# The Portuguese-speaking Community in Lambeth: A Scoping Study

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**July, 2015**

# Contents

## Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Donna Yay at the London Community Foundation for her support and guidance throughout this project . We would also like to thank the many individuals who gave up their time in order to participate in the research.  Many of those interviewed make a huge contribution to the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth and beyond and we feel it is important to acknowledge this.

The report would not have been possible without the generous support of these people. We hope that it fairly represents their knowledge and views and take full responsibility for any errors or omissions.

# Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from research with the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth commissioned by the London Community Foundation. It is designed to inform the work of the Lambeth Community Fund Grant Committee which makes decisions regarding the distribution the Portuguese Speakers Community Fund. Based mainly on semi-structured, face to face interviews with community representatives and local service providers, it provides a snapshot of the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth, its make-up, needs and support structure.

It is estimated that approximately 30,000-35,000 Portuguese Speakers reside in the borough of Lambeth. Whilst the community remains concentrated in and around the area known as Little Portugal in Stockwell, both the census and the growing number of cafes and bars ran by Portuguese Speakers indicate that members of the community now live throughout the borough.Portuguese is the second most commonly spoken language in Lambeth after English. A 'Day of Portugal' festival has been held in the borough over many years and now attracts around 40,000 visitors.

Language and culture give the community a distinct identity but it is also extremely heterogeneous, comprising peoples from four continents who have arrived in distinct waves over the past fifty years. It includes people with few qualifications and little English engaged in mostly unskilled, low-paid work who have lived in the UK for decades but integrate little with the wider community and university graduates, fluent in English, who left Portugal in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and who have settled easily into London's multi-cultural scene. Although many Portuguese Speakers from outside of Europe do live in Lambeth, they appear as likely to live elsewhere in London and their main cultural assocations are not based in the borough.

The community overall is described as law abiding, hard-working, respectful, family orientated, entrepreneurial and 'joyful' with a shared love of food and conviviality and a strong religious commitment. As within Lambeth more generally, there are however pockets of vulnerability and disadvantage with particular concerns around:

➢ Problems accessing local, public services due to poor English Language skills
➢ Unsuitable housing and homelessness
➢ Vulnerable and isolated elderly people, some with mental health problems
➢ Mental health problems more generally
➢ Domestic violence
➢ Substance misuse

- Unemployment and low wages
- For non-European Portuguese Speakers, issues around immigration status

A range of organisations, groups and networks work with and for the community. The most significant as potential recipients of grant funding are:

- established charitable organisations with Portuguese Speaking staff and volunteersoffering a range of educational, employment, health and welfare advice and support targeted at the community;
- cultural associations often linked to particular regions of origin which organise social and cultural events and meetings as well as providing an informal support network;
- online forums and groups which provide a medium for the exchange of information and advice about work, schooling, housing, benefits etc.

In addition, there are numerous private businesses, formal representative bodies (such as Consulates), local authority services, churches and charities (ones not specifically targeting Portuguese Speakers) which service the community in ways like those above and beyond. The appendix to the report lists the organisations identified during the course of the research, differentiated according to their role and capacity to bid for funding and with contact details provided.

Many of the small organisations identified are weak in terms of formal organisation and capacity building, often relying on the good will and determination of individuals with busy family and working lives. Some do have the desire and the potential to develop activities appropriate for funding but do not meet the criteria set at presentand require technical support to be in a position to do so.

## Recommendations

There is a concern within the community that the funding criteria for grants from the Portuguese Speakers Community Fund (especially the limit on the amounts that can be awarded and on the duration of projects) disadvantage the organisations best placed to meet such needs. It is recommended that the London Community Foundation discuss such concerns directly with the governing body of the Portuguese Speakers Community Centre so as to better understand them and so as to identify potential ways forward.

It is recommended that the London Community Foundation engages with key stakeholders identified in this report so as to incorporate their knowledge and contacts in decision making and so as to

ensure a degree of shared ownership of the process by which the Portuguese Speakers Community Fund is allocated. One way to do this would be for the Fund to employ or fund a Portuguese-speaking outreach worker to pro-actively support grant applications by visiting community centres and other organisations and groups and assisting directly with form filling and meeting the formal requirements set for obtaining funds. This would also help to address the limited capacity and wherewithal of some organisations and groups at present to develop funding bids.

It is recommended that the London Community Foundation and the Grant Committee uses the information presented in the appendix to a) target potential grant recipients and identify from them what they need in order to meet criteria in the future and b) develop a network of contacts throughout the community which can serve as a source of information and a channel to feed information through.

It is recommended that in inviting and supporting bids for funding, the Grant Committee gives consideration to the following kinds of activities or projects:

➢ Support groups targeting vulnerable members of the community
➢ Awareness and knowledge raising events
➢ After school clubs and activities targeted at Portuguese-speaking families
➢ Careers/Jobs advice and information workshops/sessions (including advice on small business start-ups)
➢ ESOL classes in general but also tailored to meet the needs of specific professions
➢ Health education advice and information workshops/sessions with a focus on mental health needs and support services in particular
➢ Action-research projects investigating specific problems and evaluating potential forms of support

# Introduction

This report presents the findings from research with the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth commissioned by the London Community Foundation. It is designed to inform the work of the Lambeth Community Fund Grant Committee which makes decisions regarding the distribution the Portuguese Speakers Community Fund. The latter was set up in 2010"to improve the lives of Portuguese-speaking Lambeth residents" and enables grants to be awarded which will:

"1. Improve the mental and physical wellbeing of Portuguese speaking residents, creating happier, healthier and less isolated residents

2. Help provide those not in education employment or training with the tools to get back onto a pathway to employment, ensuring people have the necessary skills to work and providing opportunities for people to achieve their ambitions" (London Community Foundation, 2015: 2).

In accordance with the research brief, the goal of the report is to provide "a snapshot of the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth in 2015, to identify how it is currently made up and how it is supported" (ibid: 3). Before turning to these findings, the following section describes how the research was conducted and outlines how the remainder of the report is organised.

## Methodology

The primary research method involved semi-structured, face to face interviews with community representatives and local service providers. In order to generate an initial sample of respondents, contact was first made with *grass-root* Portuguese organisations (e.g. football clubs; local businesses), and *civic* organisations with Portuguese speaking representatives (e.g. Lambeth Council, the Portuguese Consulate, the Portuguese Speakers Community Centre).Representatives and members of these organisations were interviewed where possible and the individuals and organisations suggested by them were subsequently followed up on. In addition, the lead researcher attended a variety of community based settings and events, speaking informally with a small number of residents about issues facing the communityand also following up leads generated there. Online searches identified further organisations of interest and again these were contacted. Altogether, 80 individuals were contacted by email and/or phone of whom 36 responded and were subsequently interviewed. Three further people provided a written response but were unavailable for interview. (See Appendix A for a list of organisations and contact details and Appendix B for the interview schedule).

