



HOW MIGHT WE CREATE SUSTAINABLE
AFRICAN DIASPORA COMMUNITIES THROUGH
INTERGENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP,
SOCIAL ACTION AND COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT?

*‘What is the most important thing? It is people. It is people. It is people.’
(Maori Proverb, also encapsulated in African Ubuntu principles)*

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THE BROADER CONTEXT



Maori carving,
Porirua Museum of Arts and Cultures,
Wellington, Aotearoa NZ

1. Purpose

This report reflects on learning which resulted from a **Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travel Fellowship** awarded in 2012.

Two separate visits took place between May 2013 and February 2014. The first trip was for two weeks to **Atlanta, Georgia, USA** where I attended a two day conference followed by a number of half day meetings. The second trip for four weeks, was to **Aotearoa, NZ**, where I was hosted by two Maori families in rural settings and two Pakeha (European) families in urban settings.

The learning shared and recommendations are for senior policy makers and are intended to shed light on what could appear to be some of the unintended weaknesses and deficiencies of the 'open access' policy of current legislation and available support aimed at empowering communities. It is for those involved in creating policies and plans designed to encourage local communities to take a more active role in initiatives aimed at transforming our communities. These policies and plans which include 'Community Rights' originally came under the remit of 'The Big Society', a term which seems to have all but disappeared from the English language. However, the overall intention and direction of travel i.e. the creation of an army of local volunteer led effort, set against a backdrop of unprecedented levels of reduction in government public sector spending, remains very much on track.

This paper is also aimed at national organisations whose mission it is to lead on the implementation and delivery of these policies through **Social Action, Active Citizenship, Social Innovation and Social Enterprise** programmes across the UK. There is emerging evidence to suggest that these ambitious policies in practice are doing little to engage and empower some of our

society's most disadvantaged groups. The current position concerning grass roots implementation appears to be, high quality packages of support leading to positive outcomes for individuals and communities (within and outside of our urban areas), most able to organize and help themselves to achieve local change and even transformation. Relatively little is happening however, for those less able to access available support, and who continue to experience disadvantage and social exclusion. This might not be the stated intention, but it is clear from more than almost 50 years of equality legislation and programmes, that systems which continue to assume a level playing field from the outset, will almost always produce the same exclusionary results for some of society's most vulnerable groups.

Lastly, but not least, this paper should also be of interest to African Diaspora policy makers, academics, community based organisations and activists, in the UK. Continuous systemic failure means that our communities still face considerable barriers when attempting to access this fast moving and increasingly complex landscape. This exists alongside complex community politics, local organisational management issues, fragmentation and some would say, competition. There is also a noticeable dearth of new creative and entrepreneurial community based leaders with social business skills coming through, based on a model which we have ourselves created. These people are urgently needed to help create new types of organisations, spaces, responsive services using change agency processes which successfully help us navigate this brave new world thereby creating sustainable communities for the future.

2. A question as a catalyst for social change

A recent Stanford University Social Entrepreneurship article suggested that '... one of the distinguishing behaviours of innovators is asking the right questions – questions that others are not asking.' (Rabbat 2014).

Towards the end of 2010, I wrote a short article entitled 'My Big Question', the purpose of which was to start a dialogue about who (individuals, communities, organisations, policy makers and planners), **in the UK was actively thinking about creating a sustainable and thriving African Diaspora community for the future.**

I knew that African Diaspora leaders had worked tirelessly in our local communities between the 1960's and mid 1990's fighting against social injustice and discrimination. Community leaders such as Sybil Phoenix, Mavis Best née Clarke, Darcus Howe, Jessica and Eric Huntley, Gus John and Linton Kwesi Johnson and John Le Rose to name but a few, have campaigned and voiced community concerns including Stop and Search (SUS), the New Cross Fire, educational exclusion campaigns and were involved in anti-racist marches and other important political activities. Their actions increased accessibility to available resources and held failing systems to account. They designed their own social innovations in response to challenges they faced, including the Supplementary (Saturday) School movement, African-centred models of mental health practice, groups for young men and young women offering rights of passage and mentoring support, preschool provision, creating culturally diverse educational resources for primary and secondary schools, Black bookshops which sold international

Black literature, community centres as well as other physical assets and resources. Together these 'community led' initiatives created a strong platform which supported our communities during the first five decades, post Windrush.

However, most of these community leaders are now ageing, some are retiring, some are returning to their countries of origin and / or increasingly affected by poor health. As a result a gap has opened up with few visible new leaders stepping into this emerging space neither is leadership knowledge, skills and experience being transferred between the generations. The extent of the need and demand for new kinds of community based leadership skills and knowledge has been demonstrated through a relatively new high profile African Diaspora leadership programme, offered through the Royal Society of Arts (www.thersa.org) which had over 1000 names submitted for places. Available evidence suggests that the four different providers were not drawn from African Diaspora led community based organisations neither does the curriculum offer within the programme reflect our world views, ways of being or specific needs. It has however, attracted some extraordinarily talented and highly skilled African Diaspora individuals who are committed to leading the development of their communities both here and across the African continent.



Aotearea, NZ, 2014

I had intended that new relationships, experience, knowledge and skills gained during both trips, would inform the theory and practice of a new initiative called ‘The Ubele Initiative’ (Swahili for ‘The Way Ahead’). Ubele began to emerge in 2011 as a strategic and practical response to ‘My Big Question’. As a result of what I learnt during my Fellowship, Ubele is now growing into a creative and highly skilled group of 20 volunteer change agents or ‘Watani’, a community of ones with a special bond. We have begun to support our communities so that they can begin conversations about their own models of community asset processes (people as well as spaces), community enterprise development and strategic partnerships. It is also beginning to have a national impact through partnering with Locality (www.locality.org.uk) which leads on the implementation of ‘Community Rights’ through the Localism Act, 2011.

¹. The African Diaspora refers to individuals and /or groups who define themselves as being of African heritage; who live in the UK and irrespective of citizenship retain emotional, financial and cultural links to their country of heritage and/or the African continent (*Common Ground Initiative, Comic Relief, 2010*)

3. Why focus on African Diaspora communities when Britain is a 'post racial' society?

2015, is the 50th anniversary of the Race Relations Act, 1965. Some of the social and economic challenges facing our community appear to be deepening, with relatively few effective national strategic and/or long term interventions being designed to tackle them. The net effect of these seemingly intractable issues can be seen through available national data (see below for some examples) which include an over representation in the criminal justice system, disproportionately high levels of educational exclusion and unemployment and the number of people sectioned under mental health legislation. In some instances, it seems as though some of the ground that had been hard won is actually being eroded. Examples of this include a perception of loss and/or destabilization of community assets (buildings and other spaces) which The Ubele Initiative will be conducting a national mapping exercise into, over the next 6 months in an attempt to assess the extent of any actual change.

My quest to find or to create answers to 'My Big Question' has become even more heightened since 2012. This has in part been fuelled as a result of the increased level of interest and opportunities emerging from within the 'Right to Bid', 'Challenge' and to 'Build' which all fall within the 'Localism Act, 2011'. Research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation back in 2011, exploring potential opportunities arising from the transfer of community assets under the Localism Act, 2011, suggested that '.....in disadvantaged areas

limited opportunities to generate revenue from community assets. There is a real risk that some communities will be left behind in the asset transfer agenda...which '... may exacerbate existing inequalities among communities'.

