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**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT**

**ANNUAL REPORT April 2011- March 2012**

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May 2012

1. **Summary:**

# The Community Partnership Project started in 2005 as a London Child Protection Committee (LCPC) Action Research Project being running across eight London boroughs and funded by the LCPC, the partner London boroughs, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Home Office (HO). The participating London Boroughs were: Brent, Camden, Enfield, Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Newham, Southwark

To date only 2 posts are still in place in LB Camden, and Hackney. In Camden the post is and funding secured until March 2013.

This report is an update on the progress of the Community Partnership Project for the year 2011-2012. It illustrates the background information, the complexity of working with community and faith groups, progress to date, challenges, achievements and issues arising outside the area of concerns. The report also suggests few actions.

CPA Project is about working with faith and communities organisations, supplementary and mainstream schools to encourage stronger working relationships and to promote the safeguarding of children in all areas of life.

# Overview:

Camden’s largest communities with a distinctive cultural identity are the *Bangladeshi*, *Black African* and *Irish* communities, followed by *Indian*, *Black Caribbean* and *Chinese*.

Over the last 10 years, traditionally established community languages in Camden, such as Greek, Gujarati and Chinese have been overtaken in number by the languages of relatively newly arrived communities. Most notable increases are in refugee groups from Africa, South America and former Yugoslavia, hence the rise in numbers with Somali, Portuguese, Arabic, Spanish and Albanian as their first language in both sectors.

The Language Survey 2010-2011 identified 141 defined First Languages for EAL pupils in Camden schools, which have increased from 128 in 2009[[1]](#footnote-1).

Bengali/Sylheti continues to be, by far, the largest first language of EAL pupils in Camden schools. There were 2342 pupils with Bengali/Sylheti as their first language in Camden schools in 1995, rising to 3291 in 2010-11. This figure is slightly

lower than 3313 recorded in 2009-10.

There were 1580 pupils in 2010-11 with Somali as their first language compared to 345 in 1995, representing a larger increase.

Some groups such as the Congolese are newly arrived in the country and language and gender roles can impact on the ability of service providers to engage with them. However for all the communities concerned certain harmful practices are often understood to be an important part of their cultural identity in what can seem like an alien and hostile environment and one which doesn’t understand their religious customs.

In fact these groups often do not engage with mainstream services and indeed sometimes deliberately avoid them. However, because of the harm these practices can cause it is vital that they do not go unchallenged.

Camden has a diverse religious population, with a significantly higher proportion of people of Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist faith than either London or England and Wales[[2]](#footnote-2). There are a great variety of places of worship for Muslims, Christians including African churches, synagogues, Hindu, Ba’hai temples.

There are 23 supplementary schools and 10 mother tongue classes on the LB Camden Cindex, that are run by immigrant communities supporting their children’s’ knowledge of both academic subjects as well of the cultural identity. However, there are several weekend schools that are not registered with the Directory of Cindex but working with the CPA Project.

1. **Aims and objective of the Project include:**
2. support groups to understand the UK laws in the context of safeguarding children
3. educate communities on how harmful traditional practises are deemed within the UK laws,
4. coordinate child safeguarding training and awareness raising sessions to community, faith groups, supplementary and mainstream schools
5. Bridge between local authorities and the target groups by demystifying myths and misconceptions for a gradual change.
6. Support lasting partnership and joint up work among safeguarding children stakeholders by involving the target groups in the planning and delivery of the training sessions
7. Provide general capacity building support to targeted groups including securing resources
8. Explore ways of measuring the extent of gradual changes of perceptions and attitudes on the perception that UK laws and policies on child protection are not aiming ‘to penalise’ cultural practices but to protect children across the board.
9. Expose key agencies to the new concept that the target groups are also ‘a source of help’ - something useful to all.
10. **Methodology**

* The success of any community engagement lies in the partnership work. Relevant stakeholders include the local authority, voluntary sector and practicing community groups, the NHS, the Met-Police- Child Abuse Team, the School Inclusion Team and major charity organisation working on child rights such as NSPCC, major funders of specific harmful practices such as London Trust, Rose and the CPA of Hackney and City Borough.
* Ability of combining CPA priorities of child safeguarding with those of the targeted community groups
* Value the views of the community group members in the selection of priority issues
* Ownership of the training content by the beneficiaries
* Opportunity of involving key ‘community’ experts in the training with the aim of replicating this model to other BME communities
* Developing informal ‘memorandum of understanding’ of what constitutes risk of harm and abuse within the cultural context by the service users.

