



NEURODIVERSITY COMMUNITY PROGRAMME (ANCP) IMPACT REPORT

JUNE 2025



Sponsored by:

- **Leeds Community Foundation**
- **Sir George Martin Trust**

AFRIKINDNESS
NEURODIVERSITY
COMMUNITY
PROGRAMME (ANCP)

PROUDLY FUNDED BY

Leeds
Community
Foundation



Sir George Martin Trust

The Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Programme (ANCP) is dedicated to raising awareness, fostering inclusion, and providing essential support for neurodiverse children and families, particularly within African and minority communities.

Many families face cultural stigmas, misdiagnosis, and a lack of access to resources, leaving neurodiverse children without the support they need to thrive.

Supported by the Sir George Martin Trust, ANCP delivers awareness campaigns, tailored training, and community engagement initiatives, equipping parents, educators, and community leaders with the tools to create inclusive environments. We received our very first funds as a charity from Sir George Martin Trust.

We are excited that the Sir George Martin's Trust fund has committed to funding this programme.

We thank You! [Click to Read More](#)

Leeds Community Foundation

The Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Programme (ANCP) raises awareness, fosters inclusion, and provides vital support for neurodiverse children and families in African and minority communities.

We are also proud to have received the Sylvie Nunn Memorial Award from Leeds Community Foundation, recognizing our impactful work in the community. This award provided additional funding to launch the ANCP Drop-in Sessions, a safe space for parents to seek guidance, resources, and peer support to better navigate their child's neurodiverse journey.

With the support of our funders, we are breaking down barriers, challenging misconceptions, and ensuring that every child—regardless of neurodiversity—feels understood, supported, and empowered to thrive.

We are excited that the Leeds Community Foundation has committed to funding this programme.

We thank You! [Click to Read More](#)



INTRODUCTION



AFRIKINDNESS NEURODIVERSITY COMMUNITY PROGRAMME (ANCP)

This report outlines the progress, achievements, and impact of the Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Program over the past year. Thanks to the invaluable support and funding provided by our stakeholders and funders, we have made significant strides in raising awareness of neurodiversity and supporting African and ethnic minority families. ANCP Program was launched in 2024 based on the [research](#) output from Dr Vivian Okoye.

Program Goals for the Year

Our primary goal for the year was to increase awareness of neurodiversity within African and ethnic minority communities. Neurodiversity is often misunderstood within these communities, leading to stigmatization and limited access to appropriate support.

To address this, we focused on three strategic objectives:

- 1. Building a Community of Neurodiversity-Aware Parents and Families:** We aimed to create a safe, informed, and empowered space for families to learn about and discuss neurodiversity.
- 2. Providing Education and Support:** Through workshops, webinars, and direct support, we equipped families with knowledge and tools to navigate the challenges of raising neurodivergent children.
- 3. Training Community Leaders:** By empowering community leaders with neurodiversity education, we sought to extend our reach through grassroots engagement. These leaders are equipped to train their own communities, amplifying our impact.



Neurodiversity Community Programme: The Journey, The Need, and The Vision

In 2023, Afrikindness launched a pioneering research project through the efforts of our dedicated research associate, Dr. Vivian Okoye—a Clinical Psychology graduate from Newcastle University. Her study explored the deeply rooted and often overlooked issue of delayed autism diagnoses among Black African parents in the UK, with a particular focus on communities in Leeds and Yorkshire.

This was no ordinary study—it opened the door to voices and stories that had long been silenced or ignored in communities.

The research uncovered a troubling reality: many families from Black and ethnic minority communities experience substantial delays in recognising, accepting, and accessing autism diagnoses for their children.

Awareness was often low or non-existent, and where it existed, it was clouded by deep cultural misconceptions, religious beliefs, stigma, fear, and, in some cases, shame.

Parents described feelings of isolation, confusion, and helplessness as they navigated an unfamiliar and, at times, inaccessible system. One mother shared that she prayed for her child's "spirit of disobedience" to be cast out—until she finally understood it was autism.

Another parent admitted to spending hours searching the internet, lost in a web of misinformation, due to the lack of culturally relevant resources or trusted guidance.

