

Weave Six: From Achievement Gap to Education Debt and the Appreciating Value of the African Voice: It's in Our Cloth to Heal, Protect and Create – Mandiani's Great Story and I in my Best Cloth

Every Child Matters Agenda included with the African Voice; It's Mandiani Time in Schools, Symposia for Community Development; Celebration of our Elders and Mandiani in the USA

*"We are the miracles that God made
To taste the bitter fruit of Time.
We are precious.
And one day our suffering
Will turn into the wonders of earth."
(in 'An African Elegy', 1992)*

Introduction

The intent in this Weave is to make public the Mandiani Great Story. I want to evidence how Mandiani grew from complex origins to prosper as an education service of quality (included with the African Voice) for black boys (connecting in diverse ways to an African origin).

Integral is Mandiani's scoping and framing within the funding regimes of the Children's Fund and the Young People's Development Programme (undergirded with the Every Child Matters agenda and the Children Act, 2004), and the novel inclusion of the African Voice in the shaping of its services. It is in this way that we in Mandiani would say that we "seized a window of opportunity to do good work". Mandiani is on the loom.

Work in Schools – Learning to Love to Learn (Stories of a Glorious Past, Historical Debt and Appreciating Value)

Mandiani work in schools guided by the Children's Fund and YPDP programmes were translated to a number of specific aims within the boys' personal development

activities. It is in this way that Claire Moore and Tina Rae's 'Positive People – a Self-esteem Building Course for Young Children in Primary and Secondary Schools' (2003), modified with inclusion of the African Voice was utilised to good effect. This programme had the following content areas:

Table 3: Positive People

Positive People – a Self-esteem Building Course for Young Children in Primary and Secondary schools	
CONTENT	
Good Points	Friendship
Skills	My Best Day
Appearance	Taking Turns
Achievements	Being A Leader
Good Feelings	Looking Back and Looking Forward

The objective of this programme was to build on self-esteem, through participation in individual and group activities that increased self awareness enabled better self regulation, heightened motivation, enabled the development of empathy and increased social skills in groups.

The boys were also encouraged to be reflective, to give attention to their own behaviour and consider its meaning for self and for other members of their group.

The programme included following aims:

Table 4: Objectives

To improve self-knowledge	To focus on and improve listening skills	To develop confidence in speaking in front of peers
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To recognize and label positive qualities in oneself	To experience what it is to feel good about oneself and improve self-regard	To further increase self-esteem and self-worth
To be more able to take turns	To be able to give and receive compliments	To value differences in each other
To begin to recognize and label positive qualities and achievements in others, i.e. Empathy	To articulate and record positive qualities and achievements	To achieve a greater understanding of feelings and emotional states and how these affect others as well as oneself
To respect and accept differences in order to promote a sense of equality	To affirm the validity of other' positions and feelings	To value the contributions of all members of the group
To co-operate with other members of a group	To further increase social skills	To be able to consider different solutions to a situation of conflict or difficulty

However, the programme stated so baldly, does not convey how it came alive in schools.

I can hear Andrew Muhammad figuratively saying to pupils in schools, 'I can guarantee you now! Even before we start, that you are going to enjoy this lesson'. The young people would look totally amazed, but by the completion of the session none could say that they had not enjoyed the session.

Andrew Muhammad contributed to our 'Learning to Love to Learn' programme, an element in the personal development programme offered to schools. He was one of our partners on the project. There were others who offered purposeful, appropriate and high quality activities/services. For example, Yellow Circles engaged the young people in creative ways. They used games, art, story, films and music to explore

issues of self-identity, the lived experiences of African peoples and to inspire the boys to embrace of new ways of being. Yellow Circles work, particularly in primary schools was a real highlight. They produced a play with the young people entitled, 'The Dream That Woke The World – I Can ...U Can', which was performed at a school assemblies and at a Mandiani Open Evening (a Quality Time Event) for parents, family members and friends.

Andrea Palmer, from the Lewisham Community Development Partnership, offered a high quality intervention into the lives of black boys with her sessions on puberty, hygiene and anger management in Secondary Schools. Nulinks mutli-cultural literacy programme, Ras Benjie's Drumming focused on timing and Ozzies computerised music workshops were some of the other creative interventions offering new ways of learning and providing great fun for children and young people participating in Mandiani.

There was much evidence that showed that in work and play the young people increased their learning, grew and really enjoyed themselves. This was borne out in Annmarie Turnbull's (2006) case study, which was part of the ongoing participative action research (PAR) evaluation of the LCF. Turnbull's random sample sought the views of 22 boys, one third of those who were involved in the project at the time, in both primary and secondary schools (Years 3 to 7), and also 14 parents/carers.

Turnbull conducted short semi-structured interviews with children during Mandiani daytime sessions in schools. She attended five sessions in three schools. Turnbull also interviewed parents/carers at an evening parents' meeting and by telephone. Questions for children and parents explored perceptions of what the service

provided by Mandiani was intended to do, what was liked and disliked about it and what impact it was believed to have had.

In addition all Mandiani's documentation was made available to Turnbull for analysis. This included evaluation forms completed by boys, parents and teachers and videos and photographs of Mandiani's work.

The evidence drawn from the perceptions of the boys, their parents/ carers and their teachers were presented in a number of ways in the case study. However, central were the detailed findings from the interviews with the boys under six themes that emerged consistently. Turnbull (2006) presented the themes as follows:

- Understanding themselves as black boys in their community
- Broadening knowledge and experience, raising skills and confidence
- Improving personal behaviour and preventing involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime
- Raising educational attainment and attendance and changing ways of learning for the better
- Having fun
- Reactions at home and from friends (Turnbull 2006, p. 7)

In Mandiani as a staff group, we were always conscious of how difficult it was to evaluate the qualitative experiences of young people and their families, and we were always challenged to inform funders and supporters of the fullness of our activities. This was necessary, *'to ensure that when assessment of the outcomes of our activities or the determining of the financial levels of support that we required, an awareness of the nature of Mandiani's work and its positive impact had to be understood. This was of importance,*

because we felt that our activities could not be wholly understood or always measured within traditional mindsets and frameworks.'(Phillips 2006, pp. 1-12)

It is in this way that Annmarie Turnbull's Case Study on Mandiani (Turnbull 2006) was important, for it contributed to illuminating the 'fullness of our activities', our positive impact and the novel framing of our work with children and parents.

Interestingly, the case study began in the final months of my involvement in Mandiani and was completed after my departure in March 2006. Therefore, it is a most fitting and relevant storied record of Mandiani's work in schools and evidence of the nature of my influence (leadership, social action and innovation) in the project over the period of my employment (some three years).

In the case study I am able to appreciate in the voices of children, teachers and parents Mandiani's novel impact. I am also able to discern from these voices the appreciating value of the African Voice (in itself, in transaction and in encouraging new learning), as I engage with Ladson-Billings notion of the education debt, included with critical "race" theory.

Further, into consciousness comes heightened awareness of my embodiment of my valuing social living pedagogy in action. In this way, I am challenged to shift my perspectives and practice relating to education inequities from the margins to the mainstream (from achievement gap and disadvantage to education debt and the appreciating value of the African Voice.) I am also challenged to reposition self from continued operation weighted in the African community, to communication to the widest community to bring about radical structural and systemic change.

On what the boys think of Mandiani, Turnbull (2006) evidenced that the boys interviewed, were thoughtful and were positive about Mandiani. Turnbull noted, *'There is no doubt that from the boys' points of view, Mandiani is an overwhelmingly positive experience'* (p. 7).

On the first of the six recurring themes given focus by Turnbull (2006), "Understanding themselves as black boys in their community", highlighted was that all but one of the boys voiced the belief that Mandiani involved exploring what it meant to be a black boy living in Lewisham today. In response to the question 'What is Mandiani for?' the three responses below demonstrated their awareness as follows:

"It's trying to help us grow up as a black child. To give us the courage to get a better job when we get older. To help us grow up to be strong." Amani

"I think it's for getting to know who you are deep down. Looking at your past ancestry. Saying how we're feeling and discussing things. It's like a lesson. It's planned out with starts and endings." Jay

"Trying to achieve a way of making new things. Making new friends. We're a community and we're black and I think it encourages us to be strong and never give up. We work together beautiful." Jordon (p. 7-8)

Turnbull (2006) also included comment from a Year 6 teacher, at one of the primary schools where we were working, which supplemented the boys' views. The teacher stated:

"I feel that it is an essential part of our provision for black boys here, and it has an extremely positive impact on their self image and confidence. Are the boys benefiting from the Programme? Most definitely, and so do the families." (p.8)

Here, in relation to what Mandiani's was for, the evidence was positive in our encouraging self-awareness, valuing behaviours, appreciation of the African Voice,

building new relationships and working together amongst the boys participating on programmes, and indeed across programmes.

On the second theme, 'Broadening knowledge and experience, raising skills and confidence', Turnbull evidenced that learning about Black history and Black culture was prominent (the African Voice was in the room) and that there was a strong sense from the boys that, whether through classroom sessions, or trips and events, Mandiani was providing valued informal education opportunities. Turnbull's (2006) examples of the boys' comments were as follows:

*"We do good stuff, African stuff, West African dancing and learning about Africa".
Jonathon*

"I like the fact that I did not know a lot about black people. Now I can come home and tell my Mum and Dad things they don't know about black people". Kuran

"I like the discussions, for example we talk about how places got their names, like Jamaica Road (the historical), then that triggers different ideas". Jay (p, 8)

It is here that the thought of the "appreciating value of the African Voice", for me, emerges for the first time in the Case Study. What I mean by this is that I can evidence that the African Voice has value in itself for the person embracing it. I observe this feature of the African Voice when the young person says "We do good stuff, African stuff" (Turnbull, 2006, p. 8). I also view the appreciating valuing of the African Voice in its communication, its transaction. I observe this feature when the young person says that "I now can come home and tell my Mum and Dad things they don't know about black people" (Turnbull, 2006, p. 8). Further, I view the appreciating value of the African Voice as a spark to further inquiry, to find out something else and new learning. This is observed when the young person says "we talk about how places get their names, like Jamaica Road, then that triggers different ideas" (Turnbull, 2006, p. 8).

Here, a different idea is triggered for me, as Ladson-Billings historical debt surfaces in connection with Jamaica Road. Local history has it that Jamaica Road was named after England had acquired the colony of Jamaica from Spain in 1655. The road was part of the route connecting the docks and warehouses in Southwark with those in Rotherhithe, Deptford and Woolwich, which were significant for the Elizabethan slave trade (London Borough of Southwark 2011). Another version says that Jamaica Road was named after the Jamaica Tavern, which was visited by the naval administrator and diarist Samuel Pepys. Pepys was an investor in the Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa (1663-72). He also once sold a black servant into slavery (London Borough of Southwark 2011).

I am thinking about how useful is this kind of knowledge for black boys, particularly, as its focus is on areas where they lived. Deptford is in Lewisham and Southwark and Woolwich are neighbouring boroughs. I have suspended thinking on the appreciating value of the African Voice, although it is not very far from the surface in my consciousness, it seems more appropriate to give attention to Ladson-Billings historical debt, for it has relevance here. I will return to the appreciating value of the African Voice later in this Weave.

Ladson-Billings' focus on the historical debt, one of the lenses from which she creates her notion of the education debt, acknowledges the legacy of slavery and other forms of discrimination in hindering African American, Native American, Latino/a and other ethnic groups from receiving a quality education. Ladson-Billings (2006) cites Anderson, 2002, and writes:

"...education was initially forbidden during the period of enslavement. After emancipation we saw the development of freedmen's schools whose purpose was the maintenance of a servant class. During the long period of legal apartheid, African Americans attended schools where they received cast-off textbooks and materials from

White schools. In the South, the need for farm labour meant that the typical school year for rural Black students was about 4 months long. Indeed, Black students in the South did not experience universal secondary schooling until 1968” (p. 5).

Ladson-Billings also noted that it was major leaders of the nation who endorsed ideas about the inferiority of Black, Latina/o, and Native peoples. Ladson-Billings (2006) writes:

“Thomas Jefferson (1816), who advocated for the education of the American citizen, simultaneously decried the notion that Blacks were capable of education. George Washington, while deeply conflicted about slavery, maintained a substantial number of slaves on his Mount Vernon Plantation and gave no thought to educating enslaved children.” (p. 6)

Further, Ladson-Billings (2006) paints an instructive picture of how the education debt was accumulated historically. She notes laws forbidding the teaching of Africans in the Southern states existed, when in 1827 Massachusetts public schools were made free of charge. Ten years later when Horace Mann becomes head of the Massachusetts State Board of Education in 1837, Edmund Dwight, a wealthy Boston industrialist, supports the board with his own money. Ladson-Billings notes that what is "omitted from this historical account is that the cotton which sourced the textile factories and drove the economy of the East, depended primarily on the labour of enslaved Africans” (p. 6). The point is made that whilst African Americans were enslaved and prohibited from schooling, the product of their labour (wealth from the cotton-crop) is being used for the benefits of those who already have education. The gap widens and the debt accumulates.

In considering the source of New England’s wealth from the 1830s Ladson-Billings (citing from Farrow, Land & Frank, 2005) demonstrates that the development of cotton mills, the growth of shipping, manufacturing, the introduction of banks, insurance companies and railroads, all evidence how indebted the region was to

African Americans.

In detailing these circumstances Ladson-Billings (2006) is motivated to ask: “Why, then, would we not expect there to be an achievement gap?” (p. 5).

Ladson-Billings' (2006) concern with the over-use of the term “achievement gap” is due to its misplacement, as a way of explaining and understanding the persistent inequality that exists (and seems always to have existed). However, though her attention is on US schools, I consider that there are strong parallels with the UK. I value Ladson-Billings postulation that looking at the over-used term ‘Achievement Gap,’ places the burden of responsibility of catching up on children born into poverty or racism, rather than a sharing of the burden/ responsibilities with policymakers and the citizenry as a whole.

