



# SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

2021 - 2022



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**“Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage”**

**Maya Angelou**

I am proud to have led Ubele for another year and to work alongside an amazing team of people who have pro-actively contributed to the building of an organisation that is committed to achieving sustainable communities through the adoption of an economic, social, and racial justice approach to our work.

As we approach the end of the first year of our five-year strategy of building sustainable Black and racially minoritized communities in the UK, we have deepened our commitment to community wealth building through influencing policy, undertaking new areas of research, and developing innovative local, regional and national practice

across the UK and Europe. As a result of this work, our global reputation and impact continues to grow. Our commitment and growth are also reflected in an increased portfolio of programmes and interventions. We have fine-tuned our unique infrastructure ‘plus’ approach. We remain embedded in communities working from the ground up, incubating new ideas when invited.

Change has also been internal. Towards the end of 2019, and on the cusp of the Covid-19 epidemic we had one full time member of staff member and a team of Associates (including myself). Over this past year we have grown to a team of 12 full time staff (equivalent), contractors and associates;

and we continue to grow. During this time, we have paid significant attention to strengthening our organisational structure, systems and processes, thus providing more stability and security for our emerging team. After 7 years of short-term funding, we secured significant core costs from Oak Foundation to create a small Community Wealth Building team for five years. This will support our 'asset and people development' agenda including strengthening Gida Housing Co-op and providing capacity as key consortium partners in the redevelopment of our unique home, the Wolves Lane Centre, Haringey.

We have also secured 'Backbone' funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation and have secured other core funding for another 5 years. Although we are now able to plan with more certainty for the longer term, our story of years of consistent under-funding is far from unique. There are still long-lasting changes to be achieved on behalf of our sector. For this reason, we will continue to position ourselves to facilitate and sometimes provide leadership with other colleagues in advocating for a more equitable share of available resources.

The goal of shifting power simultaneously with advocating for a more equal share of resources for those less recognised or heard, is not for the faint hearted. However, thus far, we are realising the fruits of building respectful partnerships. Partnerships, as we know, are rarely equal and we have often found ourselves at the boundary of challenging situations. Willingness to painstakingly

nurture, and sometimes walk away from relationships and systems that are unwilling to flex, is a key and painful lesson we have learnt in the past year.

Despite this important lesson, I feel an enormous sense of gratitude for the support we continue to receive; for the new partnerships and relationships which have been forged and, in some cases, a continued recognition of the impact of institutional racism leading to new and more flexible financial resources being directed towards our sector.

Covid-19 shifted the way parts of the system saw itself and how the system responded to those who were at the sharp end of a terrible crisis. May this introspection long continue especially as we work to survive the looming Cost of Living crisis.

I am in awe of the pure determination and tenacity of people who operate on the frontline of their communities. Those unsung and often unseen s/heroes offer safety nets for an increasing number of those who fall through the gaping holes of our shrinking social system. I thank them deeply for their continued commitment to serve. I also thank the Ubele team, our partners and wider stakeholders for supporting the original and core vision of creating sustainable Black and racially minoritized communities.

**Yvonne Field, Founder/CEO**



# ABOUT US




## Who we are

Ubele (Swahili for ‘the future’) is a social enterprise established in 2014 following a series of intentional conversations with African diaspora leaders. Its legal status is that of a company limited by guarantee with an asset lock. Ubele operates from Wolves Horticulture Centre in North London.

Ubele seeks to find sustainable systemic solutions to persistent social and economic challenges and to build a resilient future for our communities in the UK. Although African Diaspora led, we support a diversity of community-based organisations and groups

with community asset, community enterprise development and next generation leadership initiatives. We have developed using a bottom up, community-based approach to empower Black and racially minoritized communities in the UK to initiate and sustain transformational social and economic change.

Our current core team of 10 full-time equivalent staff supported by 15 Associates, is multi-disciplinary drawn from health, education, youth services, social care, adult education, community arts, academia, and the social and for-profit business sectors.



The average length of experience of our associates in the public, not-for-profit and private sector, is 25 years.

Intergenerational practice runs like a golden thread throughout our work. We recognise the value what each generation can contribute and so create opportunities for intergenerational dialogue and project based working arrangements. We pass to younger generations cultural values and traditions of the African diaspora community and other diaspora such as South Asian.

As such all staff regardless of age, experience and position are actively encouraged to find and use their voice and take leadership throughout our projects, activities and learning opportunities. However, as we had for 2021/2022, secured under 50% of core funding, all but one member of staff was on short term contracts. We hope to secure the additional core costs in 2022/23 to stabilise the organisation for the next few years.

## What we do

Ubele's ground-breaking work is focused on the critical question of how best to build the sustainability of Black and racially minoritized communities in the UK. We are unique in that we offer from front line, community-based initiatives, through to national strategic interventions. We design change models that deliver local, national projects and international programmes as well as being involved in London and regional policy initiatives.

Much of our work in the last year continued to be influenced by the recommendations in [A Place to Call Home \(2015\)](#) including the development of Wolves Lane and Lloyd Leon Centres in Haringey and Lambeth, respectively. In this regard we have seen a significant increase in our advocacy work, research outputs, incubation projects, and capacity building to individual groups; and a rapid growth in our ability to influence strategic thinking, design principles and delivery to Black and racially minoritized community organisations on the ground.

We undertake pre-intervention situation analyses and research, utilising culturally sensitive, participatory, and inclusive methodologies with authorship of the narrative



and ownership of the outcomes remaining within the communities. Our frontline work with communities is always about modelling and innovating good practice for better life experiences for individuals and beneficiary organisations.

However, every Ubele intervention is undertaken as a steppingstone to achieving community led, transformational systemic change regionally and nationally. So even as our ambitions and reach continue to grow and evolve, we maintain our bottom up, community-based practice and methodologies. We work alongside communities to enable them to advance their own solutions to challenges within their communities.

## Who we work with

We have worked with Diaspora and other racially minoritized communities in the UK and built strong connections with the global African diaspora to create opportunities for mutual learning and exchange. Our commitment to tackling social, economic, and racial injustice has led us to work with an increasingly diverse range of communities across all regions of England.





## Our vision, mission, and frameworks

Ubele's vision is to empower Black and racially minoritized communities in the UK to act as catalysts for socio-economic change. Our catalyst approach works from the premise that to successfully address the issue of equity requires organised and funded actions sustained over an extended period. As such Ubele is an infrastructure+ support organisation incubating, designing, and implementing innovative local initiatives, alongside regional, national, and international project and programmes. Our work is community rooted, intergenerational, collaborative, innovative, experiential, and aimed at strengthening the sustainability, resilience, and voice of the communities that we serve.

Our single largest UK grant during this period was the Oak Foundation's 5-year £1M Core costs from January 2022. We experienced a change in turnover from £1.2M in 2020/2021 to £1.5M in 2021/22.

**Over the last year our work has been guided by four strategic aims namely, to:**



Strengthen our communities through enterprise and asset development



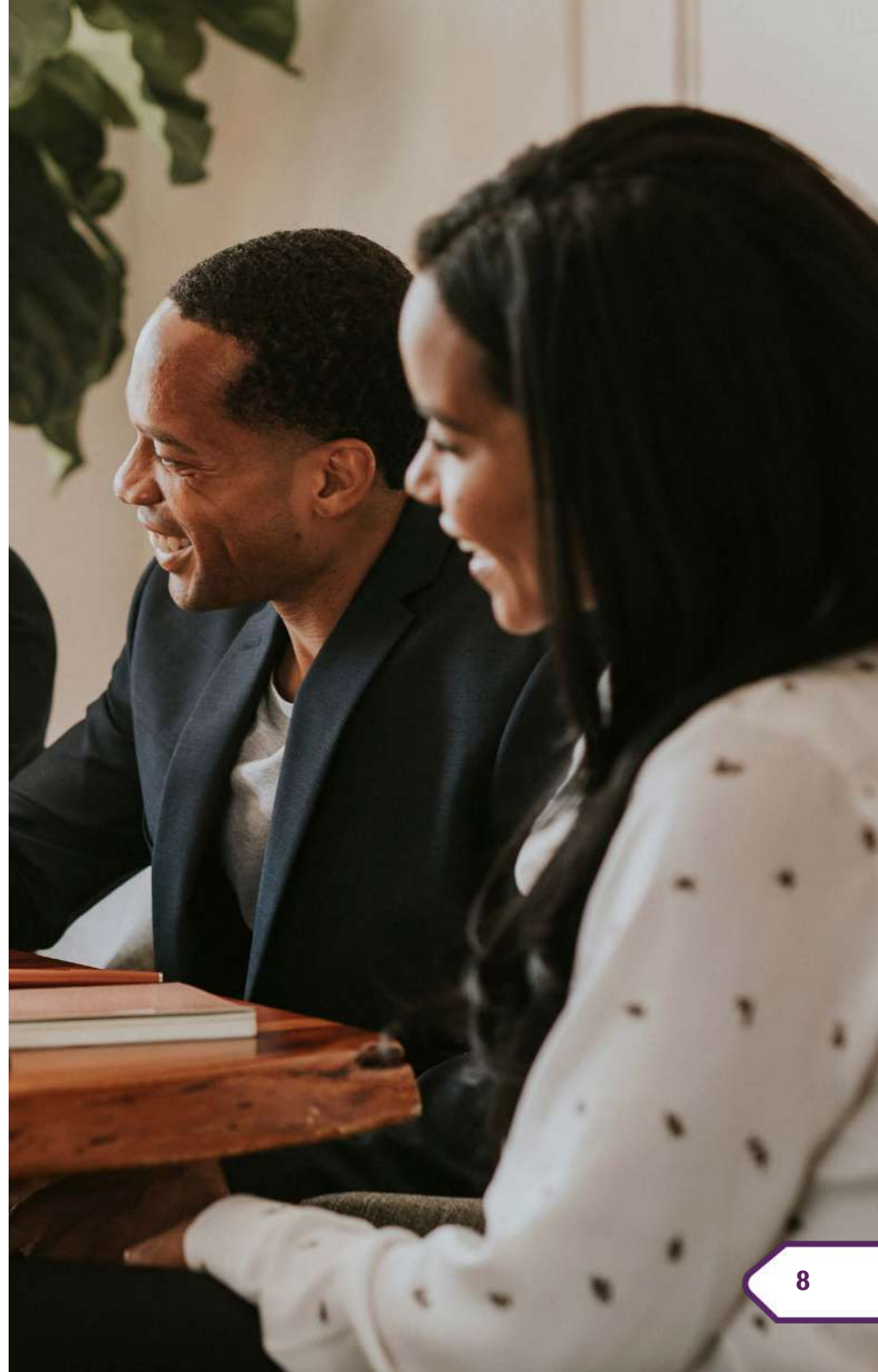
Advocate for equity and justice in our community



Strengthen our infrastructure and voice



Develop our people, groups, and organisations



These four aims have informed [Ubele's first 5-year strategic plan](#) are ambitious in intent, and we believe do justice to the strong foundation, reputation and learning that Ubele has built from its research, community dialogues and practice, and reciprocal relationships with policy makers, funders, and other partners.

Guided by our strategic aims the programmes, projects, and initiatives and strategic interventions undertaken in the last 15 months are summarised in Ubele's strategy represented below.

## UBELE 2021 – 2022 STRATEGY

### Why Ubele



An African diaspora led, intergenerational, infrastructure organisation cognisant of the past with all its complexities, but not limited by it

### Vision



To empower Black and Racially Minoritized communities in the UK to act as catalysts for equitable systemic social and economic change

### Mission



We work with community leaders, groups, and organisations in the UK and beyond, to strengthen their sustainability, resilience, and voice

### Values



Community-Rooted    Intergenerational  
Innovative    Experiential    Collaborative    Enabling

# UBELE 2021 – 2022 STRATEGY



## Strategic Aims

- Strengthen our communities through enterprise and asset development
- Advocate for equity and justice in our communities
- Strengthen our infrastructure and voice
- Develop our people, groups, and organisations



## How

- Policy influencing through research and practice
- Community Centred Dialogue
- Convening, Facilitating, and Incubating
- Working and Collaborating
- Empowering community leaders
- Capacity Building
- Developing Partnerships
- Improving Health and Well-being
- Securing resources for our communities
- Innovating Inclusive Developmental Models



## Enablers

- A sustainable Investment Strategy
- An organisation with highly skilled and diverse staff with integrity
- Strong, focused, inclusive, forward looking, and intergenerational leadership
- Inspiring and nurturing trust among Black and racially minoritized communities/groups
- Innovative, efficient, transparent organisation that makes data driven decisions



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## UBELE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



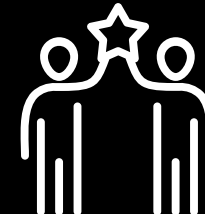
**1. Enterprise and  
Asset Development**



**2. Advocacy for equity  
and justice in our communities**



**3. Strengthening infrastructure  
and voice of our communities**



**4. Develop our people,  
groups and organisation**

# I. Enterprise and Asset Development

## Projects

Black Business Matters  
Black Rootz  
Black Youth in UK Manual Trade Sector  
Eat Wood Green  
BMC- Enterprise Development Programme  
Gida Housing Co-operative  
Lloyd Leon Community Centre  
National Community Wealth Building Strategic Alliance  
Paths to Economic Opportunities  
Wolves Lane Horticultural Centre

## Impact

- Ubele becoming a recognised leader in supporting local community assets
- Strengthened voice and visibility of Black-led businesses within the sector
- Deepened culture of financial resilience and self-reliance across the sector
- Disruption of structural food inequalities
- Increased visibility of Black people's contribution to national food production
- Improved diversity and resilience of food supply chain
- Increased equity of outcomes for Black and racially minoritized VCSE and communities regionally and nationally
- Influence inclusivity in government policy in social and community enterprise, community assets, and housing
- Realisation of a platform for wider systemic change
- Improved community cohesion

