Child Protection Community Volunteering Project Evaluation

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ACRONYMS

AFRUCA- Africans Unite Against Child Abuse
CPD- Continuous Professional Development
CP- Child Protection
DfE- Department for Education
FGM- Female Genital Mutilation
LA- Local Authority
ToT- Training of Trainers
UK- United Kingdom
UNCRC- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Background

The Child Protection Community Volunteering Project also known as the Children’s Champions Project was first initiated in 2013 to run between April 2013 and March 2015. AFRUCA secured further funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to run the project between April 2015 and March 2016. The project was created to tackle the growing number of Black/African children going into the child protection system and ending up in care.

The project involved training members of the Black/African community on child protection to go on and train other members of the community thereby creating a ripple effect of child protection. The project also involved working with families in contact with social services and training practitioners around working with Black/African children and families.

The project had four main outcomes:

- Build the capacity of members of the Black/African community to address child protection issues and safeguard children from abuse and harm.
- Empower members of the Black/African community to have a better knowledge of how to prevent child abuse and how to keep children safe from harm.
- Support families in contact with child protection services to adopt positive parenting practices and act in the best interests of children.
- Improve the skills and knowledge of frontline practitioners to better intervene in Black/African families.

The main aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact and outcomes of the project between April 2015 and March 2016. The evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from beneficiaries with questionnaires previously designed for AFRUCA by Charity Evaluation Services (CES). Data was collected via interviews, online survey questionnaires, a focus group discussion and from AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data documented during the course of the project.

Summary of Findings

Champions

AFRUCA trained 52 Champions (46 women and 6 men) during the project cycle. We found evidence that most Champions were very pleased with their contact with AFRUCA
and the support they received as well as gained a lot from engaging with the project. From data collected for the evaluation, Champions reported the following outcomes:

- Increased awareness of child protection issues in the UK
- Better understanding of UK legislation which focuses on protecting and safeguarding children from harm
- Better able to identify ways in which parents can improve their parenting practices
- More confident about talking to other people in the Black/African community about child protection

Community workshops

AFRUCA Champions through volunteer-led child protection workshops had gone on to train 1,7214 members of the Black/African community. We found evidence that the following outcomes had occurred:

- Participants knew more about child issues protection issues that can emerge in the African community
- Participants had a better understanding of UK child protection legislation
- Participants knew more about positive parenting practices

Family support

AFRUCA worked with 53 families within the project year which exceeded its set target of 30 families. While work is still ongoing with a number of the families, from data collected from AFRUCA’s eleven closed cases we found that:

- Parents were better able to voice their concerns
- Parents were better able to engage with services
- Parents improved their parenting capacity and knowledge of positive parenting
- Children who were in LA foster care were returned to their parents’ care

Practitioners

Between April 2015 and March 2016, AFRUCA trained 420 practitioners across London and the South of England which exceeded its set target of 240 practitioners. From the evaluation, we found substantial evidence that practitioners were satisfied with AFRUCA’s training courses and had gained new knowledge and skills around working with Black/African children and families.
Summary of Recommendations

- **Build its human capacity** to take on more child protection cases because of growing demand as well as build the capacity of all staff to market AFRUCA’s training courses.

- **Provide therapy for families where children have been removed and returned** as a result of the devastating psychological effect this experience can have on families.

- **Conduct a longitudinal research** to measure long term outcomes of the Children’s Champions project.

- **Upscale the project nationally** to reach areas where there is need and demand.

- **Conduct research on physical chastisement** to explore the reasons why so many children from African backgrounds are referred to AFRUCA’s service and in the child protection system as a result of physical chastisement and the reasons why parents resort to this method of discipline.

- **CPD certify and diversify AFRUCA** training courses to increase practitioner’s attendance rates and growing demand by agencies for their staff to work effectively in cross-cultural settings.

- **Diversify the role of Champions** to become specialised in other areas of AFRUCA’s work such as FGM, Anti-child trafficking and faith based abuse.

- **Increase male participation** by recruiting more male Champions and working with more male specific organisations.

- **Work with more schools** by contacting all safeguarding leads, family support or community liaison officers within schools to arrange workshops for parents as well as exploring the possibility of running workshops at the weekends.
1.1 About AFRUCA

Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA) is the premier charity promoting the rights and welfare of African children, young people and families in the UK. Setup in 2001, with offices in London and Manchester AFRUCA works with key agencies, frontline professionals, government and policy makers locally regionally and nationally to inform and influence policy. AFRUCA aims to promote the best interest of the child in all its work areas and activities. At the core of this, is the belief that culture and religion should never be a reason to abuse and maltreat a child. The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UK Children’s Acts of 1989 and 2004 provide the framework for AFRUCA’s work. AFRUCA’s main focus is prevention and early intervention. AFRUCA works in five key areas:

- **Awareness raising and sensitization** within African communities and among young Africans about children’s rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions and UK legislation promoting the rights and welfare of children.

- **Information, education and advisory services** to raise the profile of African children in the UK, increase awareness of their needs, improve policies and practices, and develop the leadership potential of young Africans. Activities include research and publishing reports, media work, conferences, seminars, workshops, and training programmes for policy makers, service providers, parents, faith and community leaders, young people, community meetings, advice and consultancy services.

- **Advocacy and policy development** by working closely with policy makers to shape the development of policy and regulatory action to promote the welfare of children.

- **Community and international development** in partnership with others to put in place programmes and projects to help relieve some of the suffering and hardship that African children experience.

- **Support for children, young people and families** working to support children, young people and African families in crisis or at the point of breakdown through effective early intervention services. Our therapeutic service provides a confidential space to explore thoughts, feelings, beliefs and experiences through one-to-one, psycho-educational groups or group therapy, to those who have been affected by abuse, trafficking or FGM.

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1.2 Project Description

The Child Protection Community Volunteering Project also known as the Children’s Champions’ Project was initiated in 2013 in light of growing evidence of the overrepresentation of Black/African children entering into the child protection system and ending up in care\(^2\). Through previous work in the community AFRUCA found that one of the reasons why there was a disproportionate representation of Black children in the care system was as a result of ignorance of the child protection laws in the UK. Consequently, the project was set up in recognition of the need to provide practical solutions to tackle this problem.

The project was funded by the Department for education (DfE) for an initial two years between April 2013 and March 2015. Funding from the DfE was secured to run the project for another year from April 2015 to March 2016. The project covered London and the South of England. The main premise behind the project was to train members of the Black/African community as Champions who in turn train other members of their community thereby creating a ripple effect of child protection. The project also involved working with families in contact with social services and training practitioners around working with Black/African children and families. The project had four key outcomes and was divided into four key work areas as illustrated in the diagram below:

FOUR SPECIFIC OUTCOMES:

- Build the capacity of members of the Black/African community to address child protection issues and safeguard children from abuse and harm.
- Empower members of the Black/African community to have a better knowledge of how to prevent child abuse and how to keep children safe from harm.
- Support families in contact with child protection services to adopt positive parenting practices and act in the best interests of children.
- Improve the skills and knowledge of frontline practitioners to better intervene in Black/African families.

\(^2\) Statistics from the most recent government data show that Black/Black British people make up 3% of the UK population however 7% of the children in care are Black/Black British.
Figure 1: Summary of AFRUCA Children’s Champions Project

1 Champions
Training members of the Black/African community as volunteer Champions

2 Communities
Champions train members of the Black/African community on child protection

3 Families
Specialist advice and support for families in the child protection system

4 Practitioners
Specialist training for practitioners working with Black/African families
2.1 About the Evaluation

The primary aim of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness, impact and outcomes of the project as a whole. The evaluation was conducted between January 2016 and May 2016. Data was collected between January and March 2016 and the report was collated, written and finalised in May 2016. The evaluation adopted a mixed methodology (using quantitative and qualitative methods). The evaluation sought to:

- Assess the impact and outcomes of the project
- Evaluate the ability of the project to create change(s) for specific beneficiaries
- Identify key successes and lessons learned
- Explore the potential of replicating/scaling up the project nationally
- Assess AFRUCA’s ability to run the project and meet set project targets
- Draw recommendations that will influence similar and future projects

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

Data was collected by adapting questionnaires previously developed for AFRUCA by Charities Evaluation Services (CES). Data was collected via interviews, focus group discussions and survey questionnaires.

2.2.1 Interviews

In March 2016, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 families who AFRUCA had supported in the past. These families were randomly selected from AFRUCA’s 11 closed family support cases. The interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. Interviews were also carried out with AFRUCA staff.

