



The Basis Project  
Building and sustaining success  
Refugee Council | Refugee Action

## **Bristol Zimbabwe Association (BZA)**

### **BZA's Organisational Development and How the Refugee Week Football Tournament and Family Fun Day (RWFT) was Organised**

The Bristol Zimbabwe Association (BZA) was set up in October 2004 and registered as a not-for profit community organisation in 2006. The Association has a membership of at least 150 people, which draws from expatriate Zimbabweans, refugees and supporters. The BZA office bearers are the chairman, secretary, treasurer and three committee members. Other members also volunteer, as required, to manage different activities that are undertaken by the association. The number of people who have volunteered their services to the association are 15 - 20 to date.

The BZA provides a variety of services to their members as well as encouraging active integration within the Bristol area including the scheduling and coordination of a number of activities and events. Our services include networks, representation, information sharing, website, conferences and meetings, signposting, well-being (sports in particular football) and partnerships (working with other agencies that include professional lobbyists and government agencies on topical issues).

The BZA's main activities are streamlined to meet the needs of the target community. It aims to always include members in identifying projects and implementing them. This paper focuses on experiences of BZA as a community based organisation developing its plans and identifying needs of members, and how it organised the 2011 Refugee Week Football Tournament.



## Describe what your RCO did, and what came out of this

### Developing our business plan

The BZA's Vision is 'We want to live in a society in which the Zimbabwean community in Bristol are part of an inclusive society of people enjoying equal rights, access to services, opportunities and civil liberties, making a proactive contribution to the City's vibrant life and ethos'. The BZA pursues this vision by offering opportunities for sharing information, networking, exchange of skills and support and partnerships between Zimbabweans and other communities.

In 2008 the BZA developed a three year business plan, with the help of expertise from volunteer refugees who are members of the association. The business plan was one of the outputs of the research paper 'A profile of Zimbabweans in Bristol' sponsored by Bristol City Council Development Fund, which identified the practical and strategic gender needs of Zimbabweans in Bristol. Three of the core objectives of the business plan developed were to;

- Source funding to organise at least three events each year;
- Use the events to market the BZA and register as many members as possible; and
- Identify key community members to volunteer their expertise to the association, depending on the activities at hand.

Since then, the business plan enabled the BZA to:

- Host the Zimbabwe day during the Refugee Week. Friday evenings during Refugee Week are reserved for topical discussions chaired by the BZA representatives.
- Zimbabwe independence day celebrations: BZA host the yearly 18th of April Zimbabwe Independence Day celebrations. More than 400 people attend the yearly event from all over England. The initial celebrations were funded by Quartet Community Foundation. The last two years, the celebrations were funded from funds generated from fundraising activities during previous events and by member donations.
- Football team. BZA runs a multi-national men's football team, Zimba FC, which plays in the Senior Division of the Bristol & Wessex Sunday League. The formation of the team (registration and team uniforms) was funded through project proposals. The day to day running of the football team is funded from players' contributions on match days.

The other activities organised by the BZA in the past three years include cultural awareness workshops, fundraising activities, anti-deportation campaigns, book launches, referrals and sign posting, providing speakers in schools, meetings and conferences and partnerships with other organisations such as Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA), Bristol African Initiatives, African Voices Forum and AfriKaEye.



## Researching the needs of our members

In its endeavour to identify gaps, needs and projects / activities that can assist members acclimatise to the Bristol environment, the BZA in 2008 commissioned a study 'A profile of Zimbabweans in Bristol', funded by the Bristol City Council Development Fund and headed by a BZA volunteer member who participates in some of BZA's sub-committees. In particular, the purpose of the study was to estimate the number of Zimbabweans in Bristol; establish their socio-economic status, needs and challenges and produce a guide for the future work of the BZA.

We used a logical framework analysis to plan the research- we found that using this technique really helpful in structuring the research. Part of the logical framework analysis involves identifying assumptions and risks, so it helped us to identify a lot of potential problems in advance. One site with information about logical framework analysis is here. <http://cec.vcn.bc.ca/cmp/modules/pd-lf.htm>. We involved a number of community members in planning the research to get a range of perspectives.

The number of Zimbabweans living in Bristol was estimated by using an adopted social mapping tool developed by the World Bank for participatory evaluation of communities ([http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/evaluation/watsan2005/annex\\_files/WB/WB1%20-%20Sustainability%20planning%20and%20monitoring.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/evaluation/watsan2005/annex_files/WB/WB1%20-%20Sustainability%20planning%20and%20monitoring.pdf)). Postcode maps were used in this exercise. Names were compiled using the BZA register, political organisations, church groups, area of work (e.g the NHS), social clubs (e.g the Zimbabwe football team) and contributions by the participants. To avoid double counting / duplication of names the following details were recorded for each person: name, nickname, sex, age group, marital status, number of children, area of residence. Information on socio-economic status and needs was gathered by the use of a questionnaire with mainly close-ended questions. The information compiled from the questionnaires was substantiated by use of interviews with community members including those from other nationalities and representatives of Bristol City Council, Bristol Zimbabwe Association, Refugee Action and the Citizens Advise Bureau. The research assistants were drawn from different genders groups defined by their area of residence, type of work, social activities they participate in, sex and age. A totals of 60 questionnaire responses were received. 53% of the respondents were females and 47 % were males. Most of the respondents were asylum seekers (30%) followed by those with work permits (19%). The 'indefinite leave to stay' constituted 17 %, UK residents 9%, students 3%, disabled 2% and other 20%.

