the london LGBT voluntary and community sector

ALMANAC 2nd edition

Kairos in Soho
I must confess that I had not read the 1st Edition of Kairos in Soho’s (KiS) London lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) Almanac until I was asked to write the foreword for the 2nd edition. I thought about what I should focus on and many ideas came to mind, such as: the dark times we are in, where hard fought for laws that give us equality protections are now under real threat; the notions of ‘Big Society’ and localism that seem to ignore the many excluded, unheard voices; or the contemptuous rise of nationalism.

After reading both editions what is clear is that the issues that London’s LGBT sector works with are wholly analogous to other equality sectors. Large proportions of organisations listed campaigning as an activity. Additionally many have representation to influence policy as a key purpose. There is also a disproportionate reliance on volunteers. Many organisations simply cannot afford to pay volunteer expenses, which may be a barrier to the participation of underrepresented groups who conversely cannot afford to pay their own expenses. For me these and the many other issues depicted in this 2nd Edition of the Almanac serve as a stark reminder of the similarities of struggle and strength across the equalities voluntary and community sector (VCS).

I recently went to meet a colleague who manages a VCS organisation that provides mental health counselling and support services on a borough wide basis. Their services are predominantly targeted to and accessed by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. She shared that there has been a significant increase in demand as the impacts of the recession and austerity take hold. We talked about the current changes to the funding environment and the consequences for service provision. Of particular relevance is the current thinking with regards to commissioning of services, shifting from a model that was cognisant of the need to provide culturally appropriate services to a model that considers such specifics as unnecessary. Arguments against this shift have been deemed as BAME VCS resistance caused by more of a concern about self preservation, rather than this sector voicing the particular needs of those they represent. But, as the analysis of the surveys, the testimonials and case studies in this 2nd Edition clearly demonstrate, comprehending the diverse needs and experience(s) of
The communities we work with and for is absolutely essential to reducing the effects of prejudice and discrimination and achieving positive outcomes.

This 2nd Edition of The London LGBT Almanac builds on and expands the content from the 1st Edition. It supplies a critical insight of the relevance of the past to the present. It is an easy to read ‘must have’ tool that will be used again and again for the policy, planning, development and funding of London’s diverse LGBT VCS.

Elizabeth Henry
CEO, Race on the Agenda
Kairos in Soho would like to extend heartfelt and sincere thanks to the following, without whose contributions The London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition would not have been possible: all of the inspiring LGBT organisations who took the time to complete the London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition Survey; all of the contributors on heritage for their insight and hard work; Ajamu; Ingrid Pollard; Lynette Goddard; Elizabeth Henry; Marai Larasi; Sue Sanders; Dorett Jones; Tom Wilkinson; the focus group participants; Ruben Flores; all of the London LGBT Learning Network participants; Giovanna Speciale; Colin Standing; Fiona Ellis; Cathy Pharoah; Julia Unwin; Julie Fish; everyone who provided feedback on the London LGBT Almanac 1st Edition; Race on the Agenda; the Runnymede Trust; the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival; colleagues in the equalities sector who helped us to promote the survey to ensure it was inclusive of all of London’s diverse LGBT organising; and everyone else who helped to promote and support the London LGBT Almanac 1st Edition.
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Introduction

The London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition contains key, up-to-date statistical information about diverse LGBT organising in London, a special section on LGBT volunteering and activism, and contributions from a wide range of people on the theme of heritage and diverse LBT women’s organising.

This second edition is presented in a distinctly different format from the Almanac 1st Edition. In order to create a more accessible picture of London LGBT organising and also highlight and celebrate the range and diversity of activists and organisers past and present, the printed Almanac has a graphic and visual style.

The Almanac aims to provide a strategic information base for diverse London LGBT organisations to plan and develop; and for funders and infrastructure organisations to be better equipped to understand the experience of, and offer support to, diverse LGBT organisations. The Almanac was conceived after the publication of the PiP Report (KiS 2007), which was the first in depth look at London LGBT organising and infrastructure in light of the government’s review of infrastructure development at that time. The work is also part of KiS’s wider work with London LGBT organisations and individuals.

The London LGBT Almanac 1st Edition, published by KiS in April 2011, provided an important benchmark to measure changes in the London LGBT organising landscape year on year, in a rapidly changing climate. It has been reported that the 1st Edition has been instrumental across diverse LGBT organising in raising awareness about each organisation’s work, in preparing funding bids and in influencing policy. In particular, the provision of a hard copy report highlighting the range of organisations has been useful in the face of limited visibility and understanding of their diversity, number and impact.

Positive reviews of the first edition were published for instance in Third Sector. Julia Unwin of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation writes: ‘organisations that have never established a strong foothold on the increasingly shaky funding ladder will

1 Available at http://www.kairosinsoho.org.uk/KISalmanacRGB.pdf

2 http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/Article/1076755/Fiona-Ellis-masterclass-presenting-information. Cathy Pharoah also reviewed the Almanac 1st Edition for Charity Times
feel even more insecure in these very difficult times… that is why this new Almanac from KiS is so important. In straightforward and clear language it describes the funding environment, focusing on practical and achievable opportunities while making a compelling case for change. The LGBT community is well served by a publication such as this which enables a sober, grounded, and evidence-based analysis of the funding needs, and requirements, of a very important set of voluntary and community organisations.’

Both feedback about the Almanac 1st Edition, and some of its important findings, set the direction for this edition.

Exploring diverse LGBT experience, at both an individual level and an organisation level, has been key this year. The Almanac 1st Edition findings were explored at the London LGBT Learning Network events in May and September 2011. These events looked in detail at issues that stood out for attention. The first edition findings made clear that LBT women are underrepresented across current ‘LGBT’ organising, and also that it is essential to better understand experiences of ‘giving one’s time for free’ in order to support sustainable, independent, diverse LGBT organising. The extent of activity around policy and campaigning within the sector was also remarkable in the first year. Therefore this year attention has been paid specifically to: policy and campaigning collaboration; LGBT volunteering experiences; heritage and lesbian, bi and trans women’s organising; and diverse fundraising. Subsequent editions will focus on other issues that have arisen in the 1st and 2nd Editions, and update the more detailed statistical information.

The LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition is also a snapshot of a particular grassroots sub-sector of voluntary and community action. This year it also captures a historic moment in which acclaimed photographers Ingrid Pollard and Ajamu capture each other in portrait. A set of portraits by Ajamu of all the contributors to the heritage section, likely presented together for the first and only time, is also included.

As will be discussed further in the methodology section, the sample of the Almanac 2nd Edition looks quite different from the first. Twenty additional organisations have been included in the Almanac research this year. New participants are primarily organisations with social and arts and culture aims. We actively sought inclusion of these groups in order to explore and promote their importance to LGBT community development and positive engagement of diverse LGBT people. The sample also includes three exclusively bisexual-led organisations, where none
that were London-based were included last year. About 40% of the sample is LGBT community of identity organisations (LGBT organisations that work around a specific equalities area, e.g. race, disability). As a constant theme the publication highlights the specific experience of LGBT community of identity organisations because it is evident that these organisations have different experiences across many issues.

A list of all of the organisations that participated is included in the publication. Profiles of all of the organisations that have been part of the London LGBT Almanac 1st and 2nd Editions can be found and edited in the London LGBT Almanac wiki³.

³ http://londonlgbtalmanac.wikispaces.com/
The London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition is published in a climate of ‘equalities recession’: defined as a curtailment of institutional support for the pursuit of equality. ‘There are a number of developments in recent months that suggest a weakening of government commitment to equality as a core value. The first sign of a different perspective on equality was a change in language…we have seen a shift in the political rhetoric where fairness has increasingly replaced equality’ (Jackson and Speeden 2012). Equality is absent from the principles of the ‘Big Society’. The Runnymede Trust, in its report ‘Fair’s Fair’ published in July 2011, finds that BAME people fear that the big society will fuel racial tensions, and that this government’s flagship policies, such as free schools, will only increase segregation (Francis 2011).

The community cohesion, localism and big society agendas are impacting negatively on equality organising generally and LGBT organising specifically. Within these agendas, people are encouraged to think about sameness rather than difference. At a time when local authorities are legally obliged to think more broadly about equality, incorporating ‘new’ protected characteristics, the notion of community cohesion altered, and in some cases, confused the framework entirely. The concept of ‘community cohesion’ emerged in the UK in 2001 with the Cantle Report’¹. This report has been criticised by Southall Black Sisters: ‘although social and economic inequalities were touched upon, the focus of the enquiry was largely on the cultural manifestation of segregation rather than structural inequality’ (2010: 14). As a policy driver this notion has undoubtedly informed the acceleration of attention to localism and the gradual ‘mainstreaming’ of equalities focussed work into general provision. During the period of implementation of cohesion policy, between 2001 and 2011, there has been an eleven fold increase in the number of people voting for far right parties (Institute of Community Cohesion 2011).

There is something specific about LGBT organising within this wider policy context, and the demise of political will towards an equal

¹ The Cantle Report drew attention to ‘polarised and segregated communities’, in which people led ‘parallel lives’ and made some 67 recommendations. Whilst still highlighting the need to tackle inequalities, the recommendations were much more wide ranging and amounted to a new approach to race and diversity.
society, which is its age and the minimal extent of its integration into wider equalities infrastructure.

The Almanac also emerges amidst a nationalist and deeply heterosexist fervour that is somehow neatly captured in the Coalition for Equal Marriage’s campaign video\(^2\), imbued with militarism. Interestingly, the Almanac highlights that if people could change one area of policy immediately, many say it would be to create equal marriage; however, this is a wish expressed disproportionately amongst mainstream LGBT organisations, and this is not, by and large a desire expressed by the community of identity\(^3\) LGBT organisations in London.

An equalities agenda enables healthy dialogue across and between different groups, about meaning. This is perhaps despite the increasing institutionalisation of equalities sectors. A cohesion and mainstreaming agenda, promotes an ideal that is about everybody getting along whilst discouraging people from reflecting on difference and the structural inequalities that exist. Essentially, such an agenda divides, and omits critical conversations about inequality, poverty and power.

There have been some successful challenges to government by the voluntary and community sector (VCS) on the grounds of equality\(^4\), but these significant political victories are countered by the wider observation that specialist housing, refuge and health services are being gradually absorbed into mainstream organisations. This ‘mainstreaming’ is both political and economic, with larger organisations bidding for and winning contracts on the basis of cost. In just over a decade, and after a major focus of attention on the state of equalities and discrimination in the UK\(^5\), the teeth within the Equality Act, to oblige local authorities to assess equality implications of policy, are not sharp, and are broadly inaccessible to challenge.

The Equality Act 2010 means that sexual orientation and transgender identity have entered the legislative equalities frame. However, the extent to

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2 Produced by the Coalition for Equal Marriage, directed by Mike Buonaiuto.

3 In a policy context these are often referred to as ‘protected characteristic’ organisations or ‘equalities’ organisations.

4 For example, Southall Black Sisters against Ealing Council; Roma Support against London Councils.

which thinking around these issues exists within the plethora of institutions forming ‘government’, is extremely limited. Wherever and whenever LGBT issues are tabled, it is as though this were their first ever coming out. In particular in local government policy, the extent to which intersectionality and equality were unable to find a place at the table during the rise of cohesion discourse, and despite legal changes, was remarkable.

The cohesion agenda attempts to drive a move away from funding single equality work. In the interests of ‘everyone getting along’, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion reiterated the Cantle report’s recommendation against ‘single group funding’, i.e. funding community groups organised on the basis of identity (Haq 2008). Moreover, commissioning, the contract culture and the resulting focus on measurable outputs and outcomes mean that it is increasingly difficult to fund equalities work where measurable outputs can only be achieved over a significant period of time. The outcome focus fuels a drive toward quick solutions which often fail to challenge the institutionalised nature of heterosexism. The specifics of equalities work make certain funding frameworks fundamentally inhibiting to the course, creativity and independence of the work.

The continued gradual unfolding of the impact of outcome funding is intensifying with the significant cuts in public spending. There is less and less questioning of the disappearance of single strand funding. ‘Protecting Independence – the Voluntary Sector 2012’ report, published in January this year, identifies that ‘statutory funding, and the way that public services are commissioned, [is] the source of much concern’ and raises issues such as: ‘an inability for the sector to influence design, delivery and funding models; the increasing blurring of boundaries between private, public and voluntary sectors; the risk of self-censorship and challenges to the sector’s independence of voice; the pressures on independent governance; and the need for regulations and safeguards that protect, and do not hinder, independence’. Inclusion London has found that many Deaf and Disabled People’s Organisations in London ‘reported concerns with current tendering and procurement practices that appeared to be tailored in favour of large organisations’ (2012: 3). ‘Protecting Independence’ calls for urgent action in the coming year, in particular the importance of ‘understanding the diverse needs and value of different parts of the sector, including those of smaller voluntary organisations’.

Quoted in the original PiP Report (KiS 2007): ‘The operating environment for VCOs
has changed substantially over the last ten years, and to the extent, some would argue, that an increasing interest from government is posing a serious threat to its independence and its role in advocacy and social reform’ (Ball and Unwin 1998). Some might argue now, more than then, that the major players in voluntary sector infrastructure do not keep sufficient distance between government agendas and their own. Despite no analysis or reference to the existence of hundreds, possibly thousands, of equalities organisations, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations’ Civil Society Almanac 2012 claims to provide a full and comprehensive analysis of ‘civil society organisations’ in the UK (NCVO 2012). The report undoubtedly provides a major foundation for the development of policy and funding year on year, and yet is absent of equalities content and context.

In this wider context of a changing sector, ideas about volunteering, at the bedrock of community development and social action, are undergoing significant changes. ‘Volunteering’ is being presented as though invented by the current government. Some organisations have little option but to recruit volunteers more to meet funder targets than to meet the needs of service users or to provide a positive and fulfilling volunteer experience (Ramsay 2007). There is barely any reference to volunteering in relation to affirming identity in mainstream analysis and reporting. In this regard, the Almanac takes a close look at ‘giving one’s time for free’ in the context of the London LGBT voluntary and community sector.

The London LGBT Almanac is one of very few in depth research reports that reflect the social and economic position of community of identity voluntary and community sector organisations and those organisations with intersectional identities as a focus. The data is first hand and immediate. It stands as a unique reference point for consideration of impact of change, and trends in development in a particular sub-sector of the VCS. This is a reference point that may prove useful for any community of identity sector, particularly thinking about independence, the importance of unfunded organisations and the diversity therein.

The LGBT sector is a micro-cosm of the wider sector, with its hierarchy of super charities, in that there is one large LGB charity with a significant profile that this year is predicted to have an income level equivalent to 75% of the remainder of the sector in London, over one hundred organisations in total. Given the lack of attention to LGBT issues more broadly, there is a risk that the impact and drive of the majority of the sector remains largely un-
recognised, and overlooked. Many of the individuals behind the work for decades, are simply not heard, and not visible. The Almanac aims to set a different, real and complex context as the backdrop for future development, outside of the one-dimensional perspective often given on the LGBT VCS.

Whilst the many prejudices that community of identity organisations address may be different, the ways in which institutional versions of these evolve to exclude, marginalise and undermine, are common. Therefore the analysis of the Almanac is aimed at a wide range of people and organisations with an interest and concern for equality, and the role of the VCS towards that end.

The Almanac is also published after an intense period of relationship building, learning and outreach between KiS and many partners and friends. The London LGBT sector is a multi-faceted place that is working at the intersection of many communities and multiple issues. The Almanac seeks to highlight a sector in all its diversity, in which knowledge and not funding is power and size is less important than engagement.

The Almanac is also set in the context of an inspiring re-emergence of grassroots organising, perhaps as people see the impact of single and dominant voices, and wish to speak and act for themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition Sample</th>
<th>Total (109)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community group</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership organisation</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered charity</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company limited by guarantee</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network or forum</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT project in non-LGBT organisation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social enterprise</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic group</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership project between voluntary organisations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student group</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community interest company</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial and provident society</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Methodology

The main research sample is made up of those currently active, not for profit organisations that specifically serve or represent LGBT people based in and serving Greater London, which completed the London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition survey. The survey was promoted and emailed to all London based LGBT organisations known to KiS, and completed between November 2011 and January 2012. The extent of ‘known groups’ was extended by carrying out in depth desk research. Separate surveys were created for funded and unfunded organisations and both were available online or in hard copy. Representatives from diverse organisations tested the survey before it was launched. An interpreted face to face session was held for D/deaf organisers to complete the survey.

Diverse, radical, grassroots, less formal and short term or ad hoc groups, and groups engaged in arts and culture activities, were particularly encouraged to complete the survey. The sample of the Almanac 2nd Edition is thus distinct from the sample of the Almanac 1st Edition. The Almanac 2nd Edition sample is larger by 20 organisations. Some organisations that participated in the 1st Edition did not participate in the 2nd Edition due to: lack of capacity; no longer being in operation; or becoming part of other organisations.

Many London based organisations, those that have funds and those that do not, are active nationally, and even internationally. This year some questions were re-framed in order to capture certain details about organisations that are based in London but also operate elsewhere. For example, four organisations that completed the survey have staff based outside of London (numbering five full time and two part time), and these have been excluded from the staffing analysis. However, for organisations that are London-based but operate elsewhere and have funding, there was no way to consistently or verifiably separate income and expenditure that impacts on London and income and expenditure that impacts elsewhere. This is partly owing to the fact that London is the capital, so much national work remains London-based work, albeit that has a national impact. Therefore the information presented here on income and expenditure relates to whole organisations. We understand that it would be desirable to be able to separate income and expenditure that impacts on London and that which impacts elsewhere, but in the absence of a consist-
ent way to be able to do that, this is a common approach to regional voluntary sector research.

In total 112 valid surveys were returned (52 from the unfunded survey and 60 from the funded survey).

Of these, two were excluded as they provided information to indicate that they are not based in London. One was excluded as its responses indicated it did not specifically serve or represent LGBT people. The full sample of the London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition is thus made up of 109 organisations. In the main body of text, all numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number unless this provides insufficient detail around a specific issue.

