

Equity Project 2019-20

Removing Barriers to Access at a City Farm in Bristol

Exploring the barriers to access to urban farms for diverse communities, and presenting possible solutions

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- Equity Report researched and written by Manu Maunganidze, Rhian Grant and Esme Worrell
- Recruitment and Selection Documentation Audit compiled by the Diversity Trust
- Cultural Competencies Audit and Report conducted by and authored by Cocoa Stephens, Josepha Garrett-Hollows and Samuel Hollows

FOREWORD

The Farm's Equity Project began in the summer of 2019 after one of our Project Managers walked into the Director's office and said: "You guys need to be doing more about Diversity and Inclusion". They were right. Despite having an adequate Equality and Diversity policy in place, and the sense that we considered ourselves a 'welcoming, open and caring' organisation, our people (service users, staff and trustees) did not reflect the diversity of people living Bristol, and in particular the communities around the Farm. Looking back at our historical archive of photos, the images depict significantly diverse community engagement which led us to ask what external and internal factors have influenced a change in our people, and more importantly, what could we do to remedy this. It was very apparent that we needed to embed and embrace a cultural shift to become a more inclusive organisation where everyone has equal opportunity to thrive.

Initial research revealed that the lack of diversity at St Werburghs City Farm is mirrored in the sector as a whole, with fewer than 9% of voluntary sector employees coming from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (from ACEVO's 2018 report on Racial Diversity in the Charity Sector). Alongside this, the farming industry is the least diverse employer in the UK (Labour Force Survey, 2016). Determined that we didn't want to be included within these failing statistics, we set on a path of action, organising compulsory Diversity and Inclusion Training (BSWN) for key staff managers and identifying project ideas that would allow us to uncover and address current limitations and barriers to inclusion.

In October 2019, we secured funding through Space to Connect, a partnership between The Co-op Foundation and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to expand activities and embed sustainable ways of working to build a more secure future. The Equity Project was a central component of this work, seeking to explore barriers to participation for the diverse communities within geographical reach of the Farm. The resulting Equity Report sought to provide a body of research to inform the Farm's strategic development in attaining a more inclusive future and to share learning with organisations of a similar focus and size.

The Equity Team followed a rigorous process in compiling the report, including contracting the support of two external consultants (The Diversity Trust and Cocoa Stephens) and carrying out their own research within the areas local to the Farm. The Equity Project engaged and collaborated with individuals and groups from a mix of age groups, genders and ethnic backgrounds. Participants in the research were approached via a combination of methods, including targeted focus groups and surveys, street canvassing and door knocking. The locations and communities targeted with these approaches were selected with the intention of diversifying representation. A range of research methods were used, including individual interviews, focus groups, community meetings, questionnaires and surveys. The Equity Report draws together the consultants' reports and combines them with our own research, to deliver a set of organizational recommendations.

'The core question, then, for community based urban farms seeking to increase their diversity and be more inclusive, is not how to get ethnic minority communities interested in what urban farms do, since it is apparent that such interest already exists. The core question is how to get to know the community at large, in all its diversity, in order to offer people a suitable environment in which they can engage in pursuits that are already of interest to them in a more accessible way, so that SWCF can become a community resource which invites and encourages people from all backgrounds to bring their own inspiration, passion and knowledge to augment it.'

Excerpt from the Equity Report

The key recommendations of the report centre around:

Global factors such as:

- Increasing community consultation, outreach and co-creation of projects
- Increasing partnership working with other organisations that represent people that are not currently engaging with the Farm

Physical factors such as:

- Improving access and transportation to the Farm
- Improving signage, interpretation, maps and fliers
- Improving accessible, year-round facilities and affordable refreshments

Cultural factors such as:

- Supporting greater ownership from people of ethnic minority communities
- Increasing awareness of all sites and services through proactive marketing
- Redefining the vision of the Farm and developing a new “voice”

Staffing factors such as:

- Introducing reflective practice about cultural competency for all staff
- Improving our recruitment process to welcome diverse candidates
- Developing and sharing key milestones to set timescales to ensure progress is transparent

The importance of this project was drawn into sharp focus by the events of 2020, namely: the Coronavirus pandemic, which exposed and exacerbated longstanding and deadly inequalities embedded in our society; and the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25th 2020, with subsequent Black Lives Matter protests that swept the globe.

The Equity Report has made these societal issues personal, by uncovering the echoes of structural racism within our own organisation. As Binna Kandola says in his book ‘Racism at Work’: *“The belief that we as individuals, could not be racist, and by extension, that our organisations can’t be either, is one of the most serious obstacles that exists in making racial equality a reality.”*

This report has brought home the depth of work that is required of us, as an organisation and as individuals, to dismantle biased and prejudiced views. This is both deeply humbling and a clarion-call for deep-seated change. Whilst we are proud that our organisation welcomed and supported the investigations of the Equity Report, what has been uncovered is daunting and reveals significant gaps in our understanding of the issues, highlighting a wide range of areas we must now address as our top priority.

We recognise that the work of dismantling barriers to access, increasing our cultural competence and becoming a more diverse organisation at all levels is not something that happens overnight. This report is the first step along this path of making racial equality and inclusion of all protected characteristics a reality within our organisation, and we are committed to the journey in full. We take full responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations within this report and will put mechanisms in place to ensure that we are accountable to ourselves and our wider community. We hope that, by making this report available to our wider sector, our work can be a stepping-stone for other organisations to start their own journey towards inclusion and equality.

Ash Meakins
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Kari Halford
Co-Director

Jess Clynewood
Co-Director

“Diversity, Equality, Equity and Inclusion are all key for a fair and just society. St Werburghs City Farm is an example of a community organisation which can embrace and exemplify how this can look to other organisations and groups. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of post-colonial Ghana once said, “Thought without practice is empty; and action without thought is blind.” This equity report is the first step to understanding of where we are and what the challenges will be in engaging with our wider community. This is our thought moment. From our report, we can work on bringing meaningful action to help create a Farm that is truly open and welcoming. This will be a journey in which we hope to include everybody and anybody to drive real and positive change. So join us and get in touch to find out more about how you could get involved in supporting our vision for a Farm where everyone belongs.”

Navaratnam Partheeban MRCVS, trustee at SWCF

SOME NOTES ON LANGUAGE

- St Werburghs City Farm is referred to as both St Werburghs City Farm and SWCF throughout this report, except for direct quotes from research participants, or from external documentation.
- It was noted during the research that there is some fluidity in language around participants, for example some participants are likely to self-identify as volunteers however they would most certainly be classed as a service-user by SWCF. The language used in this report may not always reflect how individual persons identify; this is to ensure that the information given is accurately reflecting each person's agreed relationship with SWCF. A clarification on participants at SWCF:
 - Staff – persons employed by SWCF by means of a contract of employment (this includes paid interns).
 - Contractors – persons engaged from an external organisation to carry out a piece of work on behalf of SWCF by means of a contract or tender.
 - Volunteers/ lead volunteers – voluntary persons carrying out duties on behalf of SWCF and abiding by the same policies and behavioural expectations of employed staff.
 - Service-users – persons who are engaged as recipients and beneficiaries of SWCF's services.
 - Visitors/members of the public – those who visit SWCF to engage with the publicly available areas of the site independently, and on occasion as part of a pre-arranged tour of the site.
- References to 'staff interviews' and 'conversations with staff' refer to both formal and informal interviews conducted internally by the Equity Project team, as distinct from the 13 staff interviews conducted as part of the external Cultural Competency Review. Data taken from the Cultural Competency Review is referenced as such throughout the report.
- The definition of ethnic minorities as "BAME" which refers to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities does not sufficiently allow for the appreciation of varying opinions, situations, and levels of engagement within the diverse communities that are encompassed by this acronym. Public debate about the usefulness of this term, which influences a lot of statistical demographic analysis, is ongoing. We chose instead to use the phrase 'ethnic minority', as at the time of writing it presents a largely accepted term which is appropriate to the specific context of writing this report. The researchers took great care to not generalise the opinions given to them to be representative of all minority and ethnic groups and encourage readers of the report to do the same.

SPACE TO CONNECT FUNDING

This piece of research was funded through Space to Connect, a partnership between The Co-op Foundation and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Space to Connect Enhance funding was granted to SWCF to expand activities and embed sustainable ways of working to build a more secure future. Part of this commitment was this report, which aims to explore barriers to participation for the diverse communities within geographical reach of SWCF, and to provide a body of research to inform the creation of an organisational strategy to become a more inclusive organisation and community resource.

BACKGROUND OF SWCF AND URBAN FARMING IN GENERAL

The purpose of this report is to seek to understand why the ethnically diverse communities who live within Bristol inner city do not currently make full use of SWCF. It attempts to understand how SWCF is viewed by those

communities, and what impact that has on their ability or desire to make use of its services. This report then seeks to find ways in which the Farm could transform itself in the coming months and years to become a more inclusive and accessible space that all the residents of central Bristol can view as a genuine community asset. There are no clear-cut routes to organisations becoming more inclusive and representative of the communities they work in. Mistakes are almost unavoidable. Having to go back to square one is inevitable. However, a good strategy is always starting with being open and honest; honest about how SWCF functions and what it means to its intended users, and open about how it intends to get better at what it does. In short, the report will answer the following questions:

- Who currently visits SWCF and why?
- Who currently does not visit SWCF? What are the reasons why those people do not currently visit SWCF?
- Who is currently employed by SWCF?
- Are the marketing strategies, event offerings and employment practices at SWCF currently inclusive of the diverse communities that live within walking distance?
- How could SWCF change these elements to become a better and more resilient community asset?
- What would better access to SWCF mean for the mental and physical health of the communities currently not making full use of SWCF? Further, what would it mean for the sense of community in Ashley Ward?
- Do the issues SWCF face in becoming more inclusive mirror more broad issues about feelings of exclusion by ethnic minority people to the British countryside in general, and to urban green spaces in particular?

WHAT IS ST WERBURGH'S CITY FARM?

SWCF is a unique urban agriculture project within Bristol Centre. It is nestled in a little valley on the edge of St Werburghs, downhill from St Andrews and Lockleaze, and adjacent to the self-build eco-houses of “The Yard”. It directly manages 5 ½ acres of mixed farmland (involving both animals and plants), conservation areas and event space along with 13 acres of allotment land. It is in Ashley Ward which has a 33% ethnic minority population [1]. This is more than twice the Bristol average of 16%. [1] There is no demographic data available for the immediate area next to SWCF. However, it is visibly and audibly more affluent and White-British than, for example, the neighbourhood of St Paul’s 10 minutes’ walk away, which has a more visibly African and Caribbean heritage population. Staff surveys and tours of SWCF indicate that these latter demographic groups and other ethnic minorities are currently not as engaged with SWCF (either as self-directed visitors or as service users, trustees or volunteers) as might be expected given their proximity to it.

The stated vision of SWCF is “to inspire and educate happy, healthy, communities, through green spaces, local food and each other”. Within the latest aims of SWCF are the explicit intentions to “enhance access and enjoyment of green spaces” as well as “bring a diverse group of people together” through “better communication”. The assumption here is that SWCF recognises that what it offers is something that has a positive impact on people’s lives. The 18+ acres under SWCF’s management also comprises a sizable parcel of land in a high population and building density part of town. The health and societal benefits of being in green spaces and being involved in food growing are well documented and almost universally accepted, especially in relation to city-dwellers. The aims stated here point to an acknowledgement by SWCF that these benefits are not currently being enjoyed by the entire community, and that part of the responsibility for better engagement lies with SWCF itself.

WHAT IS SWCF DOING WELL?

SWCF is in many respects a thriving community asset; through SWCF’s own data, through conversations with staff and the public, it was widely acknowledged that the organisation has a positive impact in many areas

including:

- Providing practical and fun education to school children of all ages and backgrounds through contracts with local schools, community groups and individual families.
- Providing key services to people with learning disabilities.
- Providing open access to over 60,000 visitors per year.
- Providing well attended events and facilities for many local participants and groups each year.
- Providing a variety of volunteer opportunities and programmes to all ages throughout the year.
- Providing fair and meaningful employment to people passionate about ethical farming, education, and the environment.
- Competently managing one of Bristol's biggest and most active allotment sites.