2.2.2 Questionnaires/Online Survey

Online questionnaires (which consisted of a mixture of open and closed-ended questions) were sent to Champions, host groups (organisations AFRUCA had partnered with to run child protection sessions), practitioners and community members who had attended volunteer-led child protection workshops.

The questionnaire was sent to all the 52 Champions trained by AFRUCA. 22 Champions completed the questionnaire (a 42% response rate). A second questionnaire was sent to 1051 community members between January 2016 and March 2016 who had attended the volunteer-led child protection training sessions and given their contact details, 107 people completed the questionnaire (a 10% response rate). A third questionnaire was sent to 50 host groups. 7 completed the questionnaire (a 14% response rate). A fourth questionnaire was sent to 98
practitioners who had attended AFRUCA’s organised training courses, 18 practitioners completed the questionnaire (a 18% response rate).

2.2.3 Focus Group Discussions

A focus group was held in March 2016 to complement information collected from interviews and survey data. In attendance were 4 Champions and 3 representatives from host organisations. The focus group lasted for about an hour and a half.

2.2.4 AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data

AFRUCA maintained a log of all its service users as well as collected evaluation forms after various training sessions and this data was used to inform the evaluation. The following data sources were analysed:

- Champions profile data collected via online registration forms
- Evaluation forms collected at Champions two-day ToT
- A record of community child protection workshops held
- Evaluation forms collected at child protection community workshops
- Report of outcomes that have occurred for family support users
- A record of practitioner training sessions held
- Evaluation forms collected at practitioner training sessions

2.3 Analysis

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and collated by the interviewer. Data from the pre and post evaluation forms at the practitioners training sessions were analysed using Excel. This included information about the level of participants’ confidence and knowledge against the subject area. All other survey data collected online was also categorised and analysed using Excel.

2.4 Limitations

The short timescale of the project meant that it was not possible for the evaluation to capture the longitudinal impact of the Children’s Champions Project over a number of years. Also, ongoing family support work with the families AFRUCA worked with meant that we were not able to capture the outcomes for all families.

Finally, the low response rates by respondents posed a threat to the validity of the research. To mitigate against this problem reminder emails were sent to respondents three times during the data collection phase of the evaluation. Respondents were also contacted via telephone. Even after this, responses were less than expected. In order to
secure the validity of the inferences, AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data (data collected through feedback forms after training sessions) was also used to inform this evaluation. We found that responses between the data collected from AFRUCA’s feedback forms and survey questionnaires sent out to respondents did not vary significantly.
I decided to become a Champion because I am concerned about children going into care and how parents are ill-educated about practices that are considered part of culture and tradition.
3.1 Who are AFRUCA Children’s Champions
AFRUCA Children’s Champions are members of the Black/African community willing to volunteer their time to undergo an intense training in child protection, cultural practices and their impact on safeguarding children in the UK and disseminate this information to other members of the Black/African community. The Children’s Champions were a core part of the project.

3.2 Role of Champions
- Undergo an intensive two-day training in child protection, child abuse, harmful cultural practices and their impact on safeguarding children in the UK.
- Facilitate a minimum of one child protection workshop to a group of 25 people or more supported by a member of AFRUCA staff to ensure that the information passed on at workshops is accurate and matched with AFRUCA’s standards.
- Sign and adhere to a code of conduct governing their role and responsibilities during their time volunteering as an AFRUCA Children’s Champion.

3.3 Recruitment of Children’s Champions
AFRUCA recruited and trained 52 Champions against the set project target of 60 Champions. Champions were recruited via road shows, at volunteer-led child protection workshops and self-referred by other Champions. Champions were recruited from London, Kent, Essex, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire. In the survey sent to Champions, they were asked to give reasons they decided to become volunteers. They reported joining the project for various reasons as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Reasons for applying to become a Children’s Champion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for applying</th>
<th>Number (22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I thought the Children’s Champions Project was focused on issues that Black African communities need to address</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought I would gain understanding and/or experience that would help me in my job or career</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I wanted to help parents/carers in my community to improve their parenting 5

I am a parent/carer and I wanted some parenting tips which I could put into practice 1

I wanted to meet new people -

Someone I know suggested I should apply -

I had some spare time and I wanted to find something to do -

Other -

AFRUCA staff reported that over one hundred people were recruited to become Champions. However, because of the rigorous vetting process and requirements, a number of people did not qualify. Additionally, in a few cases, some people had finalised the vetting process but did not show up for the two-day training due to work and personal commitments.

“It was quite difficult for some people especially with the DBS checks as quite a number of people did not have some of the documents needed to complete the application.” -AFRUCA Staff

“Two days to the training or on the day of the training a potential Champion calls you up to say oh I’m really sorry I cannot make it as I was unable to take time off work or I could not find a child minder for my children which is very understandable but disappointing.” -AFRUCA Staff

Champions were also asked how they found out about the project. Table 2 gives a breakdown of their responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Champions heard about the project</th>
<th>Number (22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone I know told me about it</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I attended another type of event run by AFRUCA where the Children’s Champions project was mentioned</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I attended a Children Champions workshop | 1
I saw information about it on AFRUCA’s website | 1
Other (Volunteer Redbridge, Facebook likes, on my NHS.net, from work premises, I applied for a job with AFRUCA). | 6

3.4 Background of Champions
AFRUCA Children’s Champions originated from different African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Guinea, Uganda, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia and Kenya. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the representation of the different countries Champions originate from.

**Figure 2: Map representing Champions Countries of origin**

![Map of Africa with countries labeled and numbers indicating the count of Champions from each country.](image)
Champions comprised of 46 women and 6 men from various professional backgrounds including: social workers, pastors, a childminder, a house keeper, teachers, an accountant, mental health practitioners, an engineer, administrators, a pharmacist, project managers/ coordinators, a radio show producer, solicitors, a foster carer and a Masters student.

The diversity of the Champions backgrounds both personally and professionally served as an added advantage to the project as an AFRUCA staff pointed out;

“The fact that some Champions were able to speak in their native tongue (Twi, Shona and Somali) and explain the content of the training in more detail to members of their community made a huge difference to the workshop sessions especially for those who could not understand English.”

“At one of the sessions, the Champion facilitating was a family solicitor and she was able to explain the key UK child protection laws in detail to a participant who had posed a question about the Children’s Act 1989 Section 20 which was not part of the training content.”

3.5 Training of Children’s Champions
The 52 Champions were trained in two sets over the course of two-days. The first training held on the 4th and 5th of July 2015 (27 Champions) and the second on the 7th and 8th of November 2015 (25 Champions). On day one, the training covered what is child abuse, key UK laws on child protection, harmful cultural practices and their impact on safeguarding children and other safeguarding issues such as internet safety, domestic violence, leaving children home alone and physical chastisement.

On day two, Champions were equipped with presentation skills and training materials to enable them facilitate their own training sessions to workshop participants. Champions were also asked to deliver mock presentation sessions on various issues they had been trained on as a simulation exercise for their future sessions.

Champions were also asked to sign a code of conduct which set out clear guidelines and rules about AFRUCA’s expectations of Champions while volunteering for AFRUCA.

3.6 Champions feedback on the recruitment process and two-day training
From the online questionnaires collected from Champions and AFRUCA’s monitoring data we found clear evidence that Champions had a high level of satisfaction with the

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3 Section 20 of the Children’s Act covers the Local Authorities duty to provide accommodation for children http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/20
recruitment process and the two-day training. Out of the 22 Champions who responded to the questionnaire, 20 agree or strongly agree that AFRUCA kept them informed about their application status prior to becoming a Champion.

“I like how I was kept up to date, before the programme, through telephone [calls] and emails.”

Evaluation forms collected from the two-day training showed that Champions highly rated the quality and usefulness of information on the various topics covered at the training.

“I found it very useful, being able to talk about things in a no holds barred way - allowed us to explore the topic thoroughly - I loved that.”

“Course is excellent and encouraging for the Black Community as a whole.

“The training was extremely detailed and is something I will always remember.”

Champions also commented on the training handouts, trainer’s delivery, venue and time keeping.

“It is very educative and informative. Enough material to cover all areas of the session. The delivery was explanatory enough and [made] understanding easy.”

“The trainer was friendly and personable. She gave people the opportunity to share views & opinions fairly and answer questions with knowledge & great insight.”

While most of the comments were excellent, a few Champions commented on poor time keeping at some sessions.

