

The Phoenix Way Key Messaging, Draft Comms Strategy & Key Communications Deliverables August 2023

Transforming Grant Funding & Fostering Transformational Change for Black & Global Majority communities in the UK

The Phoenix Way is a community-led initiative to improve socio-economic outcomes for Black & global majority communities in the UK. This will be achieved through promoting fundamental changes in grant-making, centring the voices and experiences of those at the margins. We will also partner with key stakeholders, including third sector, corporates, and governmental organisations to shift the paradigm for our communities.

The Phoenix Way is led by The Ubele Initiative and supported by the Global Fund for Children, established in partnership with six Regional Leads. The Phoenix Way has the support of several UK funders, including The Youth Endowment Fund, the Lloyds Bank Foundation, FONDATION CHANEL and we continue to work with the National Lottery Community Fund.

1. What is The Phoenix Way?

The Phoenix Way (TPW) is a national community-led, collaborative partnership created during the Covid-19 pandemic in response to the structural inequalities which Black & global majority communities and community-led organisations face in relation to influencing and accessing grant funding in the UK. Its principal aims are to:

- Transform the relationships between funders and Black & global majority-led organisations,
- Mobilise partnerships and resources to tackle systemic racial inequalities in the UK, and
- Develop shared leadership, which actively invests in these communities, empowering them to make decisions about funding processes, priorities and allocations.

[“The Phoenix Way seeks to ensure that no community is left behind.”

The Phoenix Way will develop a pioneering model that can be replicated and scaled up to ensure that communities facing poverty, exclusion and discrimination influence decisions that impact their lives. By putting communities in the lead, The Phoenix Way seeks to ensure that no community is left behind.

2. The Phoenix Way origins

The Phoenix Fund was launched in 2020 to put racial justice at the heart of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund was devised and led by Black & global majority community leaders from across England and established with the support of [The National Lottery Community Fund](#) and [Global Fund for Children](#).

The fund was targeted at Black and racially minority-led community groups impacted by COVID-19. £2.4 million was distributed (£0.4 million in infrastructure support and £2 million in grants to 184 community groups) across all regions of England. Around 1400 applications were received, demonstrating the high need for this targeted funding opportunity.

In response to this high unmet need, **The Phoenix Way Partnership** was formed in 2021 by the community leaders who shaped the **Phoenix Fund**. TPW Partnership are building on this work by creating new processes which will support systems change. TPW partners will form the regional infrastructure for the delivery of the Phoenix Fund 2.0 in collaboration with our funding partners.

3. Aims of The Phoenix Way in 2023

The Phoenix Way exists to drive transformational change at regional and national levels by adopting an equity and social justice lens and creating learning which impacts the wider funding ecosystem and Black & global majority communities and community organisations.

The wider aims of The Phoenix Way are:

- **Raise awareness** of the unique challenges facing Black & Global Majority communities across the UK.
- **Develop strategic and innovative solutions** to address the needs faced by communities, and work with a range of stakeholders including national, regional and local government, voluntary, social enterprise and community sector leaders, corporations and community groups.
- **Mobilise flexible grant funding through The Phoenix Fund 2.0** to Black & Global Majority grassroots groups across the UK and working in their communities by developing and delivering a number of collaborative grant funding rounds designed and led by Black & global majority communities, over the next five years.
- **Actively empower** Black & global majority communities to collaborate with funders in decisions relating to funding processes, priorities, and funding allocations.

- **Challenge the funding sector** to review its grant-making processes and track record of providing funding for Black and racially minoritised communities. And to become more transparent by sharing data on funding allocations.
- **Strengthen regional Black & global majority infrastructure support organisations** by 2026.
- **Encourage and support funders** to work within a restorative justice model by transforming their systems so they are more able to respond to structural inequalities and develop a shared leadership.
- **Commit to truly equitable grant giving** across all strands of grants - from the smallest to the largest grants.

