

Southall Community Alliance

Annual Report 2007 / 08

Contents	Page
1. Chair's Introduction	2
2. A view from the front desk – Savita Vaid	4
3. Manager's Work Report	6
4. BMER Fundraising Officer's Report	20
5. Views from Partners:	
Education & Social Group	26
Punjabi Theatre Academy	26
Tallo Information Centre	27
Refugees in Effective & Active Partnership	27
Access for Support & Development Centre	28
6. New SCA members 2007 / 08	30
7. SCA Board / Staff	31
8. Partnership Work	32
9. Appendix 1 – Accounts 2007 / 08	

Chair's Introduction

On behalf of the members of the Board of Southall Community Alliance, I am pleased to provide the introduction to the Annual Report highlighting a year of excellence in achievement and in fulfilling and surpassing targets.

We had set ourselves some clear objectives at our meeting last year "As an organisation we are confident that with the continued effort of all our team of staff, volunteers, members and the support of the funding agencies will enable us to create a sustainable legacy and further deepen our ties with the community. Our cherished goal of establishing a permanent home for SCA and the Community Resource Centre will need to come a step closer to being realised in the year ahead. SCA will also work towards strengthening its relationship and support for the activities engaging women and youth in the community cutting across gender and generations. Southall is and should remain 'for us all'."



Business & Community Project Workshop in progress

As the comments and views from the staff team will illustrate, SCA has moved forward on all these fronts as well as delivering on its ongoing activities. With a carefully worked out programme to address the existing and emerging needs of the community and of our partners, SCA has successfully contributed to the support of organisations engaged in improving the quality of life of Southall's citizens. The community forum has again become a focus of attention discussing and championing issues from community cohesion, education, facilities, health, interfaith and regeneration to Southall gas works.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

During the last year SCA secured funding to consolidate its position as a valued and trusted partner to key organisations. SCA has formulated objective strategic viewpoints on behalf of the community and acted as a delivery agency on a diverse range of issues. I strongly recommend a serious study of the annual report which underlines the inherent strength of the organisation. SCA's efforts to secure long term accommodation for its Community Resource Centre were underlined by the community forum held specifically for identifying availability, access and needs.

It is a massive compliment to our organisation when dignitaries from across the globe come to visit our offices and see for themselves community cohesion in action. From the warm and professional welcoming smile of Savita Vaid, the motivational support of Sharmarke Diriye, Sukhvinder Kaur and Heman Yones and the diplomatic ambassador of SCA Janpal Basran, all of whom provide a seamless quality experience for all our community organisations and individuals.

The facts are that thirty plus organisations were supported last year, funds were secured for BMER groups totalling £248,237, with almost two thirds for services for the benefit of young people in Southall. Developing Southall Connect; a BMER network and support for various women's organisations is now well underway.

The challenges as for all organisations large or small subject to the dynamics of public sector funding are equally applicable to SCA particularly in relation to increasing competition for ever-decreasing resources. I am confident that the strategy endorsed by the Board together with SCA's in-house expertise in the pursuit of quality and value for money through flexibility and partnership will be the key to our future success.

Harsev Bains
Chair of SCA

Administrative Officers report

A view from the front desk

For anyone who has visited the Southall Community Alliance office, I am sure you can bear witness to how busy the centre can get, so when I was first employed and seated at the reception desk you can imagine how daunting the thought of having to deal with every visitor became. Luckily, the support from Janpal and Suki meant I was swiftly in control of my surroundings and thoroughly enjoying every minute.



Enthusiastic participants at a SCA Community Forum meeting

Initially, my main duties at SCA had heavily revolved around greeting visitors to the centre and accommodating groups or assigning them to hotdesks. Although this is still a large part of my job, over the past few months this has gradually developed from general administrative work, bookkeeping and overall office management to assisting Janpal with the various projects SCA has been involved in arranging over the past year in particular.

Successful funding bids have meant SCA has been very fortunate in being able to organise and arrange a wide array of meetings and events covering a range of topics from health, environment, community cohesion, joint business and community working to sessions targeted at particular sections of the local community.

This has enabled me to work with and amongst diverse members of the community and has provided me with an insight into the needs of these organisations and individuals which, I hope, in some part, are being met by SCA.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

A year long community cohesion project over the course of the past year enabled me to get involved in workshops designed by SCA exclusively for women, young people, and faith groups. It was interesting to be able to share their experiences and to hear their opinions on how the local community could integrate better.

A significant amount of my time at the front desk is often occupied with assisting the general public with their queries; whether this means signposting or translating documents, I find SCA offers what I have found to be a service otherwise unavailable in Southall but evidently much needed. Often there are barriers to otherwise accessible services due to not fully understanding the English language and I find that the multilingual staff and user groups operating from SCA assist in this capacity greatly.

During an average day at the SCA office you can overhear a multitude of different languages being spoken; from Asian languages such as Malayalam, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu to Somali, Arabic, Farsi, and even Slavic speaking groups. A wonderful aspect of my job at SCA is the opportunity I get on a daily basis to meet and speak with people from different backgrounds and cultures and I find that every day presents a new challenge when working directly with these residents and helping them to overcome these obstacles.