Ladson-Billings (2006) posed that focusing on achievement gaps is akin to placing attention on a deficit; a bound, short term measure, when we should be focusing on the notion of an educational debt; an accumulative, long-term outcome of continuous short term deficits. I use Ladson-Billings (2006) “education debt” to argue that the achievement gap moves us toward short-term solutions that are unlikely to address the long-term underlying problem of the educating black boys (connecting in diverse ways to an African heritage).

I use the features of the historical debt in the US, to parallel developments in the UK. However, what Ladson-Billings (2006) presents as a national feature, in relation to the US, in the UK its feature is international, and universal.

Robin Blackburn in *The Making of New World Slavery: from the Baroque to the*

Modern, 1492-1800 (1997), suggests that slavery points us towards the "dark side of progress" (Blackburn 1997, p. 5) in that the inhumanity of the system developed side by side with huge steps forward in knowledge and technique, such as the exploration of the Atlantic and the development of new navigational techniques. The profits of slavery were central to the primitive accumulation, which paved the way for English industrialisation

Wilson Elbe Williams (1938) catalogues the linkages between the triangular trade and British industrial development. The conclusion of his thesis includes the following statement:

'The African trade was a very important factor in the growth of the capitalist economy in England. First, it furnished a considerable market for British manufactures, particularly textiles which exchanged for Africa's chief product, Negro slaves . . . Second, African gold was an important source of the medium of exchange which the rising capitalism of England demanded. Third, the great profits derived from the African trade, in spite of notorious losses, helped to build the large personal fortunes, which eventually were turned from purely commercial to industrial employment. Finally, the African trade stimulated such industries as shipbuilding, and thus was an important factor in bringing about England's supremacy in the overseas trade...

From the exploitation of slave labour in the West Indian economy, large fortunes arose. Some of this wealth was transferred to the mother country, and eventually invested in industrial enterprise' (p. 39).

Eric Williams (1943) also makes the connection between the slave trade, slavery, and the rise of British industry. He noted on England's wealth that the profits of the 'triangular trade' between Europe, Africa and the New World had 'made an enormous contribution to Britain's industrial development' (Williams 1943, p. 105).

Williams wrote on how the 18th-century banks in Liverpool, the 'slaving metropolis', and in Manchester, the 'cotton capital', drew funds from the triangular trade.

Williams identified the Heywood Bank in the Liverpool, which was absorbed in 1883

by the Bank of Liverpool and Thomas Leyland's banking operation that merged in 1901 with the North and South Wales Bank Ltd, as financial institutions founded on profits from the African trade, which was equivalent to the slave trade (Williams 1943, p. 47).

There were similar patterns of developments for new banks in Bristol, London, and Glasgow. Barclay's Bank was a foremost example, where its founder David Barclay "was not only a slave trader but an owner of a large plantation in Jamaica" (Williams 1943, p. 101). The insurance firm, Lloyd's of London, began its operations by insuring slave cargos and slave ships (Williams 1943, p. 104).

In terms of heavy industry, James Watt's development of the steam engine was financed directly by slave owners (Williams 1943, pp. 102-3). Antony Bacon, a leading ironmonger of the 18th century, had strong financial connections with the triangular trade (Williams 1943, pp. 103-4). Part of the finance that led to the development of the Thorncliffe ironworks, begun in 1792, came from a razor-maker Henry Longden, who received a bequest of some £15,000 from a wealthy uncle, a West Indian merchant of Sheffield (Williams 1943, p. 104).

Further, Palmer (2008) noted Caribbean slavery transformed the Scottish economy in the 18th century. Profits helped Scottish cities and built academies (Inverness and Bathgate). Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art, Buchanan Street, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, Harmony House, Inveresk Lodge and Gillespie School all benefitted from slavery. Industries for tobacco, cotton, spices, coffee, sugar and rum prospered, and ports such as Leith, Glasgow and Greenock flourished. Historical links between Scottish universities and British slave colonies have been important in the

development of the universities with some establishing links with Jamaica during slavery, educating the white children of slave masters. Educational links remain to this day (Palmer 2008).

The Atlantic slave trade and the slave plantation system in the West Indies, and in the Americas in general, were crucial to European industrialisation and the financing of the Industrial Revolution sparked by the triangular trade between Africa, the Americas, and Europe left few lines of industry untouched.

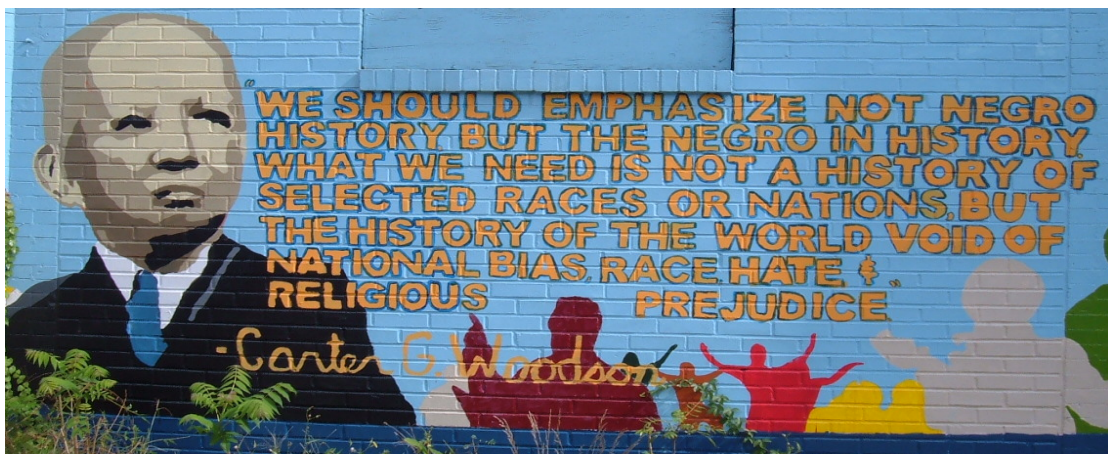


Figure 29: Carter G. Woodson Memorial Mural Photographed on Mandiani USA Visit 2006

However, benefits accrued in the UK were matched by the demise of Africans in the sites of the triangular trade. Walter Rodney (1972) in the context of his theory of uneven development shared his perspective on the active underdevelopment of Africa by the Europeans in his work, 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa'. He noted on how the slave trade precipitated the secular economic backwardness of the African continent, which was aggravated by the plunder of late 19th century and early 20th century colonialism (Rodney 1972). Indeed, slavery derived from the triangular trade and colonialism appeared to be the genesis of the comparative

economic backwardness of African peoples, wherever the trade touched and colonialism extended.

However, Ladson-Billings notes that although the historical debt is a heavy one, it is important not to overlook the ways that communities of colour always have worked to educate themselves. Between 1865 and 1877, she informs on how African Americans mobilised to 'bring public education to the South for the first time' (Ladson-Billings 2006). Ladson-Billings also cites Carter G. Woodson (1933/1972), who criticised the 'kind of education that African Americans received', and his challenge to 'African Americans to develop schools and curricula that met the unique needs of a population only a few generations out of chattel slavery' (Ladson-Billings 2006, p. 6).

Earlier in this living theory thesis, at a personal level, mapping educational inequities, I noted on slavery and my colonial education, citing Sparrow's calypsos, 'I am a Slave' (1962), 'Dan is the Man in the Van' (1963) and 'Model Nation' (1962). Sparrow's *I'm a Slave*, informs how after freedom "I (the slave) had no education, no particular ambition, everyday I down on my knees". In *Dan is the Man in the Van* he sings that if he had learned all he had to learn in school, he would have been a "block-headed mule" (Slinger, *Dan is the Man in the Van* 1963); and in *Model Nation* he sings "colonialism" gone.

I have also in my own stories, 'Create Your Own Dance' (200), 'Intrusive Thoughts' (Appendix Four, 2005) and 'If I had been included in my own education' (Appendix Three, 2006), shared on the character of my secondary schooling, community and higher education experiences. These sets of experiences, though not without

positives, impacted to evidence that I was not OK, that I did not count and my own influences minimised.

Further, I charted the educational campaigns of black parents, and the continuing development of black supplementary / Saturday schools that contributed substantively to the education of the black child. Indeed, the Sankofa Learning Centre was part of this tradition. Mandiani, is also build on this tradition in its offer.

These experiences inform on a history of educational inequity that extends beyond UK boundaries. In many ways the UK's legacy is most pervasive, and punctuated by overt and covert 'assimilation strategies', that stirred within me 'strangeness'.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a disproportionate number of Caribbean migrant children were classified as 'educationally subnormal' and placed in special schools and units (DfES, 2006). By the end of the 1980s, the chances of white school leavers finding employment were four times better than those of Black pupils (Steer, 2000). In 2000–01, Black pupils were three times more likely than white pupils and ten times more likely than Indian pupils to be officially excluded from school for disciplinary reasons. These chronic problems have contributed to the disadvantage of those of African origin and their position at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum (DfES, 2006). This continues to be a concern into the 21st century.

It is here that my thoughts return to the appreciating value of the African Voice, as I

manoeuvred for a more optimistic vantage point. I considered that Ladson-Billings communication of the education debt was of full import to policy makers and the US citizenry. In the UK it also has this value, particularly, as it is my contention that the ECM agenda is scant in addressing the needs of children and families from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Every Child Matters (ECM) launched by the Labour government in 2003 was considered as one of the most important policy initiatives and development programmes in relation to children and children's services, and has been described as representing a "sea of change" to the children and families agenda.

The Victoria Climbié case and the subsequent Laming Report (HMSO, 2003) were regarded as the reason for the Labour government's introduction of ECM. In the foreword to the Green Paper Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) Tony Blair had stated that 'responding to the inquiry headed by Lord Laming into Victoria's death, we are proposing here a range of measures to reform and improve children's care . . .' (p. 1).

However, Parton (2006) noted:

'while the Green Paper and the legislation were presented as a direct response to the public inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié . . . they were much more than this' (p. 977).

Indeed, ECM in its introduction appeared to say very little on reform related to the needs of children from minority ethnic groups (including children of African origin).

Interestingly, the Laming report in its detailed account of the circumstances that led to the death of Victoria Climbié had raised some issues with regard to her ethnicity (Black African). In particular the conclusion stated that :

'... it is impossible to assess after the event the likelihood of a particular step being taken in Victoria's case if she had been a white child ... however ... at some point, the focus may have shifted from Victoria's fundamental needs because of misplaced assumptions about her cultural circumstances' (p. 346).

However, the report further stated that 'this was not an inquiry about racism' (p. 347) though Chand (2003) and later Garrett (2006) were critical of the inquiry's limited focus on themes relating to 'race' and culture. Garrett made the important point that:

'... the publication of the Laming report has contributed to the government's decision to entirely reshape services for children in England and Wales ... Nevertheless, it is, perhaps, a little surprising that issues relating to 'race' and 'place' alluded to in 'Laming' have not been investigated, in any detail ...' (2006, p. 316).

Significantly, Garrett argued that the Laming report appeared to partition off a child's race from the core business of an assessment and that this was later reflected in Every Child Matters.

This was disappointing, particularly as various studies over decades, including those contributing the African Voice, had raised concerns about the disadvantages faced by black children (connecting in diverse ways to an African origin) and their families across the education and child welfare services. Yet, the findings from these studies appear to have had little impact on the subsequent reforms.

One final point on the ECM agenda, before advancing this living theory thesis is that the Green Paper has also been criticised for the lack of gender analysis. In a paper entitled 'Why gender matters for Every Child Matters', Daniel et al. (2005) argue that

'the mainstreaming of gender is needed in child welfare policy and provisions, and Every Child Matters (missed) a golden opportunity to begin this process' (p. 1344).

'Gender mainstreaming' means:

'...an approach which recognizes that policies may impact differently on the lives of women and men . . . and which attempts to promote gender equity' (p. 1344).

Valuing this concept I would suggest that ethnicity mainstreaming is similarly required, whereby the mainstreaming of children's ethnic origins and all that this entails, also need to become integral to education and child welfare legislation, policies and practices to both protect and promote the rights of all individuals, and in particular those from minority ethnic origins.

For me, focus on the education debt takes these concerns out of the margins into the mainstream, however, though the African Voice is extant, I consider that it needs illumination (the African Voice is not distinct). Here, I engage with critical "race" theory alongside Ladson-Billings education debt, as I recall the qualities of the appreciating value of the African Voice in its illumination.

Interestingly, it is the publication of Ladson-Billings & Tate's (1995) article, "Towards a critical race theory of education", which first brought critical race theory attention in educational circles. It provided a lens through which educational practices and policies could be investigated (Ladson-Billings, 1999) and a methodological tool that offered understanding of how "race" and racism affected the education and lives of

the racially disenfranchised" (Parker and Lynn, 2002, pp. 7-8).

In the United States four tenets have characterised critical race theory. Firstly, it evidenced the everyday impact of racism and exposed how it privileged whites and disadvantage black peoples. Secondly, it promoted the voices of black peoples enabling telling of their own stories of their experiences. Thirdly, it challenged the notion that meaningful social change can occur without radical change to existing social structures, and fourthly, posed that civil rights legislation, rather than reducing the effects of racism on black peoples, have primarily benefited whites (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Nebeker, 1998).

