



Representing black and minority ethnic communities in Camden

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping squares in purple and yellow. One large purple square is on the left, with a yellow square overlapping its right side. Below the purple square is another purple square. To the right of the yellow square is a yellow square. At the bottom right, there is a separate yellow square.

Annual Report

2005-06

A View From the Chair

In the 2005 Annual Report, I commented that knowledge and change had been central themes for CBMEA. Over the past twelve months, these themes have continued to be significant for the organisation. Change in particular, is something that you can always predict. You may not know when and where it may happen or indeed how you might be affected by it. Notwithstanding, it is always predictable because nothing ever stays exactly the same. In view of this, a change conscious organisation is one that is flexible and agile – able to redirect focus, reassess priorities and still meet targets.

For an organisation like CBMEA, responsiveness to change is absolutely crucial. In the last 12 months we have seen our operating environment transformed. In particular, we have seen Camden's Local Area Agreement begin to bed down, the development of the Community Strategy completed and a review of voluntary and community sector funding take place. CBMEA has played a crucial role in helping to shape these agendas. These changes have a significant impact on the way in which CBMEA manages its business and engages with our members and the outside world. The fact is, the clearer we are about the implications of change, the better able we will be to provide support, advice and to shape the debate.

'For CBMEA, we have learned that it is crucial that we develop a strong knowledge economy – sharing with others what we know and learning from them.'

I have heard it said that: "if you do not anticipate, then you are surprised." Therefore as well as managing change when it arrives, we need to be better able to anticipate its arrival. Here, our networks and partnerships are crucial. For CBMEA, we have learned that it is crucial that we develop a strong knowledge economy – sharing with others what we know and learning from them.

There are also a number of important challenges facing BME specialist service providers. These include changes in funding and in particular, the move from grants to commissioning, with the emphasis on service delivery. This has led to many BME

organisations feeling uncertain about the future. While clearly, there are some activities that can be reduced to service level agreements, service level delivery often overlooks many of the discrete but important elements of work that the BME sector carries out with respective communities. This anomaly must be addressed.

A further challenge for the BME sector in Camden is that in an increasingly competitive environment where major non-BME led organisations, with considerable resources at their disposal, are looking at the BME client group as just another potential source of funding. These organisations are often very successful at securing funding, particularly through the commissioning process; yet lack the direct face-to-face contact with BME clients, which is so important. This often results in these organisations developing relationships with the BME sector in order to access clients. Too often, these relationships are one sided with BME organisations rarely receiving any financial benefit and often effectively subsidising these activities.

With regards to the above, CBMEA has achieved significant success over the past 12 months. Despite this, much more still needs to be done.

I would just like to end by thanking all those who have contributed so much during the last year. In particular I would like to extend my gratitude to the Board of Trustees, who have shown great dedication and commitment. I would also like to thank Monica Olusola, CBMEA's Director and her staff team. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to CBMEA members, partners and funders, without whom the important work we are doing would not be possible.

I look forward to working with you all in the forthcoming year.

John Oke,
Chair of Board of Trustees

Director's Report

As CBMEA's Director, I am very pleased and proud to be writing this end-of-year report. It is my genuine and considered view that CBMEA has come a long way in the past year and overcome a lot of challenges on the way. If there is one thing that has struck me most, during the relatively short time I have been in post, it is the need to have a clear vision. An organisation with a clear vision knows where it is going, what it needs to do to get there and how long it is likely to take before the vision is realised. Organisations, without a clear vision often find themselves finding it increasingly difficult to justify their continued existence in what is an increasingly competitive market-place for service delivery.

Vision is important for other reasons too. It helps you to define who your partners are and how to develop measures through which you can most effectively test the success of your activities. In my work

'If there is one thing that has struck me most, during the relatively short time I have been in post, it is the need the have a clear vision.'

I am convinced that the strength of CBMEA's vision as an organisation, for our members and our community means that we are well placed to improve outcomes for all those who benefit from our services.

