



Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre

Evaluation Report September 2016



Forward

I am delighted to have been invited to write the forward to this Evaluation Report on the work that is taking place in Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre in Ashton under Lyne.

Holy Trinity Church is set in one of the most challenging areas of Tameside. The statistics set out in the Background section of this report speak for themselves and describe a community living with significant deprivation and a range of long term needs.

The Christian Church is about hope and transformation: the transformation of both lives and communities. The vision and aim of the Diocese of Manchester is to be a worshipping, serving and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community. This involves responding to human need through loving service and transforming the unjust structures of our society – two of the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion. It is this vision that is at the heart of what Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre seeks to be and to do.

For over a quarter of a century now, the people of Holy Trinity have been working in partnership with others in a specific way to alleviate need and address some of the issues facing the local community. This has been done through the creation of the Community Centre which is now a very established and successful community resource whose work is documented in this report and whose activities have been recognised and praised by the local council, the local police and a range of local and national funding bodies.

The following report tells its own story. It is a story that speaks of vision, patient commitment and determination, and belief in the power of local people to work together to create a community where all can flourish, if they are supported with the resources to do so. It is for this reason that I wholeheartedly endorse Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre's application to the Big Lottery for funding.

My own hope and prayer is that we will find ways of enabling this good news story to continue. For Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre is nothing less than the means by which this particular community will secure a hopeful future.

*The Venerable Cherry Vann
Archdeacon of Rochdale*

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Introduction

This report aims to pull together what we have learned from our work in the Holy Trinity Area of St. Peter's Ward, Ashton-under-Lyne and particularly focuses on the role of the Community Centre and that of one other specific project based in the Centre – SPY (St. Peter's Youth).

The report reminds us of our own learning and provides a mechanism for sharing that learning with others.

The Executive Summary highlights the main learning points. The rest of the report seeks both to tell the story of the Community Centre, set out our learning as it happened, and illustrate the effects of the project using personal case studies and activity case studies.

Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre is a vital and essential resource within this high BME, deprived community in Tameside. It is a resource that cannot be lost, if the community is to build its own confidence and hope for the future.

Consultation with user groups suggests that without the Centre they would be unable to deliver their activities in the Holy Trinity Area. Some would cease provision altogether, others would continue but would need to move to another area, taking much needed provision out of the local area.



Executive Summary

This report evaluates work undertaken out of the Holy Trinity Community Centre in the period from 2005 to 2016. For a substantial part of this time the Centre provided a home for the SPY project run first by Ashton Regen and then as part of St. Peter's Partnership's the local Development Trust. From 2005 until 2014, SPY had full management responsibilities for the Centre. We have therefore used much of their work as part of this evaluation.

More recently, Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre (HTCCC) has striven, with very restricted resources, to provide a venue for important local groups, projects and services while also seeking to encourage and develop local provision. During this time Tameside has seen a 56% cut in Council funding has suffered disproportionately from the impact of austerity, and along with other similar areas, faced the effects of benefit reform, universal credit. All regeneration funding has also been withdrawn.

One of the most important lessons we have learned is that it is people rather than statistics that matter most. Consequently a large part of this report is dedicated to telling stories of people, projects and groups associated with HTCCC, demonstrating how a 'Grow Our Own' approach has resulted in people and groups growing and beginning to make significant contributions back into their own local community.

Key to the ongoing development of the Holy Trinity Community is essential work with local women, particularly Asian women who are the most socially excluded group in the area, and who have traditionally been underrepresented in the life of the Community Centre. Local women want to undertake vocational training and find work, but are precluded from doing so by barriers which include language, child-care, cohesion, self-confidence and sometimes money. These matters will be a primary part of the work of the Centre in the future. Many women find it almost impossible to access services which are based outside the immediate community, only a few hundred yards from their homes.

A 'Grow Our Own' philosophy will be an integral part of any effective development work which will of necessity be Asset Based. Developing skills and self-confidence among volunteers will lead to the possibility of future employment and empowerment to make a difference in the community.

The Centre remains one of the very few local organisations with a focus on Community Cohesion and needs to continue to be a beacon of partnership and cohesion. HTCCC needs to place a priority on developing closer ties between user groups. It needs to continue to develop a holistic approach which values diversity.

Focussing on work with the hardest to reach groups of women and developing the skills of those already involved in the Centre will ultimately allow an asset transfer of the building from the Church of England to the local community.

Background

Local Context

The ward of St Peter's in Tameside Metropolitan Borough and the Parish of the Good Shepherd are in the top 10% of deprived communities in the country. Given the cuts to neighbourhood renewal funding, 56% cuts to council services, and benefit reform the area has seen an increase in need. Local third sector projects are at the forefront of addressing these needs.

Along with our partners we have sought over a number of years to address these needs, seeking funding to establish new and support existing community projects which both challenge and mitigate poverty in line with the recommendations of the Poverty Commission for Greater Manchester.

Despite good work over many years, St Peter's Ward continues to be a poor and racially divided community. The statistics provided in Tameside Integrated Needs and Capacity Assessment (North Neighbourhood) prepared by Sylvia Pascoe (Tameside MBC) in September 2013, highlight the depth of need here:

Child poverty in St Peter's is 34.4 % compared with the UK average at 20.9%.

Students attaining 5 A* - C GCSE in St Peter's is 24.4% compared to Tameside at 41.8%.

51% of students attain level 4 at KS2 compared to 74% in Tameside.

Highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Tameside.



Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre, Dean Street, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 7HD
Tel: 0161-339-0236 Website: www.goodshepherdashton.org/community-centre

Charity Registration No. 1134826

Children living in households receiving HB/CTB at March 2009: St Peter's 39.6%, Tameside 24.7%.

Worklessness: St Peter's rate 29.2%, Tameside 17.8%, Greater Manchester 17.2%.

NEET's at 13.4% for 16 -18 year old: the highest in the borough.

St Peter's Ward has 3,225 people aged 0-19, or 27.25% of the ward population. (highest in Tameside)

St Peter's Ward with 6 Lower Super Output Areas is in the worst 5% LSOAs in England (IMD 2011/12 DCLG Inspiring Communities 2009)

St Peter's is characterised by high worklessness at 29.2% with over half the workless population claiming incapacity benefit/ESA.

There are significant numbers of single parent households within the area with 28% of homes with dependent children being lone-parent households and 3 generations of worklessness.

Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre

Holy Trinity Church was consecrated in 1878 and is a grade II listed building. It is in the Parish of the Good Shepherd, Ashton under Lyne and is in the political ward of St Peter's. The area around the church is locally referred to as Holy Trinity and is mainly a black and ethnic minorities' community with 48% Pakistani, 35% Bangladeshi, 13% white British with other small minorities representing 4%. The community is very fluid and subject to change given the high proportion of private rented sector housing and relatively cheap rented housing.



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Given the Ward profile and poverty within the area, the Church committed to a social justice and more holistic needs led approach to meeting the needs of the community, when 22 years ago with thanks to the vision of Father Charles Lawrence and the courage of the church wardens and church members, the Church was reordered to create a community centre and worship area. The community centre accounts for approximately 50% of the building.

The work to create the Community Centre was carried out in three phases. Phase one & two, creating the worship area and ground floor of the community centre was completed in 1992. When Father Charles left Holy Trinity in 1994 and Father David Wiseman was appointed, he carried on the work started by Father Charles by completing the third phase of the project and adding the first floor area of the community centre after obtaining a lottery grant of £50,000.

The church wardens were actively involved in this reshaping and are still involved to the present day. This allows the church to have a substantial local presence and it was the main base for St Peter's Youth (SPY).

100's of people per week continue to enjoy the services of the Community Centre including, ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages), luncheon clubs, educational and vocational classes, youth clubs and martial arts classes as well as being an important venue for cultural celebrations and events. It is a centre for cohesion in every sense, and a powerful symbol of Christian values.



St. Peter's Youth (SPY) 2005 to 2014

How the Work Evolved

SPY began life as a result of priorities identified by Ashton Regen. and its successor infrastructure organisation, the local development trust known as St. Peter's Partnerships. Initially based elsewhere in the West End of Ashton, SPY's work was greatly enhanced when it moved into Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre (HTCCC).

SPY, the St Peter's Youth Project, was a community based organisation operating in St. Peter's Ward, Ashton, a deprived area of Tameside. Its aim was to contribute to breaking a cycle of disaffection experienced by young people, by de-commissioning existing services and implementing a 'Grow Our Own' approach to youth work.

In 2002, extensive research and consultation was carried by the Halsall Consultancy (Report: Needs of Children and Young People in the Ashton Renewal Area of St. Peter's Ward, 2002) in the Ashton Regeneration Area with agencies, residents, parents and young people. A wide range of issues and concerns were identified, many by the young people themselves, specifically:

a high involvement in anti-social and criminal behaviour; low levels of educational achievement; low levels of literacy and numeracy; high levels of youth unemployment; a low level of parental support; a large number of young people suffering from low self-esteem; many young people with low expectations for their futures; a shortage of positive role models; a high number of homeless young people; a shortage of voluntary/community organisations supporting young people.

The findings also confirmed that young people in this area were growing up in segregated communities with little to support racial integration between the Asian and White community. Although there was no evidence of racism amongst young people, all of those interviewed said that they thought there should be more activities to bring the two communities together in all age groups to prevent the type of riots experienced in Oldham summer 2000.

It was felt that a holistic programme of activities was needed:

to break a cycle of negative behaviour, change the way in which many young people thought and enable them to develop the life skills needed to become responsible citizens

The report stated: "We must break the cycle of disaffection and change people's expectations and attitudes to life if we are to make any significant long term change within the Ashton Regeneration Area."

The death of Victoria Climbié exposed shameful failings in our society's ability to protect the most vulnerable children. On twelve occasions, over ten months, chances to save Victoria's life were not taken. Social services, the police and the NHS failed, as Lord Laming's report into Victoria's death made clear, to do the basic things well to protect her.

The outcomes highlighted by Lord Laming in the report Every Child Matters are;

- Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- Staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect
- Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- Making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- Economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

These were seen as the critical high-level outcomes for a project like SPY. However, given the local issues and barriers young people faced SPY's focus was directed to more local outcomes.

In 2005, services provided through mainstream providers were decommissioned and replaced with a 'Grow Our Own' youth work initiative, promoted by the St Peter's Youth (SPY) project which aimed to address the issues highlighted in the area, in the belief that the solutions lay within the local community – the local community being the solution rather than the problem. The following outcomes and aims were adopted:

1. A reduction in anti-social behaviour.
2. Young people are safe and healthy.
3. Improved employment and training prospects and educational achievement.
4. A sustainable, strong and cohesive community.

Central to the achievement of these, was the empowerment and inclusion of local community members who volunteered, received training and moved into casual, part-time and full-time employment.

Activities to achieve the outcomes included providing young people with things to do and places to go through the volunteers and staff in the project, offering activities seven days a week. The bringing together of young people from across a geographically and racially divided community was designed to address the concerns of the project 'sleep walking' into segregation.

The initial 'Grow Our Own' project was piloted with 8 unemployed young men from the local community, who received basic community sports leader training as volunteers, were CRB-checked and then worked on a summer programme delivering sports to local children.

Following the success of the pilot and decommissioning of services, there was an increased level of 'Growing Our Own' activity and training, including Levels

2 and 3 in Youth Work, higher level coaching qualifications, training in outdoor education, basic expedition leaders' award, climbing

Through this process, funding was attracted from the Rank Foundation, Big Lottery and Working Neighbourhood Fund of £1.2 million. This funding covered the period to December 2011. A further £570,000 was obtained to fund ongoing work until December 2014.

The 'Grow Our Own' approach contributed to the following achievements in the area against the desired outcomes which were:

1. *A reduction in anti-social behaviour.*

By 2011 a reduction of 61.5% had been achieved.

2. *Young People Safe and Healthy - Reductions in hate crime as an indicator of community cohesion.*

Over the three years from 2008 to 2011 a reduction of 34.5% in hate crimes was recorded.

3. *Improved employment and training prospects and educational achievement.*

Over the life of the project 88 volunteers were trained, with over 50% moving into employment

4. *A sustainable, strong and cohesive community.*

Evidenced by case studies.