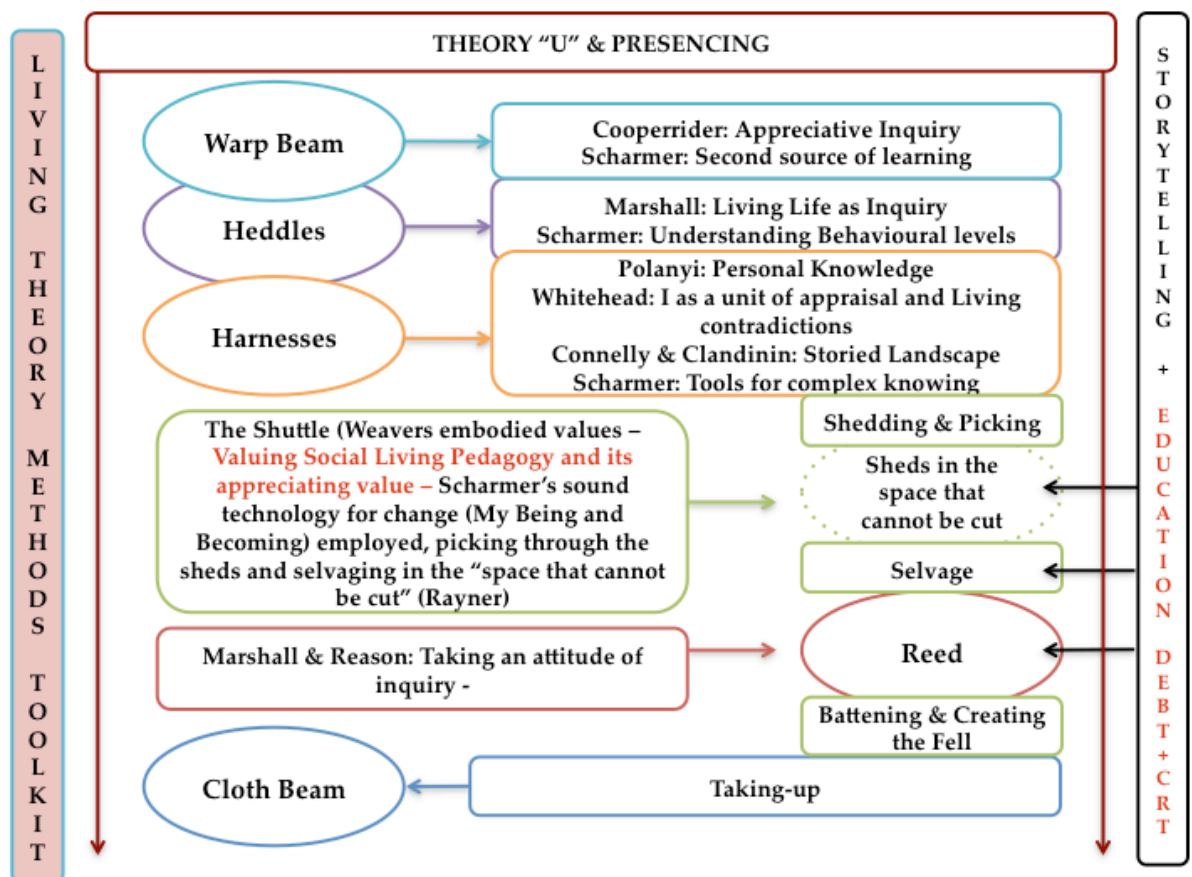
Hence, in my view if this is what critical race theory offers then it also has the potential to provide understanding of the impact of 'race' and racism on educational practices and policies in the United Kingdom. This is so, particularly as in both countries "race" has been fundamental in shaping relationships of power and notions of citizenship through law relating to inclusions and exclusions.

Mandiani's programmes embraced these four tenets that characterised critical "race" theory. However, in our own thinking, we would not wait for change, but would work with young people to bring about change in their ways of being and in a comprehensive set of activities seek to influence, teachers and policy makers in bringing about change in structures/systems

It is also my view, if as Bernal (2002) says, “critical race theory is about learning to listen to other people’s counter-stories and finding ways to make them matter within the education system” (Bernal 2002, pp. 105-126), then it is most certainly worthy of exploration in relation to the work of Mandiani. Further, Solorzano and Yosso also emphasised to the importance of placing marginalised peoples at the centre of the methodology through valuing their stories, counter-stories and narratives for analysis (Solorzano & Yosso 2002, pp. 23-44). Further, Ladson-Billings own perspective that “It is the voice of people of colour which is required for a deep understanding of the education system” (Ladson-Billings 1998, p. 14) provided novel inspiration.

This was the character of my living theory thesis, I enthused, valuing Polanyi’s personal knowledge (Polanyi 1958, 1998) and Jack Whitehead’s ‘unit of appraisal’ (Whitehead 1989), together with the novel application my loom, included with my engaging storytelling praxis. These stories or the “naming one’s own reality” (Ladson-Billings 1998, p. 14) provided “psychic preservation”, a “kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain” (Ladson-Billings 1998, p. 13) caused by racial oppression that made white educational privilege appear natural. However, they also contained information valuable for understanding the education system and how to transform it. This is my commitment for the African Voice and Great Passion to be in the room, inspired from my valuing social living pedagogy. This was the nature of Mandiani’s “heal, protect and create strategies.”

It is in this positive way that I returned to the notion of the appreciating value of the African Voice emerging out of my work in Mandiani, as evidenced in Turnbull’s Case Study. The education debt is included with critical “race” theory on the loom as I embrace the view that Mandiani’s personal development programme, ‘Learning to Love to Learn’, focused on Stories of a Glorious Past, which informed on contributions of Africans to world development from antiquity through to present day offered a complementary steer to the historical component of the education debt.



Education Debt, Critical “Race” Theory and Appreciative Value of African Voice

In Stories of a Glorious Past we draw from the positive experiences of African peoples in Africa and the Diaspora and engage with the concepts, such as, identity, community, extended family, embodied values and living history. Important is the

appreciating of a positive self, building loving relationships, being accountable and responsible in home, school and community and thinking, sharing and acting embracing change. This is the 'appreciating value' of the African Voice (in itself, in transaction and in inspiring new learning) that I evidenced earlier in Turnbull's case study. It is a gift to the world, values intimacy and upholds an optimistic vantage point for change.

In considering the successes of African's though, we do not do so in isolation of other peoples' successes (ours is not an essentialist way). So, when we talk about world history and focus on Africa's contribution, we do so in a way that affords inclusion and appreciation of other peoples' contributions.

Indeed, this is how our 'bi-cultural competences/influences' are given scope. That is, the ability to find purposeful ways of being in the world and be at ease embracing more than one culture, without losing Self.

Mandiani was not simply an African experience; a Caribbean experience; a European experience. It was a bi-cultural experience of some complexity. So, when we engaged with black boys (connecting in diverse ways to an African origin), we drew from our bicultural influences and also encouraged the boys to draw from the strengths of their bicultural experiences Here, also is evidence of the appreciating value of the African Voice in a foundational way from a dynamic way of being in a complex

world. I appreciate a dynamic action on the loom, as I consider the nature of our communication to young people.

We say to the young people that we love them. We say to the boys that each is unique, have unlimited potential and that positive self-appreciation of their uniqueness and potential is important to building successful lives.

We also say to them that their uniqueness and potential have a location in history – personal, familial, communal, national and universal. Furthermore, we say to the boys that their challenge is to bring their uniqueness and potential to the fore and search for positive purpose in their lives. Our standpoint is that “self knowledge” is key to success in the world.

However, this message is often challenged, as some boys present negative self-identities, show reluctance in seeing themselves as subjects worthy of appraisal, their knowing of the influences on self, on others and in social formations. It is in this way that their circumstance seems compounded by the seeming continuing systemic absence of positive images of black boys within educational environments. Racism appears as if undimmed.

The work of David Gilborn and his colleagues is comprehensive in this area (Gilborn, 2000, Gilborn, 1996), and showed at that the time the damaging impact of the education system on the life chances of black children. The longitudinal review of the situation in relation to Black children in education in the United Kingdom, by Bernard Coard, 30 years after his ground-breaking book, ‘How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System’ (Coard, 1971), “Tell it

Like It Is", is instructive. Coard states:

The figures back it up. Over the past 30 years, standards across schools have undoubtedly got better, but achievement among black children has remained comparatively low. In 2002, 30% of black Caribbean children got five A to Cs at GCSE, compared with a national average of 51%. Black boys are more likely to be excluded than any other group.*

The mayor's report concluded that black schoolboys had been let down by local authorities' and teachers' prejudices for 50 years. Black boys still complained of racism and stereotyping, and their parents said teachers did not want to involve them. (Coard, 2005)

However, Mandiani embraced the notion that it is important to appreciate the necessity of "life-changing" actions to transform the hearts and minds of black boys trapped in "negative" cycles of unsatisfying experiences and to not do so is to neglect the personal and systemic challenges with which black boys are confronted.

In contending the challenges though, we are aware that for black boys "growing up is hard to do" and that there are issues derived from conditions and experiences, which impact negatively on young people's personal, social and economic reality, their educational development and their life chances.

Issues, such as, low self esteem, poor educational attainment, lack of awareness on sexual health and relationships, school absenteeism, poor mental health, lack of opportunities for training and employment, drugs misuse, lack of a sense of community and poor access to services.

Hence, a decided part of our thinking in our strategies for working with black boys is that there is a need to “heal and protect” them. There is a need to find ways of rekindling their self-belief, and to inspire belief in self and those that share their social reality.

We acknowledge too, at times in their development when they are particularly vulnerable and susceptible from messages or experiences that decrease their chances of success and satisfaction in life, we need to protect them from further harm. This is the underpinning of the personal development programmes with black boys, which set out to ‘rekindle’ the boys’ self-belief, and to ‘inspire belief in self’. It is in this way that our Mandiani’s ‘Learn to Love to Learn’ programme, and indeed the approaches to all our work should be seen.

Our ‘Learn to Love to Learn’ personal development programmes offered in schools attend to the systemic and personal challenges faced by the boys. Our ‘Stories of a Glorious Past’, part of the programme, gives evidence of one of our strategies for ‘rekindling self-belief.’

This focus on “Stories Of A Glorious Past” is an important element in the personal development programme, for though the widest issues are considered and challenged, for example, the absence of positively inspiring images of black boys within many education environments. It is its impact (personally) on the boys that is significant.

This is so, because there is fascination as the boys learn about Timbuktu, Egypt, the Olmecs and more. They have interest, because these “Stories” have relevance for

their developing positive self-identities. We consider that our “Stories Of A Glorious Past” rekindles the boys’ self-belief, for their negative self-identities and non-recognition of self as being subjects worthy of appraisal are challenged, as they become fascinated with self (appraising self). It is from this positive base that we “co-create.’

It is in this way that I build on Ladson-Billings (2006) notion of the education debt (the everyday impact of racism and policy bias to whites) across the four components, give voice to the counter stories of children, parents and teachers in a way that matters in the system, and commit to profound structural and systemic change.

It is also in this way that I would deepen inquiry into the inclusion of the African Voice in Mandiani’s personal development programmes, giving focus to another element, ‘Stories of a Glorious Past’, which connects in a novel way to Ladson-Billings (2006) historical debt.

Mandiani structured personal development programme did not stand-alone, for though the focus was on the black boys’ needs, recognition was also given to the importance of parental participation, professional engagement, and community development as part of a holistic educational process. Hence, the programme was undertaken with individuals and groups (peer, family and community) in the young persons’ schools, homes and community and in youth settings.

Indeed, if/when children are challenged to transform their lives, parents do not embrace necessary changes in their own lives, teachers do not explore new

approaches (including self), communities do not find novel ways of learning, then the prospect for something different happening is greatly diminished (I give focus to the wider programme later). Here, I give evidence drawn from the case study that shows how learning to handle difficulties was recognised by the boys as important part of our Mandiani's personal development programmes. Turnbull (2006) evidenced how the boys communicated difficulties with learning to deal with racism and peer pressure as follows:

'You learn about young black boys and how you should treat yourself, like when your friend is distracting you in lessons to do your own thing and think for yourself' Alex.

'The heart to heart stuff that might worry me, like racism, that does worry me a bit' Frank.

'They tell us about what we can do to be good. Tell us of other ways to deal with problems than fighting' Ife (p. 8).

The issue of racism also surfaced in different ways. Turnbull (2006) giving evidence on reactions of friends and teachers in the schools to the boys attending Mandiani sessions revealed that, whilst for the most part their involvement was accepted, some of the boys in primary schools had to justify involvement in work targeted specifically at black boys, as follows:

'I haven't told a white person – I don't know why. I've told my best friend and some friends. I'm not sure what they thought. I think they'd like to be in it'. Jonathon

'In year 4 my teacher didn't particularly like it 'coos he thought it was racist, but I had to say Mandiani is a group and if you can't take that that's your problem. For this I had to "sit out" for 10 minutes, but others cheered. I liked that support' Jordan

'Some of them think it's racist because it's only black boys. It's anti-racist. It's just trying to help me' Amani (p.12).

Here, some difficulties with notion of the 'appreciating value of the African Voice' is in evidence. As noted earlier, I observed the 'appreciating value of the African Voice' in and of itself, and though this is of importance, I feel that if it remains just within self then its appreciation is circumscribed. There is also a concern with how the appreciating value of the African Voice can be compromised by the nature of transactional relationships as evidence in the outcome of teacher behaviour and pupil behaviour above that resulted in the pupil being punished.

Observed in the comment 'I haven't told a white person' shows marginalisation. In transaction it is also important and if only communicated within the African community its marginalisation is also in evidence. The same would be for new learning, as if competing forces (racist and anti-racist). Its circumscribing within the African community continued its marginalisation. The same would be true if the transactions that it encouraged remained only within the African community, and its impact relating to new learning was likewise.