Two popular services that I am responsible for administering include bidding on the Locata housing scheme and consumer advice surgeries by Ealing Trading Standards. Both are schemes provided by Ealing Council and available at SCA, offering local people the opportunity to choose their preferred accommodation, if on the council housing register, with the latter providing consumers with the support to take action against unsatisfactory services or goods they have purchased from retailers.

I am also currently responsible for implementing two major changes within SCA. We hope to acquire the PQASSO quality assurance system for our organisation over the next year for which I will be liaising with staff, members and stakeholders and I am also in the final stages of developing the SCA website.

When I joined SCA's staff in April 2006, I had no previous experience of working within the voluntary sector. I soon discovered the wonderful qualities found exclusively within community organisations through Southall Community Alliance and have found the experience so well suited to my nature that my own personal goals have dramatically changed and I now hope to continue to pursue a career within this sector. On that note, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to my colleagues, Janpal and Suki, and to all of the SCA management committee and groups who have made my job so enjoyable over the past year. I look forward to another busy and rewarding year at Southall Community Alliance.

Savita Vaid
Administrative Officer

Manager's Work Report

SCA Resource Centre

The past year saw SCA involved in a wide range of projects and local work but as in the past the Resource Centre continued to provide much of the focus for our daily work. Since moving to the premises in 2004 SCA has developed the space within the building to support the needs of local groups in the most practical of ways. The development of hot desks, small meeting space, free IT resources, office support services etc has become symbolic of the organisation.

The sheer volume of people using the building remains at a high level, over 5,500 people using the facility in 2007/08. Each year we continue to remain pleasantly surprised by the number of Ealing residents who come to the building. It is worth emphasising this Ealing, as opposed to Southall dimension, because although the majority of these users will be from Southall there is a noticeable number of users from Greenford, Northolt, Hanwell and even Hounslow. This is testimony to the services provided by groups at the Centre, which attract such users and once again reflects the value of an accessible community hub.



Abdullahi (ASDC) assisting the public using an SCA hotdesk

During this period we also witnessed yet another increase in hot desk usage, with the number of group users increasing from 32 to 36 groups. This is a huge number even given the fact that some will only be occasional users and evidences the growing demand for small, temporary office facilities in the Southall area.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

Amongst some of these hot desk users were Access for Support & Development Centre, Common Society Group, Focus Forth, Kulmiye, Voice of Dalit International, Slavic & Baltic Community, Bahar Centre etc. These are groups who work across the full spectrum of voluntary sector activity ie youth, womens, arts, sports, education groups and also they also represent the multi-ethnic Southall of today.

The number of groups using our meeting space actually decreased during the year, from 32 groups in 06/07 to 20 in 07/08. This runs counter to the trend of the past few years but does not signify a decrease in demand for the facility. This is simply a reflection of the fact that some groups made block bookings for lengthy periods of time and so the former pattern of small groups requiring space for short meetings was hard to replicate during the course of the year. One consequence of this pattern of usage has been that former users of our meeting room have had to locate alternative venues at which to hold meetings and events.



REAP training for community interpreters at SCA

As well as assisting local community groups the Centre has also hosted many other activities. These ranged from weekly yoga classes to visits of staff from the Department of Communities and Local Government. Although the size of the meeting space is relatively modest we were still able to arrange meetings covering a range of issues including climate change, outreach surgeries by local agencies, finance worker training etc. This mixed pattern of usage confirms the value of having small, accessible meeting space for local groups and residents.

Some of the activities arranged during the year which evidence this versatility of usage include :

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

- Climate change meeting
- Stroke awareness session
- Middlesex Football Association workshop
- SCA Community Forum meetings
- CASH training on community accountancy
- Steering group meetings of a Metropolitan Police research project involving the Somali Youth Union in the UK
- NRF Youth Forum

SCA was also able to use the meeting room to deliver capacity building training for local groups. These sessions arranged between February and March 2008 were tailored to meet group needs and covered areas such as monitoring and evaluation, development plans, fundraising etc. This is a scenario that is likely to be repeated in future years where we will probably make more frequent use of the space for our project activities.



Heman Yones providing help to Mr Elmi (ASDC) at website design training

Staffing

SCA has traditionally enjoyed a continuity in staff roles that has been a major factor in the development of the organisation over the past four years. There was no change to this core stability over the last year, even though we had new and temporary staff working for SCA.

The official face of SCA to most of our contacts and users will always be our administrative officer, Savita Vaid. As well as dealing with her normal and often hectic workload Savita had to deal with the additional challenges presented by monitoring and maintaining the finances of various different funding streams. As we have come to expect Savita was able to deal with this workload in a very friendly, efficient and professional manner and we hope that in the forthcoming year she will be able to benefit from training in areas that will contribute to her professional development.

The BMER fundraising project remains one of the main forms of support that can be accessed by groups through SCA. Starting in 2004 this project made use of neighbourhood renewal funding to employ two workers based in Southall and Acton respectively. Since inception the project has been widely acknowledged as a spectacular success, raising well over £1 million in funds, much of which has been in small size grants.