Respondents included those working in and for charities, social/cultural clubs and associations, businesses, churches, local authority bodies, the NHS, the print media and social media platforms, as well as Embassy representatives and a local Portuguese-speaking Councillor. The interview data has been supplemented where possible with secondary information derived from previous studies, official statistics such as the 2011 Census, local government reports, web-based information and relevant academic and media sources.

Although the contact details for the people interviewed for the research are included in Appendix A, the report itself is anonymised. The commentary indicates, as appropriate, points on which there is consensus or disagreement and effort has been made to provide an accurate reflection of the range of views and perspectives offered. The research is qualitative and the sampling strategy involved targeting individuals and organisations who could offer an informed perspective and useful information concerning the issues at hand. It was not a survey of the community as such and data on the characteristics of the sample are not included because they would not be representative of the community. Some interviewees were British and some do not live in or work in the borough but do have connections with residents there. The sample was diverse in terms of age, length of residence in the UK, ethnicity and so on and the researchers deliberately targeted respondents who could speak for the various sub-communities within the community.

## Report Structure

In order to stay focused on the goals of the study, the findings are organised so as to address each of the eight objectives outlined in the research brief, albeit in revised order. The first section gives an overview of the Portuguese-speaking community, its size, its distribution in geographic terms, the different sub-groups within the community and its key characteristics and needs. The next section maps out schematically those groups and organisations in (and beyond) the borough that are led by Portuguese Speakers and/or have Portuguese-speaking staff and other services that are targeted at the Portuguese-speaking community. The strengths, weaknesses and developmental needs of existing organisations and services are then evaluated with reference to examples and elements of good practice and assesses the extent to which existing provision meets the needs of sub-groups within the wider community. The concluding section summarises the key issues and makes recommendations as to how grant-making and other capacity building programmes can be delivered or improved upon in order to effectively support the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth.

# The Portuguese-Speaking Community in Lambeth: An Overview

## The Size of the Community

As the authors of the current study reported in research undertaken in 2001 (see Nogueira & Porteous, 2003 for published version), establishing the size of the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth and its constituent wards is not straightforward. A more recent report summarises this issue well:

> "It is almost impossible to ascertain the exact size of the community because many people are not registered, pretend to be here but are in Portugal, do not answer the census, or hide themselves. Freedom of movement within the European Union makes it very difficult to develop accurate figures. There are also many people who have Portuguese nationality but are not Portuguese in the cultural sense.However, there are probably at least 30,000-35,000 Portuguese speakers in Lambeth" (Sloan, undated: 4),

Whilst this figure broadly corresponds to the one given by people interviewed for this study, it is quite clearly a 'guestimate', and necessarily so. The available statistics almost certainly tend to underestimate the population. For example the most recent census records 6992 Lambeth residents, 2.3 percent of the borough's population, as having been born in Portugal (ONS, 2011) but this excludes not only those born to Portuguese parents in the UK but also migrants from South America and Africa. The Lambeth Pupil Survey for 2013 (Demie et al, 2013) shows that seven percent of school students speak Portuguese. If for argument's sake, this is taken as broadly representative, it boosts the population to just over 20,000, but in fact it is again likely to be under-representative as the proportion of Portuguese speakers with school aged children is likely to be significantly less than in the general population (see Nogueira & Porteous 2001). A GP interviewed for this study, meanwhile, reported that in one surgery, 2000 of the 6000 patients registered are Portuguese-speaking.

What is not in doubt is the relative size and importance of the community. Even if it is an inadequate indicator of the number of Portuguese-speaking people living in Lambeth, the census figure above of just under seven thousand suggests that the community outnumbers residents born in, for example, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ghana, Somalia, South Africa and Australia. Moreover, whilst both Polish and Nigerian-born populations are much closer to the number recorded as born in Portugal, the Portuguese speaking community has a much longer standing presence and history in the borough, more akin to the Afro-Caribbean community in this sense. This

is reflected in the Lambeth Pupil Survey which reports that Portuguese is the second most commonly spoken language in the borough after English.

Albeit slightly crude, the census data provides an indicator of the distribution of Portuguese-speaking residents within Lambeth (see Appendix C). It reveals that Portuguese-born residents are spread amongst the five districts that make up the borough as per Figure One below. Whilst the traditional heartland of 'Little Portugal' in Stockwell is still central - 43 percent of Portuguese-born residents are concentrated in just five of the 21 wards that make up the borough: Stockwell, Larkhall, Ferndale, Oval and Coldharbour - their diffusion throughout the area is also quite evident. This much was taken as obvious by respondents, regardless of the official statistics. As one commented: "When you see a Portuguese Café or Deli popping up in a neighbourhood, it is for certain where there is a substantial number of Portuguese-speaking residents" and such establishments now exist in Tulse Hill, West Norwood, Streatham and Brixton, to name but a few of Lambeth's better known sub-districts.



Figure One: Distribution of Portuguese-born Lambeth Residents (derived from ONS, 2011)
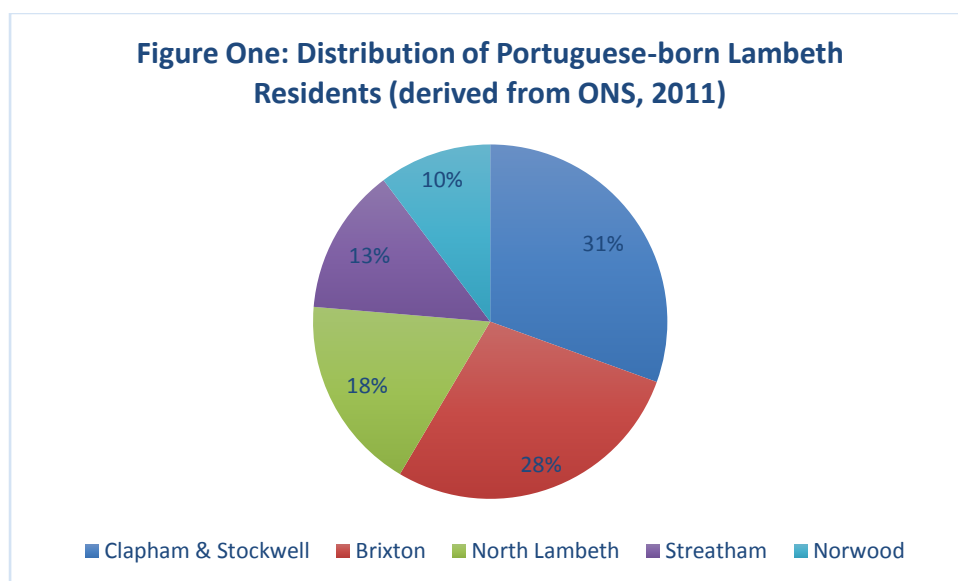
## A Community of Communities