Over the last year we have begun to put in place the building blocks that will see our vision materialise. In particular we have developed new networks and partnerships, strengthened our voice in the local community and campaigned successfully on a number of important local issues. As a result of this we have seen our standing in the community grow and our trust, confidence and influence increase. However, trust, confidence and influence

are not an end in themselves. Rather, they are a means through which CBMEA can be better able to achieve its objectives and outcomes. For CBMEA, this means empowering the BME community, lobbying on behalf of local groups and representing the interests of those least accessible in the community.

The progress we are making is both exciting and cause for optimism. However, it is important that we do not lose our focus on the work that still needs to be done. We must therefore maintain our relentless focus on performance improvement.

As Director, I am committed to helping CBMEA to achieve this objective.

**Monica Olusola,
Director**

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About CBMEA

Camden BMEA Alliance (CBMEA) was launched in 2002. We are an umbrella organisation, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The Alliance serves the BME community in Camden and operates across the borough. The aims and objectives of CBMEA are as follows:

- To collectively represent black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in Camden at strategic level
- To have a strategic and collective lobbying role
- To address the long term sustainability of the BME voluntary sector
- To develop and maintain a robust infrastructure for Camden BME Alliance

Summary of functions

As a strategic organisation, CBMEA does not provide frontline services itself. Our role is to develop the capacity of service providers, as well as other strategic organisations in Camden, to better meet the needs of the BME community. As part of this, we advocate on behalf of BME organisations, lobby local decision-makers and steer local decision-making on issues such as policy making, service development and funding.

On a more practical level, CBMEA provides a knowledge resource 'The Alliance Room' through which our members can access information of relevance to BME organisations. In addition, CBMEA undertakes research in major policy areas, disseminates this information through a wide range of user-friendly publications and facilitates events and seminars on various topical and 'live' issues.

CBMEA also works in partnership and as part of this we come in contact with a wide range of organisations, across the statutory, public and voluntary sectors. Through these contacts, we seek to establish networks of influence and make effective contributions to the overall well being of Camden's BME communities.

Our Membership

CBMEA currently has 36 members (both full members and associates) registered with us. Many of our members are community-focused organisations and groups, providing services in areas of greatest need, to those who need them most. The overarching objective, of our members, is to improve the quality of life of Camden's BME population through the provision of dynamic services at local level.

Service delivery models vary across our membership. For example, some members deliver a range of holistic services (health, education, employment and housing advice). In other instances the focus is specialist, specific and targeted in one area. This diversity of provision is important because it increases choice for local people – enabling them to determine what services suit them best.

'Our role is to develop the capacity of service providers, as well as other strategic organisations in Camden, to better meet the needs of the BME community.'

Our Vision

In September 2005, CBMEA published a vision paper 'Looking Out' which considered the future role of the organisation in light of changing external factors.

The vision paper identified some of the key challenges, facing CBMEA, and explored how the organisation could position itself, most effectively, in light of these challenges. These subsequently formed the focus for CBMEA's organisational planning day held later in the year. A summary of the issues raised in 'Looking Out' is set out under the sub headings below:

A Vision for Communities

The vision is to strengthen the role of the Alliance as a strategic voice in the community. As such, we have adopted communities as our flagship agenda. The specific point here is that by focusing on communities, the Alliance is in a better position to contribute to a wider range of headline policy issues such as social harmony, community inclusion and the respect agenda. CBMEA has also shown foresight by recognising the close connection between the communities agenda and neighbourhood empowerment initiatives being developed both locally and nationally.

Working in Strategic Partnership

As part of our radical vision for the future, CBMEA acknowledges the need to play a more active role in the various discussions taking place in the borough. However, in order to engage in these important local debates, and exert strategic influence, CBMEA needs to strengthen partnership links across the statutory, public and voluntary and community sectors. Furthermore, in light of the responsibilities, a greater lobbying role places upon us, we must also review our existing partnerships and determine whether they remain fit for purpose.

A Better Deal for Members

An honest assessment of services and support provided to members reveals that there is much that could be done better. The vision is to make a fresh offer to members and provide better quality services that meet needs rather than requirements. This radical, added-value approach to supporting our members, challenges the notion that effective strategic support can be provided on the basis of stipulated outputs alone. Rather, it proposes that the demands of a fluid operating environment can only be met with an innovative and flexible response.