I, along with others, began to notice that the social action, social innovation and community enterprise space was attracting new and different groups of people. Most of those appeared, we observed, not to be reflecting the cultural diversity found in many of our major urban areas. On closer scrutiny and after numerous conversations, it began to look like an 'urban boy's club' to me (and I don't mean hoodies!), with connections and relationships stemming from school, university and/or previous employment. The term 'hipster' probably more aptly describes what I am noticing, even though it actually stems from the late 1940's describing a Black subcultural figure in Anatole Broyard's essay in Partisan Review called 'A Portrait of a Hipster' (1948). Today it is often used to describe a white subculture figure living in newly gentrified urban neighbourhoods who has as '...an air of knowing about exclusive things before anyone else.' (New York Magazine, 2010). I witnessed a very similar phenomenon whilst visiting previously black neighbourhoods in Downtown, Atlanta, Georgia. I was informed that black neighbourhoods in **Downtown Atlanta which have now become gentrified and are almost exclusively white neighbourhoods.**

There maybe a lack of capacity and more

Some of these new groups seemed to have carved out a new and exciting world of creativity, design thinking, systems thinking, chaos theory and agile working, coupled with a changing language and urban lifestyles which reflect their new hipster status. They are adopting social innovation lens through which to study and effect social change locally and globally as well as being the primary consumers of goods and services from Farmer's Markets, cafes selling organic meals and drinks and shops selling vintage clothes. The net effect can be seen in an increasingly rapid gentrification of some of our previously highly undesirable neighbourhoods of Brixton, Dalston, Deptford, Peckham and now Tottenham in London. Such developments are part of the policies and plans within Boris Johnson's 'London Plan 2014' (www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning) which has created '33 Opportunity Areas' across London. However analysis of the planned changes and the potential and actual impact on disadvantaged communities were recently cited in Just Space (2014), (www.justspace.org) response to the London Plan. As a London wide network they have collected and submitted a comprehensive response on behalf of community based organisations, as deprived neighbourhoods have been targeted for major infrastructure projects primarily led by large private sector developers and other companies. Just Space will be represented throughout the City Hall hearings about the London Plan next month.

There is little doubt that this picture is becoming more noticeable in deprived in the areas up and down the country which still have large numbers of people experiencing

social exclusion alongside highly priced property and property owners.



Maori carving,
Porirua Museum of Arts and Cultures,
Wellington, Aotearoa NZ, 2014

4. What evidence is there to support the emerging picture?

Population growth

Evidence about the impact of recent austerity measures are now surfacing and paint a very worrying picture within which my question continues to emerge. I made mention of some of these issues above but there are a myriad of other examples and some compelling data. For example, census data suggests that **Britain's BME community** has almost doubled over the past 10 years from **8%** in **2001** to almost **15%** in **2011**, with Black Africans being the fastest growing group (Policy Exchange 2014) and that BME communities are expected to be grow to **30%** by 2050 (Policy Exchange 2014). The African Diaspora has been designated Africa's sixth region by the African Union, and the UN have declared 2015 to 2014 as the international decade of People of African Descent which centers on the themes of Reconciliation, Justice, and Development.

Employment

However, available evidence suggests that BME communities still experience higher levels of disadvantage when compared with their white counterparts (Policy Exchange, 2014) and African Diaspora communities are not benefiting for example, from the gradual slowing down of the recession or increased **employment opportunities** (Voice4Change, 2014). In June 2012, **7.3** per cent of White people, **15.5** per cent of **Black (African or Caribbean) people** and **17.3** per cent of people with **mixed ethnicity**, of working age (16-64), were

unemployed. In October 2012, **23 percent of black males aged 16-24 were unemployed**; 13 per cent of white males in the same age group were unemployed. Across London, the picture is particularly disturbing. At 6.8%, Tottenham has the highest rate of unemployment in London, (Haringey Independent, 2013). Also when unemployment data is analysed in terms of job seekers allowance (JSA) claimants, where 49% of all claimants are BAME (Nomis, 2014). Sixteen out of the 33 London Boroughs (50%) have proportionately more BAME claimants than white claimants (41%) with boroughs such as Newham (68%), Brent (67%), Tower Hamlets (63%) Ealing (62%) and Harrow (62%) faring the worst.

Health and mental health

Research in 2013 indicated that black people detained under **mental health** legislation are **29** percent more likely to be forcibly restrained than white patients. They are 50 percent more likely to be placed in seclusion and more likely to be labeled as psychotic. BME young graduates are more likely to face unemployment than their white counterparts (Runnymede Trust, 2010) and young black males are 7 times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police (Metropolitan Police, 2014). More recent evidence points to a rise in negative racial attitudes over the past 30 years in the UK. (<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/338779/selfreported-racial-prejudice-datafinal.pdf>)

There is no doubt that success stories within our community are highlighted from time to time, however they tend to be rather individualistic or very local in nature and often describing relatively small scale achievements or strides. Even though there has been, for example, a marked increase in the number of BME university entrants and graduates as cited by the Runnymede Trust in 2010, universities attended fall within a rather narrow range and tend to exclude those within the Russell Group. Furthermore, **more BME graduates are likely to face unemployment than their white counterparts.** Even when differentiating for 'Black African', 'Black Caribbean' and 'Black Other', the national picture remains overwhelmingly challenging with regards to the health, education, employment, social welfare and criminal justice system outcomes for African Diaspora communities.

Although the focus of my enquiry centers on the needs of African Diaspora in the UK, it is important to mention the considerable role that African Diaspora communities play in their countries of origin and that they are making an impact in the areas of investment, enterprise development and job creation in Africa. The Department of International Development has more recently begun to recognize this through the Common Ground Initiative which is delivered in partnership with Comic Relief. They are supporting African development through organisations including small African Diaspora led organisations. The review of the first four years work was the topic of the 'Africa in Action: Celebrating Diaspora Contribution to Development' conference earlier 2014.

Despite the relative success of some of our activities in Africa, **national data suggests that more than 60 years of social and economic policy in the UK, has done relatively little to improve the overall life chances of the African Diaspora community here.** This is still the case, even when compared with other disadvantaged communities from across the UK. I suggest that significantly different ways of thinking and doing are now required to help reduce this growing gap. We already have many of the skills, knowledge and experience to co-create potential answers. However, the need to get more of our community ready to meet such a challenge takes me back to my original question and the quest for new knowledge, experience and connections during the two Fellowship trips and indeed over the past few years.

Hopefully my findings and recommendations provide a useful starting point for those who might not have seriously considered the depth of need, what effective strategies should be put in place and which African Diaspora led agencies and organisations, amongst others, need to be invited into those conversations to help map out directions of travel and/or future strategies.

5. Fellowship purpose and plans

I applied for a Churchill Fellowship under the theme of ‘**Communities That Work**’. I had noticed almost non-existent opportunities for deep dialogue and problem solving between government officials, national organisations and African Diaspora communities, about the implementation and effectiveness of (their then) new policies and programmes. Consultation processes went so far, but do little, in my experience to effect real engagement and empowerment which leads to lasting social change.

I submitted my application a few days before the 2011 uprisings. Earlier that year I felt an under-current of dissent emerging which I thought might overflow into some of our most disadvantaged areas. I was also acutely aware that we (local communities through to senior government officials) did not have a coherent strategy in place for engaging disadvantaged communities who would become even more marginalized due to the unprecedented social and economic austerity measures being planned.

I applied for the Fellowship to explore models of African American and Māori leadership, social action and community enterprise. I felt that if the above three elements could be brought together successfully into a model they could make a major contribution to our wealth building and provide a strong foundation on which to build our long term community sustainability plan. I also felt that travel could offer me a unique opportunity to learn from international examples of good practice, especially where national organisations, systems and processes had been created by minority communities with strong regional and local connections which were also having a significant impact on the ground.

I am aware that both African American and Māori communities have experience of extreme forms of racism, discrimination and oppression. Furthermore, this continues to be the lived experience for Māori, as indigenous people of the land. Both communities had and continue to be, at the forefront of anti-racist struggles and work hard to create and implement strategies, plans and programmes the aim of which is to alleviate the direct and indirect effects of racism and discrimination, despite the inherent challenges involved.

