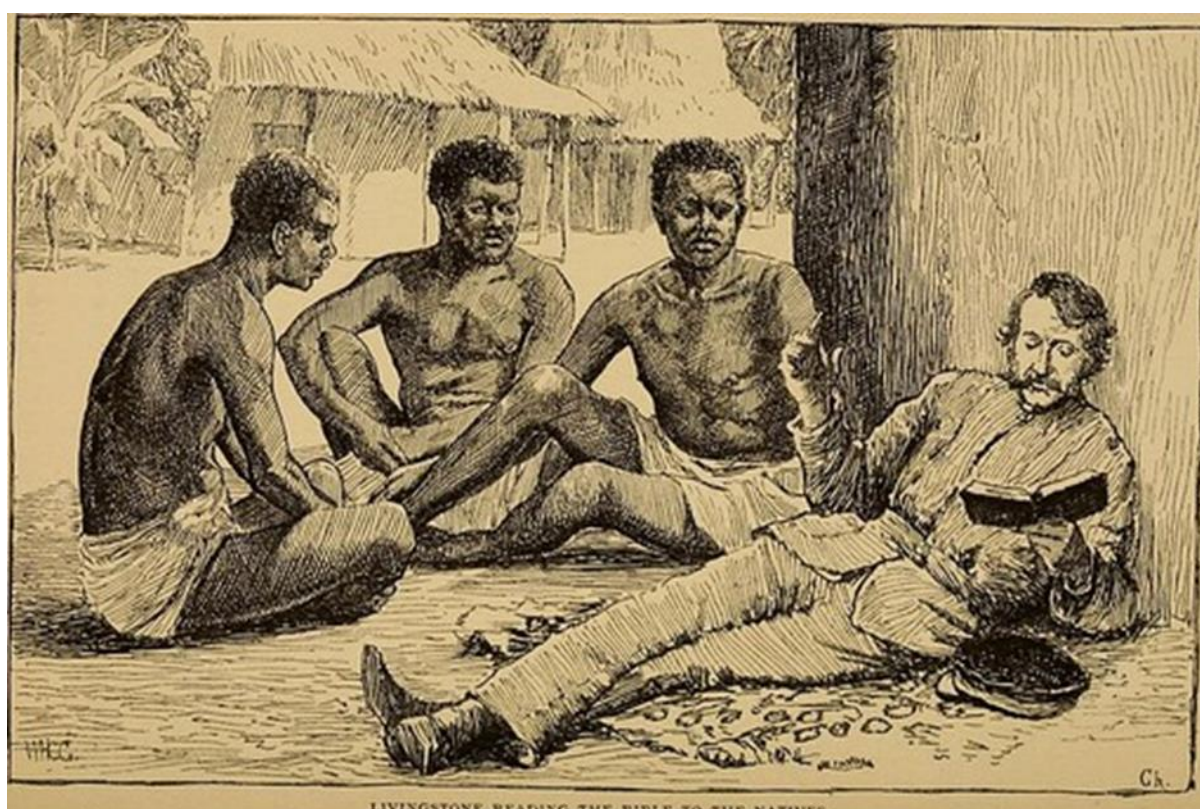


African Perspectives on David Livingstone

Project Evaluation

April 2020



LIVINGSTONE READING THE BIBLE TO THE NATIVES.



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Introduction

In 1874, three Africans visited Newstead Abbey and Nottingham. They were all friends and companions of the famous Victorian explorer David Livingstone who stayed at Newstead from 1864-5. Belong's African Perspectives on David Livingstone project set out to explore the links between Nottingham, Newstead Abbey, the explorer David Livingstone and his three African companion visitors.

With funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project recruited a diverse group of volunteers from the African and Nottingham communities who undertook detailed research and showcased the stories of Abdullah Susi, James Chumah and Jacob Wainwright, the three young men in question.

The project has attracted national and international interest, forging links with the David Livingstone Memorial Centre in Scotland, and helping develop Newstead Abbey's understanding of Livingstone's work, amongst others.

Delivered on time and within budget, the project is an excellent example of how support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund enables the amplification of a lesser known historical story which can be developed into a compelling narrative, and which, through new learning and insight, has added to our knowledge of one of the most significant characters in African history. It has also given a brought a new perspective to certain aspects about African history, especially for young people from an African heritage living in the UK.

Think Funding was commissioned to prepare this evaluation report, and in so doing has had access to project files and the full range of documented material created by it. To supplement this review of findings, it also consulted a number of project stakeholders and heritage volunteers who worked on the project, to gain their views. Finally, it invited Project Officer Simon Ferrigno to share his personal views about the project. He spoke about some of the issues it faced, and the overwhelming sense of achievement at its conclusion.

Belong Nottingham

Originally founded as an African Refugee Community Organisation by refugees for refugees, Belong now supports migrants from all backgrounds and from a wide range of countries, including those in South America to East Asia. The charity's main aim is to empower refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to achieve their full potential and to be economically active and socially included.

Belong believes in community and cooperation and it has recruited a multi-cultural staff team which is reflective of the community in which it works. Their background and experience helps the project to understand the needs of the people it works with, and aids service planning with target group beneficiaries.

Belong offers services in the following areas:

- Employability: CV writing, careers advice, volunteer experience, job searches, interview techniques.
- Education: ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages), IT skills, integration training, social enterprise training.

- Youth: Support with integration, academic and social development, dealing with peer and family expectations.
- Health: Improving confidence in accessing health services, promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- Housing: Liaising between migrants and charities that help with accessing accommodation.

Belong has a positive track record of managing the delivery of heritage projects which aim to seek out, explore and explain, areas of common history between migrant and host communities. Its previous project brought back to life the story of George Africanus, an African-born man who settled in Nottingham in the 18th century, becoming a well-known businessman in the city.

