

EXPLORING
**FUNDING, POWER
AND PARTICIPATORY
GRANTMAKING**

WITH BLACK COMMUNITIES IN
LAMBETH AND SOUTHWARK

APRIL
2024

IMPACT ON URBAN HEALTH



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The funder and the community member are often in separate categories in the philanthropy world. Power dynamics are present as the funder dictates the terms and conditions for receiving the funding while the practitioner jumps the required hoops to receive the money. An alternative approach to traditional philanthropy mechanisms is participatory grantmaking, which evolved from a confluence of grassroots practices, social justice movements, and the efforts of pioneering organisations and thought leaders. It reflects a broader movement towards democratising philanthropy and shifting power to those most affected by funding decisions. Taking this approach further, what might happen if the funder were in the room? What would it look like for the funder and fundee to make a new table where they sit together to decide where to allocate funds?

The Black Systemic Safety Fund was initiated by Impact on Urban Health¹ in July 2022. It was designed to explore participatory grantmaking with a systemic lens and utilise a unique social labs methodology. The social lab was facilitated by The Ubele Initiative and Reos Partners and involved Black and racially minoritised community experts from Lambeth and Southwark.¹ As funders, Impact on Urban Health wanted to explore how they could enable community-based experts to make effective, innovative, ambitious funding decisions. They also wanted to explore what they were learning about mechanisms for devolving decision-making and power to communities, as well as the challenges of devolving in relation to their charitable objectives.

The process spanned several months and uncovered new lessons, truths and challenges in participatory grantmaking processes. Transforming fund distribution is crucial for addressing power imbalances and historical injustices between funders and local communities. Participatory grantmaking is about sharing power throughout the entire granting cycle, including priority-setting and accountability management. For it to succeed, funders must genuinely share power and foster shared perspectives with participants. While discussing money can be emotionally charged and may create harmful dynamics among groups time to build trust and relationships beforehand is vital. The report will delve further into the challenges and insights from this process and highlight areas for further innovation and learning.



1. Impact on Urban Health employs a place-based approach in their work. This means they operate from their home – Lambeth and Southwark – where they invest, test and build up their understanding of how to improve health in cities. These learnings are then shared for learning on a global level.

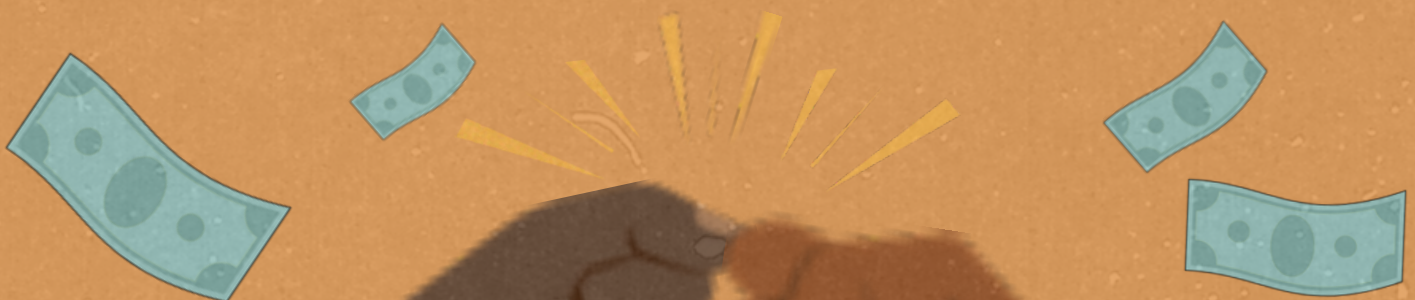
1. INTRODUCTION

In seeking to explore funding, power and participatory grantmaking with Black communities, Impact on Urban Health (IoUH) initiated a process that engaged a group of community leaders in a participatory process focused on the shared challenge of safety (lack of) for Black and racially minoritised communities in Lambeth and Southwark.²

The process, termed 'The Black Systemic Safety Fund', was designed and facilitated by The Ubele Initiative and Reos Partners using a social lab approach. It consisted of six workshops, with participant-led learning journeys, prototyping sessions, and reflective interviews in between. The overall process took 18 months and spanned from July 2022 to December 2023.

Core to the initiative has been an emphasis on centring Black and racially minoritised community leaders as experts in thinking about and addressing systemic challenges. The Black community leaders were compensated for their insights, expertise and engagement with the Systemic Safety Fund process and then given a further £500K directly to collectively develop and resource a range of interconnected prototypes, solutions and initiatives aimed at tackling the systemic barriers to safety within their local communities.


This document follows the main Learning Report and sits alongside a series of focused outputs exploring three specific themes: 'Safety', 'Funding, Power and Participatory Grantmaking', and 'Processes for Black Led Systems Change'. In this series, we highlight what was done relating to the respective focus areas, what we learned that's worth repeating, and what questions can help guide future processes.



2. Impact on Urban Health employs a place-based approach in their work. This means they operate from their home – Lambeth and Southwark – where they invest, test and build up their understanding of how to improve health in cities. These learnings are then shared for learning on a global level.


WHERE WE INVESTED

WHAT WE DID



We invested significantly in the journey, funding the **participation** of the community experts as well as in the process itself

WHAT WE LEARNED



The investment and process were appreciated by the community experts who felt that going through the process enabled direct outcomes for them, and created a participatory granting process that supported **equitable outcomes**. Being fairly remunerated was also vital to both enabling participation and conveying respect.