The makeup of the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth is characteristic of the Portuguese speaking community globally and mirrors cosmopolitan London in its own right. Within the community are migrants from four different continents: Europe (the Portuguese mainland and the islands Madeira and Azores); Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and the island of Sao Tome e Principe; South America (Brazil) and Asia (East Timor). Each ethnic group has its own unique culture, yet crucially they share one language and are said as well to be bound by their love of food, music, dance and conviviality in general. There is a sense then in which the community is heterogeneous and diverse whilst remaining distinctive as a whole. One respondent commented

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that members of the different sub-groups "get on with each other very well and this is visible in the celebration of the Day of Portugal, Camoes and the Portuguese Communities", a one day festival that has been held (almost) annually for 39 years and in the borough since the nineties (N.B: Luis de Camoes was a poet of the 15[th]century), with tens of thousands attending.At the same time, it is a loose assemblage of peoples with quite distinctive histories of migration to Lambeth and the UK. One respondent remarked:

> "In Lambeth you find people from all four different continents within the Portuguese speaking community. This is taken as a unit and does not translate in cultural differences. A lot of people coming from African countries or from Brazil have Portuguese passports so, statistically they are considered Portuguese when culturally they are not. In the same way it happens with the Commonwealth it happens with the CPLC (Community of Portuguese Language Countries) and I believe the English authorities don't understand this particularity. They divide the community by geographical characteristics and language spoken but then when there is the same language coming from diverse geographical origins they have difficulty understanding. If we could establish a parallelism between this and the Commonwealth, they would understand. If that explanation is not made then they might have difficulties in 'grouping' us"

With this in mind, the different sub-groups within the Portuguese-speaking community are considered in turn, beginning with those from the Portuguese mainland and islands. Migrants within this group are said to have arrived in three waves. The first of these stretched from the 1960s to the 1980s and whilst initially concentrated in west London, it was this generation that came to establish the grouping of shops and businesses known as Little Portugal in Stockwell. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a further significant migration flow occurred coinciding with a time of high unemployment rate in Portugal. This wave of migrants tended to be from poorer parts of Portugal (and notably Madeira), to be more transient and less likely to have a good level of English. They were drawn to the existing community where they felt safe and where they could use informal support networks to access work and public services. The third wave was sparked by the 2008 global economic crisis which led to soaring youth unemployment and to emigration "at levels unknown since the 1960s, with more than 100,000 people leaving (Portugal) each year (Wise, 2015: 13). Commenting on this movement, Wise notes that "Britain is a leading destination for Portuguese emigrants but unlike the previous generations of rural workers who fled, today the migrants include many skilled young graduates" (ibid: 13). This observation echoes that of reports in the Portuguese media and the views of those interviewed in this study. It was said that newcomers were much less

likely to settle in Little Portugal, not least because of gentrification and rising house prices but also because they speak English well, have jobs across the London area, have a much looser affinity with longer standing Portuguese-speaking residents and tend to be more integrated within London's multicultural scene.

The online research revealed further evidence of this in social media. There are numerous Internet groups, their activity balancing between providing information to and allowing a dialogue between users. Participants in these groups tend to use criteria such as proximity to their workplace or 'good' schools for their children in looking for accommodation rather than because it is within sight and sound of other Portuguese speakers. Similarly, whilst they clearly take part in a variety of social activities together, this is not based in the traditional Portuguese community in Lambeth. Many of this generation appear to simply not need the security and 'community capital' that nourished earlier migrants and whose cafes and clubs[1], associated with sub-regions within Portugal, remain the most visible representation of the community.

It remains the case, however, that less well resourced Portuguese-speaking migrants, those with greater need for support with housing, health and income, do continue to move to and/or spend their time in the traditional settlement area and to rely on the informal support network it provides as well as services targeted at the community which are based there. Hence even within the European part of the Portuguese-speaking community, differences by age, social class or status and region of origin are evident and significant and this has become manifest in distinct modes of networking, one physical, the other virtual.

Comments received regarding other Portuguese-speaking communities also tended to characterise them in contrast with the longstanding Portuguese-born community in the Stockwell area. With reference to Brazilian migrants for example, one Brazilian respondent observed that "in Lambeth, the Portuguese community has been there for longer and they are quite parochial, they live around each other, work for each other… there is no such thing as a "Little Brazil" area, is there?" Some areas, notably Streatham and Brixton were recognised as having a few 'visibly' Brazilian businesses and Brazilian music and dance culture were said to "reach the Portuguese and Angolans in particular". There was also some ambivalence over the extent to which the Brazilian people have settled. On the one hand there was a perception that the Brazilian community has a 'come and go' attitude, that most come on student visas to "study English and have a part-time job for the duration of their stay, but they tend to return to Brazil". On the other it was asserted that Brazilian people

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[1] Clubs are associations dedicated to a particular interest or activity ie cultural, sport, social and can co-exist with particular cafes in that they are the physical space in which the club gathers.

tend to integrate more quickly than other Portuguese speakers. One respondent observed that a great number of Brazilians work as couriers in London, a type of work which requires knowledge of the city as a whole; another noted that more Brazilians seem to apply for volunteering posts where Portuguese language skills are needed.

A recent survey of Brazilians in London (Evans et al., 2010) accords with at least some of the findings from the interviews conducted for this study. These researchers cite Stockwell as an area in which Brazilians are concentrated but also report that they are equally populous in other parts of London and the general story is one of diffusion across the city. In terms of length of stay, Evans et al. report that a majority of their participants had lived in London for five years or more and a significant minority planned to stay indefinitely. In terms of characteristics, the migrant population described by Evans et al. corresponds with the most recent wave of immigrants from Portugal – youthful, educated to degree level and with good language skills.