It is important to acknowledge the positive impacts and achievements of the organisation, both to paint a clearer picture of the landscape in which the research has evolved, and to illustrate the existing foundational capacity from which the recommendations contained in this report may be implemented.

NEED FOR RESEARCH

As with most social enterprises, SWCF must remain relevant to the people who live near it. This piece of research attempts to find reasons why people from diverse backgrounds apparently engage with SWCF less than others. The perception is that ethnic minorities are visibly less likely to visit the Farm or work there.

By uncovering some of the potential reasons for this, we can then point to some of the actions SWCF could be taking to improve access to those people who are currently not making full use of it. It is also hoped that this research will be a useful reference in the future, to measure what changes have taken place, and to inform future decision making.

Finally, the research will aim to embed inclusivity into the culture and organisational structure of SWCF. The very publication of this research should signal a change in how SWCF seeks to re envision itself relationship with the communities near it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The project has been informed by a wide array of diverse source material to create what is hoped to be new insights on the topic of diversity and equality at city farms specifically, and outdoor spaces generally. What follows is a summary of some of the literature already available on these topics.

DATA ON INEQUALITY

There is an increasing amount of data available online relating to different elements of inequality. The following resources were particularly informative:

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019) [2] – This is a nationwide survey that identifies the levels of deprivation of every neighbourhood (Lower Super Output Area) in England. It measures 9 different forms of deprivation including access to housing, education and income. The data from this index has been useful identifying the relationship between deprivation, ethnicity, and access to St Werburghs City Farm (SWCF).

Bristol City Council Ward Profile Data (2019) [3] – This is a detailed assessment of different characteristics of Bristol's 34 wards. This data includes statistics on demographic make-up, household size, education, child poverty and other data which proved invaluable to understanding the ward (Ashley) that SWCF is in as well as being able to compare that data with other parts of Bristol. This data was invaluable in understanding the profile of the people of Ashley Ward and therefore seeing who was currently not accessing SWCF and the potential

reasons for this exclusion. One limitation of this data is that wards are a larger geographical area than the LSOAs and therefore less specific.

Bristol City Council Quality of Life Survey (2018) [4] – This is closely related to the Ward Profiles above. It however has in-depth information on Bristol residents' attitudes to food growing, access to leisure facilities, approaches to community volunteering and many other aspects of life which this project used to explore why certain populations were not represented at SWCF in expected numbers. As above, there is a limitation to this data being ward based as opposed to LSOA-based.

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (Natural England) [5] – This government commissioned survey is conducted every year to measure the level and nature of access to nature of different demographics in England. In brief it shows how ethnic minorities have lower levels of access and positive engagement with the British outdoors. This information has been useful in identifying in what ways SWCF fits into wider trends of access for minority groups and ultimately what may be some of the reasons for that lack of engagement.

Ethnicity Facts and Figures from The Race and Disparity Unit (updated yearly) [6], National Census data (conducted every 10 years), and RSPB's survey on access to nature were also very useful in cross-checking, validating or enhancing some of the information gathered in the above.

THEORETICAL AND QUALITATIVE LITERATURE

The work of Amartya Sen (2004) was useful in providing definitions of equality, inclusion, and deprivation.

The community planning toolkit [7], as well as the work of AM Begnall and others (2016) [8], provided a solid framework for ways of conducting the research as well as possible ways of engaging with the community following the end of this project.

The Runnymede Trust's 2017 report on Ethnic minority disadvantage in Bristol provided a useful analysis of inequality along ethnic lines in Bristol. [9]

Recent articles on exclusion from nature in general by authors Beth Collier (UK) and Angelou Ezeilo were taken into consideration. It was found that many of the themes explored in outdoor inclusion are similar to those referring to urban agriculture.

CITY FARM LITERATURE

A great deal of effort has gone into analysing the data SWCF collects (and does not) on its visitors and staff. This was to gain a better picture of the readiness of SWCF to implement effective inclusion strategies, and to create a benchmark that could be referred to in future reviews of SWCF's equality efforts. Where possible comparisons were made to similar documentation produced by other city farms such as Windmill Hill (Bristol) and Rice Lane City Farm (Liverpool).

- SWCF employee statistics – SWCF did not until this project retain consistent demographic information on who worked (and volunteered) there. Part of this project was therefore to gather this data.
- SWCF policies and procedures – These documents were analysed by an external agent to assess the current administrative and legal capacity of SWCF to deliver on its intended inclusion and equality aims.
- SWCF's recruitment advertising – Past job adverts were analysed by an external agent for potential bias, language used, and legality as well as where and when they were placed.
- SWCF's marketing (physical and online) was also assessed.

SWCF did not possess any consistent information on the demographic of its visitors. This is normal and in keeping with standard practice for city farms. Strategies to find ways of collecting this data for the sake of inclusion are suggested in this report.

METHOD

Example of methodology: The BMJ report on barriers to access of mental health services for ethnic minority people provided a solid framework for the method of investigation used to produce this report.

<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/11/e012337>

DESIGN AND SETTING

Qualitative research was undertaken in the following areas of Bristol, spanning a two-mile radius SWCF:

- Lockleaze
- St Pauls
- St Agnes
- St Jude's
- Easton
- Easton/Lawrence Hill
- Newtown
- Central (Stokes Croft)

The Equity Project was designed and executed with the following principles of community engagement at its core:

- Inform
 - Consult
 - Involve
 - Collaborate
 - Empower
-

PARTICIPANTS

In the design and execution of the project and data gathering, the Equity Project engaged and collaborated with individuals and groups from a mix of age groups, genders and ethnic backgrounds. Participants in our research were approached via a combination of methods, including targeted focus groups and surveys, street canvassing and door knocking. The locations and communities targeted with these approaches were selected with the intention of diversifying representation. 16% of Bristol's population identify as persons of colour from ethnic minority backgrounds, and a significant proportion of this percentage live in the areas relevant to our research. In Ashley Ward, the council ward where SWCF is situated, 33% of the population are Black, Asian or of a minority ethnicity, more than twice the Bristol average. Given the proportion of ethnic minority representation within the geographical remit of our research, our intentional collaboration with a range of local organisations whose work is specifically with ethnic minority communities, and the diversity of our research methods, our participants are representative of a diversity in ethnic background, age, gender, socio-economic status, education and occupation. All participants were asked to complete equality and diversity monitoring forms and the information was anonymously gathered, recorded, linked to responses, and analysed for emergent patterns. All participants were informed that interviews would be recorded anonymously, and consent was obtained prior to interviews. Interpreters were sourced where needed and appropriate. Interviews were recorded on a handheld audio device in various private and group settings.

DATA COLLECTION

The following methods were used in the collection of data:

- Individual interviews recorded on a digital audio device

- Focus groups/Community meetings recorded on a digital audio device
- Questionnaires/Surveys through digital forms delivered via email, and monitoring forms recorded on paper.
- Cultural competency review of staff and volunteers performed by an external agent. The review produced a separate anonymised report which has been referenced throughout this project.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Three groups of participants were selected for individual interviews. The first grouping is of staff members of SWCF; the second group consists of members of the public, who were approached for interview without preparation or prior knowledge of the Equity Project or its aims; and the third group consists of individuals to whom we refer as 'experts'. Experts are loosely grouped together as people expected to have a higher than average understanding of the issues under investigation by the Equity Project, namely community leaders and grassroots organisers; individuals with experience in areas of equality, diversity and inclusion; and persons with professional experience in greenspace cultivation and engagement. There is no hard distinction between the public and those perceived to be experts. It has, however, been useful to make this distinction in developing our interview techniques, and in weighting some of the responses.

A set of initial individual interviews were conducted with staff members at SWCF, with the intent to establish a basis for a hypothesis for our research. Participants were all asked to offer three reasons as to why, in their opinion, ethnic minorities might be less likely to visit SWCF than other members of Bristol's population. Responses were recorded and transcribed anonymously.

Individual interviews were carried out in the community within a 2 mile radius of SWCF. These were conducted via a combination of street canvassing, door knocking, and engagement of individuals in a community learning centre. Interviews were structured to capture specific information about people's perceptions of SWCF and their current, past and potential future relationship to it, as well as their general attitudes and engagement with respect to food growing. All of these interviews were conducted without any prior approach made to participants. Participants were asked to give 5/10 minutes of their time to answer some questions for a SWCF research project, and for their permission to record interviews anonymously.

Expert participants were identified and reached out to in advance, contacted by email or telephone and given a pre-designed briefing on the purpose and aims of the project, and interviews were formally organised in advance. Interviews designed for experts were structured differently to those designed for the general public, with a view to ascertaining the areas of relevant expertise of the participant, and drawing on their specific areas of knowledge, understanding and experience of the community to provide insight for our research and to lend weight to the recommendations put forward in this report. Interviews were conducted in person where possible, or by telephone, and recorded with consent.

FOCUS GROUPS/COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The report intended to group gather small groups of people from varying demographics to discuss issues of access to SWCF. Although 2 focus groups were conducted, this process was then cut short by the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions that came into force half way through the data collection phase of the report. The structure of these focus groups and could be used by SWCF in the future to gather community opinion and perform community engagement.

QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS

Staff were surveyed about their identities using the Equalities Act (2010) framework. This provided SWCF with relevant data on how diverse its current staff is and a baseline for future improvements in its inclusive

recruitment drive.

Allotment holders were sent a survey via email of which 71 responses were recorded.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY REVIEW

An external Cultural Competency Review was commissioned by the Equity Project, to review the competencies of SWCF staff and structures in matters regarding cultural inclusion and equality and handling racial biases. A report detailing the findings and recommendations of the review is included in the appendices of this report. These findings and recommendations have been analysed by the Equity Project and have afforded further insight to our investigation.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH METHODS

- The in-depth conversations with staff, public, and experts allowed for a strong qualitative analysis of the various themes explored in the research.
- The use of different sets of questions to reflect the level of prior engagement or expertise provided a well-rounded set of information about perceptions to SWCF and urban agriculture.
- Carrying out in-depth staff interviews gave valuable information about the capability of SWCF to deliver on its inclusion and diversity aims.
- The project did not get the opportunity to do much engagement in the latter stages due to the lockdown restrictions of 2020. This also impacted the ability to speak to members of the public in their neighbourhoods.
- The relatively small sample of public participants did not allow for a fair quantitative analysis. This is work for SWCF to consider in the future as an addition to the qualitative work carried out in this report.
- Takeaways from Allotment Holders Survey: Of 71 respondents, 6 identified as “BAME” in their responses to a survey sent out to all members of the allotments managed by SWCF. Just 8% of respondents, in a ward with a 33% ethnic minority population. This lack of responses does not furnish any definitive evidence as to why people of colour might not be able, applicable, or wish to complete a survey of allotment holders. Since there is no further information against which to cross reference this statistic, such as the overall percentage of ethnic minority allotment holders on the site; context as to demographics of people who are likely to respond to surveys in general; or a demographic analysis of email users, very little can be drawn from this by way of solid conclusions. It does, however, confirm the assertion that surveys are of little use in increasing inclusion of people of colour in urban green initiatives and spaces.

ANALYSIS

Transcriptions of all 13 staff interviews were analysed for potential barriers, which were collated using a keywords system, and used to provide the basis for this report’s hypothesis.

Thematic analysis was conducted on the transcripts of the interviews carried out. This allowed the researchers to identify common themes, key words, and identifiers that could be used to assess people’s perceptions of SWCF, diversity and other themes explored in the report. The keywords extracted from staff interviews were codified and developed into a system of analysis for the rest of the data acquired on the project. The keyword system enabled the extraction ‘outliers’ from public and expert interview responses. Outliers are barriers that emerged from participants’ responses which are not covered by the codified keyword system, and which have not been raised in our hypothesis. These suggest where the hypothesis may prove either incorrect or insufficient in representing the barriers to ethnic minority participation at SWCF. Discussions between the researchers following interviews, survey results and focus groups produced notes on findings that then were cross-checked with the results of the key themes method.