Another parent shared that she had never come across the word "neurodiversity" before and admitted she didn't really understand what it meant or how it related to her child.

The study also brought to light issues such as:

- Stigma and denial within cultural communities;
- Lack of trust in statutory services due to historical discrimination or poor engagement;
- Language barriers and low health literacy;
- Limited understanding of how to access or navigate SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) support systems;
- Underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in neurodiversity spaces.

These realities, reflected through raw, honest, and heartfelt one-on-one interviews, underscore the urgent need for a different approach—one that meets families where they are, speaks their language, understands their context, and empowers them to take action.



In response, Afrikindness established the Neurodiversity Community Campaign Project—a bold, research-driven initiative designed to provide culturally sensitive education, resources, and intervention support for ethnic minority families with neurodiverse children.

Beginning in Leeds and Yorkshire, the programme aims to build awareness, dismantle stigma, equip families and educators, and foster an environment where neurodiverse children are truly understood, accepted, and supported.

The campaign provides:

- Drop-in sessions for parents seeking guidance and emotional support;
- Training programmes for community leaders, professionals and educators;
- Community engagement activities to promote awareness and inclusion;
- Culturally relevant toolkits and resources that empower parents and community members.
- Level/3 training certification for key volunteers to co-create culturally sensitive training packs for diverse communities, and schools.

At its core, this programme is about listening—truly listening—to communities that have been historically marginalised, and working alongside them to co-create solutions.

It is not just about policy or provision; it is about restoring dignity, building trust, and amplifying the voices of families that deserve to be heard.

With over 70% of surveyed parents reporting that they had little to no knowledge of autism before their child's diagnosis, and 60% stating that stigma or fear delayed them from seeking help, the urgency is clear.

The Neurodiversity Community Campaign Project is more than a programme—it is a lifeline, a platform, and a promise that no parent will be left behind simply because of who they are or where they come from.



Summary of Services Provided Through Funded Support - Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Programme

With the support of generous funding, Afrikindness has been able to deliver a range of impactful services to support ethnic minority families navigating neurodiversity. The programme began with **awareness campaigns**, including community engagement events and outreach activities to educate families on neurodiversity. These campaigns culminated in inclusive family fundays, which featured sensory play areas for neurodiverse children and safe spaces for parents to connect and share experiences.

Although not initially planned, we responded to urgent community needs by introducing **intervention support for families** facing severe challenges with their children's behaviours and unmet educational needs. This flexible approach allowed us to adapt our services to meet real-time demands.

To provide deeper engagement, we hosted a **6-part webinar series** tackling various neurodiversity topics with experts, advocates, and parents. This enabled open, in-depth discussions, and increased parental understanding of conditions such as autism, ADHD, and sensory processing challenges.

A **community parent support group** was also formed, creating a safe and consistent space for parents to share, learn, and grow together.

We delivered a **4-week culturally sensitive training programme** on neurodiversity and inclusion, helping parents, educators, and professionals build confidence and practical skills in supporting neurodiverse children.

Additionally, we received supplementary funding from Leeds Community Foundation through the Sylvie Nunn Memorial Award, which enabled us to launch **weekly online drop-in sessions** starting in March 2025. These sessions provide direct access to trained advisors including educators, neurodiversity advocates, and health professionals.

This report outlines the breadth of services delivered, highlights the impact and reach of our work, and reflects on the challenges encountered, including language barriers, cultural misconceptions, and ongoing gaps in trust and access to local services.



IMPACT SUMMARY



Impact:

Webinar:-

- Over 400 individuals attended the webinars collectively, with an average attendance rate of 65%. Over 1600 views on Youtube. Streamed live on all social media platforms
- 618 participants received 30 parent resources via email. Majority of participants are from Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Pontrefact etc
- Post-webinar feedback indicated a 95% satisfaction rate, with many participants reporting increased confidence in supporting their neurodivergent children.