Background to the Project

Funding for the David Livingstone Heritage project was secured in 2018. The rationale for the project was to encourage an enthusiasm to relive Livingstone's tales, but crucially, and more importantly, to assess the impact and influence of his work in Africa, especially the cultural ramifications, on British society.

The original aim of the project was to revision Livingstone's journeys and experiences and to assess the legacy he left across two continents and a diverse audience. The project afforded a unique opportunity, in particular, to further explore the journey made by three African men, all very close to, and greatly influenced by Livingstone, who journeyed to Nottingham as a result of their work with him, and their involvement at Newstead Abbey.

The project therefore, would not only be of interest to students of Livingstone, but also communities in Nottingham, especially those with a black African heritage, who might have a particular interest in the visitation of Susi, Chumah and Wainwright.

The project initially sought a May 2018 start date, and an end date of November 2019. A budget of £73,000 was approved for the project by the then Heritage Lottery Fund, which included the recruitment of a Project Officer who would have responsibility for leading and managing the project, under the auspices of Belong's Chief Executive. External consultants would be brought in to deliver ICT training to volunteers and a Volunteer Mentor Coach role was established to support staff and volunteers and to focus on creating a lasting legacy for the project.

Aims, Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes

The project set out to make an in-depth assessment of the British explorer, David Livingstone. He is credited with making an outstanding contribution to western knowledge about the African continent, in particular his explorations and his humanitarian crusades, notably against slavery. His contributions have largely been viewed in a positive light, however recent re-examination has questioned the value of his legacy. In particular, there remains a contested view about his role in colonialism and commerce in Africa, and because of his strident views about Christianity.

However, at the 200th anniversary of his birth, the BBC saw fit to open a piece¹ about his legacy with this quotation: "a missionary, an explorer, a medic, an anti-slavery campaigner and Victorian celebrity whose death prompted displays of public mourning reminiscent of Princess Diana."

The article concluded with a comment, which perhaps sums up the dichotomy of views currently held about Livingstone's legacy, from Dr Joanna Lewis of the London School of Economics. She said "Either you loved him or loathed him. You loved him because he was a great explorer, a humanitarian and he was a great Scotsman or you loathed him because you blamed him and other missionaries and explorers for bringing colonial rule to Africa."

The Belong project agreed the following series of ambitious aims at the outset of its work in addressing Livingstone's legacy, it sought to understand:

1. His role in mapping the African continent
2. His influence on the education and the future development of African generations that followed after him
3. The influence his African aides and leaders had in shaping his exploration and the political changes that came about as a result
4. Whether he genuinely represented the British Government or the Church in his mission to Africa
5. The way in which he was perceived at the time, both in the UK and in Africa: missionary or business person?
6. His role in the abolition of slavery
7. The impact of his legacy on the current generation of Africans, both in the UK and in Africa
8. Whether or not he has any remaining living descendants.

These objectives were to be delivered through a range of activities, including the recruitment of 30 volunteers; heritage, IT and digital technologies skills training; community engagement and interaction, especially with young people in Nottingham, and particularly, Hyson Green; visits to historical sites with the aim of interrogating stakeholder professionals and to undertake new research on established collections; and events and exhibitions to showcase research and other findings from the project.

At the onset, the project was considering the possibility of offering an NVQ level qualification for volunteer trainees involved in the project, but this was later discounted.

The project anticipated recruiting a diverse range of participants, 30% of whom would be young people.

Forecast outcomes included improvements in the level of heritage knowledge and skills obtained by volunteers (including research and writing skills, heritage interpretation and conservation skills, research and writing as well as event management); improved levels of understanding and knowledge achieved by young people, particularly those of African descent, and the formation of new knowledge networks with youth organisations and schools. The project also aimed to develop a new website to showcase its work and findings.

¹ "Dr David Livingstone – A 200 Year Legacy" <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-21829205>

Project outputs and outcomes were agreed and set out in a delivery document agreed with the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Key areas to address included:

- a) Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the delivery of this project.
- b) Recruit 30 volunteers, including 10 young volunteers.
- c) Establish a diverse project steering group, to include representation from Nottingham's African community, and coordinate quarterly meetings.
- d) Partner with Nottinghamshire Archives to train 30 volunteers in using archives and interpreting records.
- e) Train a further 10 volunteers to be heritage champions, 10 volunteers in oral history skills and 30 volunteers in digital skills, to include social media and website management.
- f) Organise and facilitate visits to the David Livingstone Centre and the British Library.
- g) Conduct research into the life and legacy of David Livingstone and share research via a website and a touring exhibition to be displayed at venues across Nottingham.
- h) Organise a celebration event at the New Arts Exchange.

Project Delivery

a) Project management

A project management group was formed at the start of the project, this included representatives from the following organisations:

- Jean-Didier Mualaba, Chief Executive Office, Belong
- Chris Weir, Local Heritage Practitioner, Vice Chairman of the Nottinghamshire Local History Association, a Board member of Nottingham Civic Society
- Susanne Seymour, The University of Nottingham
- Helen Bates, Community Engagement Coordinator at Leaves of Southwell
- Amdani Juma, the African Institute for Social Development

The role of the Steering Group was to be a sounding board to check progress against the project brief and to offer advice to the Project Coordinator. The group had no formal terms of reference.

Simon Ferrigno was recruited by Belong to lead the project with the title Heritage Project Officer. Simon had an estimable biography having worked extensively in Africa, Asia and South America on sustainability issues involving farmers and commerce. Simon had written extensively on sustainability, including a book, numerous reports, and a regular magazine column on the subject. Simon had also worked in community development, and music in London after several years as a professional chef and part-time radio DJ in France.

Simon's conclusions about his role within the project, and its outcomes in general are set out in the 'Viewpoints' section of this report.