1. **Work achieved**
2. **Updating the Safeguarding Children Information Pack** for BME Community and Faith groups and Supplementary schools. The pack is available at the VAC website www.vac.org.uk.
3. ‘**Protecting children in the community’ training sessions –**from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 one hundred and fourty nine -149- local BME residents from community and faith groups as well as from supplementary schools have participated to the training. The ***(attached appendix 1) shows the number and statistic breakdown.***
4. On-going **review** work on child protection policies and procedures and support with the CRB checks provided to 7 BME community and 5 faith groups, 2 supplementary schools and one Theatre company.
5. 14 statutory organisations have been involved in the work of the Project as stakeholders.
6. **Fundraising work for and with the target groups –**
7. *Unsuccessful* - *pending*
   * ‘*Emerging communities and* *Safeguarding Children Project’*- joint work involving the French speaking African community members at the Victory Chapel (Congolese church), Ivorian and French Speaking African Women Action Group ( a women led organisation), LB Camden Training Dept. and the CPA VAC. The proposal aims to raise awareness of child abuses linked to beliefs.

The bid was submitted to the coalition of charity organisations under the London Trust and it has been unsuccessful.

It has been consequently submitted to the Innovation Fund with little success. The proposal has now been improved and it will be re-submitted to the Innovation Funding after having incorporated the feedback from the funders.

1. *Successful :*

* Successful bid from LB Camden- Safeguarding Children Board for ‘*Protecting children in the community’* Round 4 obtaining £ 8,019.

1. *Pending* 
   * *Changing Attitudes- safeguarding children.* A community research study on changes in attitudes regarding harmful traditions and UK laws on child safeguarding. The proposal is now improved and ready to go to the identified funders.
   * *‘Protecting children in the community – Round 5.* The proposal aims to continue the work of raising awareness of traditional harmful practices and UK laws on child abuse.
2. **Advisory role**

The CPA has contributed as an Advisor to the following working groups, forums and initiatives:

1. ‘*Pan-London Safeguarding Children Culture & Faith* a new Pan London Initiative gathering information to assist London LSCBs in their on-going activity of engaging with communities and encouraging the development of local action and services to safeguard and promote the welfare of BME children and FAITH communities
2. *FGM Cross Governmental Forum*, an initiative for a coordinated and comprehensive response to FGM – The Forum is to make recommendations on how FGM should be tackled nationally and develop a programme of work for implementation in 2012.
3. *FGM Special Initiative Advisory Group*, a **UK-wide Special Initiative to fund community-based preventive work to safeguard children from the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in all its forms. Approximately £1m has been invested in 15 organisations throughout England over a three-year period. The projects started in January 2010.** The Forum will advise on the strategic development of the Initiative.
4. *Manor House Health Advocacy FGM Project*. The initiative is providing community education workshops with a focus on Female Genital Mutilation. Seasonal advocates will provide 1-1 bilingual health advocacy to women who have undergone FGM and direct links to the Whittington Hospital African Well Woman clinic for counselling and clinical services.
5. *Mosques and Imams National Advisory Group (MINAB).* A database of 600 mosques and worship places in the UK, the group would advise on the prevention agenda and gender involvement in faith settings.
6. *NSPCC’ Protecting Muslim children’ initiative:* The purpose of the Advisory Group is to provide cultural knowledge and advice to ensure that those working with children in the Muslim communities are provided with and can access appropriate services that will safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
7. *African Children Network* established by AFRUCA is to provide an opportunity for mutual learning and support among African communities and faith organisations working in the area of or interested in the safeguarding of African children in London. The Network also aims to bring to the attention of policy makers and practitioners issues and concerns regarding the protection needs of African children and their own experiences and expertise in addressing them.
8. ‘*Advisory role at Family Services & Social Worker, to* *the MET Police Child Abuse Investigation Team* (CAIT) strategic meetings on a complex FGM case involving 2 families from the practicing community.
9. Joint work with Islington and Hackney CPAs and Manor Gardens Health Advocacy Project on FGM, help accessing communities and planning workshops for both advocacy workers and practising communities
10. Joint work with George Eliot School on FGM and Somali parents.
11. New Roots- Khat Initiative linked with CPA sessions and looking for possible join work on issues of domestic violence and child protection linked to the drug consumed by targeted minority groups.
12. **Dissemination/ Conferences**:

* Interviewed for the Observer article on FGM issue 25 July 2011
* Consulted by the Community Safety Unit- Met Police on child trafficking and links with St. Pancras Int’l station.
* Debrief session with Holborn CAIT Police on FGM case involving a Somali family.
* Member of the Communication Sub-group- LA, Community Engagement sub-group aiming to improve links and communication with BAMER organisations on safeguarding children agenda.
* Working group member for the follow up of NSPCC conference on ‘Protecting Muslim children’ held on 17 March 2011 (does it fall under this report? )that I facilitated.
* Advisory role at Family Services & Social Worker (South) on ‘runaway’ case involving a BME girl.
* Member of the FGM Strategic Meeting organised by Esmee’ Fairbairn for culturally acceptable anti-FGM campaign
* The North East Metro Child and Family Services Alliance- based in Melbourne- Victoria, Australia – paid visit to VAC- CPA office to gain info and knowledge on good practice and partnership work. Immigrant culture and child harm issues discussed.
* Launch of ‘Cut’ film jointly developed by Lillian Baylis Technical School, Kids and Met Police. Contribution on the follow up work.
* FGM Strategic Meeting (Home Office) overseeing proposals of culturally acceptable anti-FGM campaign/s led by the FGM Special Initiative
* Advice given to Camden Law Federation on a FGM case
* Supported the LB of Islington on referring a spirit possession (Jinni) case to local Imams.
* Supported the LB Hackney Social Service understanding the role of Qur’an as a healing component for mental disturbed people
* Advice on run away case involving a Kosovar girl.
* Attended cultural event organised by Ivorian and French Speaking African Women Action Group.
* Help to Manor House- Health Advocacy Project re: volunteer involvement into Social Service provision
* Contributed to the Culture and Faith Pan London Project
* CPA Project as a focal point for advice on FGM, safeguarding children and culture.
* Held an information stall at the Camden Parents together event @ Haverstock School in October 2011
* Attended 2 days conference on ‘Witchcraft branding, spirit possession and safeguarding African children’ organised by Afruca
* Improved work relationship with the LB Camden Private Fostering Team as they are using the ‘Protecting children in the community’ sessions to promote the issue of private fostering within BME and faith groups. A slot of 10-15 minutes allocated in each and every session starting from Feb. 2012
* Constant feedback to Camden Safeguarding Board- Community Engagement Sub-Group *‘Protecting Children in the community- ’.* Used the Substance Reporting System (SRB).
* Contributed to the Ofsted Inspection of Children, Schools and Families Directorate. Positive outcome.

1. **Challenges**
2. **Difficulty of identifying key partners and sustaining lasting working relationships with Faith Groups and targeted community organisations.**

Action suggested:

* *Review the Directory of Faith Groups in LB Camden dated 2002*
* *Coordinating training and workshops targeting faith groups.*
* *CRB checks as an issue of sourcing local organisations ( for example Islington LA complete CRB checks for voluntary organisation at a £ 5 admin cost)*

1. **Lack of information of existing faith groups agencies in the borough and services that they are offering to children.**

Action suggested:

* + *Review the Directory of Faith groups dated 2002 including whether educational service is provided to children or/and private tutors are engaged with families.*
  + *Explore support for mobile churches and local mosques issues of planning permission and access to premises*
  + *Develop family and Community friendly communication channels, such as awareness raising days in community settings, jointly organised by BME community or faith organisations and relevant service providers.*

1. **Evaluation and monitoring process**

The project developed an evaluation form where questions are submitted to lead person of the contacted organisation:

1. To what extent your organisation had the ownership of the training content and planning? Please describe
2. Has your understanding of safeguarding issues being influenced by the training?
3. In which way your organisation made use of the Safeguarding Children Information Pack? Please describe
4. Describe any change of your community/faith group after the training session?
5. If offered another training session what would you suggest?
6. Any other comment?

The trend analysis suggests that:

1. Community groups get involved in most aspect of the training, such as the structure, and planning of the session. They have their share of tasks to perform in order to make the session successful. They are able to selecte who to bring in for the session and we have chosen the time/date of the session
2. a lot of scenarios which had been mentioned in the training session have impact on them. In general, main four aspects of safeguarding issues are understood
3. The Child Safeguarding Information Pack are used as a guideline for our organisation
4. Awareness of the legislations relating to children, and how to act up on them is done but there is the need for more sessions as other users need to know too.”

Action suggested:

* *Evaluate effectiveness of the training to the beneficiaries by undertaking a community led research study in order to know of any gaps and learning experiences.*
* *Support to ‘Changing Attitudes Project’ proposal that aims at measuring and analysing the extent of possible changes of harmful practise within practising communities.*

**Strengthening further the CPA Project**:

Key suggestions include:

1. Identifying ‘training the trainer’ within targeted communities is a useful vehicle to deliver the appropriate messages.
2. Support local community groups to develop their own responses to needs in their community. (Example: create dialogue involving Met Police, Social Services, involving key community members in relevant forums, etc.)
3. Encourage community groups to input into local decision-making process. (Use local information sources to promote joint work)
4. Develop a joint agreed agenda on cultural values and the law of land with targeted groups.
5. Customise training package on Child protection to include identified local issues; e.g. parenting skills, truancy, private fostering, domestic violence etc.
6. Explore incentives for gradual changes; e.g. applying laws, information, governance and valuing the common grounds on the topic.(when possible)
7. Joint working between CPAs to offer a wide range of skills, experience and cultural awareness. Work should be done in a thoughtful and respectful way and that there is a dialogue created. Statutory agencies need to learn about the experiences and needs of community members as well as imparting info about harmful childcare practices
8. Changing the perception that the law of the land and policies on child protection are here ‘to penalise’; cultural practices. Participants of the training sessions should feel that when it comes to child safeguarding they too have a lot to contribute as it is a universal concept and ‘culture’ shouldn’t override it.
9. Assist community and faith groups to access resources for their own activities and help with premises for their functions.

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1. http://www.camdendata.info/AddDocuments1/Forms/DispForm.aspx?ID=386 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Camden Directory of faith communities, 2002 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)