Utilising Research and Information

The most effective strategic organisations have a strong research function or capacity. Therefore, the long-term vision, of CBMEA, is that we should also develop this dynamic capacity. The objective is to be innovative in the use of research so that we are better able to turn information into knowledge, knowledge into influence and influence into outcomes.

'The vision is to make a fresh offer to members and provide better quality services that meet needs rather than requirements.'

Vocal and Influential

CBMEA is trusted within the BME community to champion local issues and be an influential voice on issues such as equalities and social cohesion. As part of this over the past year CBMEA has engaged with councillors, community leaders and local partners on a wide range of local policy agendas. Examples of those where we have made a significant contribution are summarised below.

Promoting equity of opportunity

During 2005-06, CBMEA re-emphasised its commitment to improving equity of outcomes for BME communities. As part of this we have played a key role in equality stakeholder meetings. These forums have provided us with the opportunity to represent the views of the BME community in practical ways such as by conducting equality impact assessments on Council policies and strategies. By so doing, we have been able to evaluate the likely impact of these policies on equalities groups. Service areas that have been covered through this process include housing and leisure provision.

Developing Camden's Community Strategy

Building upon our flagship "communities" agenda, we have taken the opportunity to play an active role in the review of Camden's Community Strategy. As part of this, we have consistently promoted the 'one Camden' message and argued for a set of shared values to be woven into the new strategy. Based on the premise that people should not be disadvantaged because of where they live or treated differently because of their circumstances but should be able to enjoy equality of access to services and not live in fear of crime and nuisance. These values straddle ethnicity, age, gender and geography and it is these same values that should unite us as one Camden. We have met with the Leader of the Council and other senior officers in the Council to discuss our thinking and championed a bigger role for neighbourhoods in the development and realisation of the borough's longer-term vision.

Local Area Agreement

As a member of the LAA Steering Group, CBMEA has contributed significantly to the development and sign off of the borough's final agreement with the Government Office for London. CBMEA has played a particularly important role in the development of the stronger sub-strand of the agreement. Now that the LAA has been signed-off our attention will turn to the establishment of robust and rigorous processes through which the agreement can be monitored.

Accessing Resources

CBMEA has played an active role in helping our members to better understand the funding environment and position themselves to access future funding opportunities. Our work on the Local Area Agreement in particular has helped our members to understand the implications for them of "pooled" funding. In addition, we also held an event entitled: "Unravelling the Funding Maze", which helped members to better understand the challenges and requirements of funding regimes.

'Now that the LAA has been signed our attention will turn to the establishment of robust and rigorous processes through which it can be monitored.'

Practical Engagement

In addition to the various strategic challenges, faced by BME organisations, many also face operational challenges, which prevent them from functioning effectively. These challenges can range from access to office facilities or meeting rooms, to the availability of clear and easy sign posting to key resources.

In light of this, CBMEA has continued to offer our members practical support and assistance during 2005-06. Set out, under the sub headings below, is a summary of efforts made over the past 12 months.

Access to the Alliance Room

'The Alliance Room' holds a unique collection of information resources to support the development and sustainability of BME organisations. As well as being available to CBMEA members, this valuable resource is also accessible to all BME voluntary and community organisations in Camden. It is also worth noting that CBMEA's premises are now wheelchair accessible following modification work.

Providing Practical Assistance

CBMEA is committed to providing practical assistance to the local BME community. As a demonstration of this, we are now hosting the Somali Forum from our premises. In addition CBMEA also worked alongside partners in the voluntary and community sector to put in place the new Community Empowerment Network structure.

Sign posting to Resources

Over the course of 2005 -06, we have continued to draw attention to useful resources and opportunities. For example, through our dedicated newsletter 'Alliance', we have provided advice to members on a range of services and support including:

- News about a wide-range of funding streams
- Availability of free training provision
- Information about events and seminars being organised by CBMEA, our members and external organisations
- Opportunities to work in partnership with fellow members

Developing Knowledge and Skills

CBMEA has successfully delivered an evaluation and monitoring project. The project, which was funded through the NRF, focused on building the capacity of BME organisations to monitor and evaluate their service effectiveness. Learning from the project is being disseminated to all CBMEA members through the tool kit developed and its success will, hopefully, see more BME organisations benefiting from increased funding opportunities.