Tara Munroe of Opal22 Arts and Edutainment was recruited to mentor Simon throughout the project. Tara has a wide ranging experience of arts and heritage and is a well-known local

practitioner throughout the East Midlands with a focus on BAME arts and culture. Tara has commented about her work, and the work of the project: "The David Livingstone project has been a joy to work with. It has been great to observe how the Belong team has embraced a historical subject and made it appeal to the masses, branching into schools and the wider community. I think the creative thinking of how to distribute the information in a visual and thought-provoking way had enabled them to be able to carry on the conversation further, and I look forward to seeing where they go next with this story."

b) Activities and deliverables

The narrative at the heart of the David Livingstone Heritage Project

It is not the intention of this report to tell the whole David Livingstone Story, however, it is important to understand some of the key narratives which the project explored and brought to life in more detail. Within the project booklet, "Strangers in a Strange Land", the project set out the defining relationship between Livingstone and the three African visitors to Newstead, and the rationale for the project thus:

Strangers in a Strange Land

In 1874, three Africans visited Newstead Abbey and Nottingham. They were former companions of the famous Victorian explorer David Livingstone. They had been with him on some of his African explorations, in some cases spending years with him. James Chumah and Abdullah Susi are immortalised in a picture taken at Newstead Abbey.

Together with Jacob Wainwright they were the subjects of chapters in "Livingstone and Newstead", a book written by Alice Frazer, daughter of the Abbey's owners at the time of the visit, the Webbs.

What do their stories tell us about exploration in Africa in the 19th Century? And why are Chumah, Susi and Wainwright not better known in Nottingham today?

Livingstone at Newstead Abbey

David Livingstone stayed at Newstead Abbey in 1864-65, at the invitation of the Webb family. He was a friend of William Frederick Webb, having met him in Africa. During this visit, he wrote part of his book on the Zambezi Expedition.

His days at Newstead were said to be some of his happiest. He got to spend time with his daughters, Agnes and Anna Mary. Together, they played with the other children in the house, when David Livingstone was not working on his book. The room he stayed in can be seen today at the Abbey.

This was his last visit home to Britain. He died in Africa at Ilala, in Chitambo's village, in 1873. His wife, Mary Moffatt, an African born missionary's daughter, had died in Africa during the Zambezi expedition.

Following his death, a group of Africans buried Livingstone's heart and organs under a Mvula (or Mpundu) tree. They honoured him with both a Christian burial service and a traditional African ceremony. They then carried his body, diaries and equipment to the coast near Zanzibar in an epic nine month, 1000-mile journey, during which 10 of

the 60 Africans died. One of these was a ten year old girl called Losi, who died of a snake bite.

Two of those on the journey, Jacob Wainwright and Carus Farrar, left diaries and letters telling of their arduous journey.

James Chumah and Abdullah Susi helped to complete the Last Diaries of David Livingstone at Newstead Abbey, working with Horace Waller and two of Livingstone's children, Agnes and Tom.

Chumah, Susi and Wainwright had all once been enslaved. Livingstone is said to have freed Chumah with his own hands. David Livingstone was a fervent anti-slavery campaigner, whose actions and death helped end the East African slave trade, which was led by Arab traders often working with local groups.

However, the colonial narrative placed Livingstone as the famous explorer, while the voices of his African companions disappeared into the background.

Livingstone's success was built on African contributions, and James Chumah, Abdullah Susi and Jacob Wainwright were educated, modern and independent participants in the Victorian age.

The three Africans we have studied in more detail all came from the Yao people of South-Eastern Africa, centred on the southern end of Lake Malawi, in the Shire highlands. They are one of the Bantu peoples, a group who spread across a large swathe of Africa in the centuries before the colonial era.

Livingstone explored here on his second expedition, and this is how they met.

The project booklet produced at the conclusion of the project sets out the above story in more detail, and is clear evidence of the research that the volunteers were able to undertake. They have greatly added to the stories of Abdullah Susi, James Chumah and Jacob Wainwright, and especially how they supported and aided Livingstone during his Africa explorations and his exploits further afield.

The story is indeed a fascinating one, and the project has successfully highlighted a number of key elements of pre- and post-colonial Africa, not least the lineage of Livingstone's three companion's and how their own personal histories were moulded by their interaction with his life and journey as well as the major forces shaping Africa at the time, not least the legacy of tribal dynasties, the development and impact of slavery, trade and commercialism, and the continent's aggressive colonisation by European countries.

Project Activities

Simon Ferrigno maintained a comprehensive diary to record all activities undertaken within the project, by way of a snapshot, these are some of the records with dates.

Date	Activity
9.10.18	Meeting Susanne Seymour at Institute for Study of slavery. Interested in being in steering group; also working on a project centred around Newstead, but previous owners to Livingstone era one – the ones