It is here that critical race theory assisted, because in focusing on the everyday impact of racism and exposure of how policies privileged whites and disadvantage black peoples, as in Ladson-Billings (2006), the education debt, is affirmed. However,

simultaneously I am telling the African Story as a counter story and as a way of making the African Voice 'matter within the education system' (more evidence of the appreciating value of the African voice). In this way I promote the voices of African peoples, and in valuing critical race theory, I place the African child in the centre of the room, in the centre of his or her own learning. There is an obvious connection with work in Sankofa here. However, with the Maroon and Sankofa bird suspended, it is critical race theory to the fore, alert to events occurring in the present (in the now) and communicating the African Voice in the school, in the system (in the present). Thereby, creating the opportunity to work with issues as integral to the system, and importantly in diverse partnership (young person, parent and teacher). It is in this way that I communicate the authentic voices of boys of African origin and ground their experiences in a local, national and international context, when I evidence their stories as integral to the Mandiani initiative in schools and the widest community.

It is in this way also that Ladson-Billings' focus on the historical debt is embraced and in giving evidence of the appreciating value of the African Voice that its added value begins to take a purposeful and practical form. I love what Paul Gilroy's (1993) imputes about slavery in linking in a fascinating way abstract philosophical modernity to the brutal practice of African enslavement. Gilroy gives evidence of how Africans in enslavement from the mid-nineteenth century have embodied memories of slavery, as a way into profound critiques of modernity in general. For example, Gilroy gives evidence of Frederick Douglass' "as if he is systematically reworking the encounter between master and slave in a striking manner which inverts Hegel's own allegorical scheme" (p. 60). However, Gilroy continues, "It is the slave rather than the master who emerges from Douglass's account possessed of

'consciousness that exists for itself', while the master becomes representative of a 'consciousness that is repressed within itself' " (p. 60).

However, more than simply inverting the dialectic for the sake of argument, the reworking of Hegel's narrative into one of emancipation initiates a Black aesthetic that puts the shared experience of enslavement and emancipation at the heart of a socially motivated literary tradition. Gilroy draws from this that the concentrated intensity of the slave experience is something that marks out blacks as the first truly modern people, handling the nineteenth century dilemmas and difficulties, which would become the substance of everyday life in Europe a century later (220-221).

This for me is the notion of 'appreciative value of the African Voice', in its dynamism, and not in an essentialist way. It is in this form that it has a role to play in modern times grappling with contemporary issues like that of Ladson-Billings innovation of the education debt. It is the idea of the appreciative value of the African Voice that was the fulcrum, the tipping point for our novel contribution in schools, and would be in the focus on symposia, quality time events and residential/retreats (other aspects of our work that follows. It is the ability to find purposeful ways of being in the world, and be at ease embracing more than one culture, without losing Self and Purpose that would characterise Mandiani's interventions and success in schools. This would not be easy at any stage of our journey.

Critical "race" theory also posits the notion that meaningful social change cannot occur without radical change to existing social structures, and this is Mandiani's position. However, to just simply wait for these changes to occur was not our way.

We set out to increase the pace of change through Mandiani's activities and impacting the ways of being of black boys in a comprehensive way.

On improving personal behaviour and preventing involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime (encouraging change in ways of being) the evaluator noted that the boys had a clear sense that involvement in Mandiani had changed their behaviour for the better. The evaluator also evidenced that all but a few of the boys linked Mandiani to improving their involvement in schooling. Importantly, Turnbull noted that although the boys appeared to have no explicit recognition of the concept of informal education¹⁷ their comments on learning by experience, role models and increasing self-understanding suggest the boys recognised that they were benefiting from something different from the formal learning methods of the school.

'Now I've started to take myself seriously'. Clinton

'I understand more of who I am. Before, I didn't know. When you hear about Martin Luther King, he struggled for civil rights you know, and stood up for people and I think what it would have been like if he wasn't there'. Jay

'I think I'm a bit more focused and asking a lot more questions' Kieran

'I want to learn and be like Andrew' (a Mandiani worker) Jonathon

¹⁷ Informal Education techniques lie at the heart of Mandiani. It is still little understood by many services working for children. Two excellent recent introductions are L. Deer Richardson and M. Wolfe (eds), *Principles and Practice of Informal Education*, 2001, RoutledgeFalmer and R. Harrison and C. Wise (eds), *Working with Young People*, 2005, Open University/Sage

'It's a good thing because it's got respect and it's something to do so I don't get bored'

Jonah

'They care about us and make sure we don't get into trouble' Daniel (p. 10-11)

Turnbull's evidence of supplementing comments from school staff shows how Mandiani was making the African Voice matter in the education system as follows:

The Learning Support Unit Manager, Bonus Pastor School noted:

'We are extremely pleased with the work of the project at Bonus Pastor. The programme has motivated our pupils into recognising and embracing the importance of their education' (p. 11)

'The school's very interested, it's a brilliant project' - (Inclusion Manager, School) (p. 9)

'I'm very proud that Mandiani are able to come. I believe the boys are benefiting although I would like to be able to assess the benefits in a more tangible way. When are you going to do a girls project?' - (Learning Mentor, C of E School) (p. 9)

Additionally, Turnbull (2006) informed that boys are involved in drama, music making, games, art and new and challenging physical activities that included trips and weekend residential. Fun is central to Mandiani activities.

In exploring what the boys' family knew and thought about Mandiani Turnbull (2006) informed on positive responses from home. Interestingly though, some boys believed their involvement in Mandiani had impacted on home life, as follows:

'They've seen a difference in my behaviour at home as well as in school. I don't scream any more and I understand when people are talking to me. I wouldn't change anything. To me Mandiani is perfect. It helps with my behaviour and my learning. There is no way to explain it' Ife (p. 12).

The case study in concluding the section on the boys' perception noted that all the boys interviewed believed they were benefiting from Mandiani. Most are challenging children to work with. In one primary school group six of the ten participants had been identified as having special educational needs and two had been close to exclusion. One of these two explained

'I like everything. It's changed me, I've been happy, that's all' Jonah (p. 12).

The case study noted that parents and carers believed that Mandiani had a positive impact on black boys' lives and often on their own lives as well. Aspirations of parents and careers were also congruent with Mandiani's aims as follows:

'A positive sense of his back identity, support with his transition to young adulthood, opportunities to do activities which will strengthen my relationship with him as a single mother'

'Positive role models for young black boys in their formative years'

'I'd like Mandiani to help my son to concentrate and stay focused on what he has to do, and not be so easily led'

'Raise his self-esteem and let him meet with other positive males and begin to be more positive himself'

'An environment where he can develop a positive opinion of himself. This will help him to have greater confidence and acquire useful life skills' (p. 17).

All the parents acknowledged that they faced challenges with their sons that Mandiani could help them with. They also felt that there were tangible benefits for the boys that they attributed to their involvement in Mandiani pertaining to their learning, attitudes and self-development.

Help for themselves

In relation to help for parents comments on the impact of Mandiani on their sons offered no surprises; the boys themselves had recognised each issue the parents mentioned. However, parents also recognised an array of ways in which they were being supported by Mandiani and of which their sons were rarely aware.

- Provision for their children of opportunities to try activities that they would not have thought of or been able to afford.

! Knowledge of black history that white parents did not have.

! Opportunities to meet with other parents of black boys presenting challenges.

! Approachable staff who encouraged them to reflect on their parenting.

- Better behaviour of the boys at home influencing their siblings and making home life calmer.

! Good black male mentors for their sons.

- Reinforcement of their own values to their sons – family values and respecting others to respect yourself.

! Developing new skills (for example conquering a fear of heights and improving others (for example planning and listening skills). (p. 19)

Hopes for the future

When asked, 'If you were in charge of Mandiani what would you do?' there were a number of suggestions: developing regular after-school activities, one-to-one mentoring about exams and other specific needs, and involving black girls and continuity until boys left secondary school. There were also suggestions for the greater involvement of parents in Mandiani that included more sessions with children and parents together, more opportunities to meet with the staff and other parents, more three-way meetings with school staff and more one to one partnership working between parents and Mandiani workers.

What parents and carers think of Mandiani

Our work with parents and carers has been critical to the success of the boys, for they play important roles in their development and have responsibilities that cannot be simply passed on to teachers or youth workers. Of course, teachers and youth workers have their part to play, but that is as part of the extended family, in a professional capacity and as members of the widest community.

Productive and regular links with parents/family support were maintained at various levels. We ensured their commitment to their son's participation on the project through mail and telephone communication. We have held one-to-one and group meetings with them. We have also involved them in undertaking challenges with their sons, parenting workshops, open evenings, quality time events and seminars. Furthermore, anytime we involved their children in activities outside of school-time when we see them, we engaged informally about positives happening in their lives and any concerns that they may have.

Our open evening for parents and their children to see films like *Antwone Fisher*, which explores a young person's anger and his re-connection with family were successful. Parental attendance to Mandiani's 'Heal, Protect and Create' symposiums also evidenced high involvement. This area of work with parents and family was sustained as a high priority whilst I was working in Mandiani. In *What Manner of Man is My Father, Part Three: Mandiani Time*, there are six clips as follows:

1. Teachers Voices: Three teachers are communicating their support of Mandiani and nature of the service's impact in their schools.
2. SOS Time

3. In My Best Cloth
4. A Unique Purposeful Recognition for Mr. Rowe
5. Elders Ball
6. Mandiani in the USA

Symposia

The leaflet for the Mandiani Symposium, 'Black Boys and Our Ways of Being', 9 July 2005, below, was our invitation to community members to this quality time event for the whole community.

The leaflet is an appliqué to be stitched on to my cloth representing the 'village at work', co-creating and co-evolving Mandiani. It also introduces the placement of my presentation to the Mandiani Symposium, on the warp beam, as I return to the loom. The title of the presentation is "It's Mandiani Time". This is an occasion that is appreciated valuing Cooperrider, as evidence of me in my best cloth (bringing my past into presence) and also emerges as a place of fertility, valuing Scharmer, affording inquiry into my interior condition focused on journeying in reach of my highest future potential.

In symposia we found a dedicated way of working with the widest community, where focus was on our work or interesting contributions from invited guests encouraged inquiry, dialogue and the promotion of strategic actions related to our issues of concern or future work activities.

It was in this context that my presentation was offered and afforded was an opportunity for storytelling. I am valuing Marshall's counsel to notice how I tell my story, and attending to my inner and outer arcs, when the co-evolving of the

Mandiani initiative was at its height - living its 'greatness', and I at my most confident in my leadership and social action.

This was an event for purposeful storytelling, encouraging the collective to think, share and act more purposefully.

Our guest speaker for the symposium was Brother Andrew Muhammad (The Investigator). He is one of the United Kingdom's leading Black history and culture specialist whose lively energetic presentations give evidence of the universal contributions and achievements of black peoples.

In Mandiani, we say the "Investigator puts the fun back into learning for pupils, parents and the widest community. The Investigator's unique style inspires his audience to investigate the truth for themselves, to journey and to discover Black people's roots in every major civilisation since time began".

Dr. Lez opened the Symposium by welcoming participants. He informed that the theme "Lift Up Your Head and Hold It Up High" had much significance at a time when the statistical evidence for black boys' disadvantage in schools remained a concern, that the boys themselves were telling stories of their demise (knowing little of their history and expressing much negativity about their environment and their future prospects).

DrLez introduced Brother Andrew, informing that he "was worth waiting for" as "Brother Andrew's work educates us all on the positive additions that black peoples have made on the world today and helps us understand Africa's place in

world development". Once again I am thinking about the appreciating value of the African Voice and Brother Andrew Muhammad's presentation affirms my thinking.

Brother Andrew prefaced his presentation, *"Stories of a Glorious Past – the Black Presence from Antiquity - Its Meaning for Self in the Present"*, by informing that his nomenclature, the 'Investigator', embraced his love of the study of history. He also informed that it was his intent, in his presentation, to take us on a journey through time with a decided focus on the important issues for understanding the needs of black young people.

The journey for Brother Andrew began in school where the insistent memory is that he spent much of his time within that environment as the "class joker".

"I thought I would joke my way through school and that this way of being would never end. I would joke my way through the world of work too".

Brother Andrew related that his school reports always had remarks like: "Andrew is intelligent, but lacks focus". "He is intelligent, but is easily distracted". "If only Andrew could concentrate on his work he would achieve much better results".

Hence, it came as no surprise, when he related that he left school without any qualifications of worth and in his own eyes – failing.

The experience and personal circumstance of educational disadvantage for Brother Andrew held a much wider significance than how it related to him, particularly as

he felt that the evidence of black boys' experience of inequities in schools had changed little since his time.

Andrew challenged that there were systemic aspects that contributed to black boys' educational underachievement and that the blame could not be placed solely on the boys who often are challenged to learn in uninspiring environments.

Andrew posed that Black boys can learn, but may be teaching styles may not be matched to their learning styles. He considered that this may well be worth investigating, particularly as there is evidence of how in youth settings boys can learn nearly every word off the music albums of their favourite artists, yet they find difficulty in learning and being attentive in school classrooms.

However, for Brother Andrew, that the circumstances within which black boys are experiencing appears unchanging means that the black community have responsibilities to do something about these circumstances. He says, "We are also to be held accountable, because we have responsibilities for the transformation of these circumstances too."

On our children's education, Brother Andrew charged that we have responsibilities, which cannot just be left to teachers.

This he felt was particularly so in a school environment where "teacher flight" is prevalent and as a consequence of this, there was an increasing incidence of tuition by supply teachers. This circumstance he felt, characterises much of our children's experiences in schools.

Brother Andrew stated that the reasons, usually given for “teacher flight” are high property prices, poor pupil behaviour and a lack of support frameworks for teachers in schools.

Whatever the reason though, he felt that the shortage of senior teachers and the alarming turnover of staff were having a decidedly adverse impact on our children’s learning. That is, schools were underperforming and our children were not getting the education that they deserved.