“The training was great but I wish the time management was better as we did rush through a few important bits.”

Of the 22 Champions who completed the online questionnaire 21 agree or strongly agreed that the training helped them understand their role as a Champion.

The training was so nice, educating and it created awareness for me as AFRUCA Champion.”

From the evaluation forms collected at the two-day training sessions in July and November, 81% of Champions agreed or strongly agreed that the training had equipped them with new skills to train others in child protection.
3.7 Champions feedback on AFRUCA’s support before and during workshop sessions

After the two-day training, AFRUCA staff were constantly in contact with Champions regarding upcoming workshop sessions to arrange for them to facilitate a workshop. Once a Champion agreed to run a session, further details were sent to the Champion including a copy of the slides in the post. AFRUCA staff also went over the slides and any potential issues over the phone with the Champion(s) prior to the day of the event. An AFRUCA staff also attended the training to help with logistics, setup, offer support with facilitation and questions. In a few instances, staff also co-facilitate the session with Champions.

Champions who responded to the survey questionnaire (n=22) indicated a high level of satisfaction with the support they received from AFRUCA staff.

- 17 said that they agree or strongly agree that AFRUCA provided them with all the information they needed prior to running their workshop session.
- 21 said they agree or strongly agree that AFRUCA staff have a very good understanding of the various child protection issues covered in the workshops.
- 21 said that they agree or strongly agreed that the support they received from AFRUCA on the day of the training was very useful.

“Having an AFRUCA staff there with me helped me boost my confidence and made the session go better.”

“I felt confident presenting to parents about safeguarding and had AFRUCA staff with me.”

“The AFRUCA staff set everything up well, support was on hand as it was my first time. Experience staff engaged the audience at the beginning. I was encouraged and supported throughout.”

From the responses we received, it was quite clear the Champions appreciated having an AFRUCA staff with them at the workshop sessions as they did not have to worry about the logistics of the day and concentrated on facilitating the session.

3.8 Champions participation on the project

We found evidence that a number of Champions had gone beyond the requirements of the role set out for them by AFRUCA to facilitate one training session. Nonetheless, a number of Champions are yet to meet this target.

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4 This was in rare cases where a Champion who was meant to co-facilitate a session with another Champion was unable to make it due to work or personal commitments or where a Champion arrived late for their session.
Evidence collected from AFRUCA’s monitoring data shows that 71% of Champions (37) had facilitated at least one training session and 29% (15) were yet to facilitate a session. This shows that more than half of the Champions had actively engaged with the project. Of the 37 who had run training workshops 3 had run more than 4 workshops, 3 had run 3 workshops, 6 had run 2 workshops and 25 had run one workshop.

We wanted to find out the reasons some Champions had not facilitated sessions before the project ended in March. In the survey questionnaire Champions were asked if anything had made it difficult for them to run sessions. Majority of Champions who were yet to facilitate sessions said that finding the time was a huge constraint.

“It has been hard to find the time.”

“The workshops are very far from me to be able to merge school and the workshop.”

“I haven’t felt confident about running workshops.”

“I would have wanted more non-faith based communities.”

Champions were also asked if they could suggest community or faith groups that AFRUCA could partner with to run workshops as well as support other Champions. From the survey responses (n=22) 6 Champions said they had suggested groups, 13 said that they had given advice or support to other Champions at events organised by AFRUCA for example the Champions Reunion or two-day training⁵ and 14 said they had given advice to other Champions at other times.

We also found that Champions were passing on what they had learnt to people outside the child protection workshop sessions. 18 of the respondents from the survey questionnaire noted that they had spoken to people who had not attended the child protection workshop sessions, 3 said that they had spoken to people on an individual basis at the child protection workshop they had run. A number of Champions noted that they had given people parenting tips, informed them about UK laws and in most cases suggested that they contact AFRUCA for information or guidance.

“People that I have spoken to have become more conversant with the law on leaving children home alone and smacking children amongst other topics related to their children.” - AFRUCA Champion.

⁵ At every new two-day Champion’s training AFRUCA’s invites Champions from other sets to speak to and advice new Champions about their experiences
“[After] one of my workshops I had to direct an Algerian single mum with two children to contact AFRUCA office for help. I monitored her progress for a while which was positive. AFRUCA was supportive according to her.”

AFRUCA Champion

We also found evidence that Champions engaged in other areas beyond their stated role (see section 3.2). For example, a number of Champions volunteered at the AFRUCA head office in London and at various AFRUCA events such as the AFRUCA Summit on African Children and Families 2015.

The level of Champions engagement with the project based on responses collected from the online survey questionnaires and interviews with AFRUCA staff, showed the degree of importance Champions had attached to their role. A number of Champions were not only engaging with the project but showed a huge interest in other aspects of AFRUCA’s work as reported above.

3.9 Impact and Outcomes

To ensure the robustness and validity of data collected to measure these outcomes, two sources of data were used. The first was AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data from feedback forms collected after the two-day Champions training. The second, was from responses gathered from the online survey questionnaires sent to Champions during the evaluation period.

3.9.1 Increased awareness of child protection issues in the UK

There was strong evidence to show that Champions had an increased knowledge of child protection issues in the UK.

- From AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data collected from feedback forms after the two-day ToT, 98% of Champions said that they strongly agree/agree that they know more about child protection issues in the African community.
- Champions who responded to the online questionnaire (n=22) 18 stated that they strongly agree/agree that they know more about child protection issues in the UK as a result of their involvement with the project.

3.9.2 Have a better understanding of UK legislation which focuses on protecting and safeguarding children from harm

We found strong evidence that Champions had a better understanding of UK laws in relation to protecting and safeguarding children from abuse and harm.
Evidence from AFRUCA’s monitoring data from the two-day ToT showed that 92% said that they strongly agree/agree that they have a better understanding of UK legislation which focuses on safeguarding and protecting children from abuse and harm.

From the 22 Champions who responded to the online survey questionnaire, 18 said that they agree/strongly agree that they have a better understanding of UK legislation which focuses on safeguarding and protecting children from abuse and harm.

3.9.3 Better able to identify ways in which parents can improve their parenting practices

From the evidence collected we found that Champions were better able to identify better ways in which parents can improve their parenting practices.

- From AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data collected after the two-day ToT 98% of Champions said that they agree/strongly agree that they are better able to identify ways in which parents can improve their parenting practices.
- Champions who responded to the online survey questionnaire (n=22) 19 said that they agree/strongly agree that they have are better able to identify ways in which parents can improve their parenting practices.

Even though no specific data was collected to measure if Champions had made any changes to their parenting practices, we found anecdotal evidence that some Champions had gone on to make some changes as a result of their involvement with AFRUCA.

“The knowledge and delivery of these trainings gave me better skills in parenting my children and the children around me.” - AFRUCA Champion

“Having knowledge of child protection and positive parenting has helped me personally to be a better father.” - AFRUCA Champion

3.9.4 Are more confident about talking to other people in the Black/African community about child protection

We found significant evidence which indicates that as a result of their involvement with the project Champions felt more confident to speak to members of the community about child protection.

- From AFRUCA’s monitoring data 96% said that they strongly agree /agree
that they are more confident about talking to other people in the African community about child protection issues.

- Champions who responded to the online survey questionnaire (n=22) 21 said that they agree/strongly agree that they were more confident in speaking to other people in the Black/African community about child protection.
- Champions were also asked if their public speaking skills had improved as a result of their involvement with the project. 15 agreed/strong agree that as a result of their engagement with the project their public speaking skills had improved. One Champion commented:

  “The training increased my public speaking and presentation skills. I became more confident in delivering trainings in different places such as churches, schools and other areas.

An analysis of the outcomes of the project on Champions showed that they were far-reaching. Champions had not only gained skills to equip them to engage effectively with members of the community and disseminate the child protection knowledge they had gained at the two-day training, but also used the knowledge and skills they had gained as a result of their involvement with the project in their personal lives. For example one Champion with a background in IT decided to pursue a Masters degree in Social Work.
I came to the program with tears in my eyes because my children were fighting but with this program I found answers.
4.1 Background of workshop attendees

AFRUCA’s monitoring data showed that 1,724 people attended volunteer-led child protection workshops during the project cycle. 1,024 provided information about their ethnicity and countries of origin. The majority identified as being Black African (79%) and Black British/Black Other Background (11%). Majority of attendees trained identified their countries of origin as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Somalia, Botswana, Malawi, Congo, Jamaica, Angola and Kenya. From data collected 70% were female and 30% were male.

