



OUR HISTORY

Ghana Union Greater Birmingham [GUGB] has had a chequered history in its 54 years of existence. During this period, the union has gone through different stages of development and growth. It started around 1968 as Birmingham African Students' Union supporting Ghanaian students, and also other African nationals studying in Birmingham at that time. It later evolved in the early 1970s as 'Ghana Union Birmingham' under the leadership of Mr. Francis William Amoah, one of the founding fathers of the union. The formation of Ghana Union Birmingham was a result of the growing demand for us to have our own union, coupled with the increased numbers and diversity of the Ghanaian community in the city of

Birmingham and its environs. In those days, there were hardly any Ghana Union activities in the West Midlands region, and Birmingham was the centre of attraction where major Ghanaian events and activities took place for the Ghanaian community in the Midlands region.

Today, things are different as we now have a growing number of Ghanaians residing across the Midlands region. This has also resulted in the formation of various Ghanaian unions, associations, churches, and other groups in the Midlands. In 2010, the Ghana Union Birmingham (GUB), changed its direction in the next stage of its development and took on a new and challenging role. It brought together all the major Ghanaian

groups in the Midlands under one roof when it organised the memorial service for the late Prof. John Evans Atta Mills, former President of the Republic of Ghana. This signalled the beginning of the formation of the regional umbrella body for Ghanaian groups in the Midlands region. At this point, GUB thus assumed a new name of 'Ghana Union Midlands' (GUM) to reflect its ambition to lead the formation of a regional umbrella group.

GUM then took on a 'dual role' in looking after its Birmingham members, whilst at the same time pursuing the formation of a regional umbrella body to provide a unified voice for the Ghanaian community and friends of Ghana. This 'dual role'

model led to some concerns regarding GUM's 'modus operandi' and types of its membership, which included groups and also individuals. Despite attempts to clarify the structure of GUM as an umbrella organisation with a 'Birmingham Group' serving as the Secretariat, the message did not resonate well with people, and hence the confusion of the status of GUM and the Birmingham Union.

In the Ghanaian community, the term GUM is often used synonymously as the Birmingham Union. Ghanaians wrongly assume that GUB is the main union representing Ghanaians in the region. To resolve this misconception, and confusion, we decided to separate the two unions to operate independently as two distinct organisations. Having accomplished

the task of forming a new regional umbrella body, Birmingham Union relinquished its caretaker role of GUM and has now assumed the same status as any of the regional groups affiliated with GUM, the regional umbrella body.

The two unions now operate independently as separate entities and serving their respective target audience. GUM now targets and works only with Ghanaian unions and other groups in the Midlands region to support and build their capacity. Whereas Birmingham union i.e., GUB works with Ghanaians residing in Birmingham and its environs as the main target beneficiaries to help and support them. The Birmingham Union has now been reconstituted with its

own constitution, and now operates as the 'Ghana Union Greater Birmingham {GUGB}' to reflect the City's new administrative jurisdiction, which includes Birmingham city and its environs.

The 'Ghana Union Greater Birmingham' is temporarily acting as the secretariat for the umbrella body until an administrative office and a new secretariat is established to take over the affairs for the regional umbrella body. GUGB acting as the Secretariat is in line with GUM's operational policy for any of its affiliated group members with the capacity to serve as the secretariat for the umbrella body on a rotational basis.