

equinox  
consulting   
innovation | diversity | sensitivity



info@equinoxconsulting.net  
www.equinoxconsulting.net

020 8680 5678 (Tel)  
020 8680 5757 (Fax)

Equinox Consulting,  
Cygnets House  
12 -14 Sydenham Road  
Croydon CR9 2ET



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# 1 Executive summary

## **Introduction**

This mid way independent evaluation of the Child Protection Training for African Parents in London programme reviews the performance of the project designed, developed and delivered by Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA).

AFRUCA was set up in 2001 in response to topical news reports about abuse to African children and against the back drop of cases such as Victoria Climbié, which brought child protection under scrutiny. AFRUCA believed that the African community needed to own the problem and find workable solutions but there was also a genuine need by African parents to adopt a positive parenting perspective to help reduce the incidence of their children being taken into care and to assist child protection practitioners in working with African parents.

AFRUCA works to:

- Raise awareness on child protection issues relating to national and international legislation
- Provide information, education and advisory services to its stakeholders
- Provide advocacy and help in the development of policy as it affects child abuse
- Engage in community development to establish projects to work for African children nationally and internationally

## **Objectives and methodology**

The evaluation was to assess the project against objectives, evaluate the challenges, review the operational characteristics, evaluate the content, comment on the working relationship with partners, assess that impact and draw conclusions on the findings and make recommendations.

A judicious method utilised involved: a review of the original application, end of year reports, annual reports, evaluation forms and monitoring documents, discussions with AFRUCA staff, partners and beneficiaries, observation of training sessions and analysis of evaluation forms. The field and desk work took place between January 2011 and February 2011.

## **Management review**

AFRUCA has six trustees who are elected every two years and who meet four times a year; though we were not able to interview any of the trustees, we found evidence that they were involved in decision making and the decision to apply for the funds to run this project. The board does not operate with formal subcommittees.

AFRUCA operates with an adequate staff complement of five full time and three part time staff and several volunteers to assist in all aspects of the work especially in the organisation of events. The finance and policy function for the organisation are fully filled and the project worker organises the training sessions with support from the director.

AFRUCA has offices in London and Manchester, has a robust information and communication technology system with a well maintained database functions and it promotes its work on multiple media platforms now making use of social network media as well. Its administrative systems and communication systems are sound for both intra and inter office communications. Frequent meetings keep staff informed of all things in the office.

AFRUCA uses a Sage computerised accounting system to maintain their books and complies with a set of financial principles and policies that ensure the checks and balances are maintained with integrity, there is budgetary planning and the accounts are audited at the end of every year.

Most projects are properly researched and planned before being implemented and weekly meeting are held to track progress of most projects and corrective action is taken when necessary.

The organisation is yet to adopt a formal quality system though it had investigated the use of PQASSO as a standard of quality control.

**The application and targets**

The Big Lottery Fund approved the sum of £405,959 over a five year period for the Child Protection Training for African Parents in London project; the targets for the project are described below. Our rating of the different elements of the programme is based on three main criteria: a) Programme set up and contacts with stakeholders b) Process and scope of delivery and c) Satisfaction of beneficiaries as deduced from the evaluation.

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Develop and produce a range of materials on safeguarding children on child protection issues facing children on multiple media platforms	2,000 to be distributed to parents and community each year = 10,000	A
Child protection training workshops	12 sessions a year = 60 240 parents a year = 1200	A
Provide advice and support for parents going through the child protection system	10 families a year to benefit from advice = 50 families	B
Organise road shows that will create awareness	4 road shows a year. 25 parents per road show = 500 parents	C
Work with core partners organisations and local authorities to reach the community	4 core community organisations over 5 years = 4 20 other organisations over 5 years = 24 organisations 4 borough councils over 5 years	D

**The client group**

The project is targeted at African parents living in London. Over 74% of Africans in the UK live in London; their number is estimated to be 417,615 based on the last census and is projected to be much higher in the recently completed census. Africans represent 5.05% of the London population but in some boroughs in London their proportion is as much as 17% of the population.

AFRUCA has managed to reach the African groups mainly in genuine need for the training on positive parenting. It has attracted participants from over 21 of the 53 African countries and over 95% of participants have come from the Nigerian and Congolese community whose children were at most risk of being involved in the child protection system. The participants were distributed normally across the ages; many of them (36%) however were in the 35 – 44 years age band, 23% in the 25–34 year band and 17% were in the 45–54 year band. An overwhelming 81% were women.

### **The materials**

AFRUCA has produced a video on child abuse that it uses for the training programmes as well as distributed to practitioners in the child protection system and to community organisations. Over 1,000 of these have been distributed. Booklets for training: on Child Abuse, Child Trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation and Witchcraft Branding; the child abuse and witchcraft have been translated into French. Booklets on Private Fostering, Physical Abuse and Sexual abuse are yet to be produced.

The materials have been well received by participants on the training programmes, the partner community organisations and other stakeholders think the material is the most comprehensive though simple to read on these very important subjects.

The motivation for producing the materials was to inform all about the issue of child protection and to encourage positive parenting that was very much needed within the African community and to that extent the materials have exceeded all expectations.

### **The training workshops**

AFRUCA promoted the training sessions using leaflets and brochures distributed through a variety of media sources and through the partner organisations that it works with to reach the African community. There was open access to the training and all who applied were able to attend.

The targets for the training workshops of 12 per year have been fully met. AFRUCA has delivered training to over 500 people during the period under review. The overwhelming majority of participants rate the publicity, the venue, the refreshments and the timekeeping to be very good or excellent. The content and delivery of the programme was also rated highly by most of the participants and the programme met the objectives for which the

participants had attended. Improvements suggested for the training was for wider selection of topics and it was clear from comments of participants that the training had had a beneficial impact on them and they were likely to put the lessons they had learnt into practice.

Some of the training directed at French/Congolese speaking Africans was delivered with an interpreter who translated into Ligala.

### **The advice sessions**

AFRUCA has built up an impressive list of referral agencies including: solicitors, community organisations, faith based organisations and statutory sector agencies that have referred people in genuine need of services to AFRUCA.

They have met their target for working with 10 families a year on a variety of cases. This heavily demanded open ended service has benefited users who are very grateful to AFRUCA for helping resolve problems that seemed to be intractable. AFRUCA needs more resources to deal with the complex issue of witchcraft abuse that needs a lot more time to resolve.

### **The road shows**

AFRUCA have also overachieved their targets on the number of people for the road shows. This service took much longer to set up due to frequent staff changes but once that had been resolved the number of road shows increased. One of the road shows organised with a second tier black organisation was so successful that it attracted more than 1270 persons who were made aware of the projects being run by AFRUCA.

### **The partners**

AFRUCA has forged partnerships with several community organisations over and above the four organisations per borough per year that was in the original lottery bid. In the first year of the project not all the organisations announced in the application continued for a variety of reasons. This was corrected and AFRUCA has to date worked with over 20 organisations including faith based organisations who tend to attract the most needy of the users for the service.

The organisations all have a meaningful relationship with AFRUCA and are very happy with the service that AFRUCA provides to their membership. They rate AFRUCA very highly and believe that the relationship has been beneficial. Whilst some of the organisations are pleased with the flexible nature of the arrangement, there are others who feel that a more

formal contract will work better since all will be clearly aware of the responsibilities under the relationship.

The arrangements with the local authorities have been difficult to forge but with a new approach that has been taken with one of the councils which has resulted in AFRUCA providing child protection consultancy and training to the practitioners, there is more scope for a more productive relationship.



## 2 Conclusions

### 2.1 Targets and outputs

Develop Materials	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved	
Booklets, leaflets and brochures and videos	2,000	Developed DVD on Child Protection distributed 1,000 copies Developed booklet on FGM distributed 1,000 Developed Booklet on Child Abuse and distributed 1,000	2,000	Developed booklet on Witchcraft Abuse and distributed 6,800 FGM Distributed 350 to community and faith groups	2,000	Developed Booklet on What is Child Trafficking What is Child Abuse and What is Witchcraft Abuse; translated into French Distributed 1,000 copies	<b>A</b>
Child Protection Training	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved	
Child protection training sessions 12 sessions a year = 60 240 parents a year = 1200	12	8 sessions for 95 participants	12	18 sessions for 353 participants	12	18 sessions or 600 participants	<b>A</b>
Advising and Supporting Parents	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved	
Provide advice and support for parents going through the child protection system	10	20 sessions for 5 families and 2 telephone advice 2 parents supported on witchcraft abuse	10	liaison with solicitors started <b>11 one on one 2 hour</b> advice sessions child protections and witchcraft	10	4 families in child protection system	<b>B</b>
Road Shows	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved	
Organise road shows that will create awareness 4 road shows a year. 25 parents per road show = 500 parents	4	1 in Hackney	4	2 road shows, 4 people attending	4	7 road shows 1270 beneficiaries	<b>C</b>
Work With Partners	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved	
community organisations 4 core community organisations over 5 years = 4 20 other organisations over 5 years = 24 organisations	4	trained 3 staff members, changed from Waltham Forest to Hackney	4	15 community organisations but left Waltham Forest and moved to Hackney, 2 staff members trained	4	Work across 4 main boroughs of Southwark, Hackney, Haringey and Islington with over 20 community organisations	<b>D</b>
Local Authorities 4 borough councils over 5 years	4	consultations carried out with all local authorities	4	Working with City and Hackney Safeguarding Board and Hackney Community Adviser. Has a deeper relationship with	4	Still working with local authorities who refer clients but increasingly working with schools and other agencies to deliver services to parents	<b>D</b>

				Southwark			
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## 2.2 Achievements, Successes and Ratings

It has met all its targets in all the aspects of deliverables in the original application despite the initial mobilisation problems. Our rating of the different elements of the programme is based on three main criteria: a) Programme set up and contacts with stakeholders b) Process and scope of delivery and c) Satisfaction of beneficiaries as deduced from the evaluation

There were two dimensions to the project as conceived for delivery, a proactive side and a reactive aspect.

The proactive aspects related to the **development of materials** on child protection for both practitioners involved in working with children in the child protection system to ensure that they better understood the cultural issues involved in dealing with African parents and delivering **positive parenting training workshops** and advice to African parents to ensure that they do not contravene the law. These proactive aspects of the training was about achieving the desirable joint objective in not disrupting family lives that would mean that children will be taken from their parents with all the attendant implications on an already stretched Social Services system.