From a total of 78 organisations, groups or projects that indicated that they raise funds or have income, (from both surveys), 13 were excluded from the finance sample as they are projects within larger organisations, either where the large organisation is already included in the sample or where these projects are located within non-LGBT organisations. A further organisation was excluded as no financial information was provided.

A further five organisations were excluded from the finance sample as they are not LGBTQI by mission though they do important work with diverse LGBT people. One organisation provided insufficient information to be included in the full sample, but their figures were added into the finance sample using data from the Charity Commission. The finance sample is thus made up of 60 organisations.

We have defined LGBT community of identity organisations to include only those organisations that work on behalf of equality groups, and are run by the group that they work on behalf of (e.g. a disabled LGBT organisation run by disabled LGBT people).

The categories that you will find in certain aspects of the analysis were developed after careful consideration of responses to open ended questions during the Almanac 1st Edition research. The categories of multiple choice questions have been subsequently added to, to reflect organisation’s responses to ‘other’ in order to be as accurately representative of London LGBT organising as possible.

Wherever comparisons are made with findings in the Almanac 1st Edition or the PiP Report (KiS 2007), this comparison is between the same sample of organisations unless otherwise stated; that is, those that completed all or both surveys.

Participants in the focus groups that formed the basis of the LGBT volunteering and activism experiences chapter were offered a bursary for their expertise, and travel expenses.
Purposes and motivations of LGBT organisations

Nine broad categories for purposes and motivations, detailed below, were developed based on analysis of organisations’ stated purposes and mission statements, and responses concerning drivers for what organisations do. Many organisations fall into more than one category. The categories have changed since the Almanac 1st Edition to reflect the new organisations included in the research this year and to include information on motivations in addition to purposes.

To promote LGBT equality and human rights, and equality for specific diverse LGBT communities, including work to raise awareness of gender diversity, and to challenge oppression of diverse LGBT people. Approximately 24% (n=26) of organisations have this as their purpose or driver. For example Imaan ‘promotes the Islamic values of peace, social justice and tolerance through its work, and aspires to bring about a world that is free from prejudice and discrimination against all Muslims and LGBT people’.

To build and empower community, including work around LGBT heritage and work to address isolation. The largest proportion of organisations, 38% (n=41) have this as their purpose. For instance Drum Out Loud exists to provide ‘a place for LGBT drummers and non-drummers (we all have rhythm) to have a social activity available to them on a regular basis. The aim is ‘to build a Drum Out Loud community, where people can come and meet new people and share the experience of being part of a drum circle creating collective rhythms’. OutdoorLads aims to ‘give [gay and bi men] a strong sense of community and to promote self-development and self-worth’.

To address LGBT experience and need around a specific issue, including promoting LGBT inclusion in mainstream services. About 20% (n=22) of organisations do this. The West London Gender Variant Association for example works ‘to improve the health, well being and safety of local gender variant people by building communication links and positive working relationships with...relevant health organisations...to ensure fair and equal access to surgical procedures, medication, psychological care and funding...throughout the West London area’. Schools Out ‘works to make LGBT people in all our diversity visible and safe in education’ and this year will launch a website, ‘The Classroom’, ‘for teachers to find...good to go
lesson plans across the curriculum that are inclusive of LGBT [people], and a methodology that educates out all forms of oppression through the LGBT lens’.

To provide a platform for representation in order to influence policy. Approximately 33% (n=36) of organisations in the sample have this as their purpose. Justice for Gay Africans for instance ‘is a UK-based collaboration of activists, artists, academics, politicians and others designed to draw on the leadership and insight of Black people in the UK to effect positive change for Black LGBTI communities in Africa, Europe and the Commonwealth’.

To support LGBT organising and collaboration. About 13% (n=14) of organisations state that this is a purpose of theirs. LGBT Jigsaw for instance ‘is a London initiative to reduce LGBT youth homelessness. The project brings together Stonewall Housing, the Albert Kennedy Trust, PACE and Galop to provide a network of services for LGBT young people.’

To provide non-commercial social spaces and activities. Approximately 19% (n=21) of organisations indicated that this is their purpose. For example the Gay’s the Word bookshop Lesbian Discussion Group ‘[nurture] the well being and interaction of women who are attracted to other women in a relaxed, safe and non-commercial scene space’. One of the drivers of Bi Coffee Group is to be an alternative to the pub-based bi groups and accessible to wheelchair users.

To provide space for LGBT people of faith. 6% (n=7) of organisations in the sample indicated that they do this. Sarbat for instance is ‘a one-stop resource for LGBT Sikhs...its aims are: to provide a voice for and lobby on behalf of LGBT Sikhs; provide free resources on spirituality, Sikhism, and sexuality; publish testimonies of LGBT Sikhs; and hold regular social events (Sarbat Socials) in London.’

To provide support for individuals and communities affected by HIV. 4% (n=4) of organisations in the sample indicated that this is their purpose. For example the Eddie Surman trust ‘offer[s] care, support and advice to all people around all issues concerning HIV.’
Activities

London LGBT organisations carry out a diverse range of activities. The chart alongside shows the activities that organisations said that they engage in, and the following section looks at policy and campaigning activities in more detail.

Amongst trans organisations the most frequently reported activities are building knowledge and the provision of information, advice, signposting and referrals. Amongst women’s organisations the most frequently reported activities are information, advice, signposting and referrals, and events. No women’s organisations, of which there are very few, identified campaigning as an activity of their organisation. However LBT women’s work was explored in a London LGBT Learning Network workshop, and a participant pointed out that ‘there are so many projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation activities</th>
<th>% (n=106)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, advice, signposting, referrals</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building knowledge</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters and online media</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigning</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (e.g. of public sector staff)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Befriending and/or mentoring</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills development (developing the skills of LGBT people)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and research services</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource development</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts activities (e.g. performance)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting LGBT organisations</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (i.e. in schools)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpline</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activities*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party reporting</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport*</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious/spiritual worship</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health testing and alternative therapies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth work*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct action and/or civil disobedience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing provision</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These categories were not available as responses when organisations completed the survey; they were added afterwards based on responses to ‘if a main activity is not listed please tell us below’. Therefore it is likely that the number of responses shown is lower than it would otherwise have been.
[by LBT women] that go on but are understated…invis-
ible.’

Amongst BAME organisations the most frequently reported activities are events, advocacy, arts activities, building knowledge, and information, advice, signposting and referrals.

None of the above community of identity organisations say that they engage in direct service provision e.g. around health or housing. As will be explored further in the finance and funding section, LGBT community of identity work receives only a fraction of the income of the LGBT sector. BAME, women’s and trans organisations all reported engagement in arts activities. BAME-led Wise Thoughts for example writes, ‘our projects support community cohesion and aim to inform, raise awareness and promote socio-cultural diversity using arts as a key tool to engender social change.’

Policy and campaigning

The London LGBT Almanac 1st Edition provided a comprehensive map of the London LGBT sector’s engagement in policy and campaigning including: the levels at which organisations engage (local authorities, national government departments, service providers, and arts and sports institutions etc); the specific legislation organisations tried to impact; the issues that organisations are concerned with; the methods that they use to effect change; and their policy and campaigning aims.

Policy work and campaigning is an important part of what LGBT organisers and organisations do: in the London LGBT Almanac 2nd Edition, the fifth largest proportion, 38% (n=40) of organisations listed campaigning as an activity of their organisation, and approximately 33% (n=36) of organisations in this year’s sample have as their purpose providing a platform for representation in order to influence policy.

There has been a shift in what organisations are concerned with this year in the light of external developments. Overall there was less engagement with legislation reported by organisations in the survey, now that the Equality Act is law. That said, organisations are concerned that the Equality Act is implemented, and would like to create change where the content of the Act, as it was eventually passed, is insufficient. One organisation said ‘the Act may be in place but still doesn’t go far enough’. A change that another organisation would like to see is ‘addressing protection [against] discrimination and harassment of trans people who do not understand their
identities in the framework of ‘gender reassignment’.

There was also desire to effect change in new legislation, like the Localism Bill. There was concern expressed about possible threats from this government to the Human Rights Act.

In response to the question: ‘if your organisation could make one change to public policy right now, what would it be?’ one organisation said ‘to stop the current Health Bill from going through.’ REGARD is working to change the Mental Capacity Act, introducing a ‘Sue’s Law’ to enable people who are not in a legally recognised relationship to nominate their ‘next of kin’ by means of a simple legal declaration.

The table alongside shows what issues London-based LGBT organisations campaign on and/or engage in policy-influencing work on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations policy/campaign issues</th>
<th>% (n=80)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homophobic and transphobic crime</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual health</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuts to public services</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith and homophobia</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth services</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV testing and services for people living with HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil partnerships/equal marriage</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia and transphobia in sport</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring/national statistics on identity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced marriage</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and alcohol harm reduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care*</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex work</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability access</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older/adult social care*</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These categories were not available as responses when organisations completed the survey; they were added afterwards based on responses to ‘if a main issue that you work on is not listed please tell us’. Therefore it is likely that the number of responses shown is lower than it would otherwise be.
Policy/campaign issues

A primary policy aim of many LGBT organisations is to change homophobic, transphobic and other discriminatory practices in the delivery and commissioning of public services; another is overcoming isolation through greater visibility and integration for diverse LGBT people, and overall ‘community cohesion’. One BAME LGBT-led organisation said ‘by encouraging community cohesion through the running of projects and activities which allow for mixed communities to get together, we are embedding campaigning activities within all that we do’. A bisexual-led organisation said they would like to see ‘the inclusion of “and bisexuals” [change] from being a token gesture into a genuinely thought-out deliberate and researched inclusion. Many gay issues are also bi issues, but some bisexual issues get erased by being “straight and bi” issues or solely “bi issues”.’

Funding cuts, particularly around LGBT services, youth services, and the arts, were a predominant concern for LGBT organisers. The second largest proportion of organisations, 24% (n=19) indicated that they campaign on cuts to public services and 21% (n=17) indicated that they campaign on youth services. One organisation said that they would like to see ‘more funding and recognition for LGBTQ youth work’. A youth organisation shared: ‘with funding we could do so much more’. LGBT organisations have been formed to work specifically around cuts to public services and funding. Queer Resistance for instance is ‘a collective of queers and allies across the UK coming together to fight the cuts - including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer folk. We come from all communities, backgrounds and walks of life and we share one common objective, to resist these changes.’

LGBT community of identity organisations would like to see changes such as ‘full access for disabled people to public places and services’; ‘immigration and asylum laws [that] are de-racialised and equal to heterosexuals applying for spouse visas’; and ‘understanding of issues for LGBT parents and their children’.

Many organisations would also like to see equal marriage in place.

Some specific changes organisations sought, further to the issues they identified as working on, are: to reverse the new housing benefit regulations; to standardise reporting practices on homophobic crime; to implement inclusive sex and relationship education; to move away from market-driven funding for services; to improve the adoption and fostering process for same gender couples; to tackle health inequalities experienced by LGBT peo-
ple; to improve the criminal justice system; to implement equality and diversity training for teachers; to have better healthcare provision for trans people; and to raise awareness of the importance of the work of the LGBT voluntary and community sector, and the HIV voluntary and community sector.

There were several references to working across equalities in organisations’ descriptions of their campaigning and policy influencing work. For instance one organisation said they were ‘working in partnership with other protected equality groups to ensure equality considerations are addressed’. Stonewall Housing ‘shares the experiences of LGBT people in housing need with other agencies such as National Aids Trust and Refugee Support to produce innovative research reports and works with other housing groups to include LGBT experiences in housing campaigns’.

Some arts-based organisations have fresh perspectives to bring to the policy and campaigning arena. For instance one said, ‘the power of song provides a universal language to bring people together, provoke the broadening of musical appreciation, rally support, and [oppose] negative stereotypes that feed homophobia.’

Of course not all LGBT organisations are engaged in policy and campaigning – one said simply ‘we are not political’. Further, 28% (n=26) of organisations participated in no policy forums or initiatives or consultations during the past year. Organisations were slightly more likely to engage in policy initiatives and consultations than policy forums.

For those that do, the data provided on the number of policy initiatives, consultations and forums that organisations participated in during the past year (as shown in the table next page) suggests an overall increase in these types of policy engagement since the Almanac 1st Edition survey.

Policy initiatives, consultations and forums

Participation in policy and campaigning through the channels of consultation and government policy forums has its challenges. One borough-based LGBT forum said: ‘it is often difficult to engage with the LGBT community and to get them to give their input into policy development work. Often we feel that opinions may simply reflect those of the Forum’s management committee rather than being truly representative of the community’.

Policy achievements that organisations shared from the past year include: ‘we got a funded anti-bullying project into schools’ and ‘we have
created useful dialogue with governmental institutions and civil society organisations...to build links in communication across sectors on Black LGBTI issues’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of initiatives/consultations</th>
<th>Number of organisations 2010</th>
<th>Number of organisations 2011</th>
<th>% change</th>
<th>Number of forums 2010</th>
<th>Number of forums 2011</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-40%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-42%</td>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7 to 9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 plus</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10 plus</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experiences

Organisations were asked to reflect on their experience during the past year. In response to the question ‘on a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you feel your organisation has been able to deliver against your purpose or mission in the past year?’ This year’s total sample overall was more positive than last year’s total sample overall: the largest proportion of organisations, 42% (n=38) indicate 4 compared with 38% (n=27) in 2010 – perhaps a surprising finding given the political economic context, though less so when considering that this year’s additional organisations operate largely independently of statutory funding or engagement. Amongst organisations that are new to the sample this year, 39% (n=21) indicated 4 and 24% (n=13) indicated 5.

The diagram opposite in contrast shows only organisations that completed both surveys, where 16 organisations (34%) indicated that they were less able to deliver their purpose or mission in 2011 than in 2010.

Delivery against purpose/mission
An organisation providing essential support to LGBT people who have experienced violence said about their ability to deliver against their mission: ‘we do...’
not have enough resources to meet demand’. A trans organisation shared: ‘we are managing but we’re struggling’.

An organisation for LGBT people of faith said ‘lack of funding prevents us from carrying out our full assumed remit’ and a Black LGBT organisation stated ‘not enough resources....’.

### Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of organisation</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered charity</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company limited by guarantee</td>
<td>+21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note to the table: Registered Charity n=21 (2010), n=22 (2011); CLG n=14 (2010), n=17 (2011).

### When organisations were established

The year in which the largest number of organisations was formed is 1995 (n=8), second is 1999 (n=7), and the same number (n=6) were formed in both 2007 and 2010, demonstrating that new LGBT organisations continue to be created. Three organisations formed in 2011, since the London LGBT Almanac 1st Edition survey closed.

The average number of years that organisations have been established is sixteen.
# Geography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic scope</th>
<th>% (n=109)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across London</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London and south of England</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several boroughs</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One borough</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/neighbourhood-based</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-regional</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Premises

8.5% of organisations (n=4) that did have a regular and reliable office or meeting space in 2010 now no longer do.

Without regular meeting space 38%

With regular meeting space 62%

Office / meeting space
The people involved

A considerable number of diverse people are involved in and impacted by London LGBT organising. Last year for instance we found that the service users of LGBT organisations number between a quarter and a half of London’s LGBT population; this does not account for the thousands of volunteers, trustees, staff, members, and many event attendees.

The Almanac 2nd Edition focuses predominantly on staff and volunteers (including trustees), target group, and participants in activities and service users. A special in-depth article on LGBT volunteering and activism experiences is included and has been developed through focus groups and research during the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target communities</th>
<th>% (n=107)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBT/LGBTQ/LGBTQI people</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young LGBT people</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay/Bi men/ MSM</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAME LGBT people</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB women</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans people</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual people</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older LGBT people (50+)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People affected by HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT parents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled LGBT people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGB people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT people of faith</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Other’ includes non-identity based groups e.g. LGBT artists; and categories that were not included in the survey options such as Bear signers (of British Sign Language); trans BAME people; refugees; and Muslim LGBTQI people.

75% (n=80) of organisations are run by the specific LGBT group that they work on behalf of, and 25% (n=27) are not.
Organisations and staff (n=102)

Without paid staff 68%

With paid staff 32%
For each member of staff there are approximately 9 active volunteers

Staff and volunteers
Percentage of full and part time staff (n=183)

Full time staff 38%
Part time staff 62%
Percentage change in staffing levels
Volunteers

The PiP report (KiS 2007) found that the LGBT voluntary and community sector is disproportionately reliant on volunteers, and that these volunteers contribute many more hours on average than volunteers in other contexts.

Staff Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff overall in this year’s sample</th>
<th>183 (full time and part time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The median* number of staff per staffed organisation</td>
<td>1 full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 part time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74% (n=32) of LGBT community of identity organisations do not have paid staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One organisation that had paid staff in the PiP sample now no longer does</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There has been a 20% decline in staffing levels since last year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note to table: LGBT community of identity organisations mentioned here may be LGBT projects in mainstream organisations.

Participants and service users

Excluding one uncommonly large organisation, the organisations in this year’s sample report 88,820 service users or participants in their activities.

Amongst organisations that have experienced an increase in their number of service users since the Almanac 1st Edition survey in 2010, the average increase in each organisation was 59%.

Just 4 organisations (8.5%) experienced a decrease in their number of service users.

Volunteer facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteers overall in this year’s sample</th>
<th>1673</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median number of volunteers per organisation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median number of volunteer hours per month</td>
<td>30 hours per organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT organising benefits from</td>
<td>131,580 volunteer hours per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,965 per calendar month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2530 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>361 per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The median is the numerical value that separates the higher half of a sample from the lower half.
When comparing volunteer hours per month with the number of volunteers in an organisation, the volunteers contributing the highest number of hours per month individually are nearly all in LGBT community of identity organisations – 8 of the 9 organisations where volunteers each contribute 21-140 hours per month are LGBT community of identity organisations.