## Outcomes

- Formation of an influential wealth building alliance
- New and improved banking products, services and support for Black-led businesses
- Flexible business finance accessible to our communities
- Securing capital and revenue funding to strategically place Wolves Lane as a model of sustainable community enterprise
- Incubation and nurturing of new community enterprises
- Leadership and governance of 12 community groups with community assets developed
- Increased awareness of the barriers to promoting community led approaches to housing development for Black and racially minoritized community led organizations
- Conceptualization and commencement of GIDA housing cooperative in Tottenham
- An innovative housing model for Black and minoritized communities
- Retention of 2 Black and racially minoritized community-led buildings and spaces
- A new model for Black and racially minoritized community-led community centres
- Leaders of 12 asset-based community organisations equipped with knowledge to generate trading income and secure funding and investments to reduce grant dependency and develop greater sustainability.
- 12 Social Enterprises across the UK equipped to develop financial management systems that are appropriate for day-to-day management of income and expenditure.
- A roadmap for Black and racially minoritized communities' youth entering the manual trade industry
- Formation of a Black led network of community food growing sites
- Strategic conduit for new partnerships that leverage financial resources at national and regional levels

## 2. Advocacy for equity and justice in our communities

### Projects

81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance  
Being Black in Islington  
EVENS  
Leading Routes  
Ethnic Inequalities in Health Research  
Sensing the City  
The YELC

### Impact

- Influence central government plans to ensure that the experiences of our communities are included in the national inquiry into the impact of Covid-19
- The documented lived experience of our communities is used to influence policy
- Transformational change that is more inclusive adopted by funders
- Amplification of Black and racially minoritized communities' youth voices in community led approached to city and town planning
- Strategic influence on equity in higher education policies
- Influencing policies for equity and justice within the sector

### Outcomes

- The lived experience of our communities are captured in 4 pieces of national evidence- based research
- Campaign on policy issues that directly impact our communities
- Transformational change among funders in collaboration with other Black and racially minoritized ethnic led organisations
- Embedding of the Young Emerging Leaders Collective by developing their leadership practice and vision for change
- A new national Black and racially minoritized community led platform that amplifies voice and influence to ensure more long-term equitable outcomes
- New models of advocacy for hitherto hidden voices
- Influencing national policy makers who are responsible for mechanisms to address ethnic inequalities in health
- Influencing national policy makers and national funder's responses to post Covid-19 pandemic interventions
- Creation of a Network that creates pathways into and celebrates progress of Black and racially minoritized communities in higher education
- Inclusion of Black and racially minoritized youth voices in national mental health campaigns



### 3. Strengthening infrastructure and voice of our communities

#### Projects

Rootz into Food Growing  
The Phoenix Way

#### Outcomes

- A 40 member Pan-London food growing network
- Creation of a London based regional network of infrastructure organisations serving Black and racially minoritized communities
- Creation of spaces for conversations, exploration and ideation which secures resources and supports the delivery of a new inclusive infrastructure strategic plan for London
- A model for regional networking with infrastructure organisations serving Black and racially minoritized communities
- A pioneering replicable model of grant making that ensures Black and racially minoritized communities have a say in their life impacting decisions

#### Impact

- Improved diversity and resilience of London food growing supply chain
- Funders galvanised to move to more inclusive practices
- Amplification of Black and racially minoritized community voices within the mainstream
- Improved financial health and resilience for Black and racially minoritized community organisations
- Increased visibility and strengthened collective voice of the sector

## 4. Developing our people, groups and organisation

### Projects

Alagba  
BAMEstream  
Black on Track  
Blue Thread Funding  
Diaspora Kitchen  
Elevate Women's Leadership  
Erasmus +  
Exhale Retreat  
Ubele Circles

### Impact

- Increased happiness, fulfilment, and improved health for those experiencing mental health difficulties
- Amplification of the role of the voluntary sector as enablers in accessing culturally sensitive mental health provision
- Healthier more cohesive communities
- Strengthened Black and racially minoritized communities' organisational capacity to anticipate threat, plan for change and develop new initiatives
- Transformational social change for future generations
- Strengthened collective capacity of the VCSE sector

### Outcomes

- Reduced feelings of isolation
- Increased capacity and capability of leaders, governing bodies and emerging groups
- Increased capacity of emerging and or established Black and racially minoritized community led organisations enabling them to develop and thrive
- Empowered young adult leaders of social justice campaigns
- A Cultural Competency Framework for raising awareness of mental health stigma in Black and racially minoritized communities
- Improved confidence, self-esteem, and professional outcomes for 59 lecturers from Black and racially minoritized communities in 5 universities
- A new model for transformational change among Black and racially minoritized communities' staff within higher education
- A Systems Map that identified barriers and leverage points to economic engagement of middle-aged unemployed members of a Black and racially minoritized community
- Improved skills and competence of 300 cultural heritage educators, youth workers, youth leaders and activists
- Increased systems change leadership capacity and capability of 20 Black and racially minoritized community organizations in Manchester
- Creation of pan-European connections and partnerships
- Raised awareness among Black and racially minoritized youth of Black and racially minoritized community contributions to social justice in the Britain

# ACHIEVEMENTS

Ubele works from the premise that it is people and organisations with intention that create sustainable social, economic, and environmental change. As such partnership, collaboration and a system thinking approach, are core to our approach. From the beginning we have sought relationships with infrastructure organisations and supporters across the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE). We have encouraged open and honest conversations about race and ethnicity, equality, and challenged the status quo through conversations on how we arrive at transformational change that results in social equity.

All 29 projects undertaken over the last year have contributed directly or indirectly to the fulfilment of more than one strategic aim. However, for brevity, we report on each project once within the strategic aim that it most directly addressed.

## Between April 2021 and June 2022, through 29 main projects and other initiatives we:



Engaged **2031** people through intergenerational leadership programmes, capacity building support programmes, international mobilities



Undertook 5 pieces of research in the two critical areas of health and employment



Strengthened the infrastructure of 34 groups and community organisations through training, grant and/or loan funding.



Received £1.4M from Oak Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation



Received £5M funding to secure Ubele's core operations over the next 5 years

# Strategic aim 1: Enterprise and Asset Development

The Ubele Initiative made 9 interventions towards this aim in the last year

- **1.1 Black Business Matters** – Improving the commercial landscape for Britain's black business community by delivering banking products, services and support that improve banking experiences for Black-led businesses.
- **1.2 National Strategic Alliance** – Bringing together 12 Black and Minoritized key local anchor organisations across the UK to deliver the Black and Minoritized Communities Enterprise Development Programme (BMC-EDP). A 12 month capacity building support programme offered to community enterprises in the Health, Welfare, Education, Enterprise, Youth and Community sectors. A grant of up to £30K was available to all participants to support the development of their enterprise.
- **1.3 Black Rootz** - The first multi generational, Black-led growing project advocating for the inclusion of black voices in the UK food growing space. Successfully making speaking appearances and running workshops across the country.
- **1.4 National Baseline Research into Black and Minoritized Youth Presence in the UK Manual Trades Sector** - researching existing routes to the manual trade industry, the barriers for Black and Minoritized young people and producing a roadmap for the future.
- **1.5 Eat Wood Green** – Developing a food growing enterprise in Wood Green funded by and in partnership with Haringey Council's Recreation Department.
- **1.6 Pathways to Economic Opportunities (P2E)** - strengthening London organisations to remove barriers to economic opportunity by demonstrating the pivotal role of London Black and Minoritized community organisations in addressing inequalities and delivering services for Black and Minoritized communities.
- **1.7 GIDA Housing Co-Operative** - a partnership of three community groups, Rode Housing Co-operative, Bahay Kubo Housing Association (BKHA) and The Ubele Initiative. We envision becoming an affordable housing provider which empowers under-represented communities, by giving them influence and collective control over the management and maintenance of their own homes, as a response to the poor quality and insecure privately rented housing many have had to endure.

Read on for a more in depth look at these interventions, their programme delivery and funders.

## The challenge

Ubele believes that enterprise and asset development are the foundations of self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability within our communities. This belief is supported by five principles that underpin community wealth building ([CLES](#)) namely: ownership of the local economy, financial power in local places, progressive procurement of goods and services, social and just employment practices, and socially productive use of land and property.

With regards to enterprise, Ubele's learning from capacity building and other analysis during the pandemic revealed that Black and racially minoritized VCSE have a turnover of between £1K and £100K, most with weak infrastructure in areas such as governance, staffing, funding, financial management systems and digital platforms. Small businesses contribute over 50% of private sector turnover and 60% of all private sector jobs in the UK. Black owned business contributes around £30B to the economy, are at the forefront of innovation, at the heart of their communities and are essential to the economic health and

communities. Yet, there is little data on what the Black business needs to survive and thrive. Although government recovery plans have started to consider addressing some of these inequalities, there is still an urgent need for strategically targeted interventions over a period of years in both enterprise and asset development in Black and racially minoritized communities. Ubele over the last year made 9 interventions towards this end.

## Our interventions

### 1.1 Black Business Matters

In 2021 [Black Business Matters](#) a community led initiative in partnership with HSBC and powered by Ubele, Extend Ventures, Lendoe, Black South-West Network, and All Inclusive helped improve the commercial landscape for Britain's black business community. Fuelled by the situational analysis above and in response to the racial disparities brought into sharp focus by the disproportionately negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Black and minoritized communities, Ubele convened a working group of Black and minority ethnic business leaders and



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to the economy**





other senior professionals to address the challenges facing Black-owned business already suffering from pre-existing inequities including, but not limited to capital shortages and reduced access to credit. Ubele worked with HSBC and other partners to innovate and deliver banking products, services and support that improve banking experiences for Black-led businesses.

## 1.2 National Strategic Alliance

Ubele also established the first ever [National Strategic Alliance](#) to support community wealth building within Black and Minoritized Communities. The Alliance comprise 12 Black and Minoritized regional infrastructure alongside other key local anchor organisations across England. It is through this alliance that the **Black and minoritized Communities Enterprise Development Programme** (BMC-EDP) is currently being delivered.

BMC-EDP has delivered year one [2021-2022] of a 3-year national Black and Minoritized Enterprise Development Programme (BMEDP) across the UK,

in partnership with [Access Foundation](#) and [Social Investment Business](#). The package of capacity building support offered to participants from Health, Welfare, Education, Enterprise, Youth and Community sectors, was tailored towards the organisations' assessment needs using a diagnostic tool which ensured that the support was bespoke and therefore specific to the direct needs of the organisation. Together with the programme manager a range of support is identified and forms the basis of the 12-month programme.

This included a support package which included 14 seminars and 8 peer-to-peer learning sessions, bespoke financial management advice and coaching from industry professionals and business coaching and advice to those within the organisation who would most benefit. A grant of up to £30k was available to all 12 cohorts to support the employment of new staff, buy in consultants' expertise, purchase new equipment, or to spend in whichever way supported the development of their enterprise. The public invitation for applications in June 2021 attracted 80 applicants.





BMEDP has adopted an iterative approach so learning from the first year is being used to inform ongoing design and implementation plans to ensure that the systemic change element is embedded as the initiative moves forward. New BMC-EDP rounds opened in May and September 2022.

### 1.3 Black Rootz

**Black Rootz** is the first multi generational, Black-led growing project in the UK advocating for the inclusion of black voices in the food growing space in the UK. Its growing success challenges the myth that foods like sweet potato and cho cho/ christophene cannot be grown in the UK. Members of the collective make speaking appearances and run workshops across the country. At the invitation of Kew Gardens, the group held workshops on sweet potato and Micro Greens for London growers as part of Kew Garden's Community Open Week and Community Access Learning Programme. In February 2022 Black Rootz was featured in the Observer.



## I.4 National Baseline Research into Black and Minoritized Youth Presence in the UK Manual Trades Sector

Ubele with support from Youth Futures, conducted a national analysis of the needs, future training, and employment opportunities of 16 – 24yrs from [Black and minoritized communities within the manual trades sector](#). The research looked at existing routes to the manual trade industry and produced a roadmap for Black and minoritized young people.

The research noted young peoples' expressed narrow perspective of options within the industry which made them perceive the sector as unattractive. The young peoples' responses reflected stereotypical ideas of electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and building jobs as unintelligent, pre-dominantly white, not glamorous and male; but, as essential to society, always in demand and paying sufficiently. The other factors influencing their perception of, and gravitation into or away from the manual trades were:

- Parental and community's unfavourable view of the industry as a first choice
- 'White-male laddish' culture as not a good fit for them

- Limited careers information and advice; and limited guidance and entry points to the sector; and the
- Dearth of diversity and inclusion practices within the industry

The study advocated for better parental and community awareness programmes linked to industry approved training providers delivered through credible and recognised voluntary and community sector organisations. It also called for a more diverse workforce within the construction and manual trades at all levels, and as part of any recruitment and selection strategy. The study cited the need for careers information, advice, and guidance at school alongside work experience and internship opportunities. Diversity and inclusion practices within the industry were also recommended to encourage and support large companies to open placements, apprenticeships and learning opportunities, including scholarship.



**The other factors influencing their perception of, and gravitation into or away from the manual trades were:**

- Parental and community's unfavourable view of the industry as a first choice
- 'White-male laddish' culture as not a good fit for them
- Limited careers information and advice; and limited guidance and entry points to the sector; and the
- Dearth of diversity and inclusion practices within the industry





Further research is needed to understand better the push and pull factors that will entice or repel young people from a career in the manual trades. For example, the following questions require answers: Is ethnicity the main excluding factor? What is the influence of culture, class, and gender on young people's choice, and is the drive to acquire a university degree pushing young people away from a career in the manual trade?