	(Wildman) who were compensated for loss of slaves after abolition. Their archival work has started.
23.10.18	Meeting with Jill Jefferies at Nottingham Refugees Forum. Build relationship and extend offer of involvement on project steering group to representative from groups; opportunity for volunteering on project to be made available to NRF.
6.12.18	Preparation of leaflet to promote project launch.
6.12.18	First steering group meeting takes place.
Nov, Dec 2018 / Jan 2019	Recruitment of volunteers.
2.2.2019	Volunteers visit to Newstead Abbey to review Livingstone collection held by the Abbey.
16.3.2019	Volunteer session: Maps, travel, borders. Exploring the journeys of explorers then and migrants now; the relevance and changes in maps; the maps that might reflect African cultures.
5.4.2019	Chris Weir archives training: Newstead records, Spinner book. Visit with volunteers, registration for archives use. Practical lesson in using archives.
15.5.2019	Volunteers at David Livingstone Centre - Visit to DLT and National Library: Meetings with Elena (learning manager), Natalie (curator), Kate (collections), Leslie (conservator), Lara and Austin, and several volunteers and trainees (Gillian, Phyllis, Rosa, and a work placement student).
16.5.2019	Volunteers at National Library of Scotland: National Library of Scotland -
8.6.2019	Work session: volunteers focus on final outputs: posters, booklet. Refining three core areas of focus for our booklet on the project. Review of Scotland trip and lessons: 1). Before David Livingstone and colonialism; 2) David Livingstone's achievements and the 'Three Cs': Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation. 3). The Africans with David Livingstone. Were they servants, followers? Friends? Porters? People and achievers in their own right. What is their legacy? Jacob Wainwright's reception at Newstead Abbey. How much has changed since 1874?
11.6.2019	Royal Geographical Society visit.
15.6.2019	Volunteer session on workshop support materials and poster preparation.
29.6.2019	Volunteer session on events and comparison between 19th and 21st Centuries for people of African origin.
27.7.2019	Volunteer session on African companions and attitudes to race now and then.
December – January 2020	Completion of poster and booklet text. Completion of 20 minute project film and trailer.
January 10-24, 2020	The Vine Community Centre Exhibition - Vine exhibition, workshop and lunch. Circa 150 people attended the exhibition during the two week period.
February 10-21, 2020	St Mary's in High Pavement Exhibition - St Mary's exhibition. Circa 500 people attended the exhibition during the two week period.
March 2020	Booklet launch and Celebration Event: Delayed due to Coronavirus restrictions. Booklet distribution expected to begin April/May. Copies will be sent to key contacts and volunteers. We will also contact local libraries, tourist outlets and Newstead Abbey to see about distribution and sales.

Achievement of outputs and outcomes

The following is a summary of the verified key achievements secured by the project in line with the project plan agreed with the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Ref.	Target	Actions and Achievements
a.	Take proactive measures to be inclusive, remove barriers to access and reach new and diverse audiences through the delivery of this project.	The majority of the volunteers recruited were from African communities now settled in the UK, as well as people from white British and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds. Groups and schools targeted for the touring exhibition were in areas with a diverse mix of people. All sessions were planned in a way that allowed people with jobs and childcare to participate, including using rooms and venues with provision of child play areas on several occasions. An aspect of the project was also developed in partnership with a local school. By taking the end of project exhibition into venues like St Mary's in the High Pavement and Newstead Abbey, also meant project outcomes were shared with a non-BAME audience which helped to broaden the audience for the project and its narrative.
b.	Recruit 30 volunteers, including 10 young volunteers.	The project recruited 21 volunteers in total, and these formed a core group. A further 8 were involved from the Young People's project, as well as two classes (year 5 and 6 from St Mary's Academy) and one group of older people in a workshop at the Vine Community Centre. In the core group, some volunteers dropped in and out according to work, study and family demands, but a small group (8) have engaged and participated in activities in a more consistent way (i.e. attending more than 50% of all activities), and this group helped the most to shape the research and outputs. Two of the volunteers were also members of the steering committee and one is on the board of Belong. Volunteers were actively supported throughout the project. Those who were regulars and involved in most of the sessions worked with the Project Coordinator to develop a volunteer support plan. This set out personal aims and goals during their time with the project and enabled the capture of key learning. These were set out under a heading with the plan "Volunteer job description and work plan." An example of one volunteer's key goals is: • Writer and blogger on project • Researcher on food and health

		• Preparation of food based on project findings • Cooking for food takeovers at events • Preparation of recipe book based on African and British food in 1873-5
c.	Establish a diverse project steering group, to include representation from Nottingham's African community, and coordinate quarterly meetings.	The Steering Group was comprised of a diverse group of individuals including: the Belong CEO, Amdani Juma of the African Institute for Social Development, Chris Weir (archives expert, ex Nottingham Archives, also a tutor on the project who participated voluntarily in other activities), and Drs Susanne Seymour and Helen Bates of Nottingham University. Three steering group meetings took place.
d.	Partner with Nottinghamshire Archives to train 30 volunteers in using archives and interpreting records.	Two training and research sessions were held at Nottingham Archives, one at Newstead Abbey and three at Belong, at which ten volunteers were involved. The project also made visits to the National Library of Scotland, and the Royal Geographical Society to seek out records on Livingstone and his African servants, involving a total of four more volunteers. A further four sessions about archives research were held at Belong and the Bridge Centre for those who could not attend the other archives sessions. Two sessions took place at the British Newspaper Archives to research stories on Livingstone and the African Companions' visits to Nottingham and learning how to search. All participants at project workshops (including the 21 volunteers, and 10 young people) were offered guidance in how to interpret records and shown how to use local archive materials.
e.	Train a further 10 volunteers to be heritage champions, 10 volunteers in oral history skills and 30 volunteers in digital skills, to include social media and website management.	The core group of volunteers involved in the project completed all or most of the activities (8 in total) and can be considered Heritage Champions, having learnt a core set of skills on research, writing, communications and social media as well as on the lives of David Livingstone, Abdullah Susi, James Chumah and Jacob Wainwright. Those not participating in all activities have accessed some of the training notably on archives research, writing, the research materials and digital skills. The core group and others have reflected on the life of David Livingstone and his connections to Newstead and on the lives of Abdullah Susi, James Chumah and Jacob Wainwright.