What does clearly differentiate the experience and circumstances of Brazilian and other non European Portuguese speaking migrants from those coming from Portugal are issues related to immigration. Thus Evans et al. write about Brazilian migrants:

> "In the large majority of cases, the move to London was motivated by the search for better opportunities for working and studying. Many had arrived on a visitor visa which bans the holder from taking up paid employment, but many also entered the country on studentvisas, whilst others held a European passport, with Italy being the country that most awarded a European passport. The immigration status of many Brazilians changed over time, reflecting the efforts of some to overcome the limits and restrictions imposed by certain types of visa, which circumscribe their ability to prolong the stay in order to meet their original aims. Obtaining a European passport, for instance, can be considered a strategy towards this goal" (2010: 28)

Whilst many in the Angolan community no doubt face similar issues with immigration status, there was a sense that only a small minority of Angolans seek to reside on a long term basis in the UK. As an Angolan respondent put it: "Many have as main goal to go back to Angola. Angolan people are not part of the immigrant profile."Whilst a significant cause of emigration from Angola was the civil war (1975 -2002), the upturn in the country's fortune since has meant that many people have been able and chosen to return. This might be one of the reasons for some of the Angolan associations to cease their activities. On the other hand another Angolan respondent said:

"I have been away from association's activities for over 4 years, so I don't know what the present situation is but when I worked for these associations the local authorities met the needs of the Portuguese Speaking organisations, through financial support. The gaps had more to do with the capacity building within these organisations. Currently I think the gap is related to budget cuts, which, actually caused many of the organisations to close, including the ones I worked for".

Much the same would also seem to apply to migrants from Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. As with those from Brazil and Angola, migrants from Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau were reported to be more concentrated in other areas of London such as Lewisham and Newham. This is reflected in the fact that none of the representatives of these communities who the researchers managed to identify and contact (see Appendix A) were based in Lambeth, nor did they provide details of ongoing activities within their communities in the borough. As for the remaining Portuguese-speaking sub-groups identified at a general level (Cape Verde, Sao Tome e Principe and East Timor) no response was received from the organisations the researchers contacted, nor did they receive mention of note amongst interviewees in general. Having said this, some respondents indicated that there may be hidden needs amongst these smaller Portuguese-speaking sub-groups in part because they are a minority within a minority and do not have representatives to speak and advocate for them at a local level. It was commented for example that "the Mozambique community doesn't know what is available for them" in terms of public services.

To summarise, the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth has a strong presence both in terms of numbers and its cultural significance. Their shared language and enjoyment of food and celebratory gatherings are felt to be strong enough to make talk of a 'community' valid and, as is discussed in the next section, this is reflected in the numerous but typically informal cultural associations that exist amongst Portuguese-speakers from around the world. Portuguese and Brazilian cafes, bars and clubs provide a powerful visible indicator of the community and indeed of how it has grown and spread and the now established Day of Portugal festival, an event estimated to draw 40,000 visitors (Sloan, undated: 15), has served to cement their place in the diverse socio-cultural landscape of the borough. Many of the respondents sought to emphasise that Portuguese-speaking people have made a significant economic as well as cultural contribution to Lambeth and London, with migrants over generations having established successful businesses locally and beyond. Whilst as within any such community, there are members with needs and problems that have implications for education, health, social and other public services, there is good reason to believe

that in line with evidence concerning immigration more generally (Travis, 2014), the net economic contribution of the community alone is positive.

At the same time, the heterogeneity of the Portuguese-speaking community must be acknowledged. Amongst migrants from Portugal (the mainland and islands), there is a notable difference between those who arrived in the first wave of migration and newcomers, the first being more connected to traditions and organised through associations (characterized by geographical areas within Portugal and Islands) which the latter group does not identify itself with, instead relying on social media to network amongst themselves and paradoxically more integrated within the multicultural host community than many longer-standing residents. Portuguese-speaking people from South America, Africa and Asia, meanwhile, face the same challenges with immigration status as other non-EU migrants and this has implications for their use of certain public services. Moreover, although Brazilian migrants do enjoy a distinctive cultural presence in Lambeth as in London more generally, the non-European Portuguese-speaking communities have less visibility in their own right and as such appear harder to reach.

## Community Characteristics and Needs

Notwithstanding the last point above and whilst it may have reflected the framing of the study around the community in general, it was nonetheless striking that when respondents were asked to comment on what they perceived to be key characteristics of the Portuguese-speaking community, they did not distinguish particularly between sub-groups. On the contrary what was emphasised was that people across the community interact with each other without there being any overt signs of tension, be it racial, religious, cultural or otherwise. Portuguese-speakers, regardless of geographic origin, were described as law abiding, hard-working, respectful, family orientated, entrepreneurial and 'joyful': "the community is made of 'open people', joyful and respectful and who do not get into conflicts." They were said to be very proud of their ethnic and cultural heritage, hence the large number of cultural associations which in turn reflect different regional identities and they are anxious for this to be passed on to children born and/or having grown up in the UK. "It is very important that we preserve our language and our culture for all, for our children.  We should remind them of their origins, very important". Pride in the language is very evident and was mentioned time and again as the true link between the different cultures which make up the community. Also mentioned frequently was the general love of food and the mutual enjoyment of distinct traditional dishes; the menus of restaurants will frequently include a mix of dishes from all four continents. The daily visit to the café is another shared cultural routine, one that functions well as a type of informal support network. Finally, religious beliefs, mostly Christian, are strong and an intrinsic part of the

day to day life for many, so the church is another source of community spirit: "the Portuguese-speaking community is largely religious and devout. Religion is an anchor and a stability value."[2]

Given that interviewees included a number of people whose work involves supporting more vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community, it is unsurprising that problems such as economic deprivation, alcohol and substance abuse or high levels of illiteracy were mentioned. Other issues identified were a lack of engagement with services providing support to people with mental health problems or learning disabilities, domestic violence – described by one interviewee as "considered very normal" - and homelessness with access to housing more generally seen as especially problematic. It was reported that gender inequalities persist within the community and within families and that there was also tension between the older and younger generations in attitudes towards mixed-race marriages and non-heterosexual relationships. Of course, as with concern over young people's behaviour (which was also raised) such issues can hardly be said to be peculiar to Portuguese-speaking people.

An issue mentioned by almost all respondents (see also Sloan, 2014; Stockwell Community Partnership, 2011) was that a significant minority of the community do not speak or read English at a level sufficient to engage with local services or non-Portuguese speaking residents (although as noted already, this is much less true of more recently arrived migrants). Whilst this does create problems for people - one of the biggest complaints about public services is that most are not staffed by people who can speak Portuguese - the fact that some long time residents still do not speak English is a reflection of how they have been able to survive within the community by relying on its own support networks, businesses and services. If you live in Lambeth, it is quite possible to work, shop, go to a café, attend church and so on speaking only Portuguese. Moreover, as much as not speaking English is viewed as problematic in certain contexts, not doing so serves to sustain Portuguese identity.