### 1.5 Eat Wood Green

Ubele is developing the **Eat Wood Green** project – a food growing enterprise funded by and in partnership with Haringey Council's Recreation Department. In the spirit of sustainable greening, Ubele's Rootz Into Food Growing project will utilise the space provided above the Wood Green Shopping Centre car park to train interested community members to grow culturally appropriate food, sustainably and commercially. Through this work Ubele will advance its model for developing community food growing enterprise and, in the process, provided much sought-after community food growing skills.

### 1.6 Pathways to Economic Opportunities (P2E)

Structural barriers in the UK have created profound racial inequalities that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have placed incredible strain on people and families' economic mobility. To address this in London, the Ubele led [Pathways to Economic Opportunities \(P2E\)](#) programme was born.

The **P2E** programme is strengthening London organisations to remove barriers to economic opportunity by demonstrating the pivotal role of London Black and minoritized community organisation in addressing inequalities and delivering services for Black and minoritized communities.



London Community Foundation (LCF), [Action for Race Equality](#), supported by JP Morgan Chase have committed £2M over 3 years to this P2E endeavour to invest in organisations providing employment, enterprise and financial health (EEFH) support with leaders from Black and Minoritized backgrounds. P2E is raising the voice and experience of these organisations by bringing partners together to co-design and co-deliver activities. Phase one, now completed, assisted 6 organisations that support entrepreneurship, small businesses and/or support economically underserved people to develop skills, access jobs, or improve their financial health and resilience. To date key learning from working with these organisations on their infrastructure include:

- The need for organisational development support and a mix of grant funding for at least 2 years
- Encouragement of collaborative working and networking opportunities, especially ones leading to effective partnership working
- The need to prioritise within the organisation's development programme effective governance and leadership, especially with respect to trustee recruitment and effectiveness

Phase 2 of P2E was launched in June 2022. Phase 3 will focus on engagement with the wider EEFH sector, local government and policy through the evaluation, external communications, and events.

## I.9 GIDA Housing Co-Operative

With regards Asset development, Ubele's 2015 publication [A Place to Call Home](#) highlighted the threat to community asset ownership among Black and Minoritized communities.

Ubele's **Community Wealth Building** strategy is currently funded with a grant of £1M over 5 years from the Oak Foundation, Power to Change Flexible Finance and EDP funding. The resources fund a series of local and national interventions, new research, and an innovative housing model. Two notable initiatives under this umbrella are the **GIDA Housing Project** and the **Community Wealth Building National Strategic Alliance**. Ubele's management of Wolves Lane, oversight of Black Rootz and Eat Wood Green also falls within the community wealth building strategy.



## **GIDA (the Hausa - Northern Nigerian - word for “home”)**

**Housing Co-operative** has been set up in direct response to the poor quality of private rented housing experienced by Black and Minoritized communities in Tottenham and across London, both in terms of affordability and lack of influence over management and maintenance of their homes. We see the current opportunity for at least 52 community led homes to be established on the St. Ann’s Hospital Site Tottenham as a way to address this and demonstrate an alternative that empowers communities and builds social value.

GIDA is formed by a partnership of three community groups, Rode Housing Co-operative, Bahay Kubo Housing Association (BKHA) and The Ubele Initiative. It was birthed by Ubele as part of our commitment to Community Wealth Building and leading on the establishment of Black and Minoritized National Strategic Alliance for community wealth building.

We envision becoming an affordable housing provider which empowers under-represented communities, by giving them influence and collective control over the management and maintenance of their own homes, as a response to the poor quality and insecure private rented housing many have had to endure.



“

**“We are incredibly excited to work with the vibrant building occupiers and local community who are committed to delivering this scheme successfully. Our multi-skilled team bring expertise in community engagement, community buildings, and sustainable design to breathe new life into this important community asset that will connect the history and legacy of the Lloyd Leon Community Centre.”**

**Tara Gbolade, Founder Design Studio**

”



## ENTERPRISE CASE STUDY – BMEDP ADHAR Project

Ubele was proud to assist [The Adhar Project](http://www.adharproject.org) through the BMC-EDP Programme. The ADHAR Project [www.adharproject.org](http://www.adharproject.org) is a Leicester based mental health charity for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. This team of caring people from different backgrounds, communities, and faiths in Leicester collectively find new ways to improve awareness of mental health issues, and available support. It empowers people 18-65 years old to manage their own mental health difficulties by addressing all factors that are related to the issue and delivering these services in a culturally relevant and personalised way. Their vision for the future is to build a society where all those who are experiencing mental health difficulties live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives.

Adhar works with a wide spectrum of conditions, including anxiety, addiction, self-harm, schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, personality disorder, phobia or an eating disorder. Adhar empowers people to seek early intervention to manage their mental health challenges alongside its provision of bespoke advice, activities, art therapy, cultural activities, and signposting to additional services. They often accompany the young people on meetings and appointments and help them to raise concerns about their care or experiences and help a person build the confidence needed to speak up for themselves or share their views and feelings in situations where a person may feel threatened or powerless. Adhar also undertakes educational campaigns to challenge stigma around mental health and advocate on behalf of individuals and communities on mental health issues, ensuring they understand their rights.



Adhar's Employment, Health and Wellbeing Project is in collaboration with Business2Business's "Brighter Futures" project. It aims to help clients overcome any obstacles in their life through a combination of coaching, mentoring, volunteering and training. In this way they can get into education or employment, which will in turn improve their happiness and financial security.

This project supports people who are transitioning to increased self-management and more independent living, and whose recovery may be threatened by additional, external stresses. They offer early intervention methods, with the aim of preventing external stresses to continue or worsen the client's mental health. Adhar recognises that people who are struggling with their mental health problems have experienced many difficulties on their journey to recovery.

This project therefore emphasises the process of learning, engaging, taking action and engaging with others. It is about having positive thinking and actions and developing participants sense of self-value and empowerment. Some of the activities offered are 1-2-1 sessions, training workshops and community visits. When the client has completed the programme, they are discharged and referred to the 'Peer Support Network', which provides self-help for continued support during their recovery.



## Strategic Aim 2: Advocacy for equity and justice in our communities

The Ubele Initiative made 8 interventions towards this aim in the last year

- **2.1 Leading Routes** - Paths to University Success - supporting prospective students in navigating higher education at all stages, in response to concerns raised about the Black student experience.
- **2.2 Rapid review of inequalities in health care and the NHS workforce** – focusing on priorities set by the NHS Race and Health Observatory (RHO), this review found many areas requiring attention, but some rose above others namely mental health, maternal and neonatal health, digital inclusion, genomics and precision medicine and the health and care workforce.
- **2.3 Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS)** - first of its kind research which helps us to understand the realities facing ethnic and religious minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The EVENS data is deposited with the UK Data service where it is freely available to research communities.
- **2.4 Being Black in Islington** - engaging with local Black residents and voluntary and community sector leaders to explore how Black people experience life and how they engaged in decision making.
- **2.5 81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance** - marking the 40th anniversary of the 1981 Uprisings in Brixton, 81 Acts is a collection of the transformational, lived experiences and unheard stories of 1981 acts of rebellion that fundamentally changed Britain. This has enabled the community to archive and amplify their voices.
- **2.6 The Young Emerging Leaders Collective (YELC)** - a community-driven, anti-oppressive, non-hierarchical, and radically caring community of young Black people who envision a world where racial and social justice is realised globally.
- **2.7 The Ubele Circles Project** - based on the Sankofa principle of seeking knowledge from the past to benefit generations to come, The Ubele Initiative brought together social activists of varying ages to examine their role in British social activism and the changes they have contributed to making.
- **2.8 Lloyd Leon Community Centre (LLCC)** - the home of Brixton Domino Club and Brixton Soup Kitchen. Ubele has guided its transformation into a more exciting, vibrant and creative facility serving the local community. The success of this project has led to a new sustainable model for Black and Minoritized led community centres.
- **2.9 Wolves Lane Centre** – along with partners Crop Drop and Organic Lea, Ubele's vision is to turn this three-acre development in Haringey into a thriving space for sustainable growing, education, social enterprise and community engagement.

Read on for a detailed breakdown of these interventions, including quotes from our beneficiaries.





## The challenge

Early in the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, Ubele recognized that racial equity was not always at the heart of research conducted by national infrastructure bodies, and so these research projects often insufficiently capture the experiences of marginalised communities. Ubele carried out two instructive national surveys and herein committed to using evidence-based research and lived experience of our communities to highlight deep-rooted social and economic inequality, and call for the specific needs of marginalized and disadvantaged communities to be addressed in post-Covid-19 recovery and growth plans.

Informed by the above and other research, Ubele, in the last year engaged with 8 initiatives, that explicitly served to advocate for equity and justice for our communities in partnership with a range of stakeholders, and in contexts as wide ranging as food justice, higher education, health, employment, and activism. Ubele also campaigned on policy issues to address systemic barriers to funding for more equitable outcomes.

## Our Interventions

We improved our evidence base and understanding of funding flows from grant makers and social investors of the Black and racially VCSE sector and shared with them our learning and practice from the Phoenix Way - a transformational approach to inclusive and participatory grant making.

### 2.1 Leading Routes

As a response to concerns raised about the Black student experience into university Ubele incubated [Leading Routes - Paths to University Success](#) to support prospective students in navigating higher education at all stages.

The Leading Routes project team organised day-to-day activities and delivered an annual event to enable parents, carers, and young people from the African diaspora communities to gain insight into the selection and recruitment processes of the UK's elite Russell Group universities.



The project also offered mentorship, access to networks, training, and development opportunities to university applicants through an Erasmus+ funded Summer School. The information received enabled parents and their children to initiate informed discussions about education pathways.

Leading Routes provided a platform that celebrated black students and academics in higher education and a network that encouraged progress in higher education. Additionally Leading Routes aims to strengthen, over time, the pipeline into academic careers for black students and inform and influence policies that affect the black student experience at a strategic level.

Leading Routes – Paths to University Success is now a registered CIC and Ubele chairs the Advisory Group.

We report three pieces of research within the advocacy strategic aim, two in health and the other in governance.

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**“Leading Routes has positioned itself as an organisation that aims to address issues in the student’s life cycle from a Black-led perspective. We recognise that institutions have a lot of work to do around changing cultures and practices. We say ‘in the meantime’ what can be achieved by a community organisation to help students and parents to navigate higher education. We’d also like to be a ‘critical friend’ for the sector and lobby on issues that we feel need to be addressed.”**

**Paulette Williams,  
Co-ordinator.**

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## 2.2 Rapid review of inequalities in health care and the NHS workforce

With funding from the [NHS Race and Health Observatory](#) (RHO\*) and in partnership with the Universities of Manchester, Sheffield and Sussex, Ubele conducted a rapid **Review of Inequalities in Health Care and the NHS Workforce** focusing on priorities set by the RHO. First of its kind, the review found many areas requiring attention, but some rose above others namely mental health, maternal and neonatal health, digital inclusion, genomics and precision medicine and the health and care workforce.

The research found that few national datasets had sufficiently high-quality ethnic monitoring data to allow for robust analysis of ethnic inequalities. Nonetheless, inequalities were evident in each of the areas reviewed. There were clear barriers to seeking help for mental health problems rooted in a distrust of primary care and mental health care providers, as well as fear of being discriminated against in healthcare.

The review pointed to the central importance of women's relationship with care providers, particularly midwives and health visitors, during pregnancy and beyond. Poor communication between the women and the health providers was a prevalent theme. System level factors as

well as attitudes, knowledge and behaviours of healthcare staff contributed to some ethnic minority women feeling 'othered', unwelcome and poorly cared for.

The research found that there were very few documented ethnic differences in attitudes towards using digital health apps. However, there was some evidence that ethnic minority participants might use apps less frequently and this may be borne out of mistrust of intended uses of data by government agencies.

Ethnic minority people are not well represented in large genomic wide association (GWA) studies. Older ethnic minority people were less likely to donate DNA in studies and that apprehension may also be present for younger black people. Many GWA studies only used 'European ancestry' participants in their analysis making it impossible to investigate the role of ethnicity.

The review found evidence of ethnic inequalities across a range of professions and settings in the NHS, with NHS ethnic minority staff enduring racist abuse from other staff and patients. The studies on career progression showed how racism hampered ethnic minority staff's career progression and professional development.



Recommendations were made for further research in each of the areas under investigation and more generally on the impact of racism on healthcare. This is in order to disrupt the mechanisms and systems that give rise to ethnic inequalities.

Among the recommendation for practice and policies were the following:

- Enforcement of Guidelines on Ethnic Monitoring Data to ensure that patients' ethnicity is recorded and done so accurately in all interactions with NHS staff. In this way statistics on service use by ethnic group, age and gender can be generated, and allow for clinical data to be linked across datasets to improve the monitoring of clinical outcomes and to enhance quality
- Work to build trust with ethnic minority groups and key VCSE organisations to improve health outcomes.
- Commitment from NHS England and NHS improvement to tackle racist attitudes and behaviours among healthcare staff and address structural dimensions of NHS systems that discriminate against ethnic minority women and their babies
- Digital literacy support for those who struggle with basic digital access in various medium, languages and learning styles,

and investment in interpreter services in NHS Trusts, in mental healthcare, in GP surgeries and at various points along the maternal health care pathway for in person, telephone and digital appointments

- That NHS England and NHS Improvement review recruitment and staff development procedures to locate barriers to ethnic minority staff's progression - promotion, career development and pay

### 2.3 Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS)

Ethnic and religious minorities are under-represented in mainstream surveys in the UK, so when survey data are used as evidence for policy change the voices and experience of those minorities are marginalised and sometimes misrepresented. [Evidence for Equality National Survey \(EVENS\)](#) is intentionally different. Ubele is proud to have partnered with the University of Manchester to advocate for a change in this first of its kind research which helps us to understand the realities facing ethnic and religious minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ubele introduced an innovative approach to recruiting participants to ensure that people from a wide range of religious and ethnic



groups across England, Scotland and Wales were represented proportionally. A holistic approach meant that questions were asked about education, employment and economic wellbeing, housing and neighbourhood, social and political participation, health, ethnic and religious identity, and experiences of racism and discrimination. The EVENS data is deposited with the UK Data service where it is freely available to research communities. A free e-book is to be published in 2023.

