KATH’S

The breath of activity of African, Black British and Caribbean diaspora community and cultural organisations have a long-standing history and breadth of activity in the North East. Their founders and members represented here are past and present and span across the generations. They have employed a variety of perspectives, approaches and motivations for originating and strategies for representing. Some are current and others have been dissolved their resilience and passion to implement their different community and cultural visions is interwoven in the social history of the North East.

Some organisations such as North of England African Community Organisation (NEEACA), emerged from earlier 'in house' gatherings and parent organisation The Ghana Union and SCAFRO (Standing Conference of African Union). Many of the Elder vanguards, some of whom are no longer with us today and recognised here, have paved the way for the range and plethora of organisations, groups and projects which followed, from voluntary-led charities to the large-scale regional infrastructure-capacity building and change BECON to smaller, ‘every project has a different life span’ projects such as Freedom Think Tank, developed in 2007 for a specific purpose to engage in an alternative narrative on enslavement in 2007 for the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade 2007. For these organisations, culture and heritage are interwoven with community -everyday experiences and survival mechanisms from struggle to celebrations. A variety of artforms, creative expressions and dialogue has been used to communicate oral traditions, part and parcel to build and strengthen the lack of equity around community provision and services and wider societal needs such as citizenship by challenging the status quo around institutional and systemic structures via political protest and lobbying.

These organisations and individuals have fostered innovative partnerships, good relations and allyship across private, statutory and third sectors bodies across intersections. They have achieved a continuing legacy of Black and minoritized-led representation and access across LGBTQI, Education, Race Equality, Youth integration, and the Black and marginalised Women sector to name a few but though not mutually exclusive. They have been witness to and active engagers in the changing face of both local and global world changing events around race, representation, identities and inequalities prior to and inclusive of Stephen Lawrence and the MacPherson report of the mid- nineties, the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000); the death of multiculturalism and Equality Act (2010) and the more MeToo and BLM era in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in the US and the Covid-19 pandemic. For these organisation ‘the personal is political’ and of equal importance is the cornerstone of these organisations to show the cultural pluralities and ‘diversity within the diversity’ in the diaspora. The importance of marking the contributions that people made and giving voice to these stories evade being lost to history as progresses Black and minoritised people as active and progressive agents of change in their own liberation in the North East.

\*NB NEEACA (1998-June 2018) These are individuals who have been ex Board members are volunteers who have provided their personal experiences and digital archives to the project.