2. CONTEXT

// Funders tend to like accountability, clear outcomes, certainty, demonstrated value for money, a clear focus on 'charitability', management of risk, and so on. But this process is necessarily open-ended and about taking risks and challenging existing practice. So, if you work within an organisational culture that has less experience or natural affinity for that way of working, it's going to be a very anxiety-inducing process to sit with. It will feel like counterculture. And maybe even like you are part of an institutional structure that isn't equipped to deal with such big questions unless a safe space is actively created to dig deeper with colleagues. **//**

Quote from Implementing Team Reflection Session

Central to The Black Systemic Safety Fund has been an emphasis on developing novel approaches to positioning Black and racially minoritised community leaders as experts who should be at the forefront of decision-making around how to frame, address and fund systemic challenges related to safety. To support this learning, Impact on Urban Health contracted The Ubele Initiative and Reos Partners to design a process that would place £500K directly into the hands of local Black community leaders and experts.

A key part of the learning associated with this process has been to track how local experts and community leaders both participate in and fundamentally question, challenge and improve existing funding structures. This includes learning more about devolving decision-making on funding to local people. For Impact on Urban Health, key questions guiding their learning in this area include:

- As funders, how can we enable community-based experts to make effective, innovative, ambitious funding decisions?
- What are we learning about mechanisms for devolving decision-making and power to communities?
- What are we learning about the challenges of devolving in relation to our charitable objectives?

Participatory grantmaking goes beyond the mere distribution of funds; it fundamentally reshapes power dynamics by centring community expertise and lived experiences in identifying problems and solutions. This approach, which involves community experts and funders collaboratively engaging in a systems change process to determine granting priorities, fosters significant learning for all participants. It is these learnings and insights that will be explored throughout this report.

3. GUIDING METHODS AND THEORY

3.1. SOCIAL LAB METHODOLOGY

“ The only way these solutions work is when they’re developed in partnership with the people actually affected by these problems ”
Zaid Hassan, Author of The Social Labs Revolution

The Black Systemic Safety Fund adopted a social lab methodology. A social lab is an experimental process that brings together diverse stakeholders to tackle a complex social issue. In the lab, communities of experts explore the root causes of a selected issue and jointly design and test prototypes and solutions to a shared challenge – both in the lab itself and beyond. As prototypes are tested in the real world, new data and insights emerge, and solutions are refined and tested further as part of a continuous cycle of improvement.³

Since the majority of local community experts were themselves Black and racially minoritised, the social lab process differed somewhat from other labs run by Reos Partners and was adapted to meet the needs of a Black led systems change initiative. For this particular process, facilitators adopted a series of participatory methods which centred on the use of music, art, play and creativity as a means of moving through ‘stuck problems’. Within residential workshops, this involved working alongside Drew Sinclair, a multidisciplinary artist and creator with a specialism in community work.

“ What we’ve done in this Lab is quite unique and different from other multi-stakeholder processes. Often, the idea is that we work with a microcosm of the system in the room. This often means that a few minoritised voices are part of these processes. In reality, this means you often see dominant power structures still showing up in those rooms (i.e. minoritised voices not being heard, leaving the process due to a lack of a sense of belonging). I think what we’ve really done differently here is that we actually moved marginalised voices from margin to centre by working with a predominantly Black and Brown group of people. One of the underlying hypotheses, for me, that we’re testing is something along the lines of people who are oppressed by a system often know best how they actually work. Therefore, we need to centre those voices in our efforts to achieve real, systemic change. ”

Yannick Wassmer, Senior Consultant, Reos Partners

³ As Ilse Marschalek et al (2022) note, this process means social labs function according to a participatory action research methodology, providing a continuous feedback and improvement loop.

Core to the social lab methodology is an emphasis on creative, participatory, flexible and action-oriented approaches to solving complex issues. As such, social labs are:

Social

- They require a team that reflects the diversity of people directly affected by and involved in the problem at hand, and the full multi-layered reality of the system.
- What does this social aspect accomplish? Among other things, it enables greater creativity and avoids the tendency to impose top-down solutions, which rarely take advantage of the full range of knowledge—including local and informal knowledge—that can be brought to bear on a problem.
- Detailed knowledge of a system comes from living in it.

Experimental

- Complex problems are not amenable to monolithic, planned “solutions.”
- The social lab methodology supports teams to devise prototypical solutions to key social issues which can then be tried out in a cycle of consultation, experimentation, assessment, and revision.
- While messy and unpredictable, this process allows a portfolio of promising ideas to be tested and developed before too much time and money is spent on them.
- When, by trial and error, the teams have discovered what works, they can then grow these solutions with greater confidence.

Focus on root causes

- What most of us refer to as “problems” are typically symptoms. When we focus on symptoms, we produce at best a temporary improvement. At worst, we inadvertently reinforce the dynamics that are the cause of the problem.
- Through the active participation of people from every level of the system, the social lab methodology identifies and acts on root causes — thereby opening the door to real progress.

Invite dissent

- Dissent can be uncomfortable, but the social lab methodology embraces it as an antidote to groupthink and stagnation. The friction of argument and diverse positions unleashes tremendous energy.
- When skillfully managed, that energy is creative and productive. In addition, the free expression of competing and contested claims in the structured environment of the lab reduces the likelihood of confrontation outside it.

Since the majority of local community experts were themselves Black and racially minoritised, the social lab process differed somewhat from other labs run by Reos Partners, and was adapted to meet the needs of a Black led systems change initiative.

This involved drawing on the personal and professional expertise of the team at The Ubele Initiative, an African diaspora led, infrastructure plus organisation, empowering Black and racially minoritised communities in the UK, to act as catalysts for social and economic change.

3.2. OUR UNDERLYING FRAMEWORK

As part of the social lab approach, and inspired by Reos Partner's change-facilitation philosophy,⁴ Michael Hamilton (The Ubele Initiative) and Yannick Wassmer (Reos Partners), as lead facilitators of the process – adopted a series of participatory methods and facilitation approaches. These approaches centred the use of music, art, play and creativity as a means of moving through 'stuck problems' within the learning and prototyping process. Within residential workshops, this involved working alongside Drew Sinclair, a multidisciplinary artist and creator with a specialism in community work.