## 2.4 Being Black in Islington

As part of its strategic planning, Islington Council commissioned Ubele to find out how members of the Black communities experienced life in Islington. **Being Black in Islington** engaged with local Black residents and voluntary and community sector leaders (Islington Council Staff and Islington Councillors) via voice recording, videos, photographs, and graphic harvesting. Six themes emerged namely: belonging, racism, access to services, trust, representation and community voice, community organizing and connections

pointing to how Black People experience life and how they engaged in decision making.

The research revealed that Black people living in Islington did not feel that they belonged there, citing gentrification as an exacerbating factor. Black people talked about the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and disability; and the sense that “anyone who is not white is considered to be Black” failed to acknowledge that difference and intersectionality. They talked about lacking basic rights and the existence of institutional racism and its impact on quality of life in the areas of policing and community safety, young people and education, health and mental health, and poverty. Other issues raised throughout the engagement included: lack of employment, high-quality work, and community programmes, lack of funding to start enterprises, limited support for mental health leading to poor outcomes for Black people across all indicators of poverty. The conversations highlighted the limited voice and influence that Black people have, and this is exacerbated by the lack of Black community organisation and infrastructure.







### **Belonging**

“we are told this is not your country...we have paid our bills - I have worked all of my life and paid into the system-no one has right to tell me get off this place – I am here”

### **Access To Services**

“Black people cannot afford to live here”.

### **Negative treatment of the police towards young black people**

“...police treat young people in the area like criminals before they have even asked their names”.

### **Concern for young people**

“...parents cannot do it all alone”.

### **Trust between Black Community and the council (and other public bodies):**

“Nothing changes so why bother”

### **Representation & Community Voice**

“there is a small but overstretched number of Black Community Leaders”

## Community Organising & Connections

### “There is a lack of organized groups”

Some suggestions to remedy this situation included: inclusion of Black CEO's, diversity workers and community programmes; Black people in higher positions; and more support and preparation for Black people accessing roles in higher employment.

The situation in Islington is consistent with Ubele's observation of the challenges faced by Black people across the UK and reflected in some of Ubele's other research.

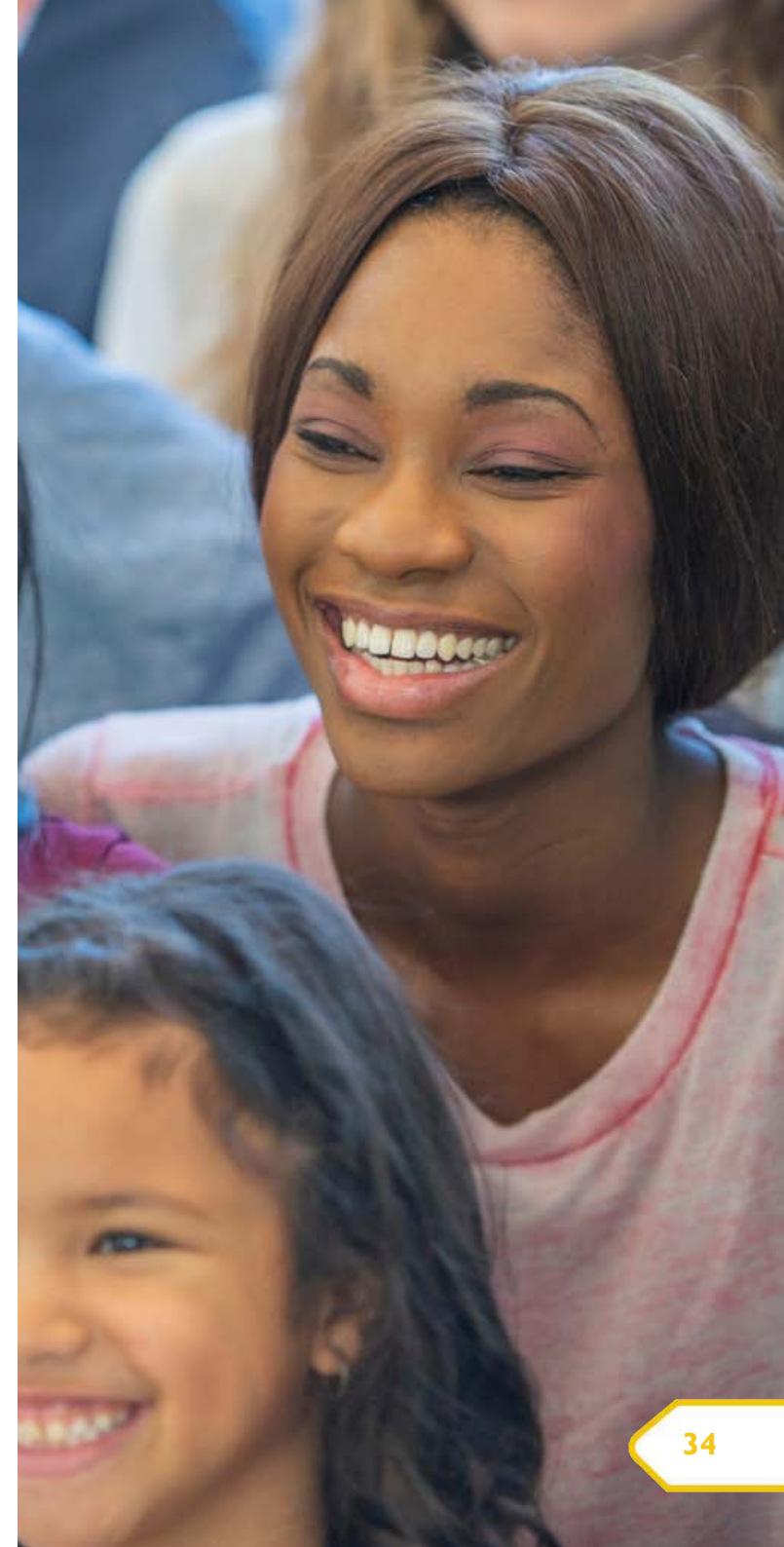
To mark the 40th anniversary of the 1981 Uprisings in Brixton, Handsworth, Toxteth, Moss Side, Chapeltown, and St Pauls, 81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance is enabling communities to archive and amplify their stories galvanising around the principles of Humanifesto and addressing these six themes: resist; insight/incite; respect; reform; regroup & renew; and revolution.

In collaboration with MUSEUMAND, Empathy Museum and funding from The

National Lottery Heritage Fund, Ubele built this project from the ground up. 300 enthusiastic open hearts across generations and continents gave their pro bono time and energy to re-create, re-define, re-claim and re-value collective transformational, lived experiences and unheard stories of 1981 acts of rebellion that fundamentally changed Britain.

## 2.5 81 Acts of Exuberant Defiance

**The 81 Radical Acts of Exuberant Defiance**, provide a lens on contemporary experiences of equity, catalyses collaboration between disparate, diverse grass roots organisations, engages the changing demographic in the area's rich activist heritage; and explores, discovers, and champions new modes of shared creative advocacy, enabling hidden voices to be heard within the collective experience.



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**“...Beginning in April 2021 with a community-wide delivery of commemorative postcards, the series included production of Atlantic Billboard and an animation projected onto Atlantic Road across the anniversary weekend. Place has been significantly important in the amplification of 1981, with Railton Road as a key location of the uprising.**

**...With a new mural at 198 Gallery, Jon Daniel's Afro Supa Heroes holding the frontline, and youth organisation BIG KID Foundation working with local historians and artists to tell the story of Dexter's Playground in a unique creative dialogue along the boundary of the site, the legacy of 81 Acts will be a visible part of the cultural landscape of Brixton into the future. The 'Peoples' Inquiry' and 'Holding the Flame' an innovative augmented reality statue that commemorates lives lost in police custody and calls for fundamental change in the relationship between community and police, drew the programme to a close in April 2022.”**

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In the last 10-15 years ongoing regeneration has meant rapid radical changes for young people in the neighbourhoods of Peckham, The Old Kent Road and Brixton, like other parts of London with long held significance for the African and Caribbean communities. Ubele, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit and Pempeople collaborated on Sensing the city: [Young People and Regeneration in London](#) to explore the role of creative expression in amplifying the voice of young adults in community-led approaches to planning in London. Race, age, and labelling hovered the young peoples' shared experiences of regeneration and multi-dimensional trauma. The frustration of enduring voicelessness – or rather, of repeatedly being 'unheard' - was palpable, but so was a thirst for co-creating safe and caring neighbourhoods, where people like them could thrive. Participants experimented with poetry, spoken word, storytelling, and mobile filmmaking, inside and outside of workshops to address the questions: What is the place for young adults to shape the future of these neighbourhoods? Cities are endlessly changing, but who is change for? How do young people feel about regeneration of their neighbourhoods? How can we ensure young residents have a voice and are heard in critical planning decisions that affect their lives and their communities?

A significant outcome of this initiative is a [Daniel Oduntan's short film - Sensing the City: Young People and Regeneration in London](#). Designed and edited in portrait, the video letter lends itself to mobile viewing, with the option of reading or listening to each voice note.





## 2.6 The Young Emerging Leaders Collective (YELC)

The Young Emerging Leaders Collective (YELC) is a community-driven, anti-oppressive, non-hierarchical, and radically caring community of young Black and racially minoritized people who envision a world where racial and social justice is realised globally. It is a core programme to lead the next generation of leadership for Ubele and further afield. Participation in the collective includes, but is not limited to intersections of gender, sexuality, class, citizenship status, disability, neurodiversity, education experiences, and faith.

### YELC:

- Raises awareness of and advocates for social, racial and climate justice in the UK and globally.
- Hosts events, curates projects and workshops around sustainable and liberated futures for racialised communities.

- Provides and support young leaders in creating a brave space for community activism

In the last year YELC carefully curated 9 monthly newsletters and 9 monthly events each planned and executed by a different young leader with the support of the rest of the collective. This working arrangement allows for each leader to raise awareness of and share ideas with audiences about a social issue that they are passionate about. YELC has ensured that the Ubele led national Heads Together mental health campaign listened to and represented the experiences and views of young Black and racially minoritized people in their wider discourse.

Another of YELC's successes was 10 episodes of the TL2 Podcast, a unique space to hold conversations about issues that affect Black and racially minoritized people and share lived experiences. In total over 1000 people attended the events, with an average of 25 – 40 people attending

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**‘The Young Emerging Leaders Collective enables me to stay involved in Ubele and help plan and run events, as well as continuing my development as a leader alongside some inspirational fellow members.’**

**– Maria Fernandes**

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Members of YELC have said that the podcast positively impacted their mental health and wellbeing as it has given them an outlet to express what is on their mind and debate the contemporary issues affecting them.

[The Ubele Initiative - YELC](#)

[The Ubele Initiative - A growing community – Ubele's Young Emerging Leaders Collective \(YELC\) by Aisha Khan](#)

[The Ubele Initiative - International Women's Month Festival](#)

[The Ubele Initiative - #IWD2019 Our Young Emerging Leaders are organising a free event on 8th March to celebrate International Women's Day](#)

## 2.7 The Ubele Circles Project

**The Ubele Circles Project**, based on the Sankofa principle of seeking knowledge from the past to benefit generations to come, brought together young and older social activists to examine their role in British social activism and the changes they have contributed to making. The first circle consisting of 6 sessions attended by 25 people each time, discussed Afrikan & Asian Post-WW2 Resistance in the UK. The second circle consisted of 4 sessions and was attended by 20 people each and discussed the '[The West Indian Front Room](#)', an exhibition visited by more than 35,000 visitors of different ages, genders and social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.



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**‘Circles bring together different generations where we can talk directly and share and explore together people’s experiences of the past, of the current time with the backdrop of time. Though we still live our lives between the islands which makes us privileged really with our Caribbean culture that the world can’t get enough of, our sense of pride, which no one can take away, and the privilege of our stories that wherever we go, we leave something they just can’t hold onto and create and we take that with us. An experience of dark and light with curves running through in between the islands. Quite an experience.’**

**– Barbara Grey**

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Ubele has developed an extraordinary successful practice of mentoring leaders of existing community assets in enterprise-based asset management, alongside incubating and nurturing the development of new community business. Working intensely with leaders of community spaces, such as [Lloyd Leon Centre](#) in Brixton, [Wolves Lane Horticultural centre](#), both in London, we support and facilitate greater collaboration with local stakeholders, leverage community talent and resources to sustain vibrant and creative community asset for the future.

## **2.8 Lloyd Leon Community Centre (LLCC)**

### **Lloyd Leon Community Centre (LLCC)**

is the home of Brixton Domino Club and Brixton Soup Kitchen. Ubele has guided its transformation into a more exciting, vibrant, and creative facility serving the local community. Commissioned by Lambeth Council, Ubele provided a comprehensive package of support and development. Through intergenerational collaborations the community identified a clear vision for the future of the centre based on the community needs. Another outcome of this work is a new sustainable model for Black and Minoritized led community centres



## 2.9 Wolves Lane Centre

Ubele, along with Crop Drop and Organic Lea are legal partners and stewards of the **Wolves Lane Centre**, a three-acre development in Haringey. The former plant nursery has commercial green houses, a rare palm house with tropical plants, a cactus house, a palm house, rainforest area, professional standard kitchen, classroom spaces, barn, and woodland area. The Ubele vision is to turn Wolves Lane Centre into a thriving space for sustainable growing, education, social enterprise, and community engagement with a £2.4M grant from the GLA and the National Lottery. The buildings and glasshouses will undergo much needed refurbishment as well as investment in sustainable energy systems to heat the palm house. The development of this centre is contributing significantly to Haringey's journey to becoming a Garden City

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**“We are incredibly excited to work with the vibrant building occupiers and local community who are committed to delivering this scheme successfully. Our multi-skilled team bring expertise in community engagement, community buildings, and sustainable design to breathe new life into this important community asset that will connect the history and legacy of the Lloyd Leon Community Centre.”**

**- Tara Gbolade, Founder of Gbolade**

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## Strategic Aim 3 : Strengthening infrastructure and voice of our communities

The Ubele Initiative made 2 major interventions towards this aim in the last year.

