



Hilaria Asumu

Job Title: Founder/CEO, WSH BME Kidney Network
Locality: Greater Manchester Wide
Project Title: Bridging the Gap in Reaching Black Ethnic Communities Unable to Access Services

Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership



Project Aim

The project aimed to address healthcare and service access disparities faced by Black ethnic communities in Salford, focusing on new immigrants and refugees. These groups often encounter language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and systemic mistrust of public services. The objectives were to:

- Empower communities with knowledge about available services.
- Build trust between service providers, especially GPs, and the community.
- Facilitate collaboration between local councils, public services, and community organizations.

What did I do?

We organised two key community events to engage Black ethnic communities and highlight healthcare, housing, and social services. We distributed culturally relevant materials and provided a space for open discussion. The first event showcased public services and created a platform for dialogue. However low turnout revealed gaps in communication and outreach strategies, as well as community mistrust and lack of awareness. The second event was organised in partnership with a local church, a trusted hub for the Black ethnic community. Using a familiar venue helped foster trust and encourage participation. The church's involvement increased credibility and attendance, and culturally tailored messaging resonated better with attendees.

What did I learn

- **Trust and familiarity:** Partnering with trusted community institutions, like churches, enhances outreach and engagement due to their credibility.
- **Tailored communication:** Community members respond better to culturally and linguistically specific materials and presentations.
- **Collaboration:** Working with council officers, faith and community leaders, and community groups creates a broader, more effective support network.
- **Continuous improvement:** Low turnout at the first event provided insights, leading to a more successful second event. Feedback loops are essential for refining strategies.
- **Multifaceted barriers:** Addressing language differences, mistrust, and cultural misunderstandings requires a holistic approach combining education, relationship building, and structural changes.

Has this changed how you work?

This experience has significantly changed my approach to community engagement. I now prioritize partnering with trusted community institutions, like churches and local leaders, to enhance credibility and reach. Cultural sensitivity is crucial, and understanding the unique needs of different groups ensures that all interventions are appropriate and accessible.

What happens next?

The next phase will focus on sustaining and expanding the project with continued collaboration with the Equalities Team at Salford City Council, local churches, community leaders, and organizations like Salford CVS to reach more Black ethnic community members. I am also developing an app to track service use rates, event attendance, and community feedback. I

To read more about Hilaria's journey, scan the QR code below



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