The participatory methods and facilitation approaches employed throughout the process were guided by Theory U, an action-research and awareness-based method for changing systems and addressing complex social issues pioneered by Otto Scharmer.⁵ While the U-theory adopted in the process can be described quite simply – and appears neat and straightforward when depicted as a diagram or shared retrospectively in a report – the reality of applying this approach was markedly different in practice.

“ Through music, art, play, and creativity we 'brought Africa into the room' for lack of better wording. I feel that this was of great importance in shaping the identity of the group, how relationships were formed... It brought an element of joy, pride, and connection that I haven't seen in many other processes that I've been part of. ”

Yannick Wassmer, Senior Consultant, Reos Partners

“ I think what we've really done differently here is that we actually moved marginalised voices from margin to centre by working with a predominantly Black and Brown group of people. One of the underlying hypotheses, for me, that we're testing is something along the lines of: people who are oppressed by a system often know best how they actually work, therefore we need to centre those voices in our efforts to achieve real, systemic change. ”

Yannick Wassmer, Senior Consultant, Reos Partners

“ Instead of the normal, straightforward way of dealing with complex issues, the U methodology allowed in-depth analysis of complex issues, and provided a holding space for participants to think deeply, reflect and develop solutions to safety issues. ”

Local Expert & Participant

4. Adam Kahane (2021), *Facilitating Breakthrough: How to Remove Obstacles, Bridge Differences, and Move Forward Together*.

Available at: <https://reospartners.com/resource-library/facilitating-breakthrough-book>

5 Otto Scharmer (2018) *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications*. Available at: <https://www.u-school.org/theory-u>

3.3. APPLYING THE U-THEORY

The U-theory was applied to The Black Systemic Safety Fund using a three-phased approach which involved systematically addressing and responding to:

1. The Internal Conditions of the Intervenor

// The quality of the intervention depends on the interior state of the intervenor //
Bill O'Brien

Rather than jumping immediately into problem-solving mode, “the U-process begins with the idea that the best predictor for the outcome of an intervention is the internal condition of the intervenor”. This means before any discussion or action can take place, the intervenor(s) in a system – in this case, the group of participants in the Black safety process – must become more aware of themselves.

In the first phase of the work, group members focus on building awareness of their strengths, limitations, areas in which they feel stuck, and what motivates them to become unstuck and move forward. Taking this approach is very much in line with principles and approaches pioneered by systems change activists and facilitators including Bill O’ Brien, Grace Lee Boggs and Adrienne Maree Brown, for example.

2. A Shared Concern with Safety

Having built individual and collective awareness, the second step of the U-process emphasises becoming subject driven – identifying and collectively working to understand ‘a lack of safety’ as the shared social problem or issue, which is complex in nature, and therefore required the development of prototypes for action.

We wanted to think about safety beyond the narrow lens of violent crime and policing, which is what tends to happen when it comes to Black communities. So the discussion in the second phase of the process was: What do we know about safety? Can we very intentionally engage in learning journeys with experts who can share different perspectives on safety? Can we consider more rigorously how other people think about and approach problems associated with safety? Who else is working on or affected by this issue that we should be talking to, and who should be informing the development of our own solutions and prototypes?

3. Actions to be Taken

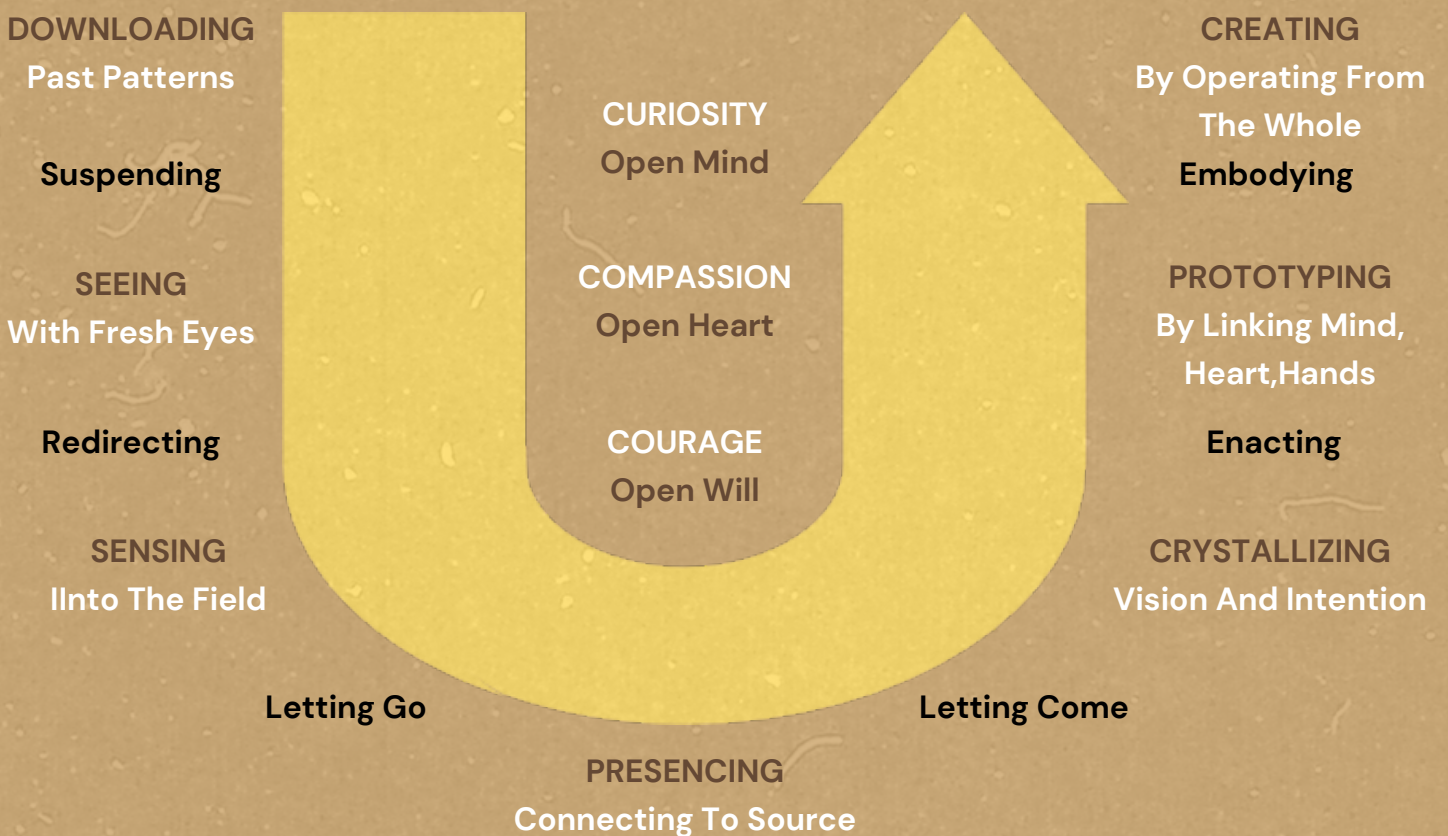
Finally, in the third step of the U-process, participants (i.e. community experts), move into taking action to address their shared challenge using the prototypes developed in earlier phases. In this phase, community experts intentionally try not to overthink the problem or their actions, focussing first on implementing solutions, and refining their approach as they move forward and new insights emerge.