In a survey undertaken by Tameside MBC in 2009 comparing attitudes of residents in St. Peter's Ward. The project was seen to have achieved:

- 23.4% fewer people saying that teenagers causing a nuisance was a problem.
- 21.9% fewer people saying that they were worried about witnessing gangs on the streets.
- 29.6% fewer people having actually witnessed gangs on the streets.
- 19% fewer people thinking teenagers hanging around was a problem.

Most striking of all was the substantial added value calculated and captured in a report quantifying Social Values of the Community Sector. Speaking of SPY's social return on investment, the report stated:

'The forecast net SROI for the St. Peter's Youth Project based on the core outcomes used in the SVMF is 77:1. That is, an estimated £77 of social value will be generated for every £1 spent on the project between April 2010 and March 2011'. We are in the process of having this report independently reviewed and we believe strongly that our project creates great value for your grant investment and for our community.' (Commissioned through Northwest Together We Can 2010)

The report can be obtained by contacting the C4EO team.

Cultural and Organisational Change:

The most significant change is evidenced by the reductions of youth causing annoyance. Young people now feel better listened to, better represented, better cared for and provided for with greater hope for the future. Research through SPY's Youth Committee – "Youth Truth" found that when young people were asked to rate specific matters from very poor to excellent, these were their responses:

- Do you agree that you have opportunities to enjoy and achieve - 80% said excellent or very good.
- Do you agree that the area is a safer place to live - 57% said excellent or very good.
- Do you agree you have a voice - 74% said excellent or very good.
- Do you agree the project brings young people together from different backgrounds - 84% said excellent or very good.
- Do you agree the project brings young people and the community together - 72% said excellent or good.
- Do you feel supported in developing qualities and skills for the future - 71% said excellent or very good.

St Peter's Partnerships as a community charity embedded the 'Grow Our Own' strategy into all of its service areas and, wherever possible, looked to employ local people through the engagement in volunteer opportunities, training, and leading to employment. Of those employed, 70% were from within the Ward.

The project given its positive outcomes particularly around cohesion was asked to develop the model 'Grow Our Own' in another area of Tameside.

Also worthy of note are the 4 national youth work awards:

1. The Children and Young People Now Awards 2007: Work Force Development Award: St. Peter's Youth (SPY) Grow Our Own
2. Awards for Bridging Cultures 2009: Cal Kelsall, St. Peter's Youth (SPY).
3. The Children and Young People Now Awards 2011: Youthwork Award: St. Peter's Youth (SPY)

4. The Children and Young People Now Awards 2011: Children and Young People's Champion: Carl Kelsall, St. Peter's Youth (SPY).

A series of projects were undertaken under the auspices of a variety of different funders including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Rank Foundation, the Getty Foundation, The Big Lottery. There projects included, High-SPY and InSPYre.

Broader Impact

As a direct result of the perceived success of this project, SPY and, in particular, Carl Kelsall were invited to undertake work in the Hyde area of Tameside. This involved another nascent form of ABCD, and was a project called 'Hyde and Seek'. This project aimed to replicate the "Grow Our Own" philosophy that had delivered a 34% reduction in reported hate crime and an improved social return on investment.

Following a partnership event in Hyde it was agreed to concentrate on:

- Capacity building including training for two local organisations namely Hyde Community Action (HCA) and the Bangladeshi Welfare Association (BWA).
- Building a multi games area on local green space (The Millennium Green) with a celebration event.
- Better coordination of work through a Task group chaired by Tameside MBC's Director of Education.
- Supporting young people and providing youth work training at level 2 to ensure culturally sensitive youth provision.

The work was only short term funded for 18 months but managed to deliver on all of its aims, notably HCA have become a significantly stronger organisation.

Case Studies - Project Activities

Throughout this evaluation many of the case studies provided could have been placed either under the SPY Project or under the later Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre Project. Each of the Case Studies has been placed where the greatest impact was felt. Where the studies have no specific attribution, they have been prepared through interviews by Margaret Stanley a member of the Management Committee of HTCC:

1. **FAST Club Summer Activities**, in partnership with Holy Trinity C of E Primary School and St. Peter's C of E Primary School.



The FAST Club brings together a 98% Asian school, Holy Trinity and a majority white school, St. Peter's, with the highest percentage of 'looked after' children in Tameside, it continues to work in 2016 to promote greater community cohesion.

SPY organised for children from the FAST Club (Families and School Together), whose main facilities are based at Holy Trinity School, to get involved in lots of activities over the summer holidays. As part of that, they worked hard on a project that

contributed to community life. The project was to improve the FAST Club headquarters.

Kathleen Menmuir, then Headteacher at Holy Trinity C of E Primary School said, "I have been amazed at the transformation of the mobile classroom which the children had worked hard on over the summer. We have had many positive comments from members of the community and especially from our neighbours on Kenyon Street. Neighbours are saying that they have had a lovely summer, as there has been no vandalism or noise from children roaming the streets. The FAST club has really kept our children happy and engaged all through the summer holidays"



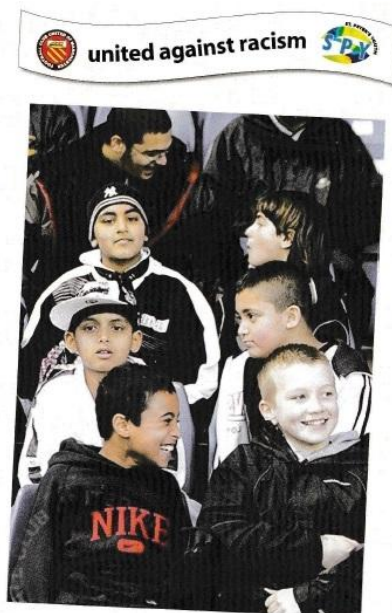
Other projects that SPY engaged the young people in included a 'Stand Up Speak Up' event and half term activities dedicated to 'St. Peter's United Against Racism'. This saw more than 100 children and their families parade

their banners at Gigg Lane Football Stadium, the then home of 'FC United', wearing their United Against Racism T-shirts.

Community Cohesion

The local publication entitled 'Every Child Matters' commented that this project directly addressed Community Cohesion:

"Common sense dictates the bringing together of young people from one school which is 98% Asian (Holy Trinity) and St. Peter's which is 67% White with the highest percentage of looked after children in the Borough, in activities that are directly linked to community cohesion, which are anti-racist and inclusive, with some of the most difficult to reach pupils from each of the schools in holiday activities, extra curriculum activities and opportunities to celebrate the collective achievements must develop a greater opportunity for social contact with groups they would not normally socialise with."



2. Be Healthy and 'Summer Splash'

Over one summer SPY delivered a summer programme that saw hundreds of young people enjoy a range of sporting activities, which also included the very successful "summer splash" swimming initiative. Summer Splash saw 70 young people and their families enjoy swimming lessons at Ashton Baths.



Ofsted commented on the whole programme: 'The promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the encouragement pupils get to make a positive contribution to the community are good. Guidance and support given to pupils who are in the early stages of learning English are excellent as is the support given to their parents.'

The Summer Splash programme was designed to keep young people safe in and around water and provided parents with essential first aid skills. The sessions also promoted good health by encouraging young people to enjoy physical activity and also provided them with a healthy snack too! Councillor Jack Davis said, "It was brilliant to see young people from our community learning, playing and achieving together. We have struggled in the past to get pool time and would like to thank Tameside Sports Trust for their support. ... It proves just what can be achieved when partners work together to meet community need."



Kevin Pietersen, the England Cricket star was so impressed with the work to promote community cohesion and sport as a way of bringing young

people and communities together, he donated an autographed cricket bat. Carl Kelsall, Youth Strategy Manager at the time, said, "It has been impossible to decide on which young person should receive the bat from the hundreds that took part in the activities. We have decided it should go on display at the new £1.9 million Community and Sports Centre on Oxford Park - this will be a permanent reminder of the success of this summer. It's very easy for us all to recognise the negative behaviour of young people, we notice it because it affects the quality of our life. It is essential that we all begin to recognise good behaviour and provide opportunity for them to enjoy and achieve and publicly celebrate their achievements. Seeing young people being praised by workers, neighbours and peers sends out the right messages that if we provide opportunity to do the right thing, young people will."



3. Youth In Action Learning (2012)

SPY were funded by Youth in Action and Tameside MBC to deliver an exciting, unique programme to work with 30 young people over 12 months to explore their identity and community and to begin a meaningful uncensored dialogue about the issues preventing real cohesion. Ultimately 45 young people got involved with the programme, 34 male and 11 female. The group came from the St. Peter's and Holy Trinity areas and were from British White, Pakistani, Bengali, Thai and Kosovan ethnicities.



Risks were taken to open up contentious and sensitive subjects on race, identity, culture and Britishness. It was an incredible journey for young people and staff alike.

We looked at our **identity** through discussions, debates, music, games and photography. Debates were often heated but ultimately agreement was reached that blame, hate and war do not solve problems and probably make terrorism more prevalent.

We learnt that young people have to know their identity and be comfortable with themselves first. The strength in the BME young people was their strong,



cultural and religious identity which made them much more resilient to the effects of exclusion and poverty.

In contrast the white young people felt they didn't know their history or culture and felt being proud of being white British makes you seem racist in our society. Their anger stemmed from this feeling of being taken over and Britishness being lost.

We explored other factors that have changed Britain such as economic conditions, poverty and unemployment which have affected us regardless of our

ethnicity. We discovered that things are still volatile between the two areas of St. Peter's and Holy Trinity, particularly evident in the male participants.

We used outdoor activities as a tool to team build and bond young people who would not otherwise have come together. We learnt that we are not all the same but still equal. We learnt about the human behind the stereotype and that coming together around activities we enjoy works!

We enjoyed a residential weekend together, we created a DVD and we talked seriously about how we can tackle racism in our society. We agreed that common interest bring young people together, that young people need time and space to consider their identity and ethnicity and that ultimately the solution to the problem lies with us.

4. Youth Committee (Youth Truth)

SPY Youth Committee was elected in 2010 to be a voice for all SPY members. In April 2011 the Youth Committee undertook a research and evaluation project. Members of the Committee commented that this gave them an opportunity to learn about how to conduct research, work as a team and collate information to help us make decisions and changes



Nazia, Shazia, Hannah, Laura, David, Alisha, Shah, Alex and Ikram.

to our project. 'Youth Truth' was the name given to the research and evaluation. It was part of the evaluation undertaken after three years of funding from The Big Lottery for SPY which had provided exciting, challenging and fun activities which brought different communities together.

The research highlighted the following things which needed to be addressed:

- For every 4 young men there is one young woman accessing services: groups themselves were excluding young women. Although sessions were open to both male and female, young men were not welcoming or accommodating females. Some young women could not attend because of family restrictions in evening sessions, and families could discourage attendance due to sessions being mixed. This was a particular barrier for Asian young women.
- The girl's work provided needed to be more challenging and exciting, with more physical activity.
- Young people said that more variety on sports, more work with juniors and more holiday activities were needed, they said that swimming sessions were too early, that some sessions clashed with mosque time, that there was some bullying and fighting and that advice and guidance could be better.

The Youth Committee committed to address these things in the following year and did so through to August 2012.

Research also highlighted the following:

- Young people really enjoyed what SPY offered
- The staff were seen as friendly and fun.
- SPY created a nice feeling and made you part of the community
- 92% of young people thought SPY was good or excellent.
- SPY successfully got young people to try new activities, trips and training
- SPY helped with developing confidence and knowledge.



All of this research was used as part of the evaluation of the Big Lottery Project.

Case Studies - Individuals

1. Mike

Mike is 59 years of age and White British. He and his long-term partner have lived in Tameside for the past 10 years with their 16 year old son. Although born in South Africa, he was brought up in Rotherham when his parents returned to the UK. Mike is dyslexic but this was not diagnosed until he started to work for SPY – something Mike still resents – and so leaving school with poor qualifications, he set himself up as a self taught, self-employed landscape gardener, a job he did for 33 years. At one point he



participated in a scheme for young unemployed people, teaching them landscape and environmental construction both in the classroom and in the field and he hoped that it would lead to a teaching qualification but the project folded after only 14 months. Mike also worked as a psychiatric assistant on an acute admissions ward when work was scarce in the winter months.