Details of the ages of participants were also collected and data shows that most participants were between the ages of 35-54.

4.2 Volunteer-led child protection workshops

By the end of the project in March 2016, AFRUCA had held 63 child protection workshops in London and the South of England and reached 1,724 community members which had exceeded the target of running 60 workshops and reaching 1,500 members of the Black/African community. AFRUCA’s target was to train 25 people at each training sessions but we found that this was marginally askew by a few workshops which had either a small or large number of attendees. Table 3 below gives a picture of the various workshops and number of attendees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of attendees</th>
<th>Number of workshops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-69</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Community member’s feedback of workshop sessions

Feedback collected from the survey questionnaire as well as AFRUCA’s monitoring data suggests that participants had a high level of satisfaction with the child protection training sessions. From post feedback forms collected after the volunteer-led child protection workshop sessions, participants were asked to rate the content of the training, the training handouts, trainer’s delivery and trainer’s response to questions. 86% rated the content of the training as either very good or excellent, 87% rated the training handouts as either very good or excellent, 87% rated the trainer’s delivery as either very good or excellent and 83% rated the trainer’s response to questions as very good/excellent. Participants made the following comments:

“The training covered a lot of aspects of child development and raising children in African settings. Thereby overall the feedback is excellent.”

“With manuals6 [training handout] you are able to go back to what you have learnt from the training.”

“Happy I attended the programme because I have more knowledge of better ways to bring up my children.”

“Questions were well entertained and explained with right answers.”

“Trainer was very clear and knowledgeable about her presentation able to expand her information to make it understandable.”

“I really enjoyed the session. It was very enlightening. We need more sessions on how to communicate with children and change mindsets of children within the African community.”

From our evaluation we found that as a result of community members’ satisfaction with the sessions, some had gone on to become Champions.

4.4 Champions experiences of running workshop sessions

Champions gave very positive feedback about their experiences of delivering workshop sessions to members of the community. Responses to the questionnaire showed that they were enthusiastic about passing on information to others and felt that participant’s

6 AFRUCA gives out its Manual on Child Protection for African Parents to participants at each training session. The Manual contains the content of the training sessions as well as detailed information about child protection in the UK and parenting.
engagement with workshop sessions was also very positive. When asked what they felt went well at the sessions they facilitated Champions noted that:

“Being able to educate parents on laws safeguarding children from abuse.”

“The interaction between the attendees and myself”.

“Passing on the information to members of the community.”

“In the session that I ran, I felt the informal style of the workshop allowed parent/carers to pick up new information and also gave them an opportunity to clarify aspects of the legislation that they were misinformed about. This exchange happened in a relaxed environment so I think the new information will stay with the parents/carers.”

AFRUCA Staff also commented on their observation of Champion’s sessions

“You could see the passion of Champions shine through during each session, they knew what the issues were within the Black/African community especially in relation to physical chastisement and really wanted to pass on the information to parents to ensure that their children do not end up in the child protection system due to ignorance of the laws in the UK”.

However, Champions also commented on what they felt did not go well at the training sessions. A number of Champions felt that timing was sometimes a constraint and that some parents could not reconcile their cultural beliefs with the law. Some Champions also felt that the lack of translators was a problem at sessions as well as low attendance rates at some sessions.

“Some African parents did not understand why children should not be [physically] chastised.”

“[It] was difficult for some parents to find a common ground between tradition and laws.”

“Mostly went well, although timing is sometimes a problem.”

“I was expecting a big number of parents.”
4.5 Working in partnership with other organisations
A key success of the project was AFRUCA’s ability to work in partnership with other organisations to host child protection workshop sessions. During the course of the project cycle, AFRUCA worked with 50 organisations. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of the types of organisations AFRUCA partnered with.

![Figure 3: Type of Organisations](image)

4.6 Location of workshop sessions
The Champions project was funded to run in London and the South of England. One of the successes of the project was the ability to run sessions not only in London but various parts of the South of England covering the South East and South West. Figure 4 below shows a breakdown of the different sessions and Table 4 shows a breakdown of the different parts of London where sessions were held.
Table 4: Breakdown of workshop sessions held in London by area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakdown of Sessions in London</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Haringey, Dagenham, Camberwell, Southwark, Islington, Anerley, Edgware Road, Tottenham, Lewisham, Hackney, Bethnal Green, Woolwich, Plumstead, Greenwich, Kensington, Peckham and Barking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Host organisations experience of working in partnership with AFRUCA

The organisations who attended the focus group discussion (n=3) or answered the online questionnaire (n=7) showed a very high level of satisfaction with their experience of working in partnership with AFRUCA and the child protection workshop sessions delivered by various AFRUCA Champions. Host groups were asked what they thought of their first contact with AFRUCA:

“They were very professional and their follow-up contacts means they value you.”
“The contact was quite satisfactory. There was communication via telephone and email, and so we were able to prepare properly to receive them and they also came well prepared to deliver a very informative package.”

“The communication was fantastic.”

Host organisations were also asked about their satisfaction with the training sessions delivered by Champions:

“Extremely satisfied. My clients are demanding for continuity of the project as it helping them to understand their parenting roles well and also making them better parents.”

“AFRUCA brought a well-qualified staff who knows what they were talking about. Everything went well because people were free to ask questions and answers they expected. It was the best session we’ve had for some time.”

“The team that delivered the event did so in a very warm and non-judgemental way. They made the environment one in which parents felt understood and free to speak.”

The repeated requests that AFRUCA received to run more than one workshop by a number of host organisations also alludes to this. Five host groups booked more than one workshop session with AFRUCA during the project cycle.

4.8 Understand the different forms of child abuse within the Black/African community and how to prevent it.

Another aspect of the project that should be mentioned here is AFRUCA’s video on child protection. The video was intended as a tool to help raise awareness on child abuse and AFRUCA’s work. AFRUCA’s target was to reach 5000 people. We found evidence from AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data that 3,981 members of the community had viewed the video via various avenues such as Social Media (Facebook, Vimeo and YouTube), at volunteer-led child protection training sessions and at AFRUCA’s practitioners training sessions. However, we were unable to collect evidence from Social Media to show if as a result of watching the video they had a better knowledge of the different types of child abuse and how to prevent it.
4.9 Impact and Outcomes

4.9.1 Know more about child issues protection issues that can emerge in the African community.

We found strong evidence that as a result of attending volunteer-led child protection workshop sessions, attendees had an increased knowledge of child protection issues that can emerge in the African community.

From AFRUCA’s monitoring data collected at 63 workshop events, out of the 1115 participants who completed their evaluation forms, 88% agree/strongly agree that they know more about child protection issues that can emerge in the African community.

“AFRUCA’s training helped me identify some behaviours that may potentially result in child abuse that I had previously been unaware of.”

“I learnt through AFRUCA that it's not good to be ignorant of issues pertaining our children. Much information will help us raise healthy emotional kids.”

“I learnt a lot of things that I didn't know before. I feel more knowledgeable after the training event.”

4.9.2 Have a better understanding of UK child protection legislation.

We found strong evidence that as a result of attending volunteer-led child protection workshop sessions, workshop attendees had a better understanding of UK child protection legislation.

From AFRUCA’s monitoring data collected at 63 workshop events out of the 1115 participants who completed their evaluation forms, 88% agree/strongly agree that they had a better understanding of UK child protection legislation.

“I learnt more about children’s rights in this country…”

“I have a better understanding of the UK child protection law and these will improve my parenting skills.”

4.9.3 Know more about positive parenting practices

A key outcome of the project was a need for parents to learn and adopt more positive parenting practices. We found strong evidence that as a result of attending volunteer-led child protection workshop sessions, attendees knew more about positive parenting
practices and consequently, many had gone on to make positive changes to their methods and strategies of parenting.

From AFRUCA’s monitoring data collected at 63 workshop events, of the 1115 participants who completed the evaluation forms, 88% agree/strongly agree that they knew more about positive parenting practices. This has exceeded AFRUCA’s set target of 80% of people attending volunteer-led community training sessions reporting an increase in knowledge of child protection and positive parenting.

Apart from an increased knowledge of positive parenting practices we also found a wealth of evidence that those who had attended the child protection sessions went on to re-examine and change their approach to parenting. From the survey questionnaire sent out to attendees (n=106), they were asked if they had made any changes in the way they communicated with their children.

