Black Thrive Global

THRIVING FUTURES PROGRAMME

YEAR 1 ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021 TO AUGUST 2022

Global Black Thrive

Lambeth Black Thrive

Haringey Black Thrive

Birmingham Black Thrive

COMMUNITY FUND

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"The only vehicle to liberation
is building an organisation
that can empower the global
Black nation"

Kehinde Andrews

Appendices
(linked)

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Introduction

Black Thrive exists to address the inequalities that negatively impact the mental health and wellbeing of Black people. The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) Growing Great Ideas funding has enabled us to establish a Thriving Futures Collective which is coordinated by Black Thrive Global (BTG), is deepening the work that began in Lambeth in 2016 and extending Black Thrive to Birmingham (led by Catalyst4Change) and to Haringey (led by Mind in Haringey).

The ambition of Thriving Futures is that Black communities will be at the forefront of reimagining, redefining and co-creating a society where systemic racism and other oppressive systems have been dismantled and they have fulfilling lives.

Our Impact Report published in October 2022 summarises on pages 12 to 14 the progress against our Thriving Futures ambitions and provided quite a bit of detail about the work of our Research Institute and work in Lambeth. This report provides a summary of the progress towards achieving our ambitions and 2024 milestones, reflects on the learning from the first year of the Thriving Futures Collective as a whole and the prospects for transformational long-term change. Attached as appendices are the activity reports for Birmingham and Haringey for the year ended 31 August 2022.

Progress Towards Our Ambitions And 2024 Milestones

The table below shows that we have made progress on most of our programme areas. We were not expecting to make progress on all areas in the first year and we are satisfied with the overall progress, given our resource constraints. However, we made less progress than expected in Lambeth due to not recruiting to the post of Programme and Partnerships Manager for Communities.

		Good progress		Some progress		No significant progress

Programme Area	Activity Area	BTG & Overall	Birmingham	Haringey	Lambeth
Black communities driving change By 2024, we will have built a network of Black led community organisations and leaders in Birmingham, Haringey and Lambeth that have articulated the changes in system conditions that will enable Black people to thrive and will have developed sufficient tools and know-how to lead the constructive challenge of systemic rasicm.	Co-learning for Thriving Futures	Some progress	Good progress	Some progress	Some progress
	BT Assemblies	Good progress	Good progress	Good progress	Good progress
	BT Leadership Academy	Some progress	Good progress	No significant progress	No significant progress
	The Black Connections Book	Some progress	Some progress	Good progress	Some progress
Learning about thriving - knowledge construction. Dissemination and acquisition as a communal process By 2024 we will be able to see the shape of a Black-focused community Shared Measurement System which goes beyond statutory indicators to incorporate community "metrics", draws on existing research, stimulates new research and builds a shared understanding of what the real issues are and the outcomes and actions that communities want to see. This will be the foundation for decolonising the evidence landscape.	BT Dashboard & Knowledge Hub	Some progress	Some progress	Some progress	Some progress
	Building a movement to decolonize the evidence landscape	Some progress	Good progress	Some progress	No significant progress
Community-led system change By 2024 systems change in Lambeth will be documented and disseminated, we will have developed a model of systems change from a Black perspective and we will be positioned to provide thought leadership on Black issues for statutory and non-statutory sectors.	A Black-led model of systems change	Some progress	Good progress	Good progress	Some progress
	Investing in community-led change	Some progress	Some progress	Good progress	No significant progress
Strong and agile backbone By 2024 Black Thrive Global would have developed the infrastructure, tools and skills to act as a backbone of backbones and Birmingham, Haringey and Lambeth will have backbones to support their local Black Thrives.	Defining the shape of our backbones	Good progress	Good progress	Good progress	Good progress
	Developing our backbones	Good progress	Good progress	Good progress	Some progress

Our **CommUNITY Assemblies** have been successful across all Black Thrive localities and over the course of year one, we held four Assemblies. At each CommUNITY Assembly, there were representatives from the other localities to offer practical and moral support and share practice. Each was well attended by the local Black community, Black-owned businesses, statutory organisations and local stakeholders. Feedback from the community and other attendees was collected in the form of facilitated table discussions, post-it notes and vidbox's and was used by partners to shape the direction of their work.

We made early progress in identifying three overarching curriculum areas for our Leadership Academy.

Leadership of Self - the personal qualities and attributes to lead and advance race equity

Leadership of What - the skills, tools and frameworks to work effectively

Leadership of Where – the knowledge and understanding required to make change in different localities.