I was drawn to Atlanta, Georgia as the city offers an international success story of African American achievement in terms of education, business, entertainment and public life. It was also built on a proud history of civil rights with Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr and his wife Coretta King, Rosa Parks and Andrew Young, activist, politician and diplomat being some of the city's most renowned and respected sons and daughters. It is also the home of three of the oldest and best known historically black colleges – Morehouse (for young men), Spelman (for young women) and Clark Atlanta (co-educational), which I had always wanted to visit. They are located in the same neighbourhood and their students benefit from all three academic institutions through cross-curricula teaching and other activities. Sweet Auburn Street, where Dr. King Jnr was born and grew up was also known as the richest African American street (due to its entrepreneurial culture and activities) in the whole of the USA, back in the 1930's.

I was also interested to learn about some of the Black national organisations which have a long and distinguished history of operating in Atlanta, how their civic, public sector and business leadership had been created and how new leadership continues to emerge.

THE TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP

AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS MY LENS

African Diaspora communities in the UK have previously struggled to create and sustain national collective strategies, systems and/or structures which include the cultivation of nationally representative community leaders and activists with an accountable voice (apart from through faith communities). Unfortunately our elected leaders are often viewed as being divorced from local communities and this gap I feel remains a key strategic weakness that needs to be addressed by African Diaspora communities ourselves. Plans to create a national platform through the interim National Afrikan People's Parliament (www.inapp.org.uk) are still in the development phase. It should formally launch in 2015. However, some members of the African Diaspora community would argue that due to its' particular political ideology and current membership, that it does not have a sufficiently broad enough appeal. National infrastructure, research and campaigning organisations such as Voice4Change(www.voice4change-england.co.uk), Race on the Agenda (www.rota.org.uk) and Operation Black Vote (www.obv.org.uk) have experienced reductions in central government funding and have very limited resource.

I was interested in learning about leadership and community enterprise in rural Māori communities living in the Far North of Aotearoa, NZ (named by the Māori as, 'Land of the Long White Cloud'). Such communities are experiencing a deep economic downturn with local industries closing and young people moving to the main areas including cities to look for work. I also wanted to learn about their cultural values, traditions and indigenous knowledge systems. I instinctively knew that we had a deep ancestral connections and that there was so much to learn about how they these were being transferred between generations.

At the beginning of 2014, I wrote a chapter on 'Ubuntu' leadership for a book on 'Leadership in the Third Sector', which should be published later this year. 'Ubuntu' is paradigm which was central to Nelson Mandela's style of leadership and is a concept found in much of where the African Bantu peoples are scattered. In essence, it is the essentially African concept of what it means to be human and '...emphasises the interconnectedness of self within society and the extension of humanness within shared community' (Brubaker 2013:96). I am being increasingly drawn to explore this model which embraces the following five concepts

- sharing and collective ownership of responsibilities and challenges
- the importance of people and relationships over things
- participatory decision making and leadership
- patriotism – survival of the group over individual interests being paramount
- reconciliation as a goal of conflict management.

I was interested to observe Ubuntu or similar principles whilst staying with Maori communities, as the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, NZ. I wrote about this in a blog piece in February 2014 whilst still in Aotearoa NZ entitled, 'How might we avoid becoming a community of Native Nowheres'. It reflected on the personal and community development work I felt we still need to do to actively embrace and pass on our cultural values and traditions as well as to reconnect with our ancestors, to help create a stronger sense of who we are, as Africans in the Diaspora. <http://ubele.org/why-we-should-avoid-becoming-a-community-of-native-nowheres>.

6. Between practitioners and theorists there is a special place

In 2009, I complete a second Masters' degree programme at University of Surrey which introduced me to an array of more creative, humanistic change agency tools, skills and strategies. The programme challenged and encouraged participants as emerging and experienced change agents, to validate and utilise our feelings, emotions and deepest sources of knowledge. It encouraged the use of intuition and other often overlooked or discounted (in Western societies), ways of knowing. Researching into and applying aspects of these models eventually transformed my approach to facilitating systems change in systems. However, I was still looking for new practical tools after completing the programme. I had not felt compelled, as some of the other participants had been, to study in further depth, the models we had been introduced to more deeply, even though I was using some of them in my work. My main criteria were that they needed to have a clear theory base and yet could be relatively easily integrated into my practice with individuals, groups and organisations. I also wanted to be able to inspired by its creativity and be able to share it with others, so we could eventually create our own model of social change.

I was by a series of co-incidences introduced to 'Theory U' which encourages individuals to immerse themselves in the field of inquiry and to generate responses to stuck social issues through adopting a more generative response (rather than reactive quick fixes) in order to address the systemic root issues and causes. The book, 'Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges (2007)', written by Otto Scharmer who is also the founder of the US based Presencing Institute, describes a three phased 'U' process, Sensing, Presencing (or retreating and reflecting) and Realising (or creating something new quite quickly through prototyping) which when applied to complex issues can lead to transformational change. I decided to approach both trips using the initial 'Sensing Phase' of the 'U' which offers an opportunity for a deep dive or total immersion in the system one wants to impact on, asking participants to suspend judgment, cynicism and fear. It encourages you to '...observe, observe, observe' (Scharmer 2007) and to listen in a way which he calls 'generative' and which '...requires us to access not only our open heart, but also our open will our capacity to connect to the highest future possibility that can emerge' (Scharmer, 2007).

One of the practical activities during in the Sensing Phase are 'Learning Journeys' where you go to meet people who have direct experience of the system you are wanting to influence or change. I have always experienced them as very simple in nature, yet they yield results which are often quite magical and transformative in terms of what you notice in the field and subsequently understand about the system you want to intervene in and change.

I did not undertake much research prior to visiting any of these communities (apart from where I needed to be and when), although Scharmer (2007) also mentions an initial phase of building common ground or co-initiating. I was largely going on what I already 'knew' about their history and culture and a deeply held childhood desire to visit them I noted my assumptions (which included prejudices and stereotypes!) about African Americans and Māori people. I made an agreement with myself that I would listen deeply and do less talking – I intended to become more aware of and validate the physical sensations and vibrations



vivian Hutchinson,
Taranaki,
New Plymouth, Aotearoa NZ,
2014

experienced as well as my own internal conversation, when in conversation and dialogue with others.

Dialogue actually means, '... meaning flowing through us', ² and is qualitatively very different from for example, debate, discussion and negotiation. Lastly I would allow myself to be open, trusting and to follow whatever unfolded – I know that my ancestors would guide and protect me. I would be a follower, rather than a leader, which was a very different place to operate from, rather than my normal place in the world. However, to get the most from this unique experience, it felt important to suspend my normal position, so that rich and deeply transformative learning could emerge.

Both trips were demanding, exciting and overwhelmingly eventful – however, it was not all work either. I was able to experience some of the fascinating sights and sounds of each country through attending performing arts, visiting national museums, art galleries, a jazz festival, meeting up with old friends, having a treatments in a natural hot spring water Polynesian spa, eating in numerous restaurants, of course some doing some shopping! However, the trip to Aotearoa NZ, took me completely outside of my comfort zone, as I felt relatively ignorance prior to my visit and yet chose to remain as such, as I had intentionally wanted to create a unique learning opportunity with a real personal and professional stretch.

² D.Bohm.,1996

STORIES FROM MY JOURNEYS.....