SUMMARY

The following section identifies and highlights the global, cultural, physical, and staffing related factors that emerged as key points in our research. Through interviews, surveys and conversations with local community leaders and groups, and key stakeholders at SWCF, we found common recurrent themes. The qualitative data indicates clearly areas which must be analysed in greater depth and used to develop proactive solutions to tackle the issue of inequality at SWCF. Global factors, while largely taken from external literature, provide important context to SWCF on the wider landscape of diversity, equity and inclusion within farming and the outdoors.

Some notes:

- It must be noted that the results highlight external factors on SWCF's ability to approach inclusion, diversity, and equity. Part of SWCF's focus should be to figure out how to mitigate these external factors - SWCF may begin by contemplating this question: How can SWCF's own internal locus of influence mitigate or cancel the external factors outside of its immediate control?
- As part of this project, a Cultural Competency Review [10] was commissioned by an external consultant, Cocoa Stephens and team. The resulting report is referenced throughout the results and recommendations. Some notes on this review:
 - The Cultural Competency Review interviewed 13 people who are engaged at SWCF as staff, volunteers, and trustees.
 - The Equity project selected interviewees through a process of loosely assessing the perceived decision-making power held by each individual, aiming to engage a cohort that was representative of a cross-section of the organisation.
 - The interviews were conducted confidentially by the external consultants, and results were shared with the Equity Project team as a report containing analysis of the data gathered, as well as anonymous excerpts from the interviews.
- Unless otherwise stated by means of a citation, all quotations have been drawn directly from our raw data - interviews, surveys, and focus groups. The quotations taken from interviews and focus groups below are unedited except where the meaning would be unclear. Please refer to the Appendix for more context or clarification.

ACCESSIBILITY FACTORS

1. GLOBAL FACTORS

IMAGE OF FARMING AND OUTDOORS IN DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2011 census [11], over 98% of Black people live in urban areas. This is compared to 78% for White people. This difference is important in trying to understand the different attitudes of these 2 groups to the outdoors. For example, white people are more likely to have family and other relations in rural England and Wales. Further this pre-existing connection has an impact on whether people from certain demographics feel an affinity for the outdoors.

The MENE report published by Natural England [12] shows a significant difference of access to green spaces between White people and the rest of the population. For example:

- 19% of people from ethnic minority backgrounds *Strongly Agree* that they live within walking distance of a green space. This is compared to 33% of "White" people.

- 30% of “urban” residents are within walking distance of a green space, as opposed to 48% of rural residents.
- 57% of people in the most deprived neighbourhoods visited a green space as opposed to 70% of those in the least deprived places.
- 20% of children from ethnic minority backgrounds visit the wider countryside once a month as opposed to 40% of White children.

Beth Collier [13] summarises the reasons for lack of ethnic minority engagement with the outdoors. Apart from the urbanisation highlighted above, Collier also notes that minority groups do not feel a sense of community in green spaces. There is also a perceived cultural connection to the “fields” as being places of “trauma and coercion” [13]. This trauma, which Collier says is partly as a result of the history of colonialism and slavery, is compounded by a sense of feeling like connection to nature is related to poverty, dirt, and oppression. These images are reinforced in mainstream media. Furthermore, people of colour are not represented in the images, stories, publicity that relates to nature. As detailed below the lack of representation of people of colour at SWCF is consistent with the rest of the environmental and nature-based sector.

It is important to note that the statistics and assumptions presented here are by no means a conclusive assessment of why ethnic minority communities engage significantly less in outdoor based activities compared with their White counterparts. The data is presented as contemporary evidence of a lack of engagement within these respective communities in such places as SWCF, alongside other outdoor places and pursuits. Understanding some of the potential specific reasons in the local context will allow SWCF to begin to come up with solutions. The impact of coming up with solutions should not be understated. According to Natural England:

- Ethnic minority people are 30% less likely to engage in social action for environmental actions than white people.
- People in the least deprived neighbourhoods are almost twice as likely to engage in deliberate environmental action than those in the most deprived neighbourhoods. [6]

There is potentially a direct relationship between how successful places like SWCF are in becoming more inclusive and how likely the populations around them will engage with current environmental issues.

GENERAL DIVERSITY IN THE INDUSTRY

Classifying the industry that SWCF is in is not entirely straightforward. The founding service of SWCF is to engage the local community in the roles and responsibilities of a small working farm, however it also provides education, mental health, and community services. Many of these other services use the farm site or its animals as a tool for engaging, empowering, or educating its beneficiaries. The reasons mentioned above all play a part in this. The farming industry is the least diverse employer in the UK. [14]

Urban farming, which SWCF falls under, forms an exceedingly small percentage of this. According to government data only about 8000 hectares out of the total 1,8 million hectares of urban land in the UK is “allotment and growing land” [15]. This represents only 0.0044% of urban land use. Further, over 60% of Britain’s land is classed as agricultural [16]. SWCF is therefore part of a very small subsection of the “farming” industry as a whole. However, that subsection is uniquely placed to engage with urban populations without the limitations of distance and expense.

“With the [land based organisation], there are more people who are coming from a traditional agricultural background, who are coming from a rural background, who are less likely to have been to university, definitely still of white British extraction. They're more likely to be rural working class, not been to university.” - Bristol Urban Farming Expert

It is important for SWCF to recognise that this proximity to populations currently not engaged in farming presents an opportunity to be at the centre of inclusion and diversity within this industry. The current inclusion of adults with learning difficulties is an example of this unique position.

FUNDING FOR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS OF ENGAGEMENT

SWCFs business model requires approximately 50% of its annual turnover (£744,223 in 2020) to be secured through grant funding and service contracts. Most of the funding is highly prescriptive and project specific. This can limit how well SWCF can adapt to the need for better engagement with underrepresented people and groups. An example is that a sizable proportion of time, space and resources are currently dedicated to various forms of youth education provision and outreach for adults with learning disabilities (It must be noted – both have in the past had a higher level of engagement with participants from minority ethnic backgrounds than other projects and services at SWCF). Both focal points provide a relatively dependable and consistent income for SWCF. As outlined by various interviewees in this research, this is what SWCF is known for.

In seeking new funding streams, it is normally easier and sensible to expand on what is already being offered. Funders of all kinds will often seek to see a positive track record in an area of expertise before releasing funds. As SWCF seeks to become more inclusive of more diverse groups it will necessarily need to, amongst other things:

- Explore new avenues of funding and funders.
- Reimagine ways of placing joint funding bids with existing organisations who represent people who are currently not engaging with SWCF.
- Create more mutually beneficial relationships with community groups and organisations who will have good justification in spending their funds at SWCF.
- Work closely with the council to find ways in which new funding for groups can be tied in with activities and programs that SWCF can provide.

2. PHYSICAL FACTORS

LOCATION

The location of SWCF has been cited by many participants across the scope of the Equity Project's research as being a key barrier to participation for people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. It is situated in an area which has a cul-de-sac feel, as it is only accessible via somewhat rough, off-road pathways, and one road which passes through a long, graffitied railway tunnel. Participants have noted a sense of its being "shut off" from other parts of the city. The surrounding roads also tend to carry heavy traffic. Some participants expressed concerns about taking children and young people to SWCF on foot due to fears associated with heavy traffic and poorly maintained access routes. Others suggested that the "off the beaten track" location causes it to be overlooked and forgotten about by the public. Here are some of the responses from participants in the Equity Project's research:

"Despite its proximity to diverse communities, there are significant barriers to access due to the geographical location of St Werburghs. Poor signage has been noted, coupled with overgrown walk-in access via the footpaths. It has been described as physically difficult to access the site."

"you never really think about it, it's kind of enclosed."

"One of the issues I find in Bristol with lots of things like that is there are certain opportunities which are put, what I call in the wrong place. I feel like if it was just edged out to the road and St Werburghs City Farm is slightly closer, it would be used all the time. People would walk past, they'd be in there, you know, you could have people go to nursery, kids coming back from schools, they pop by to see this or to see that even if it was just a walk through. But because that little edge in and where it is situated makes a massive difference."

"You can tell them where [SWCF] is, still, I've had to meet people on the end of that road to take them into the Farm."

“One thing I just wanted to add, which some people find difficult is the road. I know it’s; I know that it’s, you know like the main road coming down and crossing over by the roundabout. That’s one of the main issues, especially when there’s young people you want to go [to SWCF] live on that side. If you think of the demographics, most of the people we work with live on the opposite side, to go to St Pauls, through the park. Their families won’t allow them to go because they have to cross that main road.”

However, as one Community leader pointed out in the quotation below, people of colour in Bristol are not located only in bounded areas, there is a diverse population in many areas of the city that can be reached by intentional community engagement and outreach:

“Back in the 80s and 90s, the mixture of people, because St Pauls was regarded as a Black, Afro-Caribbean area, and by now it certainly isn’t, and so is Easton. It’s all change, I think for the Afro-Caribbean communities, it’s spread throughout the city now. So, there are big changes there. So, talking about attracting people, you have to reach out a bit [wider].”

Furthermore, the fact of the situation of SWCF being set apart from other areas of the city need not necessarily present a barrier to access. This could be viewed as a positive feature of SWCF, if other factors, both physical and cultural, were to become more widely inclusive. For example, the ‘enclosed’ nature of the space could help to assuage fears associated with the urban environment felt by parents and vulnerable persons that were very evident in the Equity Project’s research.

Excepting concerns about transportation and fears of the urban environment in general, the associations that people make regarding the location of SWCF appear to have more to do with the sense of whether they ‘belong’ in the particular environment created by the culture and nature of SWCF, and of its immediate location. Therefore, while there are specific physical barriers that can be removed and actions that can be taken to increase physical access to ethnic minority persons and others, there are also many aspects of the culture of SWCF that can be reassessed with the goal of expanding inclusive practices and increasing the accessibility of the space to suit all local residents.

Please see section three, on the image of SWCF in the public mindset, where this concept is further explored.

TRANSPORT

The limited transport links between SWCF and other areas of Bristol have been noted by a number of staff members as a factor of concern, and this has been confirmed by research participants and contributors as a potential barrier to wider participation.

“I don’t know about any public transport to get there really. So you’d have to get to wherever the nearest bus goes to and then walk if you don’t have a car.”

“Its isolation away from public transport links has been noted as being a problem – the nearest bus stop is 10-minute walk away, and the nearest train station is 15 minutes away. Lower level super output areas typically have lower average disposable income, and so the effect of this is that the cost of public transport becomes another barrier.”

It must not be assumed that people with ethnic minority backgrounds will have lower income or transport limitations. However, given the combined facts that the wards surrounding SWCF are categorised as Lower Level Super Output Areas and that a condensed proportion of Bristol’s ethnic minority residents reside in these wards, it must be acknowledged that these factors bear weight on the barriers facing wider participation.

VISIBILITY

A factor raised by participants is that the entrance to SWCF is not visible, since the entry gate is set away from the road and is not well sign posted. In fact, signage around SWCF in general has been highlighted as a point of concern by participants across this study, as the following quotations suggest:

“Poor signage has been noted.”

“We’re not welcoming, we don’t have signage up in different languages.”

“I’ve always wanted to have a post, so I would just have like, you know, some red gold and green signs or something cultural, which takes you to the farm. You need something that invites people into the space.”

A further factor of note, linked to the visibility of SWCF’s access points, is that there is no member of staff whose role it is to welcome visitors at the entrance, answer questions, or act as a guide for first-time visitors to SWCF.

“You can just go in. But then you would in your head be saying, Oh, am I allowed to come? If you’ve never been here before, you’re like, Oh, who do I tell? Where do I go? Do I sign in somewhere?”

“There’s an unsaid thing where you feel like someone has to invite you into a space. “

“It’s about having the right people sort of guiding you through that process. Making it as fun as possible, making it as accessible as possible.”

An effect of this absence of a staffed-entrance is that visitors are required to arrive with their own sense of entitlement to access the space, which may instil visitors with a positive notion of the space as open and community owned. However, for members of communities which are universally subjected to exclusion in environments such as SWCF, this effect may not be as far reaching. Moreover, an adverse repercussion in the form of an exclusive, ‘members only’ atmosphere may be the unintended result.