AFRUCA has produced the DVD that is used in training, they have produced four useful booklets out of the seven that was proposed by the end of the project and two of these have been translated into French to meet the needs of the growing number of Africans from Francophone countries settling in London. It has over-achieved its target in the number of training sessions, running 18 sessions last year and reaching over 600 participants when the target was 240. A joint **A** rating has been awarded.

The reactive side of the project involved: providing advice to parents, organising **outreach road shows** and working with community organisations and statutory agencies involved in child protection work.

The targets for the **advice sessions** with the parents were all met, but because they were open ended and complex to manage the follow up and support work was more difficult to achieve. It is working with more parents, exceeding the 10 a year target and spending more time in open-ended support for these families going through the child protection system. A **B** rating is awarded

AFRUCA could do much better in these aspects of the project; it took sometime to organise the road shows but once a mechanism was found to achieve the objectives, the targets have been achieved. It is now running enough road-shows, seven in 2010 and managing to reach over 1,000 people in one year, far in excess of the 100 parents targeted. A **C** rating is awarded.

Forging a working relationship with the **partner community organisations** was difficult to set up at the beginning of the project; AFRUCA now has more reliable partners with whom they have forged successful relationships and working with the faith groups have proved more beneficial in targeting parents and children who are in most need of the offering from the Project. There have been vast improvements in getting through to these parents but though the groups are satisfied that their members and parishioners derive a desirable benefit from the AFRUCA intervention, the systems and processes of working need improvement.

The work with the **statutory sector** though crucial has been more difficult, they are yet to be fully on board and the mechanism used to get one of the boroughs interested to fully participate in the Project will be adopted in engaging other Local Authorities. It has engaged with local authorities in four boroughs, works with four main community organisations and in this third year of operation has engaged with 15 other community organisations.

This aspect of the work has been awarded a **D** rating

## 2.3 Technical competence

AFRUCA has shown that it has the technical competence to deliver the Project. All the stakeholders are satisfied with the organisation and delivery of the programmes. The DVD that has been produced is highly rated and the materials are seen to be very useful for the participants on the programmes and to those who receive advice from AFRUCA. The delivery of the training is also highly rated and shows that a lot of thought has gone into the planning of the programmes.

Professionalism has been a feature of the approach; this has enabled the participants to engage in the programme knowing that they are learning useful information for their benefit. The work that AFRUCA does also has the endorsement of the local authorities they work with and the partner community organisations.

The extensive research and consultation with stakeholders has informed the design, development and delivery of the training workshops. The sessions are interesting, psychologically motivating and backed by a body of knowledge.

## 2.4 Institutional

AFRUCA has demonstrated that it has the institutional capacity to deliver the project successfully, the administrative, communications and information technology systems deployed in the organisation are adequate. They have developed the right materials to assist in the programmes and despite the small number of staff, have been able to run several projects by proper planning and the deployment of project management mechanisms to ensure satisfactory supervision of all the projects and enough head office support to deliver and complete successfully.

As projects are developed away from London, it may stretch the resources of the central office to provide the necessary supervision and monitoring of projects. As things stand at present though the strategic direction of the organisation to consolidate projects serving the same community means that it can deploy its competitive competence to service the community to its advantage.

## 2.5 Social and cultural value

The work undertaken by AFRUCA definitely tackles a social problem, getting newly arrived parents to look after their children properly so that they do not fall foul of the child protection system, is laudable. It assists the communities to discharge their responsibilities towards their children in an acceptable modern way. AFRUCA adds value by engaging in a social marketing endeavour that is aimed at providing information that will lead to attitude and behaviour change. They perform this function well because they have an understanding of the cultural issues and are able to apply the sensitivity and empathy required to help people adopt positive parenting attitudes.

Their target client groups are hard-to-reach communities who are new in this country and are also traditionally uninvolved and excluded communities in need of assistance in integrating into the local host community. Their own community organisations are helping

but the assistance of AFRUCA enables them to come into contact with the local authorities for the right reasons, not just when they have breached regulations.

It is important to note that more women have participated in the programme and that this programme is targeted at Africans who are part of the ethnic minority community in this country.

## 2.6 Economic and financial value

Reducing the number of child abuse cases takes a lot of financial stress from the local authorities who have a statutory duty towards the care and safety of children. AFRUCA has played a significant part in the prevention of children being taken from their families and into care. Their intervention is invaluable but can be quantified: £80,000 a year to spread awareness amongst 4,000 people a year amounts to £20 per intervention. This is certainly less than the cost to process a child through the child protection system or to remove a child from their parents into the care system.

The other aspect of the value is that though there are indications that the number of children in the child protection system has increased in some of the boroughs, this may be due to the vigilance of social workers who react to any signs that can be construed as abuse and in this regard the work that AFRUCA has been doing in engaging the local authorities may assist them to be more discerning in their understanding of cultural issues.

The ongoing recession and the resulting job losses places even more pressure on parents and places more children at risk, especially during periods of deep cuts when statutory services are being reduced for the most vulnerable. This combination makes the services of AFRUCA even more relevant and more valued as they work with local authorities to reduce the number of children in the child protection system.

AFRUCA has also demonstrated financial responsibility by ensuring that its financial systems provide the necessary checks and balances and that its costs are reasonable.

## 2.7 Sustainability

AFRUCA has achieved a great deal in the relatively short time of 10 years that it has been in existence and has demonstrated that it will survive and grow to undertake the necessary work in preventing child abuse and promoting positive parenting skills to the African communities.

It is working on issues that are critical to sustainability:

- the governance systems are adequate but need strengthening
- engaging with more African community organisations and faith groups as a mechanism for reaching the target client groups

- delivering projects that are based on rigorous research and are demanded by the target communities
- playing close attention to quality issues though this is not done through the adoption of a formal quality system
- showing resourcefulness in diversifying its funding base to include a mixture of grants, fees from different activities, service level agreements and fundraising events to ensure that it is able to cover its costs and build reserves.

For as long as AFRUCA delivers to the current needs of the community in positive parenting and is able through its research to anticipate some of the unknown needs, it will continue to survive and grow.

## 2.8 Outcomes

The overall conclusion based on the evidence of discussions with stakeholders, examination of all documents and observing the programmes is that AFRUCA has met all its objectives and overcome the initial problems at the mobilisation stage relating to the frequent changes of staff that caused the project to stall and prevented the forging of a meaningful relationship with the original delivery partners in the community sector and the local authorities. AFRUCA has showed resilience by changing the boroughs in which it operated to boroughs where they were able to engage with other community organisations that have been able to attract participants in need of the services on offer. We can also conclude that most of the outcomes of the project have been fulfilled.

The work AFRUCA is doing is also having a resounding impact on many of the beneficiaries who in their evaluation sheets and in the interviews have praised the work of AFRUCA as being invaluable not only in raising awareness but also in providing them with tips about positive parenting that they intend to implement in their daily lives to help them and their children get better adjusted to life within this country.

**Improved Parenting skills of 240 African families per year** – the targets have been achieved and most parents have indicated that they are putting what they have learnt into practice.

**Improved family relationships with happier safer children targeting 240 families a year** – the targets have been achieved based on the materials, training and advice.

**Improved support and assistance for parents going through the child protection system** – the targets for support have been met, there is still some work needed for those whose have cases relating to the complexities of witchcraft abuse.

**A marked reduction in the number of African families and their children going through the child protection system** – though the number of young people in the child abuse system has increased this could be a reaction to the need to be more vigilant. There is a need here for AFRUCA and the statutory sector to work in partnership so that, though they continue to be rigorous in their approaches, they will reduce the number of young people who are mistakenly put in the care system.

**Improved capacity of partner organisations to support and advise African parents in safeguarding children and child protection issues** – the relationship with the community organisations will be improved through negotiations to ensure that they deliver to the terms of the agreement with AFRUCA; no training the trainer programme has been implemented with the partner community organisations. There is still a lot of work to be done in getting the statutory organisations fully on board with what AFRUCA is delivering.

## 2.9 Lessons learnt

Some lessons have been learnt in the process of organising, delivering, and monitoring the programme. These include the need to

- develop robust criteria for deciding who to partner in future projects and a framework that will establish the responsibilities under which they operate
- be flexible in the delivery of programmes recognising that initial plans may change even after rigorous research and piloting
- explore other mechanisms for engaging partners from the statutory sector where there is a mutuality of interests and objectives
- monitor the processes as well as the content of projects and feed these into reviews

### 3 Recommendations

Based on the review of the documents, the discussions with stakeholders and the analysis of the questionnaires, we are able to make some recommendations towards the more efficient and effective operations of the project and the sustainability of the organisation.

1. AFRUCA should reorganise its Board to provide them with more involvement in the development of policies and provision of strategic leadership. This can be better achieved if the Board sets up sub-committees to oversee the functional areas of the operation of AFRUCA as it grows. It is suggested that sub committees for operations, marketing, human resources and finance and fundraising be set up.
2. As the organisation grows bigger and takes on more projects it is recommended that AFRUCA adopts a more formal quality system such as PQCASSO. This will help in the development of more robust systems and assist in the delivery of quality services in all projects at all times.
3. More work is needed in developing a set up criteria that potential partners will need to sign up to before working with AFRUCA; a compact that defines the relationship will be a useful way for moving forward. This can be done in the form of a contract or a memorandum of understanding that provides for the terms of the relationship and commits them to working with AFRUCA and motivates them to act in the best interests of AFRUCA.
4. AFRUCA should widen the sphere of people it influences now by requesting to make formal representations to other local authorities in London with larger African populations so as to be able to start working in these boroughs. It must seek to develop a database of more African organisations and individuals who will then serve as friends of AFRUCA to spread the message of child protection wider but also have a wider pool of committed people to work with.
5. AFRUCA should keep in closer contact with the participants on the training programme and implement the initial feature of pre-programme and post programme interviews to track participants and find out what impact the programme has had on their change in behaviour to become better parents.
6. AFRUCA should define what it is offering in advice and support to parents through the child protection system; the evaluation has seen that this aspect of the work is open-ended and may mean that more time is spent on working with clients who can be sign posted to other services in addition to child protection services.
7. AFRUCA should increase its contacts with the schools and other institutions that are involved in determining and establishing child abuse and assist them with a cultural understanding so that the large number of African parents that are wrongly accused of child abuse can be provided with assistance.
8. AFRUCA must continue to provide support to families especially in these times of cuts to services that render African families more vulnerable from a cessation of some services. AFRUCA can work hand in hand with the local authorities to



determine areas of greatest needs, such as the whole area of witchcraft abuse that is yet to be fully understood by child protection practitioners.