‘Instead of projecting a future, what may be more sensible is to create a future by making it change the makers as well as the destination.’ Muchie, 2014

The following sections are highlights and reflections from my visits which link to the three main tenets of the fellowship: intergenerational leadership, social action and community enterprise. For more insight into my adventures on each separate trips, readers should read the three blog pieces I wrote which are on the Ubele website:
<http://ubele.org/community/>

7. Leadership Lessons in Atlanta

Successful leadership depends on the quality of attention and intention that the leader brings to any situation. Two leaders in the same circumstances doing the same thing can bring about completely different outcomes, depending on the inner place from which each operates. (Scharmer, p1, 2007)

During the trip to Atlanta (14-30th May 2013), I heard numerous insightful local and national African American leadership stories. I was fortunate to spend time meeting with and learning from extraordinary African American people including representatives from:

- Spelman College (young women)- which offers a wide variety of national and international leadership programmes throughout the college via their Centre for Leadership and Civic Engagement
- Morehouse College (young men) through the Andrew Young Global Leadership Centre which offers a wide variety of programmes including a 'minor' in leadership studies and a Coca Cola Pre College Leadership Programme –second week of June each year
- 100 Black Men – To grow the next generation of leaders: 'What you'll see is what you'll be!' It partners with professionals e.g. doctors, lawyers, air traffic controllers, managers and also hosts a Leadership Summit for Presidents of Chapters in December each year.
- Fulton County Youth Commission who deliver a range of youth leadership programmes including their:
 - Global Leadership programme for 9-11 Graders
 - Bi-annual Youth Leadership Academy for 25 boys aged 7-8 year olds
 - Bi-annual Youth leadership Academy Girls aged 7-8 years old.
 - Priceless University- for young women aged 12-17 years. Curriculum includes job shadowing, etiquette, public speaking, life skills, college preparation and financial literacy
- Emeritus Reverend Dr. Gerald Durley – civil rights leader, pastor and psychology academic.

i. Spelman and Morehouse Colleges

– creating a Black leadership legacy second to none!

I started my two week trip in Atlanta, Georgia, by attending the 9th Spelman College Women of Color, two day international conference, entitled 'Strategic Leadership: Building Wealth, Entrepreneurship and Paying it Forward' (which in the UK is commonly known as 'giving back'). This was exactly where I was meant to be!

It was a gathering of more than 500 women (and a few men) of color, of all ages (from 1st year undergraduates through to retired former professors), which provided a unique opportunity to connect, learn and network with some of the most prominent women leaders and emerging leaders in the USA and globally. I was generously offered four free places to attend the conference and was able to extend the invitation to three other African Diaspora women who are based in the UK, two of were also current and previous Churchill Fellows. I wrote about our experiences at the Spelman Conference in the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Newsletter, Summer 2013. (www.wcmt.org.uk) As a result of the article I have extended my network of Churchill Fellows of colour and we plan to host a meeting in 2015.

Spelman College's leadership development model is designed from the experiences of African American women and is used as key strategy for preparing women for effective leadership. They offer Executive Leadership, Student Leadership, Intergenerational Leadership and Mentoring Programmes. Their approach also encourages young women to give community service over the four years they spend at Spelman, enabling them to increase their level of leadership responsibility and skills and experience so that they eventually lead key elements of the programme. After the conference I met with the convener and lead for the college's leadership strategy and programmes, Dr. Jane Smith, Executive Director of the Centre for Leadership and Civic Engagement.

Knowing that you are being educated in the most prestigious Black female institution in the world probably gives one a deep sense of potential and opportunity as well as life long networks and connections. I was struck by the level of confidence and self awareness demonstrated by the younger women at Spelman. I was also impressed by the older women I met who had completed a Spelman education decades earlier. They seemed to demonstrate a genuine level of commitment to supporting future generations of women leaders emerge - something I have not witnessed in the UK. They were open and engaging, sharing hints and tips about how they had succeeded. Above all they appeared organized and spoke directly to conference delegates about their ambitions to 'Pay Forward'.

During a meeting with Dr. Smith it became clear that she was keen to develop a more strategic relationship with African Diaspora women in the UK. She offered me a more generous package of support for 2 women to attend their 10th conference, in May 2014. However, last minute glitches with flight seats meant that this could not happen in 2015. I plan to follow up on this for 2015, especially given that issues of educational opportunity, access and attainment are of significant concern to our community. A number of African Diaspora women from the UK have graduated from Spelman. I made contact with one of them at the conference and we have remained in contact with since my return. She is an excellent champion for a Spelman education and is willing to support potential ideas.



Spelman College Women of Color Leadership Conference, May, 2013



Yvonne at Spelman College Women of Color Leadership Conference, May, 2013

Offers of more strategic connections were also mentioned by Dr. Julian Cole, Acting Director of the Andrew Young Global Leadership Centre. They also have a comprehensive leadership development programme which includes 80 Bonner community service students (www.bonner.org) working in the local neighbourhood. Morehouse students also go to Haiti, Honduras, Thailand, and Central and South America on leadership development programmes. There is much to be learnt by our young African Diaspora leaders through a strategic partnership with Spelman and Morehouse Colleges. I am not sure at this point how this might be realized, but it is an opportunity that needs to be considered and if possible be built on for future generations.



Signage at Spelman College

ii Walking alongside leadership giants!

One of the highlights of my leadership journey in Atlanta, was my meeting with Rev. Dr. Durley; a fearless, charismatic Morehouse College graduate, psychology academic, civil rights activist, community organiser and church leader with over 55 years of civic service. Although in his 70's and recently retired, he is still very involved in his community and has begun to carve out a new role for himself as an eco warrior championing environmental concerns of people living in poor black neighbourhoods. He is also developing a new generation of leaders, by intentionally selecting a group of young people aged 25 and over, for extended periods of conversation, dialogue, mentoring and coaching. I unexpectedly encountered one of these young people in his early 30's at a session of the Georgia Coalition of Black People's Agenda - it was clear that Rev Dr. Durley has chosen very special young people for this 'next leadership' role.

Rev. Dr. Durley also expressed deep pride that a young man less than half his age had been chosen to replace him in his church leadership role. He demonstrated a willingness to shift his leadership position, infact he viewed it as an essential prerequisite to be able to 'hand over the baton' in a very real and meaningful way.

Rev. Dr. Durley has also fought hard to ensure good quality affordable housing is available in his neighbourhood. I saw the evidence of how, along with local partners, he had transformed the housing stock. The first 'project' or estates in the USA had been built in his neighbourhood and over the years they had experienced urban decay. I mentioned

that I was also interested in the changing needs of African Diaspora elders in the UK and he took me to visit a new initiative which consisted of 42 x 1 bedroom high quality flats for Black elders. Residents of this scheme were keen to share their experiences of homelessness, (there were also other stories of social and economic disadvantage) and how this facility had helped transform their lives. It had been built after numerous years of campaigning and strategizing nationally and locally which had led to the eventual securing of federal, state and church funding. Listening to this story offered me an important lesson about the potential impact of targeted and strategic interventions as a means of facilitating transformational change.

Initially, our meeting was challenging to arrange; we were both on tight schedules and kept missing each other. However, the warmth and generosity he showed me once we finally met (plus a Southern breakfast of catfish, fried chicken and grits in one of his favourite local cafes), enabled us to converse like old friends. As I followed him around and he spoke to me and to local people we met along the way, I was able to listen generatively. By the end of the time spent with Rev. Dr. Durely, I realized that I was no longer the same person who had met him some few hours earlier. I had 'gone through a subtle but profound change that has connected you to a deeper source of knowing, including the knowledge of your best future possibility and self' (Scharmer, 2007, p3). Afterwards I realized that I had spent the morning in the company of an extraordinarily special leader – a real giant. I had never encountered such a person in my life before. He described our

meeting as a 'Kairos Moment', God's time. There is no doubt in my mind that it was an extraordinary experience and more than a year after our meeting, I am still reflecting and learning: insights continue to emerge. I drew on our encounter to form the basis of a blog piece about my visit to Atlanta which can be found at www.ubele.org.

iii. Why develop very young leaders (7 years and over)?

One of the surprises during my visit to Atlanta was to hear about some of the public sector responses to youth leadership development by Fulton County. I heard about a number of innovative programmes including a leadership programme for boys and girls in Grade 3 (aged 7-8 years). The programme for boys focuses on Entrepreneurship Skills and Leadership and on Science, Technology and Maths (STEM) and Leadership for girls. This programme is held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday during the academic year and during a six week Summer Academy.