Polly Curtis, writing in the Guardian, Friday April 30, 2004 notes that “The turnover of senior management in schools has reached crisis levels”.

According to analysis from the National Association of Head Teachers (2004) “Vacancies for headteachers has reached the highest level in seven years and is 20% up”.

David Hart, NAHT general secretary, says that: "Headteacher turnover is reaching critical proportions."

Each of these remarks gave credence to Brother Andrew’s viewpoint. However, he further charged that with these prevailing conditions, particularly where our children are concerned, it appears as if the notion of the importance of consistency in the education process has been forgotten.

Brother Andrew argued that such conditions characterised schools in ‘poor socio-

economic environments' (uninspiring sites for our children and ourselves) and determined their plight.

This depiction of schools in 'poor socio-economic environments' connects with Ladson-Billings economic debt, which highlights the financial, geographical, and resource inequities that led to a vastly unequal school system for disadvantaged students. This often translates into lower income and fewer job opportunities later in life, thus acting to perpetuate the cycle of poverty in particular communities.

Ladson-Billings' focus on the economics of the education debt gives evidence of the funding disparities that exist between schools serving White students and those serving students of color. She notes that this is not a recent phenomenon.

Ladson-Billings also notes that one of the earliest things one learns in statistics is that correlation does not prove causation, but she suggests that we must ask ourselves why the funding inequities map so neatly and regularly onto the racial and ethnic realities of our schools. Ladson-Billings indicates that it can be demonstrated that the amount of funding rises with the rise in White students. This has been the way over centuries, and schooling for certain populations had been nonexistent in early US history. She avers '*clearly Whites were not prepared to invest their fiscal resources in strange others.*'

Ladson-Billings also suggests the earning ratios related to years of schooling and the wealth gap is important, for it shows how people are doing at particular points in time. However the cumulative effect of income disparities are not addressed.

Ladson-Billings also indicates that wealth disparities between whites and blacks in

the US have implications for the social position of African Americans far beyond obvious implications. It impacts the quality of housing, neighbourhoods and schools a family have access to, as well available finance for higher education. Further friendships and family ties exacerbate the effect of the wealth gap related to resources available to blacks relative to whites. (p. 1)

This economic analysis maps well onto the notion of education debt that Ladson-Billings advances. So, while the income gap more closely resembles the achievement gap, the wealth disparity better reflects the education debt.

Earning ratios related to years of schooling and the wealth gap also have importance in the UK. Weijie (2005) citing Tooley (1996) noted that in the UK, Tooley (1996) has also evidenced concern over educational inequality, and cites Rutter (1979) who says that in the UK, 'parents have always been able to buy into better school districts and reinforce social inequality' (Massey & Denton, 1988). Tooley (1992) also cites Miliband's (1991) concerns over sink schools and suggests that accusations of schools as 'sink' and failing are not new.

Le Grand suggests that state spending on a child of a family in the highest socio-economic class is about 50 percent more than that of his/her counterpart in the lowest socio-economic group (Le Grand, 1982). Further, inequalities have remained unchanged over decades (Halsey et al., 1980). Therefore, it is no surprise that the welfare state has been condemned as a 'middle-class racket' (Gray, 1993).

Earning ratios related to years of schooling and the wealth gap also have importance in the UK. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2007) stated that the gap between rich

and poor in the UK is as wide as it has been for 40 years. The JRF also found that wealthy areas had become "disproportionately" richer compared with society as a whole. However, the number of "poor" households had risen over the past 15 years. The JRF noted that since the 1980s, wealthier people have moved to the suburbs while the poor remain in inner cities.

The JRF continued, 'rich and poor are also less likely to be living next door to one another than in the 1970s, for they have become clustered in different areas.' The "exclusively wealthy", are c in suburban pockets, in the south of England.

The National Equality Panel report (2010) showed that, while gender and ethnic background are all factors in determining a child's success, the social class into which a child is born is still important. The gap between rich and poor has failed to narrow since the 1970s. The report states:

"Britain has moved from being a society where those near the top had three times the incomes of those near the bottom in the 1960s and 1970s to one where, since the start of the 1990s, they have four times as much."

The report evidences large differences between the haves and have-nots and highlights the way economic advantage and disadvantage reinforce themselves across the life cycle, and cumulate often on to the next generation. The report states:

"...the evidence we have looked at shows the long arm of people's origins in shaping their life chances, stretching through life stages, literally from cradle to grave. Differences in wealth in particular are associated with opportunities such as the

ability to buy houses in the catchment areas of the best schools, or to afford private education, with advantages for children that continue through and beyond education. At the other end of life, wealth levels are associated with stark differences in life expectancy after 50" (p31-32).

In Britain who your parents are has implications for intergenerational mobility and the nature of relations in society. Wide inequalities erode the bonds of common citizenship and the recognition of human dignity across economic divides. The report says as much in noting that the sheer scale of differences in wealth, for instance, may imply that it is impossible to create a cohesive society. Further, large inequalities in economic outcome are associated with societies having lower levels of happiness or well-being and to the social problems and economic costs resulting from these (p3).

Christopher Hope, Whitehall Editor (2010) offers the following lists of the National Equality Panel report finds:

- Parents of public school-educated sons can expect their children to be paid eight per cent more by their mid-20s than boys educated at state schools.
- At school poor British white boys are well below the national average by the time they are seven, deteriorating further after they are 11.
- Women are paid 21 per cent less than the national average, despite women into their 40s having better qualifications than men.
- Britain has one of the most unequal societies in the world, with income inequality ahead of Ireland, Japan, Spain, Canada, Germany and France. Inequality is worse in England than Wales and Scotland.
- A typical professional on the verge of retiring is worth nearly £1million compared with just £59,000 for someone who is long-term unemployed.
- Poverty rates are among the worst in Europe, with only Italy, Spain and Greece faring worse.

- Average and below average White British children are less likely than those from minority ethnic groups to go on to higher education.
- More than half of children educated at private schools, and more than 40 per cent of those with professional parents, go to the top Russell group of universities.
- Two-thirds of those with professional parents receive firsts or upper seconds, but only half of those with unskilled parents.

The National Equality Panel were not required to make recommendations, however the implications they drew from their findings identified actions needed to tackle inequalities across a number of areas, ranging from education and pensions to taxes and neighbourhood renewal.

However, allied to the concern of wealth is educational segregation. Ladson-Billings feels that "serious discussion of the costs of segregation or the advantages of integration for our most segregated population, white students" (p. 5) has not been sustained. So, in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Brown decision, there is little evidence that Brown was given a chance. Ladson-Billings suggests that there is evidence that show America's public schools are in a process of resegregation. "Almost three-fourths of Black and Latina/o students attend schools that are predominately non-White. More than 2 million Black and Latina/o students—a quarter of the Black students in the Northeast and Midwest—attend what the researchers call apartheid schools. The four most segregated states for Black students are New York, Michigan, Illinois, and California" (p. 9).

In the UK segregated schooling, whereby children from families with generally the same background of wealth, education and social networks are more likely to be educated together and separate from children who are in other groups

It is a historical legacy, however it is also occurring in current times. Before 1870 provision for schooling was shared between religious or philanthropic groups and the state. Ball (2008) notes that the elementary schools were for the working class, the secondary schools for the middle class and private public schools for the ruling class.

Urbanisation, the extension of the franchise and the needs for skills for an industrial society from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century saw the introduction of free universal compulsory elementary schooling introduced for children 5 – 12. By the 2nd World War this age range was extended from 5 – 14.

The 1944 Education Act that introduced secondary compulsory for all did not disrupt the broad segregation patterns, for the private fee paying sector were not part of the tripartism whereby modern, technical and grammar schools would be “Equal but different”.

However, parity was never accomplished. The technical schools were sparse and the selection tests at age eleven favoured children from families with more social, cultural and educational capital, and as a result grammar schools were largely populated by children from relatively privileged families (Crook, Power and Whitty). The system fixed a child in one kind of school with little chance of mobility between different schools.

In the 1960s the non-selective comprehensive schools were introduced. And in the

years 1965 to 1981 the proportion of 11-16 in comprehensive schools rose from approximately 8% to 83%. Even this did not disrupt the segregation patterns, because its continuance was evidenced in the internal school organisation. The focus on ability, the creation of sets and school choice were factors encouraging the continuance of segregation. It is these factors that were challenged at the time, but would persist to be again challenged in current times, albeit under a new focus of the marketisation of education.

What exists now is a patchwork of schools and an increased diversity, which has seen added Academies, Foundation Trusts and Specialist Schools to the mix. About 7% opt out of the publicly funded sector to attend fee-paying. In London that percentage rises to about 20%.

It is suggested that social segregation continues in specific localities, and is particularly evident in London and other densely populated areas. However, the issues are not only to do with geography, but type of school. Grammar schools are populated by more affluent families with higher level education, while secondary modern schools are populated by children of less affluent families and with parents who have fewer educational qualifications. Atkinson & Gregg (2004) found that if you were of high ability but poor you stood less of a chance of gaining a place in grammar school than a child from a middle class family.

It is into these conditions that the children of African heritage were to be inserted. Coard's finding of how the West Indian child is made educationally sub-normal in the 1970s was foundational to understanding the black experience. Miliband's (1991) evidence of high achieving middle-class white pupils in league table top ranked

schools, and disadvantaged working class, ethnic minorities in inferior or 'sink' schools has been equally instructive in terms of class and ethnicity.

However, it is the re-emergence of issues like cream-skimming, the focus on ability, the creation of sets and school choice that are encouraging new discussions about segregation. For example, (Gillborn and Youdell, 2001) in response to suggestions that schools have to decide where best to concentrate their efforts based on ability, argue that the use of ability "is a 'loaded, fallacious and highly dangerous concept ... (that) ...offers a supposedly fair means of condemning some children to second class educations". Since pupils who are black, or who receive free school meals are considerably more likely, and more unfairly to be judged as lacking in 'ability', they are consigned to lower sets and lower tiers. It is to be expected that the educational divide can only widen with the continued misplaced belief in 'ability.' On the internal arrangements in school, Gilborn and Gipps (1996) note that pupils in bottom sets are predominantly black or white working class, and those in top sets may be 'uniformly white.' Ball (1981) also suggests that teachers for bottom sets tend to be less experienced and junior staff says these decisions are based on judgements on 'ability.' Indeed, when schools are ranked according to their percent of pupils achieving A-C grades, Gillborn and Youdell (2001) have observed an 'educational triage' syndrome, whereby schools ration their time and effort, and focus on pupils on the borderline between the D and C grades, at 'the cost of judging some pupils (disproportionately Black and working class young people) as without hope.' This suggests that social inequalities based on ethnicity and social class are exacerbated.

Another feature of segregation related to social class and ethnicity pertains to school choice, engagement and a hierarchy of schools. It is argued that segregation is both

created and made worse in an education market because less affluent and less highly educated parents are not skilled and engaged with choosing as more affluent and more highly educated parents and so do not gain access to high performing schools. There are privileged choosers, semiskilled choosers and disconnected choosers mapped against middle class, aspiring working class and working class parents. Wilms and Echols (1992) used the terms “inert’ and “alert” in a similar way to describe parental engagement.

These privileged ‘choosers’ are largely white and middle class (Ball et al., 1996). Working class parents tend to be either ‘disconnected choosers’ (Gewirtz, 1995) or ‘semi-skilled choosers’ (Ball, 1996), lacking the knowledge or the skills to go about maximising their children’s educational opportunities and outcomes.

Here, I am mindful of Ladson-Billings' reading of the work by Wolfe and Haveman (2001) entitled Accounting for the Social and Non-Market Benefits of Education, which informs that the ‘non-market effects of schooling’ are not accounted for and ‘the literature on the intergenerational effects of education is generally neglected in assessing its full impact on education.’

The nonmarket effects include the following:

- *A positive link between one’s own schooling and the schooling received by one’s children.*
- *A positive association between the schooling and health status of one’s family members.*
- *A positive relationship between one’s own education and one’s own health status.*
- *A positive relationship between one’s own education and the efficiency of choices made, such as consumer choices (which efficiency has positive effects on well-being similar to those of money income).*
- *A relationship between one’s own schooling and fertility choices (in particular,*

decisions of one's female teenage children regarding non-marital childbearing).

- *A relationship between the schooling/social capital of one's neighborhood and decisions by young people regarding their level of schooling, nonmarital childbearing, and participation in criminal activities (pp. 2–3).*

In challenging these socio-economic conditions that characterised the schools, which our children attend, Brother Andrew considered factors that were not contributing to change.

Brother Andrew informed on a video game called "Grand Theft Auto", which it seemed boys knew about or had in every class he had attended in his sessions in schools. Andrew informed that the game was about stealing cars and selling drugs. Andrew also informed on "Ghettopoly". In this game buying stolen properties, pimping, building crack houses, paying protection fees are some of the elements. Andrew suggested that this was evidence of the growing association of black boys with "gangsterism."

This association, Brother Andrew feels has crept up on us, because such links were not portrayed so strongly in the past. Further, Brother Andrew argues that there is an encroaching cycle of negativity reflecting very much a situation in the USA where many black men are already embedded. He cautioned though, that he is aware of the existence of similar developments in the United Kingdom. It is in this context that Brother Andrew made reference to the film "Bullet Boy" (2004). He felt that though it had the potential to make positive impact, being concerned with issues in black communities, in an environment within which negativity prevails, it just adds to the negativity.

Brother Andrew stated that if there were positive films being made - a black boy becoming Prime Minister or a Super Hero saving the planet, then 'Bullet Boy' alongside, could be appreciated differently. What we have though with 'Bullet Boy' is a stereotypical portrayal of black boys, as caricatured in the publicity poster, of a "gun in the mind" of the star performer. This he felt compounds that association of black boys with crime, murder and non-achievement. Brother Andrew questioned why are we not making films about successful black boys? Where are the positives in their lives? How can we build with them better futures?