Comparison of numbers of organisations where volunteers contribute the most hours
The decreases in the number of volunteers in some organisations, and in the number of volunteer hours contributed, are in some cases clearly at least partly explained by capacity factors such as loss of premises, staff, and income. However in other cases the reasons are likely to be complex, as are the reasons for the overall decrease in volunteer hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparing volunteers in 2011 to 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of volunteers has increased in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of volunteers has decreased in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of volunteers has remained the same in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall the number of volunteers has risen by 1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparing volunteer hours in 2011 to 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of volunteer hours per calendar month has increased in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of volunteer hours per calendar month has decreased in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of volunteer hours per calendar month has remained the same in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall the number of volunteer hours per calendar month that LGBT organising benefits from has decreased by 9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

During the Autumn of 2011, KiS held two workshops and focus groups to explore diverse LGBT volunteering and activism experiences. In this section we will share the results of this research in the interest of increasing and celebrating LGBT activism and volunteering, improving support where needed, and pursuing greater sustainability.

The research included activists, volunteers, people who run LGBT organisations on a voluntary basis, volunteer managers in LGBT organisations, and representatives from mainstream volunteering infrastructure organisations. There was a high level of participation from LGBT community of identity organisations. One of the workshops/focus groups was mixed; in the other, participants were all from LGBT community of identity organisations, which created a unique discussion.

We know from the PiP report and the London LGBT Almanac 1st Edition that LGBT organisations are much more reliant on volunteers than other organisations, and that these volunteers tend to contribute more hours than volunteers in other settings. This part of the sector research has been about trying to better understand the unique elements of LGBT volunteering and activism, so that it is possible, for example, to learn how to collaborate better together as a sector, or to share this information with mainstream funders and infrastructure organisations in order for them to provide appropriate support where needed. Research has shown that mainstream volunteering infrastructure is not consistently supportive of LGBT volunteering (Consortium of LGBT VCOs 2007). Volunteering in general is in a place of change in some respects. For instance roles and responsibilities may change with the increasing delivery of public services through volunteer-dependent organisations.

The results of this work are shared below, particularly what might be unique aspects of LGBT volunteering and activism, and what contributes to positive experiences for LGBT activists and volunteers. LGBT volunteering and activism are considered as being on the same spectrum, both sharing the giving of one’s time for free. One of the issues that emerged in the research is that both ‘volunteer’ and ‘activist’ are contentious terms that may alienate some people and inhibit participation. One participant argued for instance that the ‘label of volunteering is off-putting
amongst the BME community. It’s not a term people relate to; though many people give of their time free. So in what follows the focus is on people who give unpaid time to LGBT organising, whether they identify themselves as activists, as volunteers, or as neither. As one participant said, ‘people want to be involved - but don’t see it as activism or volunteering’.

LGBT volunteering and activism: What if anything is unique about it?

LGBT organising is particular, not only because it involves organising around gender and sexuality, and cross cutting issues round race, disability, age etc., but also because what we might describe as the LGBT ‘sector’ is relatively small despite its large impact: a relatively small number of organisations, and mostly run by a relatively small number of people. One participant made this comment whilst describing their experience of being in a new organisation with a small number of people involved: ‘I suppose the main thing out of that is disparity between having a group of very active people running an organisation that looks really active and looks really professional... looks like we’re punching well above our weight while actually on the inside it’s all volunteers which is incredibly difficult to do, when you’re kind of writing funding bids and doing all of the rest of it and you’re doing everything in your own time’.

Identity-based and equality-seeking motivations can be overlooked in mainstream volunteering research. A recent major research project into volunteering and participation for instance does not name personal experiences of identity-based inequality as a factor influencing why people participate; and whilst the report names ‘helping others’ as a personal motivation (Brodie et al 2011) it does not take into account ideas of helping oneself, or setting up something ‘for people who looked like me, sounded like me, and could relate to some of the issues that I was going through’.

Motivations and benefits

Creating and occupying spaces to share and explore mutual identity are very important motivations for LGBT volunteers and activists. One participant described their organisation as catering to a difficult and very specific set of needs emerging from a shared religious, sexual and cultural identity. ‘The idea of selfless community work is very significant within the community, and I try to tap into that to get people to take on tasks.’

Another participant pointed out that volunteering or activism is not always driven by
People felt that finding ‘community’ was an important motivating reason for giving one’s time in LGBT settings, and being able to be ‘out’ and comfortable in an LGBT identity within that; LGBT volunteering/activism is an opportunity to ‘give something and have a sense of belonging’; ‘community and collectivism - [we’ve] all got that one thing in common, particularly amongst trans people’. This is something that has been highlighted in an article looking at LGBT volunteering in Scotland, where research showed LGBT organisations can provide young LGBT volunteers a ‘safe space...to socialise, engage and participate, as a community of interest’ (Juetten and O’loan, 2007).

Related to this, in the focus groups people shared that they appreciated being amongst others with similar values in terms of working for LGBT equality when engaging in LGBT volunteering or activism.

People also shared that they felt a sense of responsibility, e.g. to improve the experiences of other LGBT people, or to ensure that LGBT perspectives were heard by policy makers. One participant said that he ‘felt a responsibility to take on a role and continue even in face of personal attacks – as [I’m] convinced about the importance of providing voice for the local LGBT community’.

In contrast to motivations in mainstream volunteering settings, people shared that gaining skills to add to their CV was not necessarily a motivating factor: ‘I didn’t...volunteer just to put on my CV. I did it because I wanted to do it and then...I learnt new skills, it kind of... helped to apply for jobs... because now I have the skills’.

In relation to skills development and employment, and the LGBT sector’s potential role in supporting people into work, it was important to note that in fact some had concerns that they would experience employment discrimination if they added LGBT volunteering experiences to their CVs. A volunteer manager shared that relatively few volunteers in the organisation asked them for a reference due to concerns about being outed and that having a negative impact. Although another participant spoke of the complexities of this: ‘I’ve always put it on my CV, and I have been advised not to, but I’m proud that I do it, and just put it on there. I don’t want to work for someone that would want to just sift me out anyway. Thankfully I have got a job, by putting it on the CV, so yeah
that was good. But we’ll see what happens in the future. It might go off depending on what I want to do’.

The impact or outcome of engagement with LGBT volunteering and activism varies with the type of organisation that people engage with. For instance in the case of support groups, people may leave the organisation when they have gained confidence - so that their leaving is a positive not a negative thing. ‘[An] increase in confidence can then lead people to stop - which, although impacting negatively on the running of the group, is obviously beneficial’. ‘People can use the group and then leave - a good thing - a sign they have passed through something, want to get on with their lives. It is a mark of achievement when you don’t then see people. Most people think of it as a negative when it just means people are getting on with their lives’. In contrast, an organiser from a lobbyist/advocacy organisation shared that their volunteers were all over committed, but ‘got the work done’.

Whilst ‘retention’ of volunteers is a central concern of mainstream volunteering, and an appropriate concern of some types of LGBT organisations, to understand LGBT volunteering and activism broadly it may be more relevant to consider what motivates people, and to recognise that people leaving organisations is not necessarily a bad thing. Also many people volunteer with more than one LGBT organisation, and can use skills developed in one organisation in another when they feel it is time for them to move on. One participant talked of their hope that although they could only offer a yearly event opportunity, the volunteers would contribute elsewhere throughout the year. ‘I think we had a lot of turnover of volunteers in the first year, because we gave them that experience but we didn’t know how to then take it on, reward it and try to encourage more of it... hopefully [the volunteers] go on to support other events in the community’. It is also possible as one participant pointed out that people gain confidence in identity-based sectors, and then move on to volunteer in mainstream contexts.

The complexity of visibility

Visibility arose in the research in complex ways. Participants explored whether in some contexts simply outing oneself is an activist act. ‘Visibility is important - people don’t see me and think I’m gay, so I have to raise it - is that activism?’ A faith-based LGBT organisation representative described how members created group visibility at Pride, while maintaining individual anonymity. One participant spoke about the impact of describing their activism experiences on their CV: ‘it’s a real issue but I couldn’t get a job for a long long time be-
cause of presenting as trans, and I was open about that on my CV’. Another participant said ‘the only way for me to break down discrimination is to be visible’; whilst for others ‘people would not recognise some people as gay, but fear stops people being more visible, [you] can’t force people to be more active, especially when they don’t have the confidence’.

**Building positive, sustainable experiences**

People shared what was positive for their own volunteering experiences. As the contexts that people were coming from were very diverse, not everything that follows will be relevant for each individual or organisation; but sharing learning is important to build positive, sustainable, experiences, and to recruit and retain volunteers and activists within LGBT organisations.

LGBT work can seem very challenging at times - it takes huge persistence to achieve goals. As one participant noted, you ‘have to be a very persistent person’. Another described ‘coming across lots of individuals who do not agree with your viewpoint - unpleasant emails, unpleasant comments, no getting away from it’.

Peer support can contribute toward positive experiences: ‘[I] would like to get more involved and learn other skills/knowledge from other LGBT volunteers. Hence being here and getting involved with the Learning Network to make [my organisation] better.’ ‘First of all [my group] offers a whole support and friendship network.’ One organiser said about the service users of their organisation: ‘a lot of people we work with are very isolated, and volunteering would really help a good portion of them to feel connected again’.

One participant spoke of members from his community who wanted to be involved but had little time, so he had to find other ways to get people involved such as going ‘into other [online spaces] to bring other people in’. Flexibility and creativity were also relevant in terms of funding the group’s activities; it was expressed that those who are working can be asked for a voluntary donation, whereas those that do not work do not need to pay.

A relatively large organisation in which one participant volunteers is unable to offer any expenses. ‘People say “how are we getting expenses?” and I’m like “huh, what are they?”’ - tube costs, and things like that, I don’t get anything... but I don’t mind doing it, you know what I mean... I think I’ve grown as a person doing it.’ There were few organisations who spoke about being able to offer volunteers their expenses, which suggests that, given
the number of people who do volunteer across the community, this in itself did not necessarily prevent people engaging. However it would seem important that these costs should be met, in order to be able to include people who cannot afford to be out of pocket.

One participant spoke about offering incentives for volunteers, such as discounts at Soho bars, but none of the other participants mentioned encouraging engagement in this way.

People’s perceptions of whether they will be welcome and included in organisations are important. Research in Scotland has shown that some disabled LGBT people who want to take part in an LGBT voluntary or community organisation may hide their disability to avoid further segregation and stereotyping, if the LGBT organisation is perceived as ableist (Disability Rights Commission 2006).

Yet the only national disabled LGBT organisation is entirely volunteer run. Providing safe spaces where prejudice and discrimination are challenged is essential to building positive and sustainable experiences for diverse LGBT volunteers and activists.

Giving people a sense of ownership over an organisation’s activities also emerged as a contributing factor to positive experiences.

In conclusion, the research indicated the following:

- Understanding the volunteer / activist spectrum is significant, as one or the other can be equally alienating. They are also roles that can exist within the same group and supplement each other. As one participant, a volunteer in multiple LGBT organisations, said: ‘placards are heavy – I don’t do much activism – as I see it.’

- With this in mind it is important to recognise that formal structures might not always work, and there may need to be greater flexibility with the roles people take on. ‘Need some structure but the less paperwork the better.’

- Jargon, bureaucracy and traditional notions of volunteering can be off-putting to a diverse community.

- Experiences of specific identity-based inequality, and creating spaces where identities are positively affirmed, are important motivating factors for LGBT activists and volunteers.

- Recognising that finding community is a big motivating factor for LGBT people, and understanding how this relates to the opportunities or tasks that people take on, is important if organisations wish to ensure that volunteers
and activists’ expectations are met. This is consistent with findings from the PiP research that LGBT organisations have a strong social aspect that provides critical support to LGBT individuals.

• Volunteers’ moving on does not necessarily represent a negative volunteering experience. In fact the opposite may well be true. Sometimes moving on is symptomatic of an increase in self-confidence and skills.

• Peer support is very important for positive experiences.

• Incentives such as boosting CVs and offering discounts aren’t necessarily reasons given for volunteers engaging.

• Resourcing expenses for those taking part, whilst not cited as a barrier to taking part by those in the focus groups, will inevitably impact on who is able to get involved, and disproportionately so on those from communities that experience multiple inequalities.

• Spaces that engage equalities and diversity are currently receiving little funding but motivate high levels of volunteer engagement. Given volunteers and activists describing ‘over commitment’ and ‘burnout’, any discussions around sustainability must consider the ongoing impact this has on individuals, and where space is created for recognising this.
Editorial by Marai Larasi, Director of Imkaan

This section of the Almanac focuses on some of the diverse ways in which LGBT organising has happened, and continues to happen. Each contribution in and of itself provides something unique and valuable, offering memories, insights and perspectives on journeys travelled. As a collection of narratives, this section opens up a much needed space for reflection, dialogue and new knowing.

In our work and in our living, we must recognize that difference is a reason for celebration and growth, rather than a reason for destruction.

Audre Lorde

As the voluntary and community sector (VCS) has become increasingly ‘professionalised’, we have found ourselves (re)creating hierarchies around phenomena such as need, space and representation. At the same time, some forms of activism (usually those linked to the provision of services to meet specific needs) have been validated through funding, commissioning and sponsorship; while other voices have become less heard, and other ways of organising have become less important and even less credible.

This has important implications for LGBT people and how we organise, how we describe our needs and how we define our aspirations. In thinking about the importance of this section of the Almanac, I found myself asking several questions which reflect my own frustrations at the limited representations of LGBT people and our identities, even within the ‘progressive’ spaces afforded within the VCS. Who tells our stories? How are they told? Are they our stories or are they single narratives? When they are told as our stories, how often are they one dimensional scripts that have the potential to further homogenise us? Within the spaces of this ‘industry’ of social justice where we are activists, advocates, service providers and campaigners, have we ensured that we acknowledge the structural inequality that exists within LGBT ‘communities’? Have we closed doors behind us once we ourselves have gained access and opportunities for voice? Have we created space for our difference? Or have we ourselves become architects of sameness?

Each contribution in this section provides a particular per-
spective, with organising being defined and expressed in multiple ways; and although the thread of identity runs throughout, each piece offers the reminder that there is no one LGBT experience. Yet there are some common themes. These are narratives of defiance and of the carving out of space. These are stories of survival, commitment and resilience. Some of these stories are touched by rage and a sense of loss; and I am struck by the thought that there are many unheard memories and accounts of LGBT activism, that as we have become a sector within a sector, we have perhaps forgotten to tend to the hurt and heartbreak that we face when ‘the personal is the political’.

Crucially these pieces speak to us of our differences, differences rooted in everything from social identity and family histories, privilege and marginalisation to journeys in and out of activism and professional pathways. This section offers us a small cutting of what is ultimately the tapestry that is LGBT ‘community’; reminding us that we have (hi)stories and legacies that are richer than we often now know. From Anne Hayfield’s description of ‘We Are Here’, to Vald’s reflections about aging described by Dr Catherine McNamara, to Nazmia Jamal et al’s discussion of black lesbian identity, there is a resounding reinforcement that we are here - all of us.

KiS’s commitment to ongoing recognition and support of the different ways in which we organise is not only an important antidote to our (re)production of hierarchies and the associated structural inequalities; this opening up of space in which difference is acknowledged, communicated, expressed or even simply held is also an opportunity to speak in the language of aspiration rather than in the language of need. Beverley Duguid rightfully states, ‘oppression can also be a source of unity’; yet the challenge for us is to also unite within spaces of vision and aspiration. It is essential that we develop narratives which define us outside of our need, and in which we validate our lived experiences (including those which are painful and damaging), while daring to imagine ourselves in ways that do not reproduce notions of us as social problems, as hate crime statistics and sexual health figures.

I am grateful for each of these pieces and to the contributors for being willing to share them with us. I have been moved, troubled, touched, reminded and inspired. I have learnt, revisited and (re)viewed old ground through new lenses. These contributions have given me a taste of who we are, where we have been, where we are, as well as lessons we have learnt. I truly hope that the space that this section opens up will
provide us with many more opportunities to write new, diverse, individual and collective chapters which honour all that we are.

*Editorial note:* KiS convened an Editorial Board comprised of Ajamu, Lynette Goddard and Sue Sanders that met in October 2011 to develop the theme of heritage and diverse LBT women’s organising. The Editorial Board identified contributors and topics, and developed a brief for writers that defined heritage as: a reclamation of what is often an exclusive domain of mainstream institutions; that which is personal to diverse LGBT people, which has positioned ourselves today; something remembered, told and preserved by ourselves in a way that does not seek to define ‘us’ in order to exclude or other or divide us.
Dr. Beverley Duguid by Ajamu
Documenting black women’s political activism by Dr. Beverley Duguid

Background

Black women’s political activism is not new - in eighteenth century Britain black female slaves took part in the anti-slavery campaigns alongside better known campaigners such as William Wilberforce, as active resisters to slavery. Mary Prince, who came to Britain as a servant in 1828, petitioned Parliament, with the assistance of the Anti-slavery Society, in order to gain her freedom from slavery (Midgley 1992:10).

This article outlines the historical development of black women’s collective agency in Britain with particular attention to black LBT women.

OWAAD – A unity of blackness?

The Black Power Movement (BPM) in Britain was influenced by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Visits to Britain by political figures such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael in 1965 and 1967 respectively, added to the growth of a political and class consciousness. ‘Black Power’ captured the imagination of young people, enraged by the Enoch Powell ‘Rivers of Blood Speech’ of 1968 which talked of a Britain ‘overrun’ with immigrants (Sudbury 1998). By the 1970s, racism and state harassment were increasing: the ‘SUS laws’ often led to unwarranted arrests; the education system was routinely failing black children; there were higher than average figures for school suspensions; and a disproportionate number of black people were accessing mental health services (Sudbury 1998: 5).

Against this backdrop, black women also realised, not unlike those in the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM), that gender issues were marginalised within the mainstream male-dominated BPM. In 1980s Britain black women were ‘bursting to articulate their own experience of oppression’ (Bryan, B et al 1985: 164).