- **3.1 Rootz into Food Growing (RiFG)** - a pan London Network of successful community growing sites of Black people and people of colour within the horticultural sector. In only its second year, it has established a 40-member strong Pan-London RIFG network, developed 4 food growing enterprises ready to trade, and facilitated workshops on growing culturally appropriate crops to over 500 attendees in venues across the country. Members of the network undertake food grower placements and receive relevant systems leadership skills development and enterprise training opportunities to grow their food enterprises commercially.
- **3.2 The Phoenix Way (TPW)** - a transformational approach to inclusive and participatory grant making. Led by Ubele and made up of leaders from Black and Minoritized communities from across England, it has called on international, national, and local funders to address systemic barriers to funding. TPW's approach to grant making is an outcome of The Phoenix Fund, a £2.4 million community-led fund co-designed and co-led by community leaders from across Black and Minoritized groups in England in partnership with The Ubele Initiative, The National Lottery Community Fund and Global Fund for Children. The approach was designed by Ubele to target groups that The National Lottery Community Fund had not previously engaged.

Read on for a detailed breakdown of these interventions, including quotes from our beneficiaries.



## The challenge

Social movements have the power to fundamentally reshape public discourse and catalyse mass action. The events of 2020 stemming from the murder of George Floyd by the police in the USA, the Covid-19 pandemic and its disproportionately negative effects of Black and racially minoritized in the UK - triggered a discourse that dramatically shifted the landscape of anti-racist action.

UK experiences of social and racial justice and anti-racism may lead to worry that the current gains although memorable are insufficiently institutionalized, short-lived and so will be undermined or co-opted. For this reason, a focus on the role of infrastructure is well placed as one of many inputs that underpins and sustains racial justice work. Following decades of under-investment in infrastructure organisations serving Black and racially minoritized communities the following questions remain relevant: As new groups are being established and existing groups are elevating their ambitions what are the underlying support systems that can meet the evolving scale, depth, and complexity of racial justice work?

There are gaps in regional and national leadership limiting the ability of the sector to act collectively. While there are well established infrastructure organisations and forums operating and speaking on behalf of the sector in Bristol, in most communities the picture is fragmented with multiple groups and limited coordinated representative capacity. There is a clear need for a mechanism that amplifies the special needs of the sector and acts collectively to influence policy and leverage resources for our communities.

Two major Ubele initiatives – Rootz into food Growing and the Phoenix Way - contributed to strengthening infrastructure and voice over the last year



## Our interventions

### 3.1 Rootz into Food Growing (RiFG)

**Rootz into Food Growing (RiFG)** is a pan London Network of successful community growing sites of Black people and people of colour within the horticultural sector. RiFG aims to challenge and disrupt some of the structural inequalities that exist within the current UK food growing sector and to achieve food justice. RiFG leads the design and development of its own commercial growing enterprises and advocates to secure land for future food growing social business concerns.

Now in its 2nd year [RiFG](#) is thriving. Funded by Farming the Future, it has established a 40-member strong Pan-London RiFG network, supported 4 food growing enterprises on their trading journeys, and facilitated workshops on growing culturally appropriate crops to over 500 attendees in venues across the country including Kew Gardens and the Oxford Real Farming conference 2022. In the process, they have provided much sought-after community food growing skills.

The Ubele Initiative has launched **Wolves Lane Centre Members**, a network of Black and minoritized led Pan-London growers. We undertake food grower placements and receive relevant systems leadership skills development and enterprise training opportunities to grow food enterprises commercially.

RiFG works in partnerships with GLA, Shared Assets, Sustain, Capital Growth, Social Farms & Gardens, Kew Gardens, Landworker's Alliance, Ecological Land Coop, Locality, Haringey Council, Walworth Garden, Sutton Community Farm, Soil Association, Shared Assets, OrganicLea, and Cohere Partners, Be the Earth, Coventry University's Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience team and 30Percy. It is also a stakeholder in the London Fringe Farming Project and in GLA's Designing London's Recovery Programme whose aim is to expand land and support peri urban farms in London to create new green jobs, local productive community hubs, and improve the resilience of London's food supply chains.





### 3.2 The Phoenix Way (TPW)

**The Phoenix Way** (TPW) is a rare opportunity to achieve transformational change for future generations through shifting power in grant making systems, processes, decision making and support to communities. Led by Ubele and made up of leaders from Black and racially minoritized communities from across England, it has called on international, national, and local funders to address systemic barriers to funding. Leaders spread across six regions of England are overcoming obstacles and forging ahead with humility and pure grit.

TPW's approach to grant making is an outcome of the Ubele convened Phoenix Fund, a £2.4 million community-led fund co-designed and co-led by community leaders from across Black and racially minoritized groups in England in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, Ubele, and Global Fund for Children. The reach of The Phoenix Fund was striking: more than 65 per cent of the organisations that applied to the scheme had no previous history with The National Lottery Community Fund but worked with a wide range of people in need across the country.

A report on the first year of the [Phoenix Way](#) re-examined the lack of recognition of the historical barriers that Black and racially minoritized groups faced in accessing funding and how this has hampered their sustainability. Sparse resources have mostly been engaged in frontline activity and space for reflective planning and thinking have been limited. Additionally, BME led organisations have not been positioned to support mainstream programmes, which attract management costs, which can also help to underpin infrastructure costs. Crucially, the reasons for limited resourcing of BME groups have tended to focus on the capacity of BME groups themselves – looking at their bid writing or business planning skills, for instance – rather than focusing on funders and their decisions. Finally, where BME funding has been made available to community groups it is generally from specific pots and programmes and therefore seen as a substitute for mainstream funding. The attitude displayed by many funders is part of the problem that has led to the ongoing fragility of BME organisations.



Underpinning many of the conversations with grant holders was the question: 'what support do you need to make the impact you want?'. A common theme was assistance in helping them tackle racial disparities and make them more visible to the public. What emerged is a landscape in which the onus is constantly on Black and racially minoritized organisations to highlight the issues facing local communities and explain these to funders (but not in a way that causes embarrassment or uncomfortableness). Perhaps worst of all, it's a landscape in which Black and racially minoritized groups are provided limited resources to tackle huge issues, and then have their lack of progress used as evidence that their impact is limited.

What also emerged is an alternative approach - a way of doing things that is more inclusive and has greater potential to make lasting change. The report reaffirmed the need for a fundamental thinking shift - for the sector to move past 'race equality' approaches to one of racial justice – an awareness of disparities in outcomes for different groups and to fund activities to alleviate these.

In 2021, £50 million over 5 years was allocated by The National Lottery Community Fund to support Black and racially minoritized Community charities and grassroots groups. TPW

National Steering Group which includes The National Lottery Community Fund, Black Southwest Network, BRAP, Centre for Knowledge Equity, Global Fund for Children, Imkaan, Impact Hub Bradford, Kanlungan Filipino Consortium, Lancashire BME Network, Maslaha, South Asian Health Network, Ten Years' Time, Voluntary Action Leeds and Lives of Colour partnered on, and co-designed the programme. Ubele was also in dialogue with the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) and other potential funders to secure a further £10M.

TPW's National Steering Group has identified national and regional priorities and will help to facilitate engagement with Black and racially minoritized community-led charities and grassroots groups to enable them to access funding and support that have previously failed to reach them. The programme will be delivered through grant-making panels, capacity building support, leadership development, learning partnerships with space for innovation. In addition to its fund-making and other priorities, TPW has a clear and challenging systems-change agenda for the NLCF, YEF and other funding partners. This is to ensure that funders' commitments to achieving more equitable outcomes longer-term are enacted as referenced in Ubele's Booska Paper, 2021



## Developing our own organisation

Internally Ubele is growing rapidly in response to the pressing needs of the Black and racially minoritized communities simultaneously ensuring that the organisation itself remains stable. It has paid attention to its internal governance, and increased leadership opportunities for younger staff and associates. Four Catalyst groups have been in operation to guide implementation so its 4 strategic aims, in addition to one focused on sustainability. Ubele is also developing a social impact framework supported by an emerging data management system that will enable the organisation to share our learning and relevant data with our strategic partners and to inform the development of more effective interventions across the sector.

In relation to financial sustainability Ubele felt it necessary to strengthen its funding base so it can act strategically and autonomously. It did so by increasing the percentage of income earned through consultancies and existing partnerships to co-design and co-deliver national and regional programmes.





## Strategic Aim 4: Developing our people, groups and organisation

The Ubele Initiative made 10 interventions towards this aim in the last year.

- **4.1 BAMEStream** - an alliance of mental health practitioners, therapists, policy specialists, organisations, activist, and academics, dedicated to bringing the mental health needs of Black and racially minoritized communities into the mainstream.
- **4.2 BAYO** - an online hub for services that brings together Black led collectives, initiatives, community run services, mental health professionals and social prescribing services into one place
- **4.3 Youth Engagement and Awareness of Mental Health** - working in partnership with Youth Empowerment Leaders Collective (YELC) produced two podcasts.
- **4.4 Good Grief** - Immersive bereavement workshops assisted End of Life carers, death doulas, practitioners, therapist and those with an interest in end-of-life care with culturally appropriate bereavement training
- **4.5 Our Grief** - a 30-minute film featuring the experiences of Grief, Loss, and Bereavement by 7 Black women
- **4.6 Cultural Competence Framework** - co-created with a group of young people and used by mentors, youth workers, and teachers to help Black and racially minoritized young people to move beyond survival mode so that they can thrive.
- **4.7 UGiveHope Evening of Entertainment** - weekly sessions of light-hearted entertainment - music, poetry, spoken word, magic, comedy and singing, all performed pro bono by artists from 31 countries around the world in the spirit of love and unity
- **4.8 Diaspora Kitchen** - interactive, cookery sessions and intergenerational conversations with Black and racially minoritized chefs
- **4.9 Exhale Retreat** - open to Black women from different generations working in civil society and the philanthropic sector
- **4.10 Erasmus+ Fellowships** - individual fellowships to 500+ young adult leaders targeting micro and small organisations most at risk of closure due to lack of reserves and high dependence on the leadership of one or two individuals.

Read on for a detailed breakdown of these interventions, including quotes from our beneficiaries.

## The challenge

Underpinning the success of all Ubele's work is the development of community leaders, activists, entrepreneurs, community groups and organisations, helping them feel purposeful, valued and giving them a sense of belonging. A forerunner to this is attention to the health, mental health and well-being needs of individuals, and systemic interventions such as health research initiatives reported on earlier.

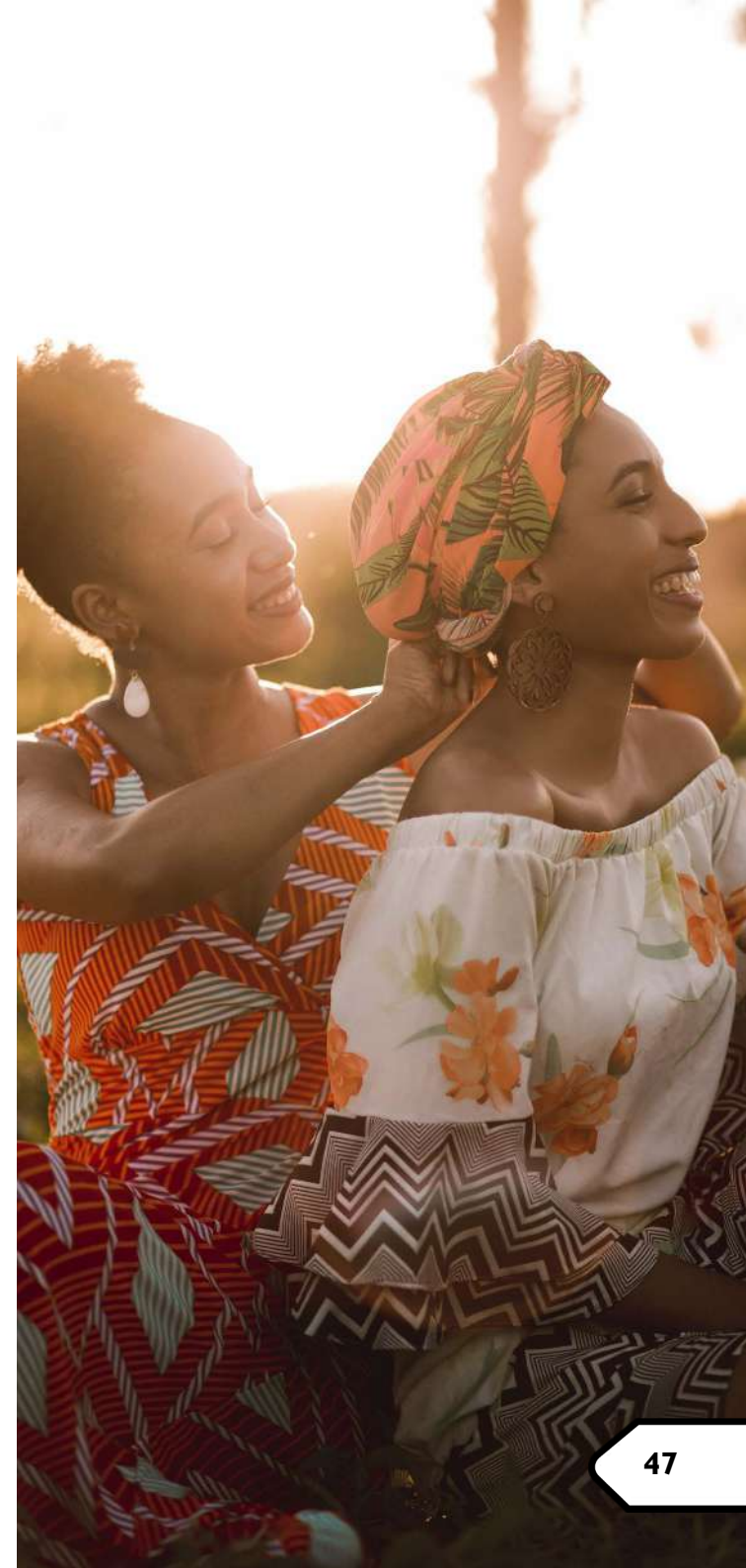
## Our interventions

We conducted two national rapid reviews in 2020/21 which captured and highlighted the effects of the pandemic on marginalised communities. As a result of the growing mental health crisis identified, Ubele incubated BAMEstream, an alliance of mental health practitioners, therapists, policy specialists, organisations, activist, and academics, dedicated to bringing the mental health needs of Black and racially minoritized communities into the mainstream. Health, mental health and wellbeing is an important strand of Ubele's work.