		The volunteers shaped the direction of project research and provided insights into an African interpretation of the stories. The project was also able to assess historical narratives of Africa in the Livingstone era as well as modern narratives such as <i>Tram 83</i>, a book by a Congolese author about modern Congo, one of the regions where Livingstone travelled. Project volunteers were also able to engage in storytelling and in comparing Nottingham then and now, exploring the experiences of our participants and the relevance of the story to them and their experiences.
f.	Organise and facilitate visits to the David Livingstone Centre and the British Library.	Successful visits were organised to the David Livingstone Trust and Centre (DLTC) (May 2019), the National Archives of Scotland (May 2019), and The Royal Geographical Society (June 2019). The visits enabled detailed research by volunteers and greatly broadened the scope of the project. The Viewpoints section later in this report highlights how the project has added to the information and knowledge held by the DLTC and Newstead Abbey as a result of new findings that were made.
g.	Conduct research into the life and legacy of David Livingstone and share research via a website and a touring exhibition to be displayed at venues across Nottingham.	Research activity was comprehensive, and has included a review of a number of biographies and accounts of David Livingstone (including the account by Alice Frazer, a Newstead resident who met all the characters), online sources (including films and video available on the BBC and YouTube), archives material, websites, documentaries and regular group sessions with volunteers to discuss findings and seek their interpretation and comment. Volunteers received creative writing training with Nottingham writer Norma Gregory to help in writing up interpretation, and training in the use of video-diaries, social media, and graphic design and presentation skills for dissemination. Research outcomes have been collated to prepare an end of project booklet (currently in draft format), a website, and posters and display materials which will be used for public events, and further workshops in the future. The main panel and film are designed for continued use after the project ends, and it will be used for future events post-Coronavirus. These are likely to include St Mary's Catholic Academy in Hyson Green, Nottingham Libraries, and the David Livingstone Trust in Scotland.
h.	Organise a celebration event at the New Arts Exchange.	This was scheduled for March 2020, but regrettably was cancelled because of the coronavirus. The venue was due to be the Council House Ballroom, Nottingham, with the Lord Mayor due to speak

Sample of materials produced

The following is a small sample of the materials produced as a result of research undertaken within the project. The two posters are examples of the research material gathered and their method of presentation.

ABDULLAH SUSI, FOUNDER OF LEOPOLDVILLE/ KINSHASA, COMPANION OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE



Abdullah Susi was far more than a porter, or a freed slave. He was a riverman, sailor, caravan leader, dockworker, explorer and founded the settlement in Kongo that we now know as Kinshasa, one of Africa's largest cities. He visited three continents and many countries.

Abdullah Susi was born in Mapela Velha, which is now part of Mozambique. Taken as a slave, **he was freed by Livingstone in 1861, and travelled with him to Bombay, helping sail the vessel Lady Nyasa after the Zambezi expedition.** He worked there as a docker until Livingstone recruited him to join the last expedition in 1865. He was one of the three Africans who stayed with Livingstone for the whole of the last journey from 1865 to 1873, with Chuma and Amoda.

Later he was brought, with James Chumah by Livingstone's friend James Young on the Malwa landing Southampton April 15th 1874, to help Waller with the editing of the Last Journey's. From Waller we know that Susi used to help read the labels on medicine bottles to ensure Livingstone was correctly dosed.



Together with Chuma, he led the expedition that brought Livingstone's body and effects back to Zanzibar, preserving them for future generations. Together they organised the preservation of the body, the inventory of the effects, and the journey, at times very perilous journey.

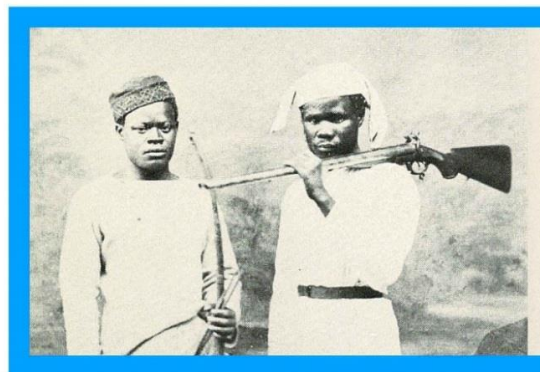
Susi and Amoda had a twenty year relationship with Livingstone. Longer than most Africans/Europeans. Without Susi and the others bringing Livingstone's body and papers to the coast, Livingstone's later years and story would have been lost.

Susi was awarded a medal by the Royal Geographical Society for his contributions. Waller called him and Chumah **'Actual geographers of no mean attainments'**.

It is also Susi who first greeted Henry Morton Stanley, meaning Stanley knew full well who he was addressing when he made his famous, if disputed, greeting of 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?'. The conversation is said to have gone like this
" 'who the mischief are you?"

'I am Susi, the servant of Dr Livingstone', said he, smiling and showing a gleaming row of teeth.'

Susi met Stanley first. But history was written by a white man and we forgot.



Scant as the historical records are, we can read into the lines that Susi, like others, had some difficulties perhaps linked to the things he lived through and the travails endured, especially as a slave. But he continued his career becoming a caravan leader for the UMCA (1883-1891), and with Stanley for King Leopold of Belgium (1879-1882), founding the settlement known as Leopoldville, now Kinshasa. He was baptised as David in 1886. Susi was married to a woman named Mochosi (Simpson), in the third expedition at least. He was baptised as David (after David Livingstone) on 23 August 1866 by Bishop HC Goodyear.

Died 5 May 1891 in Zanzibar after a long illness with growing paralysis, aged around 50. He left one small son, that Bishop Smythies talks about wanting to be guardian for and says **'Susi had been a good friend to me from the first, and I shall miss him more than any of our people'**.

PICTURE CREDIT

David Livingstone's followers, Susi and Chuma, pictured with his former possessions. Photograph, ca. 1873. Credit: Wellcome Collection. CC BY

Susi and Chuma, Africa, ca.1870-ca.1900 Credit: courtesy of the Centre for the Study of World Christianity Archives, at the University of Edinburgh GB 237 C5WC47/L519/55

Credit: Abdullah Susi by Mauli & Co, no date
© Royal Geographical Society (with IGB).

PRE COLONIAL AFRICA

DESCRIBING THE ACTIVITIES OF EXPLORERS CAN LEAD TO THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS NO AFRICA BEFORE THEM.

'WE DIDN'T EXIST'.



Yet Africa and its peoples did exist. Africa is the cradle of humanity, its birthplace, and home to civilisations and nations that were established before most European nations: Egypt, Songhai, Mali, Ethiopia, and Kongo. It was not a blank slate. Explorers like David Livingstone mapped the continent and engaged with its people, and their actions helped change it.