To contend these questions Brother Andrew felt that we needed to remind ourselves of our achievements and our histories of success. He also felt that if you have no positive self-identity then the base from which to build is impaired. Marcus Garvey, he noted, said, "that a tree without roots is a dead tree". Brother Andrew considered a positive cultural identity was of importance in feeling truly included in society and that the absence of black peoples from the subject of history in schools, except as slaves, confirmed to black boys their exclusion. They were not part of the picture. They did not fit in. This conundrum he feels needs attention.

Brother Andrew considered that a lack in self-knowledge was a critical factor in the educational disadvantage of black boys. He recounted how at school, ignorant of his roots, he had contributed to ridiculing continental Africans, thus participating in a form of self-harm. He remembered too, how his brother had given a book about Kemet (Egypt), but at the time there was no inkling as to the important messages in the book. As a result of this mindset Brother Andrew just tossed the book aside. Until one day, at a loose end, he picked it up in search of release from an increasingly aimless and purposeless life. The book would play an important part in Brother

Andrew's development, for as he started reading it, almost immediately he noticed lights started switching on in his head as he learned about the achievements of Africans.

Brother Andrew noted that this was the spark that ignited within him to come to terms with and do something about a life (his life) that was going nowhere. He was encouraged to focus on himself and his attitude to living. He began to learn to love to learn and found that whatever you love, you have a desire to learn more about it. You learn from the heart (by heart, with a passion).

Brother Andrew also noted that it is this message "learning to love to learn" that he brings into sessions with young people. Further, he feels that it is his passion for learning that young people recognise and is in tune with. So in his sessions they are attentive, focused and show unconditional respect (evidence of a valuing social living pedagogy). He stated, "The young people give recognition to the spirit that I bring into their sessions."

Brother Andrew considers that a lively, spirited way of being is necessary to challenge the frameworks within which black boys are ensnared. He also considers that there is complacency about conditions, which still evidence that opportunities for their positive participation remain restricted to sport and play. He is concerned, because in these same areas damage to black boys self-identity is occurring.

Hence, for Brother Andrew, "Mandiani is like gold dust in schools". For him, Mandiani is making a contribution of value, in their recognition of how knowledge of Africa's contribution to world history, is critical to black boys personal

development. Furthermore he stated, it is important to recognise too, that history is a “mirror of a peoples’ potential.”

On Africa’s contribution to world history Brother Andrew focused initially on Kemet and Nubia, noting the grand size of some of the early monuments. He also noted the impact and inventiveness of persons like, Menes (the Scorpion King); Imhotep (Father of Medicine) and the experimenting Snefru (the Bent Pyramid). He also informed on the grandeur and symbolism of the Sphinx, which was carved out of a mountain, had the body of a lion and a head of man representing (strength and wisdom). He encouraged us to drink this in, for this was the work of Africans.

We would have to drink much more though, before Brother Andrew completed his presentation. He told of the oldest University in the world, the temple of Man, the Collosus of Memnon, the Temple of Horus and informed when maps of the world were drawn the great Mansa Musa was inset in those maps.

Brother Andrew told too of black civilisations in India (the Indus civilization and of the Bonda peoples). He would remark too, on the Dravidians and the Sadhu (whom he would compare with Rastafarians).

Brother Andrew would travel to the Americas too and relate on the Olmecs in Levanthia.

Further he would travel and question us as to our awareness of pyramids in China and give evidence of such an existence.

Brother Andrew motioned if all this information is absent from those who work in the interest of our black boys, who seem only to be clothe in negativity, how do we begin to see and embrace their sensitivities?

Brother Andrew did not stay in the distant past though and told of black inventors like Benjamin Banneker, a mathematician, who mapped out Washington DC and is responsible for the siting of the White House.

He told of Dr. Daniel Hale Williams who performed the first heart operation in which the patient lived.

Brother Andrew told too of George Washington Carver, agricultural chemist, who discovered three hundred uses for peanuts and hundreds more uses for soybeans, pecans and sweet potatoes.

Among the listed items are recipes and improvements to/for: adhesives, axle grease, bleach, buttermilk, chili sauce, fuel briquettes, ink, instant coffee, linoleum, mayonnaise, meat tenderizer, metal polish, paper, plastic, pavement, shaving cream, shoe polish, synthetic rubber, talcum powder and wood stain. Only 3 patents were ever issued to Carver.

Furthermore, he told of Elijah McKoy (the inventors inventor) who invented the oiling cup for steam engines and whose name became associated with quality assurance. So that when people went to purchase his items, they would ask for the “real Mccoy”.

Of course, there were activities in the United Kingdom too, and Brother Andrew talked of a black presence of well over two thousand years. He told of Emperor Septimius Severus (AD 145-211), an African, who arrived in Britain in AD 203 and when he died in AD 211 he was cremated in York (Eboracum), the capital of Roman Britain.

Of the future for black boys Brother Andrew posed that computer games “grand theft auto” and “ghettopoly” sought to ensnare black young people and continue with their portrayal of negative images. However, it need not be so, because in his work with young people it is their positive potential that is in evidence.

Brother Andrew shared how he used audio-visual material to engage and interest young people in his Mandiani sessions and the young people are focused, still and attentive in this sessions. The exemplar that he gave was that of his use of the film “Matrix”, which he described as one of the greatest films ever. He noted that this film is all about the chosen one, Neo, who at the outset is asleep, ignorant of his purpose in life.

Hence, initially he presents as a hacker and a trouble maker. Thus, when he meets Morpheus, a master teacher who tries to teach him of the greatness of his purpose, he cannot accept such teachings. When Morpheus tells him of his genius, that he is the chosen one and saviour, he is doubting.

Brother Andrew draws comparisons as he tells his story about Neo in the Matrix to the circumstances of black boys, particularly in reference to their lacking in self-knowledge. This lacking he feels is demonstrated in the film where Neo is not aware

of the fullness of his name. Brother Andrew notes that Neo taken from Latin means new. Also the letters in the name NEO can be rearranged as ONE (carrying the information that he is the chosen one).

Further, the letters can be rearranged as EON meaning time. Hence, Neo is the “new one on time”. Brother Andrew noted that many films have symbolic meaning and exemplify symbolic realities and in this sense considers that the Matrix has much import for the experiences of black young people.

The film clip that Brother Andrew shows begins with Neo running away from the Agents. He does not want to face reality and is shot. Here, Brother Andrew draws an analogy with the plight of Neo, with the situation faced by black young people. He says the negative thinking about black boys in society is killing their self-confidence. Lack of understanding of their ways of being is compromising their aspirations.

As the film clip continues Neo is shot again. The Agents feel their job is done and walk away. Those supporting Neo cannot believe the chosen one is dead.

However, in death there is life, and amidst the chaos as if its Armageddon time, Neo, who was asleep, awakes. Neo comes to life as a woman that loves him, and knows that he the “chosen one” kisses him. Here, Brother Andrew reminds the audience to not to give up on their boys and men. “You must love them more than they hate themselves”. We have to believe that they have the power to transform their circumstances.

In his awakening Neo is enlightened and becomes aware of his purpose, recognising that he is indeed the chosen one. He begins to appreciate self is able to face reality (see the woods from the trees). He can tackle the problems that confront him and face up to his responsibilities. Neo arrives at a “moment of clarity”. He can accept who he is (I am who I am). He can be at one with nature, is able to see life differently and be at ease. He is no longer running away, he is running to be a part of society and to transform society not from negativity, but through the use of light (knowledge, wisdom and understanding). With light society is transformed. Neo completes his mission and is ready for his next tasks. He is empowered. Brother Andrew ended his talk with “Brothers and Sisters never give up. Lift Your Head Up and Hold it up High. Thank you”.

In the question and answer session that followed Brother Andrew’s presentation a mother talked about her love for her son. Another talked about her son’s success in transforming self.

Brother Andrew in appreciation applauded the mothers’ remarks and in response to a question about black boys’ materialism, articulated that materialism in itself was not the problem. He stated that the lack of moral fortitude to balance materialism was the key issue.

A member of the symposium posed the questions, “Where are the fathers? Where are the men? Where is the balance in responsibility in caring for children?”

In response Brother Andrew noted that recently he attended a parent's meeting and he was the only man in attendance. He noted too that he took his children’s education so seriously that he gave up work to “home educate”. Furthermore, he noted, that for some black men in relation to our responsibilities “we have forgotten,

that we have forgotten, we have forgotten". Concluding the point he stated, "there may well be a need for black fathers forums, black men's workshops and conferences. That need is urgent".

Brother Andrew closed this section of the symposium by reiterating that our children's education are our responsibilities and that we have to look into our mirrors, recognise that we have made some serious mistakes and to act to transform our unsatisfying circumstances. To do this, he suggested, people have to be involved in the decision-making processes in educational environments. Thus, we have to embrace our responsibilities in the education of their children seriously.

"If necessary", he stated, "teach them the power of positive thinking and help them improve to build self-esteem through 'Success' programmes appreciating actions for the greater good' or the 'superior' good". "Remember", he concluded, 'that there is nothing on this planet that can destroy a mind that is made up, focused and committed'.

Its SOS Time

It was against this background that I made my presentation and as I view the audio-visual recording I am thinking that I know this moment. However, the thought that surfaces is that of 'Living My Dream on my Jamaican Sojourn', as Director of the SOS Children's, Barrett Town, St. James.

I say living my dream on two counts. Firstly, I cherished the thought I would work in the Caribbean, in a way that I could really understand the people, community and organisation and make a contribution that made a difference at all levels. Secondly, it

was being offered the opportunity for achievement, through my employment as the Director of the SOS Children's Village, Barrett Town, Montego Bay, Jamaica, to be able to 'live a dream' beyond my wildest imagination. The opportunity to Live Me (Embracing the African Voice as a Way of Being), Live Family and Live Community.



It was as a time when I was in my best cloth. It was the height of my embrace of the African Voice as a 'way of being'. It is here, because I conjecture knowing that my presentation at the Mandiani symposium, 'Lift Up Your Head and Hold It Up High', for me, in affirming embodiment of the African Voice, as a 'way of becoming' is at its height in Mandiani. It's Mandiani Time. These two songs by the children remind me of being in my best cloth in Jamaica. What Manner of Man is My Father, Part Two, SOS Children Voices (IIa) show the performance of two impromptu songs that I composed (1) Let us Children Have a Say and (2) Jamaican People are a Joy to the World.

It's Mandiani Time

In my presentation I want to say that black boys' ways of being, are influenced by our ways of being. We, comprising the Village have responsibilities and are accountable for what happens in our Village, families and children. I want to communicate that by placing all the responsibilities to what happens to our children on the system, we are negligent in our duties. We play a part in creating the unsatisfying conditions with which they experience, and indeed in our own demise. Still, the presentation is communicated with optimism, as I remind the village of how we walked differently, and our style was patterned. I recall times of our stridency when we would protest, 'no rights - no obligation'.

Now, it seems we fear and fail to inquire into ourselves and to look beyond the parapet. Here, my imagination runs to Ladson-Billings' socio-political component of the education debt. For Ladson-Billings the socio-political debt acknowledges how black Latina/so, and Native Americans have been excluded from legislative and political processes often leaving them powerless and unrepresented politically. Therefore, that Mandiani's Symposium, was taking place at the Lewisham Civic Centre, and as part of my presentation I would say that we have fought for the right to meet in this place, and that this is interesting

One of the points that Ladson-Billings makes in pertaining to the socio-political debt draws attention to the 'bold action' of Congress, in the introduction of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which resulted in dramatic changes in voter registration. Ladson-Billings says she finds it hard to imagine such bold action on behalf of African American, Latina/o, and Native American children in schools. She stories:

'... imagine that an examination of the achievement performance of children of color provoked an immediate reassignment of the nation's best teachers to the schools serving the neediest students. Imagine that those same students were guaranteed places in state and regional colleges and universities. Imagine that within one generation we lift those students out of poverty.'

Ladson-Billings informs that the closest example of such 'a dramatic policy move' is that of affirmative action.

'Rather than wait for students of color to meet predetermined standards, the society decided to recognise that historically denied groups should be given a preference in admission to schools and colleges'.

Ladson-Billings says 'the major beneficiaries of this policy were White women' and that Bowen and Bok (1999) found that it helped create what is now known as the Black middle class in the US.

Affirmative action has always held a dubious status in the UK. However, section 11 monies and many of the access courses (pre-degree) prevalent in the 70s and 80s could be seen in this light. However, without the far reaching results that seems to have occurred in the US. It is only in the recent Equality Bill (2010) that 'positive action' makes an entrance. Previously, it had been resisted, although in Northern Ireland it has been integral to social policy for some considerable period.

In this socio-political component of the education debt, Ladson-Billings also gives focus to how families of color have regularly been excluded from the decision-

making mechanisms that should ensure that their children receive quality education. She notes that the “*parent–teacher organisations, school site councils, and other possibilities for democratic participation have not been available for many of these families*”.

In the UK the Electoral Commission research explored in some depth the relationship between ethnicity and political engagement (The Electoral Commission, *Voter engagement among black and minority ethnic communities*, 2002). The Commission's report in 2002 found that:

- People from black Caribbean and black African communities were the least likely to vote in the UK. Research has also shown that people of black African heritage have one of the lowest levels of registration.
- There is some evidence to suggest that dissatisfaction with political parties played a part in depressing turnout among BME communities.
- BME turnout rates are affected by generic factors including the younger age profile of these communities, the higher levels of social and economic deprivation experienced among these groups, and the fact that they predominantly live in urban areas where turnout levels tend to be lower than average.
- Additionally, there are also community-specific factors affecting turnout such as lack of representation in high-profile public positions.