// We try not to spend too much time considering what we're going to do. But recognise, we've done the work. And so let's trust our instincts, let's trust our belly. Let's trust that we are the expert on this problem. And the thing that we feel needs to happen is a thing that actually needs to happen because we have lived experience of the problem we're trying to address. //

Michael Hamilton, Director, The Ubele Initiative

THEORY U: OUR UNDERLYING FRAME




While the U-theory adopted in the process can be described quite simply – and appears neat and straightforward when depicted as a diagram or shared retrospectively in a report – the reality of applying this approach was markedly different in practice.

Michael and Yannick, as lead facilitators of the process, were required to hold the U methodology lightly by flexibly and intuitively drawing upon a range of participatory activities and moving back and forth like a pendulum between the various phases of the 'U' as they pursued emerging lines of inquiry and responded to new insights and questions thrown up by the group.



WHAT THE PROCESS WAS

WHAT WE DID




We went through a co-creative process of continuously developing a **systemic** understanding of the issue of safety, creating a strong **relational infrastructure** in the group and co-creating new **solutions**

WHAT WE LEARNED



The journey felt **messy** and was sometimes challenging




The **journey itself** was of crucial value


OUTCOMES WERE:




new insights and capabilities in **all who participated**



shared systemic understanding



changed **approaches** by all



reducing the power differential between funder and fundee

“ What we ended up with as facilitators was an experimental approach in which we were constantly saying, what's going to work in this particular space, and with this particular group now? ...A space where we could take risks and give something new a try. Where if it works, it works. And if it doesn't work, we declared it in the group quite openly. ...We had to open people up to possibility; to take people away from certainty so they could explore new mental models and ways of being. ...Even as we've got to the prototyping stage, it's not been about saying, 'This is this is the thing that's gonna work'. It's about saying, let's give this a go! ”

Michael Hamilton, Director, The Ubele Initiative

3.4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

“ Reflecting back on how we used theory-U now, it comes across like a really neat process. But in reality, it really wasn't. The safety project, for me, was a real demonstration of the iterative nature of the U process. It was really messy. We moved through it in cycles, getting lost along the road, having to revisit certain places to reconsider our sense of direction. ...There was just a constant sense of developing ideas and testing those ideas, and then coming back to the drawing board together. ...But I think that's how it's supposed to be. ”

Yannick Wassmer, Senior Consultant, Reos Partners

Critically, the open-ended and messy nature of the process also had to be factored into the design of the process, and the approach to learning. This was where the role of the project manager, Christina Oredoko at The Ubele Initiative, became especially important in holding together, facilitating and creating the container for relationships across the implementing team and local experts. While this relational role is one that might be expected of any project manager, within the context of the social lab, the additional emphasis on acting as a host, convenor and even mediator became especially apparent during moments of uncertainty or challenge as the process unfolded. As such it required balancing pragmatic and logistical considerations of project management – the desire to create order out of complexity or chaos – with the need to remain open to new directions.

“ The role of the project manager is hugely important. Within the social lab and U theory, we call the project manager the host or convenor; the person that's holding people beyond the workshops and creating a container to deal with the kinds of issues that emerge in a process like this. ...It's absolutely critical that the project manager and convenor understands the process, and sees their role as relational. Their job is to hold people through the process of experimentation, and resist getting scared about outcomes along with funders or process participants; resist the desire to take the groups into action prematurely, which is the urge many of us have. ”

Michael Hamilton, Director, The Ubele Initiative

Adding further support to the need to document and track the open-ended and process-oriented nature of the project, was the work of Debi Lewinson Roberts (independent consultant, storyteller and facilitator) and Veronika McKenzie (Reel Brit Productions), both of whom captured insights, learning and data related to the social lab along the way. Documenting the journey in itself became critical, since it allowed members of the implementing team and process participants alike to be 'on the same page' about progress made and learning surfaced across various phases of the work.