Livingstone travelled much in the land that is now the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as the lands now shaped by colonial history into Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania.

The Kingdom of Kongo was in the Western part of Central Africa. The name comes from its founders, who spoke Kikongo. The kingdom was founded around 1390 CE. Kongo had a thriving civilisation before Livingstone's time, politically, with structures, as a state, which grew in scale from about 1665.

Originally, chiefdoms were formed between the ocean and the Congo River upstream from Malebo Pool (Matadi today). By about 1500, the coastal dwellers were supplying salt and fish and had transformed the coastal plain of Loango, towards the estuary of the Congo, into a vast palm-grove producing palm-oil. Further north, near the edges of the great forest, raffia palm was cultivated and used to make fabric. Lastly, in the same area and further into the forest, red dye-wood was exchanged for products of the savannah.

PICTURE CREDIT

Africa blank map with rivers <https://pasarelapr.com/map/blank-map-of-africa-with-rivers.html>

1896. 'Ya-Yao dancing man.' J.G. Watson. This photo is in Sir Harry Johnston's 'British Central Africa' and is captioned, 'Angoni dancer and drum players.' From S.G. Williams. Wikimedia Commons

Three C's

By **Luc Kangele**

Christianity, Commerce and Civilization

Three C's that commence annihilation

Our faith, trade and customs

Weakened across all kingdoms

Songhai, Buganda or Kongo

Victoria, Kaiser or Leopold

See me as I see you

Red blood and not eyes blue

Life is like the changing of the seasons

Spring to summer, winter before autumn

We were in our winters

When you brought your summers

Summoned our chiefs to sell our lands

Signed off in words we couldn't comprehend

We are not the same but we are equal

So let's fix this as one people



The slave trade that Livingstone encountered was not new. Between 1506 and 1543, the Kongo king, Afonso I opened the country to Portugal, setting in train a vast economic and political reorganisation and a deliberate assimilation of features of Christianity. Afonso I made the Catholic Church the state religion, and his son Henrique was consecrated bishop in Rome.

The slave trade developed from 1514 onwards. The King tried to control it by establishing royal monopolies and then, in 1526, to abolish it. This attempt failed. In his reign, the gulf between the nobility and the ordinary people widened: the former became literate, espoused Christianity and took part in the slave trade, while the ordinary people were harshly exploited.

Christianity, Commerce and Civilization were the 3 elements that David Livingstone believed the continent of Africa needed in order to be levelled with the Western world. Unfortunately, the man from Blantyre embodied European impulses towards Africa: antislavery zeal, search for raw materials, Christian evangelism and sheer curiosity. Today, many of the countries created out of the colonial maps of the areas Livingstone explored continue to suffer poverty and conflict. Were Christians missionaries acting like spy agents for their respective metropole? Or were they naive about the intentions of their political counterparts?

THE PEOPLE OF CHUMAH, SUSI AND WAINWRIGHT

The Yao: of the Bantu group based at the south end of Lake Malawi (area of Shire highlands), hence Livingstone coming into contact with them, they spread down into Mozambique as well. Long before Livingstone's time, the Yao were traders linking the interior to the coast, and this included involvement in the Arab slave trade. They were also farmers, and fisherfolk.



Viewpoints

During the preparation of this evaluation report, a series of questions were posed of Simon Brown, Curator at Newstead Abbey, and Elena Trimarchi from the David Livingstone Trust and Centre in Scotland, along with a sample of volunteers being invited to give their thoughts on the project via an online Survey Monkey questionnaire. Simon Ferrigno was also interviewed. These are their views about the project.

a) Simon Brown, Newstead Abbey

Simon is part-time curator at Newstead Abbey, the ancestral home of the great athlete, lover, political firebrand and occasional writer Lord Byron. Simon is responsible for the Newstead Abbey collection, and its display and use by the public. Livingstone spent 8 months at Newstead Abbey during the years 1864 and 1865, largely as a result of his deep affection for Mr and Mrs Webb, then owners of the Abbey, and it is here where he wrote one of his most important journals, the *Zambezi and its Tributaries*. After his death, his children and his African servants, Chuma and Susi, transcribed his last diaries there.



Simon (Brown) recounts that Newstead Abbey formed an important part of the research undertaken by volunteers, and led by Simon Ferrigno spent a day there researching its collection. The Abbey also hosted the exhibition prepared by volunteers, which Simon reported was generally well received by visitors and colleagues. Project volunteers were greatly encouraged and supported by Simon, he stated "We're always interested in seeing new research that relates to the history of the house and individuals associated with it, so this project aligned well with that." In particular, the project identified new findings about Livingstone's African companions, "The research in the project gave new insight into Chuma, Susi and Jacob Wainwright, which will help our interpretation going forward."

Simon was very positive about the outcome of the project, although he did make the point that their involvement at an earlier stage might have helped it even more, "We were generally very pleased, although it would have been better to have a deeper involvement in its conception if we were to use the findings in a more permanent way."

b) Elena Trimarchi, David Livingstone Trust

Elena Trimarchi has been working for the David Livingstone Birthplace Project since October 2017. The David Livingstone Trust (DLT) was entrusted in 1930 with the ownership of the David Livingstone Centre at Blantyre, which includes the Listed Building of his birth, surrounding parkland, and the 2,000 piece David Livingstone collection. The David Livingstone Birthplace, in Blantyre, Scotland, is undergoing a £6.1 million refurbishment of the museum building, exhibition, and visitor buildings.



Elena was especially interested in the work of the Belong Project in terms of its exploring new angles about Livingstone's work, and the new light it cast on the lesser known stories of Livingstone's life, she said "A big part of the DLBP is uncovering and highlighting some of the under-represented histories, part of Livingstone's story. We are moving away from the 'hero' interpretation and acknowledging the key parts that the people he worked with and met in Southern Africa played in his three expeditions to the region."