It is when it comes to accessing local services that language becomes a serious issue and there is no doubt that the principle of equal access to public services relies heavily on the few Portuguese-speaker led organisations or organisations and charities who have Portuguese speakers within their staff, and are able to assist with welfare advice, free advocacy, interpreting, etc..This difficult situation is felt to have been made worse by recent budget cuts with family members including children and generally untrained people forced to act as interpreters for their clients. It was observed as well that there are some thriving businesses run by Portuguese speakers which offer a similar service but at considerably more cost. Respondents reported that some of these businesses

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[2] See Appendix A for churches contacted

are perfectly legitimate and provide a good service but that others are less reputable, exploiting a gap in the market and members of the community at the same time.

Access to work is also limited for non-English speaking migrants and this leads to concerns over low pay and employment rights being disregarded. Some respondents mentioned cases where the hourly rate paid was below the minimum wage or where working for family and friends meant tolerating verbal and even physical abuse. Also noted was that both Portuguese-speaker led charitable organisations and private recruitment firms provide assistance in "job finding" to many unable to do so through the local Job Centres. Of the latter one interviewee commented: "(Their) role has changed a lot. Nobody is there to help you find a job anymore… just go to the computer, that's it, go to the computer! What if you don't really know how to work it out? Or you don't understand what it says?...Nobody helps you anymore".

A further concern is the situation of some of the elderly in the Portuguese-speaking community. Their lack of knowledge of the English language together with some of the particularities of age, like being retired, less able to move around or suffering from degenerative illnesses like Dementia and Alzheimer's disease, causes a level of isolation that most respondents acknowledged is a considerable worry. This is an issue which organisations with Portuguese speakers in their staff have sought to address, for example by creating meeting groups for the elderly where language is not an impediment. Nevertheless, there was a strong sense that more resources need to be applied to a problem which, as in wider society, has become more acute in recent times and which is made additionally problematic where the language barrier exists. The issue of gaps in provision is returned to below, but first it is necessary to summarise the findings regarding the services, networks and groups which exist within and for the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth.

## Community focused services, networks and groups

The services, networks and groups identified as working, directly or indirectly, with and for the Portuguese-speaking community are described below, divided into six sub-groups according to their distinct roles and institutional characteristics. The commentary distils the information and views from the interviews as well as from the various secondary sources consulted. All the named organisations below are listed in Appendix A, grouped in the same way along with others identified in the course of the research but not directly mentioned here. The location of the most significant organisations and a sample of others listed is shown on the map of Lambeth wards at Appendix C.

### Charitable Organisations and Churches

It is is around the traditional heart of the community in the North East of the Borough that the most significant of these organisations are concentrated. In Kennington, the Portuguese Speakers Community Centre (PSCC), whilst established to provide a service to the community across the UK, plays a key role locally. Its projects include ESOL classes, training in community interpreting and food safety, legal advice, counselling and support groups for people with mental health problems and the elderly. Closer still to Little Portugal, the Stockwell Partnership has been employing Portuguese speaking staff for several years. Its provision includes benefits advice, skills training, debt management surgeries, civic awareness and empowerment activities. The two organisations between them stand out as key providers who work closely together.

Also in Stockwell, the Friends of Tate South Lambeth have recruited a Portuguese Speaker to disseminate their work and organised events focused on Portuguese-speaking culture though aimed at the wider community. In the Brixton area, organisations based at Stockwell Park Community Centre, such as 'The Community Trust', a charity run by the Residents Association that works with all the communities of the area and OASE, a Portuguese speaker run social/spiritual organisation, were reported to have been having a particular impact on the Portuguese-speaking on the Stockwell Park Estate and the adjacent area. Lambeth Mencap in West Norwood is known to have a Portuguese speaking member of staff who works with Portuguese speaking families and LADPP (Latin America Disabled People's Project) in Kennington (Southwark side) has also consciously recruited Portuguese speaking volunteers. Further afield, in Willesden, the 'Casa do Brazil' aims to function as a 'community centre' for Brazilians across London and offers services akin to those mentioned above but also including advice and guidance relating to immigration status.

## Portuguese-speaking Cultural Associations

There is a crossover between this and the private sector in that some cultural associations are run from existing businesses and cafes, making use of the fact they are already a meeting point for Portuguese-speakers, though often tied to a particular region of origin. Most are organised informally but nevertheless provide assistance within their sub-groups by organising social and cultural events, often with the purpose of fundraising for particular causes. They also run football clubs, some having children (youth) and senior teams organised. Others create their own Folklore Groups but even though these can be identified by their names with different sub-groups or regional areas, they are open to all members of the community wishing to participate and engage. Mostly, these associations are run by individuals or groups of individuals during their spare time, subsist on a fee-paying membership and require a dedication that is not easily sustained over time.

Organisations identified as being run by and for Portuguese-speakers other than those from the mainland Portugal and the Islands were based outside the Borough of Lambeth. They include the 'Casa do Brasil' in Willesden, 'Casa de Mocambique' in Lewisham or the AssociacaoLuso-Guineense' in East London. Where the researchers managed to talk to representatives from these bodies, they confirmed that they would work with and/or for residents in Lambeth – it is simply that they are not based there. Much of their activity is advisory as well as social and cultural.

## Social media groups and mailing lists

The growing number of social media groups, some public, some by invite only, with a huge number of members or followers, provide a very useful service in terms of information towards integration in the British way of life for the Portuguese-speaking community, by means of giving information and creating an informative dialogue amongst group members. Such online networks are novel in that they seem to appeal to and be used by the Portuguese-speaking community as a whole, independent of geographical origin or cultural background and because in the case of the more political sites, they represent a new kind of social movement for and of the digital age (Mason, 2012). Nor are these networks purely virtual. Interviewees could for example name instances where convenors of online groups had organised talks and presentations as well as fundraising events. Examples cited include: 'Solidariedadeem UK', 'AbracoMigrande', 'MigrantesUnidos', AbracoSolidario' and the google mailing list 'Faina Londrina'.

## Private sector Businesses

It is important not to overlook Portuguese-speaker owned businesses, including consultancy agencies and recruitment specialists as well as numerous bars and cafes. Respondents emphasised

the importance of the latter in sustaining informal support networks on which the community relies. Some examples are the  A Toca, Madeira and Pico restaurants in Vauxhall, Grelhad'Ouro, Machico , Estrela in South Lambeth Road, Chaved'Ouro, A Torre and A Butterfly Cafe in Crystal Palace,  Sintra Cafe, O Cantinho de Portugal,  and Funchal in Stockwell Road, Luanda Grill in Brixton Hill, Castelo in Tulse Hill, Maria's Kitchen and Camacha in Streatham, Mar Azul in Clapham Road,   Iberico in Norwood Road, Max Snack Bar in Brixton,  Central Station and Madeira Star in Kennington, O Girasol in West Norwood, Rodizio Brazil in Clapham High Street. (N.B. the location of these places is also shown on the map of the borough in Appendix C.)