9. Local authorities should take advantage of the sterling work that has been done by AFRUCA and replicate the services that they already provide in their local areas. The important objective is to assure local authorities that the work that AFRUCA is doing is congruent to their aims of building a good social fabric where it is in the interests of both the community and the local authority that children are kept out of the child protection system and brought up in happy family settings.

## 4 Introduction

*"Any project that provides knowledge to people to help them look after their children is welcome by all communities; it definitely has an impact on Africans who have travelled to this country for a better life"*

The Child Protection Training for African Parents in London builds on early training programmes that had been designed, developed and delivered to African parents as the main part of AFRUCA's work to promote positive parenting especially to newly arrived and less established African parents in the UK who are not familiar with the child protection laws and who bring with them to this country a different culture of parenting that is at odds with accepted concepts in this country and that therefore leads to conflict with the child protection system in the UK.

This mid-way evaluation of the five year programme has been carried out to review the performance of the project against targets set in the original application to the Big Lottery for funding and also to point a way forward that will lead to an improvement in the systems of the organisation as well as to a more efficient and effective operation of the project and the organisation.

This evaluation though commissioned by AFRUCA has been carried out by an independent organisation, Equinox Consulting, a management consultancy that provides services in community development, employment initiatives and enterprise development and that works primarily on Black and Minority Ethnic issues.

### 4.1 Background of AFRUCA

Africans Unite against Child Abuse was set up in 2001 to take ownership of the issues that confronted a large number of African children who for a variety of reasons were involved in the child protection system of various local authorities. It intended to promote the rights and welfare of African children in the UK. They also work in partnership with other organisations in Africa and across Europe.

There were several stories of African parents maltreating children and wards under their care and issues of child trafficking and children being used for sacrifice. Several of these issues reached the newspaper headlines culminating with the Victoria Climbié case where the child protection system was brought under scrutiny. There were fears that the local authorities would become extra vigilant resulting in many more children being taken into care.

AFRUCA believed that there was a need to raise more awareness and provide more information on these issues, and for AFRUCA to act as honest broker between local authorities and parents, providing training on positive parenting to parents, working with statutory agencies to provide them with a better understanding on cultural issues thereby working together to resolve problems and reduce the number of African parents and children who become involved in the child protection system.

AFRUCA believes that most of the problems confronting African families in the child protection system are intertwined and therefore takes a holistic approach in its training and service provision touching on all the issues that affect the child including, child abuse, female genital mutilation, private fostering, child trafficking, witchcraft and domestic violence issues. The protection and development of the child in the view of AFRUCA is paramount. The focus of the organisation is therefore trained on working with all stakeholders involved in the care, development and protection of children.

AFRUCA also works with practitioners working with children in the African community to raise awareness and educate everyone about issues affecting the welfare of children so all can act to protect them from abuse and harm. Their work includes

- **Awareness raising** – within the African community across the UK and among young Africans about children’s rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions and the UK legislation promoting the rights and welfare of children.
- **Information, education and advisory services** – to raise the profile of African children in the UK, increase awareness of their needs, improve policies and practices and develop the leadership potential of young Africans. Activities include research and publishing reports, media work, conferences, seminars, workshops, and training programmes for parents, policy makers, service providers, community leaders and young people; community meetings; advice and consultancy services.
- **Advocacy and policy development:** – working closely with policy makers, especially within the framework of the Every Child Matters agenda to shape the development of policy and regulatory action to promote the welfare of children.
- **Community and international development:** on partnership with others, establishing programmes and projects to help relieve some of the suffering and hardship that African children experience

## 4.2 Objectives of the evaluation

The main objectives of the evaluation assignment as discussed with the Director of AFRUCA and the Project Worker are to:

- Assess the successes of the project against the objectives stated in the original proposal
- Evaluate the challenges relating to the processes of delivering the project and identify what changes were made to bring the project back on track

- Review operational characteristics of activities and assistance provided including: location of activities; method of delivery; project timescales and nature of activities.
- Evaluate the content of the project and determine the outputs delivered
  - to promote positive parenting skills and increase better understanding of why traditional African methods are inappropriate and possibly illegal
  - in the training workshops for parents to enable them gain a better understanding of the key laws and regulations regarding child protection so that they can better safeguard their children from abuse
  - in offering support and advice to parents in dealing with local authorities' children services
- Evaluate the extent to which beneficial working relationships have been established between AFRUCA, local authorities, other community organisations and other agencies that participated in the project
- Assess the impact of the project and partnership on key stakeholders and the outcomes on the main beneficiaries
- Draw conclusions on key evaluation findings and learning points highlighting key drivers and barriers to success.

### 4.3 Methodology

We adopted a judicious mix of methodologies in agreement with AFRUCA that provided easy access to documents, materials and to stakeholders. This included: review of relevant documents, one on one discussions with relevant stakeholders, observation of a training session and analysis of questionnaires from some of the stakeholders.

Specifically we examined the following documents:

- The original application to the Big Lottery for funding
- The end of year reports for 2008, 2009 and 2010
- The AFRUCA annual reports and accounts for 2009 and 2010

These provided us with sufficient background information into the way the project was intended to operate and how it is actually running to date.

We designed questionnaires and prompt sheets that were used to elicit further information from stakeholders, including

- Staff members
- Beneficiaries of the programme
- Partner organisations; and
- Statutory sector organisations in boroughs that the training sessions were held

We reviewed internal documents of AFRUCA – mainly the various evaluation sheets completed by participants who attended the sessions We received questionnaires from 20 beneficiaries, comprising a cross section of participants on the training programme.

We observed a training session attended by about 25 participants; this was conducted in English but translation was provided in Ligala the main language of people from the Republic of Congo.

We held in-depth interviews with three of the community organisations participating in the training two face to face discussions and one on the telephone.

We held an in-depth interview with one of the beneficiaries of the programme who had been assisted by AFRUCA as he went through a child protection case with a local authority.

We interviewed at length the staff member who was responsible for the programme, the Finance Officer and the Executive Director of the organisation.

We reviewed a wide ranging selection of publications and materials including a training video that had been produced by AFRUCA and examined a selection of brochures and leaflets used as advertising material by AFRUCA.

## 5 Management and organisation

*"We set up AFRUCA because everyone was talking about the issue but doing nothing, we felt that child abuse was a problem Africans had to own before we could find solutions to the large number of African children in the child protection system"*

AFRUCA was set up in 2001, registered as a company limited guarantee on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2001 and became a registered charity on 18 July 2002.

### 5.1 Role of trustees

The Memorandum and Articles of Association of AFRUCA provides for a Board of Trustees with the responsibility to run the organisation. These follow the model rules provided by the Charity Commissioners.

There are six trustees of the organisation; all have an interest in child protection issues and the Chair is a social worker and a strong advocate of positive parenting.

Trustees are expected to be elected every two years at an Annual General Meeting. Currently there are six trustees who generally meet four times a year to receive reports from the Executive Director.

We were unable to interview any trustee in this brief evaluation but have evidence of the support they offer to the staff and of their involvement in developing and approving the application for funding for this project.

In addition to their quarterly meetings, the trustees also hold a strategic away day meeting once a year with staff to develop policy and focus on the way forward for the organisation.

There was no evidence of sub-committees that underpinned the work of the main board and we would recommend that despite the small number of trustees that sub-committees in operational strategy, publicity and communications, finance and fundraising and staff and volunteers be set up to direct the organisation. This is especially important as the organisation is set on a path of growth and the Executive Director and senior officers of the organisation will need more support.

### 5.2 Staff and volunteers

There are five full time members of staff and three part-time staff members including an Executive Director, Finance Manager, and the Project Worker.

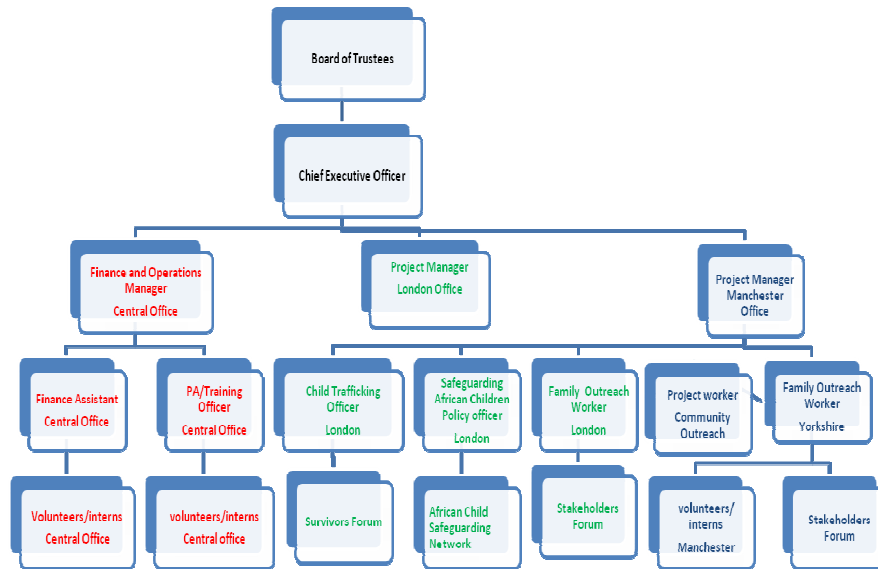
A large number of volunteers support the staff. These volunteers are involved in providing backup at the office, assisting to produce materials, helping to organise the many events held outside the office and spending time as trustees in continuing to steer and develop the organisation; they also assist in the fundraising effort of the organisation.

In discussions with three members of staff – the Director, Finance Manager and Project Worker – on organisational and project matters, they provided evidence that they were

aware of their job roles and showed evidence of the work that they were doing on the project to advance the development of the organisation.

The staff complement is adequate to run the project successfully. The Project Worker organises all the training sessions with support from the Director who delivers the training. The Finance Manager oversees all the expenditure related to the Project.

An organisational chart is provided below:



Although there is no formal appraisal system for staff members, there is a system of weekly meetings with officers to review their work plans and targets, evaluate their performance and provide feedback and support on how they will keep on target.