Following the breakdown of his marriage and reconnecting with his current partner, Mike and Helen decided on a fresh start in life and via Liverpool, relocated to Tameside. He did some volunteering work at his son's school in their eco-garden, some work in another primary school in Tameside and at Sure Start, before going to work for St Peter's Partnerships as a Safeguarding Officer conducting fire risk assessments. It was through this work that he heard of the SPY project and started volunteering on the project, something he did for 4 years. His potential as a youth leader was soon spotted and Mike enrolled at Tameside College for both youth leader and community development courses. It was at college that Mike was found to be dyslexic but with "good teaching" (as he puts it), he was able to achieve NVQ Level 2 in Youth Work and Levels 2, and 3 in Community Development which led to employment by SPY as a part time youth leader.

When SPY funding finished, Mike says he lost his favourite job in his favourite place of work. He did get another job as a community organiser in St.

Michael's Ward and received training as a community organiser working with a Bangladeshi Women's Group and a Gardening Group. But his heart belongs in Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre. Therefore when he saw the job of Caretaker at the Centre advertised, he went for it. Having been empowered by participating in the "Grow Our Own" initiative, he was attracted back to the Centre. As Mike says, "It's work, it's something to do and it keeps me connected to the community where I've worked in the past and there may be job prospects in the future." He loves the opportunity of interacting still with centre users .

Mike sees Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre as a valuable asset for the area even though in his opinion it is currently under-utilised. Without it the local community would suffer greatly because they would lose "a social welfare centre, an education centre, an entertainment centre and a good, safe place to be used by the community." It bothers him that it is under threat as it has been a big part of his life in this area.

2. Mariam

Now aged 26 years, Mariam is married with two children, Zakariyya aged 2½ years and Nailah aged 6 months. Mariam, a Pakistani Muslim, met Sajid, an Indian Muslim at Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre and they fell in love. Whilst religiously they were well matched, culturally there were many differences between them and so initially there was opposition to their union from both families. Mariam's family eventually gave their proposed marriage their blessing but it was some time before Sajid's family accepted their union. Once married the couple went to live with Sajid's family, as is customary in Indian Muslim culture and Mariam currently looks after her in-laws as well as her husband and two children. She lives in the Holy Trinity area.



Mariam was about 17 years old when she first got involved at the Centre and the SPY project, introduced by her brother Adnan. She spoke enthusiastically

about the many opportunities that were on offer to her – going swimming, playing cricket, cookery classes, learning First Aid and learning about health and safety. She went away for 3 weeks without her parents (unheard of for a young Muslim girl) and went on her first ever plane when a group of young people from SPY went to Morocco. Valuing these different experiences, she volunteered, “here, there and everywhere” and was delighted to be selected to do her NVQ Level 2 in Youth Work (part time) at Tameside College and then her Level 3 at Manchester College.

At the same time, she was a full time student at Tameside College studying Child Care and then Health and Social Care. All these educational experiences enabled Mariam, with another worker, to run a Kids Club for about 20 primary school children on a Saturday morning and she was an active and vocal member of the Youth Forum. When her full time college course ended, Mariam became a lunchtime supervisor at Holy Trinity Primary School and went on the supply list to step in as a teaching assistant when the need arose. Following her marriage and the birth of her son, Mariam became a full time Mum.

Mariam greatly values the time she spent with SPY, considering it “grew” her as a person, giving her confidence and enabling her to engage in experiences which normally would not have been open to her as a Muslim woman. It felt good for her to give a voice to the children in her Kids Club and she feels she was given the opportunity to be a better person.

She has been empowered to believe that anything is possible and that you can change the things around you if you work at changing yourself first.

She now attends the Women's Group at the Centre with her children and is pleased to be part of a project that is enabling women to be themselves and not just someone's wife, mother, daughter, or daughter-in-law.

Enlightened by her life experiences to date, Mariam now believes there is more to life than the cultural norm of cooking, cleaning and staying at home all day. Once her children are in full time school (and she only wants the two she has), Mariam wants to be in paid employment using the qualifications and experiences she acquired whilst being a part of the SPY project and putting something back into the community.

3. Firdaus

Firdaus is a 30 year old Pakistani Muslim who was born in Pakistan (her parents were on holiday there at the time) but who was brought up in the Holy Trinity area, the second youngest in a family of six children. She became friends with her future husband (Adnan Zaman) through the FAST club (Friends and School Together) at Holy Trinity Primary School and their friendship gradually turned to love when both worked on the SPY project in Holy Trinity Community Centre. But as their proposed marriage had not been arranged by their prospective families, difficulties ensued and it was to be 5 years before their union received their families' blessing. They married in 2012 and live independently.

When Firdaus left high school she went into Holy Trinity Primary School to do some volunteering in the classroom and when a classroom assistant handed in her notice because she was getting married, the headteacher offered Firdaus the job at only 16 years of age. Firdaus attended evening classes to obtain NVQ levels 2 and 3 as a teaching assistant but changed jobs within the school to become a bilingual assistant when her older sister left and the job became vacant. To improve her skills in this job, Firdaus took an "A" level in Urdu but when there was a pay regrading and the role of bilingual assistant became redundant, Firdaus returned to her job as a teaching assistant. She has been at Holy Trinity now for 14 years.



Holy Trinity Primary School has always had very close links with Holy Trinity Community Centre and Firdaus used to help run holiday clubs with pupils from the school who attended the FAST club and children from the SPY project. This is how she became aware of the SPY project but when first asked to do some casual work on the project, Firdaus preferred to be a volunteer for a year or two whilst she familiarised herself with it. She then progressed to being a casual worker and took a Basic Expedition Leader Award which qualified her to take groups outdoors for outdoor education (staying safe whilst walking outdoors/up hills, map reading, station to station walks and camping. She also did a Climbing Wall Award, an NVQ Level 3 in Youth Work and a Diploma in Youth Work. After she had done a Dance to Music course, Firdaus ran an aerobics class with SPY and also a "Wake Up and Shake Up" session in school.

Firdaus considers her working for SPY taught her a lot about herself and made her a stronger and more confident person (she is naturally shy). She valued the opportunity to become acquainted with all that is on offer outdoors and because she so much enjoys it she has valued the opportunity of enabling children to become healthier and more active. She recognises that she was a product of the "Grow our Own" initiative and values the opportunities that were opened up for her once she had qualified. Similarly she is aware of the ABCD methodology associated with the current bid and having once run a Women's Group with her sister from the Centre, Firdaus

feels strongly that such a group needs to be back in the Centre, permanently, for the women's sake. She feels they need some time for themselves to take them out of the “cook/clean/serve” cycle which is the traditional role of so many women in the area. She stated that the Mosque engages speakers to inform the community of what is on offer “out there” and questioned whether the same could not be done for the women in the community. Once enlightened, they would perhaps be enabled to become more active members of the community and pass on their knowledge to other women. In Firdaus' opinion, it is the people in a community who can make the difference to other members of the community.

4. Ammer



I am now 31 years old, married and father of 3 kids. I currently live in the St Peter's Ward in Ashton-Under-Lyne.

I started on the 'Grow Our Own' initiative with SPY as Volunteer. As a young person studying at college, I took the opportunity and signed on as a volunteer. Little did I know that it would change my life for the better!

Before starting with SPY, the streets of St Peter's were bad and as young people we used to engage in activities to waste time, as they used to say back then. This could have been standing around on the street corners, causing a nuisance in the neighbourhood, fighting, annoying people in the community etc. I remember at the time

there was a lot of crime and drug-dealing in the area as well. But volunteering with SPY got me engaged in positive activities and kept me away from spending time on the streets of the St Peter's Ward. SPY provided me with opportunities to train and develop. This led me to become a casual worker and to progress even further.

Firstly, with SPY, I volunteered and worked on various projects including Martial Arts Project, Youth Forum, Multi Sports Projects, Outdoor Pursuits Project (climbing, hiking, camping and various activities in the outdoors). I worked as a Youth Worker on all of these projects by supporting and taking lead on sessions.

Through the above projects I have become very confident, a good team player, developed leadership qualities that I never knew that I had. I gained qualifications in Climbing, Basic Expedition Leadership Award, Level 2 in Community Sports Leaders Award, Level 2 & 3 in Youth Work, Level 3 in Community Development, Level 2 in Cricket coaching, Prepare to teach in the

long life learning sector (PTLLS), Food safety, Safeguarding Young People and On the Job training.

Secondly, due to the experience and qualifications I gained at SPY I started to apply for money to set up projects for young people. With the help and support of Carl at SPY I was able to secure money for another community project that was very successful.

I also secured a job as a Community Development worker with all the experience I gained with SPY and went on to work for two registered charities in Tameside. Working with the two charities I got to use all my skills that I gained through SPY. I developed projects for older people in the community and secured over £100,000 per year for the charities.

'Grow Our Own' changed my life by providing me with opportunities to grow and develop from a young person to the person I am today. I am currently working for the MiNTed project which is a Financial Capability Project helping social housing tenants manage their finances. It is managed by Tameside CAB.

'Grow Our Own' has helped me become more confident, become part of a team, developed leadership qualities in me and has raised my self-esteem. The model works and it has worked fantastically in my life.

New projects need to be formed on the basis of 'Grow Our Own' for all people in society so that they can develop the skills and confidence to move on in life.

Ammer Ali

5. Waqas

My name is Waqas and I am currently a Financial Capability Worker for Citizens Advice Tameside. I am married and have one daughter

I started as volunteer with SPY in 2007 as I wanted to get involved in my local community to make it a positive place to live. Throughout the years my confidence grew and I became more confident in my abilities to influence the decision making processes in my local community. I qualified as NVQ Level 3 in Community Development.

Volunteering made me a passionate believer that the people who can make changes in the local community are the people living there themselves. The



project helped raise aspirations of young people in the area as we provided them with better experiences than what I grew up with.

SPY raised aspirations of people in the community and gave them the opportunity to get themselves out of the cycle of deprivation that they were in.

I believe that the 'Grow Our Own' has worked and you can see that in our community at the moment. You have youth workers like myself, who are still active in the community and delivering sessions. If an outside agency was delivering sessions instead, they would have packed up and gone and the community would have gone back to being less integrated and more divisive.

I believe that if I did not get involved through the Grow Our Own model, I would not be working where I am currently and that is why I am very passionate about helping people who are less fortunate than me and I will always do so because of opportunities I have been given.

Waqas Ahmed

6. Shahida

Shahida is a 32 year old Pakistani Muslim who was born and brought up in the area, one of six children. She describes herself as a "champion for women's equality" and never thought that she would marry but in 2009, on a trip to Pakistan, she allowed her mother to introduce her to a man and agreed to marry him. She is now happily married with two small boys – Haris aged 4 years and Ammar aged 13 months.

When Shahida was only 12 years of age, her father died and she went to an Islamic Girls' Boarding School in Bradford. Bullied in the first two years for being so thin, Shahida learnt to "hide" inside her traditional dress. (However now as an adult, she is a confident person with a good sense of self.) At school Shahida learnt the difference between religion and culture. Islam does not discriminate against women whereas Pakistani culture does and this impacted on Shahida and she resolved always to remain open minded on cultural issues.



After GCSE's and 'A' levels in Arabic and Urdu, Shahida did some teaching and office work in her school before returning home at 19 years of age. She was lacking in confidence and struggling to find her way in life. She did a "Skills Builder" course at Cavendish Mill and found an aptitude for computers, acquiring the European Computer

Driving Licence and found some part time paid work on a Community Champions Initiative doing outreach work. This lasted a year.

It was about this time that Shahida started volunteering for SPY in the youth clubs and this led to her gaining awards in mountaineering and map reading. She also particularly enjoyed the Neuro Linguistic Programming Course. It seemed to Shahida that everyone in the local community was involved with SPY in some capacity, at this stage. The "Grow our Own" project gave so many people so many varied experiences, she points out, and these often led them to them obtaining paid employment. For Shahida, there was a short term contract working on reception at Sure Start, followed by an unhappy time working in a call centre, before she was asked by the head teacher at Holy Trinity School to go to work in the school office because an Urdu speaking, computer literate worker was required. Shahida has remained in this post to date.

Whilst working and once married, Shahida continued volunteering at SPY as well as teaching the children Islamic studies at the Madrassa. She has always valued the "open -door" policy of the Centre and the way it is seen as being at the hub of the community. She says it is where we (the volunteers) "grew" in terms of confidence, skills and personal development. As doors were opened for them, it was SPY who gave them the confidence to step through those doors. The effort put in at SPY in terms of "Grow our Own" is what comes round to benefit the community in the long run and says Shahia, you get to see people in the community benefiting from your efforts - "you get to bake your cake and eat it"! She sees Carl as an inspirational person who in turn inspires you to inspire others.