One of the reasons for this type of early intervention is to make a marked improvement in the reading attainment of children and young people. Available evidence in the US suggests that the reading ages of 7-8 year olds have a direct correlation to the number of prisons and prison places that will need to be built in the future! Therefore these types of interventions are being viewed by policy makers as potentially having a significant positive impact on fiscal, justice

and social policy, longer term.

I also heard about the Children's Assembly process whereby children aged 12 years and under, have facilitated conversations about political issues affecting their communities. I was drawn to the idea of the early introduction of leadership and entrepreneurial skills development and would like to see this piloted in London with African Diaspora boys and girls. The Supplementary Schools system, which in some instances seem to require a bit of a boost to arrest falling numbers, to broaden the curriculum offer to include subjects primary schools are not offering our children and could provide an excellent opportunity and space within which this type of initiative to be incubated. I am also interested in exploring how best to listen to and consider the voices and concerns of very young children on other issues, apart from those which are debated through School Councils. There might well be models being implemented locally and nationally. I am unsure however, the extent to which they are reaching young members of the African Diaspora community.



Rev. Dr. Gerald Durley,
in his office, South Atlanta

iv. Passing the leadership baton using ‘Ubuntu’ leadership principles

‘Passing the baton’ is becoming somewhat of a rhetorical phase for our community. It seems to encapsulate the desire for a new generation of leadership to emerge with elder leaders passing on their knowledge and skills to this group. However there appears to be little evidence of this in occurring in practice. This situation appears to have been exacerbated by the extensive levels of reductions in local government spending on youth and community based services. Flexible work based and college routes into youth and community education careers developed between the 1970’s and 1990’s. Such opportunities provided a rich source of new civic leadership and social activism for African Diaspora communities. It also clearly aligns with the Ubuntu principle of contributing to the greater whole. Individuals could, pre, during and/or post qualification, serve an ‘apprenticeship’ under the guidance of a more experienced community based worker. They were often provided with meaningful and structured learning opportunities for community or civic service. If the experience went well they would learn new skills, about community issues and dynamics whilst offering new ideas and much needed hands-on support which contribute to resolving local issues. Individuals would be seen to have ‘served their time’ and built local ‘status’ which, if they stayed in the ‘field’ long enough could eventually lead to being viewed as a respected community leader. My entry point into this professional came through a 2 year college route where qualification was followed by a co-project worker role

Working in a specialist young women’s project

in Lambeth. I found myself in a leadership role from the outset.

It is clear that the traditional routes into community development and leadership have all but disappeared and we are lacking those with the new set of social business type skills which are now required to successfully lead and manage available community assets. Under the new ‘Community Rights’ agenda, Locality and partners have recruited, trained and deployed almost 400 Community Organisers across England.

www.cocollaborative.org.uk. In addition, Citizens UK www.citizensuk.org offers short programmes in Community Organizing and has linkages with the postgraduate programme in Community Organising at Queen Mary, University of London. However, these relatively few interventions cannot replace opportunities which have been lost from the system, most provide limited development opportunities and none focus on the specific needs of African Diaspora communities. Consideration of our specific needs and requirements should be an integral part of any new strategy designed to build a sustainable African Diaspora community in the UK.

I met and conversed with two Maori women on student placement when I visited the 155 Whare Roopu Community House Trust in Whangarei, Aotearoa, NZ. www.whare.org.nz. They were mature students working at a Development Trust which provided a wide variety of services to the local Maori community. They spoke to me about their work and training and the type of important opportunity the Development Trust was providing for them personally, professionally and for their wider community.

During a two week stay and conversations with different Maori Iwi or tribes in Aotearoa, NZ, I experienced first hand, some of the core values practiced in the concept of 'Ubuntu' within a leadership context. I encountered community leaders who openly respected and integrate the land, the sea and family (Whānau, pronounced Farno), into every aspect of their lives, actively acknowledging and embracing a life force or spirit (mauri), as old as the world itself. I was fortunate to be shown and told about some of their deeply held tikanga (custom and traditions) and saw how they revere their tīpuna (ancestors). They also demonstrated great Manaakitanga (hospitality), embracing me as a long, lost relative. I immediately felt at one with these so called 'strangers'. This was confirmed on numerous occasions especially when we began to share our traditional values, customs and practices. We often expressed surprised to learn where and how our traditional belief systems converged - they were the same! To my mind's eye there is little doubt that we, as Africans, including those of us in the Diaspora, are deeply interconnected with the Māori people. On return to London

I described them as our cousins (in Africa cousins are not given status as a relationship – you are brothers or sisters). I was quickly reminded when describing my experiences to an African brother here, that we are the same people!

I came away with a strengthened belief that the principles of Ubuntu should be integrated into a social business leadership framework for African Diaspora communities in the UK. This framework would include the skills, attributes and knowledge required, bringing together at least two generations of leaders (a minimum of 21 years upwards) to help create our future. Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2102) have edited a handbook which promote the decolonization of Maori people and which acknowledges and embraces their own indigenous systems of knowledge and practice. I would like to suggest that a similar resource (drawing on Ubuntu principles in practice) is produced for us and by us here in the UK. It would be used in the design and delivery of a new intergenerational leadership programme.



Yvonne Field with staff and members
Tu Tama Wahine Trust,
Aotearoa, NZ, 2014

8 Social Action in Action!

Waitangi Day, North Lands, Aotearoa, NZ



Debi and Ngaha Davies
- He Iwi Kotahi Trust,
Morewa, Aotearoa, NZ, 2014

My first hosts in Aotearoa, NZ, Ngahau and Debi Davies, suggested that I arrive in Aotearoa NZ in time for Waitangi Day on 6th February 2014. It is the major national holiday during which the country remembers the 1840 Treaty and the continuing need for Land Reform. The original treaty which was signed by more than 500 Maori chiefs was to ensure that their land rights were upheld. However this was continuously breached by the British Government, under Queen Victoria with Maori communities being dispossessed. Waitangai, is the place where the treaty was actually signed, and is close to where my hosts live in the Far North of the North Island. It is a day when Maori activists and their supporters restate their claim to land and land reform and demonstrate about other political and social issues such as the need for housing, family support, employment and educational opportunities. There is another document which was signed in 1835, the Declaration of Independence, which gave more rights to the indigenous Māori and it is this document that many Māori Iwi or tribes want recognised. The lead up to Waitangi Day is in itself an important feature. I attended political meetings on the day prior to the main event. I listened to speeches about issues affecting Maori communities and watched the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition and other dignitaries be invited into the Marae (Maori meeting place) for traditional ceremonies and tough talking about issues with Maori leaders.

Both days were emotionally charged. I felt a deep sense of injustice and pain whilst at Waitangi set against a movement of continued change. Waitangi Day made me reflect on the Caribbean claims for reparations which were announced towards the end of 2013. Fourteen Caribbean countries are seeking reparations, which includes an unequivocal apology from four European countries, including England, which profited from enslaving Africans. There is considerable work for us to do as Africans in the Diaspora to prepare ourselves so as to fully understand why this is still important, some 200 years after slavery was abolished. The late Bernie Grant, MP, who died in 2000, was the primary party political supporter of a claim. I feel it is also important for us to be able to give practical forms of support to this who have been leading this as a grassroots movement on our behalf, for decades.

Parihaka, Taranaki, New Plymouth



Photographic installations of the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and student from Dr Martin Luther King Centre for Social Change, Atlanta visiting Parihaka to pay homage to those who brought non violent resistance strategies to the world, Taranaki, New Plymouth, Aotearoa, NZ, 2014

It was not until almost a year after my trip to Atlanta that I realized that my community leadership and social action learning quest had converged or as some would say, had come full circle. I had not intended to visit Taranaki, New Plymouth, Aotearoa NZ, when I left London. However, as I was still in the 'Sensing Phase' of the U Process, I followed a suggestion by Debi and Ngahu Davis to visit Vivian Hutchinson, the author of *How Communities Heal*, 2012, (<http://www.nzsef.org.nz/howcommunitiesheal>) a book about social entrepreneurship in Aotearoa, NZ. Their story had been featured in it. Before I arrived there I had exceptional met a small group of black women, one of whom told about a group of Maori people who had lived in Parihaka, Taranaki, New Plymouth (<http://youtu.be/pQGbE1aj0V0>) who had successfully resisted English colonisers through peaceful and non-violent strategies and had kept their land.