In 2023, The Phoenix Way has launched and will begin disseminating targeted funding to Black & racially minoritised community-led groups impacted by the Cost-of-Living Crisis across England. The partners will establish a regional infrastructure support to deliver The Phoenix Way's funding opportunities.

Our work programme will include the following embedded strands:

- Grant-making including final decision making
- Infrastructure Support/Capacity Building - regional and national
- Innovation/ Leadership/ Learning & Policy
- Research & Development
- Insight into racism and racialisation
- Building sustainable communities

4. The Phoenix Fund 2.0

The Phoenix Fund 2.0 aims to mobilise over £100m of investment over the next 5 years to affect transformational change for Black & Global Majority communities across the UK. In partnership with a broad range of grant makers, we will:

- **Deliver flexible grant funding** to Black & Global Majority grassroots groups across England working in their communities. We will have several grant rounds over the next five years. Some rounds will have a focus on children, women & girls, but other rounds will have a broader focus.
- **Reach our target audience by ensuring that community groups that can demonstrate 70% of their leadership, volunteers and beneficiaries are from Black & Global Majority communities.** Applications will also be open to unincorporated organisations where certain criteria are met.

- **Raise awareness** of the unique challenges facing Black & Global Majority communities across the UK. Especially how the impact of inflation and the Cost of Living Crisis are exacerbated by structural racism.
- **Invest in developing, prototyping and scaling up strategic and innovative solutions** to the issues that communities are facing, working with a range of partners including third sector government, corporations and community groups.

Round 1 (Summer 2023): £1m Emergency Grant Round for Black & Global Majority-led Community Organisations

£1m emergency grant funding round has been granted to Black & Global Majority-led community organisations who may already have or will suffer disruption to their programmes due to current inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. Successful organisations are working with young people or women & girls who are at risk.

We have supported 50 groups across the UK with grants of £20k which could be spent on utility bills, rent costs, staffing costs and any cost that will enable groups to continue delivering services in their communities.

The round received over 500 applications, around 40% of which were ineligible based on the criteria. This once again highlights the level of need for targeted funding.

5. Phoenix Way Communications & Marketing Strategy

5.1 The Phoenix Way must achieve a high level of relevance and visibility to:

- Exert pressure on policy makers, grant makers, corporates, and others. This will mobilise them to make the necessary commitment of policy changes and resources needed to achieve our broader aims around social change.
- Engage effectively with our communities - understanding their challenges, valuing their experience, and meaningfully involving them to generate and deliver solutions. We must amplify their voices in advocating for the necessary changes in policy and commitment of resources.

5.2 Key questions to consider for our audiences:

Who are our target audiences? What are their hopes, visions and ambitions?
What are the challenges, obstacles and barriers that they face?
What solutions and opportunities are offered by Phoenix way?
How do we best communicate the Phoenix Way opportunity to our audiences?
What channels? What content? What messaging?
How do we achieve maximum impact?

5.3 Broad Objectives:

- **Raise Awareness:** Increase public awareness about the challenges faced by Black & Global Majority communities. Avoiding unnecessary consultation, we can use relevant data points and case studies to frame the experience of racial inequality in society. We want to humanise these stories by giving a platform to the community organisations we will fund and their beneficiaries.
- **Foster Engagement:** Engage and mobilise all stakeholders, including Black & Global Majority community organisations, grant-making institutions, policymakers, third sector, as well as the general public to actively participate in the pursuit of equity and transformational societal change.
- **Influence Grant-Making Practices:** Advocate for and work towards inclusive and equitable grant-making practices among funding bodies, encouraging them to address systemic biases, promote diversity internally, and commit to equitable allocation of resources.
- **Empower Marginalised Communities:** Much of the inequity in grant-making may come from skills gaps in writing applications, governance issues as well as communities opting out of making applications due to a lack of belief that they can be successful. To address this we can:
 - Provide grant-readiness tool-kits, resources and training opportunities
 - Create peer networking and peer support opportunities
 - Build organisational capacity building to improve structures and governance
 - Plug-in community groups and organisations to key opportunities for funding and resources wider than the Phoenix Fund.
- **Amplify Impact:**
 - Invest in examples of best practice to be replicated and scaled up.
 - Share the success stories of grant recipients who have made an impact in their communities.
 - Gather the evidence and data from the Phoenix Way to highlight and validate the transformative impact of equitable grant making.
 - Engage key stakeholders with the Phoenix Way model inspiring bold action and fostering new innovative collaborations.