### 5.3 Premises and equipment

AFRUCA operates from premises at Unit 3D/F Leroy House, 436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP in the borough of Islington on the borders of the borough of Hackney. It is a third floor office within a business unit. The office provides more than adequate accommodation for the staff and volunteers. There is a meeting area that serves as a library with different publications and another enclosed meeting room and kitchen facilities within the office space.

There is a reception down stairs at the entrance to the main office facility and adequate toilet facilities in the unit. Larger meeting rooms are available for hire within the facility as well.

AFRUCA has a networked computer system with a domain and all staff and volunteers have access to computers and the internet and office software and emailing systems.

There is an IT strategy in place with a well maintained database system. AFRUCA is now currently using social networking strategies to market itself and get its message across.

There is also a telephone system that works. There is a photocopier and other office machinery as well as audio-visual and presentation materials that are used outside the office for functions organised by AFRUCA.

There is organised filing for the different projects that are run by the organisation and they maintain a huge database of people who have attended their functions and those in client group of stakeholders who need to be targeted.

All these stakeholders are provided with a comprehensive pack that comprises leaflets, brochures, newsletters and publications.

An office in Manchester, Unit 98-100 23 New Mount Street Manchester M4 4DE, serves as the Northern Regional office as AFRUCA extends its work from London to other regions, to become a national organisation.

## 5.4 Administrative and communication systems

As a small team AFRUCA has a method of communicating around the office and tracking the movements of members of staff that works very well, they exchange information by email and since they work in an open plan office, it is much easier for them to interact professionally.

Fortnightly project progress meetings are however held to supplement this method of informal communications. These have worked well over the years and they have robust systems of tracking the movement and work of each member of staff. Email facility enables them to send information around even when staff members are not working on site.

## 5.5 Financial systems

AFRUCA uses a Sage Computerised system to handle its financial operations. This operates a simple receipts and payments system that ensures that all invoices are recorded and all cheques to the organisation are banked on receipt.

The computerised system handles petty cash, debtors and bank reconciliation at the end of every month; all purchases are authorised and payments are made based on a system of financial instructions that are approved. The system also enables an assets register to be maintained.

There is evidence of budgetary planning at the beginning of the year; the budget is reviewed on a quarterly basis and this is informed by monthly management accounts.

The computerised accounting system facilitates the production of annual accounts that are audited on a yearly basis and there is evidence that these are filed on a timely basis with Companies' House and the Charity Commission.

Given the current size of the organisation the system of financial accounting is adequate for their needs and provides sufficient control.

## 5.6 Project management

The ethos of the organisation remains raising awareness of child abuse issues and therefore a lot of discussions take place with other organisations about the needs of their members. The project of training on child abuse arose out of an interest in the media about child abuse cases and meetings that were called to establish the needs of African parents around positive parenting. Most of the parents were genuinely concerned about what could happen to them if they fell foul of the child protection laws. A pilot programme was undertaken and based on a review and evaluation of that programme and discussions with child protection practitioners, the application was made.

This system of project appraisal is replicated for all projects and informs the monitoring and management of all projects at AFRUCA.

There is a system of weekly meetings amongst the team to brief each other on developments within the small team of workers; a monthly review meeting between the



Executive Director and staff member responsible for each team to ensure that she is kept abreast of slippages on projects and decisions are taken on a project by project basis to take corrective action.

## 5.7 Quality and policies

AFRUCA does not subscribe to an external quality system; they had received information from PQASSO and had considered adopting it some time ago but were put off by the annual expense in the face of uncertainty of funding.

They however have a staff handbook that is provided to full time and part time staff. They also have policies relating to their operations including a complaints procedure.

It has been suggested to the Director that as AFRUCA grows, working on more projects and employing more staff, they will need to incorporate the existing policies into a more formal standard that will ensure better quality monitoring and their performance against this standard will have to be audited on a yearly basis to show improvement.

It is recommended that they adopt a simple standard such as PQASSO that focuses on Planning, Governance, Leadership and Management, User-centred service, Managing people, Learning and development, Managing money, Managing resources, Communications and promotion, Working with others, Monitoring and evaluation, Results.

## 6 The Lottery Programme

*"We consulted widely about the need for this programme; we tested it in a pilot project and were confident that there was demand for positive parenting training to meet the needs of the African communities in London"*

### 6.1 The application

The Big Lottery funding approved in 2007 was for £405,956 over a five year period. The main elements of the Child Protection Training for African Parents as described in the application are set out below:

- It will produce and disseminate child safeguarding products including brochures and DVDs through various outlets, including schools, churches, mosques, community centres, raise awareness and educate parents on issues affecting African children and their roles in addressing it.
- The child protection training will provide knowledge to parents and employees of partner organisations on relevant rules and regulations and what is expected of parents based on UK laws. Work with community organisations and Local Safeguarding Boards in delivering these training programmes and produce training manuals for participants.
- Advice surgeries will be local road shows to enable parents who need advice and support to access the projects via their community and faith organisations.
- The support element of the project will target parents who are going through the child protection system and who need help and support in understanding and navigating the system and understanding child assessment procedures.

### 6.2 The targets

The main targets and deliverables for the project are:

Deliverables	Target	Rating
Develop and produce a range of materials on safeguarding children on child protection issues facing parents on multiple media platforms	2,000 to be distributed to parents and community each year = 10,000	A
Child protection training workshops	12 sessions a year = 60 240 parents a year = 1200	A
Provide advice and support for parents going through the child protection system	10 families a year to benefit from advice = 50 families	B
Organise road shows that will create awareness	4 road shows a year. 25 parents per road show = 500 parents	C
Work with core partners organisations and local authorities to reach the community	4 core community organisations over 5 years = 4 20 other organisations over 5 years = 20 = 24 organisations 4 borough councils over 5 years	D



## 6.3 Target client group

The training programme is targeted at African parents living in London.

We established from the last census that the numbers of Africans was 485,227 representing 0.8% of the population, another 76,498 are mixed race with part African parentage making a total of 561,725. Total number of Africans including people of mixed race in London was established at 417,685. This establishes that at least 74% of the African population reside in London. The information pack for the just completed census 2011 were translated into several African languages suggesting that the population is estimated to rise sharply to account for the large number of new immigrants and refugees fleeing trouble spots.

The total figures in some of the London boroughs are:

Area	Total Population	% African	Total African	Mixed African	Black African
United Kingdom	58,789,194	0.96%	561,725	76,498	485,227
London	8,278,251	5.05%	418,285	35,435	382,850
Southwark	243,749	16.81%	40,965	1,942	39,023
Hackney	202,824	12.74%	25,839	1,599	24,240
Haringey	216,507	9.90%	21,430	1,551	19,879
Croydon	316,283	4.74%	14,977	1,249	13,728
Waltham forest	218,341	6.33%	13,825	1,195	12,630
Islington	175,797	6.68%	11,741	1,241	10,500
Harrow	206,643	3.04%	6,289	633	5,656

Whilst the African population is only 0.96% of the population overall, it forms 5.05% of the population in London; this is not surprising as approximately three quarters of the African population resides in London. In some of the boroughs the proportion of Africans in the population is much higher, for instance in Southwark, one of the boroughs chosen for the programme, the proportion is as much as 17%.

The main target group for the service has been established as people within the African community. There is no typical profile of who accesses the training and the advice sessions since these promote positive parenting but a characteristic feature of benefit are for 'those who have recently arrived in this country from a different culture of parenting and are not conversant with the child protection laws.

AFRUCA has managed to reach out to users from almost every African country and this is reflected in the evaluation forms that they keep of participants to the programmes. Their users come from 21 of the 53 African countries:

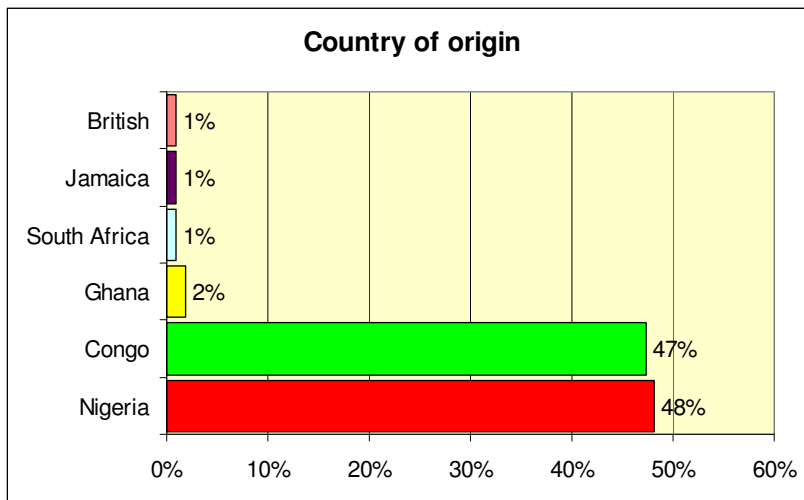
Equatorial Guinea	Cameroun	Somali
Eritrea	Uganda	Ghana
Sudan	Zambia	Sierra Leone
Malawi	Rwanda	Cote d'Ivoire
Tanzania	Zambia	Morocco
Kenya	Senegal	Angola
Zimbabwe	Nigeria	Congo

A sample of evaluation forms analysed showed that AFRUCA is attracting people from the newly arrived African communities in the UK.

They are also most likely to be unaware of the laws of the country and the culture as it relates to child protection and positive parenting issues.

### 6.3.1 Country of origin

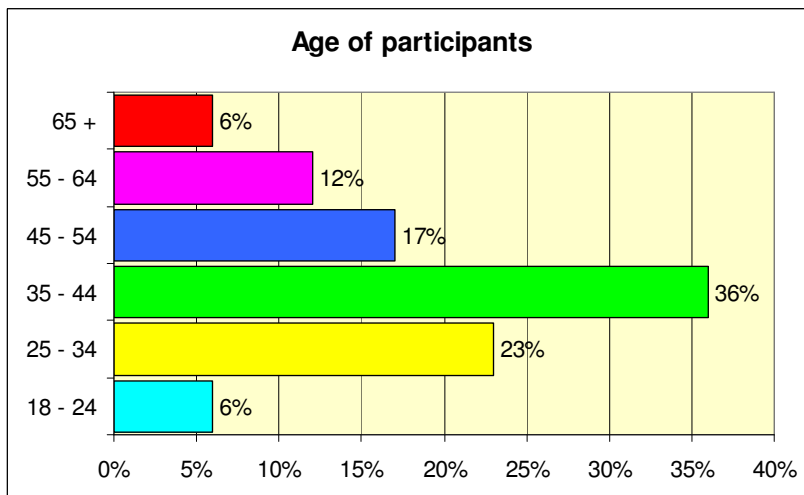
The chart below shows that nearly 48% of participants were from Nigeria, but a very high 47% came from the Congolese community who are not only recently arrived but for whom English is a third language. Their mother tongue is Ligala, they study French in their schools back home and they now have to learn English in this country in order that they are less marginalised.