Shahida has just returned to work after a second period of maternity leave. Although her husband is from a very traditional family, he has accepted her need to work and to "do her bit" for her community. They have trust and confidence in each other. Shahida is also very vocal about women's rights in her community and feels that without the Centre, things would slip back into a traditional, cultural way of life, with women having to do what their husbands say and men abusing their power and status. Shahida was told by her mother that women are supposed to be seen and not heard. Shahida never accepted this and says, "I have a right to be heard."

Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre 2013-16

How On-going Work has Evolved

The drastic reduction in available funding from statutory and other sources led the Parish of the Good Shepherd to seek alternative ways of keeping the Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre open for the benefit of the local community. We have sought where possible to encourage local groups to use the centre and have worked with them where possible to help them to take responsibility for their own management and fund raising. We believe that this develops capacity within the local community and enables local people to take control of things which have an important impact in their lives and the life of the local community.

We believe that the best, and perhaps only place to start an evaluation, is with the people who have grown through participating in the life of the local community centred on Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre

We provide below a number of case studies – some which are project focussed and some which reflect on the impact of the Church and Community Centre on individuals. These case studies demonstrate the capacity that has been built up over the years thanks to what we call the “Grow our own” process or Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). They demonstrate the power of our work, with its focus on ABCD, to truly transform lives and communities, particularly those most difficult to reach.

Over the past 10 years, first through SPY and then as a stand-alone project, the Church and Community Centre has been the focal point for a process that is committed to an understanding that the real long term solutions needed within a deprived community exist in the community. We encourage all to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

To evidence the benefits of this approach we provide a brief snap shot of the **People** who give their time to give something back not only to the Centre and users of the Centre but to the wider community. Collectively the groups which they run, and to which they belong, provide over 36 hours of activity 7 days per week. This evaluation is a tribute to these people, groups and projects and all they do. The Church and Community Centre is a means to an end and the work of those who are employed in the Centre and of volunteers is focussed on developing local skills and capacity and bringing hope to a community which struggles to see a positive future.

At present we employ a Community Development Worker 24 hours/week, funded through the Parish of the Good Shepherd and supportive grants from Manchester Diocese and the Church and Community Fund. This Community Development Worker has wide experience in work with groups in the West End of Ashton and encourages individuals and groups to develop their own skills and to determine how best to meet local need. It is to extend and develop this work that we have established a new programme called, “**People Place and Presence.**” This project will commence in March 2017.

Place

Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre is right at the heart of the local community which is known as 'Holy Trinity'. The Centre is in many ways the beating heart of the community and would leave a large void if it had to close. Its presence in the community is a sign of hope and of a commitment to the community by others, particularly the Parish of the Good Shepherd and Manchester Diocese.

The process of reshaping the building for a shared community and worship use has been outlined above. It is a process which continues to develop and which will see greater community use of more of the building as the years unfold. At present the Church and Community Centre has the following facilities available to the local community:

Facilities

Church: The main worship area can be hired for a number of different appropriate activities which can include concerts, lectures/talks, rehearsal space as well as Christian worship. In addition there is a small lady chapel which is used for regular worship and contemplative prayer. In use, the main area of the church is approximately 200 m² and can accommodate upwards of 200 people and with chairs moved to the side, an open area of approximately 88m² is available.

Downstairs Hall: The Main Hall downstairs in the Community centre is approximately 88m². A low level stage can be provided. The seating capacity in the Hall is approximately 60 people. The Hall is suitable for a variety of activities including: Table Tennis, Karate, Martial Arts, Community Dining, Parent and Toddler Groups, Dance and Movement Groups, etc.

Community Kitchen: The Community Centre has a fully equipped 16m² kitchen which is currently used two days a week by local groups working with the elderly. The kitchen is underused and has the potential to operate as a community café providing cheap affordable meals to the community. It also has the potential to provide a Home Meal Delivery Service. It has a food hygiene rating from Tameside MBC of 5.

Downstairs Offices: There are two offices available at ground floor level for hire on a short-term or long-term basis. Hot-desking can also be considered. These two offices are approximately 9m² and 17m², respectively.

Toilet Facilities: Excellent men's, women's and disabled facilities are available at ground floor level in the Community Centre.

Upstairs Hall: The Main Upstairs Hall is approximately 81m². A low level stage can be provided. The seating capacity in the Hall is approximately 60 people. This is an excellent room for meetings in the summer months. It has a small kitchen facility provided in a side room. Disabled access to the upper floor is via a chair lift.

Upstairs Offices: There are four offices available upstairs and these can be hired on a short-term or long-term basis. These four offices are 13m², 15m², 20m² and 21m² respectively.

Usage

The centre is a well-used and loved local facility. We charge £12 per hour for non-community groups and £10 per hour for community groups, we also help community groups when funding is not available.

We are flexible and provide much more than just a place for activities, including rent holidays, storage, meeting space, joined up working opportunities. We operate 9am until 10pm 7 days per week.

We estimate that at present we provide 36.5 hours per week contact time for the 10 community groups and weight watchers each week and there are over 10,000 contacts each year thanks to these groups.

We also provide space for many different community activities, holiday provision, private celebration events, birthday parties, mendis, ESOL, ICT, fundraising events, rehearsal space. In the past 12 months there have been over 40 different occasions when the centre has been used in this way.

At present the down stairs is approximately run to 70% capacity.

Upstairs, which has disabled access thanks to an Awards for All grant is used by the Ashton Women's Group and Ashton Youth Club who both have an office. The large meeting hall is less well used. There is approximately 90% under-utilisation of this space and therefore room for further development for new initiatives. One of the barriers to this space being used more often is the cold during the winter months as heating this large space is expensive.

The total income from rent and room hire is approximately £12,000 per year.

Presence

There is overwhelming community support for the Church and Community Centre's work. This is demonstrated by 500 questionnaires completed at a recent community event in the Centre. We consulted on the basis of the following vision:

To provide a Community Centre for the people of the Holy Trinity Neighbourhood in the West End of Ashton and the wider St. Peter's Ward, through which individuals of all ages, and community groups, will have access to meeting spaces, advice, information and guidance, educational, social and leisure opportunities.

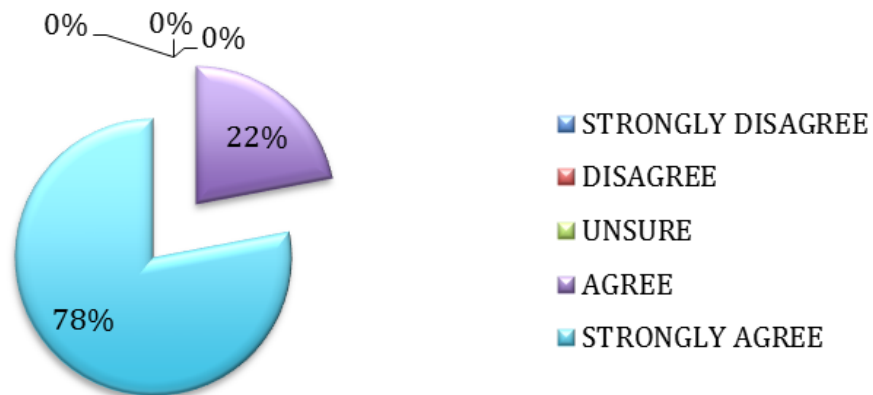
To ensure the longer term viability of this Community Centre by working with others to access community grants and encourage a degree of self-sustainability from income from the services we provide

Some ancillary questions were asked as well.

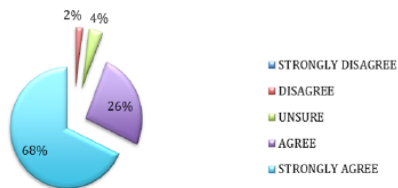
The results of this consultation can be seen overleaf. These results were of particular encouragement to the Management Committee as it worked to develop a clear strategy for the future.

100% of respondents supported the Vision and also supported empowerment of the local community. Only 2% expressed a concern about the Centre promoting community cohesion, multi-culturalism and engaging in issues beyond the immediate confines of the local community.

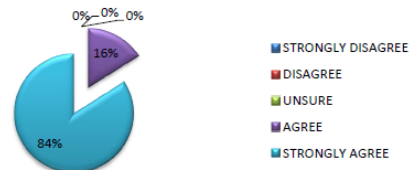
Do you agree with the HTCCC mission?



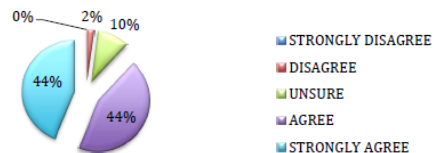
HTCCC should aim to promote good community cohesion and embrace multi-culturalism



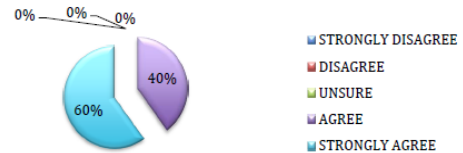
Should HTCCC challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation?



The centre should stand strong not just on local issues but on global issues affecting the whole of humanity



HTCCC should encourage the empowerment of the local community so they become active and a powerful voice for the area



Case Studies - Project Activities

1. Martial Arts – Rachael, Qamar and Imran

Our Martial Arts classes are for children and young people aged 5 years upwards. We meet twice per week, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, holding 3 different ability classes. Our aim is to break down barriers to participation by only charging £1 and for children to train in normal



sports clothes (we provide all equipment). Through the support of Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre we have managed to continue delivering seamless provision for the past nine years. Initially we were supported and funded through the SPY programme but more recently we have been encouraged to take responsibility for our management and funding.

In the past year we have secured funding from Sports Relief and Forever Manchester towards our room hire costs. Most of our members live locally and reflect our diverse community, a high percentage being of Pakistani ethnicity including girls who are particularly hard to reach. We have on average 30 members at every session and hope to attract more with our banner advertising sessions.

Martial Arts is much more than fitness, we are like a big family and we take time to speak to all our families, breaking down barriers to participation. One of our members was an Asian girl who was in a wheelchair. She loved to come to our sessions and we adapted the activities so that she could fully participate. She suffered a stroke last year and lost even more of her strength and was nearly totally blind and too ill to attend. Then one day she came back, she had a smile on her face and brand new pink tracksuit and matching trainers. She never let her disability prevent her from training. Sadly, she recently died and we were devastated with the news. However, she was an inspiration to others with her positive attitude and big smile. She will be sorely missed.

Without the centre we would have nowhere to deliver the activities and the session will close.

Rachael Hill

We have also provided a case study relating to Qamar elsewhere in this evaluation as we believe his story illustrates very effectively the work which has been done over the years at Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre.

2. 17th Ashton Brownies and Rainbows

Our group is very fortunate that we have wonderful help at Holy Trinity in accommodating us, helping us on our meeting night, getting out tables, chairs etc. and help promoting our group. On our 1st night we were given our own notice board, so we make sure we have a colourful display on it every week. We are a Rainbow & Brownie unit meeting on a Wednesday night for girls aged between 5 -11 years. Rainbows & Brownies are part of Girl Guiding which is a charitable organisation. Our activities include craft, games and many other different challenges & we do badges.



Girl Guiding is for Girls only & has been going for over 100 years. We aim for girls to have fun and develop their skills in many areas. We are part of a Worldwide family and celebrate this on our founder's birthday - Lord Baden-Powell on 22nd February by holding Thinking Day celebrations.

We take part in activities organised by our Division in Ashton, we hold an annual Bowling night, Swimming Gala and most recently an orienteering event up at Silver Springs (near Stamford Park Boating Lake).

We are an inclusive organisation encouraging girls from all backgrounds to join and have fun with us. Unfortunately although we are a 'girls only' organisation, Girl Guiding is under represented in the Asian community, both girls & leaders.

Catherine King

3. Ashton Women's Group

Ashton Women's Group is a recent addition to the activities operating out of Holy Trinity Community Centre and was set up to help raise the profile of women in this deprived area of Ashton, where traditional culture in Pakistani and Bangladeshi families often keeps women in the home and oppressed in a very traditional role as home makers.

The Chairwoman of the group is Hasna who is a 35 year old Bangladeshi Muslim, although she has a white British grandmother.