During the year due to maternity absence we retained the part-time services of Matt Freidson and Sharmarke Diriye to cover for the fundraising position. Matt was already engaged in similar work in Acton and was therefore able to adapt to working in Southall. Sharmarke was relatively new to the area but was still able to develop a very positive rapport with the numerous groups that he worked with. The end of year saw the welcome return of Suki Kaur, initially on a part-time basis.

It is great credit to all three staff members that they were able to come into their posts and work with groups in a seamless manner. Matt and Sharmarke would have had to familiarise themselves with our users but they managed this process in a way that caused no disruption to the service. In a similar way Suki was also able to hit the ground running after her return from maternity leave and was able to carry on the good work of her colleagues.

Finally, we need to also acknowledge the sterling work of Heman Yones in his role as part-time IT worker. Employed as part of the Capacitybuilders project, Heman's role was to work with BMER groups and help develop a web presence for Somali organisations. Both Heman and Savita had to overcome minor communication barriers in working to develop the Somali Connect website, a task that proved as challenging as it was rewarding.

Funding and achievements

For the past few years SCA has had real success in attracting both core and project funding. The 2007/08 period was of significant importance in our organisational development because it signalled the end of some of our main core funding and once again placed SCA in a position where we faced real uncertainty regarding our future financial arrangements.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

Even though the Big Lottery Fund had been one of our largest funders, we had envisaged applying to them again under their Basis Programme, which was designed to support infrastructure organisations. However, during the year it became clear that the funder was reconsidering the way that it supported groups, in a manner that made it very unlikely that they would support two organisations in one locality. As one Ealing based organisation had already attracted this resource it seemed an option not available to SCA.

Many local groups in Ealing found themselves in a similar situation, where imminent withdrawal of core funding coupled with lack of foreseeable replacement funds was contributing to huge uncertainty in the local sector. This scenario, often referred to as the 'funding crunch', had a similar impact upon SCA.



'Have Faith' workshop involving faith and VCS groups on
30/10/07

In the circumstances SCA and other partners from Ealing Community Network approached LBE about the possibility of obtaining transitional neighbourhood renewal funding, to support the organisation in the new financial year. We were delighted when the LBE Cabinet confirmed in January 2008 that SCA would be one of a number of organisations who would receive this transitional support. Although this has granted us some more time to once again consider ways of broadening our funding base it is essential that SCA uses this opportunity to the fullest and explores all possibilities for attracting both core and project funding in 08/09.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

Clearly the year cannot be remembered solely in terms of the financial uncertainty that was encountered but we can reflect upon a period of excellent project delivery. Some of our main project achievements have included :

Awards for All – Developing healthy cooking classes at the Dormers Wells Community Centre and raising awareness of these techniques amongst local residents. This successful pilot project was later funded by the Pfizer Foundation.

Big Lottery Fund – provided invaluable core funding for staff salaries and office running costs. This input allowed us to expand hot desk access, maintain high usage of meeting space, permitted development of SCA website, training sessions for groups etc



SCA trustee, Muna Mohamud (on the left), with a volunteer at the 'Talk Up' workshop held at Thames Valley University

City Parochial Foundation – made a contribution towards office running costs and with these resources we were able to arrange health awareness sessions, music skills training for young people, community forum meetings etc

Capacitybuilders – allowed the delivery of the 'Know IT' project, supporting the needs of BMER groups. The initial phase of the project involved a community based needs analysis followed by the employment of a part-time worker who helped develop the Somali Connect website and to arrange training sessions for groups with this new web presence.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund – this funds the BMER fundraising worker and a separate summary relating to the achievements of that project will be available later in this report.

West London Network – This is actually funding from the Change Up programme and has allowed us jointly, with Refugees in Effective & Active Partnership, to arrange meetings of the West London BMER Network. Recent meetings with a specific focus on issues affecting the BMER sector have been particularly fruitful and highlighted possible future areas of work.

Commission for Racial Equality – Another project that attracted considerable praise during the year involved a series of community cohesion events and activities, primarily in Southall. As part of this project we produced a refugee/asylum seeker mythbuster, a cohesion mapping booklet, arranged four themed workshops and arranged the 'Southall United' Conference. At all stages of this project we produced reports sharing our achievements and findings with partner organisations.

Partnership working

Many of the projects just referred to have been successful because SCA has been able to build on the good partnership links we have developed with local voluntary sector groups. This is an almost inevitable by product of being jointly involved in the planning and delivery arrangements for various projects. Last year this was most notable in relation to the CRE and Capacitybuilders funding where SCA worked with a whole range of groups to arrange events and activities.



Cllr Jason Stacey presents Voice of Dalit International with their much deserved Lottery plaque

Some of our work built on and continued our involvement in partnerships from previous years. The connection with the Ealing Change Up Working Group, Planning and Community Group, PCT Equalities Steering Group are some

examples where this continuing work was evident. Sometimes these links and connections have resulted in SCA gaining resources to deliver localised projects, such as that seeking to create better interaction between businesses and the community sector.