In 1978 OWAAD (The Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent) was formed. Although Asian, African and Caribbean women had different heritages, power that was abused and resulted in disproportionate numbers of black people being stopped and searched. It was repealed in 1981.
OWAAD believed they had a shared colonial experience. As with the BPM, they saw the word ‘black’ as an all-encompassing political term which should be energising and liberating. It was not, however, a ‘feminist’ organisation. Some women called themselves feminist, but stressed that they did not identify with the mainly white and middle class WLM. They stressed that black women had different political goals and fights from white women. For example, racism was a more important fight than sexism. How could you deal with sexism when the issues of imperialism and oppression were so current; how could you deal with male violence when the issue of state violence had not been solved? (Bryan, B et al 1985: 174). Therefore, one of the first struggles OWAAD took on was that of education: it was discovered that 80% of children in the local school for children deemed ‘maladjusted’ were black. Women joined together with Harin-gey Black Pressure Group and were successful in getting the borough to drop plans to set up ‘disruptive’ units in each secondary school.

OWAAD disintegrated in 1982 due to disagreements about its political focus. Some felt the fight should be global, some felt they had to fight oppression within their own communities first, before they could join a more global cause; and increasingly, as the next section will show, black lesbians felt that their constant demands to have a sexuality focussed discussion were marginalised.

Black British lesbians becoming visible

One of the failures of OWAAD has been attributed to the absence of sexuality on the agenda. Too strong an identification with the black community tended to conceal the patriarchal nature of many of the problems faced by black women (Lovenduski, J and Randall, V 1993: 83). Black lesbians therefore felt relegated to the sidelines. A continued effort by women to get sexuality on the agenda resulted in a response that fighting racism was not a choice but a necessity; and that sexuality and male violence were ‘luxury issues’ attributed to the mainstream WLM who had the privilege of prioritising topics which only affected their own lives (Bryan et al 1985:174).

In 1981, black lesbians began to organise at the OWAAD conference when they demanded autonomous space for a workshop. It was not until the demise of OWAAD that black lesbians really began to speak out more widely. In 1983 members of the Feminist Review collective approached several black women to edit and write a special issue of the journal and Many Voices, One Chant was published in
1984. In one article entitled Becoming Visible: Black Lesbian Discussions, four lesbians initiated a dialogue about their experiences of coming out. It was evident from the article that ‘coming out’ posed particular problems for black women. The gay movement’s insistences that the real ‘coming out is coming out to your family’ (Lovenduski, J and Randall, V 1993), was an extra pressure on black women, who because of the effects of racism, were more dependent on their families. One of the women was Pratibha Parmar, who said: ‘I think it is different for black women ... than it is for white women. One is made to feel guilty if you don’t come out’. Women could not afford to run the risk of rejection from their families and wider society. This discussion presented further evidence that organising around sexuality was not ‘futile’ and indeed had been a missing facet within OWAAD. The multiple oppressions that black lesbians suffered deserved to be addressed.

In the 1980s and early 1990s Feminist Review published further articles exploring sexuality, race and class which offered insights into the political identity of black lesbians - Jewelle Gomez and Barbara Smith’s article ‘Homophobia in the black community’ (1990) and Clara Connolly’s exploration of why black women were opposed to the ‘centrality of sexuality and separatism’ are examples (1990). Ultimately, it was black lesbians who brought to the wider WLM their history of the anti-racist struggle, their reliance on the black community and the family as a source of support, and their experience of multiple oppressions.


**Concluding thoughts**

Organising today – UK Black Pride – A lesson learnt from OWAAD

Today black lesbians in Britain are active in many areas, but documentation remains scanty. KiS’s remit to concentrate on heritage and diverse LBT women has allowed me to briefly outline some of our herstory.
I have been involved with UK Black Pride (UKBP) for four years and it is here where I have coped with my own fears of being a visible black lesbian, but the deed is done.

In UKBP we stress that our Black Pride is not an exclusive event or organisation, it exists to empower and support LGBT people who are not so visible, therefore removing the old obstacle of marginalisation. As a member of an organisation that classifies itself under the political term ‘black’, we have faced some adversities - chiefly, being accused of separatism. Although these accusations are a chilling reminder of the past, there are lessons we can learn from OWAAD’s mistakes. For example to develop political unity without minimising the differences between us; to realise that oppression seeks to divide, but oppression can also be a source of unity; unity does not mean different communities cannot still organise separately to campaign for their own unique issues.
Helen Deane and Savi Hensman by Ajamu
Ajamu interviewing Helen Deane and Savi Hensman about the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre by Ashlee Christoffersen

The Black Lesbian and Gay Centre (BLGC) was open from 1985 to the late 1990s. To contribute to the theme of heritage and diverse LBT women’s organising, deploying memory and oral history, KiS organised a conversation between Savi Hensman, who was amongst the first team of paid staff of the BLGC when it opened, and Helen Deane, one of the last trustees, when it closed. The conversation took place on 13 April 2012. The result was a long, rich and varied discussion, and some of the themes that emerged are shared below.

The BLGC

The BLGC emerged out of antiracist organising and the lesbian and gay movement. ‘It was a time when things were flowering.’

‘I had contact because of the pioneering work of the Gay Black Group, which became the Lesbian and Gay Black Group, and some of the very first lesbian Black organisations, so work had gone on beforehand...we were quite young at the BLGC, there were others who had been out and visible at a time when it was much harder, some of those who had started the Black Lesbian Network played an important part in creating that kind of space.’

‘I came across the Lesbian and Gay Black Group...on an antiracist demonstration in Leeds, or Bradford...I saw the banner and recognised that there were actually quite a lot of lesbian and gay Black people, quite a lot of us out there even though most of the time we weren’t very visible.’

The BLGC took referrals from and made referrals to spaces like Onyx, a night for Black lesbians at London Friend, and worked through close relationships of mutual support with other organisations. It addressed needs and aspirations of the Black LGBT community. ‘At that time, LGBT people were very much marginalised in a lot of society. In fact some people didn’t believe that we existed at all. And some people found it hard to believe that they existed, that their identity was something legitimate and real; so it was an organisation that was very much needed and it was a very interesting place to be.’ ‘[The arts] were very important throughout BLGC’s life, allowing people to explore their identity, celebrate it, communicate to people outside Black LGBT
circles something about their identity…the arts were very important in terms of having a sense of who you were…it can be quite difficult when there is no one to identify with and so [we were] creating that space.’

When the BLGC opened it was located in Tottenham; it moved several times, at points located in Peckham Rye and Westminster Bridge Road.

‘There was a group of parents and that’s one of the things that the BLGC didn’t get as much credit for in terms of the support that it was giving, there were quite a few mothers in there and the children used to come along as well, I know that the fact that my daughter was able to be with other children in the same situation has helped us…the young people had the opportunity to really be shown that everybody’s different, and it doesn’t mean anything other than, everybody’s different.’

The BLGC ran a telephone helpline. ‘Giving support to people one to one was quite important, a key part of why we were there.’ ‘One thing that really stays for me is the helpline. It has literally stayed with me, something that I have continued; telephone counselling became something that I carried on.’ The BLGC also published a newsletter, BlackOut, and later Blast.

Reflections on ‘identity politics’

The discussion included reflection on how Black women’s organising changed over the life span of the BLGC; and the difficulties that emerged in organising broadly under the term ‘Black’. It also included reflection from Helen about the significance of meeting Savi, and her support, when Helen first approached BLGC, then later went on to volunteer, and ultimately become Chair.

‘It became much more separated between men and women. I found it disappointing but I realised that it was really based on the funding situation, that was the driver…my perception was the money that might have gone toward [mainstream/mixed] LGBT organisations went to HIV work because it was needed. So I think that’s when the separation initially occurred and the BLGC became almost a women’s organisation to be frank. It was women running and supporting it in the end.’

‘I think while in the 1980s there had been a lot of emphasis on and antiracist movements about being together, some people felt it didn’t give enough space for their own cultural identity to emerge. In the 1990s there was a lot of emphasis on culture and maybe a less political approach to racism…That tension might not have arisen so much in the BLGC where people worked very well together, but that was
the context in which it was functioning...In [this] situation difference could become much more the focus of people’s attention, rather than what brought us together for mutual support.’

‘The name the ‘Black’ Lesbian and Gay Centre became an issue at one point.’

**Could you see a space like the BLGC happening again?**

‘It’s difficult to be too certain and dangerous to be too complacent but it is a very different space today... [maybe we need to find ways to] build alliances while at the same time separating what’s distinctive about our identity.’

‘I definitely [see a need for] a space for women and for parents...for children growing up with same sex relationship parents there is a gap.’

‘Keeping organisations going...can end up so caught up in grant applications and keeping accounts and so on that you lose sight of the spontaneity and what you were in there for in the first place. [So maybe we need to] look at other ways of organising, getting together, having celebrations, using people’s sense of what can make networks sustainable...I think it’s about doing things imaginatively rather than simply trying to recreate the past.’

‘Sometimes I think we underestimate the achievements that we had. When you’re actually doing it, it just feels like hard work. But really to reflect, we accomplished pretty big things.’

At the end of the interview Helen Deane presented archive material from the BLGC to the rukus! archive. The remainder of this interview will be transcribed and presented to the archive.
Artistic women: The diverse histories within the Interarts Project 2010
by Dr. Catherine McNamara, Gendered Intelligence

Gendered Intelligence generates discussion and debate around gender and the ways in which it presents challenges in our everyday lives.

In October 2010, we ran the Interarts Project. This intergenerational project was carried out through a series of four arts workshops aiming to challenge stereotypes and social exclusion faced by older and younger people, and foster relationships between them in a creative way.

The participants numbered around 20 for each workshop and around 30 individuals were involved overall. Participants shared stories, key milestones in their lives and described the historical context against which these things occurred. One of the project objectives was that participants would gain a greater understanding of each other’s generation and the stereotypes attached.

I am sharing the experiences and creativity of some of the diverse, creative women who participated in the project.

Rose was in her early twenties at the time of the project. When asked about her sexual orientation, she said ‘I entered the Interarts project identifying as bisexual, as at that specific time it felt the closest name I could identify with. I by no means think that we should do away with names for sexual orientation, as it allows people to identify under a collective identity, but I don’t think I can quite identify with any name at this time. The Interarts project introduced me to the phrase ‘pansexual’, a name I feel naïve not to have known before the project. I appreciate the meaning behind this phrase, by not defining two specific genders of possible attraction, as bisexuality would suggest. However, even with such definitions, which in many respects I can identify with, I don’t feel as though I...
can put a name to my sexual orientation at this stage in my life, quite honestly, I am still figuring it out.’

Rose found a new passion and interest in gender and sexuality studies during her degree course and for her, the Interarts Project enabled her to meet and work alongside a range of diverse and interesting individuals. She valued the opportunity to think about the ways she could engage in discussions around gender, sexuality and age with the group and then respond to that experience through creating an artistic piece of work.

When reflecting on the experience of working inter-generationally, Rose said:

*I feel history is an extremely important part to understanding how we have come to be in modern society, and by learning the histories of our culture and others, we may better understand ourselves.*

This is extremely important in the LGBT community, as developments from the past to the present day have been vast and, although homophobia and gendered discrimination is still present in all societies across the world, such enormous efforts have been made in the past century to eradicate these attitudes. It is important to understand the struggles older people faced in the past by identifying as LGBT, because we may be able to understand how to go about preventing the same or similar discrimination within modern society. With that said, it is also important to identify and celebrate the changes in attitudes since their time.

Talking age, sexuality and gender is a short film made as part of the project. It features younger and older members of the LGBTQ community talking about their experiences of age, sexuality and gender identity. One of the film makers described herself as a 51 year old lesbian at the time of the project. As a mixed media artist this was the first time she had worked with film and sound. She worked on the film with Michelle who said this about herself:

1966 was the year I came out, I was 16 years old and all hell seemed to break loose! By 18 I saw a specialist hoping to get hormones, their response was to send me for electroconvulsive therapy, saying that if I felt the same after the course of treatment they would consider giving me oestrogens. As a Trans woman, now in my 60’s, I have seen many changes for Trans people since I transitioned all those years ago. There are still many things to achieve to bring about an awareness and equality of our needs. I am an accredited counselor and have been involved in HIV / sexual health and physiological well-being for over 22 years. My focus for a number of years is raising aware-
ness of Trans/gender variant people’s needs in the sexual health sector. By the way I didn’t go for the electroconvulsive treatment – but I did get the hormones I wanted!

The film can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/user/GenderedIntelligence along with other examples of the art work that was produced.

Towards the end of the project when asked about what she had learned, a younger participant who identified as genderqueer said ‘I learned about the ways older people feel about age. I haven’t really spoken to older people in my life before, I’ve never had any contact aside from my grandparents, I’ve never spoken to any older people. Especially LGBT older people. It’s really interesting to see what they thought about age and their own age and how that affects them’. Another participant chose to create a photographic montage of images that communicated her history within the lesbian community in London in order to share this history not only with other participants but with those who attended the exhibition. At the time of the project, Vald was 70 years old. She was a secretary and then a social worker before her retirement. She says of herself, ‘I came out as a lesbian to myself and others when I was 35. The main object of my life, according to my father, was to be a wife and mother. I did try to conform but I managed to avoid this fate. However, I didn’t make the vital connection i.e. to realise that I was a lesbian, although I always fancied women. My interests include reading, swimming in the women’s pond and bird watching. I am a member of the Older Lesbian Network, London Feminist Network and the Age Concern Opening Doors project.’

Vald was asked about her views on the way that age is portrayed in the LGBT community. She said ‘as you get older, you become invisible almost. I think partly because people don’t like the idea of it – the decay of the body and all that. But you know, I’ve been in older lesbian groups since 1984 and we’ve talked about aging a lot – but even so – you look at your hand and you think is that my hand – you notice a lot of changes in yourself’.
Vald also tells me she has enjoyed the last decade i.e. being 60-70 years of age very much indeed. She says she is also aware of the things she will probably never do, but feels okay about that. When thinking about the younger generation of lesbians, Vald says she does want to see lesbians having an easier time of it than she did.

One of the younger women in the group got to know Vald during the project and in reflecting on the notion of learning about queer histories through this arts project, she said,

*She [Vald] described herself as a feminist when we first met and to me, a feminist was a scary kind of person. But I got to know her more. I learnt that she went through a lot more discrimination than I ever had and it showed me she was part of a generation that fought for us to feel more comfortable in society. And she reminded me of my nan who had passed away and I [am] realising that you don’t get old and decrepit and die…you become quite beautiful and you evolve as a person’.*

John Dewey suggests that “[K]nowledge is transformed in an aesthetic experience…because it is merged with non-intellectual elements to form an experience worthwhile as an experience” (2005, 290). The participants and the audience of Interarts experienced moments and stories from the lives of the individuals in the project, and the new understandings that unfolded resulted from the direct disclosure of often concealed and unspoken experiences.

Another younger woman participant told us ‘I am more positive about growing older because I am seeing more people in the older LGBTQ community and I [am] realising that you don’t get old and decrepit and die…you become quite beautiful and you evolve as a person’.
"We Are Here" – Black feminist newsletter, 1983 – 1986 by Anne Hayfield

Why was it necessary to have a black feminist newsletter? Was there a white feminist newsletter? In order to answer that question I have to paint a picture of the times and explain the political context that surrounded me - in order to do that I need to say something about my personal history.

I was attracted to political activism via the women’s movement. I got involved by a group called Women Against Violence Against Women, as I heard one of them talk about men’s violence against women. At the time, the serial killer Peter Sutcliffe was murdering women. The women he murdered were in the main working as prostitutes and because of that (or at least this is what I thought) his killing spree amounted to 13 women. It was as if their lives had little value. That was the beginning of my interest in politics, and so I was involved with organising a number of feminist actions, such as reclaim the night marches and a week of actions which culminated as a mass take-over of Soho. All of the sleazy porn shops and strip joints had to close for an hour or two. It was great fun!

The women’s groups that I was involved with at the time were mainly white women and mainly lesbian. The groups had a focus on sexual violence against women. Everything was done in a women only environment – men were the enemy. To give you a flavour of this I remember that the women’s printing collective See Red did a poster on black women fighting racism. This A3 sized (or maybe even A2 sized poster) had a montage of images of black women but it also had an image of one black man, about the size of my thumb. A Woman’s Place, the leading women’s centre in central London, wouldn’t stock it because it had a man on it.

In 1983 Grenada under Maurice Bishop had a socialist government. They started to build an international airport, and Ronald Reagan ordered a US invasion of the tiny Caribbean island. I wanted to put an advert for a demonstration in the London Women’s Liberation Newsletter but the collective wouldn’t let me as the march wasn’t women only.

We Are Here started as a conference. The idea was to create a space where black women could talk about women’s issues from a black perspective. The conference was a huge success, and following that we started the newsletter. We produced it at
A Women’s Place. I remember the archaic duplicating machines that we used and our manual collation methods. We then wrapped it up and posted it out to our mailing list.

The newsletter created a debate about what it meant to be a black feminist in the mid 1980s in the UK. It allowed us to talk about our experience of racism as well as what it meant to be ‘feminist’, or, as I saw it, to believe that women’s liberation was central to our lives.

Many of the women on the newsletter collective were lesbians, some were bisexual and others didn’t define. Some women genuinely didn’t really know whether they were lesbian, bi-sexual or heterosexual, they just wanted to be themselves.

One of the stories of this time that I have never forgotten was of a black woman who was brought up in care in Ireland. She was the only black child for miles around. She didn’t know how she got there, and she didn’t meet another black person until she was in her twenties, although she did see black people on TV. She was racially abused for years. She was called “n*****” continuously. She was so unhappy she tried to scrub her skin with bleach to try and get rid of her colour.

The black feminist newsletter was important as a way of affirming a positive identity. At the time a lot of the white feminists found it threatening. A lot of politicised black women couldn’t understand why we didn’t want to work with our black brothers.

We covered hard issues but we also were a focal point for women to meet each other and form friendships and support networks that sustained them for years. In this way political activities were for many a way of creating a new ‘family’. I fear this is something that is sadly lacking in our community today, as the emphasis is to find a partner, settle down and get married, thereby emulating heterosexuality.

We produced around twelve issues. We then decided that it would be a good idea for the newsletter to rotate. So We Are Here moved to Leicester.