## Consulates, Embassies and Media– Organisations with a national focus

The various Consulates and Embassies representing the interests of those countries that make up the Portuguese-speaking community are no more but equally no less important to residents in Lambeth as elsewhere in the UK. For example, the Social Attaché at the Portuguese Embassy represents the Portuguese Ambassador at numerous celebrations and special occasions which in turn helps to maintain the liaison between the community and its formal representatives at a national level.

It is also worth including amongst organisations with a national focus existing Portuguese-speaking media. In fact the Brazilian community seems to hold the key to success in this area.  They have a great number of magazines as well as TV and radio stations. Media representing mainland Portugal and the islands are also finding their feet with some newspapers (for example A Gazeta and Nas Noticias) distributed in cafes and businesses free of charge. Relevant media accessed through the internet (for example Palop News and Antena Lusa) are also worthy of note because of their efforts to publish news of interest to Portuguese speakers.

## Local authority, health, housing, educational, employment and social services

Within statutory, mainstream services there are examples of initiatives targeting the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth. The fact that Portuguese is the second most common language amongst school pupils has resulted in efforts to make overt provision for this group. Portuguese is now more widely available as an A level subject (Sloan, undated) and in at least one Primary school (Wyvill) Portuguese is now taught as part of the curriculum. The Grantham Centre Practice, which employs Portuguese-speaking staff and in house interpreters, reflects a similar kind of initiative in terms of health provision.  Such directed provision remains mostly concentrated in the area around Little Portugal and whilst the example of the NHS Mental Health in Lambeth and Southwark film

festival targeted at Portuguese speakers points to exceptions, the general view is that local authority services like housing, social services and the Job Centre provide limited support with some having leaflets in Portuguese and/or some offering access to Interpreters. A sense of how extensive this is felt to be came from one respondent who observed that "to speed up the process we are quite often asked to bring a member of our family or a friend that speaks English to the interviews". Linked to this was a general concern that cuts in public sector funding have had their toll in terms of these forms of support, limiting them further.

Asked whether they felt local authority services in general meet the needs of the Portuguese-speaking community, respondents were emphatic: 'No'. Access to housing, to employment, to benefits, to health services and so on is problematic, especially for the more vulnerable and disadvantaged and the general feeling is that not enough is done given the size and importance of the community overall. In terms of meeting community needs, respondents drew a clear distinction between local authority services and those provided by the charitable organisations discussed above.

## Strengths, Weaknesses and Developmental Needs

Collectively, the considerable range and number of sources of support, formal and informal, charitable and profit-making, terrestrial and online described above reflects the relative size and significance of the Portuguese community in Lambeth. Likewise, there is a sense in which the strengths, weaknesses and needs of this loose assemblage of services, networks and groups mirror those of the community itself. Thus one can say that the cafes, businesses and cultural associations are integral to the community's identity, sustaining the language, the food, the music and other connections with home that are such a source of pride and enjoyment for its members. But on the other hand one can point to the heavy reliance of more vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community on a small number of charitable organisations and see this as a weakness of the community, its immediate support structure and statutory services in general.

As is repeated in all the studies of the Portuguese-speaking community, it is difficult to understate the significance of language. The obvious strength of organisations such as the PSCC and SP is that they employ Portuguese-speaking staff who can communicate with the significant minority of those in the community whose English is very limited and who therefore struggle to access mainstream services. By contrast, the absence of Portuguese-speaking staff in benefits offices, housing associations and so on is overwhelmingly viewed as a weakness of public services in the borough and is a source of frustration.

The proliferation of new social media groups and networks within the community and indeed of more traditional media reflects the growth of the community in general as well as the youthfulness of the most recent wave of migrants to the UK and into Lambeth and can be considered a strength. This is because, as with the informal network of physical places to socialise provided by cafes, online forums provide a space for information exchange whilst newspapers and radio stations also remain important channels of communication by virtue of language and cultural attachment.

Many of the small organisations identified are weak in terms of formal organisation and capacity building. This might be because they do not have the necessary funding to progress or, in some cases, because they are born and maintained out of the determination of an individual or small group and so self-limiting. A number of socio-cultural associations and community groups seem to fall in this category and whilst they are widely valued for their role in sustaining community identity, they are also viewed as poorly governed at the level of record keeping and accounts: "they have generally no capacity to organise themselves, or to build a project or to make a bid". The fact that their primary purpose is to provide a space for convivial social interaction amongst others with a shared heritage and that they frequently rely on the spare time of people with busy family and working lives frames both their ambition and capacity.

Many respondents viewed the PSCC as a strength in and of itself but also as an overly stretched resource that relies on the efforts of the CEO and a small number of volunteers. Whilst it has had some success in diversifying its funding sources, there is strongly felt concern within the community about the sustainability of the centre without some form of long-term core funding. The centre is seen as a hard earned resource for the community locally and there is a strong sense that the centre belongs to the community. Accordingly, there is an equally strongly felt view that one of the best ways to "support the Portuguese-speaking community in the borough", as per the 'Portuguese Speakers Community Fund 2014' guidance, is to support the centre, not least because its activities cohere so closely with the aims of the fund. One suggestion was that the PSCC could act even more than it does already as an umbrella organisation under which smaller groups can develop, but it is evident that this in itself would need to be resourced. At present there is no spare capacity to do the capacity building. The centre represents best practice in that it understands and responds to local needs, its projects targeting the known problems within the community such as access to welfare, housing and health whilst also seeking to address the major barrier to mainstream services, not speaking or being able to read and write well in English. Amongst respondents there was some bewilderment that the centre was not itself the recipient of the Portuguese Speakers Community Fund given that their aims and activities appear to coincide.