One of the most successful partnerships we were involved in was one that we were jointly responsible for convening : the West London BMER Network. This network was established in 2006 as a joint collaboration between SCA and the Great Lakes Development Network. Last year saw Refugees in Effective & Active Partnership (REAP) become our joint partner, a significant step since both organisations are based in different boroughs. Since then various meeting of the Network have been arranged at west London locations and we have seen a shift away from just guest speakers to having more interactive meetings and eliciting the views and opinions of the BMER groups who have participated at meetings. Special thanks for this go to Sarah Crowther and colleagues at REAP.

SCA staff also maintained an involvement during the year with other local partnerships. These have included the Development Workers Group, Ealing Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum, West London Network and Ealing Community Network (ECN). Having already mentioned the 'funding crunch' it is also important to recognise the lobbying role that partners played on and through the ECN to tackle what was a complex situation for various groups.



Meeting of the West London BMER Network taking place at the Refugee Council offices in Hounslow

As well as maintaining a good relationship with LBE officers, in relation to specific work issues, SCA was also able to work on wider issues through the Stronger

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

Communities Board. This Board is a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership and oversees performance of community strategy commitments.

There is no doubt that involvement in these various networks or partnerships is important but equally it is important to remember that much of our progress is due to the constructive relationships we have with our 'regular' community group partners. There were many times during the year when we were able to work with various groups in arranging project activities. Needless to say some of these groups are ones we have enjoyed a long standing relationship with but others included newer partners. Some of these groups included Tallo Information Centre, Common Society Group, Access for Support & Development Centre, Bahar Centre, Somali Youth Helpline and the Russian Circle.



Young participants at a SCA event in 2007

In all it was a year of involved participation in and with different networks. As with all such work it is the joint working with all partners that makes the collaborative a success and we need to acknowledge the support, throughout the year, of some of our key colleagues such as Andy Roper (Ealing CVS), Steve Flynn (Acton Community Forum) and all the numerous members of SCA who regularly involve themselves in our work or events. As an annual reflection upon the years work we also need to recognise the valuable assistance from staff at the Partnerships and Policy Team at Ealing Council.

Community Cohesion

The concept of community cohesion with its characteristics of a common vision and sense of belonging for all, valuing of diversity and emphasis on strong

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

relationships between people from different backgrounds, is one that has had an enormous impact upon VCS activity.

In 2007 the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, Chaired by the Chief Executive of Ealing Council, Darra Singh, produced a report making various recommendations about how to enhance integration and interaction between different communities. Some of these recommendations, in relation to volunteering, migrant information pack and 'single group' funding, are likely to have a real impact upon voluntary activity. The suggestion that funding for single issue groups be reconsidered is one that could have a serious effect upon BMER and equality's groups, many of whom help communities who are marginalised and often in need of specialised support.

Community integration and joint working have been central to the way that SCA has worked and developed our Resource Centre. One of the key reasons for this is the good relations we enjoy with community groups representing the diverse communities in Southall. In a year when we have delivered a very successful CRE funded cohesion project we need to reflect upon the future and the implications that this new thinking may have for the autonomy of groups, who may be constituted to work specifically with a very distinct audience or user group.



Fatima Akhtar (Mencap) with a user at the Tuesday morning outreach sessions

SCA members

The past year saw yet another increase in the overall membership of SCA with 16 new organisational members joining the network. Although the rate of

increase cannot be compared with the flow that we experienced two years ago this is still a sizeable number of groups and, we hope, evidences the regard in which the organisation is held by other local groups.

These new members included organisations such as :

Sri Vedmata Gayatri Pariwar UK, Somali Youth Helpline, Ikma Community Action, Sikh Welfare Research Trust, East African Community Support, West London Somaliland Community, The Centre for Nepalese & Gurkhas, University of Third Age, Water Education Health & Development Program etc

SCA Board

SCA has a long tradition and history of being a volunteer led organisation and it is only relatively recently that paid staff have taken on much of the workload. There is no doubt that the contribution of the trustees has been a crucial component in the work of SCA, both in the past and present.



Heavyweight collision! Cllr Stacey, Ash Verma (HCP), Virendra Sharma MP, London Mayor Boris Johnson and Harbans Palda at the official opening of Westside Radio

In 2007/08 there was only one change to the Board with Mrs Promila Bhatia being elected at the Annual General Meeting. In terms of experience the SCA trustees have a huge collective portfolio of skills and knowledge that they bring to the organisation and this includes involvement in many other community and faith groups. Much of this experience has been built up over many years of working in Southall and so the trustees have offered a myriad of different views at times when SCA needed to think clearly about future direction.

This is also an opportune time to thank the Board for their support during the year particularly the Chair and Vice Chair, Harsev Bains and Balvinder Chahal respectively. From our daily operational perspective the presence off the Treasurer, Dilbagh Chana, and our Company Secretary, Amir Fouladvand, remains as invaluable as ever.

The Future

For over two years SCA has enjoyed the security and certainty that external core funding provides. During this period we flourished, delivered on all our commitments and maintained good relationships with our key partners, both in the voluntary and statutory sector.

Inspite of this work there remain key challenges for the organisation. The first is to secure continuation funding to allow for core activities to continue and expand. This seems to be an annual issue and given the fewer funding opportunities available from large trusts and foundations and SCA may need to consider more local resources. In turn this will require a degree of adaptation and flexibility from SCA and a continued willingness to work in partnership with partner voluntary sector groups.