5.4 Strategies, Tactics & Deliverables:

1. Strategic Messaging:

- 1.2 **Review and Finalise Key Messaging Document** - a compelling and resonant messaging framework that highlights the importance of equity in grant making, addresses systemic inequities, and promotes inclusive practice.
- 1.3 **Tailor messaging to our key target audiences**, ensuring cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and consistency across platforms such as websites, social media, press releases, and public speaking engagements.
- 1.4 **Create Updated Brand Identity** - including The Phoenix Way and The Phoenix Fund logo, brand assets, and brand guidelines - must be engaging, vibrant and professional retaining our community roots.
- 1.5 **TPW Website** - create and build the central hub for the Phoenix Way and Phoenix Fund 2.0 – possibly two separate sites TBC... must interface well with Global Fund for Children and National Lottery Community Fund pages who will administer the application process and grants. Must include clear grants criteria and FAQs.

2. Stakeholder Engagement:

- 2.2 **Leverage Ubele's social lab process** tailored to engage and facilitate participation of Black & Global majority communities in the UK and diaspora.
- 2.3 **Develop campaign marketing plan & stakeholder analysis** - map key audiences and develop range of tactics to reach them. Include effective community outreach to ensure that we get grants out to those most in need.
- 2.4 **Develop Regional Comms strategy** - working with TPW National Leadership Group (NLG) to ensure consistency of messaging across the diverse regions of the UK.
- 2.5 **Promote Engagement & Outreach Events:**
 - Town Hall events with funders and policy makers,
 - Thematic working group sessions to leverage community expertise on key issues
 - Online funding workshops - promote and manage the delivery of public facing workshops to promote access to Phoenix Fund 2.0 and wider funding pots.
- 2.6 **Establish formal membership structure for Phoenix Way** grant recipients, community organisations, advocacy groups, and influencers to amplify messages and build the broader movement for equity.
- 2.7 **Manage stakeholder communications** - keeping all partners in the loop on developments and progress.

3. Media and Public Relations:

3.1 Create PR Campaign Plan – To ensure that our messaging reaches our core audience in the most effective way. Including:

- cultivating relationships with key media outlets, journalists, and influencers to
- securing media coverage, op-eds, interviews, and guest contributions,
- elevating TPW's message and increasing public visibility.
- focus on local, regional and national press coverage including Black & Asian press and third sector publications.

3.2 Social Media Marketing Plan

- implement design and scheduled posts across social media channels including: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok and WhatsApp/ SMS
- Email marketing plan - leverage partner email networks to gather information and promote our key messages to our audiences.
- Identify and engage relevant social media pages, influencers and communities of interest to spread the message.
- Create content which educates and inspires, disseminates key messages, shares stories of impact, and engages the public through interactive content, infographics, and videos.

4. Advocacy and Policy Influence:

- **Develop Advocacy Strategy** to implement TPW's targeted advocacy campaigns to influence grant-making policies and practices, working closely with policymakers, government bodies, and grant-making institutions.
- **Publish & amplify policy briefs**, research reports, and case studies to provide evidence-based recommendations, promoting equity in grant making and advocating for systemic change.

5. Impact Measurement and Reporting:

- **Establish metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs)** to measure the effectiveness of communication efforts and track progress towards equity goals.
- **Develop Social Impact Reporting frameworks** for TPW's impact: sharing success stories, lessons learned, and highlighting the positive changes achieved through equitable grant making.