'It is also worth noting that CBMEA's premises are now wheelchair accessible following modification work.'

Keeping Members Informed

CBMEA has continued to keep our members fully informed about changes and development and in the local, regional and national policy environment. As part of this we have hosted events and meetings and published a wide range of informative articles, briefings and commentaries. A summary of our activities in this area, is set out under the sub headers below.

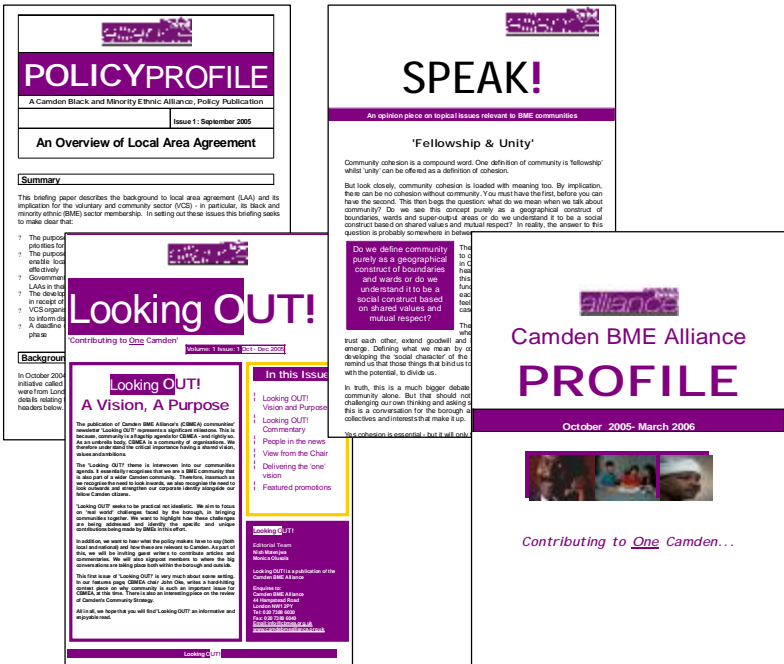
Events and Meetings

Various events have been scheduled for members over the past 12 months. These have included quarterly members meetings, seminars and presentations addressing issues such as the LAA and its impact on the BME voluntary and community sector, social enterprise opportunities in Camden and unravelling the funding maze.

Innovative and Informative Publications

CBMEA has produced various publications addressing issues of interest to the BME community. These include policy briefings and social commentaries. We have also co-produced publications, with our partners, including one which reported on the voluntary and community sector's experience of developing Camden's LAA.

CBMEA publications currently in circulation include 'Policy Profile' (our news brief on current policy issues), 'Speak' (our opinion piece on topical social issues) and 'Looking Out' (our community focused newsletter). In addition CBMEA has also published a 'Profile', which provides background and context to CBMEA and shows how our members contribute to the achievement of Community Strategy priorities.



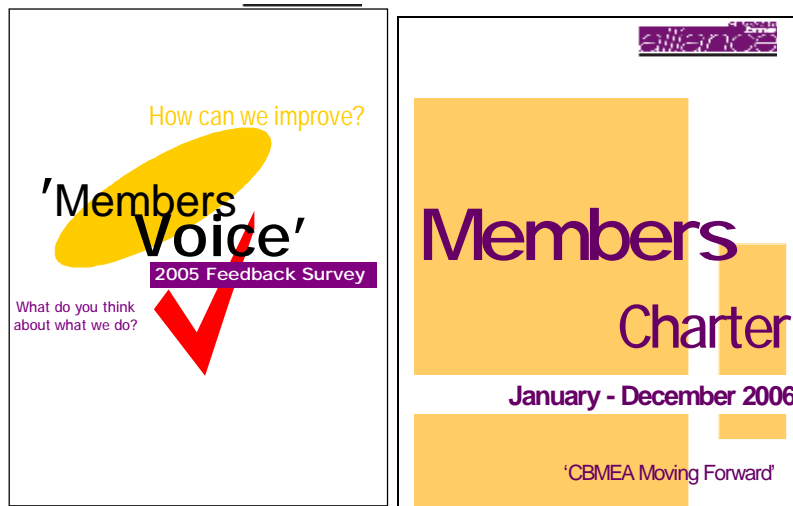
'CBMEA has produced various publications addressing issues of interest to the BME community.'