Participants further shared their concerns that, by appearance, there seems to be no community garden at SWCF, and that Propagation Place is gated, often locked, and does not appear to be open to visitors. A recurring point that has emerged from interviews is that there is not only a shared interest in animals in the local community, but that green spaces and food growing are also high interest features of the urban farming environment. Participants, including and especially those with ethnic minority backgrounds, shared a desire for increased access and engagement with endeavours in horticulture and food production at SWCF in addition to the more widely observable opportunity to view livestock.

“What I think is a shame about St Werburghs farm is the garden, the gardening area, where they’re growing. I don’t know St Werburghs farm that well, so just to put those cards on the table, I’ve been a few times, but I’ve never been to the community gardening bit because it is a closed gate. I think there’s a sign saying, unless you’re a group don’t come in, or that’s my perception of it anyway.”

This lack of visibility of distinct areas of SWCF lends a closed atmosphere to the space, causing aspects of SWCF to feel exclusive and preventing participation.

Many participants interviewed had no idea that it is possible to purchase farm produce from SWCF, and the feature of a farm shop for the purchase of farm-reared eggs and meat was repeatedly suggested as a way to entice people to frequent SWCF. One participant even compared SWCF to another urban farm in Bristol, about which they said, “a lot of the produce from the farm there goes into the cafe and you can buy eggs really cheaply and you can buy farm meat in the cafe.” This highlights that the fact that SWCF does sell produce is not widely known, and this is in part due to the absence of a visible farm-produce store at SWCF. The way SWCF’s produce is currently sold, via the office which is inadequately signposted and not welcoming to public access, is exclusive and allows access for a small subset of ‘in the know’ farm visitors only. This non-inclusive practice excludes minority groups and people of colour by default.

AMENITIES

It has been noted by staff at SWCF, by the Cultural Competencies Report, and by participants in the Equity Project’s research, that the Café is expensive, and that it does not cater to lower income visitors.

“Whilst entrance to the Farm itself is free, it has been noted by a sizable number of participants, the cost for using the on-site café is beyond the means of most with lower income.” [10]

“The cafe I think is a bit off-putting maybe because it's quite expensive.”

“Comparing it [SWCF] to Windmill Hill [another Bristol based city farm] I think that they have thought probably more about that and that the cafe is more part of the place, in the heart of the farm. But also you can get kids' meals for quite cheap I think. I think they probably thought about that a bit more.”

A suggested solution to this issue was that more affordable snacks be offered on the site of SWCF for lower income visitors and families, to encourage visits. The Cultural Competency Report [10] also raised the problem that it could take families an hour or more to travel to SWCF, and that on average less time than this would be spent on the site during a visit. Access to affordable refreshments would enable lower-income visitors to spend more time at the site, making the length and potential costs of the journey more worthwhile.

A further point raised is that the culture of the Farm Café reflects on the culture of SWCF.

“Though it's a beautiful wooden space, again, it might sort of feed into that hippie eco build image that the farm is probably associated with, whether it wants to be or not.”

The results of a deeper exploration of the perceived image of SWCF will be outlined below, however this quotation highlights the issue that there is a, somewhat exclusionary, association made between SWCF and the café.

That a link is commonly and perhaps inappropriately made between the café - a business - and SWCF - a charity - may account for a misapprehension by potential visitors that SWCF is not within their price range. And the perceived cultural link between SWCF and the café has further exclusionary effects. However, since there is no regular outlet offering affordable snacks and refreshments to visitors on the site of SWCF, excepting the Tuesday Café project, this leaves visitors with no alternative to the Farm Café for the majority of the week, which in turn cements the public's association between Café and SWCF.

LAYOUT

SWCF staff and public participants alike pointed out that the layout of SWCF is complicated, even deceptive in giving a sense that there are fewer facilities available for public use than it in fact has to offer. It has been pointed out that there is a definite lack of maps and signage to link the disparate spaces of SWCF together and demystify the layout for users.

“We do not have any good maps and we do not have good signage.”

“The Farm is very divided into different areas, it might be that families don't know necessarily about Boiling Wells, the nature bit, and the gardens for example.”

The lack of signage and maps, along with other features such as a lack of multilingual signs, information boards and posters, adds to an impression of exclusivity, suggesting that those people who need to know the layout already know it, and that the wider community are not in this ‘need to know’ group.

Furthermore, as there is no member of staff to meet and greet at the entrance, and because staff members who are present around SWCF are very often busy with a specific project, thus possessing neither the time nor the requisite knowledge to offer information, answer questions, or direct people appropriately around the SWCF site. This presents a barrier both to newcomers, and to those members of the public who may feel less assured of their surroundings or who do not have a sense of entitlement to be occupying the space. A visitor of from an ethnic minority background, may experience this lack of assurance that they are in ‘the right place’, or participating in an activity which they are entitled to, if they are not made to feel welcome and well-informed upon arrival at SWCF. There is more nuance to this point, which will be discussed further in the sections that follow.

WEATHER

Some participants, including SWCF staff and an interviewed expert, raised the concern that the weather presents a physical but, more specifically, culturally determined barrier to willing participation amongst potential visitors of ethnic minority heritage.

“Most of them they don't like because the weather is cold.”

“Community seasonal activities so that people don't fear certain places in the outdoors depending on whether it's raining or this or that. So they appreciate what it's like in each season.”

“Culturally, people have this fear of being cold”

It must also be acknowledged that such stereotypes are, in themselves, exclusionary. It is of course simply not the case that all ethnic minority people are averse to being outside in bad weather conditions. For example, one participant, a Jamaican man, shared his personal feelings on the subject:

“I like the outdoors, I really, really do, in all sorts of weather. I love the outdoors.”

The purpose of any generalisation such as those made here should be to find creative solutions to furthering engagement, not to excuse a lack of it. In the case of SWCF, an acknowledgement that some potential participants may be averse to poor weather conditions must be followed by research and creative ideation toward solutions for more inclusive events, activities, and infrastructure.

3. CULTURAL FACTORS

IMAGE OF SWCF IN COLLECTIVE MINDSET

A clear image of public perceptions of SWCF emerged from interviews. While this image does not entirely adhere to type in the global picture of farming and horticulture - which continues to be male-dominated - the perception of SWCF as an environment of and for people from white, middle-class backgrounds was dominant and pervasive in the minds of participants. Here are some of the responses recorded during interviews:

“There is a perception sometimes, and I think this applies to a lot of things, they see a place like this, and they see it as not a place for themselves. I was gonna say a lot of Black people see it that way, but not necessarily just Black people. There is a lot of working-class White people as well who see it as probably something for more of a middle class, hippie type of thing. And a lot of people who don't see themselves in that category don't really think it is something for them.”

“I come here often, and there's just one or two Black faces you see, you don't really see a lot. And in many ways, the type of people is pretty much fixed, I really do notice that.”

“My experience of doing stuff in Bristol and urban farming stuff, it's almost exclusively people who have been to university, white people, middle class people. People who are interested in environmentalism. People who are concerned about climate change. You know, people who, if you look at Venn diagrams of other sort of lifestyle choices for example, people that ride bicycles; people that have chosen not to fly; people who've chosen to be vegan or vegetarian are over-represented.”

As highlighted in this last quotation, there is a wider problem in urban farming in Bristol, and as we know from the literature, a far broader, global issue of perceptions relating to who engages in agricultural and horticultural pursuits and industries, and - within that - who is welcome to. But to point out that this is a widespread issue is not to suggest that it cannot, or should not, be tackled at local levels. In fact, SWCF is well situated within a diverse community, in which it stands in good stead to contribute to wider change in the perceptions of farming and growing.

Another factor that brings to bear on public perceptions of SWCF is the immediate location in which it is situated. The demographic, equalities, and quality of life indicators for people living around the Farm and accessing its services have changed dramatically since the Farm first launched in 1980. It is now noted as being dominated by a white, wealthy, middle to upper-middle-class portion of Bristol society, who represent values and identities that may not resonate with all people of ethnic minority backgrounds. Here is what some participants had to say on this matter:

“It’s because it’s not where they live. It’s not where they’re from. It’s very middle England. When I say middle England, it’s people perceived to have more money than them.”

“It’s mainly private housing or housing that people have built themselves and things that they would really aspire and love to do and be like but aren’t there. So they don’t mix in that sort of remit in that area.”

“Because it’s not where they come from. They find it difficult to engage there and feel like they’re not part of it. They just, they just didn’t feel it’s where they belong.”

“The other comments we’ve had before is “it’s hippie like,” “St Werburghs is where all the hippies live.”

SWCF has become strongly associated with its immediate location, and - whether or not this has been intentional - the antidote to any misconceptions or exclusivities manifesting from these perceptions is to reach out, with open arms, minds, and ears, to the wider community of Ashley Ward and the surrounding Wards, in order to open up the culture of SWCF to a broader range of influences. See the sections that follow for more insights as to how to approach this work.

APPROPRIATENESS OF RESOURCES, EVENTS, AND ACTIVITIES

While many participants praised the Summer Fair event hosted each year by SWCF, a recurrent view in interviews was that the events and projects offered by SWCF would benefit from diversification and tailoring to the interests of a broader range of communities. This was largely communicated by way of suggestions for diversifying activities, rather than by a direct assertion that SWCF’s activities and events lack in diversity. Some suggestions offered by participants in the Equity Report’s research include:

“Having something there to attract them. Like growing plants, if you’re producing some plants that’s specific to the West Indies, say, like some calaloo, red peas, the usual. Part of the Caribbean staple diet is yam, and probably for a lot of African cultures as well. Say for example you grow that. Do that and actually put it out there to say that it’s being done.”

“Community seasonal activities so that people don’t fear certain places in the outdoors depending on whether it’s raining or this or that. So they appreciate what it’s like in each season.”

“There is a really big opportunity to get in touch with the Syrian Resettlement Program. The learners could come here with the support workers, and maybe have a community allotment for the Syrian Resettlement Program or maybe another community. That will be definitely something that would draw people in.”

One expert we spoke to, Judy Ling Wong CBE, had this to say on making green spaces more accessible for ethnic minority communities:

“Take an interest in the values attached to each nationality. We talked with one of the most successful organisations involved with community groups as a whole, and what they would do is, when they would get to know people, they would sit down with them and talk about their values and beliefs. And see how they can be expressed. Talk about how they see food, how they see water, how they see the soil. People really love being understood.”

We visited a forest nearby with a Ugandan group, and when they began to get friendly with the ranger, they asked if they would be able to come into the woodland and celebrate Ugandan Independence Day in their own way. So people begin to be able to use the space, rather than just for growing crops and animals and so on, they begin to have cultural meaning and real connection.”

The view that SWCF should open up the planning of their events, activities and projects to community input and ideas was put forward by participants. The benefits of this approach are a.) that the community would bring a diversity of ideas and approaches, counteracting the homogeneity of the present cultural bent in events and activities, and b.) that members of the community would feel more of a sense of belonging in the environment of SWCF as a result of this inclusive engagement, encouraging use of the site and participation in its events. Participants suggested:

“making it open to a little bit of interpretation so that people can put their own spin on things. I think sometimes there are things that are very rigid, and in the community development world you got to sort of allow people to develop things; to produce. So, if you're going to get a few people of colour - wherever they're from - in, there needs to be an avenue of openness: [ask people,] “What do you think this space needs?”

“It'd be good for you to do door knocking, to be honest, in a way. In this community, maybe just a couple of questions you have. Or just having a little like stall downstairs [...]. Food is a good way to get people talking.”

Bringing members of local communities into the inner workings and decision-making processes of SWCF, drawing on and learning from the richness and diversity of ideas and resources that those communities have to offer will benefit SWCF, which in turn will be able to increase its beneficial offering to the community at large.

It seems clear from the bulk of the Equity Project’s research that there is no lack of interest in farming practices, horticulture, or in engaging with green spaces amongst communities of colour. Here are some of the comments from Equity Project participants to that effect:

“Some of the groups that used to come the community centre they asking for gardening.”