3.5. ANALYSIS APPROACH

Together, the learning partnership team took an ethnographic approach to learning work. This involved participating in and observing group processes and workshops, gathering a range of additional data, and reflecting collectively on emerging insights throughout the project. These insights were used to inform, refine, and make improvements to the work of the implementing partners – Impact on Urban Health, the Ubele Initiative and Reos Partners – over the duration of the process. The analysis took place over three key phases:

Phase 1:

Initial and in-depth analysis of interview transcripts to identify core and sub-themes and learning

Phase 2:

Critical reflection on core and sub-themes to explore issues of power and coloniality – e.g. identifying silences, the unsaid, and other elephants or sticky issues to be surfaced

Phase 3:

Sharing and facilitating a discussion of all learning and analysis with participants at the project's final workshop in order to sense-check and identify points of resonance and dissonance amongst participants

The interviews conducted with 15 participants (60%) served as the largest source of data for this report. Apart from one interviewee, the majority that shared their perspectives at interview were involved from the beginning to the end of the process, and were generally more engaged in participant-led initiatives such as learning journeys and prototyping activities. As such, the insights shared through interviews skew towards especially enthusiastic and committed participants. Less represented are the views of those who were unable or unwilling, for a range of reasons, to remain involved and engaged with the process.



4. REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS

4.1. FIRST THINGS FIRST

Overall, the social lab process – including theory U and a range of other participatory approaches adopted by the facilitation team – was received very well amongst the group, even if it was experienced as an uncomfortable and unfamiliar way of working for many in the room.

“ I wondered at first, should we be doing more? In the first residential, we all had to create group conversations, and everyone could go to different places if they wanted to pose a question to the group. I asked straight away, 'What do you think we should do with the money?' Because I really wanted to drive something concrete. And no one came to my table. No one. Not one single human being.So I thought, 'Oh, wow. Okay, everyone is flowing with this. I'm really, really going to need to let go of this need to control and get to the outcome. I'm going to need to flow with it now, too. ”

Local Expert & Participant

Within the Black Systemic Safety Fund process, local experts knew from the outset that they were signing up to be part of a process in which they themselves would be responsible for funding decisions. This requires robust and sometimes uncomfortable conversations around money and resources. Nonetheless, as part of their social lab methodology, the implementing partners opted to delay actions, decisions and explicit conversations about money until later in the process. This allowed participants in the process to first build trust, connection and a capacity to reflect together on safety before moving on to more challenging questions of resourcing.

In the earlier stages of the project, the decision to hold off on important conversations around resourcing was met with a range of different responses. For some participants, delaying the focus on money within a process intended to address participatory grantmaking was unexpected and surprising, though not unwelcome:

“ It would have been great if discussions about money had come earlier in the process; it could have had a real impact on deciding how the money might be spent. But, to me, there are two things to balance here: one is the process and how people come together and relationships are built. That is valuable in itself. But there's also the value of getting the money out the door to people. ...The challenge for us is thinking about doing something really different from what we would normally do: So this was an opportunity to get money out the door in a way that's different from what we would normally do. ”

Kamna Muralidharan, Programme Director, Impact on Urban Health

The majority, however, were happy to go along with the process and delay the conversation. In many cases, they were equally, if not more, motivated by the opportunity to connect and collaborate with other local leaders and experts and excited by the chance to exchange knowledge, insight and experience with peers. In addition, for several, the decision to delay conversations around money was a critical part of what worked about the process and something that could be discussed more explicitly as local leaders built up relationships of trust. As two process participants shared towards the end of the process, conversations about money could be tricky for local experts and leaders since they were typically placed in a position of competing over funding. One pair in the group noted, for example, that despite meeting and encountering one another many times over the years, they had never had the opportunity to collaborate prior to the social lab.

As a result, when they had heard of each other's funding success in the past, there had been a degree of instinctive questioning and competition: 'How did they get that? Why not us?' For both process participants, the lab had been an important space to disrupt this dynamic; however, it had been essential first to establish trust undermined by the instability of the local funding context. To use their own words, having conversations around money any earlier would have "felt very dangerous" and might potentially have "risked damaging their relationship".

4.2. NAVIGATING MONEY MINDSETS

In some cases, taking time before talking about money met another need: the desire to avoid uncomfortable or tricky conversations that could undermine trusting relationships built with others in the group. Several participants noted in interviews and workshops that money is an inherently emotive topic – one which can be difficult to discuss for a whole range of reasons. These include:

Competition over Funding:

Local experts and leaders were coming together in a context where they were typically pushed into competition with one another over funding and thus felt cautious about opening up and playing further into this dynamic.

Individual Trauma:

Several participants were able to be vulnerable, noting how conversations about money surfaced early childhood trauma and anxiety that had to be worked through internally in order to show up effectively to a collective conversation.

Collective Baggage and Systemic Exclusion:

Individual anxiety about money was frequently tied to the systemic issues participants in the safety process were seeking to address. For some, the challenges associated with talking about money were directly tied to their own lived experience of racial and class-based inequalities. Addressing conversations about money, therefore, required reflection and the development of a shared language to name these inequities and explore their historical roots.

Shifting Positionality & Self Concept:

Since most participants had never been in a position to make decisions around funding and were instead accustomed to pursuing it, talking about money as grant-givers for the first time required a shift in thinking and mental models. This process in itself was confronting and destabilising for some:

// When we came in we knew the project was about Black safety. ...I think what was powerful initially was that they said that you will have a large pot of money. And you will dictate how that money – which was in the region of £400K – is spent in the community. ...I was like, 'Okay... Either you lot are nuts, or you already know what you're going to do. **//**

Local Expert & Participant

For this reason, even once space was opened up to engage in questions of money, some participants were initially cautious, anxious and concerned about the pace of the process. Some shared fears of 'getting it wrong' by moving into decisions too quickly, and a few privately questioned whether they themselves had a right to hold power and make decisions on behalf of the community about the disbursement of funding. Among these groups, it was felt that more time was needed to work on safety ideas and prototypes and to build and deepen relationships:

// I think it's too early to have a pot of money to just be spent. I would use the money to further test and trial or work with us to develop a concept or a couple of concepts. I still feel there's some training – some more work time together – to work through our ideas. There is something about working through ideas together in a safe space with facilitators rather than be left alone to work out how we should spend the money. **//**

Local Expert & Participant

Considering these dynamics, we identified specific challenges and designed suitable approaches to address them:

CHALLENGE	OUR APPROACH
Local leaders often are put into dynamics of competing over funding	Design a process which avoids competition by creating shared understanding and ideas
Many people have experienced individual trauma and carry anxiety related to money	Undertake a process which provides time and space for inner work, as well as group interactions that help to move through anxiety
Systemic exclusion	Undertake a process which includes reflection on and the development of a shared language to name these inequities and explore their historical roots
Racial and class-based inequities	Provide time and space for shifting thinking and mental models to enable individuals to talk about money as grant-givers for the first time.