Workshops

- **Outcome:** This workshop created a platform for open discussions, dispelling myths and addressing stigma. Over 198 direct benefits

Impact Highlights

1. **Increased Awareness:** Through our workshops and webinars, over 1000 individuals gained a deeper understanding of neurodiversity, reducing stigma and misconceptions within the community.
2. **Empowered Families:** Parents reported feeling more equipped to advocate for their children, with many expressing gratitude for the practical tools and resources provided.
3. **Community Leadership Development:** Thirty community leaders are now positioned to amplify our message, ensuring sustainability and broader outreach.
4. **Direct Family Support:** Tailored interventions for families have created lasting change, improving the quality of life for neurodivergent children and their parents.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Recognition and Awards

This year, the Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Program gained significant attention from individuals and organizations for its impactful work within African and ethnic minority communities. Our innovative approach to raising neurodiversity awareness, providing education, and supporting families was widely acknowledged and celebrated.

As a result, we were honoured to receive four prestigious awards:

Awards

- **Leeds Community Foundation**
<https://www.leedscf.org.uk/afrikindness-becomes-the-first-recipient-of-the-leeds-community-foundation-sylvie-nunn-memorial-award/>
- **Corporate Vision**
<https://www.corporatevision-news.com/winners/afrikindness/>
- **Celebrating Neurodiversity Awards by Genius Within**
<https://geniuswithin.org/our-awards/inclusion-project-of-the-year/>
- **Zurich Insurance**
<https://afrikindness.org/highly-commended-recognition/>

Advocacy

Afrikindness team is now a member of the Learning disability & Neurodiversity Diversity Board, West Yorkshire



PROGRAMS

Awareness Campaigns - 6-part Webinar Series

We designed and delivered a **six-part webinar series** covering a wide range of neurodiversity- related topics. These sessions addressed the unique challenges faced by African and ethnic minority families and provided practical solutions. One key challenge is providing right information to counter misconception and misinformation in the black and minority ethnic communities. The webinar series was designed to inform, educate, and provide support to parents, educators, schools, and community leaders on the challenges associated with being neurodiverse. We brought in top speakers with lived experiences and that have thrived in the UK alongside organisations that support neurodiverse individuals.

The topics included:

- Myths and Misconceptions about Neurodiversity in African and Ethnic Minority Communities.
- Understanding and managing challenging behaviours in Neurodiverse children.
- Autism and Communication Needs: Enhancing communication in autistic children
- Sensory Experiences: Understanding & supporting sensory needs
- Navigating the System: Accessing Support as a Parent of a Neurodivergent Child in the UK.
- Early Help & Alternative Provisions: Support for Ethnic Minority Families.

Speakers

- **Hannah Otoo**, Founder of SEN Parenting UK, Founder of REYO Foundation, Director of the Autism & SEN Show Ghana
- **Blessing Ingyape**, International Dyslexia teacher of the year
- **Lovette Monyei**, Education team lead UK
- **Oluwadamilola Olukitibi Alawode**, International behaviour analyst, Autism service practitioner, Nigeria
- **Christopher Peckham**, Specialist Autism Practitioner Nudge Education, UK
- **Fran Harland**, Neurodiversity specialist, Nudge Education UK
- **Lola Aneke**, Top 50 Global Neurodiversity Evangelist and Founder of C.A.D.E.T Academy, Canada
- **Dr Gillian Rogers**, Founder Autism Arena, UK
- **Linda Holmes**, Founder, Sensory World Play Centre
- **Ola Tony-Obot**, EDI Lead Together for Children Sunderland

All series recordings and resources are here:- <https://afrikindness.org/films-and-media/resources-for-parents/afrikindness-neurodiversity-community-programme/>

The webinar series were LIVE STREAMED across all social media channels and YouTube to increase the reach



In-Person Workshops

We organized 4 highly impactful in-person workshops, attended by members of our target communities in Leeds as listed below:-

- **Neurodiversity awareness Workshop**

Community workshop in Leeds :- 30 parents attended the session

<https://afrikindness.org/a-day-of-empowerment-and-connection-at-our-first-parent-wellbeing-neurodiversity-community-event/>

- **June Autisticon conference**

Autism marketplace:- Afrikindness had a dedicated stand at the Autisticon Conference, providing guidance to parents and supporting families. Our presence at the event encouraged many families from Black communities to **attend for the first time**, seeking vital information and support on autism. It was a meaningful step toward greater awareness, inclusivity, and access to resources for all. We also had the opportunity to engage key stakeholders, organisations and partners in the neurodiversity space.