Meeting involving the Met Police and Somali Youth Union project at SCA

As LBE policy in relation to the voluntary sector has been evolving over recent years, there seems to have been demands upon the local sector to undergo a similar evolution. The closure of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme, which sustained the work of SCA and many other projects, will leave an undeniable gap. Within LBE the emphasis upon achieving LAA targets and the shift towards

an area based grant also presents opportunities for the community sector and how groups react to this will be crucial for their future. In some respects it may require groups to consider re-alignment of some aspects of their work with the strategic ambitions of local statutory agencies.

SCA's future premises needs are also becoming an increasingly important issue given our current lease arrangements. SCA has been in these premises since 2003 and this period has been wonderfully productive for us. It is certainly the case that having a strong base can provide a real spring board for the growth of a group and that conversely many groups are impeded by the lack of suitable accommodation. The past year has also seen the production of the Ealing Community Network Premises Strategy. In view of these developments it is important that the emphasis upon improved community accommodation is maintained at a local level.



A Focus Forth holiday activity for young children taking place in the meeting room

There has been some uncertainty surrounding the plight of established community venues in Southall and this has made it ever more important that there is local lobbying for new venues that can be used by the voluntary sector. It is important that local groups campaign for these increased resources in a cohesive way. Current LBE thinking seems directed at the development of more community facilities in Southall and we need to be a position that we can ensure that much needed facilities come to Southall. An essential challenge for Southall groups will be how they can remain involved in this dialogue and shape investment into the area.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

We expect the forthcoming year to be as full and busy as 2007/08 has been. It is already clear that additional project funding means that we will have to venture into areas of work, both geographic and thematic, that the organisation has previously not been involved in but this only bodes well for the future sustainability of the organisation.

BMER Fundraising Officer's Report

It gives me great pleasure to report on the work of the BMER fundraising project this year. I returned to work in November 2007, after a years maternity leave, which was covered by my colleagues Matt Freidson and Sharmarke Diriye.

Since starting in November 2004 the project has supported over 45 organisations, serving the deprived wards of Southall in the London Borough of Ealing. The project itself has exceeded expectations, both in its scope and success in meeting targets and producing outputs in the form of real and visible change for the Black Minority Ethnic & Refugee (BMER) voluntary and community groups that it has supported and more importantly for the communities and people of Southall.

The project aims to provide fundraising and capacity building support to BMER organisations in Southall. The level of support has been determined largely by the organisations themselves, ie new or embryonic organisations have required more intensive support to develop some basic policies procedures and practices which would help them fulfil their most basic legal and charitable obligations. In contrast some more established organisations have required assistance with funding searches, redrafting bids or investigating potential collaborative / partnership work. The aim of the project is to provide support services that meet the real needs of BMER voluntary groups.

Over the last year local groups have been in a unique position of receiving support from three different BMER Fundraising Officers involved in delivering this project. Some of the main project outputs have included:

- Over the year 65 bids to support the work of Southall's BMER voluntary & community sector were submitted to various funding agencies, including Local Authority, private trusts and National Lottery.
- These bids, in total valued £1,363,306

- *To date theses bids have resulted in Southall's BMER voluntary & community sector securing £248,237 for new or existing services and activities.