The project is targeting the right clients because anecdotal evidence suggests that the large number of cases relating to child abuse, child trafficking and especially witchcraft abuse are prevalent in the Nigerian and the Congolese communities.

### 6.3.2 Age of participants

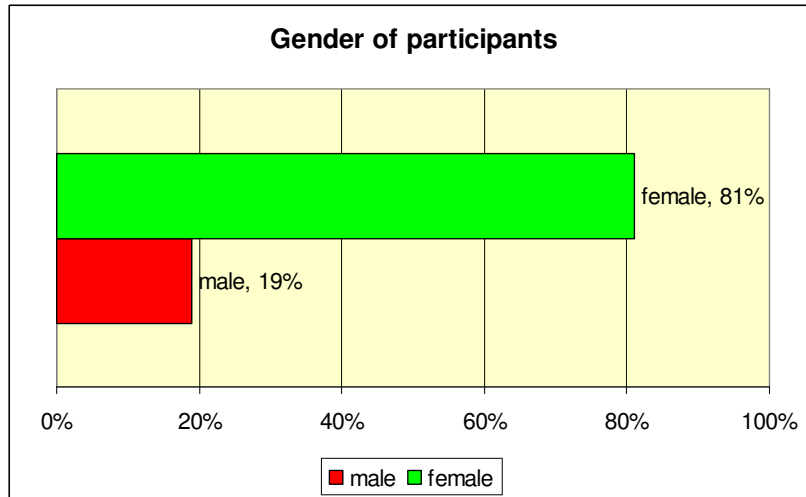
The ages of the participants who attend the programme show that the larger majority were in the 25 – 54 age brackets that were more likely to have young children living at home with their parents and therefore most likely to benefit from Positive parenting programmes.



There was no question on the evaluation form on the number of children each participant had; this would have been interesting in the light of the fact that these programmes were meant for parents with children and would have been relevant because of the calls by some of the respondents to the evaluation of a need for inter-generational programmes.

### 6.3.3 Gender

The sessions were attended by an overwhelming 81% of females as against 19% men.



This was not surprising considering that within the African community women are the primary carers of children and would be most interested in this type of course.

Another reason for the large number of women was that they were the people most likely to attend the activities of community organisations and form a much larger majority of the congregation of African churches. They were most likely to seek support for their problems from a church.

To the extent that the programme attracts African women and men who go to church for pastoral care, the programme is targeting the most appropriate people who are most likely to benefit from the training.

## 7 The materials

*"I would like AFRUCA to deliver a lot of sessions for most Africans in the community and distribute their materials widely in the UK"*

develop materials	2008		2009		2010	
Booklets, leaflets and brochures and videos	2,000	Developed DVD on Child Protection distributed 1,000 copies Developed booklet on FGM distributed 1,000 Developed Booklet on Child Abuse and distributed 1,000	2,000	Developed booklet on Witchcraft Abuse and distributed 6,800 of FGM Distributed 350 to community and faith groups	2,000	Developed Booklet on What is Child Trafficking What is Child Abuse and What is Witchcraft Abuse translated into French Distributed 1,000 copies

AFRUCA has developed a wide range of training and publicity materials over the past three years. The main publicity materials are in the form of brochures and leaflets advertising and promoting the programme. These include:

Child Protection Training and Awareness for African Parents in the London Project that is mainly used to promote the programme and is distributed by the partner community organisations and handed over to people who attend the road shows and sent out to the extensive mailing list of AFRUCA. Other leaflets include African Parents and Child Protection and Promoting the Rights and Welfare of African Children.

Other brochures distributed by the organisation in furtherance of its other programmes include:

- African Children in London Policy Project
- Safeguarding victims of child trafficking in London and South East.

A 15 minute DVD/video; African Children and Child Protection in the UK has been produced by AFRUCA. This video is used in all the training and road show programmes and copies have been given to all the partner community organisations and other stakeholder groups.

In addition to this video, four training booklets that are given to participants on the programmes have been developed. These include:

- What is Child Abuse?
- What is Child Trafficking?
- What is Female Genital Mutilation?
- What is Witchcraft Abuse?

Two of these have been translated into French for the benefit of the newly arrived persons from Francophone countries in Africa. These are

- La Maltraitance des enfants qu'est-ce que c'est?
- La Maltraitance des enfants dits << *sorciers* >> qu'est-ce que c'est?

AFRUCA is yet to produce three more booklets

- What is Private Fostering?
- What is Physical Abuse?
- What is Sexual Abuse?

The video deals directly with the UK laws in raising children within the imported cultural systems and with the important Article 19 of the UN Convention that protects the rights of children.

It deals with the different forms of Female Genital Mutilation: circumcision, excisions and fibulation. The video also deals with witchcraft abuse and how this is linked with physical abuse and the need to form stronger partnerships with the statutory sector to own and overcome these issues. The video further tackles the issue of domestic servitude and the need for awareness and training on the complex issues that could provide a case for conflict with notions of modern parenting.

The summary provided of these issues by the video helps to promote positive parenting; it is easy to watch and quite engaging and provides a useful introduction to the law on child protection as well as offering practical scenarios that can be understood by all who watch it.

The training booklets are also presented in an easy to read and understand format; they are comprehensive as they are explanatory. They provide

- An introduction
- Describe the types of abuse
- Discuss the effects of the abuse
- Restate the law
- Provide case studies and
- The steps that need to be taken to prevent and overcome the abuse

## 7.1 Motivation for the materials – case study

The motivation for developing the material was the dearth of information around on child abuse particularly in relation to the cultural differences in bringing up children. It was important to bring some understanding to the problem of child abuse from the African perspective. Some of the African parents did not consider that some of their attitudes and punishments could be deemed as child abuse in the western world let alone that some of these practices contravened the law.

The authorities were also not aware that some of the attitudes though unlawful were not wilfully cruel to inflict pain on the children and that what was more important was to educate the parents rather than to criminalise them.

Issues of child trafficking were not properly understood by both authorities and parents alike, issues such as witchcraft abuse created a major problem for the western authorities to



understand and to deal with, AFRUCA decided that a comprehensive booklet written in simple English was the best solution to the problem of advancing the education of both parents and practitioners.

They believe that the books have been well researched and distributed to a wide readership and are proud of this as an achievement because of the positive feed back that they have received on the booklets. They also believe that the next stage of the development of this will be the production of a manual on child protection. This manual could be developed as a compilation of their existing materials for teaching and directed at practitioners and, of course, this will be available in electronic format and on the website of the organisation for maximum exposure and dissemination to all.

## 8 The workshops

*“Everything regarding children, the course made me understand more better to train my children in the way of God without using abuse word on them.”*

child protection training	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved
Child protection training sessions 12 sessions a year = 60 240 parents a year = 1200	12	8 sessions for 95 participants	12	18 sessions for 353 participants	12	18 sessions for 600 participants

### 8.1 Promoting the training

We found evidence that a considerable amount of time and energy had been expended on the planning and delivery of the workshops.

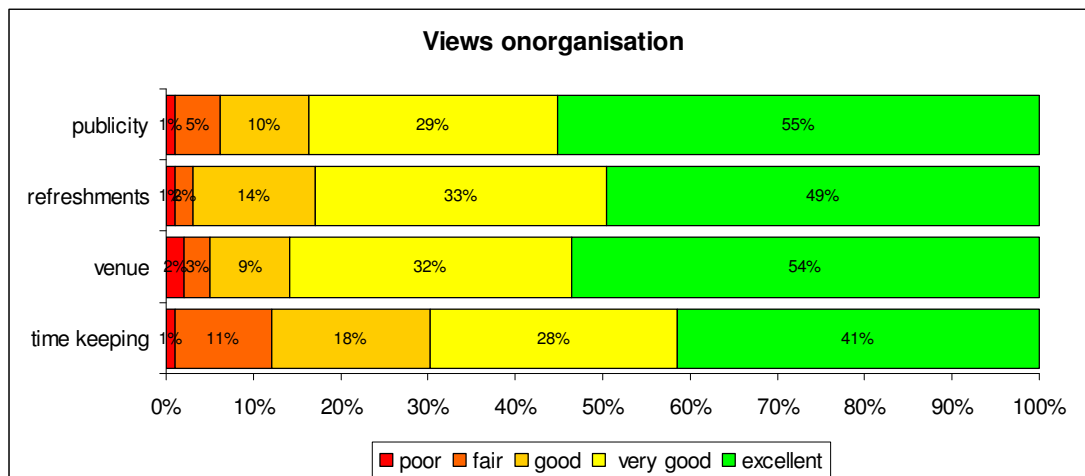
The leaflets provide information about AFRUCA, the services provided, and how to access the services and what to do about engaging with AFRUCA.

The brochures also provide more detailed information about services provided by AFRUCA and the different project activities. Also included is information on the awareness raising, training, policy work and community development aspects of the work as well as the advice road shows, and support and information.

The brochure asks recipients to make contact with AFRUCA about the services that they are interested in accessing.

Most of the participants heard about the training programme from the partner agencies who distributed the advertising material supplied by AFRUCA to potential participants. Some also stated that they heard about AFRUCA through some of the referral agencies, the council was mentioned by some of the beneficiaries as was the lawyer that was helping one of the beneficiaries through the child protection system.

The programme is well advertised by AFRUCA and the partners. The brochures are well designed and distributed widely. The participants on the programme rated the publicity as very good or excellent.



## 8.2 Selection process

The selection for the programme was seen as progressive by the participants, they felt it was excellent that there was open access to the programme and that there was a very short waiting time to get on a programme.