“We've got a large community and people who access whatever we are doing here live in flats around the area. So they have nowhere to grow. I think it's a good idea to understand what's growing, for the children. I know I'm interested.”

Again, expert Judy Ling Wong had this experience to share:

“But the other thing is to have the offer to do something, for example, to help people to grow vegetables from their own country. Which is really popular. And also to help them, because if your city farm has greenhouses, then start the plants off in the greenhouses during the cold months, and offer community groups to let them grow things or grow it for them, so that they can come and collect them when they are ready to put out. And then people can grow them in your space, or in their own space, in plant pots in gardens, on balconies, in houses. For people who don't have land, they really love that. We have a project here, a little park, with a huge Victorian greenhouse. They put the people's names down, ask them what they want, and grow it for them. They had five thousand [requests]. Within three years they had requests for 50,000. And they produce that now. It shows people in the community that you don't need to spend lots of money and have all these kits to grow things.”

Which suggests that it is not something inherent in the nature of urban farming itself that is disengaging people of colour from SWCF, since there is clearly a willingness to engage, which is not yet transmitting into the reality. In fact, a strong inclination toward horticultural pursuits and food growing was evidenced amongst many of our participants of colour, and expert participants have suggested that there are particular barriers and limitations to participation in such activities that exist at SWCF. Here are some of those insights:

“I think perhaps the thing with St Werburghs is because the Farm is quite, it's very divided into different areas, it might be that families don't know necessarily about Boiling Wells, the nature bit, and the gardens for example, they might just go to the animals and they might not necessarily want to engage with animals.”

“I've never been to the community gardening bit because it is a closed gate. I think there's a sign saying, unless you're a group don't come in, or that's my perception of it anyway. So I think it'd be really nice to have more community growing beds. Maybe that's a part of the propagation or even an allotment there that the farm has, which is free to go in anytime without locked Gates. And at certain times has free drop in activities whether that's funded or not, I don't know, but also then once people have engaged on that level then they know that they can go back and it's a space that they can use and go to, and see at different times of the year.”

“It used to be that the allotment people were given time to have their open day. Do you know what I mean? And you'd have the people doing their bits, but there would be a bit of music and tin drums and there will be somebody digging and showing someone how to do it. You know, it's like let's do and let people know what the allotment does, make them have a responsibility, the people who take it, to give one day a year or organize one or two events a year on the allotment space. So people get into their gardening or whatever, like or not like it. But if you've got regular events going on all the time, it becomes a space, a place where people go just to take the family for the day, they'll come back. Even if it's once or twice, you know, if you have everybody who visited once or twice a year, you would then see the demographic of people changing.”

The emphasis in these interview excerpts is on opening and broadening access to the green spaces at SWCF; making the site more accessible by increasing communities' awareness and familiarity with the space as a whole; opening up closed off areas and welcoming people in with cultural and participatory events and activities; and generally enabling community engagement with the site as a green space, and a horticultural resource, promoting widespread awareness that SWCF is much more than just an animal petting farm.

The cultural competency review found that staff members had some views as to what potential barriers might exist in accessing events and activities:

“It was put forward that certain communities have seasonal events that prohibit involvement with the Farm, combined with a preference for warmth and comfort and a view that farming as a subsistence lifestyle is considered somewhat outdated.”

These views contain some insights that may be construed in a useful way, if they are not merely applied as stereotypes, nor seen as insurmountable or irremovable barriers by SWCF and its staff. For example, SWCF might invite groups from the local community to utilise its spaces for the celebration of their 'seasonal events', such as the Boiling Wells site, or the indoor spaces, making efforts to facilitate, rather than agree with prohibition of, such events at SWCF. Another suggestion might be that the perception of SWCF as a place that is lacking in 'warmth and comfort' is misconceived, and might require some effort to undo, rather than reinforcing the notion that there is some fundamental cultural difference at play here. These are matters that need to be considered from alternative perspectives, with a view to positive inclusion, rather than reinforcing exclusion.

APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS

Ethnic minority participants interviewed in this project, Expert and Public alike, seemed to hold a positive view as to the potential for urban farms in general and SWCF in particular to benefit their communities. While people saw the potential value of increased access, there was a widely expressed view that more must be done by SWCF than is currently being done to reach out and engage under-participating communities. Here are some comments sourced by the Equity project, and the cultural competency review:

“I think SWCF have to come to the community centers where the Somali community use, and tell what you do and advertise that more. Because always they have a lot of children, they don't have access to

Farm or somewhere. I feel they really need to engage with them. I think it can be really, really important for Somali mothers, especially, and the younger people.”

“An outreach team into communities has been identified as a clear pathway to inviting diverse communities into the Farm. One individual stated that the Farm should be asking the communities how they could be helpful to them and what they would like to see from the Farm.” [10]

It emerged in interviews, however, that there are internal barriers at SWCF to the performance of such outreach. The Cultural Competency review found that:

“A third of the sample space were reticent at the notion of an outreach team, citing that despite community outreach efforts over the years, there has not been much in the way of change. It was also noted, “a couple of black people came but didn’t stay”. [10]

Whether these are barriers of a cultural, psychological, or physical nature is unclear from this statement. It is clear, nevertheless, that such barriers exist, and must be countered in new and purposeful ways to ensure that necessary changes occur, and that outreach and communications begin to be effective.

The methods by which communications are delivered are key. Several participants emphasised the importance of locating and reaching out to diverse communities in personalised ways. Having representatives of SWCF stepping out of the Farm, and the usual communication channels, and into spaces where communities of colour congregate, socialise, and feel a sense of belonging, is essential.

Furthermore, continuity of communications, establishing ongoing relationships with communities and their leaders, and building trust are integral to forging meaningful connections, which are a prerequisite to SWCF establishing itself as a valuable resource among ethnic minority communities in its catchment areas:

“what we kept finding through our evaluations is that people kept saying, ‘Can we do it again? When are we gonna meet again? When am I gonna see you again?’”

“It’s how you would reach them. It’s trust. With Somali people you need them to trust you.”

“we have been working really hard the last couple of years making sure that as I’ve said, that the community trusts our name.”

It has been suggested that in order to establish adequate and effective lines of communication, which have continuity as an underpinning feature, SWCF must be both patient and actively engaged in using a range of approaches to create these connections, and committed to maintaining and strengthening them in spite of obstacles. Participants have emphasised the need for patience and persistence in statements such as the following:

“It’s hard to reach them as well. They have a lot to do because mothers, they work, they have small children, they have a lot of children, they have a lot of commitments and maybe they don’t have time, but they need to also think, with these children, to go out.”

“Tell them what you do, the trust, you get trust, you bring interesting projects like food, getting them ups, coming together. Schools, coffee mornings.”

“I guess [if] you want to speak to people about SWCF you need a lot of patience, a lot of advertisement, a lot of inviting the communities.”

“I think more advertising and more project work.”

It has been noted that SWCF’s website copy speaks ‘about’ the communities it serves, rather than directly ‘to’ them as an audience. Use of language pertaining to ‘disadvantaged communities’ serves to deter potential beneficiaries and visitors who may not wish to categorise themselves as such. This being the case, those who confidently self-identify as ‘patrons and supporters’ of SWCF, as distinct from ‘beneficiaries’ or ‘the

disadvantaged', are more likely to feel welcomed to SWCF than the communities that it intends to serve. It is important that SWCF communicates regularly, intentionally, and directly with the community that it intends to serve, acknowledging, relating to, and connecting with that diverse community from a basis of understanding and shared goals. For this to be the case, SWCF must seek to better understand the communities of Ashley Ward, which it is its purpose to serve.

The importance of advertising in a diversity of community hubs and venues using posters, fliers and community engagement personnel was emphasised by participants, in addition to reaching out intentionally on social media, whilst maintaining conscious awareness of the image and messaging that is projected through all marketing platforms. Obtaining feedback on marketing practices will also be beneficial to SWCF's continued engagement with the needs and requirements of its local community.

The spaces in which SWCF chooses to advertise its projects, activities and events are significant in eliciting the attention and interest of ethnic minority communities. Some key suggestions include:

"SWCF have to come to the community centres where the Somali community use."

"Schools, coffee mornings."

"Bring interesting projects like food."

"I think if you went to some of the Black churches, you'd find a lot of older people, a lot of them would have this sort of affinity to the natural world. For them to know that it's here, having somebody go into one of these places, approach them.

"I think social media has a massive influence on how young people react to the outdoors right now."

Here we see the need for a diversity of marketing approaches reflected in participant responses, with an emphasis on personal, face to face approaches. Language – both availability of information in different languages, as well as using clear and explicit information - within communications was highlighted as an important area of focus.

"I think that their messaging should be clear that they are free, they are accessible, if they are, and that there sometimes are special events that are either free or low cost for families."

"Share it with, with the council, share it with the other organisations, advertise it."

"When the learners know how to access the place and there is someone who can translate or explain the first few visits, then they feel more confident."

"Translating something into different languages, which is really not an issue. Like in Bristol, we find anyone that will do it or volunteer to translate for you."

"A little pack that you can give [...] saying, "Hey, there is a farm, it's a part of Bristol," it can be a part of like a welcome in Bristol pack. When you say there are city farms across Bristol, this is what we do. It's also in Arabic. It's also in Polish [etc]."

Marketing is a key component to changing the reputation of SWCF in the eyes of the communities that are currently excluded. It is clear from participants' perceptions of what the Farm offers, who it is designed to serve, and many other functions essential to fulfilling the charitable aims of the organisation, that the current marketing and communications are excluding ethnic minority communities by default.

CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITIES' NEEDS

To engage the local community with SWCF, a deeper understanding of the diverse needs and requirements of Bristol's communities should be sought. To obtain this understanding, ongoing conversations with community

members, leaders, and organisations must be established for the needs of communities to be heard. In the Cultural Competency report commissioned by the Equity Project, Cacao Stephens recommends that:

“Community outreach teams need to be seen outside the Farm and active in the communities with which they wish to engage. Also, they need to have an understanding of the religious practices that conflict within these communities i.e. Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and be able to navigate with a degree of personal comfort in these circles.” [10]

In this process of community outreach and engagement, acquiring the trust of the community is fundamental. Trust becomes established as involved parties continue to deliver on their values and commitments, thus ongoing relationships of communication and participation can be built in so far as SWCF listens to its wider community’s needs and responds to them.

Doubts emerged in initial interviews (conducted by the Equity project team and separate to the Cultural Competency Review) with SWCF staff members, volunteers and trustees, as to the likelihood of people with ethnic minority backgrounds having an interest in farming, or in activities and events associated with an urban farm. The quotations below, taken from interviews with staff members, are indicative of such doubts:

“In Western society this is quite normal, whereas I don’t know if the average Joe in other countries takes part in farming. I don’t know if people from other cultures would have an interest and consider it as something to do.”

“I’m not suggesting that other cultures don’t have a background of farming, for example, but they might not have such a culture of things like city farms and education in this way that we’re presenting it as a charity here.”

“The idea of gardening and farming has different connotations in different cultures. If you come from a culture where farming is used for sustaining life then it might not look so glamorous or be so fashionable for people who come from countries where it’s considered a poor man’s job. Staying clean and not touching animals because of the risk of disease might be more ingrained in someone’s culture.”

This pattern of thinking raises a significant barrier in the minds of staff members themselves to enabling inclusivity and widening participation. It suggests that staff members at SWCF consider city farming in the UK, as well as associated activities and events, to be constrained within its traditional or present form and culture, and are unable or unwilling to see beyond this status quo. It also indicates stereotyping of ethnic minority persons among staff.

The Cultural Competencies Report found further evidence of biased views amongst SWCF staff members:

“There were many comments including “Jamaicans are not inclusive of their own cultures as they don’t bring their own children down” and “they are social farmers who only come out when the sun shines.” [10]

Comments like this demonstrate a degree of stereotyping that is inherently prejudiced, and which is highly counterproductive in considering positive measures for inclusion. Opinions such as these need to be challenged and changed by real, unprejudiced interactions, and SWCF should encourage the sharing of practices, spaces, and ideas to support these positive interactions.

