

“Club Afreaka”

**An Intervention with
African men who have sex with
men in London.**

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Definition:

African men who have sex with men

- The comfortable gay men,
- Bi sexual men,
- Men on the down low,
- Married men who have sex with men but don't identify as gay
- Sexual minorities

Introduction:

- I am Rowland Jide Macaulay,
- I am British of African descent,
- I am gay,
- I am a Christian,
- I am a poet,
- Self publisher author,

- An educator in business and Christian education.
- A confirmed and ordained Pastor.
- I have a law degree
- A Master degree in Theology.

Development Project Manager:

- Project for African gay men in London, in fact UK, an event called Tumaini,
- Build and promote Club Afreaka.

Tumaini:

- “Tumaini” is a name we have given this event. It is a Swahili word meaning “Hope”.

Workshops at Tumaini will include:

- ❖ **Faith and Culture:** how do we balance our sexuality with our faith and our African cultures?
- ❖ **Self-Acceptance:** how to be happy with your own sexuality.
- ❖ **Sex and Relationships:** how to be confident and get the best out of your relationships.
- ❖ **Building healthy communities for African gay and bisexual men:** what do we need and how do we build it?

The Aim of Club Afreaka:

- To address Sexual Health promotion needs and focus on visibility.
- Create a space and place that African music is readily available for African gay men.

History

The birth of Club Afreaka:

- Initiated from the 3rd African Men's Conference in March 2003,
- The idea was further developed by a small group of African gay men and health promotion agencies.
- A steering group was set up and included African gay men and representatives from Terrence Higgins Trust and Camden PCT.
- Club Afreaka opened its door at the BlackCap on the 10th July 2003.

History

How I got involved:

- First for personal reasons,
- I heard by word of mouth,
- I found a Club that plays African music
- Opportunity to meet other African gay men.

Club Afreaka:

- Club Afreaka is a monthly night club,
- A social gathering for African gay communities,
- A Sexual health promotion campaign.
- A safe network of African gay men and their friends.

The Venue:

- BlackCap located in North London provided its venue with limited conditions.
- It also promotes a special Club Afreaka night discount drinks bar, security, door attendant and cloakroom service.
- BlackCap ensure the club has an African feel on the night, with staff and decoration reflecting the African culture.

The People:

- Young men between the ages of 18 and 25, university and college students,
- More East, West and South Africans,
- A high number of non-Africans are also attending and this also combines the existing patrons of the BlackCap.

The Music:

- The music policy is simple
- Contemporary African music,
- Congolese & Francophone music
- R&B and Caribbean music
- South African music

African Gay Icon:

- ?
- Brenda Fassie was openly bisexual.
- G Turawa - a black Police Officer
- Bisi Alimi, Came Out as gay on National Television in Nigeria on the 8th Oct.
- Very soon, we would see a new generation of African gay icons.

Success:

- Bridged the gap between African HIV sector and the huge network of African gay men, making them more visible.
- Playing music that pleases everyone but obviously a huge challenge.
- West Africans discovering Somalian music or Caribbean discovering French speaking African culture, etc.

Success contd:

- Brought together African gay people,
- Provided a safe space for African gay men to express themselves.
- Sexual Health Promotion reaching people we would not have otherwise reached.

Challenges:

- Unable to compete with mainstream private club promoters,
- African music never penetrated the London gay scene or the straight scene.
- We are not sure if we are reaching all African men who have sex with men.
- Some African guys still find it difficult to come to Club Afreaka
- Limitation on the cost of advertisement due to NHS funding.

Challenges contd:

- Location of the venue - BlackCap
- The bar's regular customers still feel alienated.
- No feedback from the wider African communities.

Survey:

- Survey after 12 months,
- There was a surge in attendance just before April 2004,
- In June 2004, we reviewed the ways we promote and publicise the Club night,

Review of Club Afreaka Survey, conducted July 2004

- 220 people attended and we randomly asked over 50% of the people to complete the survey.

How many times have you attended Club Afreaka over the last 12 months?

- 63% of the respondents had attended Club Afreaka 0-4 times,
- 25% of the respondents had attended Club Afreaka 4-8 times and
- 12% of the respondents had attended Club Afreaka 9-12 times.

How did you hear about Club Afreaka?

- 73% of the respondents heard about Club Afreaka through a friend and word of mouth,
- 12% of the respondents heard about Club Afreaka by Flyers and
- 12% of the respondents heard about Club Afreaka by E-mail lists and Web sites.

Has the music met your expectation of Africa and did you enjoy the music in Club Afreaka?

- 95% of the respondents enjoyed the music in Club Afreaka.
- 5% of the respondents did not enjoy the music in Club Afreaka

Did you get a) Sexual Health information b) Condoms?

- 54% of the respondents received sexual health advice and information
- 46% of the respondents did not receive sexual health advice and information whilst
- 85% of the respondents admitted receiving condoms at Club Afreaka and
- 15% of the respondents admitted did not receive condoms at Club Afreaka

Will you attend future club Afreaka events?

- 94% indicated they were willing to attend Club Afreaka's future events and
- 6% indicated they would not attend Club Afreaka's future events.

What is your age group?

- 35% of the respondents age group was 18-25,
- 33% of the respondents age group was 25-35 and
- 29% of the respondents age group was 35 and over.

How will you describe yourself?

- 64% of the respondents were black African,
- 17% of the respondents were Black other and
- 19% of the respondents were other.

Expectation for future events include:

- Big sexy male dancers/naked men
- Themed nights
- More dancers including cabaret
- More African costumes
- More African female artists
- More variety Music from Africa
- Live performers
- Drag Queen Dance and Cabaret

Ending:

- African gay men have a wide choice of places to go to.
- A growing number of African gay guys are joining the scene.
- We are not just gay, we are Africans,
- We now know a little more about African gay men in London and beyond,

- We are beginning to recognise their sexual health needs and other needs.
- We recognised that an Intervention such as Club Afreaka has assisted immensely to understand the existence of African gay men's group.

Thank you.