The project was conceived to work with four named partner organisations that would assist in advertising and selection of the participants on the training programme. Initially AFRUCA would receive all the information about the trainees and engage in a pre-selection interview with prospective participants. This has been varied to enable the partner organisations to carry out the screening and to invite their members and other people that they recruit for the training sessions.

The initial concept was that AFRUCA would find out more information from the participants about their objectives for attending the training and therefore would be better able to evaluate to what extent participants had achieved their objectives.

Participants found the course easy to access and the waiting time generally was less than a month. Most participants were grateful that this was an open course and they found the selection process to be very progressive.

It is recommended that AFRUCA implements a pre-training questionnaire at the start of its training sessions. It will help if this questionnaire is delivered to participants at the same time as information on the training programme is given to the participants.

Participants accessed the training for a variety of reasons but it was mainly about getting more knowledge on the Children's Law and to learn about child abuse issues and how to deal with the council on child protection issues

## 8.3 Location, venue and facilities

The sessions were held in a variety of places. Most of the sessions were held at churches though some of the premises used were community facilities as well as conference centres.

The participants on the programme rated the location, venue and facilities as very good. The locations were familiar ones where they attended meetings and church services and had all the facilities that would aid their learning and understanding of the issues of positive parenting.

Most of the training sessions are delivered on the premises of the community organisations. We observed one training session that was delivered at 167 Mare Street, Hackney which is a community resource centre that doubles as a church facility for a Congolese organisation. The premises were accessible and well served by trains and buses.

The room for the training was adequately furnished with sufficient chairs and desks for those who wanted to do some writing. The main room was large enough with breakout

rooms for discussions; adequate toilet facilities existed in the premises. Flipcharts and a whiteboard as well audio visual presentation equipment in the form of a laptop and a projector were available.

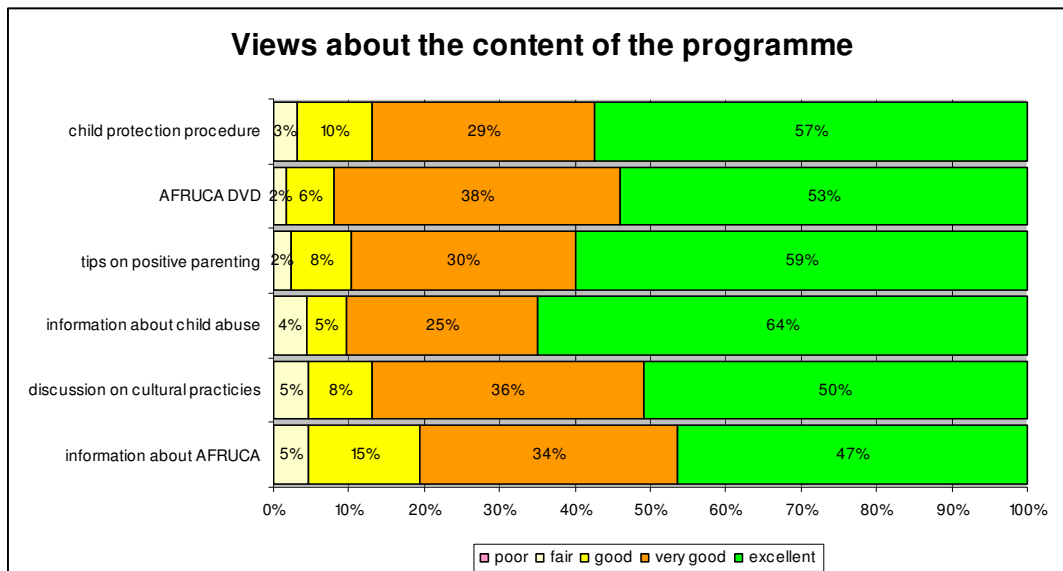
There were no issues around disability access to the premises that were used for the training; AFRUCA were not informed about any participants with a disability and would have made the necessary arrangements to accommodate them by choosing appropriate premises.

### 8.4 Delivery and presentation

We have examined evaluation sheets filled out by participants and have reviewed the analysis of these sheets on a session by session basis; we have also held discussions with some of the participants who attended the programmes. All the aspects of the programme were highly rated by the participants.

The chart below shows these ratings on the different aspects of the programme.

Child protection procedure, the AFRUCA DVD, tips on positive parenting, information about child abuse, discussions on cultural practices and information about AFRUCA were all rated as excellent by at least 43% of participants; as many as 63% felt that information about child abuse was excellent. The poor ratings on the AFRUCA DVD, tips on positive parenting, information on child abuse and discussions on cultural practices were all in the low 3% or below.



Most participants felt that everything about the course was useful; they felt that learning how to bring up a child within a different culture would eventually benefit them and their children and the knowledge that there were different laws on children’s rights was very insightful for some of the participants.

The programme in their view met their all their objective for attending the sessions.

Whilst they had all enjoyed the course, there were suggestions on how the sessions could be improved. Some participants wanted a more detailed step by step approach on how to spot child abuse and more time to discuss the cultural practices that are harmful to children.

Others wanted to know the effects of FGM on the people affected. An interesting question that probably needs to be further explored is the implications of smacking on aggressive behaviour in adult life.

One comment from a participant related to how changes in parenting could be effected in a country like Nigeria where the cultural practices would be tougher to break.

The learning experiences of participants were similar and this suggests that the participants would be more than likely to put the training into practice. Some of the comments on the lessons learnt are provided below.

## 8.5 Comments on programme

*It was informative and a lot of awareness was raised today. It has reinforced issues I am already clued in on. I am very pleased I was able to be present for this presentation. Female 45 Nigerian*

*Not to use any implements to discipline your child and as a parent you should try to take part to discipline your child and not to ask your parents and other people – Female, 45 Zimbabwe*

*To spend quality time with my children and be more sensitive to their needs. I have also learnt that smacking can be substituted with other punishment. Female 35*

*Everything regarding children and made me understand more better to train my children in the way of God without using abuse word on them. Female 35 Nigerian*

*Smacking is not the only way to correct a child. Female 55 Nigerian*

## 8.6 Method of delivery – case study

We observed a training session held on a Sunday after a church meeting at the Rhema Church at 272 Mare Street in Hackney

The training was very refreshing. The trainer introduced the subject and asked people to ask questions on the introduction. The trainer allowed participants to watch a 15 minutes video on female genital mutilation, physical abuse and trafficking of children. The trainer then dealt with the issues in the video providing a fuller picture of the cultural problems faced by newly arrived immigrants in looking after their children. There was then a question and answer session which made the session interactive and there was role-playing and scenario discussions.

AFRUCA handed out the training material in the form of different booklets as part of a training pack.

The particular session that we observed had a translator to simultaneously translate the session into Ligala, which was spoken by most of the participants who are from the Congo area. The material handed out had been translated into French because the participants were from a French speaking part of the Congo.

There were approximately 25 participants at the session including some children and the pastor of the church also participated in the training.

The participants also filled in evaluation questionnaires on the training they received. The session lasted a total of three and a half hours.

The materials have been translated into French to meet the growing number of new African immigrants and refugees from French speaking countries.

The main reasons provided for why participants accessed the training programme was to 'learn about child abuse and to gain more knowledge about the child protection system and good parenting'

Hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, biscuits and other snacks were provided.

## 9 Supporting parents

*"I have learnt about how to talk to my children and that smacking is not the only way of punishing a child: I now know how to bring up my children better and thanks to AFRUCA, I have my children back with me!"*

Advising and supporting parents	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved
Provide advice and support for parents going through the child protection system	10	20 sessions for 5 families and 2 telephone advice 2 parents supported on witchcraft abuse	10	liaison with solicitors started 11 one-on-one 2 hour advice sessions child protections and witchcraft	10	4 families in child protection system

AFRUCA has worked with several families to provide them with support as they went through the child protection system.

### 9.1 Referral process

We established that there are several different routes for referral to use the services of AFRUCA. These routes include:

- Friends and families
- Community organisations
- Faith based organisations
- Local authorities
- Lawyers and solicitors
- Schools

The referral from the community organisations has proved to be the best method for sign posting people to the services and AFRUCA intends to widen its communication and marketing strategy to embrace more African groups.

AFRUCA has worked very well with the Christian based African organisations and are now looking to expand to work with other faith-based organisations; they have run a training workshop for the parents and staff of ASSUNAH Muslim School in Haringey.

There are plans to focus on work with various pastors of churches with regards to witchcraft issues where it has been suggested that a number of young people have been branded as witches and have been taken to churches to be exorcised. Indeed as part of their material they have produced a booklet on What is Witchcraft Abuse.

AFRUCA also works with secular community organisations.

Various lawyers and solicitors have referred clients to AFRUCA so they could be supported through the child protection system in addition to the legal services they receive from their own solicitors. We examined the case work logs of two solicitors that they work with – Audu & Co and Wilson & Co and interviewed one client who had been recommended by a solicitor.

## 9.2 The advice and support

We were able to examine five of the case work files relating to cases in Islington, Barking and Dagenham, Southwark, Hackney and Haringey. These cases related to people who had recently arrived from different African countries – Kenya and Nigeria,

The cases were varied and concerned different aspects of child protection issues relating to physical abuse, immigration issues and child trafficking. The cases can also be prolonged and intensive.

Some of the cases that have been worked on include:

Nationality	contact	Type of cases
Kenya	parents	Child Abuse
Ghana	Hackney social services	Child Abuse
Congo	Bedfordshire social services	Witchcraft Abuse
Zimbabwe	Mother	Child Abuse
Nigeria	Father	Child Abuse –Over Chastisement
Southwark	Teacher in Southwark	Over Chastisement
Uganda	Mother	Child Abuse
Somali	Solicitor in Hillingdon represent parents	Child Abuse
Nigeria	grandmother	Physical abuse
South Africa	mother	Witchcraft abuse
Nigeria	Southwark social service	Neglect, Physical chastisement
South Africa	Belfast	Witchcraft Abuse

AFRUCA's work with parents is about providing early intervention when they are involved in the child protection system and continuing with follow up sessions with the parents until the crisis has been averted and the problems resolved. This advice and intervention takes different forms. The case log shows a variety. In one of the cases we reviewed it was about determining the status of children who lived with their guardian. AFRUCA had worked to establish that the person was the legal guardian and the children had not been illegally adopted and trafficked as had been suspected by the authorities. The issue was further complicated by suspected smacking and the status of the guardian who was an over-stayer.