Born and brought up in Scunthorpe in a traditional Bangladeshi family, Hasna



agreed to an arranged marriage when she was 18 years of age and came to live in Ashton when she married Kabir. The couple live in the Holy Trinity area and have four children.

In the past Hasna has done Skills Builder Courses in IT and Customer Services, an Interpreters' Course and has worked in the Centre before for Sure Start and helped run an all girls' group with Ashton All Stars. When Hasna's sons were attending Holy Trinity Primary School, Hasna was always asking questions about their education and so was asked by the then Deputy Head if she would stand as Parent Governor on the Governing Body. Elected unopposed, Hasna has sat on the Governing Body ever since and is now the Deputy Chair. So when HTCCC committee was being set up with representatives of the various ethnic minority groups being sought, Hasna was asked to sit on the committee to represent the Bangladeshi community and women.

Because of her involvement with Holy Trinity Primary School, Hasna has come to realise how many children are presenting in nursery and reception with little or no English because their mothers cannot speak the language. Similarly meeting other mothers at school and amongst her friends both in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, Hasna has come to realise just how limited in their social contacts and oppressed so many women in her community are. For many women, their husbands are so traditional that they control what their wives do and who they see and many of these women feel unable to challenge their husband's views which means that they are unable to pursue their own interests, whilst still looking after their husbands, children and the home.

Therefore when Carl Kelsall, the Community Development Worker, suggested to Hasna that a women's group could be set up in the community centre, approval of HTCCC committee was sought and the Ashton Women's Group was piloted. Set up in November 2015 and fully constituted on 6th January 2016 with a committee of seven local women, Hasna then set about organising an initial meeting of the women in the area. She is well known in the community, popular and good at networking so was able to recruit about 40 women to attend, 60% of whom were Bangladeshi, 30% Pakistani and the rest were made up of Black, Kurdish and Gujarati women. At the first meeting the women were asked to prioritise their needs and identified ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, Computer/ICT training and child care (to free them up to study) as the main priorities. However with limited funding available it was not possible to set up a full creche facility but what could be offered were ESOL classes, ICT Training and a Mums and Tots' group called "Stay and Play."

ESOL Classes

On behalf of the women in the community, HTCCC put in a bid to CVAT (Community Voluntary Action



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Tel: 0161-339-0236 Website: www.goodshepherdashton.org/community-centre

Charity Registration No. 1134826

Tameside) – now known as Action Together since its amalgamation with Voluntary Action Oldham, a neighbouring town – for money to set up an ESOL course in the community. The bid was successful and £500 was made available to AWG to set up the training.

The ESOL classes were initially organised through the WEA with numbers limited to 20 women by the WEA and given that crèche facilities could not be offered, the women with preschool children were automatically excluded. The classes were held in the community centre because it is in the heart of the community and the women felt confident enough to attend somewhere so local to their homes. Unfortunately after only 5 weeks, the WEA had to withdraw and so the classes were taken over by the sister of one of the committee members and ran for another 10 weeks as originally planned. They were a huge success and AWG now has a waiting list for future ESOL classes. It is hoped that if the current bid is successful, there will be money available to set up a properly staffed and equipped crèche facility in the community centre to free up mothers with younger children to study, who will be reassured that their children are being properly cared for in the same venue.

Computer/ICT Training

Computer training was already available locally at the St Ann's Centre through the Tameside Adult and Community Education Service but because the women in the Holy Trinity area lacked the confidence to step out of their own community and more importantly lacked the language skills to participate fully in the training, it was



negotiated that St Ann's would provide a tutor to teach the women in the community centre. The course was limited to 8 women because of the needs of the women who had never used a computer before and had little or no English. Once more this proved to be a huge success. The women felt confident in a venue they had already been to before for the inaugural meeting of AWG and ESOL classes and Hasna (Bangla speaking), Razia (a local Urdu speaking woman) and Guytri (treasurer of AWG and fluent in Gujarati) were able to act as interpreters.

All the women who attended are keen to progress their training and there is a waiting list for a beginners' course. Moreover there is an agreement in place for future provision to be organised in this way.

Stay and Play

As already stated, there has been insufficient funding to date to provide a fully equipped crèche facility, with properly trained staff, in the centre to enable mothers with young children to attend the classes on offer. But the committee

of AWG also recognised the need to provide some kind of Mums and Tots facility in the community centre to address the needs of the young children who are presenting at Holy Trinity Primary School and are in no way ready for school. The children have little or no English, lack confidence, are shy and reserved and have few socialisation skills. Therefore the committee decided to set up a “Stay and Play” group in the centre where Mums could socialise with other mothers in the area and learn basic English whilst playing with their children, who in turn would be socialising with other children outside of their families. The AWG committee applied to CVAT for funding to “kick start” this initiative. Having been awarded £500 for this, they spent £200 on toys to equip the group for play and the remaining £300 paid for 20 hours of support from a worker from LEAP Children and Families Centre, part of St Peter's Partnerships, to help them set up and run the project.



To advertise the project, the women of the committee produced a leaflet and then distributed it at school and amongst the community. Once more this has been highly successful, demonstrating the need for such a project and currently about 19 Mums attend the group – 10 Pakistani parents, 6 Bangladeshi, 2 Gujarati and 1 South Indian who between them have about 21 children. The women now feel confident to run the group on their own without the services of the LEAP worker.

Speaking for the Ashton Women's Group, Hasna states, “We know there is a need (for the services we are now providing) because we know these women. And because they can't speak English, they are so limited in what they can access. And even those who can speak English are isolated. But the lack of English impacts on the children – their kids are reserved, lacking in confidence and don't know how to socialise. We want everyone to have the same opportunities, to feel involved, confidence levels to be raised and we don't want the children to be disadvantaged.”

What has been so important to the Ashton Women's Group is that they are now enabling the women of the community to step out of their homes into a safe and welcoming environment in the community centre. There they can learn new skills which should help them to play a more active role in their children's education as well as in the centre and community and perhaps ultimately, in the workplace.

4. Neonatal Knitters

Neonatal Knitters are a local community group who knit, crochet and sew for the Neonatal Units of Tameside, St Marys' and Oldham hospitals.



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We meet at Holy Trinity Community Centre weekly and have approx. 25 ladies attending each week. Our ages range from 17 (during college holidays) to a 90 year old lady who celebrated her birthday with us last year. We are a very diverse group with ladies from England, Southern Ireland, Scotland, Pakistan and Italy.

Some of our members have physical disabilities and some have mental health issues - both to varying degrees, and Holy Trinity Community Centre offers a safe, warm, welcoming and friendly environment in which we all feel safe. This is the only venue in Ashton which can offer us a room large enough for our group, storage for the items we produce, the opportunity to interact with other diverse user groups and a central meeting point easily accessible to all at an affordable cost.



The staff at the Centre are always helpful and nothing is too much trouble for them, be it on a weekly basis or when arranging Fun Days for the community.

Sue Carrigan

5. Tameside Elders

Tameside Elders – a men's group – has been meeting in Holy Trinity Community Centre for the past 10 years. 61 year old Qurban is one such elder. He came to Britain from Pakistan aged 10 years, had an arranged marriage and has brought up 6 children here. He worked hard, initially in the mill, then in an industrial launderette and latterly for a garden furniture manufacturer to raise his family, until ill-health forced an early retirement. Qurban has been attending the Centre for about 6 years and was proud to become Chairman of Tameside Elders. However he had to step down when his lack of literacy skills precluded him from making the



necessary grant applications to ensure the continuance of the group. It is a sadness to Qurban that no grant funding has so far been forthcoming since the new Chairman took over.

Qurban is keen to point out that the group is not exclusively for Pakistani Muslim men – any older men are welcome - although they (Pakistani Muslims) constitute the current membership. At one time there were about 35-40 men attending the group but as some have passed away, some have become too ill to attend and some have returned to Pakistan, they have not been replaced and currently about 15 men attend the group. It has been necessary recently to increase the men's contributions for attending the group from £1 per session to £2 per session and Qurban considers this may partially account for falling numbers.

Tameside Elders is essentially a social group that meets in the Centre once a week on a Thursday to play cards, eat together and share news of what is going on in their own families as well as in their Mother country. At one time the group was able to meet 3 x per week but as the recession began to bite and grant funding was withdrawn, this was reduced to twice weekly and then to weekly. Qurban is very grateful to the generosity of Holy Trinity which enables them to have accommodation cheaply. The men's weekly contributions pay for the hire of the Centre and its facilities whereas a grant from Tameside MBC enables the group to buy in food. This grant has now been withdrawn and so present reserves mean that the group has only about another 6 months to run unless new funding is obtained.

Qurban cannot emphasise enough what it means to the older men in the area to be able to meet up in the Centre weekly. It has proved to be a life-saver for many of them because for the rest of the week they are just sitting at home watching television. Time and again on arriving at the Centre, the men remark, "Thank God we are here" and after Mosque on Friday, they are counting the days until the next Thursday. In Qurban's opinion it would be a disaster for the group if the Centre were no longer available to them. He also commented on the valuable resource the Centre is for family functions – two of Qurban's daughters using it for their wedding receptions.

Qurban was keen to emphasise that there is an awkwardness for Tameside Elders in meeting in a church building and indeed as we were speaking together, the strains of a hymn could be heard as Holy Trinity's congregation met for their weekly Evening Prayer.

6. Ashton Youth Club (AYC)

Ashton Youth Club which runs in Holy Trinity Community Centre two nights per week and Katherine Street Mosque one night per week is an outreach project of the Lindley Educational Trust and funded by Children in Need. This pays for the rent of the hall and staff wages. It was set up early last year by the Trust when it was recognised that there was the need for youth provision in this deprived area of Ashton. It is managed by Adnan and run by three young graduates – Nayaab, a Pakistani woman aged 22 years with a degree

in Psychology and Sociology, Rehna, aged 23 years, a Pakistani woman with a degree in Childhood Studies and Aqib, a Pakistani man, aged 23 years with a degree in Business Studies.

Nayaab and Rehna are cousins and whilst Rehna is working as a teaching assistant in Stockport to gain some experience before applying for a PGSE course, Nayaab is currently considering her options. She may do a conversion course in Law as this is the degree she originally wanted to do but was dissuaded by her college tutors. Both girls have done a 9 month Gap Scheme with the Rank Foundation leading to a Diploma in Informal Education (youth work/youth provision). Aqib is uncertain where his future lies but is valuing this opportunity of working with young people. Initially recruited as volunteers, all three are now paid casual workers since the Children in Need funding was obtained. The youth club is called AYC, a name thought up by the young people who attend and clearly a play on the word "Ace"!

Nayaab, Rehna and Aqib attended SPY activities in the Centre when they were 15/16 years of age and really loved the opportunities that were on offer

to them – going to the velodrome, doing a Winter Skills course (mountaineering, building shelters, learning how to use ice picks and crampons) and going to Morocco where they climbed the highest mountain in the Atlas range. Nayaab says it gave her the opportunity to mix with boys for the first time in a supervised setting which in turn increased her confidence and Rehna says it opened her mind to see what was on offer "out there".

When the girls were attending SPY, Adnan was one of the youth workers and they greatly value what he did for each of them on an individual level as well as providing them with a positive male role model. They also very much appreciate what SPY did for them and so want to give back into the community what they took from Adnan and SPY. When the girls heard that SPY was closing, they were devastated but when they subsequently heard that a new youth initiative was being set up in the Centre they had no hesitation in volunteering even though they were both in their final year at university.

The current young people attending AYC are mostly boys from the Holy Trinity area, although two or three of Nayaab and Rehna's young female relatives attend. The boys are a lively, boisterous group of lads who regularly test the boundaries by pressurising each other not to conform. This is possibly why the current group do not want their sisters to attend. But as Nayaab said, "If we are not going to give them a chance, who is going to give them a chance."



She feels that so many social settings do not accommodate children who do not fit the mould and that is where youth club comes in. It is hoped that by being consistently there for the young people, leading by example and offering them an interesting and varied programme of activities, some of them may come forward to be the “Grow Our Own” of the future, just as Nayaab, Rehna and Aqib are currently being grown by Adnan.

7. Bhutanese Welfare Association

The Bhutanese Welfare Association has just started to meet in Holy Trinity Community Centre. There are currently about fifteen Bhutanese households living in Ashton, three of which are Christian, some Buddhist but the majority are Hindu. The Bhutanese Welfare Association was created for those displaced Bhutanese families who were placed in the Manchester area five years ago, with other groups meeting in Doncaster and London.