There is felt to be a need for more communication and networking between the various actors engaged in some way in promoting the interests and wellbeing of the community. Whilst informal networks are felt to be strong, there is very little formal interaction between the various social and cultural associations that exist and so little opportunity to promote the interests of the wider community through collaborative working. Relatedly, whilst the work of the Portuguese-speaking councillor (Guilherme Rosa, representing the ward of Stockwell) is widely valued, the need for more representation of this kind is keenly felt. As Sloan (undated: 5) puts it, "the community is active internally and informally, but not active in the mainstream and formal political sense". Changing this is by no means straightforward. The lack of civic participation which is said to characterise the community is seen as reflecting a suspicion and wariness of political institutions and state services acquired through experience of unstable and oppressive regimes in their countries of origin. Moreover, part of the strength of informal networks comes from the fact that they provide an alternative means of 'getting things done' that avoids engaging with formal institutions and, crucially, overcomes the language barrier.

Nonetheless, some respondents did see greater involvement by the community in civic forums as a way forward. One commented that "each neighbourhood, in Lambeth, should have a Portuguese speaker representative, a "speaker" to act between community and council - that could be a good idea to implement." Others, however, argued that the Council itself should be more proactive in recruiting Portuguese speakers to jobs in front-line services. As it is, both charities which employ/recruit Portuguese-speaking staff/volunteers and private businesses ran by Portuguese speakers are relied upon because the language barrier prevents people from accessing such services.

# Summary and Recommendations

As discussed earlier, within the community exist a variety of social problems and vulnerable individuals. There are some issues (for example, crime, especially youth gangs and street violence; a lack of affordable activities for children and young people) which are certainly of concern to Portuguese speaking residents but only inasmuch as they are a concern to many Lambeth residents. The concerns that seem to have particular resonance for this community are as follows:

- A significant minority of residents who do not speak or read and write in English to a level that allows them to engage with local services without the aid of an interpreter;
- Overcrowded and unsuitable accommodation and problems accessing affordable housing;
- Vulnerable elderly people who do not speak English and may have mental health problems associated with age that are not easily diagnosed in translation;
- Mental health problems more generally (such as depression) and the fact that due to both stigma and the language barrier, sufferers may not seek support;
- Domestic violence;
- Substance misuse;
- Unemployment and low wages; concern about the practices of some employers suspected of not meeting rights to fair pay, annual leave, health and safety etc. There appears to be a relatively strong informal economy and labour market that relies on people not having the social and cultural capital to access jobs and services without the support of sometimes costly mediators;
- Non take-up of freely available health and social services due to lack of knowledge and awareness and, again, because of the language barrier;
- Difficulties for non-English speaking parents in accessing services and support for children with special needs. Some of the complex needs faced by families are not easily addressed simply by having interpreters, even where they are available. Ethical issues around confidentiality can arise, for example, if the client-professional relationship has to be mediated by a third party;
- Within the non-European Portuguese-speaking communities there are also issues around immigration status. Some public services are simply not available to people as they do not have a current visa allowing them to remain in the UK.

Most of these concerns and needs are not of course exclusive to Portuguese Speakers, nor do they affect anything like all members of the community which as we have said is diverse in terms of region of origin, length of residence, educational qualifications and knowledge of English. It is also in the nature of many of these problems that they tend to be hidden and so are not easily measured, hence it is not possible on the basis of the research for this report to be specific about how much of a problem these issues are in specific parts of the borough. It does seem plausible that as the community has spread geographically, so there will be pockets of disadvantage across the area but it is difficult to go beyond speculation on this matter.

The charitable, community based organisations which have developed over time, most notably the Stockwell Partnership and the Portuguese Speakers Community Centre play a key role in attempting to meet these needs and there is a strong argument for investing more resources in and through these key bodies as well as some smaller community based organisations.  In this regard there is a concern within the community that the funding criteria for grants from the Portuguese Speakers Community Fund (especially the limit on the amounts that can be awarded and on the duration of projects) disadvantage the organisations best placed to meet such needs. It is recommended that the London Community Foundation discuss such concerns directly with the governing body of the Portuguese Speakers Community Centre so as to better understand them and so as to identify potential ways forward.

More generally it is recommended that the London Community Foundation engages with these and the other key stakeholders identified in this report (see Appendix A and also Sloan, undated) so as to incorporate their knowledge and contacts in decision making and so as to ensure a degree of shared ownership of the process by which the Portuguese Speakers Community Fund is allocated. One way to do this would be for the Fund to employ or fund a Portuguese-speaking outreach worker to pro-actively support grant applications by visiting community centres and other organisations and groups and assisting directly with form filling and meeting the formal requirements set for obtaining funds. The aim would be to take help and advice to the community rather than expecting them to seek it out. This would also help to address the fact that capacity building is identified as a significant weakness of many of the smaller associations and groups that currently exist.[3] The kind of things which constrain capacity building include finite time and resources, limited written communication skills (English), limited knowledge and understanding of the formal requirements for funding

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[3] In this regard, it should be noted that there is very little evidence out there to evaluate existing best practice in meaningful and objective terms. Unlike the established charities such as the PSCC and SCP, these organisations do not for example collect monitoring information or formally report on their activities which in turn means there is little existing evidence on which to develop funding applications.

applications, of the process of how to write bids and of the legal requirements on organisations, for example around child protection and safeguarding so these are all potential issues to be addressed. As has been discussed in this report, there is also a need and the potential for better information sharing and collaborative working across and between the many organisations, groups and networks that support the Portuguese-speaking community in different ways and this too is an area that the London Community Foundation could use the information generated by this report to develop.

Similarly there is scope for drawing on the many online networks that have begun to emerge within the community but this requires someone able to speak the language. These groups are a repository for all sorts of information (about obtaining work, housing, welfare support, a bank account etc.). As such much can be learnt about the needs of the community through ongoing engagement and interaction with these groups. In turn they can serve as a conduit through which information about the availability of grants and how to apply for them can be disseminated. The same applies to the informal network of cafes, bars and clubs as well as to churches and cultural associations. Cultivating a relationship with such bodies is a means to both learning about the needs of and advertising opportunities to the community. This could also be seen as a way of addressing the lack of coordination and interaction between community based organisations which is viewed as a barrier at present. The formal representative authorities (the Consulates and Embassies) and traditional media outlets each have contacts within and knowledge about the community so again there is a value in developing relationships with them – as a source of information and a channel to feed information through. Finally, some mainstream services do target the Portuguese-speaking community and more generally it is likely that youth and community centres, as with some churches will have people from the community using their services. Such organisations could potentially provide information about the needs of the community (which is why the research team included them as potential contacts) and are one more outlet for spreading information.