Alongside our communities' physical and mental health and well-being Ubele strengthened the functioning of groups and organisations that provide frontline services. This support included training in systems thinking, visioning, organisational governance and leadership, and other professional development opportunities.

We worked with leading national funders like Power to Change, Locality and Social Investment Business (SIB) to co-design and co-deliver recovery support programmes, providing greater reach into Black and racially minoritized communities and removing barriers to entry.

In the last year, through the Erasmus+ funding, Ubele offered individual fellowships to 500+ young adult leaders targeting micro and small organisations most at risk of closure due to lack of reserves and high dependence on the leadership of one or two individuals.





## 4.1 BAMEStream

**BAMEStream:** working in partnership with [Nafsiyat](#) provided free culturally sensitive mental health counselling service to disadvantaged Black and Asian young people from low socio-economic backgrounds who have been living with emotional and psychological trauma such as racial trauma, homelessness, grief, bereavement, loss, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and migration issues.

The programme over the course of 18 months delivered 300 sessions of clinical supervision to 100 people, 77% of which were self-referred. Given that most clients were from Black and Asian communities where mental health is still stigmatised, there is a clear role for voluntary organisations as enablers in the facilitating of access to needed provisions and ones that are culturally sensitive.

In focus group conversations held with health care professionals it was apparent that the relationship among voluntary organisations provided a bridge within and across communities. This made access to mental health services much easier and was accessing culturally sensitive

interventions. Often, language and cultural interpretations of mental health require different approaches.

It also emerged that young people were not able to identify a simple pathway to access mental health service providers in areas such as Newcastle. Three-in-four (76%) clients on the programme were not receiving any support up to the point of referral to the project. The high proportion of self-referrals suggested the need for localising support which made a difference in the number people being prepared to access the services being provided.

Clients' testimonies highlighted that the majority of the support needed was for anxiety, depression, bereavement, suicidal thoughts, and isolation. Many were coming to terms with multiple and successive losses including that of family members and friends due to the COVID-19 pandemic.





Where appropriate they were signposted to other mental health support services for example, where self-harm could have been an issue.

A total of 10 webinars were held to an audience of approximately 400 people to raise awareness of mental health in Black and Asian communities, and address some of the issues around stigma and discrimination.

## 4.2 BAYO

**BAYO:** The Ubele Initiative, in collaboration with Mind, Young Minds, and Best Beginnings has responded to increased mental health and emotional wellbeing needs among Black communities across the UK in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the Covid-19 pandemic. We also know that there are incredible community initiatives and services supporting the mental health and wellbeing needs of our community. To raise awareness of these services we created [BAYO](#) (Bai-oh) of Yoruba origin, meaning “Joy has found us” which is an online hub.

The main aim of the hub is to solve the difficulty Black young people experience

in finding the help that is relevant to them wherever they are on mental health journey.

The Hub showcases the range of initiatives in their local communities that directly and indirectly supports their mental health and wellbeing. The BAYO hub also elevates the status of the organisations that are on its directory by bringing together Black led collectives, initiatives, community run services, mental health professionals and social prescribing services into one place. The Ubele **Youth Empowerment Leaders Collective** (YELC) in collaboration with Don’t Panic, co-created the social media campaign that accompanied the launch of the BAYO hub.

The Bayo initiative also encouraged young people to use peer led digital approaches to create a YouTube series to raise awareness of mental health. They shared their thoughts and experiences on what mental health means to them and their personal journey. Many had not previously spoken openly about their mental health and welcomed the opportunity to share their experiences in a safe space where they were supported to move from merely surviving to thriving and finding joy.

Young people who live with mental health challenges were, through a 'a test and learn approach' empowered and engaged to use their creativity and innovation in developing and hosting Webinars, Podcasts, and TikTok media as platforms to recount and capture their mental health lived experiences. These video messages were a way of embracing, delivering, championing, raising awareness and breaking some of the mental health stigmas that are particularly prevalent in Black and Asian communities.

### **4.3 Youth Engagement and Awareness of Mental Health**

**Youth Engagement and Awareness of Mental Health** working in partnership with Youth Empowerment Leaders Collective (YELC) produced two podcasts. Today's Learners/Tomorrow Leaders: 'You can't self-care yourself out of systemic oppression', - discussing the nuances of mental health specifically from racialised perspectives; and 'What's your migration story', the experiences and the impact of immigration on the wellbeing of 4 young people. The podcast can be found on Spotify, Google Podcasts, Anchor and Pocket Casts.

### **4.4 Good Grief**

**Good Grief:** Immersive bereavement workshops assisted End of Life carers, death doulas, practitioners, therapist and those with an interest in end-of-life care with culturally appropriate bereavement training.

Participants experienced real life situations in respective community spaces and were able to ask questions and seek clarity on the relevance of what they saw and heard. The workshops sessions were focused on: Muslim End of Life care; Jamaican 9 nights; Ancestral Venerations in Traditional African Spiritual practice; Latin American; and Turkish Muslim practices. Some of the learnings included the cultural relevance of particular grief practices, the importance of rituals, the role of food and prayers and the use of culturally sensitive language. The participants have committed to incorporating the new learnings in their day-to-day practice.

### **4.5 Our Grief**

**Our Grief** is a 30-minute film featuring the experiences of Grief, Loss, and Bereavement by 7 Black women. The film screenings in London and Liverpool have been accompanied by a Q&A panel discussion and followed by light engaging entertainment to help with healing of any triggering of emotions that may have arisen.

### **4.6 Cultural Competence Framework**

**A Cultural Competence Framework** was co-created with a group of young people and used by mentors, youth workers, and teachers to help Black and racially minoritized young people to move beyond survival mode so that they can thrive in the face of adverse experiences and trauma.

“

“I am 18 years old and a black transgender person as well as a new parent. Covid-19 has pushed back appointments to help me deal with my dysmorphia as a transgender person... It has been difficult to support my new family as the furlough pay I've been getting just barely covers the cost of providing for my family. My mental health has dropped significantly... I feel very alone”.

- BAMEstream survey respondent

“My family has weathered the impact of the pandemic with our own personal loss. My sister's partner passed away as a result of the virus and we have been grieving his loss separately ever since. When you lose a family member under these heart-breaking circumstances, you simply cannot put the pain into words. You realise the importance of the grieving process within your own families and communities.”

Patrick Vernon OBE

”

#### 4.7 UGiveHope Evening of Entertainment

**UGiveHope Evening of Entertainment** series which started in 2020 continued for 18 months providing weekly sessions of light-hearted entertainment -music, poetry, spoken word, magic, comedy and singing, all performed pro bono by artists from 31 countries around the world in the spirit of love and unity. In the midst of personal grief, loss and anxiety, friendships were formed, and support and comfort openly offered.







## 4.8 Diaspora Kitchen

During the Covid-19 Pandemic second wave, a source of connection and light relief was offered by Ubele through **Diaspora Kitchen**, interactive, cookery sessions and intergenerational conversations with Black and racially minoritized chefs. Chefs shared with a moderator their early memories of food and spoke about family influences on their attitude to food and what inspired them to cook. These 9 sessions raised awareness of the cultures, experiences, and food of people in the diaspora, reduced loneliness and isolation and fostered a sense of community and togetherness during the Covid-19 times of uncertainty. 16 recipes were shared. The session drew an attendance of 350.

[Diaspora Kitchen Session with Michael](#)

[Syria and South Asia](#)

[Mauritius](#)

[Jamaica](#)

[Ghana](#)

[Sierra Leone](#)

[Jamaica: UK/Jamaican vegan](#)

[Cashmere](#)

[St Vincent](#)

[Sudan/Egypt](#)



## 4.9 Exhale Retreat

A different context, but in similar vein, **Exhale Retreat** was conceived and led by Tracy Ageyman, incubated by Ubele and designed for and by Black women. It brought comfort to 12 entrepreneurs during the Covid-19 pandemic. Women shared intergenerational advice, affirmations and wisdom and used their creativity as a tool for wellness and self-care. Meditation was used as a means to self-compassion and stillness and a path to protecting their peace in their workplaces and careers.

The Exhale Retreat was an outcome of the 2020 resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and was open to Black women from different generations working in civil society and the philanthropic sector. The attendees were selected based on their lived experience, location, age, sector, and job position/experience. Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation with Ubele, The Exhale Retreat provided a curated, creative, and safe space for black women to 'be'.



## 4.10 Erasmus+ Fellowships

### **Personal and professional development, systems thinking, visioning, organisational governance and leadership**

Ubele received funding from The Erasmus+ project for capacity building. **Ubuntu Social Leaders Academy (USLA) and Journeys: Empowerment through Exploration of Cultural Heritage** project were the main project foci.

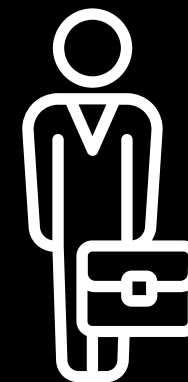
**The Black on Track** Employment Project improved the employability and entrepreneurial skills of 90 Black people in Lambeth aged 35-55 with a focus on those with long-term health conditions like hypertension and diabetes. The project encouraged them to use community action as a first step to becoming active citizens to enable them to re-engage with the economy.

The Project provided one to one guided self-assessment followed by 20 small group coaching to help participants identify opportunities and bring their ideas to reality. The experience culminated with

a group project using the domino game as a tool for community engagement, undertaken with a budget of up to £750. The overall outcomes were new skills and knowledge of how to leverage career experience, increased awareness of how to live with long-term health conditions and realisation of new employment pathways for Black people.

The systems change element resulted in a unique map of needs and support organizations. Outcomes were:

- a map of the barriers to employment prospects for Black people in Lambeth living with long-term health conditions
- a map of organisations skilled at breaking systemic barriers to change
- 3 new jobs
- 4 participants moved from part time to full time
- 30 improved their job skills
- 15 participants were supported in developing community projects to provide employment or recreation for other Black people.
- The birth of 2 new community enterprises and fertile networking ground with successful social entrepreneurs and consultants in the



**In Lambeth, 8.1% of 25-49-year-olds are not engaged with work compared to a national percentage of 7.1%. The percentage of unemployed 50+ people in the borough runs at 10.3% compared the national figure of 4.9%.**





community development area from the Caribbean, the USA and the UK. For instance with Levi Roots, British-Jamaican Celebrity Chef and Businessman.

- Participants improved their awareness of health services and five started health and wellbeing community projects
- Participants improved their sense of belonging
- Engendered the spirit of peer support and intergenerational work
- [A short film](#) capturing the inspiring lessons from community innovators involved in the programme: to serve as a legacy to inspire future community innovators

### Case Study I

Latoya is a Black a mother of 3 who is 11 years into recovery from Drug & Alcohol dependency. She is committed to helping others in the community afflicted by addiction using skills and experience gained through personal experience as well as

academic studies and extensive family and addiction focused research. In her engagement in the Black on Track Community Enterprise Development Programme her organization Wealth of Recovery was born. She is committed to endure the learning and building process to see her business come to life so she can replicate her impact across the Black community in Lambeth and beyond.

- Latoya has gained confidence to start her organization and is currently in the process of registration.
- She also gained the confidence to build a second 'side business' in drop shipping.
- She has learnt how to execute partnerships to develop collaborative ways of supporting drug abusers.

## Case Study 2

Maureen has a wide array of professional experience especially in the legal industry and accounting. She built a project called: Each One Teach One with the mission to bring mature people together by recreating past night life into afternoon entertainment sessions. This forum facilitates skills-gathering with the aim to nurture the younger generation, facilitate reconnection with peers and alleviate loneliness and mental health challenges often associated with ageing.

Maureen came into the program with no idea what she wanted to do to remain active while still earning during retirement. She has run at least four paid social events for older people thus far and

is now looking to develop online skills share forum where older people record their skills and younger people can access support.

- Maureen developed confidence in herself as she followed the coaching and guidance and was able to launch her programme.
- She has developed partnerships with other community entrepreneurs who have food-based businesses; hence enriching the ecosystem.
- She is creating a social support system that will lower the impact of mental health challenges

## The Ubele Initiative - Black on Track Community Wealth Building Film







**Ubuntu Social Leaders Academy (USLA)** is based on an African leadership philosophy which emphasises the importance of community, collectivism, and relationships over material things.