With this in mind, Elena highlighted the new focus on Livingstone's companions which the project was able to bring. "The stories of Chuma, Susi and Wainwright are key to the wider Southern African history of British colonialism and travel in the 19th century and understanding how far Livingstone's legacy reaches within the UK was really interesting. It highlights the need for further research and partnership work to be carried out."

Feedback from the Trust, and individuals associated with the Centre, about the Belong project was complimentary and exceptionally positive. Elena reported that "Individuals who participated at our offices in Rutherglen all really enjoyed discussing with the Nottingham team what each project was focussing on. It was really interesting to make links with research and also continue highlighting the stories of these individuals who have been referred to as 'faithful companions', when, in fact, they were key players."

Like Simon Brown, Elena did suggest that early involvement in the project, helping to map out its research themes, might have proved beneficial, but in general she was very positive about the work that the Belong project had achieved, "I've been delighted to work with Simon and the team in Nottingham, it's really exciting to know that there are teams of people working throughout the UK on projects with similar objectives and I look forward to seeing what the future holds!"

c) Heritage Volunteers

We conducted a small sample survey using Survey Monkey, and invited five key volunteers to offer feedback about their involvement with the project. Four of those surveyed classed themselves as a 'Heritage Volunteer', the other as a 'Steering Group Member'. The feedback from the two types of volunteer was not dissimilar, so we have included all results under a single category of 'Volunteer' within this report.

All five volunteers claimed to have a role within the project for 12 months or more. One had come to the project via a word of mouth referral, one had seen the project advertised on a poster, three others were aware of the project through links they had with Belong or its stakeholders.

When asked what their experience of the recruitment process was, all five commented that it was helpful, easy and supportive. One suggested that the process itself helped them develop team work skills, which was interesting. The absence of a lengthy application form was cited as being a good example of how to get people interested in a project without frightening them away with too much early administration. When asked about the training they received as volunteers, each referenced a different element of the project, which highlighted the range of training made available. All said the training was good and helped them to develop new skills and to gain new insights into the subject matter.

Sample comments included: "I have attended many training sessions and focused conversations based on books and other types of historical documents that I found extremely helpful." "We undertook research at the Geographical Museum, learned about team work, and

we talked about Great British Explorers and evidenced their missionary work. It was a very satisfactory experience, and of course, we took many lessons from the works of David Livingston."

When asked about the nature of their roles within the project and the opportunities this presented to the volunteers, again, the feedback was very positive. Sample comments included: "I was both a steering group volunteer and volunteer contributor on the project. Where I was born in Burundi in Africa was near to where Dr Livingstone visited. We have stones that he has written on near Tanganyika Lake, so it was good to learn more about Livingstone's wider impact on the area." "My role was well described and clear. I enjoyed taking part. I did some work on the schools programme, I led a talk about the exhibition panels, as well as being involved in research tasks."

We also asked volunteers if they thought their heritage skills were improved as a result of participating in the project. The general feeling was that they were, although individuals were less able to quantify how this was the case. Sample comments included: "Yes, my heritage skills improved and this helped to build my confidence so that I was able to speak as one of the team leaders." "Yes, of course. I discovered things that made me happy, these were about my ancestors, and for example, Abdullah Susi is the Founder of Leopoldville Kinshasa DRK, my home country." However, one volunteer noted the inconsistency of attendance at sessions by some volunteers which he felt impacted on group learning, leaving a small core group to do much of the work.

When asked what aspects of the project volunteers thought were particularly strong, most spoke fulsomely about its overall benefit. Sample comments included: "The visit to the Royal Geographic Society was fantastic, opened my mind to certain things I don't get to do regularly. The research was also a highlight because I love writing. Filming myself was also fun." "Being able to visit the home town of David Livingston in Scotland was a treat, and visiting The Geographical Museum in London to see Livingstone's including the Mupunda tree itself under which his heart was buried was special. This helped demonstrate to me the great work of David Livingston and how much he was Loved and honoured by British society."

We also asked volunteers about which aspects of the project they thought were less good. They were honest in their feedback. One volunteer suggested it might have been longer, and might possibly have included a visit to Africa and it could have focused more on the cultural and economic impact of colonialism on Africa: "The project was a good one, but I wished it was longer and possibly included visits to Africa where the impact of explorers is still felt. It might also have included more debate about what explorers to Africa damaged in terms of medicine and education, along with more consideration about how Europeans imposed their wills on Africa and Africans by force and cruelties."

One response suggested the project might have had a better structure with a clearer sense of beginning and end. "The commitment of other volunteers made it less exciting because you could not guarantee you would work with the same person twice. The length of the project was elastic to say the least, with no clear deadline." Another volunteer suggested that without a higher level of volunteer expenses, guaranteeing their ongoing involvement was largely dictated by personal finances, and because they were "struggling financially", this was a factor.

Finally volunteers were asked if they felt the project achieved its objectives. Overall they said that it had. Sample comments included: "It has done exceedingly well and achieved all its objectives. I would like it to have been a little more ambitious, bringing more African

perspectives to the fore to inform people in the UK and Europe about some aspects of African history and culture that are clearly knowledge gaps for many." "It did achieve its objectives, a lot of material was covered about Great British Explorers and their followers in Africa. It created much food for thought and enabled us to gather a lot of interesting material to teach others."



Volunteers and Chris Weir outside the Nottingham Archives



Volunteers and members of the David Livingstone Trust team

d) Simon Ferrigno, Project Co-ordinator

We conducted an interview with Simon Ferrigno, Project Co-ordinator, and the text, verbatim, is included here as it is most insightful. Simon offers an honest view about the project and how Belong could use learning from the project to inform its future development in the area of heritage exploration.

The issue of working with volunteers who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and have demanding and stressful issues in their lives which they are dealing with, is a pressing issue from the point of view of being able to maintain their involvement and commitment when sometimes, out of necessity, their lives lead them in a very different directions. This is a policy issue which deserves further investigation.