<https://afrikindness.org/afrikindness-shines-at-autisticon-conference-2024/>

- **August Workshop**

Community workshop in Leeds:- 70 community leaders attended the session

<https://afrikindness.org/lord-mayor-of-leeds-launches-groundbreaking-community-empowerment-programme-to-strengthen-leadership-and-unity/>

- **Campaigns done in 4 community groups in Leeds. Average participants around 100-150**

- **October Mental Health Workshop**

Mental health workshop done with expert speakers (psychiatrist, nutritionist) - 20 participants

<https://youtu.be/daArsW9l1co?si=5bGd8LKoXmjo1a78>

- **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding training completed for 5 members of Afrikindness Parent team sponsored by Leeds Community Foundation

- **December Power of Play Workshop (interactive session for parents and teens) - 38 parents and 21 teens participated**

<https://youtu.be/jcNDOjptp1c?si=z6T6Vgz1qBo4LtMg>

<https://afrikindness.org/power-of-play-workshop/>



Parent Support & Community

Building Trust and Providing Direct Support

Our awareness efforts established trust with many families, leading to meaningful connections. As a result, several families reached out to us for personalized support. We set up a closed focused group on WhatsApp for support & sign-posting in place with the majority of parents from Leeds.

- 37 parents in the group at the moment. We have stopped receiving new members as we need more volunteers to support.

Parent Resources

Afrikindness team collated some resources from our expert speakers which is very useful and will help parents and carers at home with children and young people. **30 resources in total distributed to 681 participants.**

- Understanding & managing behaviours (5 [resources](#))
- Managing communication in autistic children (4 [resources](#))
- Understanding and supporting sensory needs (1 [resource](#))
- Navigating challenges of parenting autistic children (12 [resources](#))
- Neurodiversity Awareness: Understanding Neurodiversity and Pathways to Diagnosis and Support in African and Ethnic Minority Communities (8 [resources](#))

Autism Fun Play at Sensory Play areas in Dewsbury

Afrikindness provided a [sensory play area](#) for two families (5 children benefitted), offering a calming and engaging space for children with autism. This dedicated area helped the children regulate their sensory experiences, reducing anxiety and promoting relaxation. For parents, it provided a moment of relief and reassurance, knowing their children were in a safe, supportive environment tailored to their needs. Parents had the opportunity to connect with each other, shared experiences and received support from the CEO Linda Holmes.

Campaign Awareness

Afrikindness actively participated in Global and National campaigns with webinars and Q&A's facilitated on

- World Autism Day campaign
- Neurodiversity week



Capacity Building through Specialized Training: Empowering Communities from Within

At the heart of the Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Programme is a commitment to capacity building, empowering families and professionals to become advocates and changemakers within their communities.

Our Neurodiversity Lead, Dr. Vivian Okoye, completed the Level 3 Neurodiversity and Inclusion Train the Trainer program with the Positive Psychology Network, a rigorous, strengths-based training that deepens understanding of neurodiversity and builds practical skills for designing and delivering inclusive education. Fully funded by Leeds Community Foundation and Sir George Martin trust.

Following her training, Dr. Vivian Okoye facilitated a 4-week culturally sensitive Neurodiversity and Inclusion training programme, engaging over 70 participants—including parents, educators, and professionals—who work with culturally diverse families.

The feedback was overwhelming, with participants reporting increased confidence, deeper understanding, and a strong desire to share their learning.

Following the training, 10 passionate individuals nominated themselves to co-create a culturally responsive training pack on neurodiversity, tailored for schools and community groups. This collaborative approach ensures that the lived experiences of families from diverse backgrounds are at the core of the content.

We're especially proud that three of the co-creators, both based in Leeds, have been recognised by the 130th Lord Mayor of Leeds for their contributions to inclusive education. They will play a key role in delivering the training across schools and communities in Leeds, helping to embed understanding, empathy, and inclusion at every level.

This is how real, sustainable change begins—by equipping communities with the tools and confidence to lead from within.