On the other hand, some more positive suggestions were raised by staff members during interviews:

“Some interviewees realised Somali and Kurdish communities have ties to agriculture and recognise that the Farm can use the connectivity to engage with these communities. There was a general understanding amongst interviewees that we all eat food and that is a good way to connect. The sharing of food is a real avenue into these communities and these should be community led functions.” [10]

This kind of positive acknowledgement of commonalities between ethnic and cultural groups in the local community, and elements that are inherent to the nature of city farming, is one way to begin to realise the possibility of opening up to the broader needs and potential of SWCF's diverse local community. In fact, the Equity Project's interviews show that ethnic minorities in Bristol are not only interested in food, but also in the origins and production of food, and in environmental sustainability, and are already engaging, or are keen to engage in a range of green pursuits. Ethnic minority participants offered insights such as these:

"People are already doing things. Things that are ingrained in their culture or just their family, the way that they do things. In certain cultures it's just normal to, like, reuse stuff and to pass things down and that's just inbuilt, you don't do it any other way. And I think there's this perception that when you talk about green issues, people immediately think, Oh, the plants and the trees. But actually, it's more complicated than that, and it means a lot of different things to different people."

"I think that's where there was an imbalance, where people were thinking that people weren't engaging just because they weren't seeing them in the countryside or in a farm, seeing black people in a farm and stuff. People were assuming that they're not interested, but people are already doing stuff."

"A lot of people, their heritage comes from really rural backgrounds. Like my grandma, she lived in a village and they had animals, and they grew a lot of their own food and a lot of it probably only came from around the corner when they had to buy stuff, like there's some very environmental living, the kind of living that we're striving to do here and paying lots of money to try and do, which is crazy. So it was, people were already doing stuff and that people came from those backgrounds anyway."

"It's just that there's an assumption, for some reason, that if you move to the city and you're from an ethnic minority, that you don't understand about the countryside and you know, that weird perception that's sometimes unspoken, that people feel it, it's not a quantifiable thing."

The core question, then, for community based urban farms seeking to increase their diversity and be more inclusive, is not how to get ethnic minority communities interested in what urban farms do, since it is apparent that such interest already exists. The core question is how to get to know the community at large, in all its diversity, in order to offer people a suitable environment in which they can engage in pursuits that are already of interest to them in a more accessible way, so that SWCF can become a community resource which invites and encourages people from all backgrounds to bring their own inspiration, passion and knowledge to augment it.

A further key suggestion from participants is that SWCF work collectively and in partnerships with other groups to produce creative solutions to existing barriers and exclusionary practices. A number of suggestions for collaboration with other organisations and service providers in Bristol were put forward by expert participants during interviews:

"I think this would be a great link if you can connect with the [program], because I know 95% of my students, they, they can't work because they are on indefinite leave to remain and they can't work for the first two years. Also, their language is very limited but it will be really good for them. And I know they crave this sort of gardening or like building up something or building a shed and they do it like on their balconies, and it's really heart-breaking to know that they used to have a farm and own land and they used to grow their own veg and they're sort of limited and that aspect has been also taken from them from their lives."

"You tell me you have a space for me here on whatever day and I don't have to pay for the room. I will set up a conversation club here."

"We can try and find a volunteer who is good with gardening and good with English as a foreign language and they would write a little tour for you and you can trial this way."

"You can get volunteers from refugee rights to translate for you like some different signs on the farm. That would be also more accessible for the learners."

“Doing like a little tour around the [SWCF], this is such an amazing part of Bristol. Then a lot of people know about that and go.”

“I only come from the teaching background, so if someone would give me a resources, and I don't have to create the lesson for my students, and I would be more than happy to deliver the session.”

“a ‘Welcome in Bristol’ pack, when you say there are city farms across Bristol, this is what we do. It's also in Arabic. It's also in Polish, [etc.]”

“When the learners know how to access the place and there is someone who can translate or explain the first few visits, then they feel more confident. And I don't see the reason why people wouldn't come. So maybe even translating something into different languages, which is really not an issue. Like in Bristol, we find anyone that will do it or volunteer to translate for you.”

“come one time with your group and do something in Somali kitchen and other groups, there's so many other that are doing very good job in Bristol. Something like that that you can do for people to get to know. And even small projects for younger people.”

Collaboration with other community-focussed organisations can provide SWCF with resources and support, as well as knowledge and information, for diversifying the provision of activities, projects, and events, and making SWCF's provisions more inclusive. Once made, such links can be sustained and developed, opening up the potential for future development, training, resource sharing and collaborative endeavours.

AWARENESS OF FARM'S OFFERINGS

It emerged, in the Equity Project's interviews with members of the public, that knowledge and awareness of the services, facilities, activities and events that SWCF have to offer, and even of SWCF's existence, are somewhat limited amongst the local community, except among what may be considered an already captive audience of those who visit on a regular basis. This seems to be the result of the fact that a particular set of people, who can easily access information about SWCF as it is currently made available, tend to share it via word of mouth within their own specifically chosen communities, and that this method of information and limited accessibility is accepted as adequate. The effect is that communities beyond the reach of that particular set are not accessing this information, and are excluded by negligence. Here is a sample of the comments from participants that were indicative of this deficit of information amongst ethnic minority communities in surrounding areas:

“Some people are probably not even aware of it.”

“I don't know of SWCF.”

“I haven't heard of it before.”

“All I know is that they do farming and that they've got animals.”

“But some families need to be reminded, or sometimes it's not on their mind to go there, because it's not something that they regularly do.”

Participants were often aware that there are animals at SWCF, a number of adult participants referred to the Farm Pub, and a broader range of people had attended the Summer Fair and shared positive associations with this particular event. However, only regular visitors had a more thorough sense of SWCF's offerings, and of these visitors the vast proportion tended to identify as White European. With respect to public participants identifying as having Black, Asian or a minority ethnic background, there was a general lack of awareness or regular participation.

All of this points to a need for actions to be taken to broaden access to knowledge of SWCF and the various opportunities it has to offer the local community. Whether these actions be executed via marketing, communications, community outreach, or a more complex combination of cultural shifts to diversify the space, it is certain that an intentional drive to reach the diverse community that SWCF hopes to serve is required.

AFFINITY WITH FARM STAFF

The perceptions that members of the local community have of SWCF is contributed in part by the people who work there. Furthermore, the experience that an individual or group has at SWCF will be informed and impacted by their interactions with staff. The next section will outline the ways in which increasing minority representation in staffing and volunteers, raising cultural competency of the existing staff through training, and rethinking recruitment strategy can impact the way that SWCF is viewed by, the way it relates to, and the way that it supports the diverse community that it hopes to serve. Here, it is important to note that all visitors will need to see themselves both as welcome, and as equally entitled to participate at SWCF. It is the job of SWCF staff to facilitate this. The cultural competency report noted that:

“Bringing people in is important but how they are treated when they arrive is the determinant factor as to whether they return.”

Therefore, in order to ensure that all visitors are made to feel welcome, comfortable and confident in the environment of SWCF, staff should receive proper training to ensure that they are able to deliver this in a culturally aware, inclusive way without bias, insensitivity or exclusivity. Furthermore, SWCF should be working to ensure that their staff and volunteers adequately represent the area in which SWCF is situated and the community which it aims to provide for.

4. STAFFING RELATED FACTORS

REPRESENTATION

Representation can be pivotal in achieving inclusivity. It requires ensuring that members of minority or marginalised groups are at least proportionately represented in spaces where they may otherwise be excluded. The Equity Project’s focus group participants discussed the feeling of entering a predominantly, or entirely White space. Discomfort, the sense of the absence of permission, and the lack of a notion of belonging or sense of entitlement and shared ownership of the space that is desirable in a community space were all reported across a range of interviews with ethnic minority members of the local community. Those who may stand in the way of measures for inclusion, who are in a position to, whether intentionally or inadvertently, block or prevent inclusivity, are referred to in the following quotation as ‘gatekeepers’:

“Those people that you come up against, if you do ask and you're in a space, if they're always people who don't look like you that will make you feel a certain way. Make you feel very kind of like, well, if all of these are the people, the gatekeepers of these spaces, then where can I go?”

The exclusivity of a space becomes internalised, and fits into a narrative fixed by what is already known about horticultural and farming spaces in the UK, i.e. that they are spaces dominated by well off, middle-class white people, which are culturally determined according to the needs and preferences of this particular group. This mounts a very real barrier for people who do not identify with that narrative or that group. This is one quotation drawn from many:

“This was a white person thing to do. It's like I'm going to be the only black person in the countryside, like walking along and it's going to feel weird.”

This quotation evokes the notion that a person of colour entering a space that is white-dominated might be subject to feeling at odds with their surroundings, that they are not amongst peers, that they stand out, as well as being always at risk of being subjected to microaggressions and more or less subtle othering.

Correspondingly, as a person of colour entering a space in which one may - even subconsciously - feel that one is not merely surrounded by people who see you as ‘different’ or ‘other’, due to the presence other people of colour who ‘belong’ in that space, one may feel free to engage, to explore, to contribute, and to benefit from

what SWCF has to offer without such a sense of being out of place, or feeling so vulnerable to the risk of othering behaviours.

Staff at SWCF commented in interviews that they had noted positive effects on children's willingness to participate due to representation of people of colour in work linked to SWCF:

"We were informed that a person of colour representative of the Farm had a very positive impact on the younger school children who saw themselves represented."

Representation is a reflexive factor which, once positive measures are introduced toward achieving it, will further positively impact the diversity and inclusivity of SWCF.

"If there's staff there or volunteers that maybe look like them, that might draw people in. And sometimes it's not just to have tokens, you know, token Somali persons and token black persons, it's actually more than that. It's giving that person more responsibility, and it's finding the right person as well."

This caution against tokenism is salient. What is needed is not simply to ensure that a recruitment quota is met, but a genuine shift in the culture brought about by an active will for change, and positive steps toward including people, groups and leaders who will contribute to that change.

CAPABILITY/CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The insights represented in this section are informed by the Cultural Competency Report [10], commissioned by SWCF, and delivered by Cacao Stephens and her team. Through conducting confidential and anonymised interviews with 13 staff, the report found that the range of baseline cultural competency among the staff of SWCF to be varied, and at times overstated and self-reported as being at a more advanced level than was found to be the case. It is relevant to acknowledge that despite the lack of staff competency expressed in the Cultural Competency Report, there is a general desire among staff to improve cultural competency and specifically to receive support in doing so. The report organises the 13 interviewees into the following categories:

- Changemakers (5 of the interviewees) – "This staff sample showed some individuals are happy to elevate and amplify voices. They showed a clear understanding of the problems associated with integrating people of colour into a predominantly white environment. There was an understanding that embracing differences brings up cultural challenges and they accept learning has to occur outside their comfort zone."
- Fence sitters (4 of the interviewees) – "Approximately a quarter of the cohort expressed similar attitudes [to the changemakers] but this originated from different perspectives. One of the individuals displayed microaggressions by use of clumsy language. Another individual expressed their desire to understand cultural difference but are aware that they do not. One found it difficult to work with multicultural groups and displayed stereotypical thinking around non-white people."
- Gatekeepers (4 of the interviewees) – "The remaining quarter of the sample space were actively engaged in discouraging visible ethnic minorities to enter the space. One person mentioned "they're not like us, they do stuff different", and they did not believe diversity lends itself to the good of the Farm."

A significant cohort of the research, the 'Changemakers', showed a positive and proactive approach to developing an inclusive workplace:

"They understand that transposing white British cultures does not work, also they understand that white British people have a fear of causing offense and displaying a lack of competency around race and religion. They self-reflect and check their own language regularly to ensure inclusivity. They are aware that the fear of difference manifests in a variety of ways like violence, holding space, jokes/banter and power dynamics. They are anxious to create an inclusive environment for everyone. This group are the catalysts for change. There are academic, intellectual and experiential people whose understanding

mostly translates into to action. The desire and capacity to embrace the move towards a more inclusive environment bodes well for the future.”