One of the findings of the study was that 33% of Zimbabweans in Bristol are involved in sporting activities, the main sporting activity being football. Almost all (95%) of the respondents would like to attend a function specifically targeted at Zimbabweans and or community groups. Two thirds (66%) would like to assist in organising events for Zimbabweans. The report recommended, among other things, a football tournament or sports event with participation from teams from within and outside Bristol or occasional activities for children.

Ever since the report was presented, the BZA has been looking for opportunities to involve its members in football tournaments, the idea being to use football as a vehicle for raising the Association's profile and promoting community cohesion.

## Delivering the 'Refugee Week football tournament'

Since its formation in 2005, BZA has actively participated in refugee week football tournaments in Bristol with other agencies. In 2011 the BZA decided that it was time they coordinate the refugee week football tournaments in Bristol. The BZA, through its chair, approached the BASIS team in Bristol expressing the Association's interest and willingness to coordinate the tournament. With the support of the Basis Organisational Development Officer, a proposal was produced and was accepted by Refugee Action.

A BZA sub-committee was set up to manage the football tournament. The sub-committee members included a football player who had been involved in a number of five-a-side football tournaments, a refugee with an economics background who has been involved in financial management training workshops, and a person with project management experience. The sub-committee's first task was to find out what BZA members and other stakeholders would consider as a good tournament. As such consultations were held with organisations that had hosted similar tournaments for the same target group, five-a-side football teams, groups of people interested in football including refugees and asylum seekers. Since the tournament was to take place during the Refugee Week most people interviewed assumed that families were invited and were therefore asking about practical needs on

the day e.g. activities for kids and women, entertainment and arrangement for food and drinks. Refugee Action and BZA had already included a bouncy castle in the budget. The involvement of the Refugee Action in the planning process meant that it was possible to add more family fun day activities such as face painting, colouring games, martial arts and drumming workshop (although some performers did not turn up on the day). It was then agreed that the day be known as the 'Refugee Week Football Tournament and Family Fun Day' (RWFT).

The sub-committee met regularly, and weekly, during the last four weeks before the start of the RWFT to:

- identify items that needed to be in place by the RWFT day,
- discuss progress reports,
- identify risks and how they could be managed, and to
- identify duties and allocate roles for members and volunteers.

The football tournament and family fun day was hosted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2011.



**What problems and barriers did your RCO face in doing this, and how did you overcome or try to overcome these?**

### *Around organisational development*

**Lack of accounting skills and financial management:** Our treasurer is not a financial management expert. The treasurer and other committee members have attended sponsored training workshops on financial responsibility and accountability, record keeping and reporting, financial planning and cash flow management.

**Funding restrictions:** BZA has no paid staff. Although the Association has benefited immensely from volunteers it is unsustainable and this has in some way hampered the delivery of service. Also like most of the voluntary sector and worst for community groups the current harsh economic crisis exacerbated by cuts also affects the Association. Members fail to raise the membership fees and volunteers, in most cases, pay their own expenses when conducting the Association's business.

**Reaching the wider community and promoting integration:** The BZA aims to integrate the Zimbabwean community in Bristol to be part of an inclusive society of people enjoying equal rights, access to services, opportunities and civil liberties. Projects that are aimed at Zimbabweans only therefore do not always have the desired effect. Our projects are therefore targeted at other community groups as much as Zimbabweans, except for the Zimbabwe Independence Day celebrations.

### ***Around the Refugee Week football tournament***

**Time constraints during planning:** There was never a time that suited all sub-committee members to meet regularly to present progress reports. All sub-committee members were in full employment. While some members worked during the day some worked on night shifts. It was agreed that four of the members who could meet regularly would coordinate efforts by other members and report regularly at meetings. A live minutes document was also created. The document allowed any member to update it whenever there was a new development.

**Involvement of teams made up of mainly asylum seekers:** Teams from all backgrounds were given same time to confirm participation. However, visits were made to some centres for asylum seekers although the main means of advertising the event was through emails. Of the thirteen teams who confirmed their participation before the RWFT day, four of the teams were made up of asylum seekers. From experience, it was also known that some teams might not turn up and some might just turn up on the day and expect to be given a chance to play.

Asylum seekers, by virtue of being people who have left their home countries to seek asylum elsewhere are people whose governments / authority figures have failed them or persecuted them one way or another. They come from communities where there is no public trust. This makes it difficult for them to believe that project can be for external social goals than personal gain. As such gaining confidence with such a person takes time. Their participation is mostly as a last minute involvement after having observed a project from afar.

These barriers can be broken down through building of trust by social visits and repeated familiar social activities. This is why it is important to have annual projects, which can become familiar with time. Of course the fact that asylum seekers are moved from place to place by NASS and accommodation providers makes it difficult for such initiatives to take hold. From experience BZA would however always recommend annual social events, than one off projects.