Refugee Action initially helped them with grant funding and they received a £500 grant from the Manchester Seed Fund, followed by a £3070 grant from the Big Lottery, awarded to enable them to preserve their culture. When this money was used up a grant of £10,000 was given by Children in Need in order that the association could teach their children their Mother tongue (Nepali or Dzongkha) and about their cultural inheritance.

Accommodation has proved a difficulty for the BWA. Initially they used to meet in a Methodist Hall where they were also allowed to worship but then



apparently “the rules changed” and they could no longer worship in the hall and the rental was drastically increased. They then met at St Peter's Partnership's LEAP project but when the rental of that room was increased, they moved to Holy Trinity at LEAP's suggestion. It has been made very clear to the BWA that they are very welcome to meet in Holy Trinity for language classes and cultural activities but Hindu worship cannot be sanctioned in a consecrated C of E building.

Prem Giri is the spokesperson for the BWA in Ashton. He is aged 39 years and married with three children. His mother also lives with his family. He states that his family was evicted from Bhutan in 1992 when campaigning for democracy

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and human rights against the king who was a dictator. The family then spent almost two decades in a refugee camp in Nepal during which time Prem married and his children were born. He studied hard and became a teacher both in the camp and in a primary school in Nepal, Maths being his speciality. Then on humanitarian grounds, the UNHCR – the United Nations refugee agency - together with the International Organization for Migration arranged for many thousands from the camps to be resettled in the West, many families opting to go to America but Prem and his family came to England, directly to Ashton. He arrived here on 6th September 2010. Prem hoped to be a teacher in the UK but was unable to pass the test of “listening, speaking, writing” to enable him to do a PGCE course. (He has a heavy accent). He therefore decided to pursue a career in accountancy and did a Masters Degree at Sheffield Hallam whilst teaching accountancy to an ESOL class in Ashton. However, without experience, Prem has been unable to secure employment in accountancy and currently works as a care worker at a residential care home in Ashton.

HTCCC has been able to offer Prem some voluntary work with the treasurer of the committee. Should this lead to his ultimate employment by a firm of accountants in Ashton, then hopefully, as a committee, we shall have been able to demonstrate our commitment to the ABCD methodology.

In the meantime, Prem is very happy that Holy Trinity has been able to offer accommodation to the Bhutanese Welfare Association. It is very important to him that the children have a safe, welcoming place to meet, in which they are able to learn their language and the respect that is inherent in Hindu culture. The ladies also are able to meet up from time to time, to dance and to sing – an important aspect of their culture.

8. Khush Amdid

Khush Amdid – which means “Welcome” - is a registered charity and its information leaflet states it “is a user led multicultural organisation, which caters for the needs of the women in Tameside with the objective of improving their quality of life.” It currently caters for about 50 older Pakistani women, with an on average attendance of between 20-30 women attending each week. The organisers however are keen to point out that it is an inclusive group and would love to see white British and women from other ethnic minority groups attending.



The idea of setting up Khush Amdid came from Mrs Sarwar Ibrahim, now aged 81 years. Many years ago Mrs Ibrahim was caring for her elderly mother and was advised that she would benefit from attending a luncheon club. However at the time there were only luncheon clubs for older Indian and

British women and because of language difficulties, Mrs Ibrahim's mother was prevented from going. When she passed away, Mrs Ibrahim resolved to correct this situation. She approached Age Concern who gave her a room at Cranbrook Gardens and a grant of £50 and so, as she puts it, "Khush Amdid was born". Since then, Khush Amdid has had a chequered history moving from meeting at Cranbrook Gardens to Age Concern to West End Community Centre and then to Holy Trinity Community Centre as rent increases at other venues have been prohibitive. It has now been based in Holy Trinity for 15 years or more. Grant funding was initially forthcoming but as austerity measures have impacted, Khush Amdid is now self-funding and so is very grateful that HTCCC subsidises their rent. The women pay £4 per session to attend (Committee members - £5) as well as having to pay for Ring and Ride if they use this service. What is interesting is that family members of both Mrs Ibrahim and Mrs Rukhsana Ali (the vice-chair) have set up Direct Debits to enable their mothers to do the work they are doing because they like to see their mothers happy.



Mrs Ibrahim has just stepped down as Chair of Khush Amdid and has been replaced by a younger person Nilah Shariff.

Khush Amdid prepares all of its food for the women's lunch from fresh in the kitchen at Holy Trinity and as well as meeting to eat and socialise, which Khush Amdid recognises is good for mental health, "a healthy mind is a healthy body", the women also benefit from exercise classes on offer. Mrs Ali cited one of their success stories – that of one woman who came suffering from high blood pressure. After several weeks of attending Khush Amdid, her blood pressure had corrected itself. It was Khush Amdid that had made the difference in her life! Khush Amdid also offers massage and sewing classes but as they have to buy in the services of women to run these sessions, they have now had to be limited because of lack of funding. Similarly they are no longer able to organise trips out for the women as they once did.

Mrs Ibrahim and Mrs Ali sincerely hope they are able to continue to meet at Holy Trinity Community Centre as it provides for a much needed resource for older women from ethnic minority groups in Ashton and beyond (some women travel in from Oldham, Denton and Hyde) . If funding is obtained and the Centre can remain open, they would like to take advantage of any training on offer – eg in Health and Safety and First Aid. In return they would like to offer Pakistani cookery classes to anyone who may be interested and they have offered to cook for the Tameside Elders group, aware that it will soon have no money with which to buy in food, stating, "They are our men, our brothers and as our culture donates lots to charity, why shouldn't we?"

9. **Shapla** (translated from Bengali means water lily)

The Shapla project was set up by the Bangladeshi community in Tameside a year ago, its main aim being to work with the local community providing any help that may be needed by the community. Its members also do charity work more broadly eg bucket collections at local supermarkets for the Red Cross. The project is run by a committee of 7 people from their own homes and Sajjadur Rahman is the Vice Chairman.

Sajjad is 45 years of age married with 5 children and he lives in the West End of Ashton. Born and brought up in Bangladesh, he graduated from university in Bangladesh with a science degree (not recognised in this country). He came to the UK in 1994 when he entered into an arranged marriage with the daughter of family friends and now works as a taxi driver. Possibly Sajjad is living out his aspirations/dreams through his children – his eldest son has just qualified as a solicitor and his eldest daughter has recently graduated with a degree in Bio Medical Sciences.

A firm believer in teaching his own children their mother tongue, Sajjad responded to a request from the local community 3-4 years ago to set up a Bangla language class, which he ran on his own. However it was hard to do this whilst working full time, so he gave it up. However once more responding to community pressure to start the classes again, Shapla was set up and the Tameside Bangla School was established. Lottery funding was obtained for 12 months to teach children aged 5-13 years to speak and write in their mother tongue. As Sajjad has known Carl Kelsall, the Community Development Worker, for some time, he approached Carl about holding the classes in Holy Trinity Community Centre. They have now been running in the centre for several months with around 30 children attending, taught by a female teacher employed by Shapla.

For Sajjad, Holy Trinity Community Centre is the ideal place in which to hold the classes, as it is in the heart of the community where most of the Bangladeshi people in Ashton live. He states that parents can walk their children to the centre to drop them off and as it is familiar to them, they feel confident that their children will be kept safe in this warm and welcoming place. Sajjad has a white British friend, Phil Buckley who is a retired police



officer from Oldham. He has visited Bangladesh many times and can speak Bangla almost fluently. He has visited the centre to meet the children telling them, "If I can speak Bangla, so can you!"

Sajjad very much hopes that Shapla can continue meeting in Holy Trinity once the Big Lottery funding runs out.

Case Studies - Individuals

1. Qamar

Qamar is now aged 34 years, a Pakistani Muslim who was born here and whose parents had emigrated here 50 years ago. His marriage was arranged but he lives very happily with his wife and their 5 children. Although living out of the area, he considers Holy Trinity to be “home” as so many of his relatives and friends live in the area.

Qamar volunteered that as a teenager, he was one of the “youths causing annoyance” in the area and indeed was on the edge of criminal activity, with a group of his friends subsequently being charged and imprisoned for drugs related offences. The turning point in Qamar's life was when he became a father for the first time, having married at the age of 18 years and for 9 years he worked long hours in a takeaway for £35 per night in order to provide for his growing family.

About 10 years ago, Qamar was asked by Carl Kelsall (SPY leader and now Community Development Worker at HTCCC) to be a steward at a community event. Qamar already knew about the SPY project because his younger siblings were involved in it and he felt an immediate rapport with the young people attending the event. As a fitness fanatic himself (he was into weight lifting and boxing), he liked what was being done out of the Centre in terms of the physical activities on offer and therefore accepted Carl's invitation to become a volunteer on the project with the opportunity of qualifying in sport and youth work. He was trained as a coach in climbing and obtained a Climbing Wall Award as well as an NVQ Level 3 in Youth and Community Development. In order to facilitate his volunteering and training, Qamar changed his job and became a taxi driver and was eventually employed as a casual worker by SPY which was able to offer him 16 hours paid work each week.

When casual work was no longer available with SPY, Qamar worked full-time as a taxi driver whilst attending college to obtain a NVQ Level 2 as a teaching assistant. He signed on with a teaching agency and did some work as a teaching assistant in a primary school before accepting placements in Pupil Referral Units. Qamar is now employed in a high school in Gorton which has many challenging behaviours. He works as a Learning and Behaviour Mentor and aspires to become a Pastoral Officer where he would receive in house training.



Qamar sees himself very much as a product of the “Grow Our Own” initiative. He feels strongly that he was “grown” by the Centre and says that if it had not been for Carl giving him the opportunity to volunteer and be trained, he would not be where he is today. This is the reason why he is back at the Centre, two nights per week, volunteering once more and helping to run the Martial Arts club which he helped to set up when he worked for SPY.

Qamar would be very concerned if the Centre were to close because of lack of funding. He considers there would be an increase in anti-social behaviour amongst young people in the area which would require a greater police presence. Therefore he values his current role in being able to keep children off the streets if only for 1 or 2 nights each week.

2. Kaleel

Kaleel is a Pakistani Muslim who is in his thirties and was born and brought up in the Holy Trinity area and has lived all of his life in the West End of Ashton. He was the youngest of 7 children (5 brothers and 1 sister) and went to Holy Trinity Primary school. Whilst there he was a friend of Daniel Lawrence, son of Father Charles Lawrence whose vision it was, 22 years ago, to reshape the church building to create a community facility as well as a worship area. Consequently Kaleel was a regular visitor to the vicarage.



When he was only 8 years of age, Kaleel began to help his mother care for his sick father until he died when Kaleel was 19 years of age. At the age of 16 years he began working part time in a day care centre for the elderly whilst continuing his studies and these experiences appear to have defined his future career. As a young carer Kaleel felt invisible, as if his voice wasn't heard and he was therefore drawn to becoming an advocate for vulnerable people in society. As Kaleel puts it, “I was born to care.” Therefore after working in a care/nursing home and then being a live-in carer for adults with learning disabilities, Kaleel began a social work course and became a qualified and registered social worker specialising in mental health and subsequently working in Tameside, Rochdale, Bury and Bolton. He also has a number of degrees including an MA in Adult Safeguarding, Law, Policy and Practice. Kaleel is currently a Designated Adult Safeguarding Manager in Bolton whilst still undertaking locum mental health clinics for an Accident and Emergency Service called RAID which assesses people with mental health needs and “sign posts” them to relevant agencies locally.

Kaleel is a strong supporter of human rights and equality for all. He is passionate about tackling social inequalities whilst advocating for Women's Rights, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/ Transsexual (LGBT) people and those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

With all his studies finally behind him, Kaleel has recently begun to think about how he could become more involved with his local community and an informal conversation with his sister in law made him realise the importance that Holy Trinity Community Centre has in community life with the aim of bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to promote equality and community cohesion. Kaleel learnt from his sister-in-law about the work being done to promote women in the area and of the BME Women's Group she attends in the Centre. He recognised that he could have a role in raising the profile of child and adult safeguarding in the area, addressing issues surrounding child and adult abuse and the radicalisation of vulnerable groups. His sister in law suggested the BME Women's Groups she attends would be a good starting point. After Kaleel had met with Carl Kelsall, the Community Development Worker it was agreed that this was an opportunity to empower women in the area to keep their families safe which could, in turn, impact on keeping communities safe. Therefore Kaleel will shortly lead his first Safeguarding Training in the Centre as a highly trained and experienced volunteer.