Co-funded by European Commission within the **Erasmus+** Programme, it is a container for learning and development programmes that extend Ubele's reach to organisations in Bradford, Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Huddersfield, and Liverpool. It consists of immersive international learning opportunities to grow groups of skilled community leaders, social activists and change agents from Black and ethnically minoritized communities. The programme is enabling younger and older leaders, including women, to tackle and navigate complex organisational and community challenges by strengthening their organisations' capacity to anticipate threat, plan for change and develop new initiatives. Participants hone their leadership skills and competencies in the process of acquiring new knowledge, insights, and understandings of how to effect deep personal, group, organisational, community based and societal change. Outcomes are the development of pan-European

connections and partnerships to meet identified development current and future needs, sharing of good practice and creating future opportunities for transnational learning.

USLA offered 213, 21 – 35yrs olds, places on 2 of 10 separate courses, and 12-days of job shadowing opportunity. The Ubuntu led courses were undertaken in Barcelona, Athens, Crete, Amsterdam, Paris, Athens, Berlin. 14 participated in the 4th Industrial Revolution - The Future of Work (Gig Economy) course. 26 participants took part in the Methods of Participatory Design using the Art of Hosting (Fractality) course. Appreciative Leadership (Fractality) attracted 26 participants. Systems Thinking and Social Change in Crete, attracted 43 participants. Communities of Practice in Crete attracted 42 participants. The Job shadowing aspect of the programme focused on and within organisations working with young people/migrants and refugees around one of these five themes: Arts, Cultural Preservation, Community Development, Youth Work, Migrants





Support, Human Rights, Advocacy, Enterprise, Education, Environment & Climate Change, Health & Wellbeing, Science & Technology.

With a high 'vaccination hesitancy' especially amongst Black and ethnically minoritized people, who are the principal beneficiaries of our programme job shadowing, was affected as only a few countries allowed in unvaccinated travellers.

Outcomes of the Academy in the last year included a dedicated webpage on our website for the project, presence on social media, and monthly newsletters.

[The Journeys - Empowerment through Exploration of Cultural Heritage project](#) another project funded by **Erasmus+** targeted 300 educators, youth workers, and youth leaders who work with disadvantaged people in their communities to support their learning, development of knowledge, skills and competencies in cultural heritage and activism.

The project was delivered through a comprehensive programme of study visits, non-formal workshops, activities, mapping, sharing of good practice, explorations, research, development of learning materials, piloting and testing of the digital media and a robust evaluation process. The vision is that participants become better able to contribute to the creation of a sustainable society by

exploring a diversity of cultural heritage spaces and stories that need to be preserved.

The outputs are a toolkit, online digital map, and mobile application. The digital map and mobile application capture and showcases the cultural heritage including that of non-European diaspora in participating countries (African-Caribbean, Roma, Javo-Indonesian cultural heritage in the UK, Afro-Surinamese, Roma, Java-Indonesian cultural heritage in the Netherlands, Java-Indonesian cultural heritage in Slovenia and Roma and African culture in Romania). It contributes to integration, community participation and strengthened local engagement, and creates social cohesion by its ability to transform the value of historical sites into socially and ecologically sustainable tourism.

Caring for and managing antiquities, places, spaces, and stories leads to an increase in the general attractiveness of a region, which by extension pays off economically through more visitors; and while this was not the intention of this project, it provides the base for the development of cultural tourism.

Partners were Drustvo Bodi svetloba (Slovenia), Stichting Interlock (Netherlands), Istanbul Medeniyet University (Turkey) and Sindicatul liber al lucratorilor din invatamant si cercetare stiintifica neamt (Romania)

Lankelly Chase increased the capacity and capability of 20 Black and racially minoritized community organisations in Manchester, to engage in and lead systems change initiatives.

The approach was underpinned by the active pursuit of social justice and equality and created spaces for dialogue to explore severe and multiple disadvantages affecting Black and racially minoritized community in Manchester. The first such social lab in the UK, it included the use of Dialogue Interviews, Learning Journeys, Storytelling, Systems Mapping, Appreciative Leadership, Open Space, World Café with 15 Black and racially minoritized social leaders. Participants identified systemic issues, learnt about systems change and the models to create transformational change. The Manchester Systems Thinking project was part of Lankelly's wider work around systems change and its attempts to rethink its role and purpose and how it operates and supports the most excluded communities in the UK. This project's learning has been shared with local, regional and national stakeholders. As part of the MEL Europe, the Erasmus+

funded project, and a follow up to the Manchester Systems Thinking project, the Manchester Systems Change project offered a series of creative learning opportunities which further fed into Ubele's vision of creating a dynamic and expanded cohort of BME social leaders. Participants took part in 11 courses through 20 fellowships in Europe. Learners enhanced their competencies and knowledge in social leadership, financial management, systems thinking, strategic planning facilitation skills, and operational activities.

The **Elevate Leadership Programme** supported two groups of Black and racially minoritized under-represented women in leadership roles within their universities. Commissioned by the University of Bristol in collaboration with the University of Bath, the University of Exeter, and University of Cardiff, funding was secured for a second cohort in 2021 which then included the University of the West of England.

Two in-person sessions were followed by online webinars, action learning groups, cross-institutional mentoring, and bespoke





resources, were invaluable tools in this transformative process. Participants were buddied up and worked on self-chosen development project to support their career development and strengthen their impact within the university. Using culturally informed methodologies like oral histories, storytelling, live capturing, and centralised voicing the programme empowered the women to reclaim their strengths and talents, acknowledge their development needs and devise action plans to meet those needs.

The programme introduced women to different leadership styles, encouraging them to identify and develop their own. It also enabled them to critically evaluate their professional position in Higher Education in order to increase their influence within their institutions.

Of the thirteen alumni in cohort two, 8 were promoted to new roles. This is in addition to those who secured new roles whilst on the programme. The other half were engaging in new opportunities and exposure to wider networks where they were making impact. Even after the programme, connections

continue to be invaluable for support in work and in life outside work. Self-care has become a real commitment and they are feeling the benefits of recognising and attending to racial trauma. They have become more visible, feeling a sense of acceptance, even if not quite inclusion, and impacting both students and colleagues. The combined result for cohorts 1 and 2 includes:

- Improvement in self-esteem and confidence for programme participants
- 25 successful job applications; secondments, salary increases and internal promotions (e.g. to Pro Vice Chancellor's Office) contributing to team cohesion and recognition for leadership approaches
- New projects introduced to the universities and increased success in research bids for participants
- The set-up of an Alumni network
- The project becoming recipient of Winner the Developing Excellent Practice Award
- Participants' active involvement in staff groups
- The universities becoming more open





to listening, learning from, and supporting structural and cultural change for inclusive environments that embrace all people of colour.

- One new business incubated and growing.
- New leadership roles e.g. working with the Race Equality Advisory Board, Keynote Speaking engagements, Contribution to staff network film, supporting the inception of the reciprocal mentoring initiative.
- Cross university networks for Early Career Scientists and nominated for awards.
- Negotiated secondment and salary increase.
- Successful £5M grant application

“

### **Caroline - Testimonial**

**I was attracted by the safe space to be frank and honest about my career experiences. I wanted to understand better the lack of representation in leadership for people of colour.**

**The benefits to the programme for me were many. I found my voice. I am more confident, increasingly started speaking up, and not feeling afraid to air my opinions. I felt uplifted and for the first-time people wanted to hear about my career experiences - warts and all. I started to realise that I had more to offer and re-commenced applying for alternative roles both externally and internally, after having previously almost given up all hope of securing a new role. This experience has galvanised me into action and taught me to never give up no matter how many times you get rejected. I also appreciated the opportunity to network with other women of colour who have helped me with my interview techniques. The action learning sets were particularly helpful for problem solving and I really miss these sessions now. More importantly, I have been sharing my journey with my two working children and helping them to navigate the workplace, as they may face similar barriers in the workplace.**

**My mentor was inspirational and actively encouraged me to strive for more as she could see I had something more to offer. As she was a successful woman of colour, I felt I could be honest, frank, and open with her. I also enjoyed the evidence-based part of the course where Peggy introduced external material supported by statistics, videos and books to support the point she was making!**

**I am now not afraid of being ‘more’ my true self in the workplace. I applied for several internal positions and secured a promotion at work after having applied for eight similar roles.**

**I am not sure the experience has impacted the University as I cannot see any tangible differences, for example in the recruitment process. I am not at a level where I can effect change, but I can influence it. I would like the University to open a dialogue with alumni participants for this purpose.**

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Funded by The GLA and Mercers Foundation, **Alagba** ('elder' in Yoruba) collaborates with players within the boroughs of Sutton, Southwark, Camden, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets, and Newham to build a pan London network of Black and Racially Minoritized-led organisations that builds capacity to develop effective work with Elders from within these communities. Each organisation is offered a small innovation fund to trial an idea at the local level, or to develop a local prototype, or pool to develop a cross-London prototype.

The project is in its early stages with roles clarified, staff in place and situational analyses for the 9 organisations completed. Reos has been contracted to lead on training and the development of the Social Labs and prototypes. Learning journeys are built in the process throughout. Creative activities planned for September this year include work 2 theatre groups, African Health practitioners, a film director, mental health practitioners and a faith organisation. Other cross organisational events are planned for early November.

Funded by [The Blue Thread](#) Ubele offered grants of up to £1000 to 10 organisations working with refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, children whose literacy learning and basic educational needs have been compromised by the lockdown and women affected by violence and abuse. The beneficiary organisations were:





In the last year we have engaged with more than 1544 people primarily from Black and racially minoritized communities through direct support and advice, designing our own events, speaking at other national events, and through newsletters and social media. We continued to support Black and racially minoritized leaders nationally, and our Erasmus+ contracts delivered 350 leadership experiences. The programmes, projects, and initiatives impact individual within organisations in improved health and mental wellbeing, professional development, and empowerment as leaders. The testimonials and case studies below from the Elevate Project, Black on Track project, and Blue Thread Funding beneficiaries bear testimony to this:

From: Dawn Dublin  
Sent: 04 July 2022 23:06  
To: Yvonne Field

Hi Yvonne,

Thanks so much for the email, donation and sharing of the link, we're thankful for all the help. I hope things are going well with you and the brilliant Ubele Initiative, which seems like it's going from strength to strength. It's really great that after all of the hard work, you and your organisation were finally recognised. Steve Conway and Yvonne Witter both speak very highly of you and I've had the good fortune of being able to attend some of the online funding workshops - such valuable resource when we were first starting up.

Thanks again for all that you do.

Director // [Black Butterfly](#)





### **Blue Thread funding beneficiary Bradford Impact Hub**

The kind donation of funding from Blue Thread was used to create a safe space at Khidmat Centres for vulnerable girls and women. Prior to the creation of this hub there was no one dedicated safe space at Khidmat Centres for vulnerable women and girls at risk to access specialist advice and support. The funding has allowed us to move other staff to different areas of the centre while our women's specialist staff now have a focused and welcoming space to work with women and girls who have been through difficult journeys of domestic violence, sexual violence, coercive behaviours, and the Criminal Justice system. The funding has allowed us to uplift and brighten the office by redecorating. We also managed to purchase new furniture and carpeting as well as have women's input and develop motivational quotes through artwork. Overall, this has given the women's hub as well as those accessing it a feel-good factor and renewed energy.

### **Blue Thread funding beneficiary STAG**

The funding was used to support our Youth Group of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children whose literacy, learning and basic educational needs had been compromised by the lockdown. In June the STAG Development Worker organised one face-to-face meetings for the group to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 and two separate trips out for a picnic, to a restaurant and ice cream parlour. 15 members of the group attended at least one of these activities. In June 2021, we asked the Youth Group members what questions they would like to ask the Mayor of London as part of the London-wide online celebration of Gypsy, Roma & Traveller History Month. Seven members of the Group contributed questions and three of these were chosen to be answered by the Deputy Mayor of London in a video played as part of the online event. (A video of the event is available [here](#) and the video of the Deputy Mayor answering STAG Youth Group members' questions starts at 1 hour and 6 minutes and 44 seconds.) In addition, an activity pack for young Gypsies and Travellers was sent out by the Youth Engagement Worker to 40 households in April 2021. The FLOW funding contributed £300 to the cost of these activities, so allowed us to buy additional materials to support the Group and encourage them to remain engaged and

“

**“Thank you so much for all your help. I was not looking at all these debts because I couldn’t see a way out and was ashamed. You’ve helped me to go through everything I owe and now I have a way forward.”**

”

provide each other with peer support and activities to encourage their involvement in education and learning.

We also used the funding to support a pilot project for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women who had been affected by violence and abuse and were struggling on low incomes. By offering five women a small amount of support with priority debts, they opened up to us about the details of their full financial difficulties and debts. We are currently working with them as a result to work through their income and expenditure, go through online debt advice processes and, where appropriate, to sign up for official debt advice. The FLOW funding contributed £200 to the cost of this pilot and all five of the women involved said it encouraged them to come forward for financial support from STAG, and to be honest about their financial situations, which they may not have done otherwise because of the stigma associated with debt in their community. One of the women supported to address her debts said:





## A note on measuring Social Impact

Notwithstanding the above and the relative ease of measuring outcomes of well-planned time specific projects, there is no simple and commonly recognized way to measure impact in the short term, as impact refers in essence, to longer term outcomes. The distinction between outcomes and impact is even more instructive when the ultimate goal is systemic change.

For Ubele, however, while results over the last year can be classed as outcomes rather than impact, there are some signs that current outcomes build on that of previous years and impact is becoming evident. For example, the outcomes of the health and wellness interventions are the immediate raised vibration of the Exhale entrepreneurs and Diaspora Kitchen viewers, improved wellbeing for those living with mental illness and culturally inclusive bereavement services. If these outcomes become habitual and are simultaneous with positive policy changes, their impact will be evidenced in better health statistics for Black and ethically minoritized

communities over time. To take another example: while the outcomes of BMC- EDP was immediate in that it strengthened the infrastructure of 12 Black and ethically minoritized enterprises in its first year, it is in the medium to longer term that profits of those enterprises will be increased and their resilience ascertained.