I had no idea that Vivian knew or had been involved in recording this story for posterity, therefore on arrival at his home, I was just a little overwhelmed to hear that I was to be introduced to their descendants! Both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr integrated their principles of peaceful protest in the facilitation of transformational change in their own countries. However, the origin of their practice is not well known – it is often cited that Dr. King adopted his non violence strategy from Gandhi without without mentioning where Gandhi originally took it from i.e. the Maori people of Parihaka. However, I was taken dinner at a restaurant by their female descendants who are also from the Tu Tama Wahine organisation (www.tutamawahine.org.nz) which offers a wide range of Maori support and development service including to women and families experiencing domestic violence. It is run by an exceptional Maori woman leader, Ngahopi Cameroon. I was also able to see and hear aspects of the story in a photographic freeze in the restaurant which was a great addition to the DVD that Vivian showed me at his home, the previous evening.

Representatives of these two internationally recognized leaders (Gandhi's grandson and a student from the Martin Luther Centre for Social Change) visited Parihaka in 2003 to pay homage to the community which resisted European colonialism even when their leaders had been incarcerated on the South Island for almost 3 years.



Waitangi Day, Aotearoa, NZ, 2014



Yvonne with 'Project Hosts' at Atlanta, 2013

Read more about their amazing and yet relatively unknown story at:
<http://ubele.org/community/>

Whilst in West Auckland Aotearoa, NZ, I was hosted by the Director of Community Watekere, an umbrella organisation for voluntary sector organisations in the region. I shadowed her for three days of meetings, with interesting individuals and community organisations and attended a SkillShare session (an intensive 2 hour workshop where you learn a new skill). I was invited to speak at their 'Open Door' session for voluntary sector organisations and community leaders. I had been pleasantly surprised by the high proportion of 'brown' people in Auckland – mainly Polynesian, Chinese and South Asian. I noticed this whilst on a tour of the city by the person who had been generous with her networks and had linked me with most of the people I was visiting during the trip.

This session provided an opportunity to open up a conversation about what I had noticed about cultural diversity and the challenges and opportunities that this offered the city. It became clear that this is an issue in need of significant attention – stereotypes that were shared during the conversation of '...the wealthy and well' Asian, do little to ensure that the real needs of an increasingly diverse population are adequately planned for and met. Afterwards some of the participants emailed and thanked me. They informed me that the type of intervention I had made at the session was very much needed and they could learn from experiences in the UK. It left me reflecting on what a country such as Aotearoa NZ, which describes itself as a 'polite society' which I interpreted as accepting or non confrontational, might do to surface and respond to these and other critical issues which are clearly bubbling up in several quarters of their society.

Coalitions can help us make a louder noise.....

One area that African Americans social activists have directed their attention towards is voters' education, rights and registration. I met Helen Butler, Executive Director of Georgia's Coalition of the People's Agenda and the Black Women's Round Table (affiliated to National Coalition of Black Civil Participation). I also attended a Georgia Coalition of the People's Agenda session which focused on voter registration for the municipal elections in November 2013 as some significant voting boundaries had been recently changed.

They had implemented several successful voter empowerment sessions which has led to a significant increase in voter registration and actual votes in Georgia. As the result of a sustained strategic campaign, the African American vote was higher than the white American vote in the 2012 elections. One successful initiative they developed is an 'Intergenerational book ends' voting initiative using high profile rap artists and entertainers such as Usher, to get young people to then get their peers to register to vote.

Operation Black Vote (OBV) recent research illustrates the potential impact and influence of the Black vote here in the UK, on the outcome of the 2015 elections. However, it is unclear as to their strategy for taking this forward into an implementation phase. I am already aware of at least three separate initiatives emerging from within communities which seek to at least facilitate a conversation about how to harness the black vote. Lessons from the USA and a coalition of the willing could be used to help shape strategies and plans here. I visited Project South, (www.projectsouth.org) which works with some of the poorest communities in South Atlanta. They hosted a 'story circle' session for

me to which a range of their stakeholders were invited.

Participants were asked to listen to each others' stories of where Black leadership, Social Innovation and Intergenerational issues 'show up' in their work. Each person shared their story which were diverse in activities and yet had many common strands – the main one being how they had managed to facilitate previously silent voices to be heard by local decision makers including children's who were under 12 years to voice their concerns about political issues affecting their community through the Children's Assembly. They spoke about how they mobilised after Hurricane Katrina with the 'People's Movement Assembly' coming to Project South. I admired the grassroots nature of their collective activity and their belief in people to act for themselves. I also found their story circle process empowering we used which, similar to dialogue, ensured that everyone could share their stories and as a result surface the collective wisdom in the room.

Lessons learnt seemed to suggest that national coalitions of organisations and movements can achieve much more if they work together on agreed priorities; the main objective being to influence public policy 'for the common good'. Helen Butler outlined the areas they had successfully focused on in their coalition including education, environmental issues, the criminal justice systems, economic development as well as voters' rights. There are a number of key policy areas that we need to influence through a collective strategic approach which could be supported with the use of new social media and other campaigning tools – however we also need strong and charismatic leadership to mobilise us.

9. Community Enterprise

- Creating alternative financial models to support community led initiatives

The past 15 years has seen a significant growth in social enterprise development and social innovation in the UK which has led to the creation of a plethora of agencies and organisations. These include Social Enterprise UK (www.socialenterprise.org.uk), the School for Social Entrepreneurs (www.sse.org) UnLtd (www.unltd.org.uk) and Nesta (www.nesta.org.uk). Most of these agencies offer arrange of services including start up advice, financial support, mentoring, training and networking opportunities. However, as mentioned above, reductions in public sector expenditure alongside a radical shift in government funding arrangements has left many already disadvantaged communities, including African Diaspora Communities, ill equipped and therefore excluded from competing for these much reduced and specifically targeted resources.

I met a woman at the Spelman Conference, who had established and grown a highly successful student accommodation business. She took me on a tour of the local Black neighbourhoods which surround Spelman and Morehouse colleges and showed me several of the properties she had bought outright, renovated to a very high standard and rented to almost 70 students. Many of these historically black neighbourhoods remain poor and under developed, with cheap housing even though the college campuses are maintained to a very high standard. This service, although a private venture, is offering much needed quality student accommodation and it was clear on meeting one of the students and their parent and listening to the conversation

During the time I was hosted by Debbie and Ngahau Davies who established He Iwi Kotahi Tatou Trust in Morewa, Northlands, North Island, Aotearoa NZ, more than 20 years ago. I was particularly interested in their model of community enterprise and community services. I stayed with them as part of their family and they arranged a schedule of visits of community businesses and organisations locally and slightly further afield. This included a home insulation project which as part of their Trust has secured contracts to create warmer homes for people on low incomes, as well as a community café within their neighbourhood. I spoke to 'Warmer Homes' project staff about emerging plans for a new business which would remake and recycle hotel curtains for people's whose homes which have been insulated, as well as for commercial sale. This enterprise would offer employment, skills and business development opportunities for local people who would also make a range of other soft furnishings for commissions, well as for direct sale. Some of the profits from these enterprises are then used to support local service provision.

This approach i.e. of established businesses supporting the development of new enterprises can help create real jobs for local people thereby contributing to the economic wellbeing. Their town had experienced a significant increase in unemployment levels after the main employer, a local food manufacturing company, had streamlined processing methods which led to a reduction in labour.