46 said they communicated with their children a lot more effectively, 19 said that they communicated with their children a little more effectively, 32 said that they had already been communicating with their children effectively before attending the workshop the remaining 5 did not respond to this question.

Those who had made some changes were asked to identify some of the changes they had made:

“I speak to my grandchild more positively and avoid shouting at her. I have also stopped scolding her and using corporal punishment.”

“I have been more conscious of such issues and the way I communicate them.”

“I spend more time to listening to my children and planning ahead.”

“When he achieves things I encourage him more and he can speak to me about other things.”

Evidence from the survey questionnaire (n=106) also showed that as a result of attending the child protection workshop participants had improved their relationship with their children or children they worked with.

46 said the relationship with their children or children they worked with had improved a lot, 19 said the relationship with their children or children they worked with had improved a little. 32 said they already had a good relationship with them before attending the workshop and 5 did not respond to this question.

Workshop attendees made the following comments:

“My son is 2 years old. Now I feel [a] more close attachment with him.”
“I’m spending more time with my young children.”

“I always consciously made decisions to interact and create fun for my kids but after the event, I’m even more conscious of doing right by my kids.”

Workshop hosts who attended the focus group discussions (n=3) as well as answered the online questionnaire (n=7) also commented on this:

“The evaluation questionnaires from the over 200 parents trained by AFRUCA for [my organisation] tell it all. They are now using softer but workable parenting approaches and they are now aware of the relevant laws and organisations they can contact for help.”

“…so many of those who attended want to see more workshops be done almost every month. They learned a lot from the workshop. Many openly said due to the knowledge they acquired from the program they’re ready to change the way their children are taken care of at home.”

4.9.4 Information sharing

We also found evidence that community members were going on to share the information they gained with other members of their community thereby creating a further ripple effect. In the survey questionnaire, we asked community members if they had gone on to share the information they learnt with others. 86% said that they had shared the information with at least one person or more.

“The day was very educative and the presenter was very good. She was ready to listen and answer questions in relation to the topic. I will be looking forward to telling more people about the benefits of not smacking children.”

Community member
I found the family support programme quite rewarding. It was in-depth and more practical. I believe AFRUCA’s vast knowledge of African culture positions them to support [families] effectively.”
5.1 Who AFRUCA supported
Within the project cycle, AFRUCA worked with 53 families which exceeded the set project target of 30 families. 41 families were offered intensive support and 12 families were offered one-off advice or very short term support. Majority of the families supported by AFRUCA were from Nigeria (21 or 51%) as shown in Figure 5.

While there was no evidence to show why more than half of the cases referred to AFRUCA’s family support service where from Nigeria, what this breakdown shows is that AFRUCA has built its capacity to work with a wide variety of families from different parts of Africa.

5.2 AFRUCA’s family support process
In the interviews conducted with AFRUCA staff, they noted that majority of family support referrals came from Local Authorities (about 35), Solicitors and a few cases were self-referrals (n=12). This evaluation reports only on the 41 intensive cases AFRUCA dealt with. Figure 6 depicts the average process of AFRUCA’s family support work.
5.3 Reasons for AFRUCA’s support and level of intervention
Twenty families supported by AFRUCA were in care proceedings (49%)\(^7\) (their children were in Local Authority foster care), eighteen were placed on a child protection plan (44%)\(^8\) due to issues around FGM, physical chastisement and spirit possession, two were children in need\(^9\) (5%) due to neglect and one was a post care proceeding case (2%). As shown in Figure 7.

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\(^7\) [Care proceedings](http://www.frg.org.uk/5-2-what-happens-in-care-proceedings) is when Children’s Services asks the court to look at your child’s situation and decide if your child needs a legal order to keep them safe. Your child’s social worker will do this if they think that your child cannot remain safely at home.

\(^8\) A child protection plan is a plan put together at a child protection case conference detailing the ways in which the child is to be kept safe, how his health and development is to be promoted and any ways in which professionals can support the child’s family in promoting the child’s welfare – if this in the child’s best interests. [http://www.protectingchildren.org.uk/cp-system/initial-assessment/child-protection-plan/](http://www.protectingchildren.org.uk/cp-system/initial-assessment/child-protection-plan/)

\(^9\) Children in need are defined in law as children who are aged under 18 and need local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development or need local authority services to prevent significant or further harm to health or development or are disabled.
Majority of the families were referred to AFRUCA as a result of physical chastisement (31 or 76%) as shown in Figure 8. Other reasons included spirit possession (faith-based abuse), neglect, emotional abuse and FGM.
There was no substantial evidence for the reasons why more than half of the cases referred to AFRUCA were attributed to physical chastisement, AFRUCA staff commented on the reasons they felt there were so many cases:

“It is something that most Africans have grown up with… It is the first form of discipline, it is not because [parents] are evil, there are some that overdo it but majority of parents are trying to discipline their children the way they know how”.

“One of the things I increasing find is that children are growing up here and it is quite different from the environment their parents grew up in.”

Based on the number of physical chastisement cases referred to AFRUCA and discussions with AFRUCA staff, while it is not surprising that physical chastisement is a problem within the African community, what is surprising is that it seems to be a big problem in the Nigerian community.

5.4 Services offered to families
AFRUCA worked with parents on a one-to-one basis to build their confidence to improve their engagement with services where there had been child protection concerns. More specifically, AFRUCA’s aim was to educate parents on the key laws on child protection in the UK and to help improve their parenting skills which in a number of cases where children had been removed from their parent’s care helped to create the necessary changes for their children to be returned home. AFRUCA staff noted that their approach was non-judgemental but rather to listen to the parents and allow them to air their concerns.

“Sometimes parents are not given the opportunity [by the Local Authority] to voice out what they want to say.”

“The way that we work is slightly different, we work in a very supportive way. Parents see us as more supportive, we work in creative ways by focusing on parent’s strengths rather than their weaknesses. Our approach is strength based.”

As illustrated in section 5.2 the length of time that families were supported by AFRUCA ranged from 7-12 weeks on a case by case basis. This usually involved a tailored made parenting programme for each family depending on the issues identified during the initial assessment. Sessions were practical and involved reasons Social Services will get involved with a family, impact of abuse on children (not just physical but all forms of abuse) and how this can put up a communication barrier, how parents can deal with difficult behaviour without smacking and other positive parenting strategies.
5.5 Service users’ satisfaction with AFRUCA’ support
From the interviews conducted for this evaluation, we found a high level of satisfaction with the support users received from AFRUCA. Services users felt that the family support sessions they received from AFRUCA were intense and helped reveal some of their parenting practices that might be harmful to children. A number of parents noted that the sessions went beyond their expectations because the sessions helped them think about the essence of some of their parenting practices and the impact on their children not only physically but emotionally.

One parent commented that:

“It was so intense, I really enjoyed the one-to-one sessions with [AFRUCA Staff] I loved it, it has opened my eyes to so many things that I might be doing as a mother which are not appropriate in the UK law…”

Another parent commented that:

“I couldn’t ask for something better, the training was very good. I am happy that AFRUCA knows that African has got its values and culture too. African parents love their children and all they are trying to do is raise them not to be a menace to the society.”

However, one parent felt that AFRUCA needed to expand on its family support service to include financial, social and emotional support.

5.6 Agencies satisfaction with AFRUCA’s support
From AFRUCA’s monitoring data we found that agencies who had referred families to AFRUCA’s family support service were satisfied with their engagement with AFRUCA and the service offered to them and their clients.

“I just wanted to say how impressed I have been with the work AFRUCA has done in a child protection case in which I have been involved. I am a family law barrister who had not encountered AFRUCA before, but today the Nigerian father I was representing and his wife were told that their children would be returned to them tomorrow under Supervision Orders. This was a physical chastisement case and before AFRUCA worked with the parents the LA’s plan was for long term foster care for these children. The father was so full of enthusiasm for all he had learned with AFRUCA and how the communication skills he had learned were working for him in the work and social environment as well as with his children. He told me he now talks to other parents who are a bit “too firm” with their children and advises them that there are other, far better ways to discipline and...
communicate with children - you have an ambassador in him and a fan in me - I shall certainly be recommending AFRUCA in similar cases. Thank you so much.” - Law Barrister

“Thank you very much for this excellent report and the work you have completed with this family. It has been nice to joint work with clear communication and planned outcomes.” - Social Worker

5.7 Impact and Outcomes

5.7.1 Parents being able to voice their concerns

AFRUCA’s family support service encouraged parents to voice their concerns during one-to-one sessions. During the interviews conducted with parents, a large majority of them said that they felt comfortable airing out their concerns about raising children in the UK with AFRUCA’s staff. Reflecting on their first encounter with AFRUCA some of them described it as a ‘breath of fresh air’. Describing her first encounter with AFRUCA another parent said for the first time she felt that she was listened to and heard. This indicates that AFRUCA’s family support service seems to have created an atmosphere for parents to voice their needs in a way that other services had not.