Active Listening

To be able to perform effectively, we need to know what our members think about us. Therefore, in 2005, CBMEA conducted its first ever members survey. Entitled 'Members Voice' this Alliance-wide satisfaction survey has sought, not only to secure comprehensive feedback from CBMEA members on the services they receive from us, but also to establish a dialogue about future service delivery options. A summary of some of the headline findings is set out below:

- Two thirds of members expressed satisfaction with the services we provide whilst a third of members were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (no member expressed dissatisfaction)
- Three quarters of members indicated that they would like CBMEA to inform and consult them more, whilst two thirds of members expressed the view that CBMEA listens to their views and opinions
- A third of members indicated that they do not attend meetings organised by CBMEA and over half of respondents indicated that CBMEA does not know enough about their work

A full report on the 'Members Voice' poll was published early in 2006. Following analysis of the results and in response to the wishes of our members, we produced our first, CBMEA Members Charter.



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Appendix A: Financial Summary

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2006

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2006 £
<u>Incoming resources from generated funds</u>				
Investment Income	764	-	-	764
Grants and Contracts Receivable	48,170	-	102,002	150,172
Total incoming Resources	48,934	-	102,002	150,936
<u>Resources expended</u>				
Charitable activities				
Lobbying and representation activities	28,700	200	95,668	124,568
Governors costs	6,486	-	-	6,486
Total Resources expended	35,748	200	95,668	131,054
Net incoming/(outgoing) Resources before transfers	13,748	(200)	6,334	19,882
Gross transfers between funds	5,015	(5,015)	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds	18,763	(5,215)	6,334	19,882
Fund balance at 1 April 2005	17,936	56,840	3,000	77,776
Fund balance at 31 March 2006	36,699	51,625	9,334	97,658

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirement for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 1985.

Appendix B: Board of Trustees

Name	Position
John Oke	Chair of Board of Trustees
Angela Nairne	Vice Chair
Koula Ioannou	Vice Chair
Ahmed Mohammed	Treasurer
Khadija Shireh	
Nahar Choudhury	
Christopher Aboga	
Lincoln Lim	

Camden BME Alliance would also like to thank the following for their support over the last year:

Advisor

- Kiran Patel (London Borough of Camden)

Funders

- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- London Borough of Camden

Appendix C: CBMEA Members

Full Members

African & Caribbean Elders	African Women's Trust	Asian Women Lone Parents Association
Bangladeshi Mohila Shomi	Bengali Women's Health Project	Bengal Workers Association
British Somali Community	Camden Black Parents and Teachers Association	Camden Chinese Community Centre
Camden Cypriot Women's Organisation	Care Alliance	Centre for Filipinos
Community of Congolese Students in the UK	Ethiopian Community in Britain	Ethiopian Health Support Association
Henna Asian Women's Group	Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre	Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association
Kings Cross Racial Diversity Project	London Irish Centre	Pan African Housing Co-op
Somali Community Centre	Zimbabwe Community Association	

Associate Members

Age Concern Camden	Artsline - Cultural Diversity	Camden CAB Service
Camden Carers Centre	Camden Crossroads	Camden Health and Race Group
Camden LEA Governor Support Network	Camden Refugee Network	Camden Victim Support
Diabetes UK	Holocaust Educational Trust	Institute of Race Relations
Working Men's Collage		

Appendix D: Contacting CBMEA

Address:
Camden BME Alliance
44 Hampstead Road
London NW1 2PY

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Fax: 020 7388 6040

Email: director@cbmea.org.uk
Website: www.camdenbmealliance.org.uk

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