Incidentally, a key moment of learning and exchange from the final workshop was that funders from racially minoritised backgrounds – people who were also present in the room – could themselves relate to this anxiety. The burden of responsibility was shifted to a much wider group of people than the funders themselves, just as the process had intended. However, this shifting of the burden raises new and potentially difficult issues for Black and racially minoritised communities, including the importance of safeguarding local leaders engaged in participatory grant-making processes.

4.3. COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Moving forward with the process and making funding decisions ultimately required courageous and well-facilitated conversations. In the final workshop, it became clear that lighthearted, participatory approaches to conversations – including a facilitated exercise in which local experts playfully discussed and bargained over their shared pot of money in both smaller and larger groups – were critical tools in moving an otherwise very serious process along and out of ‘stuckness’. It was only at this later point in the process that participants were able to allocate money to the prototypes they had developed in the social lab, reflecting collectively on the fact that delaying money conversations to focus on building relationships and discussing shared concerns had been a critical first stage of the process.

“ I worry that when funders devolve funding decisions to community leaders without allowing time for trust building, they risk damaging relationships between those leaders. Where there is limited trust, differences of opinion about how money should be spent could create rifts that make it harder for those community leaders to work together, which would be disastrous and irresponsible. ”

Radhika Bynon, Portfolio Manager, Impact on Urban Health

While money decisions were arrived at fairly quickly in practice as part of the final residential, an important further stage of the process has been that participants have been able to step back and reflect on the decisions made alongside the implementing partners beyond the final workshop. This has included a protracted process between November 2023 and April 2024, which is still ongoing, and through which local community leaders and experts have been required to write up a series of proposals indicating how their prototypes effectively address safety locally (i.e. the learning and funding session in March 2024 and the preparatory proposals submitted prior to this workshop). These proposals provide an overview of each prototype and are accompanied by budgets, justifications, rationales and a loose theory of change articulating how each aims to tackle local safety issues.

7 LEARNINGS ABOUT PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

1

Participatory grantmaking is not just about who distributes funds. It is about sharing power.



2

One impactful way to share power in participatory grantmaking is to centre community expertise and lived experience in defining the problem and solutions.



A process in which community experts and funders together engage in a systems change process to identify granting priorities can generate powerful learning for all.

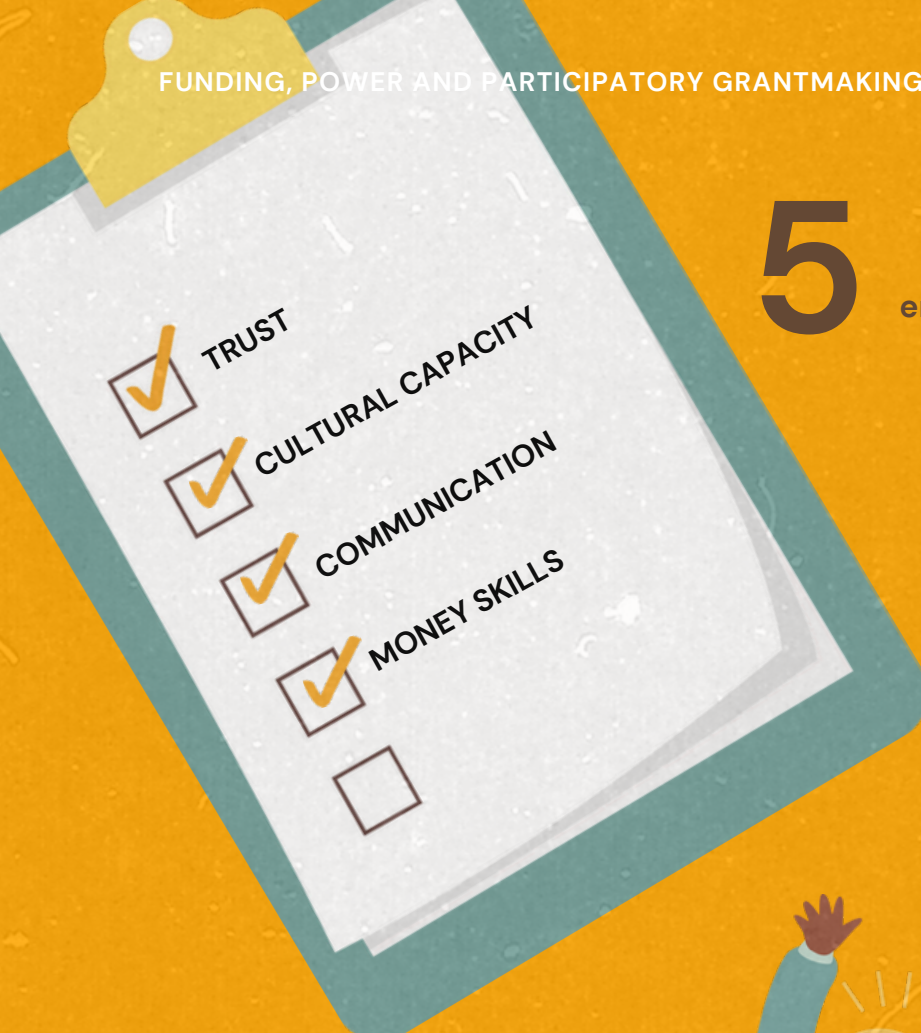
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4

Participatory grantmaking is not easy. Talking about money is emotionally charged and can even generate harmful dynamics among groups.





