



Impact report: **United Diaspora**

“Diaspora has a new meaning for me since the United Diaspora experience. I have enjoyed the richness of the range of participants and I am inspired by the shared ideas. United Diaspora is one of the most meaningful programmes that I have attended, two days well spent.”

**Siobhan Flax, Social and Cultural Officer,
British Virgin Islands - Participant,
United Diaspora 2019**

May 2019



The inaugural United Diaspora ran in London on 30 April and 1 May 2019. It gathered 85 young and emerging leaders from across the many different diasporas of the world.



Common Purpose has worked with diaspora communities for many years. This has shown us that diaspora leaders – because they have feet in multiple places – are often natural interpreters. We see how people in the diaspora add value where they are and in their places of heritage. We believe that they are uniquely placed to be bridge builders across the world at a time when there are so many forces of fragmentation.

United Diaspora brought together young and emerging leaders from many different diasporas — because they have much in common, they can learn from and support each other's work and combine their efforts to achieve even more.

We would like to thank the Greater London Authority and the Bank of America Merrill Lynch who helped make this possible by providing support in kind.

"United Diaspora has been an amazing and fulfilling experience. To have met so many likeminded people who have shared the same experiences as yourself is truly empowering."

Maria Hussain, Programme Manager & Researcher, Great Health Care - Participant, United Diaspora 2019

The Programme

The aim of United Diaspora was to build the capacity of diaspora leaders so that they have an ever greater impact, sooner, as bridge builders across the world.



There were two guiding themes for the programme:

- Leadership—developing cross-boundary leadership through the Common Purpose learning frameworks of Cultural Intelligence and Leading Beyond Authority
- Practical action— participants sharing, with each other, concrete examples of diaspora initiatives and examining success factors, pitfalls and lessons learnt - to help to develop their ideas or co-create new ones.

"A great way to meet emerging and established leaders and to learn about the impactful initiatives they are leading to drive a change in their diaspora communities"

Antoinette Mthabela, Associate, Bank of America Merrill Lynch – Participant, United Diaspora 2019

We would like to thank the inspiring diaspora leaders who gave up their time to speak to the group:

- Selina Nwulu, Young Poet Laureate for London 2015-16
- Arnold Ekpe, former Group Chief Executive Officer, Ecobank
- Adam Askew, Director of Philanthropy, Elbi Digital
- Vartan Marashlyan, Co-founder and Director, Repat Armenia Foundation
- Bashair Ahmed, Executive Director, Shabaka Social Enterprise
- Olumide Popoola, Author
- Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor, Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Greater London Authority
- Myrna Atalla, Executive Director, Alfanar
- Lauren Le Franc, Founder, Little Coffee Company
- Bisi Alimi, Executive Director, Bisi Alimi Foundation
- Bharat Joshi, South Asia and Afghanistan Directorate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Dan Gresham, Global Talent Development Director, A.T. Kearney
- Eckhard Thiemann, Artistic Director, Shubbak
- Sambacor N'Diaya, Managing Director and Co-Head of Global Strategic Equity Solutions and Equity-Linked, Bank of America Merrill Lynch

The impact



United Diaspora proved to be a very powerful experience for the participants - here is what they say:

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- 93%** The connections I have made will be valuable in supporting my activities in my country of heritage and/or in the diaspora community
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- 91%** I am better equipped to have an impact as a leader in the diaspora community
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- 87%** I feel better prepared to thrive in multiple cultures
-
- 80%** I feel better prepared to lead or operate beyond my circle of authority
-
- 89%** I will recommend the United Diaspora programme to my friends

“United Diaspora gave me the opportunity to learn new knowledge and acquire new skills that will help me continue to succeed as a diaspora leader.”
Imad Ali El Mansari,
Senior Technical Instructor, UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) - Participant, United Diaspora 2019

Outcomes

United Diaspora created a multi-diaspora community of bridge builders. It gave those who took part the opportunity to:

- learn how to lead across boundaries
- help each other to find their own identity and purpose
- share experience and strategies for diaspora action
- develop ideas for collaboration across diaspora.

The evidence of this first programme is that the outcomes for the participants were powerful. They:

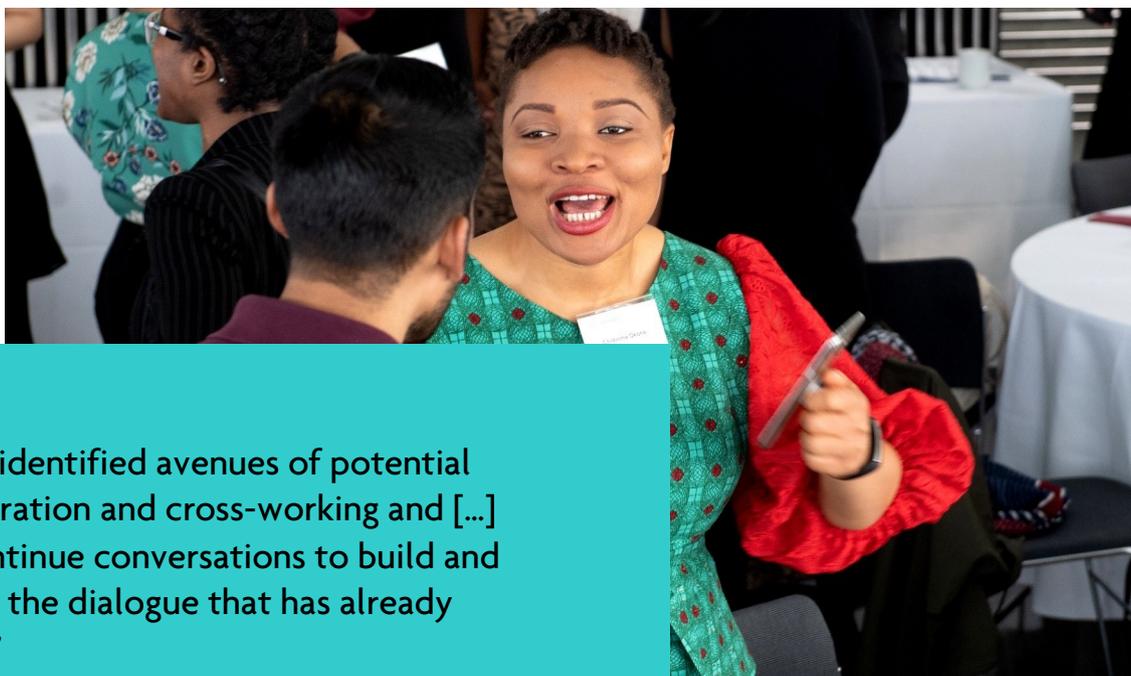
- developed their cross-boundary leadership skill
- made connections that will support their work in the diaspora and in their countries of heritage
- sparked new ideas that can be developed beyond the programme.

And in doing so increased their impact and social capital.

Next steps

Building on the success of this inaugural programme we plan to run United Diaspora in cities around the world and grow a global community of young and emerging diaspora leaders who are inspired and engaged both where they are and in their country of heritage.

If you would like to know more about United Diaspora or are interested in running one in your city, please contact Joanna Hancox, Business Director, Common Purpose International at joanna.hancox@commonpurpose.org



“I have identified avenues of potential collaboration and cross-working and [...] will continue conversations to build and nurture the dialogue that has already begun.”

Samah Ahmed, Programme and Research Manager, Shabaka Social Enterprise - Participant, United Diaspora 2019