Kaleel believes there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to bring local communities together from all different faiths and backgrounds to overcome hate and prejudice in addressing taboo subjects such as terrorism, Islamophobia, mental health, health inequalities, domestic abuse and issues surrounding the LGBT society. He welcomes the opportunity of being a part of this learning and educative process.

3. Sue

Sue is a 65 year old white British woman, widowed with three children, her younger daughter still living at home with her. Born and brought up in Manchester, Sue did office work on leaving school eventually becoming PA to the manager of the company she worked for. When the company went out of business, Sue took a job in a day training centre for Adults with Learning Difficulties in Blackley and loved it but when she became pregnant with her youngest child, she decided to take a career break as she had only taken maternity leave after the births of her other two children and felt she had missed out on too much of their early years.

In 1999, the family moved to live in Tameside and when her youngest child went into full time education, Sue decided on a career change and felt that she would like to get back into community work. She went on a course facilitated by Ashton Regeneration through TMBC and run by Carl Kelsall and



obtained a certificate in Community Development Level 1. She then went to work for St Peter's Partnerships as a Community Champion, primarily concerned with single parents.

In about 2004 Sue went to work with Carl, her manager, at Cavendish Mill, where he facilitated a Skills Builder course set up through Tameside College, primarily aimed at women with young children, with crèche facilities available but open to all. The courses, lasting about 14 weeks offered basic qualifications in a range of subjects from IT to Customer Services and Sue had the satisfaction of seeing at least 5 of the women she had worked with obtaining employment. It was at Cavendish Mill that Sue met Hasna (Khan) and Shahida (Ditta) for the first time and she feels she learnt so much about different Asian cultures whilst there. Short term contracts working with "lone parents" and setting up courses funded through Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities followed, many of them based in Holy Trinity Community Centre. Sue got St Ann's to run ESOL courses in the centre ("what goes round, comes round"!) and recognised the need for basic Maths courses to be offered.

In 2005, Sue decided to take her interest in community work a level higher and did the City and Guilds 7302 course delivered at Holy Trinity by Tameside College. This was a teaching qualification aimed at workers and volunteers working in the community and enabled Sue to deliver training in the community. But she missed working with people at "ground level" as she puts it and so took a job as a Community Development Worker with Oldham College based at the Honeywell centre, where she feels she could put into practice all she had learnt from her long involvement with St Peter's Partnerships, Ashton Regeneration and Holy Trinity Community Centre. When the funding for this post ran out, Sue was recalled to Oldham College to teach but hated it. She felt the work had become about "bums on seats" and was "target led" and that the people no longer mattered. She therefore retired in July 2011 aged 60 years.

A "community activist" at heart (Carl Kelsall's description of Sue!) and living in the Holy Trinity area, Sue is once more involved in the community as she is responsible for having set up with her friend Jenny Boff, the Neo-Natal Knitters' Group in the community centre. If the group were unable to meet at Holy Trinity it would have to disband because there is no other community facility in the area big enough to accommodate the group whilst offering storage facilities. Moreover, for Sue, it is the most welcoming centre she has ever been involved with and so friendly – important for Sue as the group is more than a knitting group. It is also a social group and meets the needs of some members with mental health issues and physical disabilities.

Sue acknowledges that she was not "grown" as a community worker out of Holy Trinity Community Centre but she would say that she has been "grown" by Carl who she sees as an inspirational, committed and passionate community worker and leader. When she first went into community work she was scared because she was older and didn't have the university qualifications that other community workers had. But because of her life experiences she had the compassion and empathy to help disadvantaged

members of the community and it was Carl who gave her the skills and the confidence to help others “walk in my shoes” as she puts it. She describes the Grow our Own ideology as amazing – the idea of passing on learnt skills to others for them to learn for the benefit of the community - and all that it takes, in Sue's opinion, is “caring and understanding”. Those two qualities are what make the difference in people's lives.

4. Church Wardens (Judith and Les)

Judith is a 62 year old white British woman married to Brian with one son Mark. She currently works as the Diocesan secretary for the Mothers' Union in Manchester but is due to retire next year. Her family has a long association with Holy Trinity stretching back to the early 1900's when her great grandparents worshipped here, followed by her grandparents, parents, Judith herself and



her son Mark – 5 generations in all! Judith was baptised, confirmed and married in the church and hopes the church will still be open so that her funeral service can be held here when the time comes! Judith recalls being admitted “on the choir” in about 1964/65 when a decision was finally taken that girls could be allowed to sing in the choir – as she says, “The church was very much men and boys led in those days.” She has been a Sunday School teacher at Holy Trinity, Youth Leader, member of the PCC (Parochial Church Council), then the DCC (District Church Council), Secretary to the DCC and finally Church Warden. Holy Trinity has always been, and will continue to be, a very important part of Judith's life.

Les is a 68 year old white British man and married to Barbara. He has recently retired from his post as a regional Electrical Engineering Manager for a large company. Born and brought up in the Holy Trinity area, Les has been attending Holy Trinity from the age of 7 years. He joined the church choir aged 8 years and has been a server since he was 11 years old. Les was confirmed and married in Holy Trinity and, like Judith, hopes to be buried from the church. Les was one of the youngest Church Wardens in the Diocese when elected to the post aged 26/27 years and has moved in and out of the role ever since. He has served on the PCC, then the DCC, acted as Covenant Secretary, been Deputy Chair of the PCC and been a Youth Leader in the church. Les is a very talented and knowledgeable DIY person and for many, many years has committed himself to maintaining the fabric of the building, wherever possible, saving the church £100's/£1000's over the years. Continuing this maintenance work at Holy Trinity is very much Les' retirement project!

Judith and Les recall how vibrant and active a church Holy Trinity once was, meeting the social needs of the congregation as well as their spiritual needs but designed to seat 800 people with no small meeting rooms, many of the

activities took place in the school hall of Holy Trinity School, which was far from ideal. Therefore in the 1970's when the congregation had reduced to between 40-45 people, the PCC began to question how the church could be changed to become more "user-friendly" and various ideas were considered. When Father Charles Lawrence arrived at Holy Trinity in the early 1980's, however, he was originally resistant to change because he considered the building to be too beautiful to be altered. But as time moved on and more and more ethnic minority groups moved into the area, with those attending Holy Trinity Church continuing to fall, Father Charles had the vision of "reshaping" the church to create a two storey community facility to meet the needs of the rich and diverse cultures now occupying Holy Trinity parish, whilst at the same time retaining a significant worship area.

Father Charles shared his vision with the congregation in 1986 and whilst there was a general acknowledgement amongst church members that change was needed, there was also fear and uncertainty about whether the community would come into the church because it is a Christian consecrated building and would there be respect for the building as such. For Judith, in particular, it was "a big leap of faith". However through prayer and involving the congregation at all stages of the planning process, including visiting other churches that had undergone similar "transformations", there was an acceptance amongst the congregation of Father Charles' and the PCC's plans. 1992 saw the completion of the first stage of the Reshape which was finally finished in 1998.

Judith and Les gave their support to what became Holy Trinity's mission – its "outreach" work with its primarily Muslim neighbours and were proud of the Diocese's recognition of Holy Trinity as a flagship church "building bridges" with its ethnically diverse neighbours. The community centre was used every day of the week for various groups and classes. Worship continued at Holy Trinity but by 2013 numbers attending church had fallen to a level where it was no longer possible to meet the demands of an active church. Judith and Les then had to make the devastating and heartbreaking decision to close the church but the Diocese, in recognition of the invaluable work being done out of the community centre, decided to suspend Sunday Eucharist but leave the church open. So now a small congregation of approximately 6 people together with up to 4 clergy meet each Thursday for Evening Prayer in the Lady Chapel, with Eucharist said once a month. The church continues to be used for team services and Holy Trinity Primary School has services in it at least 4 times per year attended by mostly Muslim parents. There have also been 3 baptisms and 1 funeral in church since 2013 and Les and Judith wish to point out that the church is still open for baptisms, weddings, blessings and funerals.

For Judith and Les, the most important thing for them is that the church remains open. (Judith's greatest fear is that it would become a carpet warehouse!) They are committed to the ongoing community use of the building and excited by the future plans for the building and community development should funding be made available. Judith also has sympathy for the women in the community remembering what it was like all those years ago

to be excluded from the choir and other roles in the church because she was a woman. She is therefore whole heartedly behind the project to raise the profile of women in the area.

Judith and Les are justifiably proud of the fact that through the spiritual and financial generosity of Holy Trinity Church, Holy Trinity Community Centre exists in this deprived area of Ashton to serve the needs of our ethnically diverse neighbours. And as Les says, "The words 'Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only' – James 1:22 – were inscribed at the back of the church in 1878 and the notice boards currently outside church read, 'Church and Community Working Together.'" They would like this partnership to continue for many years to come.

5. Adnan

Adnan is a 30 year old Pakistani Muslim who was born and brought up in Ashton, one of six children. He is married to Firdaus and as their's was a love match of which some of Firdaus' family did not initially approve, they had to wait 5 years to receive their blessing. They have now been married for 3 years and live independently.

It seems to Adnan that he has always been involved with Holy Trinity Community Centre, initially attending family parties and weddings here and then involving himself in Centre activities from the age of 16 years. After GCSE's at school, Adnan attended Tameside College to study engineering but when he applied for an apprenticeship, his prospective employers sensed that Adnan's main ambition was to become a youth worker and so did not give him a job. In interview, he must have spoken with such passion about his leisure activities when he described spending every single spare moment of every single day at the Centre volunteering!



Early on in his involvement with SPY, Adnan showed an interest in outdoor activities and with SPY's encouragement he took a Sports Leadership Award which evolved into Level 1 qualifications in football, cricket and tennis. He then progressed to centre based youth work – drama, dance, art graffiti – taking his NVQ Levels 2 & 3 in youth work which he obtained at 19 years of age. He was then offered a full time post as a youth worker by SPY – the first

ever local person to be offered such a position and something of which he is very proud.

Around this time SPY was working in close partnership with the Lindley Educational Trust to promote youth work and Adnan went to work for them aged 21 years because they had obtained Rank funding for training and Adnan was able to study for a degree in Youth Work through “distance learning” on a course accredited by Canterbury Christ Church College. He points out, however that all the evidence for his youth work was supplied by the SPY project. Adnan remains in full time employment with the Lindley Educational Trust but seconded to develop a youth project once more in Holy Trinity Community Centre, with Children in Need now funding his post.

He is keen to point out that the National Institute of Outdoor Learning seeks to demonstrate how best to engage with ethnic minority groups and cites the work that has been done out of Holy Trinity Community Centre as an example of good working practice.

Adnan believes that Holy Trinity Community Centre is seen as the central hub of the community. Those who have been a part of the Grow our Own initiative in the past have an emotional attachment to what has played a major influence in their lives. Adnan acknowledges that for him, it has given him skills, self esteem and confidence that he might not otherwise have had. He strongly believes that if the most deprived areas of the country can attract funding to train up the people who live in the community, then the skills they acquire will still be with the local people long after the funding has ceased. Adnan is one such person and his preferred venue for working is Holy Trinity Community Centre.

Adnan is currently managing the youth project in the Centre with two young people who represent for him, the new phase of “Grow our Own”. He regrets that there was no youth provision in the Centre for a couple of years which means that the new recruits are playing “catch-up” all the time. And to those critics who question the wisdom of more funding being made available to resolve the problems of the West End, Adnan replies, “Rome wasn’t built in a day” and it will take several generations to correct the cycle of deprivation. What is important to him is providing consistency for the young people in the area and engaging them when they are young.

6. Margaret

Margaret is a 71 years old white British woman married to Maurice with 3 children, 7 grandchildren & 1 great-grandchild. Prior to retiring, she was a social worker in Tameside for 22 years.

In 1990 Margaret's daughter and boyfriend who is Bangladeshi Muslim announced their intention to marry and as her boyfriend's family wanted them to have a Muslim wedding, Margaret asked that they have a Service of Blessing in church as well. At this



point in time, Margaret had not attended church for about 10 years and so began to search for a church that would conduct a Service of Blessing between a Christian and a Muslim. A work colleague suggested that Fr Charles Lawrence at Holy Trinity might be prepared to do this as he is of mixed parentage, having an Irish Catholic mother and a Mauritian Christian father.