In 1988 the Commission for Racial Equality wrote to the We Are Here collective to inform us that our activities were not lawful under the Race Relations Act 1976. The CRE wrote ‘we are interested in how you justify black women writers only’. Shortly after that we fizzled out.
Demonstration poster courtesy of Anne Hayfield
Barbara Yvonne Veronica Burford, widely known as a Lesbian feminist mother, writer, medical researcher, civil servant and an expert in diversity consultancy, was born on 9 December 1944. She died aged 65, on 20 February 2010.

Barbara was born in Jamaica, where she was raised by her grandmother until she was seven. When she was 10 she moved with her family to London, where she attended Dalston County Grammar School.

In the early 1970s she gave birth to her daughter, Sarah.

My story of Barbara centres on the work and times we shared. Her careers as a scientist and consultant are better described by those who shared those strands of her work.

Her medical research career began when she studied medicine at the University of London.

In 1964, she joined the NHS. Barbara specialised in research involving electron microscopy in certain teaching hospitals, until she lead a research team associated with both the Institute of Child Health and Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. During the 1980s when she was working with Sheila Haworth, her team was central to the achievement of several breakthroughs in heart and lung transplant surgery for infants and children.

Her creative juices were working overtime, as was she in her research career. While researching by day, she pursued her passion for art, her writing craft and her insistence on social justice in her private time.

An active Lesbian Feminist, her politics informed her creative activities and it was then that we met. In the early Thatcher years we were both regulars at the Women’s Centre, off Trafalgar Square and later at its Embankment location. On a Thursday evening we could be found, circling the table, collating the weekly newsletter, stapling the copies and then posting them by hand, taking them to the Post Office sorting office at Clerkenwell.

In those days there was a vital movement, both in writing and theatre, exploring diversity and presenting the voices that were rarely heard. ‘Women in Entertainment’ was a group working to make black, lesbian and disabled women visible in the arts. There came an explosion of writing
by feminist women, and the publishers who specialised in bringing their work to the market. The Women’s Press, Sheba and Only Women Press were in this vanguard. In London we helped to organise Women’s Conferences and group meetings to explore our issues and their solutions. Published American writers, Audre Lorde, Kate Millet and others were invited; and they came, to support us.

Barbara was active in them all, listening, reacting, debating and thinking.

The process proved a rich one. In 1984, Sheba (which continued to be her publisher) published her collection of short stories called Every Day Matters 2. Included was her story ‘Miss Jesse’, which spoke of the outsider and the British Black experience, published in the UK for the first time. In the same year, a unique collection of poems written by Black women, A Dangerous Knowing was published, with the title coming from one of Barbara’s poems.

These crucial works were an early celebration of the emerging voices of Black British women. In the forward to A Dangerous Knowing Barbara says, “I can never win at scrabble because I get drunk on words”.

Concurrently, Barbara was writing the play ‘Patterns’, commissioned by Changing Women’s Theatre. This company was begun by our great friend Nancy Diuguid, who was a leading light in the exploration of lesbianism and feminism in theatre. She worked in both mainstream and fringe theatre. The play was produced in 1984/5 at the Drill Hall and The Oval House Theatre and was a landmark piece, bringing together a group of talented women of diverse experience. The play depicted the history and experience of women. A combination of music, performance and scripted theatre, it was an exhilarating performance for both cast and audience. It was Barbara’s only foray into the collective process of theatre writing, and it had its rocky moments as any joint venture has. It did however prove her skills and hone her talents as a writer. She published her collection of short stories, The Threshing Floor, in 1986, to great critical acclaim. That same year she was one of the speakers at the Sheffield Women’s Book Fair.

In 1990, Barbara moved to Leeds with her partner, Joy Howard. She moved on in her career at the same time to work with the NHS executive. Her long held passion and knowledge of diversity issues nurtured in the women’s movement led her to produce ground breaking guidelines for NHS managers and staff, ‘Positively Diverse’. This initiative helped them to actively promote equality of opportunity at work (Department of Health 2001).
By 1999, Barbara was made Director of Equality and Diversity at the Department of Health and in this capacity she launched a number of initiatives that are now well established, such as the ‘Jobshop’ – an in-house equal opportunities employment agency that was adopted and used by many NHS trusts.

From 2002 until 2005, she worked as the Director of Diversity at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Barbara led the development of structures to ensure a high priority for her equality schemes. She devised a series of projects to improve services, by consulting older people from ethnic minorities. Her ‘Race to Improve’ facility consisted of a suite of touch-screen information points, set up in community-based locations, in a variety of languages. Barbara was a powerful force within the department.

Barbara led all the complex adaptations required to DWP forms and procedures to reflect and include the new Civil Partnership institution into government bureaucracy. Her work is still influencing the DWP.

In 2005 Barbara became the Deputy Director of Bradford University Centre for Inclusion and Diversity, and to this day there is an annual conference dedicated to her. Whilst there she helped set up Bradford’s healthcare apprenticeship scheme, which brought diversity to the city’s health sector workforce.

From 2004, Barbara ran her own consultancy, was a mentor to many women and produced Equality Guides for the Department of Health on disability, gender and religion.

She helped to develop the equality and diversity strategy for NHS North West and, to quote the document: ‘The Department of Health and NHS North West would like to pay particular tribute to Barbara Burford who, sadly, passed away during the development of the Competency Framework for Equality and Diversity Leadership. Barbara conducted the initial research nationally and internationally that identified the leadership competencies demonstrated in organisations delivering high quality [equality and diversity] outcomes. Her work forms the foundation for this competency framework.’

Barbara’s contributions to the several arenas that took her fancy were invaluable. Whether creating, managing or researching, she brought her passion for fairness, her personal understanding of being in a minority, and her analytical skills to bear. We are in debt to her for wonderful poetry and story telling that tickles our imagination and enriches our soul; for her medical work that saves lives; and her political work that informs and structures gov-
ernment bureaucracies. As a result she has been a most significant contributor to the body of wisdom that enables us to manifest human rights.

I miss that warm, generous, wise voice, that naughty smile, imbued with humour that came from her deep passion for everything she did and her love for her friends and colleagues.

Barbara Burford by Ingrid Pollard
Camden Lesbian Centre and Black Lesbian Group by Glasgow Women’s Library

In 1986, the Camden Lesbian Group was awarded funding to set up a new centre in the borough of Camden. However, it was not until 1987, soon after the centre opened in its new premises that the organisation officially became Camden Lesbian Centre and Black Lesbian Group (CLCBLG). This change was made to emphasise the total equality of the groups that used the centre, and to reflect the management committee which comprised members from both groups.

When the borough council announced the opening of CLCBLG in 1987 at the Phoenix Road premises, the group was met with a good deal of antagonism and homophobia. Some people had a problem with the fact that the premises were located near a local school and tried to block the opening of the centre. Parents argued that it posed a moral and physical danger to their children, and the campaigns were only silenced when the local authority explicitly gave its support to the centre.

Throughout the course of its existence CLCBLG worked to improve the situation of the women that used the centre. This was done through help groups, social events, discussion forums, women-only holidays, learning courses and skills workshops. The centre also provided programmes and support for Lesbian mothers and disabled Lesbians, as well as victims of violence and discrimination.

The centre worked closely with other London based LGBT and women’s organisations, including Hackney Lesbians, Lesbian Archive and Information Centre (LAIC), Gemma (an organisation specifically focused on those with disabilities), Camden Women’s Centre, Camden Black Sisters and numerous other local organisations. It became an active force in LGBT campaigning, including campaigns against Section 28, social housing campaigns, and Lesbian custody campaigns.

This CLCBLG newsletter from 1989 shows the range of activities that the group was involved in. The centre ran until 1993, when its funding was dramatically cut.

The Glasgow Women’s Library now houses the full CLCBLG archive as part of the Lesbian Archive and Information Centre archive.
Contact Details:

Glasgow Women’s Library
15 Berkeley Street
Glasgow
G3 7BW
Telephone: 0141 248 9969
Email: info@womenslibrary.org.uk
WEEKLY DAY-TIME PROGRAMME.

MONDAY - Centre closed all day.
TUESDAY - Lesbian Unwaged Club 12-3pm.
            Under 5's Playgroup 12-4pm.
WEDNESDAY - Open Door 10.30-1pm.
            Centre closed in afternoon.
THURSDAY - Drop-in for advice, information and support 2-5pm.
FRIDAY - Open Door 10.30-5pm.
            Lesbian Mothers Group 12-2.30pm.

Further Programme of Events.

Sat 15th July - Media Workshop, 10am - 4pm.
Tues 18th July - LUC outing to Women's Artista exhibition, meet at Centre 12.30.
Sat 22nd July - Meeting for Blacklebians who've been in care, adopted, fostered; 11.5
Sun 23rd July - Lesbian mothers/carers outing to Princet. Leave 9.30am
            Lesbians with Disabilities Group meeting, 2-5pm.
Weds 26th July - Open evening for prospective management committee members.
Thurs 27th July - Lesbian Separatist Meeting, 7 - 9pm.
Fri 28th July - Social for all lesbians, games, video, refreshments, creche, 7-10pm.
Sat 29th July - Voice Workshop by Voices for Oya, 1-5pm.
Sun 30th July - Day trip to Hastings.
Sat 5th July - Latin American Cooking Workshop 11-5pm.
Sat 5th August - Latin American Cooking Workshop, 11-5pm.
Sun 6th August - Mature Lesbian Group, for lesbians over 40yrs, 2-5pm.
Mon 7th August - Camden Lesbian Workers Group, 12.30-2.30pm.
Thurs 10th August - BLACK LESBIAN ONLY DAY, followed by Blacklesbian Social 7-10pm.
Sat 12th August - Day Trip.
Sun 13th August - Gemma meeting for lesbians with/without disabilities, 1-4pm.
Sat 19th August - Does this mean I'm a Lesbian. 2-5pm.
Fri 25th August - Social for all lesbians, 7-10pm.
Thurs 31st August - Lesbian Separatist meeting 7-9pm.
Jackie Knight’s hands by Julie Hornsby
A conversation with Barbara Flintham, interpreted by Julie Hornsby: Dahling by Jane Standing

Dahling is the name of the deaf and hearing lesbian network that emerged out of the Camden Lesbian Centre Black Lesbian Group (CLCBLG) in 1990. The image that accompanies this piece shows Jackie Knight, a member of the group during its life, making the British Sign Language (BSL) sign for ‘darling’.

During the past two years KiS has had the privilege of connecting with some of the women involved in the group during the nineties, and is keen to explore the historical development of the group, its importance, and possibilities for some engagement now.

On Wednesday 4 April 2012 I met with Barbara and Julie for a ‘pre-conversation’ about how KiS might approach some kind of reunion or retrospective about Dahling. Sylvia Kenneth was also invited, the former co-secretary of the group with Julie Hornsby, but could not attend on the night.

Clearly the meeting was small whilst a sizeable number of women were involved in Dahling at the time. I became conscious during the conversation of the level of respect and care women present had about the need for all former members to be invited to contribute to a gathering of the group’s history, whatever form it might take and whenever it might be.

Barbara briefly recounted her early engagement with the CLCBLG as a BSL teacher for a very diverse group of disabled and non-disabled, hearing and deaf lesbians. In particular, Barbara’s reflections on the political struggles about some aspects of BSL as a language struck a cord and brought to the fore some of the questions and issues this whole section of the Almanac has raised about politics then and now, and how the nature of organising has changed.

Some interesting approaches to building a conversation were identified and we agreed at the end to create a space where deaf and hearing women could come together, with some emphasis on the history of Dahling.
The 1980s and 90s were a time of demonstrations and public political activities. The rigid divisions of political expressions, Anti USA, Anti Apartheid, Against Clause 27/28 etc. had feminist banners alongside socialist, BlaK and youth banners on political marches.

Throughout the 1980s and 90s independent and alternative performances and theatre companies demonstrated differing priorities and working methods. Alongside new writing that highlighted contemporary life, these made politicised international connections and made gender and sexuality issues central themes, through working with narrative, storytelling, performers, and designers. The dancer Richelle is wearing clothes specially designed by Arthur Peters at Sauda, the black women’s club at Wild Court Women’s Centre.

At the New York gay pride march in 1985 I took photos whilst walking on my first Gay Pride march. I remember how much lively smiling and energetic involvement there was from us walkers and the crowds lining the streets; people were really happy to see us all. The LGBT community was all around.

Images:
2. Demonstration against Clause 27, London, 1988
3. Demonstration against USA invasion of Grenada, 1983
5. Anti Botha/ Apartheid demonstration, London, 1984
6. Richelle dances at Sauda club, London, 1990s
Anti Apartheid demonstration, London, 1983 by Ingrid Pollard
Demonstration against Clause 27, London, 1988 by Ingrid Pollard
Demonstration against USA invasion of Grenada, 1983 by Ingrid Pollard
New York Gay Pride march, 1985 by Ingrid Pollard
Anti Botha/ Apartheid demonstration, London, 1984 by Ingrid Pollard
Lesbian and gay employment rights (LAGER) provided support and advice to individuals who were having problems at work primarily because of some form of discrimination. For many years the project operated as two sides – one for gay men and another for lesbians. We helped people by assisting them in their negotiations with their employers. If employers were willing to meet with us we would represent them at internal hearings, and where an actionable tribunal case was possible we would take the case to tribunal. Somebody said to me recently that he thought the acronym was ‘unfortunate’. I liked the clarity that our name provided. At least it stated exactly what we did, although of course our clients also included bisexual and trans people.

On the gay male side much of their casework included discrimination because of HIV status or perceived HIV status. They also had a significant amount of casework where a gay or bisexual man had picked up a criminal conviction for consensual sexual activity. On the lesbian side of the project many of our clients were sexually harassed by heterosexual men who wanted to have sex with them. About 70% of the casework on both sides of the project involved harassment – often of the most extreme and crude forms. This presented a problem as much of our casework just seemed so bizarre most employers couldn’t imagine that it would happen in their workplace.

LAGER was very proud of our record on inclusion. We always had black lesbians and gay men involved in the project as staff and management committee members. We encouraged participation from black and minority ethnic lesbians and gay men by putting their issues at the heart of our work. To this end we produced two publications, ‘Black lesbians and gay men – the issues’ and ‘Shot by Both Sides – a black lesbian and gay perspective of racism and homophobia’.

This initiative worked; one year as many as 30% of our service users were black or from an ethnic minority. Our open meetings not only had a sign language interpreter present, we also attracted deaf gay people to our events. ‘Blue collar’ workers were also strongly represented amongst our service users, with many coming from semi-rural locations that could be described as an ‘advice desert’.

1 Both of these publications are available as free downloads from www.annehayfield.com
I worked at LAGER from 1986 to 2003. I would like to share some personal anecdotes. I remember myself and Phil Greasley going to a meeting at the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to talk about our work. We thought we were meeting with two people but in actual fact there were 25 equality leads from a variety of TUC-affiliated trade unions. Many of them were so ill-informed that they thought that lesbian and gay employment issues were covered by the sex discrimination act – which of course they weren’t. Some didn’t see lesbian and gay employment issues as part of their work at all.

I also had to explain to the Equal Opportunities Commission that lesbians are women – they kept on saying that lesbian and gay issues are out of their remit as sexual orientation is not covered by the Sex Discrimination Act. Yes, I know, I replied, but lesbians are women and a lot of our clients are sexually harassed. They never conceded the point.

We did good work and we got quotable cases. One of my colleagues started a case where a young gay man got a caution for a sexual offence, didn’t tell his employers and was sacked (X v Y 2003). His unfair dismissal case got as far as the Court of Appeal.

One of the worst cases that I ever dealt with was that of the teacher Shirley Pearce. She was being harassed by the pupils in her school, sometimes in her classroom, often outside her home. The school knew about it and didn’t stop it. Eventually she had to leave teaching but not one pupil was ever suspended for their behaviour. Her case went all the way to the House of Lords (Pearce vs. Mayfield School 2003). I also remember referring Jeanette Smith to the armed forces group At Ease. (I referred her case as employment law is very different for armed forces personnel compared to civilians). Her case went all the way to the European Court of Human Rights (Smith and Grady v UK 1999).

I still get very angry about the way that LAGER closed. We lost our funding six months after the Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003 became law. All of those years of trying to help people who had experienced the crudest and often most dehumanising form of homophobic harassment were in vain. Now we had a legal remedy but we had to shut up shop. At that time there was no statutory body to provide advice on sexual orientation as this was before the Equality and Human Rights Commission came into being. It was ridiculous! It was also very arbitrary the way that we lost our funding. I remember two of my colleagues went to a meeting where our funding was being discussed. One of the ‘big-wigs’ at the meeting indicated that he
wanted to meet them at the café over the road. He told my colleagues that the officer in charge of our case was lazy and incompetent and he was going to try and get our funding back. It never happened.

Is there still a need for a service like LAGER? The Labour Government of the time was adamant that they didn’t want to fund employment tribunal cases. This is because the cost of the tribunal system needed to be kept under control. The Coalition Government is planning to restrict access to the courts by charging an application fee. The Tories, of course, are not keen on employment law. People who have a discrimination case can get advice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The claimants in discrimination cases often need someone to talk to them face-to-face. Most will not be able to afford the £250 per hour that an employment lawyer might charge. An employment lawyer told me that on average a discrimination case takes about four times longer than an unfair dismissal claim. So any such service would be ridiculously expensive. Still, at least now we have the law.
Regard, the national campaigning organisation of disabled lesbians and gay men (later including bisexual and transgender people), was founded in 1989 to address the damaging isolation, exclusion and discrimination experienced by disabled people who also identified as lesbian or gay.

By the early 1990s, the disability movement had achieved significant recognition with the British Council of Organisations Of Disabled People (BCODP) as its representative body, spearheading campaigns for anti-discrimination legislation and civil rights. The social model of disability had challenged the traditional viewpoint of disability as medical tragedy and replaced it with a view of disability as social oppression. Disabled people were talking about barriers to inclusion, choice, rights and independent living; however, many disabled lesbians and gay men were feeling increasingly marginalised within a movement that was not prepared to discuss issues surrounding sexuality.

When discussing a name for our group, it was important to avoid an acronym that could ‘out’ members. Fear of violence was very real. As we wanted the disability movement to consider our demands the name Regard seemed befitting.