5

In a participatory grantmaking process it is important to take enough time to build relationships, trust, and internal capabilities before starting conversations about money.

6

Transformative participatory grantmaking requires a willingness to work in very different ways as well as an investment of time and of funds by the grantmaker.



7

Consider centring one type of lived-experience leadership (e.g. all participants being black and racially minoritized). Doing so can create a sense of ease and enable the process to move through some topics more quickly and easily, since all participants have a shared experience.



WHEN WE TALKED ABOUT MONEY

WHAT WE DID

The implementing partners opted to delay actions, decisions and explicit conversations about money until the **end of the process**

WHAT WE LEARNED

This allowed participants in the process to first build **trust, connection** and a **capacity to reflect together** on safety, before moving onto the challenging questions of resourcing.

“ We talked about the money at the very end. By this time we had enough mutual understanding and trust to easily make decisions. It was not tense. ”

5. EXPERIMENTING AND PROTOTYPING

As part of the creative and experimental social lab process participants were required to create and then test different prototypes in order to address the complex issue of safety. Given the multifaceted dimensions of safety generated by the group, process participants noted that most, if not all, Black-led organisations within Lambeth and Southwark were in some way already working to ensure the safety of Black and racially minoritised groups locally.

However, a key challenge for most remains that many local organisations are themselves placed in consistently unsafe situations through their reliance on inadequate, inconsistent and unpredictable funding. Exacerbating this scenario further has been the reality that even when these local organisations have been able to secure consistent funding, it has typically been project-focussed work and initiatives rather than core operational costs or funds which build their capacity and sustainability. Armed with this insight, process participants came up with a range of ideas to address issues of safety within the social lab.

5.1. PROTOTYPES

The first two prototypes – ‘Wakanda Assets’ and ‘Grant Funding Draft Systems’ (GFDS) – emphasised addressing the precarity, instability and lack of predictability experienced by local organisations in relation to funds. Both have thus focused on securing the safety of Black and racially minoritised communities by developing the capacity and sustainability of local grassroots and community organisations already working to address safety – i.e. working on what groups have determined to be the root causes of a lack of safety. A third prototype, ‘The Black Ofsted’, focuses on addressing racial inequality within local education systems, securing the safety of younger Black and racially minoritised students in Lambeth and Southwark. A fourth prototype around ‘Crime, Justice & Policing’ has also been proposed, and participants have reserved a portion of funding to do further thinking around how they might collectively tackle what they acknowledge to be a very important safety issue for Black and racially minoritised communities in Lambeth and Southwark.

1. Wakanda Assets

This initiative aims to address systemic barriers to safety, and has been inspired by the experiences of local leaders in the group who have lost their own resources and access to assets (e.g. community buildings) as a direct result of having critical funding withdrawn altogether or cut very suddenly, thus hampering their capacity to deliver key services which enhance the safety of Black communities.


Phase 1 of the project builds upon the foundation laid by The Ubele Initiative Agbero 2100 project. This phase focuses on extending the project's reach to four organisations in Lambeth and Southwark, which have already secured physical infrastructure. By leveraging existing assets and amplifying community capabilities, Phase 1 aims to enhance economic sustainability. The overall goal is to strengthen the longevity of community-owned and led assets in these areas, thereby fostering resilience and self-reliance.

In Phase 2, the project shifts its focus towards enhancing community safety for Black individuals residing in Southwark and Lambeth. This involves providing professional advice and practical support to address a wide range of issues, including racism, discrimination, education, employment, housing, benefits, social services, and access to culturally appropriate mental health and wellbeing support. By tackling these multifaceted challenges, Phase 2 seeks to create safer and more inclusive environments where individuals can thrive and prosper.


Through these strategic interventions, the Wakanda Assets Group aims to create vital infrastructure through practical and positive change, promoting economic empowerment, social justice, and overall well-being within Black and racially minoritised communities.

2. Grant Funding Draft Systems (GFDS)


The Grant Funding Draft Systems (GFDS) group, composed of six Black and racially minoritised leaders from Lambeth and Southwark, is dedicated to equitable grant funding. The group developed the Grant Funding Draft System (GFDS) to foster collaboration among funders and address structural weaknesses in the funding system. Core to the GFDS has been the development of a model which aims to:



Address and remedy power imbalances in the relationship between funders and local community organisations as grantees



Advance an approach that moves away from “charitable” approaches rooted in a deficit model and towards a more equal relationship rooted in partnership



Move towards an approach emphasising reparations and rectifying historical injustices over philanthropic approaches rooted in paternalistic assumptions

To meet these aims, the GFDS proposes a ranking system for grant applicants based on eligibility, impact, innovation, and sustainability. This approach aims to enhance transparency, encourage a shift in the intention of funders to invest to address social issues, promote diversity, and foster collaboration and innovation within the grant-making process.

3. The Black Ofsted

The Black Ofsted group have designed a project that aims to explore and address the systemic issues of racial injustice within the education system. It acknowledges the existence of racial disparities in education and aims to address them by implementing policies and practices that promote equality, fairness and safety.

In the next phase of the project, the group hopes to uncover issues and challenges within the education system that currently prevents Black pupils from feeling valued, respected and protected from discrimination, harassment and other forms of harm and implement the measures needed to create sustained change. This will be done in three stages:



Stage 1.

Round Table Talk Discussions



Stage 2.

Information Gathering, Analysis, Sharing and Evaluation



Stage 3.

The development and execution of a case study



Through this approach, the group will lay a solid foundation for embedding race equity in education and creating a more equitable and inclusive educational system for all. In the long term, the Race Equity in Education Project aims to bring about significant changes, including:



Culture Shift:

Transforming the prevalent white supremacy culture within educational institutions to one that is inclusive, supportive, and empowering for Black children.



Mental Models:

Shifting the perspectives and attitudes of educators, administrators, and pupils to cultivate understanding, empathy, and equity.