While there are a significant cohort with a positive and proactive approach to developing an inclusive workplace, the review found evidence of non-inclusive sentiments among staff, and the report states:

“Some members of staff found inclusion particularly difficult.”

There are a number of people of Caribbean descent who maintain allotments at the SWCF site, and indeed, as the report states, “these allotments identify the historical attachment to the land amongst the Caribbean elders” [10], since the particular group of individuals referenced, indicated as being 9 men and two women, have maintained plots at the site for a length of time that predates SWCF’s initiation. Some were even involved in defending the allotment land from being sold off by the council for development in the 1980s. Given this, the individuals are known to SWCF members. However, some attitudes toward these individuals evidenced during interviews, and the way in which they are homogenised as a group by most staff, are indicative of cultural incompetence, gatekeeping, and even hostility. For example, only one staff member interviewed used the name of any one of these elders, and all other interviewees referred to them as ‘the Jamaicans’. [10] Terms such as ‘lots of people of that ethnicity’ were used freely, and one interviewee was quoted by the report as saying:

“you have to bring these people down to a certain level to where they respect rules.” [10]

It was noted that SWCF staff are, for the most part, unfamiliar with the nuances of cultures other than their own, and that many staff had little to no exposure to anything but White British culture. [10] While it was generally acknowledged by staff members during interviews that the skill sets and knowledge of the elders are high, one member of staff nevertheless showed themselves to be unwilling to welcome the elders as volunteers, claiming that it “wouldn’t be a good fit”. [10] This shows a level of bias and stereotyping that will erect a barrier against the inclusion of people of colour and ethnic minorities at SWCF.

It is relevant to note that action by SWCF has also been evidenced as actively engaging with issues affecting this specific community, for example identifying that some of the allotment holders, including Caribbean elders were being penalised by the generic Bristol City Council allotment plot check system. Farm staff championed for a system change to ensure that it is more inclusive to those that successfully garden in a shorter season.

As outlined within SWCFs Equalities and Diversity Policy:

“...the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity apply to all employees, visitors, services users, trustees and volunteers.... Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.”

The comments gathered within the Cultural Competency Report suggest a breach of this policy, however as they were expressed under confidentiality, SWCFs Leadership team will be unable to identify the gatekeepers and investigate the comments, instead action must be taken with appropriate training, support, infrastructure, to ensure a significant culture shift occurs to achieve inclusion and equality.

There was a palpable sense that staff were concerned about being held accountable for holding non-inclusive values or opinions. However, every staff member interviewed during the review expressed interest in accessing one-to-one cultural competency training sessions and a non-judgemental space to voice anxieties or difficulties. This could be one element of a supportive infrastructure put in place for developing cultural competence amongst SWCF’s staff. [10]

RECRUITMENT

A Recruitment and Selection Documentation Audit on SWCF, commissioned by the Equity Project and produced by the Diversity Trust, found that:

“There are some 41 employees at SWCF. The majority (34) are White British with 3 as White Other. There are 2 people of Mixed White ethnicity, 1 person who is Black British and 1 person who is [Middle Eastern country].”

And clearly states that:

“From the above figures, positive action is a necessary adjunct to equality, diversity and inclusion.”

The audit cites a successful event held by SWCF:

“SWCF held a drop-in session for the latest role at The Network which was successful in attracting a more diverse audience.”

A member of the Equity project team who was part of the drop-in session and subsequently sat on the interview panel had this to say:

“It was clear to me that the language used in the job description and application form was overly complex, thus understanding the form required a specialist knowledge that was not directly relevant to the role advertised. The use of acronyms such as ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) without an explanation potentially excludes the kind of candidates that would excel at the role. The drop-in session was advertised with posters using simple clear language, and the session itself focused on explaining the role and talking through the application form so that potential candidates could ask questions and get clarification on language. The outcome of this process resulted in a diverse pool of applicants and a successful engagement of two new staff members.”

The audit also highlights gaps in SWCF’s recruitment processes relating to inclusive practice with respect to people of colour and with ethnic minority backgrounds. These are present in the spaces in which job roles are advertised; recruitment advertisements; job descriptions; person specifications; and SWCF’s Equality and Diversity Policy. The audit also references social and economic inequalities, which are a further dimension worth taking into consideration when making strategies for effective engagement with residents of Ashley Ward and surrounding wards, and broader characteristics which can interact in an intersectional way within individuals whom SWCF may aim to reach.

Participants in the Equity Project’s research also pointed to the importance of advertising for recruitment in diverse spaces:

“It’s where that job is advertised, and how much confidence people have for applying for it.”

And provided insights into how SWCF might consider representing and promoting the diverse roles available within the urban farming industry:

“a) Culturally, people have this fear of being cold, I don’t even think it’s just the farming. I think it’s about climate and weather and, b) not understanding what the farm needs from people; what the job is. When a job is advertised, I’ve seen jobs advertised and I’ve even shared it with a couple and they’re like, “what? We’d, you know, be freezing all the time and you know, it would be mucking out,” and to them the perception of the role is all based on negatives.”

“It’s about letting people know what the role is in telling them a nice story about the role.”

“It’s about selling the roles in a different kind of way and making it open to a little bit of interpretation so that people can put their own spin on things”

This apparent lack of awareness, of the multifaceted nature of the work involved in running and maintaining an urban farm, points to the importance of informing and educating the community about urban farming, and about the roles and opportunities that exist within the industry, through outreach and engagement.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Certain factors raised by the Cultural Competency Report indicate the necessity for implementation of structures at SWCF which support accountability regarding matters of equity, diversity and inclusion. What these structures should be is not a question that this report will answer, but one which it will benefit SWCF and its leadership to engage with and find solutions to.

One matter of concern, is the implicit bias that will make itself known in indirect and potentially insidiously exclusive ways, for example:

“It was suggested that candidates with academic knowledge may be preferred over those candidates with experiential knowledge – this reinforces the existing status quo as most with university education (particularly within the agriculture and horticulture field) will usually be white.” [10]

A preference such as this may be conveyed in the wording of a recruitment poster, in the decision-making process of a hiring procedure, or in a staff review, if accountability is not entrenched in the structure of an organisation. The Cultural Competency review highlights the concerns of some staff:

“Conversely, others described concerns about the employment of friends and partners – this being nepotism.” [10]

ADDITIONAL DATA

As part of the research, some interviews were conducted with experts from farming, environmental and grassroots organisations which were not directly relating to SWCF. Below are some excerpts from one interviewee which contain useful perspectives relevant to the work at SWCF.

JUDY LING WONG CBE

Judy Ling Wong CBE, painter, poet and environmentalist, is best known as the Honorary President of Black Environment Network, and as the vice chair of the UK Urban Ecology Forum (Partner Member UN Habitat Assembly Global Stakeholders Forum). Judy holds an international reputation as the pioneer in the field of ethnic participation in the built and natural environment. She is a major voice on policy towards social inclusion. She pioneered an integrative approach to environmental participation, bringing together social, cultural, environmental, and economic concerns.

Judy was asked, “What are the main barriers to access on City farms?”

And responded:

“The main thing is to be in contact. You have to reach out to them if they’re not already there. You have to see them in their own space, and the people who go there (to meet with them) have to be people who are comfortable to meet people in their own cultural space.

When you go there you need to have something to offer. For example, if there are community leaders connected with the group, you can invite the leaders to come on a tour and show them rather than just talk to them, often community leaders will feel really honoured if you do this. You need to feed them, they love eating together to break down the barriers, and you need to have appropriate food.

You need to look at your farm to be sure that it doesn’t have aspects that infringe on their customs and beliefs. For example, there are pictures of pigs at your farm. A lot of the farms have good practices like signposting to direct Muslims away from the pigs so that they never just run into them.

If you welcome them, eating together is really nice. But the other thing is to have the offer to do something, for example, to help people to grow vegetables from their own country. Which is really popular. And also to help them, because if your city farm has greenhouses, then start the plants off in the greenhouses during the cold months, and offer community groups to let them grow things or grow

it for them, so that they can come and collect them when they are ready to put out. And then people can grow them in your space, or in their own space, in plant pots in gardens, on balconies, in houses. For people who don't have land, they really love that. We have a project here, a little park, with a huge Victorian greenhouse. They put the people's names down, ask them what they want, and grow it for them. They had five thousand. Within three years they had requests for 50,000. And they produce that now. It shows people in the community that you don't need to spend lots of money and have all these kits to grow things."

PUBLIC INTERVIEWS

Knowledge and awareness of SWCF's existence, and of the services, facilities, activities and events that they have to offer is somewhat lacking amongst the general public, except among those who visit on a very regular basis. This may encourage an atmosphere of exclusivity, wherein a particular set of people who have access to information about SWCF share it via word of mouth within their own specific chosen communities. Thus, without intentionality, the effect is that communities beyond the reach of that set are not subject to this privileged information, and are excluded by negligence:

"Some people are probably not even aware of it."

"It's usually just popping in. I never looked it up online. I don't see a lot of literature around that I can read upon it, so it's generally just coming and having a look."

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

The results of this research identify a broad range of issues that are specific to the situation of SWCF, as well as a plethora that echo the broader narratives around diversity, inclusion and equity. The key takeaway is that the area of equity, diversity and inclusion must be approached with humility, openness, and by extending trust to those whom with which SWCF wishes to engage. SWCF must not divert from discomfort in learning if it is to grow into a truly inclusive organisation.

The role of this report is to provide an analytical view that may be used as a catalyst to creating lasting cultural change within the organisation, which will serve to increase its relevance and impact on the local community as a whole. The following recommendations are to be considered starting points for decisive action and further meaningful enquiry; it is not exhaustive or overly instructional.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following recommendations are intended as practical steps that SWCF can take. Some of these recommendations require additional resources (financial, human and otherwise), while others require a shift of perspective within the current culture of SWCF. Some of the recommendations are structural, as in they speak to how SWCF functions as an organisation, while others relate to tasks and responsibilities of people in specific roles or things (such as the website or marketing).

It is important for SWCF to balance the vital need for structural change with the things that need to be done by specific people at specific times. The structural change will cause long term change to the way in which SWCF staff, volunteers and processes can function. These changes will either restrict exclusive practices or empower inclusive ones.

Throughout these recommendations, one of the core themes is collaboration; the deliberate emphasis on partnership aims to facilitate a move towards SWCF becoming a truly community centred organisation that is valued and accessible to all members of its geographical community.

It must be noted that the report was largely written before Covid-19 restrictions were put in place and adaptations to recommendations will need to be made where relevant in line with government guidelines.

ACCESSIBILITY FACTORS

1. GLOBAL FACTORS

FUNDING FOR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS OF ENGAGEMENT

- SWCF is dependent on grant and commission money for around 50% of its income. The majority of funding is highly prescriptive and project specific. This can limit how well SWCF can adapt to the need for better engagement with underrepresented people and groups. An example is that a sizable proportion of time, space and resources are currently dedicated to various forms of youth education provision and outreach for adults with learning disabilities. Both focal points provide a relatively dependable and consistent income for SWCF. As outlined by various interviewees in this research, this is what SWCF is known for.

It is recommended that SWCF evaluates their approach to applying for funding, with a specific focus on how needs (social, educational, recreational and support needs of SWCF's current and potential beneficiaries) are identified. In interviews and through conversations with SWCF staff, it has been identified that needs are often outlined/identified by current staff members, who then go on to design the project with limited data from potential beneficiaries. It is recognised that a number of factors impact this system, including meeting funding requirements, as well as short deadlines for applications. SWCF should develop a strategy that will ongoingly identify and evaluate the needs of the geographical and cultural communities surrounding SWCF, using this data to identify appropriate sources of funding. Part of this system should leverage community outreach positions within SWCF to develop a culture of co-creation that is led by beneficiaries, rather than created for them.

- SWCF should seek to reimagine ways of placing joint funding bids with existing organisations who represent people who are currently not engaging with SWCF.
- SWCF should create more mutually beneficial relationships with community groups and organisations who will have good justification in spending their funds at SWCF.

- SWCF should work closely with the council to find ways in which new funding for groups can be tied in to activities and programs that SWCF can provide.