In another case a Section 20 order was used by the authorities but was not fully understood by the parents but there was a suspicion of domestic violence in the family. The intervention sometimes involves advice at AFRUCA's offices as well as accompanying the client to their lawyers, to the police, and to the social services or the schools to advocate on their behalf.

Whilst some of the cases could be closed over a shorter period after intensive intervention, it is increasingly becoming difficult to predict the length of time that would be spent on each case because of the growing incidence of cases involving witchcraft abuse. These



witchcraft cases are often complicated by cultural nuances that make them difficult for the local authority officers to understand and process.

AFRUCA has worked on many of these witchcraft cases but their complexity and the time needed to provide support to the families and proper explanation and understanding to the local authority means that the follow up work required cannot be delivered under this particular project. Furthermore, the parents, whilst welcoming the efforts of AFRUCA to assist them, become disappointed when they cannot get all the support that they require to fully resolve their problems.

AFRUCA's view is that their objectives are congruent to those of the local authority – to ensure that fewer children are subjected to the child protection system and they are prepared to work in a collaborative way with the local authority to make this happen. They are also increasingly more concerned with the absence of support to people who are involved in witchcraft abuse cases.

One of the clients of AFRUCA has been receiving assistance for over a year.

### 9.3 The value of the intervention – case study

We interviewed a 40 year old Nigerian man who was referred by his lawyer to AFRUCA and was subject to the Child Protection Section 20 Act, a document he had signed without realising the full implications. He had been accused of beating up his child, when what he had done was probably to have smacked the child. He did not understand the difference between the two terms. The child was supposed to have drawn a picture that showed when she was happy and when she was unhappy and that the unhappiness was caused by her father smacking her and that the happiness was caused by when her father provided her with a gift. Based on the picture, when the mother went to collect her daughter she was not allowed to and the father was asked to come down to the school.

He was interviewed by the school authorities as well as someone from Social Services, paramedics and the police. The paramedics examined the child and found no injuries of any kind but the father admitted to beating the child because he was not aware of the word smack. He was then asked to sign a Section 20 order but did not know what it was he was signing. He was not allowed to see his child when he went to the school on that day and he signed the document not realising the implication. He was not allowed to take the child home and he therefore sought the services of a lawyer who introduced him to AFRUCA. Social Services had taken the child to a foster parent but had not gone to court to seek parent rights but when examined by a specialist doctor there were found to be no bruising or internal injuries to the child. With the help of AFRUCA and the solicitor he was able to get his child back in two weeks. He had been taken to the police station where a statement was taken and he was bailed on that day.

AFRUCA helped him by taking him through a crash course on what the child protection system was about, which he attended at a Catholic Church premises. He was provided with a certificate of attendance for the programme which he took to Social Services. AFRUCA also provided him with advice on how to bring up his children positively and helped him with parenting skills relating to no shouting, use of harsh words and instead of

smacking or berating children using other methods of discipline such as denial of privileges for example watching television.

He was also helped with his language and his understanding of the British system of disciplining children. He was very grateful.

He also asked AFRUCA to help him with getting housing from the local authority since he felt they lived in a very small flat which is not adequate for the family's needs.

AFRUCA has been working with him since November 2009 and he is completely satisfied with the services provided for him.

He would like AFRUCA to improve the work they do by expanding from child protection issues to providing other services that people in the child protection system may need such as how to bring up a child.

## 10 Road shows

*A lot of awareness was raised today. It has reinforced issues that I am already clued in on. I am pleased I was able to be present for this presentation*

road shows	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved
Organise road shows that will create awareness 4 road shows a year. 25 parents per road show = 500 parents	4	1 in Hackney	4	2 road shows, 4 people attending	4	7 road shows 1270 beneficiaries

Frequent changes in staff at the start of the programme made it difficult to prioritise the organisation of the awareness raising road shows that were meant to publicise the work of AFRUCA as well as the child protection training for African parents in London. The initial intention was to run these road shows as mainly AFRUCA events where all the different stakeholders would be invited to meet and exchange ideas and AFRUCA will then promote itself and project its message of child protection.

There were difficulties therefore in running the events in the first year and only one road show was organised. In the second year of the project, AFRUCA managed to organise two road shows against the target of four. These were not very well attended.

The third year was more successful as the format of the road shows were reviewed and a decision was taken not to run AFRUCA only events but to be part of events that have a large number of Africans attending. Seven events were organised in the third year that attracted over 1,750 people.

The road shows served as an opportunity for making presentations about the work of AFRUCA in the AFRUCA organised events and for those other events that AFRUCA attended and installed a stand, there were several people who visited the AFRUCA stand.

A list of the AFRUCA road show events and where they were held is provided below.

date	Borough	Organisation	Numbers
28-09-09	Hackney	Hackney Peace Walk	600
23-09-09		Grandma Church Group	25
26-09-09		IMPACT awareness conference	500
30-09-09	Camden	St Pancras – Camden Trust	80
08-11-09	Islington	African Supplementary Educational Forum	40
19-11-09		African HIV Policy Network	32
11-06-10		The Basis Project	250

The road shows as originally conceived were meant to raise awareness of the issues of child protection and positive parenting within the African community and therefore AFRUCA has had to supplement the original concept with activities in a variety of media.

It has used the publications that have been widely distributed through different channels to create this awareness. Increasingly, an interactive platform of social media networks have been employed to promote the AFRUCA events and to reach a lot more people especially younger ones who are most in need of positive parenting programmes.

AFRUCA also organises several informal meetings and activities such as book readings and book signings where a lot of people are expected to congregate; its anniversary meetings have helped as well as the many appearances on broadcast and print media continues to spread the message around.

### 10.1 Media and Minet – case study

AFRUCA featured in the channel 4 Dispatches programme of 26th July 2010 “ Britain’s Children Witches”, the Dispatches programme of 30th August 2010 : Britain’s Secret Slaves, AFRUCA featured on the CNN programme “ disabled children perceived as witches” on the 25th August 2010. AFRUCA also participated in BBC London Radion94.9 FM and BEN TV interviews as a follow up to Britain’s Children Witches” on the 1st of August 2010. AFRUCA raised its voice around “criminalising the branding of children as witches”. Community Care magazine and Voice Newspaper published two articles featuring AFRUCA’s proposal for a law against branding children as witches.

These actions helped raise the profile of AFRUCA as an organisation promoting the rights and welfare of African children, a champion against branding children as witches and as an authority on the issue.

In December 2010, AFRUCA and MiNet started a mapping project to look at the impact of the recession on London’s BAME Children and Young People. The mapping has included a survey, focus groups and a Freedom of Information request to London’s local authorities to look at cases of child abuse.

The report that will come out in May 2011 will be used for strategic influence to make a stronger case for the needs of London’s BAME children and young people during the hard times of recession and spending cuts.

## 11 Engaging partners and local authorities

*"We are very satisfied by the fact that our members now have knowledge about child abuse. AFRUCA uses a good method to train people by using video, questions and making debate within the participants"*

work with partners	2008	Achieved	2009	Achieved	2010	Achieved
community organisations 4 core community organisations over 5 years = 4 20 other organisations over 5 years = 24 organisations	4	trained 3 staff members, changed from Waltham Forest to Hackney	4	15 community organisations but left Waltham Forest and moved to Hackney, 2 staff members trained	4	Works across 4 main boroughs of Southwark, Hackney, Haringey and Islington with over 20 community organisations
local authorities 4 borough councils over 5 years	4	consultations carried out will involve all local authorities	4	Working with City and Hackney Safeguarding Board and Hackney Community Adviser. Has a deeper relationship with Southwark	4	Still working with local authorities who refer clients but increasingly working with schools and other agencies to deliver services to parents

### 11.1 Community organisations

#### 11.1.1 Forging the partnership

In the original application, AFRUCA made contact with four organisations in four other boroughs where it intended to deliver services in addition to their base in Islington. These organisations were expected to partner AFRUCA in reaching out to the wider African communities and in delivering the programme. The intention was to work with four groups each year across the four chosen boroughs.

The initial groups were

- Chettle Court Rangers Youth Football Club – **Haringey**
- Centre for Francophone and Central Africa CENFACS – **Croydon**
- African Child and Family Support Group – **Waltham Forest**
- Development Support Agency – **Harrow**

There were major problems in establishing a meaningful working relationship with these groups after the funding was approved; the reasons included the:

- Inability by some of the groups to provide a platform for access to their membership as had been initially discussed with AFRUCA
- Internal problems within some of the groups that led to their folding up
- Difficulties in agreeing terms of operations with the organisations and the speed of mobilisation for delivery

**AFRUCA Child Protection Training for African Parents in London -an evaluation**

AFRUCA engaged in a lot of outreach work to meet with new groups in the original boroughs but was not able to find organisations whose scope of activities matched their own. They decided to build on the work that they had originally carried out in Islington with some of the groups. AFRUCA was invited by Southwark Council to undertake some child protection work and through that was able to forge links with other groups with whom they currently work.

AFRUCA now increasingly works with faith groups who tend to have a wider reach within the African communities and are better able to assemble people who are in need of parenting advice; they also seem to be the place where people go to when they are in crisis.

The faith organisations are also a source of referrals for the advice surgeries and interventions that AFRUCA made with the African communities.