The first *Audit of political engagement* found that:

- Almost a quarter (23%) of those from BME communities said they have discussed politics or political news with someone else in the last two to three years, compared to almost two in five (39%) of white people.
- Only one in 100 (1%) have contacted an elected representative (at a local or national level) at some point over the last two to three years.
- One in 20 (5%) are defined as ‘political activists’, having done at least three from a list of eight political activities (excluding voting and the electoral activities included within the previous indicator).

The study explained that generally, those from BME communities are divided about the value of getting involved in politics at a national level: 29% agree getting

involved can really change the way the UK is run, but 36% disagree. Operation Black Vote (OBV) has asserted that 'Too many [black Britons] believe that getting involved won't make a difference. A self-fulfilling prophecy becomes the only conclusion.' (Woolley, S., 'Standing up to be counted', in *Disengaged and disinterested: deliberations on voter apathy*, New Politics Network, Winter 2002).

Analysis of the 2001 Home Office Citizenship survey by Eldin Fahmy indicates that minority ethnic citizens participate less in political life. The study sought to explore to what extent the factors of socio-economic status, social capital and psycho-political attitudes shape political participation of citizens of ethnic minority communities (Fahmy, E., *Ethnicity, citizenship and political participation in Britain: findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey* ('Citizenship and attitudes to governance in Britain', Project Working Paper 3, ESRC funded, University of Bristol, 2004). Findings show that only a small minority of ethnic minority people appear to be 'active citizens', with 61% of respondents having not undertaken any of a range of political activities within the last year.

However, Ladson-Billings also cites examples of how black parents have sought to advocate and impact the quality of schooling for their children. She notes though that their 'advocacy often has been muted and marginalised'. Ladson-Billings evidences this powerful advocacy in the voice of an African American mother during the fight for school desegregation in Boston. She declared: '*When we fight about schools, we're fighting for our lives*' (Hampton, 1986).

These developments are not without parallel in the UK. I have already noted on the development of the black supplementary school movement in Weave Three. I have

also shown in the development of Sankofa the heroic intervention of 'home educators as maroons' into their children's education.

An ESRC-funded study on people of minority ethnic background participation in British political life indicates a more active involvement than usually assumed. The findings suggest alternative ways of involvement in politics, such as, participation in single issue campaigns, rather than formal party politics. There is a also much wider degree of political involvement, '... beyond electoral politics to anti-deportation campaigns, literary circles and musical cultures'.

Any political party that seeks the support of BMEs needs to understand this diversity of political participation (*The ESRC-funded study into ethnic minority participation was undertaken by the Centre for Urban and Community Research based at Goldsmith's College, University of London and City University, London. Two hundred interviews were conducted, with an additional 70 interviews with members of BME communities involved in more formal politics. The report Democratic governance and ethnic minority political participation in contemporary Britain was written by Prof. M. Keith, Dr L. Bach and Dr K. Shukra*).

According to this research, many BME communities are developing links that differ from 'traditional' politics. Such politics focuses on the issues that matter to them, with many people choosing such campaigns because they believe they can have a more relevant impact on their lives. Like those parents who attend the Black Child conferences on a Saturday in London on Mandiani symposia on a smaller scale.

OBV have asserted disengagement from politics because 'equitable, representative decision-making institutions' are not multicultural. They explain that there is a

necessity to make a positive change with 'strategic participation in the mainstream'. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has urged for political parties '... to be brought under the scope of the Race Relations Act' (*The Guardian*).

Concluding on the socio-political debt Ladson-Billings notes that the quest for quality schooling was a major aspect of the modern civil rights movement.

'From the activism of Benjamin Rushing in 1849 to the struggles of parents in rural South Carolina in 1999, families of color have been fighting for quality education for their children (Ladson-Billings, 2004).'

However, Ladson-Billings notes, the (black communities) '*more limited access to lawyers and legislators has kept them from accumulating the kinds of political capital that their White, middle-class counterparts have*'.

The absence of black community members from civic processes were also in evidence whether in the political processes at local and national levels and on school boards/governing bodies.

Where it really mattered in terms of decision-making black community members were marginal to the processes.

It is here the moral debt component of the education debt comes into view, for if you are not part of the decision-making, how are decisions ever equitably made. The Moral Debt refers to the disparity between what we know is socially just and our actions. Ladson-Billings notes that she finds this concept difficult to explain because social science rarely talks in these terms. However, she cites Saint Thomas Aquinas

who viewed the moral debt as what human beings owe to each other, how they honour one another. Ladson-Billings says ‘We have no trouble recognising that we have a moral debt to Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez, Elie Wiesel, or Mahatma Gandhi. But how do we recognize the moral debt that we owe to entire groups of people? How do we calculate such a debt?’

Ladson-Billings gives the example, of how at the end of World War II, Israel charged Germany not only with a fiscal or monetary debt but also with a moral debt. She also informed on how Fred Korematsu battled the U.S. government for 40 years to prove that Japanese Americans were owed a moral debt. Further, she noted how the U.S. government was forced to acknowledge its ethical breaches in the running of a 40-year study of syphilis patients through withholding treatment after a known cure was discovered. In his 1997 apology to the survivors and their families, President Bill Clinton said, “The United States government did something that was wrong—deeply, profoundly, morally wrong. It was an outrage to our commitment to integrity and equality for all our citizens . . . clearly racist” (Hunter-Gault, 1997).

Ladson-Billings does not stop here though for she cites Randall Robinson (2000) who states:

No nation can enslave a race of people for hundreds of years, set them free bedraggled and penniless, pit them, without assistance in a hostile environment, against privileged victimizers, and then reasonably expect the gap between the heirs of the two groups to narrow. Lines, begun parallel and left alone, can never touch. (p. 74)

Robinson's sentiments were not unlike those of President Lyndon B. Johnson, who stated in a 1965 address at Howard University: "You cannot take a man who has been in chains for 300 years, remove the chains, take him to the starting line and tell him to run the race, and think that you are being fair" (Johnson, 1965).

Despite those parallel lines of which Robinson speaks, in the midst of the Civil War Abraham Lincoln noted that without the 200,000 Black men who enlisted in the Union Army, "we would be compelled to abandon the war in 3 weeks" (cited in Takaki, 1998). Thus, according to historian Ron Takaki (1998), "Black men in blue made the difference in determining that this 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' did 'not perish from the earth' " (p. 21). What moral debt do we owe their heirs?

The same could be said of the "plantations," of the antebellum South and the Palolo Valley on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, where the Native Hawaiians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Filipinos, the Koreans, the Portuguese, the Puerto Ricans, and the Blacks—drove a sugar economy that sated a worldwide sweet tooth (Wilcox, 1998). What do we owe their descendants?

Ladson-Billings suggests that perhaps our largest moral debt is to the indigenous peoples whose presence was all but eradicated from the nation. In its 2004–2005 Report Card, the Bureau of Indian Affairs indicates that its high school graduation rate is 57%, with only 3.14% of its students performing at the advanced level in reading and 3.96% performing at the advanced level in mathematics. One hundred and twenty-two of the 185 elementary and secondary schools under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs failed to meet Average Yearly Progress requirements

in the 2004–2005 school year (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs, 2006).

The National Center for Education Statistics report *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives* (Freeman & Fox, 2005) indicates that the dropout rate among this population is about 15%, which is higher than that of Whites, Blacks, or Asian/Pacific.

Ladson-Billings notes that we must address the debt because it is the equitable and just thing to do. However, she also notes that its addressing has implications for the kinds of lives we can live and the kind of education that society can expect for its children. Further, she counsels that the impact of the debt on present education progress undermines the US place in the world. It also creates relational distrust (distrust and suspicion) and reminds us that the subaltern do speak.

Additionally, Ladson Billings relating to the value of understanding the debt in relation to past education research findings, and the potential for forging a better educational future. She suggests focus on desegregation and funding equity for the US. There are some interesting links here with the UK and in the ideas of mainstreaming the African Voice are the notions of equality, diversity and inclusion.

On the mounting debt she conjectures the declaration of bankruptcy, debt relief and ‘a setting where a catastrophic occurrence, perhaps a natural disaster—a hurricane—has completely obliterated the schools?’ A place where the only thing that would matter in an environment like this would be that education researchers were bringing their expertise (the best of themselves – their best cloths) to bear on

education problems that spoke to pressing concerns of the public (the whole village). Ladson-Billings wonders where we might find such a place?

She concludes on the magnitude of the education debt that her words are a limited way to fully represent it. She calls on Elliot Eisner, who in his 1993 AERA Presidential Address, "Forms of Understanding and the Future of Educational Research," spoke of representation— note the mental representations discussed in cognitive science, but "the process of transforming the consciousness into a public form so that they can be stabilised, inspected, edited, and shared with others" (p. 6).

Therefore, Ladson-Billings says we must use our imaginations to construct a set of images that illustrate the debt. The images should remind us that the cumulative effect of poor education, poor housing, poor health care, and poor government services create a bifurcated society that leaves more than its children behind. The images should compel us to deploy our knowledge, skills, and expertise to alleviate the suffering of the least of these. They are the images that compelled our attention during Hurricane Katrina. Here, for the first time in a very long time, the nation— indeed the world—was confronted with the magnitude of poverty that exists in America.

This is the context for my presentation at the symposium, as I sought to communicate the experiences of black boys in home, school and community from our work with them focusing on transforming their and our ways of being. The title of the Symposium 'Lift Up Your Head and Hold It Up High' was our inspirational message. It was a line from Everton Blender's song of the same name, which

encouraged and enjoined with listeners to stand firm, no matter how trying the circumstances, for success awaits.

Blender with his smooth, crooning, tenor vocals, up-tempo arrangements, and spiritually uplifting themes is one of the top performers of Jamaica's reggae tradition with his conscious lyrics. Hence, our message to black boys to walk purposefully, keep their spirit strong and be just, and despite challenging conditions, to build success and act to ensure happiness in their lives.

I have included the conclusion of my presentation (the whole is in the Appendix Nine giving evidence of the nature of my storytelling influence) showing my storytelling quality. It is a practice that is very much 'live' and embodied. This is its true value and is integral to my living theory methodological toolkit (my loom). Therefore, it would be remiss of me not to show this quality, this practice, so critical to the uniqueness of my loom in a live form.

I would be able to see as a result of the audio-visual record, self in flow, seizing the storytelling moment and communicating Mandiani's vision for working with black boys on transforming their ways of being. The audio-visual record would also evidence the nature of my leadership and social action, as I communicate my valuing social living pedagogy (seeing Africa through the eyes of a lover, living Ubuntu and embrace of the Great Work) in the co-evolving of Mandiani.

The 'Heal, Protect and Create' symposiums, quality time events and residentials show how our advocacy, community development perspective and partnering work were extended to the widest community. It gives evidence of how Mandiani has built

its success and made positive impact through journeying outside the box. It is journeying outside the box that offers the prospect for trailblazing/innovation.

I 'behold' this Symposium, as a place of fertility in which to explore the richness of my leadership, social action and innovation. It is an event that emerges in my inquiries, as occurring during the period when the Mandiani initiative was at its height – living its 'greatness', and I at my most confident in my leadership and social action – in my best cloth.

I conjecture that I know when I am in my best cloth, for that is what I am seeking to describe in my presentation at Mandiani's 'Heal, Protect and Create' symposium, focused on 'Black Boys Ways of Being' and titled 'Lift Up Your Head and Hold It Up High'. It is being held at the Lewisham Civic Suite (July 2005).

This would be an occasion when my embodiment of the African Voice, as a way of being and becoming, would be at its height in Mandiani. I conjecture that we are in a time to walk proudly once more, and make no apology for in the UK. It is a time to lift up our head and hold 'T' up high, there is a battle to be won for our children's hearts and minds

Listen to me tell my story "Mandiani Time". It is a time for change and our 'presencing'. For me, it is also a celebratory moment, coupling with Andrew Muhammad's brilliant contributing focused on Histories of a Glorious Past. Our contributions are appreciated as an emergent interweave.

What Manner of Man is My Father, Part Three – Being and Becoming: It's Mandiani Time (IIb)

i Mandiani Time (Part 3 IIb) gives evidence of me telling its story. I am participating in the Mandiani symposium, 'Black Boys & Our Ways Of Being', held at the Lewisham Civic Suite (July 2005).

Purposeful Recogniton for Mr. Rowe.

In August and September 2005 two great men in my life would pass. My father would be the first surprise on this score. Then came Mr. Rowe, my father-in-law and my sons' grandfather. The video clip shows me collaborating with my sons in the ceremony for his passing. It was at a time when we were not regularly in each others company and would be one of the few occasions we would share publically in the manner than we did on that day.

We all make a contribution to the purposeful recognition of this loving man of family, community and humanity. He was a man 'small in stature, and big in my life.' Here is the recital, 'Uncle Raph, Mr Rowe, Grandad.'

- Mr. Rowe Part 3 III(a) I am communicating a unique purposeful recognition of a man 'small in stature, and big in my life', with the recital, 'Uncle Raph, Mr. Rowe, Grandad' on his passing I am with my sons.

Elders' Ball – A Quality Time Event

The Elders' Ball, an event to celebrate our elders, was also a high point, a signal event in the co-evolving of Mandiani. It came to fruition as a result of an exciting piece of work with young people to do something good, do something in the community and

do something that would be memorable. The Elders Ball was the outcome.

We had set out simply to enable our elders to have some fun. We wanted to honour them and offer an event where they could attend “dressed to the nines” – no holding back (traditional African/formal).

We would celebrate them (offer many prizes) and surprise them. We would wine and dine with our elders. We would perform for our elders and dance with them until night falls. We would make public our love and affection for them and show how much we cherished them deeply with all our hearts and our special presentations.