“I thank you for sending me your report on the assessment. I am very grateful that you have fairly put in your report all the important points we discussed, and I am happy that my views have been fairly and honestly reported.” (Parent)

5.7.2 Parents better able to engage with services

We found evidence that as a result of their involvement with AFRUCA’s family support service, service users were better able to engage and communicate with other services and frontline practitioners.

“We talk to parents about the importance of working with services and why social services get involved in families, we also talk to them about the importance of being honest with services.” - AFRUCA Staff

“What we emphasise to parents is that nobody wants to take your child(ren) away and you need to work with us and the Local Authority. When parents understand this their relationship with the Local Authority improves.” - AFRUCA Staff

From the interviews conducted for the evaluation with parents one mother commented that:
“My contact with AFRUCA helped me understand [the Local Authority’s] position because initially, I was just like what is wrong with these people but it was through AFRUCA that I understood that the government has rights over children which is quite different from my own culture. Initially, I saw them as an intruder.”-Parent

5.7.3 Improved parenting capacity and knowledge of positive parenting

AFRUCA’s monitoring data recorded that the 41 families worked with needed to make some or a lot of changes to their parenting strategies. Data collected from the eighteen closed cases show that eleven parents had made changes to their parenting, including in disciplining and communicating with their children, after one-to-one sessions with AFRUCA.

In five of the closed cases, AFRUCA did not proceed work with the families due to various reasons beyond its control. For instance, in one of the cases, the family moved into another borough before the work could be undertaken and the work was not requested by the LA. In another case the child was placed in long-term foster care because her parents were adamant that she was possessed by evil spirits and in another case father absconded and the LA were not able to contact him before work commenced.

From the eleven cases which have had very positive outcomes, parents showed an improved capacity and knowledge of positive parenting practices. AFRUCA staff also noted that parents who are currently undergoing support from AFRUCA have also shown similar changes. From AFRUCA’s monitoring data parents commented that:

“A lot will be different in future. As a father, I never questioned my parenting until I came to AFRUCA, but I have learnt from it. My kids should be able to come to me.”

“There is always someone there to give support. It has encouraged me to be calmer, my manner of approaching situations when dealing with children has positively changed.”

“AFRUCA has improved me and I learned how I can change things.”

“The positive thing is that you get to know more about how to deal with things and support the needs of children’s life.”

From the interviews conducted with parents one mother commented that:

“I am calmer now as a parent, I listen to them a lot and talk it out. My way of discipline is so different compared to when I would use my hand and just
slap them or shout. My way of discipline is so different now and it is really working better, it is much more effective.”

While it is not absolutely clear if these changes have occurred only because of AFRUCA’s family support work, it is clear that it had a significant part to play.

Data is not available to assess whether or not AFRUCA reached its target of 80% of 30 families worked with reporting improved ability to provide a safer home environment for their children as work is currently ongoing with several of the families. However, from the eleven closed cases eleven had very positive outcomes.

5.7.4 Children return to their parents’ care

While work is ongoing with the 41 families AFRUCA worked with during the project cycle, eighteen of the cases, have been closed. From the closed cases 8 parents whose children were in LA foster care had their children returned to their care as a result of the work done with them by AFRUCA.

Table 5 illustrates through case studies how AFRUCA’s family support service has contributed to this outcome.

Table 5: Family Support Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE STUDY ONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRUCA was approached by a Solicitor working with a family going through the Care Proceedings process. The three children were in Local Authority foster care because the children had disclosed at school that they were smacked by their parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The parents denied the use of physical chastisement and because of this, the Local Authority’s care plan was for the children to be placed in long-term foster care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRUCA were asked to undertake some direct family support work with the parents with a view to helping them develop different techniques to manage challenging behaviour and to move the parents to a position where they may be willing to disclose what happened at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRUCA provided one-to-one family support to the family in addition to the parents attending a group community session.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The parents’ response to the work was really meaningful and they approached the work in a very positive way. Over the course of the programme, the parents provided some additional disclosures which helped satisfy the concerns of the Local Authority. The parents felt positive about what they had learnt through the family support programme and felt able to state towards the end that they knew, based on what we had talked about, that they needed to make the home environment more positive for their children.

The parents reflected that they had focussed too much on the children’s school work and on Bible study but had not spent any time doing fun activities and spending quality time with their children.

AFRUCA’s report to the Court was viewed positively and a decision was made to return the children to the care of their parents, with a Supervision Order in place so that the Local Authority could provide ongoing support.

CASE STUDY TWO

AFRUCA received a referral from a Local Authority for support with a family involved in Care Proceedings. The family had 8 children, three of whom were under the age of 16 and who had been accommodated in foster care.

The Local Authority had previously been involved with some of the older children due to the use of physical chastisement at home. The Local Authority were concerned because the daughter had made disclosures of being hit by her parents with implements. All three children under 16 had been taken into Local Authority foster care whilst investigations were ongoing.

AFRUCA were asked to meet with the parents and put together a family support package which would help the parents to think about different ways of dealing with children, and also help the family (including the older siblings) not to be overprotective of their younger sibling. The daughter had said that she felt stifled at home and was not able to wear the clothes that she wanted and could not be herself socially.

After meeting with the family and after carrying out an initial assessment, a support package was put together which included direct one-to-one work with the parents and also family work with the older siblings. There was a focus on different ways of managing children’s behaviour at home and also a focus on helping the family to understand their daughter as dual-identity. The work included helping the parents to understand in greater detail what life is like in the UK for teenagers.
The family engaged in a very meaningful way and they opened up about life at home and about their cultural values. They said that they were trying to protect their daughter and that they did not want her to fall into a bad group of friends or be exposed to any of the negative aspects of life in the UK, such as teenage pregnancy or gangs. Through working with AFRUCA, the parents demonstrated that they were able to put themselves in their daughter’s shoes and showed understanding of how their protective instincts had caused problems at home.

**CASE STUDY THREE**

AFRUCA was approached by a Local Authority, who were going through Care Proceedings with a family. The family, with three children had been known to the Local Authority periodically over a period of two years due to concerns about the use of physical chastisement at home. Teachers had previously observed the children to be fearful and the children had all made disclosures of physical chastisement to professionals.

In 2015, the two elder children disclosed at school that they had been beaten by their parents, including with the use of a belt. All three children were, therefore, subject to Police Powers of Protection, and at the time of the referral to AFRUCA, all three children were in foster care while the Court proceedings went on.

AFRUCA was asked to work with both parents to address the issue of physical chastisement and to give the parents some alternative tools to use when managing difficult behaviour. After meeting with the parents for an initial assessment, AFRUCA agreed to provide one-to-one family support to the parents in addition to the parents attending a group community session.

During the family support sessions, the parents were very open and honest about what took place at home. They were more willing to provide information about what was happening at home and were more willing to talk openly about how difficult it can be to deal with three children.

During AFRUCA’s work with the parents, the children were returned to their care under the terms of a Supervision Order. This made the parents’ involvement with AFRUCA even more meaningful and they said that they felt supported by all the staff at AFRUCA. AFRUCA and parents spent a long time exploring different ways to deal with children when they exhibit challenging behaviour and the parents took these on board and made a number of changes to their parenting.
5.7.5 Whole family approach

From the interviews conducted with AFRUCA staff one area of intervention that was considered an interesting new departure from the initial stated project outcome of working with parents, was working with the entire family. AFRUCA staff noted that increasing agencies were requesting that they work with the whole family (parents and children). In one case AFRUCA staff describe how they are currently working with a family whose children have been removed from their care.

“In the last six months, we have seen more cases were we are asked to work with children and parents so the whole family. We observe a contact session between parents and children and work on building their communication. We serve as an intermediary/mediator between the children and parents to let the children know that we are working with their parents to ensure that when they return home they will be safe.