Over the past three years AFRUCA has worked with groups that include

<b>Name</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>Type of group</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Organisation of Positive African Men	Haringey	HIV community	14-05-09	25
International Youth Centre	Hackney	Community Project	09-05-09	18
Sword of the Spirit	Hackney	Faith	05-04-09	22
Family Action	Hackney	Community Project	23-03-09	26
Congolese Finance Project	Haringey	Community Project	11-03-09	15
Congolese Finance Project	Haringey	Community Project	14-03-09	25
African Swahili Community Project	Haringey	Community Project	28-02-09	2
African Women's Welfare Centre	Haringey	Community Project	06-12-09	21
African Women's Welfare Centre	Haringey	Community Project	31-01-09	5
African Women's Welfare Centre	Haringey	Community Project	14-02-09	25
St Giles Centre	Haringey	Community Centre	28-01-09	21
Holy Cross Centre	Haringey	Community Centre	24-01-09	26
African Youth Child Organisation	Haringey	Community Project	28-11-08	6
Wisegem	Hackney	Community Project	02-04-09	23
Ugandan Community	Harrow	Community Project	09-11-08	31
African Support Services	Haringey	Community Project	14-09-09	10
AFRUCA - Leroy House	Islington	Business Centre	10-06-09	13
<b>Name</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>Type of group</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
AFRUCA - Leroy House	Islington	Community Project	24-06-09	48
Organisation of positive African Men	Haringey	HIV community	03-11-09	35
COFIPRO & Congolese Community Association	Haringey	Community Project	07-11-09	80
AFRUCA – CityParochial	Hackney	Business Centre	25-11-09	10
New Life Ministries Church	Hackney	Faith	21-11-09	17
AFRUCA - Leroy House	Islington	Business Centre	14-12-09	10
Assunah Muslim School	Haringey	Faith and education	24-12-09	61
AFRUCA – House of Commons	Southwark	Community Project	25-02-10	120
AFRUCA – County Hall	Southwark	Community Project	11-03-10	47
COFIPRO	Haringey	Community Project	13-03-10	25
COFIPRO	Haringey	Community Project	13-03-10	20
COFIPRO & Congolese Catholic Women's Association	Haringey	Community Project	24-10-10	49
Rock of Redemption Church	Southwark	Faith	15-05-10	47
COFIPRO & Andover Community Estate	Haringey	Community Project	22-05-10	31
Redeemed Edmonton	Enfield	Faith		25
Rhema	Hackney	Faith		30

### 11.1.2 Views of the partners

We conducted in-depth interviews with three of the organisations that AFRUCA has worked with over the past three years

The evidence shows that AFRUCA works with African community and voluntary groups who are involved in a wide variety of service provision; from support groups, through to organisations providing educational support to organisations that provide welfare facilities and women groups. Increasingly, AFRUCA is working with church groups who are also able to reach the wider communities.

Whilst some of the community organisations work generically across all the African communities, AFRUCA has also worked with groups that provide services to and have users predominantly from one African country. This is reflected in the breadth of nationalities that AFRUCA has been able to reach and attract to use their services.

The community groups that are partners with AFRUCA are situated within local communities, but like most African organisations their users come from all over London and beyond. This provides AFRUCA with a breadth of coverage both in the local areas of Southwark, Haringey, Hackney and Islington which are the focus of their operations but they are also able to reach users from other boroughs.

Discussions with the main partners revealed that they were all drawn to the work of AFRUCA either by recommendation of others who had benefited from previous services delivered by AFRUCA or by direct introduction by their own membership.

AFRUCA however through their own publicity materials continue to reach out to the communities that they work with in addition to the numbers that are reached through the community and faith groups with which they work.

Though there are no formal long term contracts between AFRUCA and the groups they work with, a meaningful relationship has been developed; the groups see themselves as using the materials provided by AFRUCA to advertise for the sessions and provide the space and the refreshments for the sessions while AFRUCA is responsible for the delivery. Despite absence of formal contracts the partner organisations are satisfied with the present arrangement; requests for training sessions are handled by joint meetings with the partners.

While this is satisfactory, it means that until the training session are delivered AFRUCA has no direct contact with the participants and are unable to determine their suitability for the programme. This has worked because it provides partner groups more buy-in into the relationship and they as much as AFRUCA feel that they are helping to deliver a worthwhile service that is not only greatly in demand but is also of immense benefit to their members.

Fortunately there were no initial problems of establishing a working relationship with the partner organisations. All parties find the arrangement satisfactory and feel that it is working very well.

There were no suggestions as to how the working relationship could be improved but one of the partner organisations felt that more formality will enable them to plan better if they knew far in advance the programmes that they will be required to organise and had a

formal contract. They however did not deem this to be essential or critical to the continuation of their relationship with AFRUCA.

The partner organisations find the training to be of a sufficiently high standard. They believe the training is necessary and that it is delivered well and had an impact on their members and users. They state that the best methods are used: a combination of video, direct instruction, role play, question and answer sessions and distribution of materials which all help to make the course very interesting. The various scenario settings that are a feature of the training enable the participants to contextualise the training within their own family setting.

The training in the view of the partner organisations has a positive impact on their members, who are happy that such high quality training has been made available to them. Those who have attended the training have in testimonies talked about the value of the sessions and by so doing encouraged others who have not had access to the programme to demand it.

The partners also state the subject matter of the training is appropriate for the members since they believe that any subject that promotes positive parenting especially for newly arrived immigrants who do not fully know the law of the land is beneficial not only for the children but for the community as a whole. Awareness of child abuse issues is very important given that most of their members come from a culture where corporal punishment is still rife and relationships with children is more disciplinarian than overtly loving.

They find the AFRUCA service useful to their members and also vital for the survival of the community where some of these child abuse issues are not discussed in the open.

The general feeling of the partners is that the AFRUCA training should be expanded to cover all parts of London and become a feature of areas where there is a higher than average proportion of Africans, especially newly-arrived Africans in the community.

The partners are provided with leaflets and help to advertise the programmes to their members and the wider African communities to supplement the general advertising that is undertaken by AFRUCA.

The evidence shows that AFRUCA is reaching out to more community organisations who will participate in the programme; some groups have started inviting AFRUCA to come and talk to their members to propagate the message of positive parenting.

AFRUCA engaged with the main groups it works with because it had previous knowledge of their work. They in turn had heard of the good work that AFRUCA was doing in the area of child protection and wanted to be associated with AFRUCA because they believed that the association would be of benefit to their membership.

AFRUCA worked initially with groups in Haringey, then in Hackney and is presently working with groups in Southwark. It has also run programmes from its offices in Islington.

### 11.1.3 The value of partnership – Case study

AFRUCA has had a beneficial relationship with COFIPRO, a Congolese organisation that has been set up to create a Congolese financial institution. The organisation has over 500 members drawn from the estimated 50,000 people from the Congo who live in London.



The mission of the organisation is to provide training for members to enable them to be financially independent in the UK and to develop their own financial institution. The coordinator of COFIPRO met the Executive Director and the previous Project Officer at a meeting where they talked about AFRUCA taking ownership of child abuse issues within the African community; he was impressed about the positive way in which AFRUCA handled the subject matter and upon further discussion was convinced that these workshops would be beneficial to their members most of whom had newly relocated in this country.

They did not hesitate to become partners with AFRUCA when invited to participate in the programme; they were certain that the programme would be valuable in meeting their members' needs. They have not only organised several sessions with AFRUCA but have introduced other organisations whose members will benefit from the programme.

They are impressed with the training provided and the use of multiple materials and audio visuals to reinforce the message in a positive way. They know that their members also like the training based on feedback on the evaluation questionnaires and demands as to when the programme will be next held.

They do not have a formal contract for delivery of the sessions with AFRUCA, they have developed a strong and mutually beneficial bond and they are grateful to AFRUCA for this programme. They are satisfied with the present state of affairs, but feel that a formal contract will further cement the relationship. They would also be able to plan with more certainty for a specific number of sessions that they will hold over the period of the programme.

In their view the programme could be further improved by offering other sessions on housing which is a big problem within the community and which they feel has a bearing on the cultural issues surrounding conflict between the young and the old; they would also like some of their volunteers to benefit from a training the trainers programme.

New knowledge is always a good thing and they believe that their members have demonstrated the will to use the knowledge provided from the training sessions.

## 11.2 Working with the local authorities

### 11.2.1 Making Contacts

The initial intention of the project was that AFRUCA would work closely with the local authorities in the selected boroughs. Several approaches have been made by AFRUCA to ensure that a meaningful relationship materialises, but there have been difficulties based on problems arising out of topical issues within the child protection system and issues of confidentiality.

Whilst AFRUCA has adopted an approach of trying to engage the councils in order to provide assistance and help, the topical issues relating to lapses in the child protection system, especially as relates to African communities, have meant that the local authorities have looked at AFRUCA's intentions with suspicion rather than welcoming the approaches.

Statistics on the number of African children in the child protection system in different London boroughs had been available from the London Boroughs Council at the time of the

submission of the proposal for funding. This was however discontinued and resulted in difficulties in accessing this information from the local authorities in the various boroughs. Eventually the information was accessed through a Freedom of Information enquiry; this has not helped in the development of a bond with the local authorities who now view such information as very sensitive, as there has been huge increases in these numbers sometimes as much as 125%.

Despite these tentative beginnings AFRUCA has now managed to forge a good relationship with Southwark, one of the boroughs with which they now work. This new relationship should inform its approach and its work with the other boroughs.

As stated above their links with local authorities has not been as strong as they had expected with some not willing to disclose child protection statistics and also sometimes being suspicious of AFRUCA's role in advocating for some of the parents. In one of the boroughs however AFRUCA has a very meaningful relationship working with the borough to provide consultancy services to their child protection specialist.

But forging a relationship with the local authority has required years of cultivating officers only for them to leave the service and new officers take their place. An example is in Southwark where the relationship with the council developed through a fee paying consultancy for the authority.

AFRUCA was commissioned by Southwark Council, to carry out a review of the current work with African families across Children Services and produce a report of findings and recommendations including suggested models of good practice. After the review, AFRUCA delivered two one day training courses for professionals on "working with African children and families; a two day training of trainers courses for faith and community organisations on safeguarding for their staff and members and a two training workshops for parents on child protection.

AFRUCA has also delivered some sessions within a number of schools primarily working with teachers. It is intended that this service will be improved and increased.

### 11.2.2 The value of working together-Case study

Southwark Children's Services has a Referral and Assessment Team that assesses children and families in need. Their work with African parents relates to assessing families to identify support that they need and issues relating to the protection of children. The relationship started when the Team referred one of their families to AFRUCA for assistance in recognition of the work that AFRUCA does with African families. Since then a relationship has developed to the extent that AFRUCA now offers a parenting programme for parents and carers in the borough and assists the borough in some consultancy on child protection issues. They consider the relationship with AFRUCA as very good and highly the service delivered. They consider the most useful service to be the linking of child protection to the cultural issues of the families.

They view the service as having a positive impact on the families; the education of the families on safe parenting has introduced a favourable shift from some of the traditional ways of bringing up their children to more modern and positive methods that accords with modern day concepts of positive parenting.

The council thinks that the services offered by AFRUCA are excellent, necessary and heavily demanded. An improvement will be more in terms of increasing the number of days of the training to enable more people to attend, extending the training to other social workers supporting African families and liaising with the council's brokerage department to offer more programmes to families and social workers.

The main elements of the training programme are the organisation, the delivery and the evaluation and follow up of the participants.