2. PHYSICAL FACTORS

LOCATION

- SWCF should consider evaluating the potential for improving access to the location. One suggestion could be to implement a walking bus, or a guided walk from outlying communities to SWCF and back at predetermined times.

TRANSPORT

- In order to improve accessibility to the surrounding communities, it is suggested that SWCF explores the possibility of hiring or purchasing a minibus with a view to inviting and transporting groups to SWCF.

VISIBILITY

- New signage, fliers and maps should be developed for directing the public to SWCF from St Werburghs proper, as well as clear and accessible signs welcoming patrons and making it clear what facilities are available and where they are situated. It is recommended that to increase accessibility, signs are translated into languages that reflect the demographic makeup of Bristol and the local geographic area of SWCF.
- The community garden is not perceived as accessible to the local community and this further lends an air of exclusivity to the site. Clear guidelines on accessibility to both here and the Propagation Place site should be developed and made clear in signage and online.
- Many participants interviewed had no idea that they could purchase eggs or meat from SWCF. The availability of farm produce is exclusive and allows access to a small group of 'in the know' visitors. This further amplifies the sense of 'exclusivity' at SWCF and by default excludes minority groups. SWCF should reconsider the way in which farm produce is sold and advertised so that it is accessible to the wider geographical community surrounding the site.
- SWCF should consider the possibility of a staffed entrance, or having visible staff or volunteers who actively welcome visitors to the site and make themselves available to answer questions and provide guidance.

AMENITIES

- SWCF should consider the possibility of negotiating with The City Farm Cafe for concessions based on postcode, as well as opening a dialogue about lowering their prices to become less niche.
- SWCF should consider extending the opening hours and days of the Tuesday Cafe, as well as increasing the advertisement of this more affordable and accessible eatery. It was remarked upon by interviewees that Tuesday Cafe is already a more diverse space than the Farm Cafe.
- Another suggestion is to provide a kiosk for affordable snacks and refreshments.

LAYOUT

- Comprehensive and clear signage on site should be developed in order to clearly label the facilities, buildings and attractions at SWCF, making sure to link the different areas of site together and demystify where people are allowed to visit, how to access toilets and refreshments and where different groups of animals are situated. Considering the 20% minority population surrounding SWCF, an awareness of cultural ideas around animals (for example religious teachings about pigs and other livestock) should be further investigated, and any outcomes mitigated by offering clear signage and alternative routes around SWCF.

WEATHER

- SWCF should assess its provision of indoor activities and shelter during events, and develop a way to provide services and provisions available with increased protection from inclement weather conditions.

3. CULTURAL FACTORS

IMAGE OF FARM IN COLLECTIVE MINDSET

- SWCF should seek to embolden a sense of ownership among current and future beneficiaries to the site by creating tangible links to different cultural groups through offering access to space, sharing resources, and actively visiting outlying communities and engaging before inviting them to interact with SWCF in a way that directly benefits the communities.
- During the course of our research, many suggestions were made to encourage positive interaction with SWCF including: inviting beneficiaries to name animals at SWCF so that they are compelled to bring friends and family to visit 'their' goat, on-site plant growing competitions so that return visits are encouraged to see 'their' plants, growing culturally relevant plants for sale and in the community garden (such as calaloo) that are reflective of the great diversity of cultures within the geographical community of SWCF, and naming benches or laying plaques for elders that have contributed to SWCF and allotments.

APPROPRIATENESS OF RESOURCES, EVENTS, AND ACTIVITIES

- In order to engage the local community to participate at SWCF, a deeper understanding of the diverse needs and requirements of Bristol's communities should be sought, and in order to obtain this understanding, conversations must continually be had and communities must be heard.
- The view that SWCF should open up the planning of their events, activities and projects to community input and ideas was put forward by participants. The benefits of this approach are a.) that the community would bring a diversity of ideas and approaches, ending the perpetuation of a homogeneous cultural bent in events and activities, and b.) that members of the community would feel more of a sense of belonging in the environment of SWCF as a result of this inclusive engagement, encouraging use of the site and participation in its events.
- SWCF should explore ways of bringing members of local communities into the inner workings and decision-making processes of SWCF, drawing on and learning from the richness and diversity of ideas and resources that those communities have to offer will benefit SWCF, which in turn will be able to increase its beneficial offering to the community at large.
- SWCF should seek to make clear that there are many activities and spaces at the site which do not require interaction with animals. Many research participants were unaware of the Boiling Wells site for

example.

- A key aim for SWCF with regards to general access is to explore ways of opening and broadening access to the green spaces at SWCF; making the site more accessible by increasing communities' awareness and familiarity with the space as a whole; opening up closed off areas and welcoming people in with cultural and participatory events and activities; and generally enabling community engagement with the site as a green space, and a horticultural resource, promoting widespread awareness that it is more than just an animal petting farm.

APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS

- An outreach role has been identified as a clear pathway to inviting diverse communities into the Farm. It has been highlighted that many communities would make better use of SWCF if they were visited in their own community spaces and then invited to SWCF directly for a tour or activity.

Actions need to be culturally relevant to the groups that SWCF is trying to engage, which requires input from the groups in question. Commonly SWCF develops projects based on the current staff perceptions of what would be beneficial to the local community and this is reflected in the lack of diversity among beneficiaries.

The community outreach function should be designed to foster a sense of ownership over the spaces at SWCF, inviting groups and individuals to contribute ideas and make requests for events, activities and to use the spaces available. Flipping the dialogue from “we have this activity, please come” to “what would you like to do in this space and how can we help bring this to life?”

- SWCF should develop a strategy for communication and outreach which has continuity as an underpinning feature, exercising patience and maintaining actively engaged in a variety of approaches to create connections in spite of obstacles. SWCF should acknowledge that it takes time for trust to be built with communities, and make an active and sustained commitment to building that trust with community members.

LANGUAGE OF MARKETING

- SWCF should consider developing a new ‘voice’ for SWCF that is used to communicate with the general public and beneficiaries. The marketing ‘voice’ should consider communication style and language that feels welcoming and inclusive, and takes care not to stigmatise patrons or potential patrons.
- It is recommended that the Vision, Mission and Aims of SWCF should be revised for clarity and relevance in order to support the objectives in a clear, deliberate and concise way.
- The SWCF website would benefit from refreshing to better represent what the organisation offers to the local community in terms of services, resources and support. The website should be redesigned for accessibility and with a more streamlined user experience that allows information to be found easily. The website should act as a digital hub that clearly advertises what SWCF offers in a way that is welcoming, clear and accessible.

AESTHETICS, CONTENT AND PLACEMENT OF MARKETING

- SWCF should seek to build partnerships with local organisations including schools, churches, mosques, community centres and community rooms where advertising materials can be placed. The advertising process should be systemised so that any member of SWCF staff can access a list of venues and

organisations that should be advertised to when promoting a new activity.

- It was noted by a number of interviewees that the aesthetics and wording of the posters at SWCF further enhance the values of the dominant culture, and sometimes lack appeal or relevance to target beneficiaries outside of this demographic. SWCF should consider reviewing current marketing activities for accessibility and cultural relevance. Further suggestions include recruiting local artists from a broader range of diverse backgrounds to develop some marketing collateral for use in advertising, as well as engaging community groups or schools to produce imagery for use in marketing.
- SWCF should consider the use of joining and participating in Facebook Groups as part of a wider outreach effort, sharing information with partner organisations and beneficiaries across social media to reach a wider audience.

CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITIES' NEEDS

- In order to engage the local community to participate at SWCF, a deeper understanding of the diverse needs and requirements of Bristol's communities should be sought, and in order to obtain this understanding, conversations must continually be had and communities must be heard.

AFFINITY WITH FARM STAFF

- The perceptions that the local community has of SWCF is in part due to their feelings and perceptions of the people who work there. Section 4 below outlines the ways in which increasing minority representation, cultural competency of the existing staff and rethinking recruitment strategy would have an impact on how SWCF is viewed by a more diverse public.

4. STAFFING RELATED FACTORS

REPRESENTATION (SEE ALSO CULTURAL)

- Participants discussed the feeling of entering a predominantly, or entirely White space. Discomfort, the sense of the absence of permission, and the lack of a notion of belonging or sense of entitlement and shared ownership of the space that is desirable in a community space were all reported. Thus, the exclusivity of a space becomes internalised. SWCF should seek to actively recruit a diverse staff team as a priority.

CAPABILITY/CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- An audit of staff and volunteer skills would identify the diverse experiences and knowledge already contained within SWCF staff. A number of people interviewed as part of the Cultural Competency Report revealed skill sets that could be beneficial to the ongoing work around diversity and inclusion, but it was highlighted that most other staff and volunteers were unaware of these areas of skill and knowledge.
- It is imperative that the staff team establishes reflective practice on cultural competencies, to facilitate the staff better embracing difference in line with SWCF's organisational aims and values. This should be provided by an external service or organisation as at present, the organisation lacks the capacity and knowledge to do so internally. Regular one-on-one conversations should be provided for all staff members.
- SWCF needs to allay fears and galvanise the staff team around a common aim. It should be made clear that the point of inclusivity is to enrich the environment for everybody involved, not to replace staff

members for box ticking purposes. True inclusivity creates a positive environment for all who interact with an organisation, making sure that everybody's needs are met. This can often include the previously unmet needs of existing staff members. SWCF should find a way to communicate this to all staff and volunteers and make sure that changes implemented are done in a way that highlight the overall benefit to the staff and volunteer teams.

RECRUITMENT

- An alternative hiring process needs to be implemented that mitigates against the fact that people tend to hire people like themselves. The hiring process should better highlight vocational knowledge and skill sets, and reduce emphasis on academic knowledge where this is not a prerequisite for the role. It is recommended that there is a full review of partner organisations and local community groups and centres within geographical reach of SWCF, and that a contact list is produced to ensure that all opportunities are advertised in a broad range of locations as a standard procedure. SWCF should consider hiring a consultant to co-design a new hiring strategy that can be implemented across all staff and volunteer recruitment across the organisation.
- SWCF should seek to improve the experience and retention of volunteers by identifying the positive impacts of volunteering at SWCF, and creating opportunities to increase volunteer skill sets as a potential gateway into employment. A clear pathway should be developed between volunteering and employment at SWCF, as well as strategies to identify underutilised skills, knowledge, and perspectives of current and future volunteers. SWCF should be more proactive at finding new volunteers, especially within underrepresented communities. Opportunities should be highlighted in a variety of formats including through community outreach.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- SWCF should build a strategic internal consultancy position to support the implementation of all of the recommendations contained in this report, and to support staff to design new strategies and processes to ensure the ongoing impact of this work.

SWCF should consider that this position reports directly to the board of trustees to maintain as much impartiality as possible. This mitigates the influence that is held by directors and ensures greater efficacy of the position's aims.

It is recommended that this position is time-bound and designed with redundancy to be a key criterion for success. This serves to ensure that the organisation does not become reliant on one individual to 'deliver the diversity part' of the organisation's aims, and instead supports the development of self-sustaining systems that are future-focused and evolving.

CONCLUSION

The issues faced by St Werburghs City Farm (SWCF), in becoming a more representative and inclusive space within its community, mirror broader issues relating to the culture and practice of exclusion of people of colour and ethnic minorities from the British countryside and farming in general, and to urban farms and green spaces in particular.

The barriers that exist for people of colour and ethnic minorities in accessing SWCF, that are perceived by communities within Ashley Ward, and which have been identified by the Equity Project, were partially identified by staff members at SWCF as documented and stated in this report's hypothesis. This identification and acknowledgement of the existing barriers is a necessary step in remedying them. Necessary, but not sufficient, since further steps must be taken in order to address and eradicate, or mitigate, these barriers. Furthermore, this report has highlighted a wide range of existing barriers which had not heretofore been identified, acknowledged or addressed by staff at SWCF. It is crucial to proper engagement of the diverse communities in the locality of SWCF that lessons are learned from this report's identification of these outlying barriers, and that appropriate measures are subsequently put in place to mitigate or, where possible, to eradicate them.

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