Based on this, it is clear that AFRUCA needs to ensure that it builds its capacity to take on the increasing demand for the whole family approach by agencies. Additionally, discussions with AFRUCA staff showed that there was a clear need for AFRUCA to build its staffing capacity to provided therapeutic services for families whose children had been taken into care and returned home.
I have a better understanding on how to work with black African families’ now.”
6.1 Background of Attendees
In total, AFRUCA trained 420 practitioners in London and the South of England between April 2015 and March 2016. The breakdown shows that of this number, 92 practitioners attended the AFRUCA organised training courses and 238 practitioners attended the AFRUCA commissioned training courses, substantially exceeding the set project outcome of training 240 practitioners. AFRUCA was able to collect professional details of attendees who attended its organised training courses but this data was not readily accessible for its commissioned courses. However, available data suggests that majority of practitioners who attended AFRUCA’s range of training courses were Social Workers, Health Practitioners, Teachers, Police Officers, Students, community/outreach workers, charity/NGO staff, Head teachers and crime prosecution workers.

We also wanted to find out from practitioners some of the reasons they decided to attend an AFRUCA training course. Their responses included:

- *I have been working with families with children who have special needs and witchcraft was a recurring theme, and I wanted to get additional information to have a better understanding of the family.*

- *“Colleague had previously attended and recommended it.”*

- *“To get more insight into what FGM involves.”*

- *“To become more aware of cultural issues leading to abuse of children.”*

- *“My role will bring me into contact with African families, and where I live in SE London there are a growing number of African families.”*

6.2 Training sessions held
During the project cycle, AFRUCA facilitated 26 training courses in London and the South of England. Eight were AFRUCA organised training sessions and Nineteen were commissioned by various agencies. Eleven were commissioned by local authorities, five by North East London NHS Foundation Trust and two by Essex Police College.

The most popular courses were Child Abuse Linked to Belief in Witchcraft and Juju (9) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a Child Safeguarding Issue (9).
AFRUCA also renewed its CPD accreditation within this period as this was a major requirement for some practitioners\textsuperscript{10} and an incentive for them to attend AFRUCA’s range of training courses.

6.3 Practitioners feedback and experiences

Evidence from both the survey questionnaire and AFRUCA’s monitoring data showed that the feedback collected from practitioners about AFRUCA’s range of training courses was mostly positive. The following comments were made:

“The trainer was excellent and conveyed a lot of information very well. He encouraged participation without diluting his material. All participants appeared to derive information and as well as gain insights into the subject matter.”

“I have increased understanding about African culture and now have better knowledge of how to implement useful intervention strategies.”

“A much clearer understanding of the technical terms and concepts which is really helpful when our local groups talk about the issue, and a better idea of the background/ thinking of why many families engage in this.”

86% of participants from AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data, when asked, rated AFRUCA’s training courses as either very good or excellent and 100% of practitioners when asked said that they will recommend AFRUCA’s training course to their colleagues\textsuperscript{11}.

However, a few practitioners commented that time keeping was sometimes an issue or that the sessions were too short as the issues discussed were quite complex and would have benefited from a whole days training session\textsuperscript{12}. Most of these comments came from practitioners who attended half-day training sessions commissioned by Local Authorities.

6.4 Other Support

Although no specific data was collected, we found evidence from interviews with AFRUCA staff that they had offered informal advice over the phone or via emails to practitioners around various issues. For example, staff noted that they had offered advice on cases

\textsuperscript{10} A key part of being a professional is to undertake CPD. Along with ‘on the job learning’, CPD helps to ensure a professionals’ competence over the course of their career. \url{http://www.iofam.co.uk/why-is-continuing-professional-development-important.aspx}

\textsuperscript{11} This number does not include those who did not respond to this question

\textsuperscript{12} AFRUCA noted that sometimes agencies commissioned them to deliver half-day sessions.
around faith based abuse and FGM, as well as signposted them to appropriate organisations for further support or sent them links to useful resources.

6.5 Impact and Outcomes
There was strong evidence to suggest that the specialist training provided by AFRUCA was effective in increasing practitioners knowledge and confidence to better intervene in Black/African families.

6.5.1 Improved knowledge of ways in which practitioners can effectively engage with Black/African families and increased confidence in addressing issues relating to Black/African children and families.

From AFRUCA’s monitoring and evaluation data, practitioners were asked before and after the training to rate their knowledge of ways in which they effectively engage with Black/African families. Before the training course, 80% of practitioners said that they had little or no knowledge of effectively engaging with Black/African families. After the training course, 82% of practitioners said that they had gained a lot of knowledge around engaging effectively with Black/African families. Practitioners commented that:

“The section on cultural values within Black communities was fully explored plus why Black families may not want to engage with support services because of prior experience.”

“Very good and comprehensive training. I have come away from this course with a lot more knowledge on FGM - Thank you for a very interesting morning.”

Practitioners were also asked to rate their confidence in addressing issues relating to Black/African children and families before and after the training course. Before the training, 71% of practitioners noted that they felt little or some confidence. After the training course, 91% of practitioners noted that they felt that they had a lot of confidence.

6.5.2 Information sharing

We found evidence that suggests that after attending AFRUCA’s training courses practitioners were going on to share this information with other colleagues or their clients. From the survey question(n=18) 17 respondents stated that they had gone on to share the information gained from the training with others. The following comments were made:
“I have shared it with family members. I tell them what the benefits are and they are interested in knowing what the training is about and I have advised and encouraged them about it. I have advised some of my colleagues and they are interested in attending....”

“Yes - I have spoken about some aspects of the course to families and I have spoken about FGM to colleagues within my team.”

“I shared [the information] with 15 families.”

“Yes, I have. With 3 people, a teacher and 2 social workers. They found the information useful for their practice.”

6.5.3 Made changes to work practices

From the survey questionnaire sent to practitioners, we found evidence which suggests that some had gone on to make changes or were planning to make changes (n=14) to the ways in which they work with Black/African families as a result of attending the AFRUCA training course.

“I have spoken to some of my African parents about methods and moderation of disciplining their children”.

“Not yet but I will be heading back to Uganda in the summer and this will inform how I approach the issue.”

“I'm now very inquisitive and more confident in asking questions around FGM to clients.”

I am planning to make links with faith communities in my area of work to learn more about Witchcraft and Juju belief in my local area, and to raise awareness on the topic of mental health and emotional well-being.

“…waiting to link with the safeguarding leads to assess what needs to be done to raise awareness across the organisation.”
This chapter highlights some of the best practices and challenges faced by the Child Protection Community Volunteering Project.

7.1 Successes
While there are several factors that led to the success of the project, the following main factors were critical to the success of the project.

7.1.1 Partnerships
Central to the success of the Child Protection Community Volunteering Project was AFRUCA’s ability to network and work with key agencies like schools, faith and community groups who had access to members of the community in order to deliver workshop sessions. This was particularly important because it enabled AFRUCA to reach a huge number of people from various backgrounds which would not have been achievable without the various partnerships. As an AFRUCA staff commented:

“Many people might not be able to attend an AFRUCA event on a weekday or a Saturday but what we know is that most Africans attend a faith group on Sundays. Therefore, partnering with various faith groups and their leaders was a crucial way to reach the Black/African community.”

7.1.2 Use of community volunteers
A key aspect of the project was the use of community volunteers to deliver child protection sessions to members of the community. This was an innovative way of cascading the child protection message down to a large number of people within the Black/African community. We found evidence from the evaluation that Champions professional and personal backgrounds were beneficial to the project, for example, where a Champions was able to speak in their mother tongue to members of their community to help them better understand the training content. Champions were also able to assist in recommending or connecting AFRUCA with various organisations in order to run workshop sessions.

7.1.3 Cultural appropriateness of service provision
Evidence from the evaluation showed that service users appreciated AFRUCA’s cultural competence in its service delivery and the cultural specificity of training content and this contributed to the overall success of the project. Service users appreciated that AFRUCA understood their background, culture and needs. Discussions with service users also
suggested that rather than using generic methods of engagement, AFRUCA’s approach was culturally appropriate and non-judgemental.

“AFRUCA has an excellent knowledge of African culture and are able to use it to support the African communities by bridging the gap.” - Parent

We had a large percentage of CP issues with African parents around discipline and culture. We wanted a knowledgeable approach delivered by professionals that understood our parents. We wanted to give our parents facts without judging them and this was achieved by working with AFRUCA.” - Host organisation

“I find the family support programme quite rewarding. It was in-depth and more practical. I believe AFRUCA’s vast knowledge of African culture positions them to support [African] families” - Parent

“Coming from an African background AFRUCA has a better knowledge of African parenting. The AFRUCA staff who ran the session took us through our background and seeing things from our own perspective and showing us the western aspect as well and trying to balance it. [This] was what was missing from the LA because the LA doesn’t really have a lot of in-depth knowledge about African parenting.” - Parent

7.1.4 Holistic nature of project

Also, key to the success of the project was its holistic nature which meant that the various elements of the project were interconnected. For instance, at the various volunteer-led child protection workshop sessions, Champions were able to refer families who were going through a crisis to AFRUCA’s family support service. AFRUCA was also able to use learning gained from working within the community and with families in informing content of the training delivered to practitioners for example case studies and other evidence used.