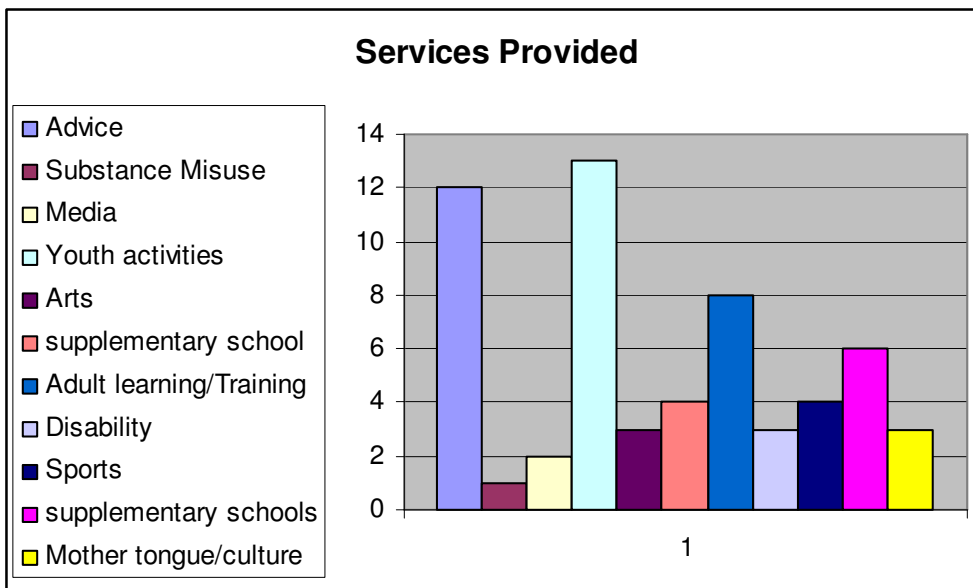
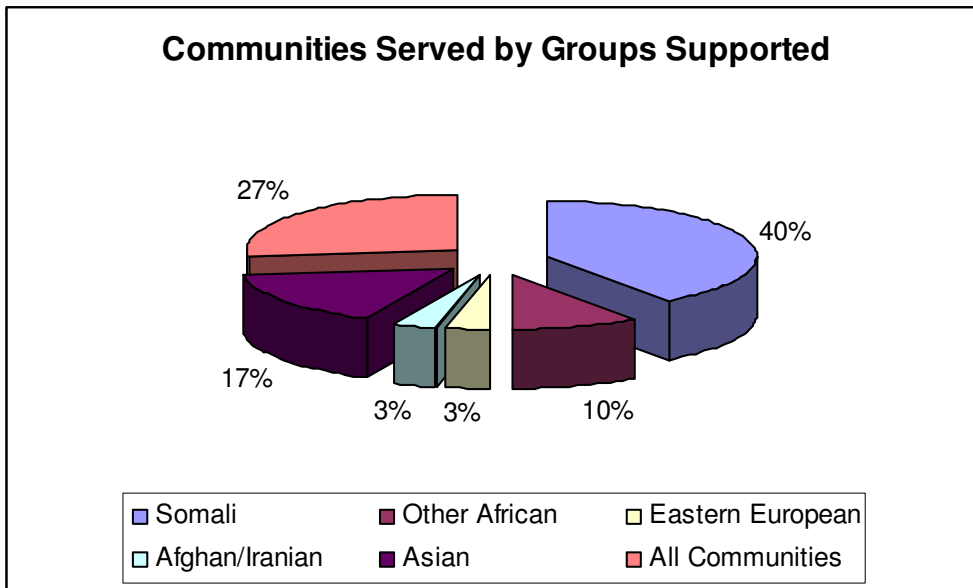
- 30 BMER groups have been assisted by the BMER Fundraising Project

*Bids to the Value of £150,000 remain outstanding.

Organisations supported by the fundraising project have ranged from Somali advice groups to Russian organisations running supplementary schools. SCA has the added privilege of witnessing much of this work in our premises, either at the hot desks or in our meeting room. The groups we work with represent the views and needs of a variety of different communities from across the globe.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

Below is a snap shot of the various communities served by the projects supported by the BMER fundraising project, as well as the types of services that groups provide.



This year has seen a rise in the number of organisations providing services to young people. This is a very welcome increase for Southall which has one of the youngest populations in the borough but is probably also one of the most poorly resourced in terms of services to young people. With the support of BMER Fundraising officers:

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

- £184,737 of funding has been brought in to Southall to assist in the development and delivery of projects benefiting young people from BMER communities
 - £106,326 has come from BBC Children in Need
 - £53,000 from Media Box
 - Other funding came from Ealing council, Sports Relief & London Children's Network Fund.

- New activities for young people in Southall have included:
 - Media Training
 - Support for Somali young men at the risk of offending or re-offending
 - Activities for Children from Afghan & Iranian communities

As well as providing practical assistance in searching for funding and completing funding applications the officers have also offered other support to strengthen and capacity build organisations. Much of this work involves ensuring that groups and organisations meet their very basic legal obligations ie

- Policies: Including child and vulnerable adult protection & Equal Opportunities
- Constitution development
- Registering as a charity
- Preparing annual accounts and reports for public & Charities Commission

Furthermore, groups have also requested assistance from officers to complete monitoring and evaluation documentation for funder's, develop easy to use book keeping systems, plan and prepare for their first AGM'S (a huge learning curve if you've never done this before), as well as to prepare for funder's assessments and interviews. Once again this reinforces the flexibility of both the project and more so the officers involved in delivering the project. Our aim is to provide services that groups want and need, that can help develop skills and confidence and which strengthen voluntary sector organisations

Issues

As previous years have demonstrated one of the biggest issues the BMER fundraising project, and more importantly the BMER Voluntary sector in Southall/Ealing faces is that there is just not enough funding to be shared amongst the ever growing number of groups. Funder's are intensifying their criteria, demanding more evidence from groups that they are the best group to deliver services, that they can provide a quality service and that their service is provided at the best value. This has meant that despite the efforts of the project many groups have experienced difficulties in obtaining funds.

Once again however there have been opportunities for groups to be commissioned to provide specific services. However, this itself has its own conditions and groups have had to demonstrate at various different levels that they have the skills, experience and capacity to deliver and manage such projects.

On a more positive note some groups in Southall have successfully been commissioned to deliver services and project officers have been instrumental in initiating communication between voluntary groups and Ealing Council.



Mehrnaz Malekzadeh (Bahar Centre), one of the groups supported by the fundraising project

Another development impacting local small groups has taken place within the structure and administration of local small grants. It has become evident that there are many small grants schemes targeted at the voluntary sector in Ealing and there seems to be an overlap in the themes, issues and criteria for different pots of funding. In order to address this my colleagues at ECVS, ECN and project officers are looking at ways this process can be simplified, be more effective and in line with local priorities and need. As this report goes to print the details of the future of the small grants scheme has not been finalised and we hope to have more to report on this matter in the not too distant future. The ultimate aim of this process is to ensure that groups have less funding deadlines and the process becomes streamlined to ensure the most appropriate groups are applying for theme or issue based funds and unnecessary administration is kept to a minimum.