I noticed that their community enterprise model was deeply embedded within the local community of Morewa. Debi, Ngahu and their team of staff were not parachuting in with surface level solutions – they had invested in building their model and working with the community for more than 20 years. They knew and cared deeply about the individuals and families who lived in this rural community and were well respected and as a result were able to co-design local solutions that had a significant long term impact. Of course they had faced significant challenges in their day to day work and in the longer term maintenance of some of the initiatives and in the longer term maintenance of some of their community based initiatives but continue to be creative in their approaches.

The majority of government initiatives here in the UK, last for an average of three years and do little to build on previous investment in local communities. We need skilled and committed people who have a deep understanding and knowledge of the needs of deprived communities and who are prepared to 'stay put' investing in them and offering their skills and knowledge for their communities. They will need long term support to build the wealth of their communities through investment in assets (buildings and spaces) and community enterprise development for the provision of local services and products. They would be creative and entrepreneurial individuals whom the government and other non government programmes recognize for their ability, capacities and connections. They could provide support for their work over periods of between 5- 10 years.

. This investment strategy could then be supplemented through community based entrepreneurial and local wealth creation. Furthermore given that most government and non government initiatives are almost universally offered through an open access, first come, first served basis, relatively little is offered in this current system to alleviate the systemic exclusion which results. There is within the current system an over reliance on the service of volunteers . These tend to be either young people (who are hoping to use this as an entry point to employment but who as a result of their age have limited skills and experience) or retired people who might have time and long-term financial support. This however excludes a whole raft of people in the middle (those under 55's) who possibly cannot afford to 'volunteer' for days, weeks and months as they have families and other domestic responsibilities to support. They are however skills and experience 'rich' and with relatively small financial and other incentives (such as high quality training), might be willing to contribute to the development of their local communities.

There is the need to focus on this growing group to engage them in offering new and different initiatives offering simple, accessible social business and leadership type skills to help kick start and support social enterprise development with local part time champions who can signpost, as well as offer on going mentoring and other support. Although there are examples of local support services, anecdotal evidence seem to suggest that large numbers of local people still do not know about what is available and/or how to access it, even in their own local neighbourhoods.

FINAL REFLECTIONS AND

An article I came across whilst working at the University of Witwatersrand Business School Journal in Johannesburg, SA in 2013, clearly summed up my journey (both physically and psychologically) within a leadership context. Although I have shied away from this particular label being ascribed to me since I was 16 years old, I have somewhat reluctantly come to accept that leadership is one of the roles that I play! The author Keith Coats (2013), a consultant on the future of leadership, suggests that **leaders normally emerge with more questions and curiosity than answers**. My journey has left me with a plethora of questions and much more that I still need to learn and experience. Coats suggests that real leadership capacity is developed through working to understand the big shifts taking place that impact on their context and leaders have responsibility to find (or create– my addition), appropriate frameworks that enable them to **make sense of the major shifts taking place: shifts that will inevitably impact on both their context and how they lead**. He further suggests that **leaders (or a colleague tasked with this activity), need to be on the ‘balcony’ as it from here’...that leaders are able to detect emerging patterns that might prove to be game-changers**.

I was not aware that I was on the balcony when I asked ‘My Big Question’ almost four years ago, or that I would connect with others from the African Diaspora community who were also what Coats calls, ‘..window gazers’. Failure to realize that the rules of the game are changing can often lead to organisations becoming obsolete or irrelevant. This is just one of the changes which appear to have contributed to an increase in the loss of our community assets (people and buildings). However, the Ubele Initiative is about us understanding the here and now and to be able to influence and take advantage of emerging trends so that our community organisations are not cast in the role of playing catch up!

Coats (2013) mentions other leadership capacities in his article. He suggests that there is a need for leaders to know themselves, and to know others thereby creating a clear link between leadership and self awareness. He sees character development as being ‘...an implicit part of authentic leadership’. He views self awareness as being the capacity to understand ‘...the behaviour and attitudes of those with whom we share space’ which he suggests requires ‘...lifelong learning and takes no small amount of courage and persistence. Both come with a warning: there are no shortcuts’ (Coats 2013:p35).

INSIGHTS

Lastly, Coates (2013) suggests that leaders need to be story tellers as stories ‘...increasingly attract and hold people together’. He suggest that, ‘We live our stories and are defined by our stories...Leaders will come to appreciate the importance of sharing their own stories and creating the space for others to do the same’.

The Churchill Fellowship to Atlanta, Georgia and Aotearoa, NZ has allowed me to use my learning to support the further development of The Ubele Initiative. The journey has clearly encapsulated all three leadership capacities mentioned above. I have indeed:

‘window gazed’ in order to ‘see’ what is on the horizon (in the USA, Aotearoa NZ and UK) and to be able to contextualise that information to support the evolution of Ubele; increased my self awareness and learnt from and better understood the core values, qualities, and behavior of some of the most dedicated and brave change agents in the world – people whom I have come to admire deeply.

I have listened attentively to the stories of these generous hosts and I can now add another whole chapter to my own story as well as that of Ubele’s – what a gift!

I was fortunate enough during my five week travel fellowship to Atlanta and Aotearoa NZ to be able to visit several other organisations, not mentioned in this report. I engaged in numerous deep and insightful conversations with professionals as well as members of local communities and am for ever indebted to them for the generosity with which I was welcomed and treated. I have begun to build new networks and forge new international friendships which will hopefully deepen over the years to come and am presently exploring opportunities for international collaborations and strategic partnerships. Details of all the organisations I visited are included in the appendices I, II and III.

I am still very much reflecting on my experiences which emerged from each trip. I feel that the process of deep reflection is yet to come as I still need to make the time to retreat at the bottom of the ‘U’ process. I might also need some support to help me sense make in this space.

I continue to draw from these sources and new wisdom has already begun to emerge which will be used in the design and development my work with African Diaspora and other disadvantaged communities for years to come.

*To be a more effective leader, you must be ‘
yourself – more- with skill’
(Goffee and Jones, 2006, p17)*

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Churchill Travel Fellowship offered me an life changing opportunity to be able to listen and learn first hand, how communities in Atlanta, Georgia USA and Aotearoa, NZ design interventions which tackle issues of social inclusion, community development and community wealth building.

As a result of this learning experience I feel the UK needs to develop some new national and regional strategies and initiatives, possibly under 'Community Rights' and other relevant national policy frameworks, which activities engage African Diaspora communities into the emerging leadership development, social action and community enterprise landscape. These include:

- the need to make an examination at what assets currently exists and where – this includes looking at their governance, what physical state they are in; how they are being currently used and what opportunities there might be for future development
- the creation of a new cadre of community assets over the next 3-5 year with people who have developed strong social business leadership skills, who are equipped to manage high quality physical buildings and other spaces well into the 21st century;
- social action / civic engagement opportunities which we design and create for ourselves, so that we are actively influencing the design and delivery of community based services, campaigning on issues that affect us, as well as strategic use of our collective influence to shape the political agenda, and
- the development of new models of community enterprise development which provide much needed high quality products and services of social benefit for African Diaspora and other deprived communities in the UK.