‘Positive images’ had become buzz words. In February 1990, a conference called Cap-in-Hand was held to discuss disabled people’s portrayal in the media. Lesbian and gay issues were raised, but ignored by the majority. Anger and frustration resulted in the development of Regard’s ‘Charter of Rights’, a list of demands for the disability movement. As individuals our struggles for recognition had little effect; however, as Regard the National Organisation of Disabled Lesbians and Gay Men, our demands were effecting change.

With pressure from Regard, the 1992 BCODP AGM was dedicated to equal opportunities. Members were asked to discuss the inclusion of marginalized groups. Many disabled people seemed unable to say the word ‘lesbian’ and were convinced they didn’t know any! Particular members asked if they could include certain equalities groups and not others, i.e. lesbians and gay men. They were resolutely directed to include all minority groups or none. This was a significant turning point for Regard. It had achieved inclusion within the disability movement’s governing body, a place on its executive committee and would be consulted on as a matter of course.
**Regard’s development**

Initially, we were a small group with a box office number for post, no funds and nowhere to meet. As an interim measure Regard operated from my dining room. Our household furniture was removed and replaced with two large desks, filing cabinets and an old donkey of a computer. Regard’s ‘temporary’ office was a base for impromptu gatherings of its executive committee, tea and biscuits and late night discussions. This interim arrangement lasted almost ten years when in 1999 we secured lottery funding for an office and employees. My ever patient family was delighted to have their borrowed space back. Regard has always had a woman chair and many proactive lesbian members. The position of vice-chair was held by a gay man however, lesbians were more engaged in debate and action. Lesbian only space was important for women to discuss body image, personal assistance and safety, and lesbian mothering amongst other disabled lesbian concerns.

**Turning our attention to the LGBT community**

Regard’s origins were within the disability community, where it had become the focus for LGBT activity and engagement. In 1992 London hosted the first Europride and our membership was eager for a Regard presence at the Pride celebrations. For years, disabled lesbians and gay men had wanted to be part of Pride but the numbers attending could be counted on one hand. Deeply unhappy at this situation, access to Pride was firmly on Regard’s agenda. Our persistent demands eventually gained the attention of the then Pride organisers, and we were invited to discuss our access requirements. By 1997 Regard had an established place within the then Pride organising committee. We were the acknowledged experts in disability and access. We had developed and published a comprehensive access audit for outdoor events. We took our place at the front of the Parade behind our own banner, offering excellent visibility and the means of setting the pace of the celebrating moving mass.

Awareness and acceptance of our issues within the wider LGBT community was low. Venues were inevitably inaccessible and disabled people were largely ignored or rejected by the prevailing body-beautiful culture. Regard received many horror stories of the abuse of vulnerable disabled people within the gay community. Body fascism and disablism, meant disabled lesbians and gay men could only conclude they were not welcome.
Helpline and socials: A different kind of activism

The distress of isolation and discrimination amongst members became impossible to ignore. Regard responded with a telephone helpline, operated by trained members. This was vital for disabled people who had to conceal their sexuality and had never spoken to another LGBT person. Some callers subsequently travelled hundreds of miles to attended Regard’s socials.

Regard Writes

Regard received requests for consultation, information, advice and talks from a wide range of individuals and organisations, parents, carers and educational establishments. Overwhelmed by demand, we produced the newsletter Regard Writes to document our activities and provide information and a platform for debate.

Conclusion

I’m mindful that this piece is about activism and so it seems pertinent to mention some of the groundbreaking consultations and collaborations that helped change opinion on the way.

For Channel Four, David Reubain and myself wrote the publication ‘Double The Trouble Twice the fun’, to accompany the film of the same name (Pratibha Parmar, Kali films 1992). This was a pioneering video advocating acceptance rather than pity, and dispelling the myth that disabled people are not sexually active. It also looked at the difficulties of enduring prejudice as both disabled and LGBT.

For the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA), Regard produced booklets exploring sex and sexuality for disabled lesbians and disabled gay men. Formerly, such material would have been produced by medical or nursing staff with an entirely clinical approach.

Regard members addressed conferences on independent living and employing personal assistants, in Canada, Ireland and cities throughout the UK. Good practice and the challenge of homophobia were urgent topics.

Regard’s very existence had political consequences. Formerly it had been easier to campaign on a single issue and disregard those aspects that didn’t comfortably fit. A slogan from the women’s movement, ‘the personal is political’ was also relevant to queer crips1 who were also Black, Jewish etc. We were pissing on pity and demanding our rightful place every-

1 The disabled LGBT community has its own ‘in language’, terms that we use amongst ourselves but would be outraged if directed at us.
where. I was chair of Regard for ten years prior to moving to Ireland in 1999. The next period of Regard’s history along with its achievements will undoubtedly be recorded by the current chairperson.
Kirsten Hearn by Ajamu
Dusting off the SAD Access Code by Kirsten Hearn

I’ve done a lot of coming out in my life. Coming out is about coming home gladly and gloriously to who I am, warts and all.

I first came out as disabled, after having been blind eight years. Positively acknowledging being disabled was revelatory. Choosing to hang out with other disabled people, and sharing our experiences of life showed me that the problems I faced were external. The world in which I lived had put up barriers to disabled people to prevent us being equal. What needed to happen was to remove the barriers and not the people. This is known as the Social Model of Disability.

So when I came out as a dyke, (in 1982) I shared my story with my sisters. I learned that my sexual orientation was not a problem. Heterosexism manifesting in discrimination, touching all parts of our lives, was! The answer was not to retreat into the closet or seek a cure, but to challenge discrimination, fight to change the world and to positively celebrate lesbian lives. I guess this could be called the social model of sexual orientation!

Way back in 1982, I believed for a time that I was the only blind dyke in the world! I tried hanging out with the lesbians. There were a few barriers though. Sighted women read lesbian and feminist magazines, which I could not read as they were not available in audio format. These were the days long before the internet and speech screen readers. Not knowing what was going on meant I was not taking part in things that my sisters were. I was starved of information and it was but a short step from there, back to isolation.

What was going on usually took place in inaccessible venues, in noisy, smoky, crowded intimidating environments that did not welcome anyone who was different. Being that solo blind dyke, I stuck out like a sore thumb.

Through my disability activism, I found other disabled dykes, equally alienated by how our lesbian community organised. We compared notes, noticed the same patterns of exclusion and decided to organise together as women, and ‘Sisters Against Disablement’ was born (SAD¹).

We talked together about how we were excluded from the women’s liberation

¹ Sisters Against Disablement were so named because we recognised it was society that ‘disabled’ us by its failure to remove the barriers that stopped us being equal.
movement and the lesbian scene (since most of us were dykes). Disabled women were seen as not proper women, and definitely not sexual, we felt. Events at which women came together to campaign or socialise were totally inaccessible to anyone who couldn’t yomp up a flight of stairs. How the community communicated and shared information excluded those who were visually impaired or Deaf. If we were to participate, at stage one, we firstly needed to know what was going on and more importantly, what the barriers were that we might face in getting involved. Stage two of course was getting the barriers moved - but that was another matter altogether.

Since 1975, Gemma, (a group for ‘lesbians of all ages with and without disabilities’ had been publishing a regular newsletter. In their events listings, each entry had a brief description of access to the venue. They required answers to the following questions:

- Where can you park?
- How do you get in the building?
- How do you get around the venue?
- How big is the toilet?

SAD took this rough guide and looked at what disabled women with a range of access needs would need to know about to be able to participate. We also identified what would meet those access needs and wrote them down too. The result was the Sisters Against Disablement Access Code, a 20 point list which, if followed properly, would give important information allowing disabled women to choose whether we could attend or not. It also provided a diagnostic guide to help event organisers plan for inclusion from the beginning.

Having invented the tool, SAD set about getting it taken on board. And oh my, what a fuss there was. We were astonished at the resistance. We were delighted at the positive responses too.

It soon became clear that the majority of events and activities failed to provide access. We began to campaign around stage two of the strategy, what needed putting in place to make the activity inclusive of disabled women. Of course, we came up against the usual resistance, fuelled by the tangible or the fear of the lack of resources, and a level of reluctance to include us because we were disabled, which was truly shocking. We harnessed the powers that be, the grant givers, (the Greater London Council and local councils) and got them to begin to support the participation costs at lesbian community events.

There was a subtle cultural shift towards inclusion. Events organised with public
money and by organisations such as Camden Lesbian Centre Black Lesbian Group, and Lesbian Line, made it their focus to include disabled dykes. Aside from activities organised by Council Lesbian and Gay units, the wider “gay” community however remained unmoved and inaccessible.

Using the principles behind the SAD Access code, Council equality officers began to exert a level of impact upon significant community events and public money started to provide the inclusive ‘frills’ to events such as London Pride. Lesbians and Gays Unite In Disability (LANGUID²) and the then newly formed National Organisation of Disabled Lesbians and Gays (Regard), began tireless campaigns for inclusion in flagship community events such as London Pride March and the loosely associated Park Festivals that were held alongside it.

In the difficult days of the nineties, Regard kept the pressure up. In the early noughties, with an equality minded Labour administration in City Hall, London Pride activities received some public money from the GLA and the Functional bodies.³ Essentially this money was a bribe to get Pride to provide a reasonable level of access, because they were resistant.

When the Tories took over in City Hall, the money dried up and Pride London returned to their old excluding practices, refusing to accept the help Regard offered.

History illustrates that when it comes to action to include LGBT disabled people, women/dykes have been willing to do this. When a community has an understanding of where their oppression comes from and can articulate it clearly, they may find it easier to ‘read-across’ to other discriminated-against groups. For many lesbians of the eighties, our lesbianism had a relationship to our desire to challenge patriarchy. Women arriving at a lesbian identity via feminism seemed more willing to engage with the issue of power and who had it.

However, the prevailing belief peddled by the sexual orientation equal rights lobby that somehow our sexual orientation was biologically deter-

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² LANGUID: Lesbians And Gays Unite In Disability was formed from the Haringey disabled lesbian and gay sub group in order to organise the first ever Disabled lesbian and gay conference. This took place in Manchester in 1988 where 70 disabled lesbians and gay men got together to share experiences and to organise. One of our commitments at the end of the conference was to have a visible presence at the Gay Pride march in 1988 and to pressure the Lesbian and gay Community for inclusion for disabled lesbians and gay men. One of LANGUID’s legacies was the formation of Regard, the national organisation of Disabled Lesbians and gays, formed in 1989.

³ GLA functional bodies are the entities which run many of London’s vital services including police, transport, fire and civil defense and which are accountable to the Mayor and the Greater London Authority.
mined seemed to invite an isolationist’s view on it only being about who we liked to sleep with.

Negotiating the minefield of emotions surrounding power, oppression and exclusion can be baffling for people who have no consciousness of their relationship to and responsibility for challenging such exclusion. Practical tools are often helpful to aid inclusion. It is time we dusted off the SAD Access Code and deployed it once more.

Where we are at on access and inclusion for disabled LGBT people right now feels to me to be several ramps down. Kairos in Soho is a shining light of inclusivity. Bi friends tell me that BiCon for example makes every effort to be inclusive. I note that in student and trade union LGBT organising (where there is a strong history of having autonomous and separate caucuses for women, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans people, Black and minority ethnic people and disabled people and often intersections of all these), access and inclusion for LGBT disabled people is high on the agenda. Despite the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and now the Equality Act, we still have a commercial scene which by and large excludes LGBT disabled people. Thirty years ago, disabled LGBT people were invisible. We are not now. What else do we have to do to beat down that still solidly locked door to our full inclusion as equals within the LGBT community!
Theatre activism from autobiography to stage fiction by Mojisola Adebayo

It is a great honour to be invited to share material for this important LGBT Almanac. My offering is a short extract from my semi-autobiographical play *Muhammad Ali and Me*, first performed at Oval House theatre in London and featured in *Mojisola Adebayo: Plays One* by Oberon Books. The play, set in the 1970s and 80s, is a coming-of-age story which parallels the lives and follows the fantastical friendship between the African-American Muslim boxing legend Muhammad Ali in his biggest fight - against racism and the Vietnam war, and a black girl growing up in a London foster home in the 1970s, who is coming out as a politically conscious lesbian thespian!

For me, to be a theatre artist, to be a black woman, to be a lesbian, is to be an activist. There is no separation. What I am doing on the stage, is a creative way of campaigning, representing, protesting, envisioning change. Muhammad Ali did not separate being an athlete from being an activist. That is why he was such an inspiration to me. He used his power and position to shake up his world. To play on Ali’s mentor, Malcolm X’s phrase, I believe in liberation, but by many means necessary. The means I choose is theatre, because for me, it is the art of dialogue.

In the scene below, Mojitola, the character loosely based on myself, is sitting on a wall outside her college, in which she is the only black person in her class. She has just been insulted by her class-mates for attempting to play the role of Hamlet. The white students argue ‘a black cannot play a white person’. This incident, based on a real experience, is a defining moment in her/my development as an artist and activist who transgresses boundaries of race and gender. As Mojitola scrutinises the paper displaying her poor grades, Muhammad Ali ‘appears’ to her again. Both Ali and Mojitola are played by the one same female actor.

**Mojitola:** (Screwing up the paper). Prince of fucking Denmark – wanker! What’s the point? I don’t belong in their nice white theatre. I don’t belong anywhere. I don’t even know why I was born. If it wasn’t for me my dad would have never married my mum, my mum would have never got beaten up, she would have never walked out, I would never have been left me in care. All the shit, all the fuck ups - it starts with me. And I don’t know how I’ll ever get past it all. I’ve got no one to talk to, no one who…

**Ali:** - you got me.
Mojitola: What are you talking about?! We’re not even living in the same year let alone the same physical place!

Ali: You think reality only exists in time and space? You at college, you supposed to be smarter than that. Look, everybody feels bad, everybody fails, everybody loses. I lost to Joe and Joe lost to George and... Presidents get assassinated, civil rights leaders get assassinated. News don’t last long. The world moves on. There are more important things to worry about than some dumb ass test. At least we’re still pretty. Pretty as girls. (Some girls pass by. Ali does a quick magic trick – presenting flowers to a female in the audience who is charmed). Did I ever tell you bout the first time I got knocked out?

Mojitola: Got a feeling your gonna.

Ali: The first time I kissed a female.

Mojitola: No! (Laughing) Shame! For real?

Ali: Why would I lie? I fainted! Ten count straight out! I was so shy back then... How old are you now anyhow?

Mojitola: 18.

Ali: 18! You grown up as fast as a jab. Say, what do you want to be in your life?

Mojitola: (She thinks). I want to be like you. Maybe I’ll even play you. Fuck Hamlet. I’m gonna pretend.

Ali: As long as it’s honest. Be a good girl. Live clean. Don’t eat pork. Stay away from boys.

Mojitola: I’ll do my best.

Ali (giving her an inquisitive look): Yeah, I have a feeling you will. (Pause). Hey want me to explain my ‘ladies trick’?

Mojitola: It’s all right. I’ve got a few tricks of my own (she smiles).

Ali: You bad! I give up how I do all my tricks these days. It’s un-Islamic to deceive people. The magic circle in England threw me out! But then so did three of my wives. We all make mistakes. Do things some people don’t like. Sometimes people hate you cos they don’t understand you, who you are, what you are. In God’s eyes we are all equal. All that matters is what’s in your heart (Ali makes a fist and makes it pulse, like a heart beat). There is nothin’ greater than the human heart. What can compare to that? Now I can’t read much, and you can imagine what’s in my own heart when there’s thousands listening to what I have to say. The Italians heard me and said they would rebuild

the Coliseum so I could fight George Foreman there, but if that don’t work, maybe I’ll fight him outdoors right beside the pyramids’, or maybe in the heart of the jungle. Yeah, that would be something wouldn’t it, a rumble in the jungle!...

(Fela Kuti’s ‘Fight to Finish’ kicks in and The Griot/storyteller narrates us into the next scene below).

**The Griot:** Seven years after America had robbed him of his rightful title for refusing the draft, the Prince went to Africa in search of his lost crown. And when he landed in Zaire, they chanted ‘Ali Bumaye! Ali Bumaye!’ Ali was amazed. There were Black people everywhere, chanting his name, Black people like him, running everything. A Black President, Black teachers, Black people on Black money. And for the first time in his life he felt at home.

*(Simultaneously Mojitola, inspired by Ali’s return to the ring, joins in a series of political street protests with the other players.)*

**Mojitola:** This is what democracy looks like *(then 9 rapid claps)*

This is what democracy feels like *(9 claps)*

We’re here! We’re Queer! We’re not going shopping!

Free the weed!

Meat is murder!

Free free Palestine!

Freeee-e, Nelson Mandelaaaaaa – *(Into all singing the following lyrics to the tune of the English hymn, ‘Jerusalem’)*

Aaaaaaand did those feet, from ’79

Walk across England’s mountains green?

And was the holy herb of God

In Brixton’s burning market seen?

And did Ken’s GLC collapse

Maggie, Maggie Maggie out with your poll tax!

Three million unemployed!

On yer bike!

Bombs and Greenham, riots and the miner’s strike

The Falklands War!

How could we know it would be like this before?...

**Everyone:** ALI BUMAYE!

*Mojisola Adebayo: Plays One is available through www.oberonbooks.com and in book shops. My next work*
of artistic activism is *I Stand Corrected*, a dance/theatre collaboration with award-winning South African dancer choreographer Mamela Nyamza. *I Stand Corrected* is our response to homophobic attitudes and actions, specifically the increasing hate rape and murder of black lesbians in South Africa and religious bigotry and the anti-gay marriage lobby in Britain. *I Stand Corrected* is being documented by Zanele Muholi, who has photographed and filmed the lives of black lesbians in South Africa since the fall of apartheid. Mamela Nyamza and Zanele Muholi are two of the finest black lesbian African artists and activists on the planet. They are my sheros. *I Stand Corrected* previews at Artscape in Cape Town in August 2012 and premieres at Oval House theatre in London from November 19th - December 10th 2012 at Oval House Theatre. Tickets can be booked through www.ovalhouse.com we hope to see you there! – Mojisola Adebayo
Queer community building in DIY music scenes by Francis Ray White and Tamsin Bookey

When is a disco not just a disco? When it is the manifestation of a form of activism and the spiritual home of your whole queer community. While the passion of promoters, DJs and clubgoers to play or hear a particular type of music on a night out might be the main reason for a new club springing up, club nights can also offer a kind of lifeline to those who feel marginalised and alienated by both the ‘alternative’ music scene and mainstream gay and lesbian clublife – one is too male/straight, the other unlikely to cater for underground music tastes, and neither offer a politicised approach. In London, alternatives can be found in the kinds of cultural activism embodied in club nights past and present like Homocrime, Unskinny Bop, Bad Reputation, Scumbag and Club Milk, or festivals such as Ladyfest or Queeruption.