Did the project meet your expectations in terms of achieving its objectives?

In the end, yes. It was not easy with managing a number of volunteers whose priorities are 'survival' in terms of jobs, family and incomes, but we managed to engage a small number through most of the project and helped them gain new knowledge and skills. The Heritage project at Belong is a strange fit as well. The organisation primarily helps migrants and refugees with first phase integration: finding work, homes and learning basic language skills. The heritage programme is a second phase project to help them understand where they now live and learn new skills with a view to lifting themselves higher and perhaps using skills they brought from their home countries.

We also were able to develop an understanding of the characters in the project and paint a good portrait of the African companions, and present to a wider public these 'hidden histories' that tell a much bigger story than that of David Livingstone and the Victorian explorers at the dawn of African colonisation. Through these stories we also explored with volunteers issues such as Modern Slavery and migration and how the Africa of today is shaped by its history, and how both Britain and Africa were changed by it.

Some of the numbers in the original proposal were quite ambitious, even if we did in the end achieve them.

How well did the local community engage with the project?

We engaged with local groups and organisations as well as our member base in Hyson Green. This was mainly very positive with the limitations of time many of our members have, and we

had very good relations with organisations like the Vine Centre and working with St Mary's Catholic Academy. We also reached out of our normal area to places like St Mary's in High Pavement, which has Black History links as the burial place of George Africanus.

It was harder to engage with other organisations like New Arts Exchange, which had staff changes during the project. But I am very pleased that we eventually managed to get our exhibition into Newstead Abbey.

Who in particular from the local community took an interest?

Belong's core community users engaged very well, with a lot of interest. Long term engagement was harder for many, however, and this suggests we need a range of shorter elements to our programmes to engage them, as well as long term ones. For example, short readings to illustrate topics which we can use to enter discussions or trainings for our volunteers and users, such as worker's rights, or leadership, or identity, or presentation skills, and so on, perhaps repeating them throughout a term or year so we can cover more users.

Among newer groups, engaging with the Vine gave us access to their 'lunch club', a group of retired people from different backgrounds who were very interested in our stories. They are a group we will seek to engage earlier in our next project.

Finally the Year 5 and 6 children of St Mary's Catholic Academy, a very diverse school, were very taken with the story and used it to engage in more exploration of Black History, slavery and thinking about the wider history of the UK.

What particular aspects of the project interested them?

The hidden history and actual exploits of Africans were very interesting to all participants, as was the vision into the history of empire and slavery.

Did you have any specific 'wow' moments when you thought 'this is brilliant and we're going beyond expectations here'?

When we produced the main exhibition panel was one, and also when we heard that Newstead Abbey would host the exhibition, when we had almost given up. Another was when we were debating exploration and the maps produced by explorers, and I tried to get the volunteers to think about the people who already lived in Africa and their maps and views of the land, and one volunteer said 'we didn't exist'. This was a breakthrough moment with the group in getting them to 'reclaim' an African perspective on their own history.

6. How has the project helped to build the credibility, skill set and aptitude for heritage initiatives in Belong?

As well as myself gaining experience in this area after working on sustainability projects in Africa and elsewhere for years, we now employ one of our volunteers to help with some of our community programmes, and plan to engage two others on future projects, one to help with developing a school programme and another to develop 'Black History' tours in Nottingham.

7. How will Belong use the learning from the project to develop its services going forwards?

More focused learning and teaching, with short trainings and a focus on a smaller group for the longer term learning. For most volunteers, a long curriculum and programme does not fit. This will work for perhaps 5 or 6 of our group, and perhaps also in work with one school and groups like the Vine's lunch club. For most other users, a programme focused on learning on

topics through heritage and history with 1 or 2 sessions per topic will work best, and this is how we will structure our future work, in two streams, but still with the aim of taking lessons out in the wider community.

Short term courses would focus on areas such as rights, identity as well as training on digital skills, writing, English, creative writing, heritage skills, research, archives research, and so on, while the longer programme would include these trainings but also focus on analysing documents and developing outputs, including exhibition materials, written materials, videos and websites, with a certificate of completion of all modules. We would also focus on helping those longer term participants into volunteer positions or further education to improve their job prospects, while for those completing shorter term modules we would look at further training opportunities if possible.

Conclusions

Following our evaluation of the project, it is clear “The African Perspectives on David Livingstone” has demonstrated considerable value and excellence in its pursuit of new knowledge about Livingstone, the man, and his three African companions, their individual stories, and how they impacted Africa and the UK. The project has created some very worthwhile volunteering opportunities leading to enhanced skillsets, improved levels of understanding about the subject matter at hand, and it has taken its learning into the local Nottingham community and further afield, where it has been received well.

Stakeholders have responded positively about the project, and new relationships have been forged. Critically, Nottingham’s Belong project has put itself forwards as a local community organisation that has an interest in the past and its impact on the present, which is to be commended. Simon Ferrigno has drawn praise as a project manager and an advocate for the subject matter in hand.

In consideration of future project management and delivery, there are one or two areas of learning from the project which could enhance and improve future activity. These are:

1. Once potential stakeholders and / or interested parties have been identified, involving them in early project planning to better align opportunities for shared learning and development is advisable.
2. Developing an agreed action plan at the start of a project is a requisite. This will inform all participants about stages of development, which inputs are required and any intended outcomes. The plan should be bookended with agreed milestones and start and end dates so that all parties are aware of time requirements which need to be met.
3. Having a system in place that creates a skills and knowledge baseline against which volunteer progress can be measured is a useful learning tool. For example, using an Outcomes Star, would enable volunteers to self-assess their starting point against a range of personal attributes, and enable them to measure progress throughout their involvement in the project.

In conclusion, however, we conclude this has been an excellent and exceptionally good value for money project with outstanding learning outcomes.