However, there was insufficient resource for BTG, Haringey and Lambeth to make further progress. With funding from the National Lottery's Leaders with Lived Experience Programme, Catalyst4Change was able to launch its LEx programme in Birmingham and also supported Maternity Engagement Action's Perinatal Leaders Training Programme, funded by Best Beginnings.

Work on the **Black Connections Book** has not yet commenced in earnest by the end of year one but all localities have started mapping their networks and (re)connecting with various private statutory and community-based organisations to identify potential collaborators. Haringey also began developing a website which will include a database for local Black businesses, organisations and locals to share their services and provide basic contact information.

Our ambition is to develop a UK-wide **Black Thrive Dashboard** that brings together data on Black people's outcomes across the main social determinants of health and across all life stages and a **Knowledge Hub** website that includes community metrics, narratives and Black-led community and academic research. BTG Research Institute made early progress by publishing Shared Measurement System (SMS) data for Birmingham, Haringey and Lambeth. However, the data that we needed from key areas like mental health were not available in sufficient granularity to enable us to do the analysis that we planned.

Progress has been made in Birmingham and Haringey on **building a movement to decolonise the evidence landscape** and developing a **Black-led model of systems change**, which has involved working with Black communities to start interrogating data and producing knowledge to influence systems change. Due to a lack of capacity no progress has been made in Lambeth.

Investing in community-led change - to trial models of community decision-making and grant-giving. Investment goes beyond financial resources and we will also aim to provide capacity-building support. New relationships and connections have been built and all localities have made progress towards establishing structures to understand the perspectives of communities, amplify their voices and enable communities to speak to "the system" in a coherent way. In Birmingham, this takes the form of a Consortium, in Haringey a Community Alliance, and in Lambeth a Community Advisory Board.

Defining and developing our backbones we are still developing what we need to be effective backbones for our particular contexts, guiding vision and this includes creating frameworks for supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, cultivating community engagement and ownership, mobilising resources.

Developing our backbones - We are still building out teams and developing the skills, tools and products to achieve our objectives.

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Reflection And Learning

Our ambition has always been that learning should be embedded across all our work and throughout our journey hence "Co-learning for Thriving Futures" was the first activity in the milestones that we submitted to TNLCF. We have had three awaydays of the Thriving Futures leadership team to reflect on learnings and grapple with key strategic issues and choices. The Collective has also been meeting monthly to update each other on research and activities taking place nationally and in each locality and also to share knowledge, practices and challenges. Meetings are attended by our Research Partner, Ratio and the TNLCF Growing Great Ideas Portfolio Officer, who have provided additional learnings from elsewhere and contacts that could add value to our programme.

What are the essential ingredients of Black Thrive?

There is an extent to which we are individually reflecting and learning all the time and we sometimes engage in collective sensemaking around specific issues, but we have not been sufficiently intentional or rigorous about interrogating, articulating and recording our collective learning. That said, some key learnings have emerged.

The interplay between the "DNA" of different localities and of organisations leading the work in each locality has made us reflect on what should be the core/essential ingredients of a Black Thrive in any locality and what can be variable (which may eventually become core).

Black Thrive Lambeth was the original Black Thrive established in 2016 as a Black-led organisation with systems change as its purpose and gave birth to its parent (BTG) in 2020. Catalyst4Change was established as a Black-led organisation in 2017 adopting the role of 'positive deviants' to avoid some of the familiar problems with addressing concerns related to the mental health experiences of African and Caribbean communities and the failure to synthesise evidence drawn from lived experience. Mind in Haringey is a local franchise of the national Mind charity federation formed in 1974 to provide information, advice and support to people affected by mental health problems and its chief executive for the past seven years happens to be Black.

These organisations have similar values (including centring communities) and focus on mental health in different ways, but their different origins mean that their centres of gravity are not quite the same. Similarly, all localities have the same issues in terms of less positive outcomes for Black communities, but local histories and system actors mean that there are different approaches to implementing policies and effecting change. We have articulated what we see as the essential ingredients of Black Thrive and some guiding principles for the way we work but (for the time being at least) are agnostic about everything else.

Methodology

Preparing soil, sowing seeds, and assessing what seeds grow and why, then adapting and sharing learning.

Systems Change

Ensure systems change is long-term and transformative in a way of driving outcomes and experiences that are beneficial for Black bodies in specific areas such as (but not limited to); employment, mental health, domestic violence, education, LGBTQ+ and social care.