The contact details for the various organisations the research team has contacted and have information for are listed in Appendix A, grouped by the type of organisation as in the discussion above. Within the table the types of organisation have been further differentiated as follows:

- **Highlighted in bold are those organisations which appear to meet London Community Foundation criteria for grants and which, based on the interviews conducted with them, appear to do or to have the potential to work on the key themes around health and wellbeing and access to employment. In other words these eight organisations appear to be the most likely candidates for potential funding the current time based on their**

**activities and capacity and because they have expressed an interested in or are judged likely to be interested in submitting a funding application;**

- *In italics are shown organisations which either demonstrated interest in creating projects but are not yet organised formally and seem unlikely to meet the funding criteria set at this stage in their development, or did not respond to requests for interview but appear on the face of it to be potential candidates for funding (including the Portuguese Speakers Advisory Service for example);*

- The remaining organisations are listed not because they are judged as potential recipients for grant funding (many would be excluded by default such as the private businesses; others do not do work relevant to the funding themes) but because they are potential sources of information and conduits for communication. Within this group are highlighted in blue organisations which are likely to include Portuguese speaking clients or users but only as part of the community in general and which may well not have Portuguese speaking staff;

- Listed finally in a separate table is a list of key community representatives contacted, not all of whom are associated with organisations in the main table.

It is recommended that the London Community Foundation and the Grant Committee uses this information to target potential grant recipients and to identify from them what they need in order to meet criteria in the future. It should be emphasised that this will involve ongoing collaboration and dialogue. For this research for example, it was only possible to map out in quite general terms the organisations, the services provided and issues of capacity. What is needed is for ongoing relationships to be developed between the London Community Foundation and these various bodies.

Finally, based on the summary of needs identified at the beginning of this section as well as examples come across during the course of the research it is possible to recommend in broad terms, some of the kinds of activities or projects which the PSCF might be used to support:

- Support groups targeting vulnerable members of the community, perhaps involving arts and craft or some other group activities, intended to reduce isolation and exclusion

- Awareness and knowledge raising events, providing information about public and community services or focused on particular issues

- After school clubs and activities targeted at Portuguese-speaking families to enable access to employment, education and training

- Careers/Jobs advice and information workshops/sessions (including advice on small business start-ups)

- ESOL classes in general but also tailored to meet the needs of specific professions
- Health education advice and information workshops/sessions with a focus on mental health needs and support services in particular
- Action-research projects investigating specific problems and evaluating potential forms of support

As can be seen from the description of activities currently performed by the various bodies listed in the table in Appendix A, some of these things are being done already but there is a general sense that the level of need is such that demand outstrips supply. It may be that the key to supporting more of these and other appropriate activities and projects is to develop relationships with the organisations and individuals identified in this report such that a mutual and ongoing exchange of information can occur.

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**Appendix B: Interview Schedule**

Please describe your role and/or the role of your organisation. How much and in what ways does your work/your organisation's work relate to the needs of the Portuguese SpeakingCommunity (PSC) in Lambeth? Is this work with the PSC as a whole or in particular areas of Lambeth or with specific sub-groups? How long has the service/organisation existed?

Outside of Vauxhall and Stockwell, are there particular places in the borough where Portuguese-speaking people are concentrated and where you and your organisation focus your work?

Through your knowledge or contact with the PSC in Lambeth, how would you describe that community? Is/are there a distinctive culture or distinctive cultures? What, if any, defining PSC values exist that you think should be preserved and supported?

What do you think are the main strengths, needsand issues facing the Portuguese-speaking community in Lambeth? To what extent are these equally distributed amongst sub-groups within the community? Are some areas/needs better provided for than others? Are there any specific problems or concerns (health, economic, housing, education, employment, etc.) How about access to services for people who do not speak English fluently?

What organisations/support groups/networks are you aware of that represent the needs of Portuguese-speaking resident s and communities? Are there socio-cultural activities particularly associated with Portuguese-speakers and how are these supported?

In general terms, how well do you think local services meet the needs of the Portuguese-speaking communities? Are there specific gaps in provision that you think need to be addressed? Do you have specific ideas about changes that need to occur and how these can/should be realised?

Do you know anyone you think might be able to help us with this research such as members or representatives of the community or particular service providers? Do you know of or have any written information that would be relevant to this research?

**Appendix C: Map of Lambeth wards (n= number of Portuguese born residents according to 2010 Census) and of Key Organisations & Businesses**



Top right box:
- Ministérios Unidos por Cristo
- Portuguese Speakers Community Centre
- Vauxhall Gardens Community Centre
- Madeira, Madeira Star, Pico

Left upper box:
- "O Cultural"
- Hyde Stockwell Community Centre
- Landsworth Youth Centre
- Friends of Tate South Lambeth Library
- OASIS
- Stockwell Partnership
- A Toca; Estrela;Grelha D' Ouro; Machico; Mar Azul

Right box:
- ACPUK (South Tate Library)
- PLS Consultants
- RBS Solicitors
- Scalabrini Fathers
- Central Station

Left box:
- Angolan-African Cultural Association
- FCP London Dragons
- GP Practice- The Grantham Centre
- Grupo Desportivo de Mangualde
- Parish of Christ Church

Right box:
- Missão Católica

Right box:
- IRMO (Indoamerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation)
- Young Lambeth – Children and Young People's Service
- Max Snack Bar

Left box:
- Kids Love Lambeth
- Neto's Agency
- Rodízio Brazil

Right box:
- Chave D'Ouro

Left box:
- Aurora Project
- Carer's Hub Lambeth
- Healthwatch Lambeth
- Mind Lambeth and Southwark
- OASE
- Stockwell Park Community Trust
- The Bay Tree Centre
- Funchal, Cantinho de Portugal, Sintra

Right box:
- Leander Road Residents' Association

Right box:
- Tree House Children's Centre
- Luanda Grill

Left box:
- Camacha Café

Right box:
- Castelo, Ibérico

Left box:
- Portuguese Speaking Advisory Service
- Spires Centre

Right box:
- Lambeth Mencap
- O Girasol

Right box:
- Butterfly, Chave D'Ouro, A Torre

Bottom box:
- Maria's Kitchen

Bottom right box:
- Charitable Organisations& Churches
- Portuguese Speaking Cultural Associations
- Private Sector Businesses
- Local authority, health, housing, educational, employment and Social services
- Cafés and bars

Map ward labels:
Bishop's 133
Prince's 331
North Lambeth
Oval 450
Vassall 332
Stockwell 889
Larkhall 649
Coldharbour 433
Herne Hill 229
Clapham Town 214
Ferndale 600
Clapham Common 130
Brixton Hill 296
Tulse Hill 398
Brixton
Thornton 253
Streatham Hill 312
Thurlow Park 228
St Leonard's 183
Streatham Wells 239
Knight's Hill 298
Gipsy Hill 193
Norwood
Streatham South 202
Streatham