Future challenges.

The BMER fundraising project has once again excelled in its capacity to support Southall based BMER groups. It is worth noting that each year the project has exceeded its targets in terms of the number of groups supported and funding applications drafted. This is due partly to the sheer demand for the service and support and partly to the welcoming and accommodating nature of the project officers involved.

Partnerships & Collaborations

We do however need to address issues of sustainability due to the funding climate within which we operate and look at ways in which we can work more creatively to ensure the survival of many worthwhile projects and services. Therefore the work plan for the project, as well for SCA as an organisation, will include looking at ways we can address this issue through creative initiatives and partnership working. The working environment at SCA, particularly the hot desk space, is conducive to partnership work and we provide a unique space which allows groups to communicate informally about every day issues, provide moral support and share skills and knowledge.

We are planning on building on this next year by setting up and providing administrative support to Southall's very own BMER voluntary sector network, 'Southall Connect' This network will be a valuable opportunity for BMER voluntary sector workers to come together to discuss issues that are affecting their organisations, share skills, peer mentor, share project information including successes, investigate partnership opportunities and look at the role the BMER voluntary sector plays in creating cohesive and integrated communities.

Furthermore a regular feature of the network will be to showcase the efforts and successes, as well as the difficulties, of BMER women lead organisations, who have previously had little or no platform or voice. We are hoping that the lessons we learn from this network will inform our future practise, assist us to engage with groups (and groups with each other) in a more strategic fashion and help us plan future initiatives which will help create a more sustainable, connected and robust BMER voluntary sector in Southall.

Quality Assurance

In order to assist groups to increase their efficiency and become better at what they are already doing we will also be in a position to provide Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO) mentoring and in house training for groups that wish to work towards the PQASSO Quality Assurance system or prepare for review for the Quality Mark. I am undergoing training and am hoping to be a licensed PQASSO mentor by July 2008.

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

This will be a huge asset to Southall Community Alliance, the BMER Fundraising Project and the groups themselves, as it will help them to become stronger and more accountable for their services as well as reshaping their thinking around quality and Quality Assurance.

One of things that often inhibits groups from undertaking any quality assurance process is the thought that it is unmanageable and labour intensive. The unique selling point of PQASSO is that it is a self assessment process (the external review is optional) and focuses on the people and operations of an organisation rather than paper and documentation. I am really looking forward to being able to provide this additional resource to groups, who are more and more likely to be asked to address issues of quality when applying for funds or tendering.



A rapt audience at the Southall United conference in March 2008

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues Janpal Basran and Savita Vaid for helping me ease back into my work at SCA, and also to extend this thanks to Matt Friedson and Sharmarke Diriye, who have kept me updated and informed of funding and development matters in the borough. I look forward to another year of working alongside the voluntary sector in Southall.

Suki Kaur
BMER Fundraising Officer

Views from partners

1. Education & Social Group

For the last few years the Educational and Social Group and the Southall Community Alliance have been working well together in supporting the local community. The services offered by Southall Community Alliance are delivered very professionally and the staff are patient and respectful. They have supported us with our various projects. Our organisation has really benefited from the support from the SCA. Workers like Suki, Sharmarke and Savita make themselves approachable for help.

Said Gabobe
Education & Social Group

2. Punjabi Theatre Academy

Ever since Punjabi Theatre Academy (PTA) started using the facilities at SCA we have been proud that this is our office, where our members, clients and local community members can receive different services from the SCA premises.

During the last 3 - 4 years we have worked closely with SCA, in particular with Janpal, Suki, Savita and Sharmarke who have been very helpful to us. The PTA always shares their project details with these members and the staff at SCA are always ready to assist. Our most important projects have been 'Lion of Punjab' and 'Puwara Bottel Da' (beat the bottle), which have been big achievements and successes for PTA and SCA have always been on hand to give guidance and support to help launch our projects.

The Punjabi Theatre Academy is fully committed to promoting Punjabi culture and traditions in the local community and are always keen to share their activities with other organisations, communities and local people and encourage them to work together. Southall Community Alliance is our 'Paradise House', a place where we can meet a variety of people belonging to different cultures and different ideas from different communities.

On the behalf of the PTA we wish SCA a long and successful future and hope for it to continue to be a hub for the local communities.

T. P. Singh
Punjabi Theatre Academy

3. Tallo Information Centre

Tallo is small well-known and highly respectable organisation that undertakes activities for young people and adults particularly provide advice and information to asylum seekers and refugees, mainly from the Somali community in West London. In order to meet with the growing demands from our clients and develop new services Tallo had to undertake capacity building to become an inclusive service provider for refugees and asylum seekers.

As a result, we are very fortunate to have been working with SCA to meet our community needs by forming a good partnership that offered us an extremely high standard of service which, improved upon our code of values, quality standard assurance and continuing professional development.

I am very pleased to extend and share my experience using Southall Community Alliance's services as one of our best capacity building organisation to expand and improve Tallo's services and resources.