Parent Intervention Support in Leeds

As part of our intervention support, Afrikindness provided monthly check-ins, parental guidance, and tailored advice to families. While many received general support, two families facing severe developmental challenges required more in-depth intervention. Due to the complexities of their cases, we conducted a thorough, hands-on approach to ensure the children and their parents received the specialised care and resources they needed.

In addition to the two cases highlighting severe developmental challenges in children, our intervention also revealed systemic barriers affecting minority ethnic communities. These challenges, including limited access to resources, lack of information, cultural stigmas, and gaps in support services, underscore the need for more inclusive policies. To drive awareness and change, we compiled detailed case study reports, shedding light on these critical issues.

Case Studies:

We provided intensive, bespoke support to two families (referred to as Family X and Family Y for confidentiality).

- **Family X:** Faced challenges navigating the UK's educational support system for their autistic children. Two autistic, non-verbal children. Mum was at the brink of depression and was not sure of where to get support. We provided support but also escalated the lapse/delay in the system. Afrikindness fundraised through Gofundme to support this family to seek a private intervention offered by Nudge Education.

Read about it :- [Gofundme](#)

- **Family Y:** Struggled with understanding sensory processing issues in their neurodivergent child. We provided tailored guidance and sensory-friendly strategies, improving the child's daily experiences. In the process of waiting for EHCP support and school placement, the condition of the child deteriorated and the child was separated from his parents.

Afrikindness raised a Complaints and high risk issues with Forum Central

Through our intervention work, Afrikindness identified these cases as high-risk issues impacting families from minority ethnic communities, particularly in accessing adequate support for children with severe developmental challenges. In response, we escalated these concerns and filed a formal complaint with Leeds city council and also raised a high risk and issues with Forum Central, advocating for urgent action and systemic improvements.

Our goal is to ensure that every child and family receives the equitable support and resources they deserve.



CHALLENGES AND CONCLUSION

While we achieved significant milestones, we encountered challenges such as:

- **Funding** : While we are passionate to support as many families as possible, we do not have the funding to do this
- **Partnership**: Demand for support exceeded our capacity therefore we need to partner and collaborate with local authorities, NHS and other stakeholder organisation to be able to achieve more and support more families.

To address these, we plan to:

- Expand our training programs to reach more leaders and families.
- Secure additional funding to enhance our capacity for direct family support.
- Develop culturally sensitive materials to further reduce stigma.
- Provide support to families during the long wait for EHCP or other support.
- Empower more parents through training and education
- Partner with more stakeholder organizations
- Carry out research to understand the broader impact in the UK

Conclusion

The achievements of the Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Program this year would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our stakeholders and funders. Your contributions have enabled us to make a tangible difference in the lives of neurodivergent children and their families, fostering inclusion and understanding within African and ethnic minority communities.

We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year and continuing to create lasting impact.

Thank you for your partnership and support.



LOOKING AHEAD: EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

As we look to the future of the Afrikindness Neurodiversity Community Programme (ANCP), our vision is firmly rooted in deepening community engagement, amplifying awareness, and sustaining culturally relevant interventions.

One of our next key milestones is the co-creation of training packs developed by participants from our first cohort—parents, educators, and professionals—who are now actively working with our Neurodiversity Lead to produce practical, culturally sensitive resources. These materials will form the foundation for outreach training in schools and community organisations, ensuring neurodiversity education is relatable, inclusive, and accessible.

Our outreach will also extend into local sensory play areas and family hubs, bringing early intervention awareness directly into spaces where families gather.

We will continue to support families with advocacy work, particularly for parents navigating Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), diagnosis processes, or school exclusions.

Additionally, we aim to build on our community-led research work, focusing on minority ethnic groups, to gather further evidence that shapes effective and inclusive policy recommendations.

To strengthen and expand our impact, we will recruit and train a second cohort of community leaders—individuals who reflect the communities we serve and who are passionate about neurodiversity inclusion. Through structured training, mentoring, and leadership opportunities, these leaders will act as change agents, helping us scale our work across Leeds and beyond.

Our commitment remains: to empower families, equip professionals, and transform communities—making neurodiversity visible, understood, and embraced at every level.



**Click the LINK to
check ANCP
services**



AfriKindness

E: info@afrikindness.org

**W: www.afrikindness.org
www.africaawarenessweek.co.uk**