In this way, AFRUCA was able to filter down this information directly to practitioners who worked with Black/African children and families to enable them better understand the concerns and cultural backgrounds of their clientele. This enabled them to gain new skills around intervening and working with families in order to inform appropriate assessments and minimise the number of children going into the child protection system as a result of cultural misunderstanding. As an AFRUCA staff commented:

“We try to help the Local Authority understand that the difference in culture does not mean that people are horrible…if I have been doing something for a long time, I need time and the opportunity to learn”.
7.1.5 Geographical coverage

The project’s capacity to reach various cities particularly outside London contributed to the success of the project. From focus group discussions and interviews with AFRUCA staff we observed that some of the areas AFRUCA was able to reach service users had very limited support in terms of culturally appropriate services and some of them were hearing about the issues discussed in the training for the first time even though they had been living in the UK for a number of years. Several host groups representatives commented that the project needed to continue because it was needed in the community in their cities. As one commented:

“My community needs this project to continue as we have not reached out to most of the members. Thanks AFRUCA!”

7.2 Challenges

7.2.1 Numbers of attendees at workshops

AFRUCA’s set target was to facilitate workshop sessions to groups of 25 people at each session. While AFRUCA was successful in training its set target of 1,500 in total, more than half of the sessions ran with less than 25 people (see Table 3). AFRUCA staff noted that it was particularly difficult to secure numbers at schools. Staff had also pointed out that sometimes schools were reluctant to deliver such a bespoke workshop targeting a particular ethnic group as parents might feel stigmatised or singled out.

7.2.2 Number of practitioners at training sessions

Despite the fact that AFRUCA staff said they had put in a lot of effort towards attracting practitioners to attend AFRUCA organised training courses, we found that there were occasions were the numbers of attendees at these training sessions was quite low as opposed to the AFRUCA commissioned courses. AFRUCA noted that this could be because of the saturation of training providers especially around FGM and the fact that not all its training courses were CPD certified.

7.2.3 Time allocated by host organisations

AFRUCA staff complained about the huge constraint they experienced at volunteer-led child protection workshop sessions. This was because sessions were run in conjunction with other programmes held by the host organisations. This meant that if the host organisations programme started late it affected the time allocated to AFRUCA to deliver
sessions. For example, if previously AFRUCA had been allocated 2 hours for a session the time would be cut down to an hour and a half or in some cases less than an hour. While this did not necessarily affect the message delivered by Champions to participants, it affected the level of interaction and number of questions which could be entertained by Champions and AFRUCA staff.

7.2.4 Increasing demand for AFRUCA’s family support work

Even though AFRUCA had recruited a Social Worker and had a family support worker in Manchester to take on family support cases, the increasing demand for AFRUCA’s services nationally meant that sometimes AFRUCA staff were inundated with requests and did not have the capacity to take on some of the cases.
Based on the evidence from the evaluation we recommend that AFRUCA:

8.1 Build its human capacity
From the evaluation, it is clear that in order to meet growing demand for its services locally and nationally, AFRUCA needs to recruit new staff specifically to take on more child protection cases. This will enable AFRUCA to build its human capital as well as increase its self-generated income. Additionally, in order to effectively deliver its range of training courses we recommend that AFRUCA build the capacity of its training coordinator to also run training courses. In addition, AFRUCA should encourage all its staff members to get involved in marketing its range of training courses to target key agencies and practitioners.

8.2 Provide therapy for families where children have been removed and returned
In general, from the interviews with parents we noted that they are usually distressed by Social Services getting involved in their families and have to deal with feelings of stress and anxiety caused by separation from their children and a feeling of stigma that they are not “good enough parents”. One parent noted that even though her children were returned she still felt tense and anxious when services came around to check on the children. In light of this, we suggest that AFRUCA provide a therapeutic service for families whose children have been removed and returned home for them to deal with the psychological effects of what has happened to them and their children.

8.3 Longitudinal research
This evaluation was meant to measure the immediate outcomes of the project. In view of this, we recommend that AFRUCA conduct a longitudinal study of the project’s service users in order to capture long term outcomes over a number of years. We especially recommend that AFRUCA maintains contact with the various LA’s it has worked with to keep track of the families who have had their children returned to their care as a result of AFRUCA’s intervention. This should also happen with community members trained by Champions. This will give AFRUCA a more robust idea as to whether the outcomes reported in this evaluation have been sustained over time.

8.4 Upscale the Champions project
The Children’s Champions Project is an innovative project which from the evaluation shows is much needed within the African community and we recommend that AFRUCA
secure funding to scale up nationally in order to reach more people. This can be done by working in collaboration with other organisations or LA’s to build their capacity to replicate the project in their local area. Additionally, from the evaluation, we found that quite a number of people felt that AFRUCA needed to develop a child or young people’s version of the child protection project. Therefore, we suggest that AFRUCA explores the feasibility of developing an offshoot of the Champions Project for children and young people across England.

8.5 Conduct research on physical chastisement

From the evaluation we found that physical chastisement was a major reason why cases were referred to AFRUCA, we also found that during workshop sessions some parents were unable to reconcile this practice with the laws in the UK and were adamant that this was an effective method of discipline. Additionally, we found that a large number of the cases referred to AFRUCA’s family support service were Nigerian families. In view of this, we recommend that AFRUCA conduct a piece of research on physical chastisement to explore:

a) Why there are so many cases of physical chastisement linked to African families and Nigerian families in particular.
b) Parents’ justification for the use of physical chastisement.
c) Whether this form of discipline is effective or ineffective.
d) What the outcomes are for children who have been physically chastised vis-à-vis those who haven’t
e) What and if the alternatives to physical chastisement are more effective.

This piece of research is important because it would inform parent's practices of discipline, practitioners understanding of the reasons why parents resort to physical chastisement and agencies work with African families.

8.6 CPD certify and diversify AFRUCA training courses

One of the major attractions for practitioners attending AFRUCA’s range of specialist training courses, apart from its cultural specialism, was the fact that the training courses were CPD certified. In view of this, we recommend that AFRUCA endeavour to have all its training courses CPD certified. With growing demanding by agencies for their staff to work effectively in cross-cultural situations and with the recruitment of mental health staff and social workers by AFRUCA, we suggest that AFRUCA diversify its range of training courses to cater for a wider audience for example courses around working with diversity.
in therapeutic settings, working with trafficked children in the care system and working with Black/African children in foster care.

8.7 Diversify the role of Champions
From the evaluation, it is clear that Champions bring a wealth of benefits to the project as a result of their varying backgrounds. Therefore, we recommend that AFRUCA capitalises on this by diversifying Champions roles beyond what was stated in section 3.2. For example, AFRUCA could utilise Champions in its other projects or train Champions to become more specialised in various areas of child protection such as FGM, faith-based abuse and child trafficking. AFRUCA could also train Champions who have various expertise to run advice clinics for parents going through various challenges for example housing issues, immigration issues or parents who just need a listening ear.

8.8 Increase male participation
Across the evaluation, we found that male presence and participation throughout the project was inadequate. For this reason, we noted that AFRUCA organised special child protection sessions for men during the project cycle. Moving forward we suggest that AFRUCA continues to encourage men to engage with the project. One of the things AFRUCA could do is recruit more men as Champions by working with male specific organisations like 100 Black men in London.

8.9 Work with more schools
It was clear from the evaluation that AFRUCA needed to do more work with schools in order to run workshop sessions for their parents. While we acknowledge that some work had been done, there is room for improvement. One of our key recommendations would be to contact all safeguarding leads, family support or community liaison officers within schools to arrange workshops. Additionally, in order to increase the attendance rates in schools AFRUCA should work in collaboration with a number of schools to hold workshop sessions during weekends to enable more parents the opportunity to attend especially for those who cannot due to work commitments.
52 CHAMPIONS

46

6

Trained 1,7214 members of the Black/African community

AFRUCA trained PRACTITIONERS 420

Supported 53 FAMILIES