Here, the African Voice is advanced giving practical meaning to my valuing social living pedagogy (Africa seen through the eyes of a lover, living Ubuntu and Great Work). The Elders’ Ball was Mandiani time for our elders.

The young people advanced their activities to another level through their active engagement in making this event a success. On the evening the young people would escort families to their tables. We would invite the good spirits to be with us and chase those intending harm away. We would set the scene with a special welcome and one of our elders would have the opportunity to speak. Mavis Clarke was the elder and she spoke of her journey as midwife, activist, mother and husband. It is a story of achievement, courage, resilience, love and partnership.

What Manner of Man is My Father, Part Three. Elders' Ball, comprises the following:

Part 3 III Elders Ball (a) gives evidence of the celebrating of our elders. The first clip shows young people escorting elders as they arrive at the Elders' Ball to their tables. Part 3 III Elders Ball (b) the second clip shows Eden talking about his dad and the Part 3 III Elders Ball (c) third clip sees Jackee encouraging us to keep telling the stories of their elders and of relationship. Part 3 III Elders Ball (d) the fourth clip is of an elder dancing embracing fully the spirit of the event.

In the event we would also celebrate ourselves, communicate inspiring stories and grow Mandiani. See the young people escorting elders as they arrive at the event (IIIa). Eden (IIIb) would talk about with his father and how it was important to honour black men who had shown responsibility and great love for their families, particularly at a time when there was so much negativity about the absence of black fathers. He noted that his father was present and told the story about him riding his bicycle to and from work in the severest conditions as a testament to his will and strength.

Jackee Holder (IIIc) encouraged us to applaud ourselves and to celebrate the young people for their inventiveness and the elders for their contribution to community. She also informed on how so many have relationships over many years and has been an inspiration in each other's lives. Jackee also told of her recent visit to Barbados and how important it is to maintain links with extended family and to tell the stories of our elders. Listen to Eden and Jackie. The event also afforded me another opportunity to see my valuing social living pedagogy in evidence in a vibrant and live way. (See me talking about the event and giving prizes). It was a time to celebrate community, celebrate family and to have fun. It was a time to celebrate and honour our elders. It was Mandiani time for our elders in a space that could not be

cut – that flowered a natural inclusionality. See the elders having fun (IIIId).

In my presentation I narrated that we were celebrating our elders for their successes in the face of often the most challenging circumstances. Our elders are important in ensuring that a positive self-identity is encouraged; they are the mainstay in sustaining unflinchingly the continuance of our extended family; they are the enduring positive symbols personified in the building of communities; they are our living history of success and of glorious achievements. They stand tall in our midst. They continue to work their miracles in finding a way out of no way. So the elders' ball was Mandiani time for our elders – a time to celebrate and honour them.

We made an important connection that evening in reaching out to the African community, to respect and learn from the foundation provided by our elders. We demonstrated in this quality time event it was an occasion to celebrate our elders (show unique purposeful recognition), build intimate relationships inter-generationally (encourage an enhanced mutuality) and have fun in a simple event of import and full of symbolic meaning (viable and encouraging an engaging dialogical praxis). It was a storytelling moment – a moment for that would continue long after its ending in the minds of all who attended. It was an occasion when the memory would last and shared with others who would not have attended. Here I share it with you.

Dr. Temba Mafico (1997) says elderhood in traditional Africa serves as mechanisms for commentary on the traditions and mores one finds in our community. Focus is on the 'soul community' defined as a way of being found in African communities (p. 10-12), central in bestowing honour on our elders, and accessing their resourcefulness

and wisdom of the elders. This includes, but is not limited to, the elders' roles as "storytellers, historians and guides in practical wisdom as members of a soul community" (p. 171).

These reflections show the importance of retaining and constantly gleaning from collective memories of our community elders, who are indeed the repository of the communal memory, the history and the faith story that is foundational and the very grounding of our own ways of being.

Michael Dyson in his book *Reflecting Black: African American Cultural Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) reminds us that recalling our roots is an ethical imperative, something not to be lost. When we remember our community traditions we tap into some deep truths about life that are both crucial and instrumental for our survival. If we lose touch with these values and embrace only the values of some of the young members of our community, we find that they want to leave the soul out of community and put the 'I,' 'Me,' or 'My' into community.

It is suggested we must always be an intergenerational community; that's where the community vision comes from, that vision which guides us and without which a people would perish.

The young people performed for elders, reflecting what the values that had learned from them. They were presented with prizes and feted and then they danced and danced.

Mandiani in the USA

Our educational visit to the USA occurred within a week of the Elders Ball, and is evidence of a rich period of experience in the co-evolvement of Mandiani. The purpose of the educational visit was manifold and had grown from an inspirational thought to attend the 'A Million More March' celebrating the tenth anniversary of the 'Million Man March'. The email exchange below with Peter Phillips, my brother and senior staff member in Devereux, shows how from sharing the inspirational thought that an organisational partnership would grow with Devereux, an educational exchange realised from the germ of an idea, opportunities for the learning of a diverse group of people across national boundaries advanced and celebration of our own leadership and social action appreciated.

Here is the initial email exchange communication on the inspirational thought.

Ian Phillips" <llewelyn69@hotmail.com> 3/12/2005 6:52:59 AM

Hi Peter,

I hope all is well with you. I have an idea and I am only just thinking it through. I work with a project call Mandiani (working with black boys (10-15). Someone had an inspired thought to travel to Washington for the 10th Anniversary of the Million Man March in October 2005. It is a great idea and we are trying to make it happen. I thought about contacting Howard University, and then remembered you and your Devereux (role and contacts). I wondered if this is something in your remit (personal or professional). So, touching base I am wondering if you can help. Of course, we will need accommodation, food and an itinerary of important places to visit. What do you think? Can you help? We are thinking about 7- 10 days. Do not forget that we will have experts with us, who have experience of working with children/young people.

I really hope that you can help, as this could be an exciting project on which we can work together. I am also thinking it could be a two-city visit (Atlanta and Washington). Thinking outside the box.

Contact me soon and take care

Ian... lots o love

Peter replied

Hey Ian

Thanks for sharing your inspiration. I have been looking for such an opportunity. Please go ahead and send me some information about the organisation (is there a website?). I will go ahead and start talking with some contacts in Washington DC and Atlanta. I am thinking that we should be able to offer free accommodation in Atlanta at least. Wash DC maybe more competitive. You will need to cover meals and travel. If I can offer I will.

Just off the top of my head I am thinking of some of my students playing host or at least tour guides in Atlanta and Wash DC to the UK youth group. We have students here from Washington DC too who will be able to tell us about the areas that are not on the visitors guide.

In Atlanta we can offer an experiential learning opportunity with tour to MLK Jr Site, tour to local Black College, visit to the State Capital to meet the Governor or State Representative, trip to a Ball Game and Devereux of course.

In Wash DC, obviously the Million Man March and there maybe many other associated events at that time.

We need to consider the dates of travel ie DC or Atlanta first?

Additionally, I would like to promote this as an exchange opportunity for Devereux students & staff to come to London as part of a cultural exchange. My target students are between 15-18 and we will want to explore some of the following issues for young people transitioning to adulthood in London and response of programs and services.

Let me know what you think and we will firm up as we go. I would like a formal letter at some time to participate in this exchange to share with my Management Team in order to formally proceed.

I love you

Peter

The idea of an educational cultural exchange would indeed be firmed up as the project progressed on both sides of the Atlantic. Peter (Devereux) had responsibilities for hosting, arrangements for accommodation, food and in-country travel and for collaboration on our itinerary in the USA. In the UK we had decisions to make

beyond the inspirational thought that focused on how could we get the greatest value out of this educational visit, who amongst our community would most benefit and how would we decide on who should go. These were some of our initial thoughts and were shared early with young people, parents and schools. The engagement with young people, parents and schools were expansive in our desire to be accountable and transparent through our deliberations and progress of the initiative.

To get the greatest value

The two-city educational visit to the USA was agreed and the value identified in Atlanta and Washington evidenced historical, social, economic and political dimensions. Atlanta was the birthplace of Martin Luther King, who was a leading figure in the Civil Rights Movement. It housed Moorehouse College. It was noted as one of the fastest growing states economically in the USA and African-Americans were contributing to this development. We wanted to learn about the life and work of Martin Luther King Junior. We wanted to know about Moorehouse College as a traditional African-American educational establishment. We wanted to learn about what African-Americans were doing socio-economically in Atlanta that was being deemed successful. We would get much more than we bargained for from our visit to Atlanta.

The same would be true of our visit to Washington, the capital city of the USA (some would say one of the capital cities of the world). The historic and political sites (White House, Lincoln Memorial and the Capitol Buildings), opportunities to learn about important African-Americans (Frederick Douglas, Mary McLeod Bethune and Carter Woodson, Howard University, etc.) and visits to museums (Smithsonian)

made Washington a treasure trove for learning. Our visit would also coincide with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Million Man March would be celebrated which we would attend.

Who would benefit most from the visit and who would go

This was a very difficult area. However, in consultation with young people, parents and schools it was decided that the opportunity would be offered to young people in secondary school. Who would go it was decided would be those contributing most to the development of Mandiani in their work in school, building relationship with parents at home / carers and contributing in the community (this included involvement in the Black Boys Ways of Being Symposium and the Elders Ball). The young people going also had to contribute £200 towards the educational visit and engage in fund-raising. Eleven young people made the trip with five staff members (two paid their own way).

Our hosts in the USA, Devereux, supported in finding accommodation, transportation and organising our itinerary for a 10 days educational visit to Atlanta and Washington. The communication sent to schools seeking permission for the boys to go on the educational visit to the USA (it took place during term time) would inform that the activities were part of our developing innovative programmes for black boys. We would also inform that Mandiani with the Devereux organisation (USA) had organised an educational exchange that will take place between 7th October and 17th October 2005. We informed that our hosts would be Devereux Georgia, based in Atlanta, which has been serving young people since 1973. It was a non-profit organisation providing services around the USA for young persons and adults challenged with emotional, developmental and educational issues.

Further, we informed that the young persons that had been selected for the visit would benefit greatly from:

- ☑ meeting young people in a different part of the world,
- ☑ visiting historic sites in Atlanta and Washington, for example the Martin Luther King Centre, Stone Mountain, Emory College, Howard University and Capitol Hill) and;
- ☑ completing of a portfolio depicting their range of learning experiences



Figure 30: Displaying Our Values at the Million More March

Additionally, we informed that on return the young people would present and give evidence of their learning experiences not only in writing and pictures, but in dialogue with peers, parents and professionals who make impact on their lives.

Mandiani staff participating on this exchange programme would also contribute to this process.

The request for the young people to be permitted to participate on this educational exchange programme was completed noting that we 'have had on-going discussion with the young persons and that they see the importance of the visit. We have also had discussion with their parents/ carers, who are supportive of them making this visit. We also wanted the schools to be supportive of the young people making this particularly exciting journey.'

We noted on the young people that in their time on the Mandiani programme they had 'contributed most positively' and had involved themselves in 'exemplary fashion in our wider programmes. The experience will be of great benefit to them and hope that it will encourage further positive achievements in the future'.

Figure 31: Visit to Martin Luther King Jr. Home



The educational visit took place from October 7 to 17th, 2005. It would be a tremendous experience for all with the highlights being the Martin Luther King Junior tour, visit to Moorehouse and visit to Six Flags.

What Manner of Man is My Father? Part Three, V Mandiani in USA – Commitments for Success (a) shows Mandiani staff grounding with young people on our USA educational visit. I am sharing on how the parents, schools and Mandiani has been committed to the success of the initiative. I am challenging the boys to show their commitment.



Figure 32: Educational Exchange Members Outside the White House (USA)

In Washington being in the capital city we walked the parks and looked out from the Lincoln Memorial. We visited the Smithsonian museum, Howard University and Civil War Museum. We visited Carter Woodson House and Frederick Douglas House. We visited the White House and to now know that within five years an African-American would become president is a fateful thought. Some say Barack Obama was not the first African-American to be President of the USA, but the

significance of his emergence has not been lost on both sides of the Atlantic. His emergence is encouraging new dialogues and affording new hopes, new ambitions and the opportunity to walk in a different way in the universe. I also felt like this when Mandela walked from gaol. A window of opportunity opens up for humanity to change course. I have a sense of Mandela's marginalisation. I now have a sense of Obama's distraction. We attended the A Million More celebrations – a reminder of how much there is still to do. Work on self and finding purpose in our lives do not disappear. On our journey back to the UK we would witness our changing selves.

However, within six months I would no longer be in Mandiani. I would follow my heart to Berkshire Consultancy Limited (the focus of the following Weave) in search of my highest future potential in Self and Work. I would return twice to a session on change and transformation and to close my own curtain on Mandiani in seeing the last man out the door (Daniel Pink). In celebration of his 'good work' I wrote a poem, entitled, 'Danny Boy'. Listen to Yvonne Archer (a Mandiani worker) rendition of 'Danny Boy', as I am unable to attend the event in celebration of Daniel Pink's 'good work' with black boys 'that cannot be undone'. Evident is our unique purposeful recognition, our enhanced relational mutuality (possibly for the whole community in attendance) and our engaging dialogical praxis.

What Manner of Man is My Father? Part Four – II a Danny Boy

- Clip Set Seven in the first I am talking about change and in the second I am bidding farewell to Daniel Pink, last man out of the door in a novel poem, recited/sung by a Mandiani worker, Yvonne Archer.

This is how Weave Six is completed closing my own curtain on Mandiani. In Weave Seven I am in the margins where decisions are made inspired by the appreciating

value of the African Voice as I begin work as an emergent consultant in Berkshire Consultancy Limited. I journey to the private sector.