

PRESS RELEASE
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***Preparations underway as British Ugandan Asians celebrate
50 years in Britain***

British Ugandan Asians at 50 (BUA@50) is an oral history project commemorating, celebrating and reflecting on 50 years since the evacuation of over 28,000 Asians from Uganda to the United Kingdom, following Ugandan dictator, General Idi Amin's decree ordering all Asians to leave the country within 90 days.

On 18th September 1972, the first evacuation flight of Asians fleeing from Uganda landed at London's Stansted Airport. Almost 50 years on, British Asians from Uganda have excelled in many fields from business and finance to politics, science, and the arts, integrating successfully contributing to British society.

To honour the momentous anniversary, BUA@50 is capturing the recollections of those who volunteered to help with the reception of Asians from Uganda during the crucial early months after their arrival in the UK. Having successfully secured £72,700 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, a new website will bring together the filmed oral histories of surviving volunteers from a number of reception camps including Heathfield in Devon, Tonfanau in Wales, and Stradishall in Suffolk.

The volunteers formed part of an extraordinary response involving 63 voluntary organisations which, at their peak, staffed sixteen reception and resettlement camps across the UK. The film will also collate candid testimonies from the evacuees, key surviving individuals from these camps and leaders of the British Ugandan Asian Community complemented by building an online archive of documents and photographs as a resource for generations to come.

BUA@50 is calling on members of the Ugandan Asian community to come forward with their testimonies and add their personal contribution to the celebrations.

In addition to the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant project, the wider objectives and scope include:

- having a national reception to celebrate the achievements of the British Ugandan Asian community and their contribution to British life;
- digitalising and archiving of Government and private documents relating to the exodus for posterity in an open access online format;
- educating British communities about the circumstances of the Ugandan expulsion and the British Ugandan Asian community's contribution to the fabric of modern British society;

- creating ongoing collaborations to foster research into the Uganda Exodus, East African migration to the UK in general, migration and diaspora studies;
- fostering British East African Asian co-operation and identity as a group.

Project Chair, Alan Critchley whose late father, eminent Civil Servant and author Tom Critchley, was full-time Director of the Uganda Resettlement Board, said:

“Stories of kindness and generosity will be heard and recorded, giving recognition to people who came forward from their local communities to welcome thousands of refugees at a pivotal time in Britain’s multicultural history. It is only right we permanently honour their contribution and that of many Ugandan Asians who call Britain home today”.

British Ugandan Peer, Lord Jitesh Gadhia, added:

“I welcome this important project to capture the stories of the amazing volunteers who helped to welcome Asians fleeing from Uganda in 1972. The generosity of spirit of the British people is worthy of being captured properly for the benefit of current and future generations.

The 50th Anniversary of the arrival of Ugandan Asians is a moment to express our community’s eternal gratitude to all those who supported us in our hour of need”.

[ENDS]

Note to editors:

1. Ugandan Asians arrive in the UK in 1972 (Source: Getty Images):



2. High resolution image of project logo:



3. Launch Film:

A 90-second film entitled “I walk this path”, based on a poem written specially for the launch by renowned broadcaster and author Ms. Babita Sharma, is [available to watch here.](#)

4. Links to social media channels found below:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [YouTube](#)

5. About The India Overseas Trust:

A £72,700 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been awarded to The India Overseas Trust, a charity established in 2002 to promote, protect and support the interests of the British Indian diaspora, registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales, registration no. 1092669. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Praful R.C. Patel, is the sole surviving member of the UK Government's Uganda Resettlement Board and was its only Asian member. He contested the Brent North Parliamentary Constituency seat at the 1987 elections, was the first Chairman of the Swaminarayan Mandir (now BAPS UK), a stalwart in voluntary Immigration and Nationality Advisory work for more than 50 years, philanthropist and retired Investment Advisor. He served on the NRI Consultative Committee set up in the mid 1980's by the Late Rajiv Gandhi Government and has been involved in public life in the UK, Kenya, Uganda and India.

6. If you require further information, please contact:

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