**Women participation:** One of the aims of the events was to include women's football teams in the football tournament. Although emails were sent to prospective teams only one women's football team confirmed participation. As such, women's teams were excluded from the tournament. Reason given by teams who could not participate ranged from lack of players since some members were away on holiday to pre-booked commitments elsewhere. No team spurned participation because they did not think it a good idea. Although it is proposed to give teams more advance notice the BZA thinks it is a good idea to see whether there are other sports women might want to participate in. Women were, however actively involved in other elements of the event.

### **Support that helped us with this work**

**Funding:** BZA has received project funding / support from a number of organisations which include the Basis project, Quartet Community, Refugee Action, Voscur and Foundation Volunteering Bristol. The Refugee Week Football Tournament was funded by Refugee Action.

**Registration of the organisation:** Avon and Bristol Law Centre provided legal expertise to enable to the Association to register with the Companies House as a Company Limited by guarantee. Today, BZA is a registered organisation.

**Financial training:** BZA participated in the 'Internal financial Controls Training' which was held on 27 July 2010. This was funded by Bristol City Council. A number of tools were developed using knowledge gained at the training workshop for the financial management of the RWFT.

**Project proposal writing:** The project proposal for the RWFT presented to Refugee Action was compiled with the support of a BASIS Organisational Development Officer. The proposal put BZA in a position to run the football tournament.

### **What are your key learning points from the work, and tips for other RCOs?**

#### **Project Planning:**

**Planning is really important-** as mentioned before we used a logical framework analysis which is a helpful tool for structuring research and project plans. Thinking in advance about the assumptions and risks involved in a project (which is part of a logical framework analysis) can help you to avoid

potential pitfalls.

**Set your targets realistically and do not take on activities that you might fail to deliver.** This allows your organisation to grow while your committee members gain experience and your members get used to your organisation. Accountability and integrity when dealing with your members and other organisations are more important than taking on activities an organisation is not equipped to handle.

Try to **involve as many stakeholders as possible at the beginning of planning a project or event.** This makes sure that;

- the target group will have a sense of ownership of the project,
- other organisations are aware of the event and will not plan to have other events that may clash with yours,
- you get as much input as possible improving the chances of the event being a success, and
- you learn from other people's experiences of running such an event.

### **Researching your community and involving a wide range of people:**

**Do not forget that the community is made up of different groups** (for example men/ women, asylum seekers, age groups). Identify these groups at the beginning and make sure that they are represented at the planning stage of any project. If you are conducting research and you are aiming for as many responses as possible identify key persons within the groups and find ways of persuading the key persons to gain you access to the potential respondents. Make sure you know about any cultural barriers that can alienate you or your research assistants.

BZA would advise any organisation that wants to better address the needs of their members **to commission research that can find out more about its members.** Findings from such a research, like the case with BZA, can be used to focus the activities of the organisation.

**Try to know the skills base of your members.** Get their CVs where possible and find ways of benefiting from their experiences and expertise. BZA's experience is that members, if asked, would volunteer to participate in collective efforts for external social goals, and participation often leads to recognition and associated benefits.

**Translate publicity material to different languages** and use different media for information dissemination. A number of asylum seekers and refugees are not fluent in English and may miss out on important information. Also, while some members are computer literate and would often find information on internet and through emails some rely on posters and radio.

If some members do not respond to your advertisements it does not necessarily mean they are not interested in the event. A number will just diarise and wait for the event. You however may need to advertise again a few days before the event.

### **Organising events:**

When selecting a venue for event, **consider the location of the target group.** This is particularly important if your members are mainly asylum seekers and refugees who cannot afford most means of transport. A venue that is at a walking distance for most of your members is the normally the best venue.

BZA has found it difficult to make members pay their subscriptions, and when invited to annual meetings most members do not come. They however turn up for activities/ events and a number would also volunteer to make an event a success. BZA are more successful when they **seek contributions for particular activities for some members** than collect membership fees. Contributions tend to improve people's participation since they would want to know how much value their support has contributed.

**Yearly popular events** always work since they are easier for members to diarise and their planning turn to be repetition, and therefore less expensive. They turn to grow with each passing year and members might even start contributing to make sure the event is a success.

**Set your targets realistically and do not take on activities that you might fail to deliver.** This allows your organisation to grow while your committee members gain experience and your members get used to your organisation. Accountability and integrity when dealing with your members and other

organisations are more important than taking on activities an organisation is not equipped to handle.

**Collaborative working:**

**Continually exploit opportunities offered by networking** – understanding what other organisations are involved, what works and what does not work, what services can your organisation benefit from for free, how policy changes or developments affects your members etc. All these are important in ensuring that your organisation is best positioned to assist your members.

**If you are not sure whether your organisation can afford office space, try office sharing** or using an established organisation that works with communities. The BZA committee does not have an office which members can use as a resource centre. Rather, they use the Refugee Action offices for post. This gives the BZA opportunities for networking with other organizations while visiting the Refugee Action offices.

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