## Research

Ubele's research work underscored the critical role of effective leadership and governance and healthy equitable partnerships within and outside our communities. Consistent inquiry, reflection, learning and generating of new ideas through multi-stakeholder social lab and U-process approach provided spaces for both community members and service providers to look inward and beyond political correctness to facilitating open dialogue and an honest response to what they see. Ubele's promotion of responsibility taking rather than 'blaming' and holding both Black and racially minoritized organisations and service







providers accountable, assisted a diversity of stakeholders to work from their best selves. The primary choice presented by the research and other project results is one of commitment to collaboration and to painstakingly work forward.

Outcome of the research in the immediate, was confirmation of the prevalence of racial and social inequalities. The research also qualified and quantified the nuances of those inequalities and did so from the viewpoint of those at the worse ends of the inequality spectrum. The research results also pointed to specific areas of leverage, absent from previous studies that have been devoid of theoretical frames derived from the lived experience of the disadvantaged. In identifying leverage points, the research sought to advocate for input in pivotal areas that will bring faster and more sustainable results. The research outputs also serve as a baseline from which impact of interventions by Ubele and others can be measured, over time.

The impact of the above approach and the positive project outcomes have created a subtle shift in perception. The tide is

moving in the direction of the Black and racially minoritized communities being perceived as having a legitimate place at the academic research table. This is facilitated through partnerships with universities already at the table. Our first piece of research A Place to Call Home was a unique and generous collaboration with Just Space and University College London, Development Planning Unit. The real impact of Ubele's work will only be realised in subsequent policy review rounds in the fields of housing, education, employment and health.

## **Voice**

The P2E and black youth in the manual trades sector research amplified the voices and increased the visibility of BME enterprises. The negotiation of new financial products by the Black Business Matters collective also signalled that those entrepreneurs felt heard by the mainstream, some for the first time. This brought immediate business relief and a win-win situation that increased trust among the stakeholders, with the Black and racially minoritized businesses feeling the leverage of their collective power. This may

be a small step on a longer systemic journey of financial institutions making their policies and products more inclusive.

Black Rootz and RIFG also gave voice. Growers are more fully appreciative of the limitations of the individual in effecting systemic change. They are more understanding of the value of letting go to build trust. They have moved from isolated individual voices to a voice in the national food growing and entrepreneurial space. From what they have learnt over the last year they do not only feel, but know, that they can influence policy. They also know that working hard although necessary, is insufficient. Intention, skill development, consistency, and focused leadership are necessary ingredients; and these need to be tailored to the disposition of the end user.

A clear view of how the local feeds into the national, or not, and an understanding of how they can influence how the national adjusts to reflect the local, was an impactful experience for members. A realisation that the onus for racially equitable results is a symbiotic process with the onus on them as well as on national policy writers, was also an impactful lesson. The quality of their work, their unique skills, and their collective voice is their contribution. This moves them from individual and personal whispers to a collective national voice ready to respond to, and initiate conversations with national stake holders.

The Phoenix Way demonstrated the power of voice and presence at the table, a subtle or temporary systemic shift from guest to co-host. The recent Phoenix Way Report, [The Way of the Way](#), and data from community groups reveal a move towards more equitable funding distribution. Over the next few years, a unique holistic model, the Ubele Way, will be developed.

## Models

Ubele forges new ways of working. It dares to try out what has never been tried before as demonstrated through the BMC-Enterprise Development Programme, the Elevate Programme and Leading Routes Programme, to name a few. As a catalyst and infrastructure-plus organisation it not only models best practice in provision of frontline services to community members, it also advocates for and innovates new models.

Models cut across examples and identify outliers whose needs are just as important as the average. Models are in essence a distillation of successful practice and point to strategic spaces of pivot. Models are also useful tools for informing policy and addressing systemic issues. It is Ubele's observation that many of the current mainstream models are not culturally inclusive. Built into all Ubele's developmental models are inclusivity feedback loops - responsive as well as proactive. The true impact of Ubele work will be evidenced when best practice becomes the norm for the communities that we serve; and further that models are community infused and informed by robust, recent, and relevant research.





## Strategic Partnership Building

Beyond facilitating individual and organisational change, strong and effective advocacy, Ubele knows well, how best to do business with all kinds of beneficiaries and partners and the impact of our approach is reflected in the desire of our partners and funders to deepen our relationships for mutual benefit. Every partner and beneficiary are unique, and we try to meet those needs with bespoke attention. Taking care that everyone feels valued is core to our good client experience and repeat business. The number and variety of organisation willing to partner with us has increased year on year and now include:

- Access Foundation
- Erasmus+
- Greater London Authority
- Locality
- Oak Foundation
- Power to Change
- 30Percy
- Action for Race Equality
- All Inclusive
- BAATN
- BACPG
- Be the Earth
- BEO
- Black Southwest Network
- BRAP
- Brian Quavar
- Business2Business
  - “Brighter Futures” project
- Capital Growth
- Centre for Knowledge Equity
- Cohere Partners
- Community activist
- Community Led Organisations
  - Recovery Scheme (CCLORS)
- Coventry University’s Centre for
  - Agroecology, Water and Resilience
- Crop Drop
- Drustvo Bodi svetloba (Slovenia)
- Ecological Land Coop
- Efficacy EVA
- Empathy Museum
- Evidence for Equality National Survey
  - (EVENS)
- Extend Ventures
- Farming the Future
- Global Fund for Children
- Greater London Authority
- HSBC
- Imkaan
- Impact Hub Bradford



- Istanbul Medeniyet University (Turkey)
- JouvayFest Creative Collective
- JP Morgans Chase
- Kanlungan Filipino Consortium
- Kew Gardens
- Lancashire BME Network
- Landworker's Alliance
- Lankelly Chase
- Lendoe
- Levi Roots
- London Boroughs of Camden, Croydon, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark
- London Community Foundation
- London Fringe Farming Project
- Maslaha
- Mental Health Crisis Support Volunteer
- Mercers
- MUSEUMAND,
- NLCF emergency Covid-19 fund.
- NLCF.
- OrganicLea
- Oxford Real Farming 2022
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Pempeople
- Race and Health Observatory (RHO)
- Recovery Programme
- Shared Assets
- Sindicatul liber al lucratorilor din invatamant si cercetare stiintifica neamt

- (Romania)
- Social Farms & Gardens
- Social Investment Business (SIB)
- Soil Association
- South Asian Health Network
- Stichting Interlock (Netherlands)
- Sustain
- Sutton Community Farm
- Ten Years' Time
- The Bartlett Development Planning Unit
- The Blue Thread
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- The Runnymede Trust
- Universities of Manchester, Sheffield, Sussex, Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter, West of England.
- UnLtd
- Voluntary Action Leeds and Lives of Colour
- Walworth Garden

Partners, funders, and beneficiaries support Ubele because they value our vision of inclusivity and equity, and the activities and actions towards fulfilling that vision. This is reflected in some of the partner and funders' sentiments expressed below:

“

**Ubele is one of Access' key strategic sector partners in the delivery of our Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) and offering support to organisations led by those from Black and racially minoritized communities. Ubele has brought expertise and deep knowledge of the Black and racially minoritized communities' sector into EDP partnership. It has been able to reach organisations that would benefit from the programme's support'**

”



## Access

“Social Investment Business (SIB) works in partnership with Ubele to deliver the Flexible Finance grant programme. This enables Black and racially minoritized Ethnicity – led charities and social enterprises to access a blend of loan and grant funding and in doing so increasing the flow of social investment funding reaching these organisations. We also work in partnership with Ubele to deliver the Black and racially minoritized sector strand of The Enterprise Development Programme supporting charities and social enterprises to develop their enterprises and generate more income from trading.

Through working with Ubele, we disbursed over £0.5m of funding to boost growth of 3 high impact organisations through the Flexible Finance programme. On The Enterprise Development Programme, we have so far awarded funding and enterprise development support to 28 Black and racially minoritized led charities and social enterprises with a further 2 rounds still to be awarded. Ubele’s Yvonne Witter and Jacy Stewart have been instrumental in the success of the programme for this sector to date, and the work of Ubele in promoting EDP across the regions. Working with Ubele has enabled us to better understand, reach, and fund Black and racially minoritized Ethnicity – led charities and social enterprises. This has significantly increased the proportion of social investment made by SIB reaching these







organisations. In addition, in working with Ubele on the Black and racially minoritized strand of EDP, we have learnt a huge amount about the needs of the Black and racially minoritized Communities sector, the barriers they face in accessing enterprise development and social investment support and we have actively put in place criteria to enable more Black and racially minoritized led organisations to benefit from enterprise development funding and social investment.

We have just undertaken a retrospective review of the flexible finance work and we are working together to enhance the outreach work that we do together and more clearly communicate together with our target audience. We have also spoken to both successful and unsuccessful EDP applicants to understand if there are further ways, we can support Black and racially minoritized led charities and social enterprises to access funding and continue to remove any barriers that remain. We also recently spoke about our partnership with Ubele at the Good Finance Addressing Imbalance Event for Black and racially minoritized led organisations to find out more about funding and support to access social investment and enterprise development support. We will continue to learn from our partnership with Ubele and apply this learning to the design and delivery of future funds and programmes.

The partnership with Ubele on both flexible finance and EDP has been extremely beneficial to our organisational knowledge and understanding of the needs of Black and racially minoritized led organisations, has increased our reach and connection to diverse-led organisations and has informed the design and delivery of our programmes to ensure greater accessibility to the support organisations need”.

### **Social investment Business**

“Ubele has been a clear, consistent, and constructive voice in London Funders work to establish more equitable ways of funding – ensuring that injustice was tackled through our funder collaboration in response to covid-19, and in ensuring this remains on the agenda as we look to tackle the structural inequalities our communities face.

Ubele is a key strategic partner to London Funders. Its work ensured that grants awarded through the London Community Response partnership focused on equity and justice, with over 50% of the £58m in grants going to groups led by and for racially minoritized communities.



We are applying lessons for the future – ensuring Ubele and groups led by and for communities affected by injustice are at the heart of the work we are doing to develop plans for longer-term funder collaboration from the very beginning’ London Funders

We have learned from our work over the last five years that developing viable enterprise models in charities and social enterprises is a key way to build resilience. It is also a precondition of being able to utilise social investment. We are delighted to be working with The Ubele Initiative and a range of partners to further expand the EDP to the Black and racially minoritized communities sector, both to directly support dozens of organisations and to help strengthen the vital infrastructure for the sector in the longer term.”

### **The Foundation for Social Investment**

Feedback from our Lottery Grant Manager stated:

“It’s the most detailed report we have received on the programme and really has shown the great work you have done in working with Black and ethically minoritized communities.

The impact of Ubele’s work is also reflected in its increasing influence within the national policy space, the latter a necessary step towards systemic socio-economic change. Ubele completed in the last financial

year its tenure as the ‘Black and ethically minoritized’ infrastructure group for London. We were the national lead organization for the Phoenix Way, a £50M, 5-year Lottery investment for Black and racially minoritized communities. More than 20 organisations were involved in this innovative national collaborative programme consisting of grants, capacity building and leadership development. As a unique catalyst, infrastructure-plus organisation we operate to influence regional and national policy.

In the last year Ubele has also been invited to join the board of the recently established Black Equality Organisation (BEO) and is Chair of Leading Routes Advisory Committee. It is also a member of London Mayor’s EDI Strategy Group, the Reos Institute Board and the London Equity Strategic Partners Group advising on London funding with other equity groups. Between April 2021 and June 2022 members of Ubele’s leadership team have been invited to present in at least 30 public forums across the country.

Ubele is proud to be an organisation that has created an impressive local, regional, national, and international track record and delivers to its stakeholders in a manner that contributes to the systemic change that we are striving to achieve. Collective project outcomes communicate consistency, focus, and respectful partnerships. This combination is impactful in that it signals to national decision makers that Ubele is open for honest business and win-win situations.”

# FUTURE PRIORITIES



In order to transform British society into an anti-racist and equitable one that future generations would be proud to inherit, there is still much more to be done within our community organisations, with existing societal structures and practices, and within Ubele itself.

The Community Wealth Building work will continue in earnest guided by our new Agbero 2100 strategy within which it locates the commissioning of A Place from Home 2.0, a follow up to A Place from Home 1.0. Work using the Phoenix Way approach and continued development of this model into The Ubele Way, will continue to be a priority.

With an increase in our experienced and skilled staff funded with a 5-year lottery grant we now have a platform on which to secure other forms of income through consultancies, commissions as well as allowing us time and space to consider social investment

opportunities these could not only help us to branch into other areas but also contribute to creating a more sustainable organisation over the next 10 years. This core funding grant will also enable a reorganisation of our internal processes and help us maintain our reputation for high quality value driven work.

Internally we are strengthening our data management system to enable the organisation to share our learning and relevant data with our strategic partners and to inform the development of even more effective interventions across the sector. We will continue to aim high to make a major contribution within the growing eco-system of organisations led by Black and racially minoritized communities which collectively can help reduce a growing social and economic gap. Our ultimate aim remains systemic change that result in a better quality of life for Black and racially minoritized communities.

# THANKS

Ubele's achievements, the support we have been able to give to Black and racially minoritized communities, leaders and organizations, and the small strides we have made on the journey to socio-economic and racial justice during the past year would not have been possible without the organisations and partners with whom we have worked, as well as those that have funded our work.

**For this we say a sincerely heartfelt, thank you.**

**At Ubele we want to make our information available to as many as possible, please let us know how we can help with this.**

**Our Social Impact Report is also available in other languages here**

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