These contemporary queer music scenes offer up a particular kind of queer belonging that has both political and cultural characteristics rooted in the DIY ethics of punk, anarchist, feminist and queer organisational principles. If there is a common ethos, it is as follows: if your culture alienates you, if you feel unrepresented, excluded or ignored, then make your own! Start a band, put on a gig or a club, write a zine, make a film, organise a festival and make the culture you want. Along with this DIY ethos comes an emphasis on the small-scale, the local and the makeshift, and an eschewal of slick professionalism and profiteering. The point is anyone should be able to have a go, no matter their resources or experience.

DIY queer cultural production may owe its ‘have a go’ spirit to punk, but it is equally indebted to the early 1990s riot grrrl and queercore movements. These were scenes that arose to challenge the (hetero) sexism of existing punk/alternative music scenes. Rather than taking culture at large as their object of criticism, these were localised interventions into the spaces and scenes closest to participants. Riot grrrl, for example, sought not only to involve more women in music-making, but to challenge the ‘boys-town’ character of alternative music scenes, dragging women in from the periphery to the centre of their own subculture. They challenged the sexual harassment women experienced at gigs and clubs, took charge of the mediation of their own scene, and shared skills and expertise in playing instruments, sound engineering and event organising. This activity was not an adjunct to other activism, aimed at improving the post-protest disco, or fundrais-
ing gig (though it could have this function), rather it was the activism – a recognition of the power at stake in cultural production and a means of loudly fighting back.

The positive benefits of this kind of activism are manifold, but perhaps not always as visible/tangible as those gained through more traditional types of LGBT or feminist politics and organising. There are rarely established or funded organisations with campaign agendas or measurable outcomes in this type of activism. However, for its
creators and participants the DIY queer club/music scene functions as a social and community centre which is not a permanent physical presence but located across a shifting range of temporary spaces, including online. The importance of spaces where you can ‘find your people’ cannot be underestimated as a means of creating livable queer lives long after coming out. The proliferation of discrete club- and music-based sub-scenes in London from the 1990s is a testament to the growing self-sufficiency of queer Londoners. Clubs established by and for a range of different queer audiences - for example, Club Kali with its predominantly South Asian audience, or Club Wotever catering to a genderqueer/trans performance art crowd - have also perhaps emerged out of a sense of isolation from mainstream LGBT cultural and social offerings and are likely to be similarly meaningful to their participants. Beyond this, the music, (self-)publications and events produced through such scenes contribute to the creation of a diverse queer culture, rich with multiple voices and stories untold elsewhere.

While queer music scenes and their associated subcultures undeniably contribute to the meaning and value of many queer folks’ lives, it is dangerous to romanticise these cultural formations as universally accessible spaces free from power relations. Although seizing the means of (cultural) production and creating autonomous self-expression might theoretically be available to all, in practice the most visible participants in the queer DIY music subculture tend to be white, often middle-class as well as younger, not disabled, and cisgendered. Without the requirements to be representative or accountable to the wider community that might inhere in more ‘official’ organisations, disproportionate participation in various kinds of DIY cultural activism reveals serious cultural biases. This is not to erase the involvement of black and ethnic minority, trans, older and disabled folks in all sorts of queer cultural organising, but to highlight the complex range of entitlements, cultural and economic capitals and considerations of taste that factor into participation. These differences often go unaddressed when there is a taken-for-granted assumption of shared understanding or belonging between participants. Thus, there needs to be open discussion around the way such differences inform how, and for whom, participation in alternative queer cultural spaces and scenes is possible. Only then can more of those people excluded by dominant cultures find the self-representation and social salvation they’ve been longing for on a nearby dance floor.
Camille Kumar, Nazmia Jamal, Melissa Rakshana Steiner and Sita Balani (clock-wise from top left)

by Ajamu
In February 2012 three women, who I have met over the past few years through the international DIY queer feminist community based in London, gathered in my living room in Brixton to share our experiences of being South Asian, feminist and LGBTQ in London. Before meeting up we had all read ‘Becoming Visible: Black Lesbian Discussions’ from Many Voices, One Chant: Black Feminist Perspectives (Feminist Review No 17, July 1984) with the idea that we might begin by responding to the topics covered in our own conversation. ‘Becoming Visible’ appeared at a time when the youngest of us was not yet born and the eldest was no more than five years old. In recent years I have gone looking for a Black feminist and lesbian/queer history within British archives to claim as my own. Reading ‘Becoming Visible’ was incredibly empowering and moving, but it also raised a number of questions for me. It was a discussion that I wanted to respond to and continue with my friends.

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The original piece in the Feminist Review was the product of eight hours of tape. We talked for three hours and while we were keen to follow the topics brought up by Carmen, Gail, Shaila and Pratibha it was striking, when listening back to the recording, how much time we spent discussing not our queerness, but our individual versions of South Asian-ness. In ‘Becoming Visible’ the women focus on Black lesbians and occasionally discuss black and Asian women separately, for example within the context of OWAAD, or to highlight that there are very few visible South Asian lesbians out at all, even on the ‘scene’. These women were pioneering, as were all feminists and queer women willing to and attempting to be visible in the early 1980s. In our group we were keen to know our differences, the different places we have come from – be it parts of the world or regions on the subcontinent that our ancestors might have once been from. I suspect that in OWAAD, Brixton Black Women’s Group and other groups like that, women did sit and talk about their backgrounds, but what has been documented, largely, is a united front of Blackness – because at that time it was necessary to do so. Identity politics are an easy scapegoat. Using the
example of OWAAD again, whether you want to blame the South Asian members or the lesbian members for the fracturing of this group (and I’ve heard both being blamed at different public events in recent years...), our sisterhood is presented as being weakened by diversity. For my part, from where I sit in multicultural 21st century inner city London, I found it strengthening to know my sisters’ pathways across the globe to our shared chosen family. I want to know who the women I work with and spend time with are. Where they come from. And I think, in a post 9/11 world where we are so often lumped in a homogenised tump of ‘brownness’ and ‘difference’, that it is worth considering who we actually are.

‘I am East African Asian. My parents are both Gujarati Muslims who were born in Kenya. I was born in London, grew up in Wales and have never been to India.’

‘I’m from New Zealand and I’m mixed race. My dad is white, but his whiteness is complicated by various migrations. My mother is Fiji Indian.’

‘I’m Fiji Indian from Australia. We think my mum’s family is originally from the Punjab and dad’s is from Uttar Pradesh, but we don’t really know.’

‘My dad is Sindhi - he was born in Karachi the year before Partition and grew up in Delhi. My mum is Gujarati and was born in Uganda which she left after Idi Amin. She came to England and my dad joined her after.’

We all have complex experiences of being ‘Indian’ that have for the most part taken place outside of India. However there was a shared agreement that claiming this heritage was important and part of ‘a kind of political and cultural moment’ that in part comes from a shared history and cause that, as demonstrated by Black feminists in the 1980s, is one that can give strength and a sense of purpose. We see drawing together South Asians in Britain ‘who have a completely different experience of being Asian’ as a crucial exercise in healing the rifts caused by Empire and also pre-emptive of the divide and rule strategies that may well be implemented to weaken our unity should the need arise. We need to use our shared histories to form strong bonds and alliances before some catastrophe requires us to. The ‘long and rich and complex history of Asian women’ in Britain that South Asian women coming from Australia and New Zealand, for example, are able to claim as their own, seems like a good place to start within our specific context.

‘These women have made a massive difference. I think part of the reason that I wanted to do something like this was really to celebrate the fact that we’ve got foremothers that go back decades in
this country and that is amazing. We’ve got South Asian Suffragettes. We’ve got so much that we could be using to make ourselves feel more rooted, or more powerful, so that we are able to move forward and stop repeating ourselves.’

 ***

While we claim Black lesbian identity as part of our heritage, much of the focus of our own discussion centred not just on visibility or whether dating white women was acceptable – as the Feminist Review discussion does – but on how we define in terms of sexuality.

‘I identified as queer for a long time and then felt so disconnected from that community. I’ve never identified as a lesbian, but I really don’t feel queer because I’m not all these things that you have to be if you are queer. When I first identified as queer I was nineteen and engaging in all these ideas about politics and they were connected to my sexuality but also to other things. I feel like as I’ve gotten older and maybe moved in different circles I’ve started to feel more isolated from queer communities. There is a very academic presence that I don’t feel connected to, and polyamory which I don’t feel connected to…’

‘I just identify as queer really. I guess it encompasses my racial identity as well as everything else. It is just a lazy term but I feel like people seem to know what page they are on with me if I say that I’m queer.’

‘Same, I identify as queer but I’m not especially bothered if people attach other labels so if someone says dyke or lesbian I’m not opposed.’

‘I guess I don’t just date cisgendered, lesbian identified women…so queer is probably most accurate for me too. But I came out as lesbian and fought for that identity so I am going to claim it. I often find it problematic when people impose terms on me - like fat or femme.’

 ***

Not much has changed in thirty years beyond shifts in labels, and this makes for a curiously strengthening experience (in the knowledge of a continued shared battle) as well as a more obviously dispiriting one in the face of increasingly difficult times for us all. Forming alliances, both with our peers and intergenerationally, is vital if we are to continue fighting for a fairer, safer and more accepting world. Look in the archive, talk to people, stay visible.

An extended version of this piece can be found at http://blackbritishlesbian.typepad.com/.

We hope to make the entire transcript and future conversations available as part of a larger project.
Poem by Jael Townsend-Marrett

I am ignored, hidden away
I am reclusive, stay away
I am defiant, it’s my way

I am Woman

Look at me, am I not here
Please, touch, taste, smell, see, and hear
This life, am I to play a part?
Who will tend to my broken heart?
Vivid glaring eyes, who would dare?
My two palms crumble, in despair
Nervous tissue, blood, flesh and bone
In tomb! In limbo set in stone
Female captive, spirit bound
Ashamed, even to make a sound
I know no arms, in which to weep
In which to sleep, I know no arms

In the carpets, taste the air
Shed, dry, skin, flake, dust and wear
Society looms, no mean feat
My passive nature leaves me weak
Stomach cramps and constipation
Hunger stems, humiliation
I am TMiss! Not It, Mr, or Sir
Hours and days, become a blur
Self induce, incarceration
Denounced; excommunication
I know no arms, in which to weep
In which to sleep, I know no arms

Damn stubble, taunted by rants
Steam, blade, scrape, cut, hair and thanks
As I, examine my shadow
Insecurity prompts my ego
Raised veins contemplating death
If and but, my thoughts draw breath
Indefatigable, nine lives
Indefensible, done with knives
I am conscious, I petition
Why then do I need permission?
I know no arms, in which to weep
In which to sleep, I know no arms

I am Woman
Jay Bernard by Ajamu
I thoroughly enjoy the idea that in the 70s & 80s black women were having sex in Britain, in their British accents, with British passports in the vicinity, & then went for a British fry-up (albeit with an African/Caribbean twist) before heading to a British university for a British degree. At a time when black women/lesbians are rarely mentioned outside the context of third-world homophobic/war/pop music/domestic-violence/horror upon horror, I took enormous pleasure in meeting with the poet Dorothea Smartt a few years ago for lunch & having a conversation about her life as a writer, lesbian & activist.

Up until then, I had raided the library for academic texts about black queer life in Britain, watched the films of Campbell X & stood outside black pride wishing I had the money to get in, but the bulk of my thinking came from America—Cheryl Dune, Audre Lorde—& I was acutely aware that the States had a critical mass of women-like-me that resulted in a stronger & more vocal sub-culture. However, this was the first time I had sat with
someone of similar heritage, who sounded like me & whose activities had
happened in the streets I recognised. So you’ve asked me how I feel about
this history. I’m part nostalgic & part sceptical. From my own experience
I know that meetings can be tedious, leaders power-hungry,
demonstrations boring & the media unsympathetic. With such a
small & specific group it’s easy to see why most organisations
- OWAAD, Brixton Black Women’s Group etc - didn’t last
more than a few years. In hindsight, it’s also easy to
see how people went about organising in strange,
ideological & inefficient ways. For example, I
wonder about the emphasis on politics & the
arts to the exclusion of almost everything
else. I’m a writer, not a scientist, it’s
true, but I wonder if that’s a choice
or a legacy. I wonder if an
imaginative leap towards
other areas – technology
especially – might
have saved us a
few decades
today.

CELEBRATING
MILITARISM
ISN’T QUEER
Finally: I've often heard people declare that things are going backwards, that nothing has changed. In some respects this is true, with the rise of homonationalism, pink-washing (Intersectionality still has not made it to the mainstream!), continuous & exasperating criminalisation & murder of black youth, as well as the de-politicisation of local communities. However the march of history is really a muddy scramble through torrential rain. To say nothing has changed is to say all those women failed when they clearly did not. Some of us make it & the more that do, the more we bring along with us. So in other respects, I feel I am the heir of much success. Long before we ever met as friends, I remember Dorothea coming to my school. I virtually inhaled the poems she sent for us to read. When I realised that she was gay, it was the first door to understanding that certain ideas about the whiteness of gayness & the blackness of homophobia were not only historically backwards, but that this very woman teaching me was an elegant riposte.
Appreciation by Dorett Jones, KiS Board member

I wish to thank all those who rigorously worked on and contributed to this Almanac. Whilst reading the Heritage section I was presented to how these contributions represent a piece of [our]self, and I was moved by us and our versatility as BME LGBT people and the diverse ways in which we name, navigate and relate to community. Thank you to the historical groups, individuals, and all who have been instrumental in organising and documenting the lives of us as well as creating platforms for expression and celebrating the pride of our heritage. Be it through artistic creativity, music and dance, language that is written, sung or signed. Whatever the community represents at whatever given time; be it sites of reclamation and political conviction, union and heritage or support and resistance or simply a place to be self.

For first and second generation diasporic African and Asian peoples in the UK, whether here by birth or migration, our histories have seen us occupy various spaces of difference, engagement, resistance, collaboration, safety and trust. All of which we here at KiS, as well as our partners and friends continually strive to do. However, we must not forget or be complacent in the numerous challenges we face both internal and external to self, the community and society, but rather continue to push and challenge the status quo.

For every generation that continues to mark and assert unique identities and organise in innovative ways, it remains important, as you can see from these contributors, for us to continue to communicate and leave legacies. Legacies that do and do not define us and legacies that speak of choice, freedom and alternative places to stand, and legacies that are told and created about us by us. Through whatever form or medium, which capture, map and record our multiple histories and journeys, we must ensure our stories, whatever they may be, are never hidden or lost but remain constant.
Ajamu, fine art photographer, co-founder of rukus! Federation and curator of the rukus! Black LGBT Archive combines photography with a particular approach to community engagement.

During the development of this edition of the London LGBT Almanac each contributor was offered the opportunity to be photographed ‘for the record’. This series of portraits by Ajamu captures some of the personalities within the community and brings to life the voices on paper.

It is a great privilege to be able to publish the Almanac containing portraits of Ajamu and Ingrid Pollard taken by each other.
Finance and funding

This section provides information about the economy of a sub-sample of 60 voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) that are ‘LGBTQI by mission’ and say that they have income or raise funds. Information is presented that is considered to be most useful to diverse LGBT VCOs for development and funding. Given the increasing pressure to ‘mainstream’, the aim is to highlight the economies that arise when explicitly organising around equality and identity. Particular attention is paid to aspects of funding that influence sustainability, independence and innovation, such as: unrestricted income; income source; reserves; and expenditure against income.

Comparisons are made against the Almanac 1st Edition, PiP, and the wider voluntary and community sector (VCS). There are 34 organisations in both this sample and the Almanac 1st Edition sample; and 20 organisations in this sample, the Almanac 1st Edition sample and the PiP sample. Prior year comparisons include only organisations in both or all samples as relevant, unless otherwise stated.

Where comparisons are offered against the VCS as a whole, figures have been taken from the NCVO Civil Society Almanac 2012 (financial year end 2009/10). There are certain limitations with this approach: the NCVO sample consists of only registered charities; it covers England and Wales as opposed to London; whilst the Almanac 2nd Edition sample specifically concerns community of identity organisations. The comparison is deemed an interesting reference point and all such comparisons are restricted to a comparison between only micro, small and medium sized\(^1\) organisations in both samples.

There are no large organisations in the Almanac sample this year. The one large LGB VCO included in the Almanac 1st Edition and PiP reported that they did not have the resources to complete the survey this year. Unfortunately, their accounts had not been lodged publicly at the time of writing and therefore the team was unable to carry out the work on their behalf as it did for others. This organisation, which accounted for 43% of total sector income in the prior year, has been removed from comparisons for consistency.

1 National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) categorise organisations as micro, small, medium, large and major; relevant financial definitions are provided in the next section.
Organisations in the finance sample

The following diagram shows an overview of the organisations in the finance sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33% (n=20)</td>
<td>organisations have paid staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67% (n=40)</td>
<td>do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62% (n=37)</td>
<td>organisations have income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38% (n=23)</td>
<td>do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33% (n=20)</td>
<td>organisations are LGBT community of identity organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67% (n=40)</td>
<td>‘mainstream’ LGBT organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% (n=24)</td>
<td>organisations are registered charities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% (n=36)</td>
<td>are not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62% (n=37)</td>
<td>organisations are ‘micro’ - income is less than £10K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13% (n=8)</td>
<td>‘small’ - income is more than 10K and less than £100K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% (n=15)</td>
<td>‘medium’ - income is more than £100K and less than £1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Count (n=60)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orgs without paid staff</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orgs with paid staff</td>
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<td>Orgs without regular or reliable meeting space</td>
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<td>Orgs with regular or reliable meeting space</td>
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<td>Orgs without income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orgs with income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-registered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered charities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organisations’ income (%)

- Organisation (n=60)
- Community of identity organisation (n=20)
- Nil
- 10K - 100K
- Nil - 10K
- 100K - 1M

Finance and funding 147
### Focus of community of identity organisations

Note to diagram: There are no bisexual organisations in the sample with income.
Overview

The total income of London LGBT VCOs is £5,579,319. This represents 0.015% of the total income of the VCS as a whole and 0.038% of the total income of the VCS in London.