With our recent partnership projects including community cohesion/capacity building, preventing violent Muslim extremism, youth conference/events, Talk Up Workshops, further youth mentoring, and others has been received and considered an excellent service which allowed us to raise the profile of our service to the community. Also with your recent consulting and capacity building service, we have increased our funding strand and managed to achieve successful bidding.

We, overall, find Southall Community Alliance an excellent organisation that endeavours to form links and advocate with the community support organisations such as Tallo. We are also confident that in partnership work with SCA we will be able to provide a valuable service to our members and look forward to developing a harmonious working relationship

On behalf of the Tallo Management Committee I would like to express our full gratitude to Southall Community Alliance for their extensive support and efforts for the last three years with Tallo Information Centre. We are looking forward to continue to working with you in the future.

Muusa Mahamad
Tallo Information Centre

4. Refugees in Active and Effective Partnership

After 3 years of increasing contact, the past year has seen REAP - a refugee-led, West London charity - joining with SCA's work to support and build up the West London BME&R network of organisations (part of WLN consortium). It's been a fascinating year, with in depth discussions about whether written application

processes for funding discriminate against groups of people whose first language is not English, about policies to 'prevent violent extremism', about the potential gains and losses to West London's BME&R groups from the Olympics in 2012. Meetings have been well attended and busy, and REAP is really pleased to be involved in this initiative that SCA has been committed to from the start.

We're also delighted to be formal partners with SCA in the 'PIP' project - bring English classes, personal support and more to refugee parents with little English who are raising young children in Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon or Hounslow. If you are interested - or know someone who might gain from this - contact SCA.

It's been a pleasure learning about SCA and working more closely with them over the past year or two. Everyone at REAP wishes SCA well and looks forward to future collaboration.

Sarah Crowther
Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership

5. Access for Support & Development Centre

Founded in 2002, Access for Support & Development Centre (ASDC) is a Somali refugee community organisation based in the Neighbourhood Renewal Area of Southall, and serving the London Borough of Ealing and surrounding Boroughs. In the past five years we have become a key stake holder in services to mainly the Somali refugee community but not exclusively.

Our current services are:

- Advice, Information & Guidance (including welfare, benefits, immigration et al.)
- Youth Club
- Supplementary School
- Skills Training, Education & Employment Guidance
- Health Promotion
- Substance Misuse & Crime Prevention Projects
- Support for Somali Youth Offenders at Feltham YOI
- Networking & Advocacy
- Preventing Violent Extremist Pathfinder Project

ASDC is currently based at the SCA building and were the first group to occupy and deliver services from the SCA office. On a daily basis we can see and support anything from 15-20 people and provide advice, guidance and information sessions at SCA.

It would not be possible for ASDC to deliver the services we have delivered for the past five years without the tremendous support and assistance we have

Southall Community Alliance Annual Report 2007/2008

received from SCA during this time.

SCA has assisted us in numerous ways including informing us of the funding opportunities available, keeping us updated on local training, meetings and seminars, providing hot desks and office facilities enabling us to continue our work for the local community. I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to SCA for their continued support and wish them a bright and successful future.

Abdullahi Osman
Access for Support and Development Centre

New SCA Members 2007 / 2008

1. Somali Youth Helpline
2. Sri Vedmata Gayatri Pariwar UK
3. Ilays
4. Ealing Somali Welfare & Cultural Association
5. Ikma Community Action
6. Apna Style Arts
7. West London Somaliland Community
8. Sikh Welfare Research Trust
9. University of Third Age
10. The Centre for Nepalese and Gurkhas
11. Water Education Health & Development Program
12. East African Community Support
13. Community Accountancy & Management Ltd
14. Equal Share Community Development
15. Essential Skills & Employment Services
16. Somali Learning Disability and Carers Association

Southall Community Alliance

Board Members

Harsev Bains	(Chair)
Balvinder Chahal	(Vice Chair)
Dilbagh Chana	(Treasurer)
Amir Fouladvand	(Company Secretary)
Michael Bolley	
Amar Chadha	
Abdullahi Osman	
Balvinder Kaur Chahal	
Babu John	
George Twyman	
Jayasree Syamlal	
Muna Mohamud	
Ravi Jain	
Carl Johnson	
Promila Bhatia	

SCA Staff

Janpal Basran	Manager
Savita Vaid	Administrative Officer
Matt Freidson	BMER Fundraising Officer
Sharmarke Diriye	BMER Fundraising Officer
Sukhvinder Kaur	BMER Fundraising Officer
Heman Yones	IT Worker

Partnerships in which SCA has been involved 2007 / 2008

1. Local Strategic Partnership Assembly
2. Stronger Communities Board
3. Dormers Wells Service Improvement Group
4. PCT Equalities Steering Group
5. West London Network
6. West London BMER Network
7. Planning and Community Group
8. BMER Health & Social Care Forum
9. Heathrow City Partnership
10. Ealing Community Network
11. ECN Steering Group
12. Development Workers Group
13. Ealing Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum
14. Refugees in Effective & Active Partnership
15. Change Up Working Group
16. Independent Advisory Group
17. Ealing Race Hate Crime Group