Prior to the Service of Blessing, which Fr Charles agreed to conduct, Margaret decided to attend a service at Holy Trinity and received such a warm welcome, that she stayed! As she puts it, "it felt as if I had come in out of the wilderness" and she particularly valued the fact that it was an Anglo Catholic church.

After attending the church for a while Margaret joined the Mothers' Union and was invited to sit on the P.C.C. which lead to Fr Charles asking her to be the church treasurer, a post she held for circa 20 years together with leading intercessions and reading in church. She has also made several grant applications for work being done in and out of the church – some of which have been successful and some haven't!

When in 2013 due to a fall in the number of people attending Holy Trinity, it was decided by the then DCC to suspend holding Sunday services, Margaret decided that due to the changing requirement of the treasurer's duties and the introduction of more computer generated accounts which she could not manage with her limited computer skills, it was time to resign from her post as treasurer. This was in December 2014 and was timed to coincide with the closure of the SPY project in Holy Trinity. Margaret was also, for many years, a governor at Holy Trinity C of E primary school

Throughout her involvement with Holy Trinity, Margaret has felt passionate about the vision Fr Charles had about reshaping the church in order to provide a community facility for the use of the ethnic minority groups resident in this poor, deprived area of Ashton. As a social worker for Tameside, Margaret worked with Muslim families in the area and when she was managing the Temporary Fostering Team for the local authority, was privileged to have Rukhsana Ali (now Vice Chair of Khush Amdid) and her husband, as foster carers. Because of her work, Margaret was seen as a valuable asset to the church in helping some members of the congregation overcome their fears and prejudices by explaining the needs of the community and how these could best be met by inviting them into the newly reshaped church where the community could meet socially and attend classes and training sessions.

Following the decision of the DCC to suspend Sunday services and in agreement with the Diocese, it was decided that as the church and community centre provided such an important and unique provision in the community and is part of the church's mission, that the building should remain open. Following this decision Margaret joined the HTCCC management committee and as part of her continuing commitment to the work being done at Holy Trinity, volunteered to carry out the case studies in this document as part of the current bid for Big Lottery funding.

7. Safia

Safia is a Pakistani Muslim woman aged 31 years. She met her future husband Ruhule, a Bangladeshi Muslim, through the SPY project at Holy Trinity Community Centre and because of cultural differences and the long standing enmity between the two countries, their relationship did not initially have the approval of either family. However Safia's father, whom she describes as her friend as well as her Dad and who cannot stand injustice of any kind, gave the union his blessing when he realised the couple loved each other and that Ruhule would look after his beloved daughter. The couple married religiously in 2011 without some family members' blessings and a year later they had a civil ceremony with both immediate families coming together to be part of this happy occasion. Safia and Ruhule now have a daughter Jasmin, born in 2015 who at 2 weeks of age, fell ill and was hospitalised with a serious illness and is at risk of having long term health problems. With all that aside, Safia and Ruhule feel Jasmin is a blessing from Allah.



Born and brought up in the West End of Ashton, Safia is the third child in a family of 6 children. Very much a tomboy, Safia was always to be found playing cricket or football with her brothers as a young child but aged 11 years, like many other Asian Muslim girls, her participation in such activities was restricted so that she could learn how to cook and clean in preparation for her future life as a wife and mother, as is the norm in the Pakistani community. She was then sent to an all girls' comprehensive school, following in her older sister's footsteps and Safia feels this did not allow her to be the person she really was. On leaving high school, she became quite withdrawn, with low self esteem, so when she went to college to study Child Care and was around boys (other than family) for the first time, she felt scared and isolated herself from everybody. In her second year, she did not even bother going to college at all for much of

the time. She then spent a further two years at Tameside College doing an IT and Business Foundation course where she met some female friends who encouraged her to keep attending. On leaving college Safia was having to search for jobs as she was under pressure from her family but as she was still not confident around the opposite sex, she was not successful in getting a job, which undermined her confidence even more. Her family thought she was lazy when in fact she was too scared and lacking in self esteem to join the "outside" world. She had been attending an all girls' youth club from the age of 13 years, becoming a volunteer at 17 years of age and obtaining the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and this is when Safia realised that youth work was

what she really enjoyed doing. A job opportunity with the Youth Service came up when she was 19 years of age. However her father was worried about her and did not feel it was right for a young Asian girl to be going out to work in the evenings. Safia did challenge this with her father and took the job but after only a month, resigned as she could not take the pressure from home any more – a further blow to her self confidence.

At 20 years of age, Safia was offered a job by her Uncle Ali at the FAST club in Holy Trinity Primary School (Families and Children Together) where she used to run extra curriculum activities at the school and not long afterwards she was offered a Midday Assistant position at the school. Through the FAST club Safia met the SPY team via her brother Adnan and she started to attend youth sessions at Holy Trinity Community Centre. Safia feels that this was the turning point in her life because it was Carl who saw the potential in her and offered her to volunteer with them as an assistant youth worker which she happily accepted. As time went on and with Carl and Adnan's support, Safia was finally able to grow and become the person she wanted to be. Her father was comforted by the fact that her brother was involved at SPY and allowed her to continue on her journey but as Safia says, "there were still hurdles to cross and making my father understand and accept this was not easy."

Through SPY she was able to indulge in all the outdoor activities she had ever wanted to do and the SPY leaders seeing the potential in Safia to be a future leader, enabled her to obtain a string of qualifications – the CWA (Climbing Wall Award) to teach indoor climbing, the BELA (Basic Expedition Leader Award) to take groups walking outdoors on flatlands, the MLA (Mountain Leader Award) to take groups on mountains and the SPA (Single Pitch Award) to take groups rock climbing outdoors which Safia never got to finish as she came to realise she has a fear of heights! With all these qualifications Safia was able to take a group of girls on The Three Peaks Challenge. Safia remained with SPY until its closure when funding finished because when she is passionate about something, she sticks with it.

Safia sees "Grow our Own" as the opportunity for local people to help their own people by planting them as a seed and watching them grow. Safia was grown by SPY into becoming the person she is today, confident and comfortable with life and having been shown a world she didn't know existed. As she puts it, "Grow our Own helped gain the real ME!" She grew in SPY from being a volunteer into a casual worker, then a trainee Youth Worker and ultimately a Co-ordinator managing several teams and more sessions with SPY.

Safia moved up the ladder in SPY during the 10 years she worked for them before it closed down. During those years she worked with young people in social care, with those having family problems and those lacking in interpersonal skills. She valued the point where young people began to trust her so much that they sought her out on a one-to-one basis to confide in her and seek her help. Through "Grow our Own" she has been able to help the young people of her own community and she now sees some of those young people personally and on Facebook who are volunteering abroad helping others or achieving their goals and aspirations by being in a job they want and

thanking SPY for the motivation to do this. She hopes and prays that these same opportunities will be available to young people now growing up in the Holy Trinity area. According to Safia, it is youth work that can teach young people about life and “grow” them in a way that nobody else can – not home, school or employment – as youth work opens more opportunities and choices in life and helps in many more ways to “grow”.

What Worked and What Didn't, and What We Learned

This report pulls together learning from work in the area over the past 10 or more years and the consultations with local residents. The key findings are:

- Women, particularly mothers from the Asian community face, significant barriers to improving their lives including: language difficulties, a lack of childcare support and cultural barriers. They have identified solutions including confidence building activities, peer to peer support, basic skills training, vocational training, and the need for a venue close to home with crèche provision.
- Peer support and outreach workers are key to any successful intervention, if we are to reach those who are hardest to reach. 'Hooks' like community days are a great way to bring people into the centre and unite people, issues, interests and help strengthen community cohesion.
- Volunteers are a vital part of what we do, and often they enter into volunteering for all the correct reasons. But it is important to enter into a clear agreement with them so all parties are clear about expectations. It is important to recognise they also have developmental needs and wants and these are part of the volunteer agreement
- HTCCC is a vital institution in the area and remains the last community centre where all can come together in a cohesive and cooperative way. User groups stated that without the centre they would stop delivering activities in some cases altogether, or would have to move away from the local community. Users like the accessibility of the centre, not just its location but the welcoming nature of staff and volunteers.
- All groups need a rent holiday for example during school holidays and Ramadan
- The vast majority of voices in the local community are moderate inclusive and tolerant, and we must ensure these voices are heard. Empowerment of the local community is essential to sustainability as we have seen different initiatives, funding streams and individuals come and go.

How This Learning Impacted on Our Future Plans

We are committed to breaking the cycle of disadvantage surrounding our local community and believe in making them part of the solution not the problem. Unfortunately the complex and deep rooted problems of the local community will only be addressed through sustained and determined effort. We are convinced that an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) process is the best way to solve problems by investing in solutions.

Evaluation that is independent and respected is essential and should be ongoing from start to finish. Summative evaluation needs to be clear about the broad benefits of the work to challenge existing methodologies in service design and delivery. This will be best done by people independent of the project.

Consultation with user groups suggests that without the Centre they would be unable to deliver their activities in the Holy Trinity Area. Some would cease provision altogether, others would continue but would need to move to another area, taking much needed provision out of the local area.

Conclusions

Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre provides an essential community venue in the heart of a deprived local community. Ten different voluntary groups deliver 36.5 hours each week of community activities. Local resources are sparse and yet amazing work has been carried out over a significant period of time. The best evidence of the quality of that work is the people who have been involved. Many have seen their lives changed and given a new direction and purpose.

The evidence in this evaluation, particularly the case studies, highlights the quality of work undertaken, the growth and retention of local community assets, and the needs that have been addressed through past projects and which continue to be addressed despite very limited resources.

Local opinion agrees with the assessment of Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre that without its presence in the area, vital community facilities will be lost and user groups would be left unable to meet or to deliver their services in the Holy Trinity Area.

The Centre remains one of the very few local organisations with a focus on community cohesion and needs to continue to be a beacon of partnership and cohesion. This will be best achieved working with local women who not only desire to be empowered but have a demonstrable commitment to seeing their local community grow and develop. It is essential that future work is developed using an Asset Based Community Development model on the lines outlined in Appendix 1.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – What is ABCD?

Asset-based community development (ABCD) is a methodology for the sustainable development of communities based on their strengths and potentials. It involves assessing the resources, skills, and experience available in a community; organizing the community around issues that move its members into action; and then determining and taking appropriate action.

The ABCD approach was developed by John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann at the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. They co-authored a book in 1993, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets*, which outlined their asset-based approach to community development. The Community Development Program at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research established the Asset-Based Community Development Institute based on three decades of research and community work by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight.

Principles

Whereas needs-based community development emphasizes local deficits and looks to outside agencies for resources, asset-based community development focuses on honing and leveraging existing strengths within the community. Related to tenets of empowerment, it postulates that solutions to community problems already exist within a community's assets. Principles that guide ABCD include:

- Everyone has gifts: Each person in a community has something to contribute.
- Relationships build a community: People must be connected in order for sustainable community development to take place.
- Citizens at the centre: Citizens should be viewed as actors—not recipients—in development.
- Leaders involve others: Community development is strongest when it involves a broad base of community action.
- People care: Challenge notions of "apathy" by listening to people's interests.
- Listen: Decisions should come from conversations where people are heard.
- Ask: Asking for ideas is more sustainable than giving solutions.
- Inside-out organization: Local community members are in control.
- Institutions serve the community: Institutional leaders should create opportunities for community-member involvement, then step back.

Ethics

Because ABCD relies on existing community assets to create change, it has been criticized for implying that disadvantaged communities have all the resources they need to solve community problems. According to the ABCD Institute, however, ABCD methodology recognizes that systemic injustice may require disadvantaged communities to seek assistance from outside the community. ABCD maintains that interventions from exterior sources will be most effective when a community's assets are leveraged at full capacity. ABCD is described as a more sustainable model of community development than needs-based community development, because needs-based approaches may perpetuate community problems by emphasizing deficiencies and the necessity for reliance on outside assistance. By contrast, ABCD aims to build capacity within communities by expanding their social capital.

A fuller description of ABCD can be found at <http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/assets/Eckley-Tackling-Poverty-in-England-18th-March.pdf>

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