Flexible

Recognise that systems change will look different in each locality depending on the architecture / infrastructure available and demographics of the location.

Knowledge Production

Identify knowledge production and evidence of impact as an important core feature to transforming systems.

Community Centred

Commitment to ensuring the experiences of the community are at the centre of systems change and include an intersectional approach.

We are now quite excited about the core and variable approach we have adopted and think that this will increase our learning about what is effective (and why) at creating change on different issues, at different system levels and in different contexts.

What structures are needed to influence "the system"?

Lambeth has had a Black Thrive Partnership Board of key statutory actors and community representatives since 2016 and BTG initially thought that this would be the essential vehicle for driving change in every locality. Mind in Haringey has been included in strategic local partnerships for some time and it was easy for them to establish a Partnership Board. Catalyst4Change has had more of an emphasis on supporting community organisations, social enterprises and faith groups that have a significant African and Caribbean mental health/wellbeing service user base and setting up a Partnership Board felt unnatural. BTG had not imagined how other than a Partnership Board the system could act collectively in a locality to tackle inequalities faced by Black people.

The opportunity for strategic influence came to Catalyst4Change in the form of implementing the recommendations of Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR) and

they are now adopting a critical friend role to ensure that African and Caribbean communities are driving and shaping the implementation. This has generated some questions about the ways in which systems "use" communities.

- Are we correct that large-scale system change needs to come from the community (e.g. US civil rights, UK welfare state, preventable deaths and absolute poverty in the Global South)?
- Should we assume that actors in the system are well-intentioned and, in their hearts, want the same as Black communities?
- What are the factors that lead to system behaviours that would suggest otherwise?
- To what extent can we counterbalance unhelpful system incentives?

How do we get the system to act on what we see?

We have been exploring ways to repurpose qualitative data collected by public sector institutions and this has involved reanalysis of mental health data commissioned by the NHS. Our analysis and interpretation of this data differed markedly from the analysis of systems actors as follows:

- In contrast to current models of care within secure facilities, service users locate their sense of wellbeing in the experience of 'liberation in the community' i.e. being home, close and connected to loved ones.
- Poor experiences of care can be related to infantilising and/or careless treatment in which patients are dealt with as a "tick box exercise" while positive experiences of care relate to clear communication between caring professionals, service users and their carers; compassion and empathy; and strong listening skills.
- In contrast to the system, service users see a need to move beyond 'cultural competence' and care delivered within a Western biomedical model in favour of systems change that provides choice, a range of care pathways, and "better interpretations of spirituality".

Why doesn't the system see what we see? The obvious answer is that "we don't see things as they are; we see them as we are" (Anaïs Nin). We knew that already which is why we are establishing the Black Thrive Research Institute. The issue seems to be that the system engages with Black communities in order to legitimise its existing perspectives, which raises questions about how we deploy the knowledge that we produce to build a movement that will lead to different actions.

To what extent do financial arrangements help or hinder us?

Our original intention was that each locality would have the same budget for the same things, but it soon became apparent that budget flexibility was required. Following discussion with TNLCF it was agreed that each locality should have flexibility to use their budgets in a way that works for them as long as the use of funding was broadly in line with our core aims and guiding principles.

We had also agreed that any underspend would be pooled, and the Collective would make decisions about what strategic investment would benefit Thriving Futures as a whole. At the end of year one the initial underspend of £80k (which later became £50k) was allocated to priority areas that were underfunded including the Leadership Academy, extending our partnership with Ratio, programme management for Birmingham, Black Connections Book, videography, and learning/evaluation. The process of collective decision making generated a sense of collective endeavour on the one hand but reduced local autonomy on the other. We are therefore reflecting on how we can balance this.

> In complex environments, continuous learning is required because there is no such thing as "what works" at a programme level – there is no standardised programme which is "best practice" for all times and in all places. In complex environments "what works" is the continuous process of learning and adaptation.
>
> **Professor Toby Lowe,**
> **Centre for Public Impact**

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Prospects Of Transformational Change

Our Growing Great Ideas programme has a focus on supporting transformational and long-term change. We're looking for visionary initiatives that go beyond individual organisations, and instead focus on ecologies, platforms, ecosystems, assemblages, networks, and constellations. We expect these initiatives to be generating an infrastructure through which many things are possible.

We're looking to invest in different combinations of people, communities, networks, and organisations that demonstrate an ability to seed and grow alternative systems, accelerate the deep transition of 21st-century civil society, and to learn and adapt as they go.

