at the youngest end of the age spectrum perhaps got the most out of the experience and design of the programme than those in what I will term the 'middle period' (30 – 45yrs), as they are neither so young not to have experienced many of the issues under discussion and not old enough to have gone through the many trials and tribulations as 'pioneers' (i.e. those who were born around the 1950s compared to those born after 1970s).

One of the key learning points to come out of the process was that further developmental work was needed to explore the threads which have emerged from this initial process. 'Taking the best from the past' (Sankofa) to build a 'community of humanness' (Ubuntu) delivered with 'generational' insights and perspectives (intergenerational) makes for a powerful approach in a world where differences can sometimes be perceived as weakness and inferiority against a more Eurocentric alignment of what is knowledge and good.

Youth work and community development offers a glimpse as to what might be possible, given the right sets of circumstances. We already know that youth work, in some parts of Europe, perhaps does not have the backing of their national government (i.e. no legislative policy framework for youth work in place) but it is a growth profession, in a growth sector, that offers disengaged communities and those struggling to get their voices heard, the opportunity to do so.

"Until the lions have their own historians the tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter!"
(Ghanaian proverb)

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