More specifically we need:

Leadership

- Design of intergenerational Leadership Development programmes for emerging African Diaspora leaders aged 21-40 years which brings together knowledge and skills of emerging leaders with those of elder leaders
- Incorporation of 'Ubuntu' principles into a new social leadership framework consisting of their values, qualities, skills and knowledge for use by African Diaspora and other Diaspora communities in the UK
- Need for other new creative social leadership skills to be offered to African Diaspora communities which includes spaces from dialogue and 'generative' listening as distinct from debating (which often leads to contested spaces), 'downloading', 'factual' or 'emphatic' listening skills
- Produce a handbook or practical learning resource which sets out Ubuntu principles and practices for community development in the UK
- Leadership and enterprise development for 7-8 year olds in black Supplementary Schools
- Develop a strategic relationship with Spelman College, LEAD in order to facilitate international exchanges
- Develop a strategic relationship with Morehouse College in order to facilitate international exchanges
- The Churchill Fellowship should support the establishment of a network of BAME Fellows to enable them to share experiences and to explore how learning derived from their travels has contributed to the development of BAME communities through the UK
- That a national coalition or round table of African Diaspora Not for Profit organisation leaders be established which seeks to influence key national policies and plans affecting the African Diaspora community in areas such as education, health, employment and enterprise

Social Action

- That interesting examples of African Diaspora communities facilitating social action leading to lasting social change are highlighted and shared across the African Diaspora community and with other BAME groups throughout the UK
- That a new cadre of community based activists from the African Diaspora and other diaspora communities are recruited and deployed in BAME communities, either by a national organisation or relevant regional organisations
- That these community based activists be employed for upto 5 years so that long lasting change can be achieved in deprived communities
- That community activists training for the African Diaspora
- community offers a broad curriculum including political awareness, campaigning, use of social media, change agency skills and opportunities to put learning into practice
- That the story of 'Parihaka' be shared locally, nationally and internationally so that the achievements of the originators of non-violent social change are recognised in international history

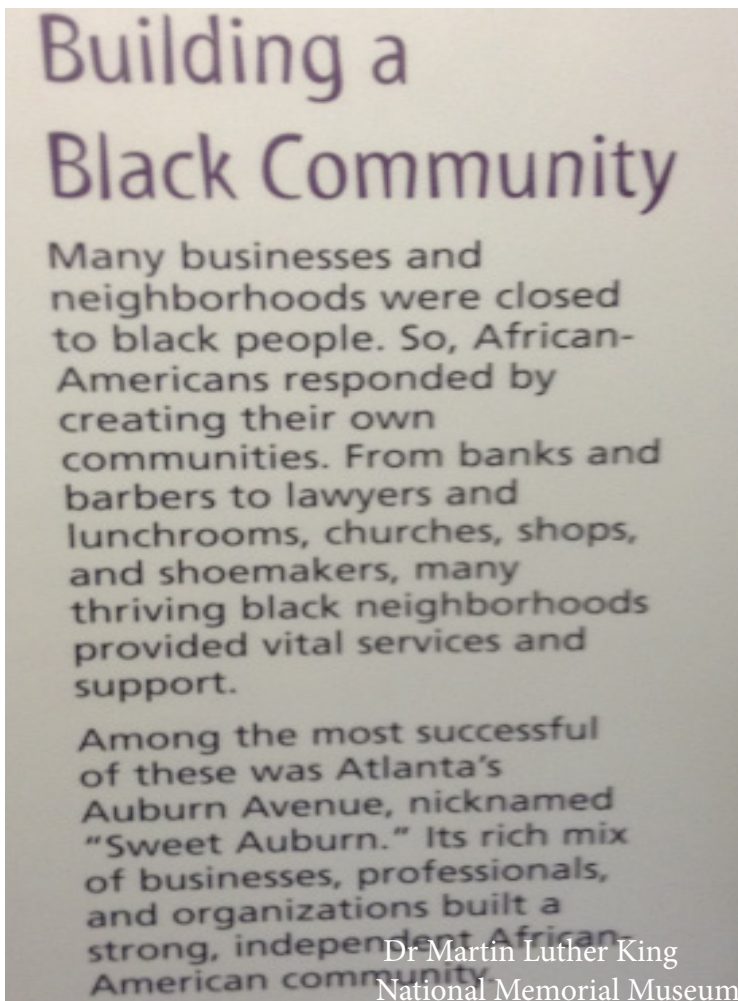
Community Enterprise

- Clear communication and other materials should be produced to increase awareness and understanding of new community enterprise opportunities and how the African Diaspora can use these to create community wealth
- Clear signposting to new community enterprise development opportunities so that previously under represented communities including the African Diaspora can access them
- Significant long term community enterprise investment is required in the form of financial, professional and other support to urban areas and deprived communities in England which have significant African Diaspora communities
- Community champions / mentors from the African Diaspora community be identified, trained and deployed to support community enterprise development in areas with significant African Diaspora communities
- Young people (under 16 years) should be supported within the school curriculum (Key Stages 3 and 4) as well as those attending supplementary education (Saturday Schools), local youth provision and within the criminal justice system, to develop community enterprise projects and initiatives

A SELECTION OF PHOTOS



View from Mosque
Midtown, Atlanta, 2013



Dr Martin Luther King
National Memorial Museum



Aotearoa, NZ, 2014



Aotearoa, N



Yvonne at CNN offices,
Atlanta, 2013





Yvonne at Spelman College Women of Color Conference, with Lauren Hill (Centre) and Marigold Nunes, Aotearoa, NZ, 2014



Lorene Royale, Aotearoa, NZ, 2014



Atlanta, NZ, 2013



Midtown, Atlanta, 2013



Aotearoa, NZ, 2014



Downtown Auckland Aotearoa, NZ, 2014



Midtown Atlanta, 2013



Aotearoa, NZ, 2014

TRAVEL ITINERARY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, USA

Atlanta Georgia USA – 14-30th May 2013

Thursday 15th - Friday 16th May 2013 Women of Color Leadership Conference <i>Strategic Leadership: Building Wealth, Entrepreneurship and Paying it Forward</i>	Friday 24th May (pm) Dr Janice Liddell, Vice President Atlanta Metropolitan College
Monday 20th May 2013 (am) Urban League of Greater Atlanta	Saturday 25th - Monday 27th May 36 th Annual Atlanta Jazz Festival Piedmont Park
Monday 20th May (pm) Visit to CNN Television Headquarters with Yvonne Witter	Tuesday 28th May 2013 (am) Thema Monroe-White, PhD Student Georgia Tech University
Tuesday 21st May – am Fulton County Executive Team: Housing and Human Services:	28th May 2013 - pm Morehouse College Andrew Young Center for Global Leadership Atlanta
Tuesday 21st May 1pm Martin Luther King Centre for Non Violent Social Change - Open visitor centre Tuesday 21st May 4pm LEAD Initiative Spelman College	Wednesday 29th May 2013 (am) Rev Dr Gerard Durley, Former Dean Clarke Atlanta University and Reverend Emeritus
Tuesday 21st May - 6pm onwards Rooms Around Campus Company	Wednesday 29th May (pm) Project South Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide
Thursday 23rd May am Georgia's Coalition for the People's Agenda (Affiliate of NCBCP) and Black Women's Round Table	Phone Conversations: Thursday 30th May 2013 Pauline Drake, Retired Professor (Spelman College) Dennis Frances, UK PhD Student visiting Morehouse College
Thursday 23rd May 1pm Visit to Apex Museum – African American Experience and African American Library	
Thursday 23rd May 4pm 100 Black Men of America, Inc. World Headquarters	

TRAVEL ITINERARY

AOTEAROA,NZ

Aotearoa NZ, 3rd - 28th February 2014

4 th – 7 th & 12 th -13 th February 2014 He Iwi Kotahi Tatou Trust Morewa, East Coast, Northland
7-10 th February 2014 Rawene, West Coast, Northland
11 th February 2014 – Whangarei, Northland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Double Five, Whare Roopu Community House Trust • Channel North – Children’s TV Station • Northland Urban/Rural Mission
15 th -16 th February 2014 <i>Rotorua for weekend</i>
17 th February 2014 Inspiring Communities, Auckland
17 th – 20 th February 2014 Community Waitakere, West Auckland
18 th February 2014 (pm) MClaren Park and Henderson South Community Initiative (MPHS), West Auckland
19 th August 2014 (pm) Families Commission – Centre for Family and Whānau Knowledge
21 st – 24 th February 2014 <i>Wellington Arts Festival for weekend</i>
25 th & 27 th February 2014 Taranaki Development Trust, New Plymouth
26 th February 2014 Ta Tuma Wahine Taranaki, New Plymouth

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