Total expenditure is £5,309,675. This represents 0.015% of the total expenditure of the VCS as a whole and 0.036% of the total expenditure of the VCS in London.

83% of expenditure pertains to what might be deemed ‘social service’ organisations, i.e. those with a focus on housing, health, domestic violence or ‘public services’ more generally.

The level of expenditure amongst London LGBT VCOs is equivalent to £9 per head spend on the LGBT population compared with £1,796 per head spend by VCOs on the whole population of London.²

2 These figures are calculated using the Office for National statistics London population figure 2011, a London LGBT population of 7.5% and the total VCS income figure (NCVO 2012).

This expenditure of £5,309,675 is also equivalent to:

- Just under 1/590th of the amount spent on fundraising by the VCS as a whole
- 1/5th of the amount spent on fundraising by the UK’s 10th largest charity
- 1/50th of the total expenditure of the UK’s 10th largest charity.

How income is shared

25% (n=15) of the organisations have 96% of the total income to the sector.
All 15 of these are medium sized and 14 of these are registered charities; one is a community of identity organisation.

Community of identity organisations run by and for women, young people, older people, people with mental health issues, disabled people, D/deaf people, BME people share between them 6% (n=20) of total LGBT sector income.

### Average income

LGBT community of identity organisations have an average income of £9,627. The community of identity organisations that make up this figure focus on the following issues/people: trans, BME, disability, older, younger, bisexual, parents, mental health, faith, D/deaf. Bisexual, D/deaf and mental health organisations had nil average income at the point of survey.

All LGBT organisations have an average income of £92,989. LGBT registered charities have an average income of £185,787.

The volunteers contributing the highest number of hours per month individually are almost all active in

### Average income by organisation type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation Type</th>
<th>Sample overall</th>
<th>Community of identity</th>
<th>Registered charities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average income</td>
<td>£9,627</td>
<td>£185,787</td>
<td>£92,989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The LGBT community of identity organisations.

The average number of years that charities have been registered is eighteen with the earliest registration in 1970, and the latest in 2007.

**Sources of income**

In the following table, and the graphic that follows it, the second column shows the total income to the London LGBT VCS from each income type shown in the first column. The next column shows the income to the LGBT VCS as a percentage of the total income from that source to the VCS as a whole. The fourth column shows the percentage of income from a given source when compared to the total LGBT VCS income. The final column shows the percentage from each income source in the wider VCS. For example, total income from the public sector to the London LGBT sector is 3,402,873; this is 0.13% of total income from the public sector to the VCS as a whole; this is 61% of the London LGBT sector’s income; in comparison the VCS as a whole gets just 31% of its income from the public sector.

It is notable that the LGBT VCS receives 61% of its income from the public sector compared to 31% from this source in the VCS as a whole. This is considered in detail in a later section.

It is also significant that the sector receives just 21% of its total income from individuals, which is half of the percentage income from this source in the VCS as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income source</th>
<th>Total LGBT sector income £</th>
<th>Total income from source against VCS total income %</th>
<th>Income source against total LGBT sector income %</th>
<th>Income source in the wider VCS %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>3,402,873</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>1,148,003</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusts and foundations</td>
<td>485,713</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lottery distributors</td>
<td>391,361</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/internally generated</td>
<td>115,546</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>11,018</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>24,805</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sources of income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Total income</th>
<th>LGBT total income as % of VCS total income</th>
<th>% of total LGBT sector</th>
<th>Compared to the wider VCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>3,402,873</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>pink</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>1,148,003</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusts and foundations</td>
<td>485,713</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lottery distributors</td>
<td>391,361</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>purple</td>
<td>purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/internally generated</td>
<td>115,546</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>grey</td>
<td>grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>11,018</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>24,805</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individuals in focus

Legacies
- Total income: 103,261
- VCS total: 1.8 billion
- % of total LGBT sector income
- Compared to the wider VCS

Donations
- Total income: 428,915
- VCS total: 6 billion
- % of total LGBT sector income
- Compared to the wider VCS

Community Fundraising
- Total income: 439,330
- VCS total: 2.2 billion
- % of total LGBT sector income
- Compared to the wider VCS
Therefore, despite the total levels of income being tiny in comparison to the whole VCS, and despite common perception perhaps, the LGBT sector in London is not buoyed by individual givers and donations. This is considered in more detail in the following section.

### Individuals

The table and graphic above show the level of income from three types of income from individuals: legacies; donations; and community fundraising. For example, the LGBT sector receives £103,261 from legacies, which is 2% of income to the LGBT VCS. This compares to £1.8billion income from legacies in the wider VCS, which represents 4.9% of income.

For each pound received through legacies by the LGBT VCS, around £17,000 was left to organisations in the VCS as a whole. Two organisations received a legacy in the year.

68% of income from donations and 28% of income from community fundraising were achieved by one organisation, whose donations have increased by 87% since the Almanac 1st Edition.

Average donations amongst those that receive donations, excluding one outlying organisation, is £6,288 (n=22) per annum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income source</th>
<th>Total income</th>
<th>As % of total LGBT sector income</th>
<th>As % of total VCS income</th>
<th>VCS total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legacies</td>
<td>£103,261</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>£1.8billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>£428,915</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16.35%</td>
<td>£6billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community fundraising</td>
<td>£439,330</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>£2.2billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is notable that the LGBT VCS raises a greater percentage of its income from community fundraising which suggests perhaps that as a micro, small and medium sector, LGBT VCOs work harder to engage the community in events and raise funds.

### In context

In the whole VCS the median\(^3\) amount of income per donor is £11 and the mean\(^4\) amount is £31 per annum. If the LGBT population in London (which we assume gives to charity according to a similar profile as the wider population), was giving to LGBT organisations, the sector ought to be earning between £3m and £11m in donations alone. This is an important development route for the sector.

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3 The median is the numerical value that separates the higher half of a sample from the lower half.
4 The mean is the sum of the values divided by the number of values.
National Lottery

7 organisations receive lottery funding, and just one organisation received an ‘Awards for All’ grant in the year.

The average success rate for any Awards for All grant is currently 50% (BLF 2012).

The sector receives 0.2% of the lottery income awarded to the VCS as a whole.

Trusts and foundations

16 organisations (27%) received trust and foundation income in the year with no statistically significant change to the prior year. Amongst organisations that received trust and foundation income, the average amount in the year is just over £34,000 (n=16), with a highest amount of £131,000, and a lowest of £4,000.

Membership

Thirteen organisations gain income through membership, two of which commented that it was evident that members were less able to afford travel and fees this year.

Most recipients are LGBT community of identity organisations that have little other income. Just one LGBT organisation that would be considered a ‘social service’ organisation and one arts organisation (both medium sized) received income from membership in the year.

Assuming that members are a population of people who become increasingly aligned to the work of an organisation, it is useful to note that 25% of all legacy income in the UK is left to ‘social service causes’. Membership is undoubtedly an important income development route for organisations.

It is positive to note that one survey respondent commented that they sought and received specific funding to explore merger and consortium building this year.

Several community of identity organisations refer to ‘how much more we could do with just a little funding’.

Public sector income in focus

Total income from the public sector to the LGBT VCS is £3,402,873, which is 61% (n=16) of total income. This compares to public sector income of 31% of income in the VCS as a whole.

Just two LGBT COI organisations receive public sector funds.

The amount from local government (including PCT and London Councils) is 65% compared to 35% from central government (including NHS).
In the VCS as a whole, the split is roughly half and half central to local government funding.

**Changes since the prior year**

Overall there has been a fall in public sector income in the LGBT VCS of 9% (£261,888 n=15). Eight organisations collectively lost £525,509 which represents 19% of the total income of those organisations.

Eight different organisations collectively gained £263,621 which is 14% of the total income of those organisations.

Central to local government funding has changed from a ratio of 50:50 last year to 40:60 amongst the same organisations this year.

One survey participant commented that ‘local authorities are becoming more introverted’, and another, that the uncertainty around London Councils was ‘extremely negative’ for the sector. A large service provider organisation highlighted trusts and the Transition Fund as being significant in supporting them to innovate and create new projects this year, though the impact of this will not feature in the financial profiles until next year. Participants referred to ‘spending a lot of resources in re-negotiating public sector funds’.

**The same organisations - some reflections**

According to the NCVO Almanac 2012, the expenditure in the VCS as a whole has been growing, and continues

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5 The Government’s Transition Fund, administered by Big Lottery Fund in 2010/11, was to help ‘organisations which deliver high quality public services to adapt to a different funding environment during a period when they are at risk of reductions in tax payer funded income’ (Big Lottery Fund 2012).
to grow, up to the current year (sample financial year ending 2009/10). Growth peaked between 2003 and 2006 and there has since been a steady growth of around 1% to 3%.

The Almanac sample is more recent by a full financial year and there is evidence that this trend is reversing in the mainstream in some areas (e.g. LVSC 2011).

**Almanac 2nd Edition compared to PiP**

Expenditure overall since PiP (sample financial year 2005/6) has increased by 42%. The increase is in part attributable to growth in infrastructure support, accounting for almost half of the growth. This is consistent with the attention paid to infrastructure between 2002 and 2010 more widely across the VCS.

Thirteen organisations in all three samples increased their expenditure between 2006 and 2010, and the same numbers have endured losses in the last year. Two important factors in understanding this are that the LGBT Almanac includes specifically London based organisations; (growth during this time is more likely in London); and also, that amongst the organisations that appear in all three samples are a disproportionate number of medium sized organisations. These organisations are heavily reliant on public sector funding and may be more likely to increase and decrease in size more dramatically in line with wider economic trends.

In the last year there has been a fall of 5% in total expenditure. It is clear that some organisations have been supported by Transition funding and that London Councils has extended funding beyond the initial threat of cuts. The financial year 2011/2012 will be critical for the sector.

There is a risk that local and central government authorities, less constrained by, or interested in equality legislation, who may have formerly discharged some duties by funding community of identity organisations, will continue to cut spending in this area.

**Almanac 2nd Edition to 1st**

Amongst the same organisations income has fallen by 1% and expenditure has fallen by 4% overall since the Almanac 1st Edition.

The following factors are considered to have a bearing on the sector’s sustainability and capacity for innovation:

**Unrestricted and restricted income**

A sector with higher unrestricted income has a greater capacity to adapt and weather a changing economic cli-
mate. The ratio of restricted to unrestricted income is 59:41 compared to 60:40 in the prior year.

An almost statistically significant change in the average percentage of unrestricted income to restricted income from 48% to 57% (n=24), in the same organisations, is a positive sign.

LGBT community of identity organisations have a ratio of 67:33 restricted to unrestricted income, highlighting that these organisations not only have far lower average incomes but also receive income with less flexibility.

Amongst VCOs as whole and of a similar size, the ratio is approximately 50:50 between restricted and unrestricted funds.

The sector is more restricted, and LGBT COI organisations are more restricted still.

Expenditure against income

The percentage of income against expenditure retained this year is 5% compared to 1% last year, which means there has been greater ability to reserve a small amount of income overall.

Public sector income

The sector has twice the reliance on public sector income and half the benefit of income from individuals when compared to the VCS as a whole. There is little change here overall compared to prior year and this reliance represents a major risk factor in the current climate.

Reserves

The sector overall does hold reserves of almost 50% of expenditure at the end of the year, representing around six months of operation. Nevertheless, the higher levels are held amongst a small number of medium sized organisations, and this is less than half of the proportion of reserves held amongst mainstream VCOs generally at the height of the recession (NCVO 2012).

83% of expenditure is amongst ‘social services organisations’ compared to 70% in the VCS as a whole; thus our capacity as a sector to ‘build community’, step into creative thinking and arts spaces, outside of the ‘care and need’ framework is disproportionately limited.

One participant commented that they are moving strategically towards a greater proportion of unrestricted income through community fundraising and donations.
Conclusions

This second edition of the London LGBT Almanac has used lenses of heritage and diverse LGBT experience, alongside statistical analysis and focus group findings, to present information and analysis to support LGBT organisations and activists to reflect, plan and develop, and celebrate their survival and continued commitment to social change in these challenging times. The approach has enabled some understanding of the complex and textured nature of LGBT organising. It has been something of a journey this year and in creating the finished product a huge number of LGBT organisers and activists have contributed in some shape or form. A varied picture has been presented, in the knowledge that many people who read the Almanac are looking for different things.

The in depth look at volunteering inspires some interesting thinking about identity and activism and how people take up different organising positions depending on where they are in the construction of their own identity. Equalities thinking is largely absent from the mainstream volunteering dialogue and so this section highlights some useful findings about motivations and commitments.

The contributions from diverse LBT women vibrantly demonstrate how our organising and activism changes and evolves, and how many people, some more known than others, individually contribute to overall ‘social change’. The sector is complex and multi-dimensional. Many perceive homogeneity where clearly none exists other than a collective commitment to organise with diverse or intersectional LGBT identity at the core and as a focus.

Incorporating photography to the extent that we have has led to some new relationships and a fresh dialogue about notions of engagement, and how it happens, formally and informally between people and organisations.

Creating an overall statistical analysis and one that additionally highlights the same organisations as the prior year, and against 2006 figures, begins the long term commitment to analyse the sector year on year. Creating this level of visibility and common knowledge about a sector often marginalised and ‘invisibilised’ is seen as critical. When a people and a sector can readily be made invisible, doing such analysis can lead some to experience concern
that any level of income may seem too high, any level of public sector support seem excessive; there is to some extent fear that this exposure will reduce support. The Almanac will create a valuable year on year benchmark in a field where visibility matters. Statistics such as the 20% fall in staffing levels in one year are important facts to be brought to the attention of funders and policy makers and regardless of shifts in actual funding levels, the miniscule levels of funding coming into the sector cannot be overlooked. There are also regular contextual highlights, for instance highlighting issues concerning LGBT giving and potential collective funding development routes.

In the absence of reference to equalities in the majority of VCS analysis, findings about average income, heavy reliance on public funds, disproportionate reliance on restricted income, low levels of reserves, lower than average levels of income from individuals, all indicate risks and development routes for LGBT organisers.

Findings about volunteers, changing numbers and trends, are useful indicators of change for practitioners arguing for resources or infrastructure support.

Changes to this year’s sample, to include a greater number of less formal community organisations, have made more clear the distinction between LGBT organising that exists largely independently of the statutory sector and funders, and LGBT organising for which the current political and economic context presents incredible challenges. The former have little by way of resources, yet a creativity and independence in action and the latter are experiencing an increase in service user base and lower levels of funding, some required to ‘do more with less’. However, lower levels of funding, the marketisation of public services, the conditions of restricted funding, and austerity politics more generally, affect the values that all organisers have to negotiate. In this context the continued commitment to innovative, intersectional explorations of identity in the sector is especially inspiring and offers learning to all sectors.

In order to support sustainable and independent LGBT organising, the Almanac will continue to provide a benchmark to measure the impact of changes in the external environment on LGBT organisations. It will continue to highlight opportunities for LGBT organisations to have better support and resources if desired; and we strive to celebrate and showcase the huge range of activity supporting the development of London’s diverse LGBT community.
## Organisations included in the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organisations included in the sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17-24-30 No to Hate Crime Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4in10</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4Play Squash</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Age of Diversity</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Aurora</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Beaumont Trust</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Bede House Association Hate Crime Project</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Beit Klal Yisrael</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Bi Coffee London</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>BiUK</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bodhicharya Kairos Buddhist group</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Brent Youth &amp; Connexions Service Mosaic LGBT Youth Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Broken Rainbow UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Camden LGBT Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support and ‘Positive Catholics’ (peer ministry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Colours Youth Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Consortium of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Voluntary and Community Organisations (Consortium of LGBT VCOs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Croydon Area Gay Society (CAGS)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Croydon Trans Group</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Cutting Edge Consortium</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Deaf Bear UK</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Drum Out Loud</td>
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<td>Ealing Gay Group</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>ELOP</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>FTM London</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Galop</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Gay and Lesbian Association of Doctors and Dentists</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Gay Authors Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Gay Classic Car Group (GCCG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Gay Football Supporters’ Network (GFSN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gay Outdoor Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Gay’s the Word Bookshop Lesbian Discussion Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Organization Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Gemma</td>
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<td>Gingerbeer</td>
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<td>GLAM</td>
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<td>GMB Shout! London Network</td>
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<td>Grace’s Cricket Club</td>
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<td>Gusto Dining Club</td>
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<td>Haven Social Group</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Imaan</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Ishigaki Ju Jitsu Club</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Japanese Rainbow Group</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Jewish Gay and Lesbian Group</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Justice for Gay Africans</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Kairos in Soho</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>LAGRAD Lesbian and Gay Real Ale Drinkers</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association LAGLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Lesbian and Gay Newsmedia Archive (LAGNA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans domestic abuse forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>LGBT Jigsaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>London Falcons GFC</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>London Friend</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>London Gay Men’s Chorus</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>London Lesbian &amp; Gay Switchboard</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>London Lesbian Vegans</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>Mermaids</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>Merton LGBT Forum</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Mosaic LGBT Youth Centre Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>New Family Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>NPL (Naz Project London)</td>
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<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>NRG</td>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Older Lesbian Network (OLN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Opening Doors London</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Out &amp; About</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Out For Our Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Outcome, Community Support Service, Islington Mind</td>
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<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>OutdoorLads</td>
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<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>OutWest</td>
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<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>London Queer Youth Group (LQYG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>PACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Positive East</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>Queer Resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Queer Youth London South East (QYLSE)</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Organisation Name</td>
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