We feel positive about the prospects of transformational and long-term change, but we have a long way to go before we see tangible results of our efforts to date.

We have built new relationships and connections with more Black individuals and organisations as well as with key actors in statutory systems and we are improving the quality of relationships between communities and systems.

We are supporting Black individuals and communities to draw on their knowledge and strengths, to exercise agency in different ways, participate in knowledge production and influence decisions.

We are producing fresh perspectives on existing evidence and creating new evidence, which we hope will enable learning, a shift in mindset and different assumptions amongst the key actors in the systems that we are seeking to change.

We have secured additional resources for our work from statutory organisations as well as from charitable foundations and we are particularly grateful to Lankelly Chase Foundation for the unrestricted funding to BTG, without which our ambitions for a Research Institute would not have got off the ground.

We have influenced national policy on two fronts:

- Two BTG Directors have been involved for 3 years in the development of the NHS England Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF), which has been piloted in several mental health trusts, including Birmingham and Solihull, and is due to be rolled out nationally in the first half of 2023. It seeks to influence systems change in mental health and strengthens the role of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in compliance.
- In his role as President of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) BTG Director David Weaver has led the development of a bursary scheme which aims to address the underrepresentation of racially minoritised groups in the counselling and psychotherapy profession.

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Future Plans

As we move into year two, we plan to deepen our work in some milestone areas and commence work in others. Plans include:

- **Improving learning opportunities.** We wish to better log our journey and begin turning our knowledge into an approach that can be embedded by partners so that in future we can share our learning with other organisations. We are exploring the possibility of commissioning a learning partner to support us with recording our measuring, learning and evaluation.
- **Pilot Leadership Academy.** The curriculum for the Leadership Academy is based on an action learning model where participants can learn and apply hard and soft skills to effect systems change. To begin with it will be trialled internally with Black Thrive staff across all localities. The learning and feedback from these sessions will be used to inform the development of the wider external programme for the Leadership Academy.
- **Establish data clubs in each locality.** There are currently plans for data clubs to commence in Birmingham and Lambeth with the option being explored in Haringey. This approach has been co-developed with the Research Institute and Ratio and allows the community to provide additional qualitative insight that shape and determine priorities for future community-owned data work.
- **Publish research.** We plan to develop a 'Learning Centre' as part of the BTG website that

will publish the research being created across Black Thrive and the Research Institute. We hope to eventually start submitting work for journal publications.

- **Recruit vacant posts.** As part of strengthening our backbones we will be prioritising recruitment in BTL so that work can commence fully. We will also be creating additional posts in BTG (Project Officer) and BTB (Programme Manager) to help increase capacity.
- **Amending funding approach.** As previously stated in this report we will be reviewing and amending our approach to allocating funds. Moving forward we will be discussing how feasible it is to pool any underspend. We anticipate further underspend in year two and will have to consider how this can be utilised as we will be unable to take underspend forward past year three, as stated by the lottery.
- **Secure additional funding.** We plan to obtain additional funding to help support with programme activity. Currently the funding we have received from NLCF mainly covers operational costs however, to take our project areas forward we will need additional resource.
- **Black Connections Book.** Work on the Black Connections Book will commence fully in year two. We will be commissioning an expert on network maps to support us to take this work forward. This will include workshops and training that will support the community and other organisations to also benefit from its use.

> ,, (The) Black Thrive facilitation team is recognised in the system as source of information, support, intellectual input, and expertise. It was felt that this is positive, but that the broader Partnership should be developing, so that a broader range of systems actors are looked to in this way.
>
> **Sheffield Hallam**
> University Evaluation Report 2022

Acronyms & Definitions

BTB	Black Thrive Birmingham
BTG	Black Thrive Global
BTH	Black Thrive Haringey
BTL	Black Thrive Lambeth
GGI	Growing Great Ideas
MEA	Maternity Engagement Action
NLCF	National Lottery Community Fund
SLaM	South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
SMS	Shared Measurement System
Black-led	We define 'Black-led' by as when more than 75% of an organisation's Trustees and more than 50% of staff members (including senior) are Black. We also recognise organisations whose work serves and creates better opportunities for the Black community.

Finance Expenditure Breakdown

Full Year One

FYB	Budget Period 1 & 2 (September 2021 - August 2022)				
	B'ham	Haringey	Lambeth	BTG	Total
Budget	126,350	111,950	111,950	145,350	£ 495,600
Expenditure	94,694	105,493	85,770	181,106	£ 467,063
Variance	31,656	6,457	26,180	(35,756)	£ 28,537