Institutional Practice Reform:

Revising policies and implementing institutional practices that embed trust and belonging for Black individuals, both within and outside the education system.



Thriving Black Youth:

Empowering Black pupils to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially, contributing to their overall safety, success and well-being.

4. Crime, Justice and Policing

A fourth prototype around Crime, Justice & Policing has also been proposed, and participants have reserved a portion of funding to do further thinking around how they might collectively tackle what they acknowledge to be a very important safety issue for Black and racially minoritised communities in Lambeth and Southwark.

This decision to pool funding to return to a focus on crime, justice and policing at the end of the process (i.e. in the final residential and beyond) has been an important insight in itself – Black community leaders have valued the opportunity to consider safety beyond a narrow lens inflected by whiteness and white systems but also recognise the importance and urgency of tackling issues in this arena on their own terms having had the space to be unburdened by this expectation.

6. POWER IN PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESSES

“ What I think is a problem is that we have the power structure whereby the funder determines what issue is addressed, how long it's addressed for, and who actually gets the resource to address it. What gets supported is the people who write good bids and good reports. And the funders tick the box. And that's it. Even though that doesn't necessarily mean they're going to be effective in delivering that project. ”

Local Expert & Participant

Considering the dynamics of power in participatory grantmaking processes, participants collectively identified a range of current problems within philanthropy. They highlighted the power imbalance between funders and local experts, practitioners, and communities and noted that the bureaucratic and often controlling nature of grant funding applications and reporting systems can divert time away from the essential work of community actors.

Participants observed that Black and racially minoritised communities are often seen as responsible for systemic inequities, perpetuating a deficit perspective. Additionally, they pointed out the limitations of participatory grantmaking, where funders still hold the power and set the terms of engagement, including resource allocation and timeframes.

Despite good intentions, funders often follow bureaucratic principles, requiring detailed justifications to secure and release funds. Furthermore, funding for participatory grantmaking processes around complex issues remains limited, making it challenging to address long-standing systemic inequities.

There is also an overemphasis on spending rather than acquiring community assets and wealth, which hinders genuine community agency. Finally, participants noted that there is often a reluctance to challenge existing paradigms, with the significant wealth of current funders frequently tied to histories of imperialism, colonialism, and slavery.



// You see, the thing that the practitioners resent and are really struggling with is the unfair power structure between the funders and the doers. And the fact that the funder has this pot of money, that he knows people are desperate to get. Because of that, grantees are prepared to endure whatever process or whatever challenges you put in front of them in order to get access to money. And I can tell you that, even though they may not articulate that fact very well, it is a pain point for practitioners. ...And it's not only with this fund; it's generally within philanthropy: it appears as if "white saviour has got money, they want to save poor Black people and is dangling the money, you need to do this to get access to it. **//**

Local Expert & Participant

6.1. NAVIGATING THE NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

// Do we even want this money with all these conditions attached after all is said and done? And do we have the time and energy to carry on with a new beginning and implement a new safety initiative after jumping through all these hoops when we have already given so much? **//**

Local Expert & Participant

The process of writing up the prototype proposals instituted additional accountability mechanisms into the participatory grantmaking process and served as a means of communicating outcomes of the prototyping phase to colleagues responsible for disbursing funds at Impact on Urban Health – most especially those colleagues who have not been directly involved with the social lab. However, while this move towards accountability is likely welcomed by some at Impact on Urban Health, the process has received a lukewarm and even hostile and sceptical response among some local experts and community leaders.

More critical process participants experienced the requirement to write up their prototypes as a form of additional labour signalling a lack of trust on the part of the funder. The process was intended to be a transformational one, a process that sought to equalise the funder-grantee relationship, however traditional expectations were upheld in the requirement to write up and submit prototypes.

“ The question is, are funders brave enough to look at and reimagine funding? To do a bit of navel-gazing and explore the big questions: 'What is wrong with us? What can we do better? Help us shape what we can do collaboratively? ...Because, in a sense, we, the community, are the patient. And you're telling us to go and self-diagnose the issues and help other people. ...Actually, you need to start listening to what we say about our bodies and how it works. Right now, when you prod us, and we say ouch, you keep prodding us. We've kept saying for years we can't live on two or three years of funding. Yet you keep giving us two years of funding. So you keep prodding us with the same stick. Something's got to change. ”

Local Expert & Participant

Consequently, several participants privately questioned the participatory grantmaking model employed currently. The most critical among these have characterised the final stages of the process as reflecting and reinforcing a status quo dynamic in which the funder continues to 'dangle the carrot' of funds in the face of communities, at times 'moving and shifting goal posts', making communities 'jump through hoops', and acting as 'gate-keepers' to the £500K funding advertised at the outset.

“ I think that our funder didn't have enough of an understanding of how to run an entire process like this before we got going. ...I remember there was one meeting when one of the funders actually just wanted to take the whole thing back and make the decisions for the group. And we had to say, 'Are you trusting the process?' It was clear that they weren't totally trusting of the process because they couldn't yet see the end of it or where the groups were going to arrive. So, I think that there's some learning for us to grapple with as an implementing team about making sure that the funder understands the process rather than getting scared with process participants. That the funder is willing to stick with the process and truly let go rather than wanting to take the groups into action prematurely, which is what they will intuitively want to do. Or to hold back funds if things go off in a different direction. ”

Local Expert & Participant

While this has undoubtedly been far from what was intended among those funders who have been most closely involved in the social lab process, these more critical reflections do make plain the questions and tensions around:

Accountability mechanisms:

The difficulty for funders in anticipating and predicting what accountability mechanisms will be required for the disbursement of funding in an evolving and open PGM process;

Communication:

The need to communicate transparently around how the disbursement of funds will occur at the outset of PGM processes and to be clear about any conditions attached to the disbursement of funds at the outset of PGM processes;⁶

Bureaucracy:

The changes in culture and structure that need to be made by funders wishing to pursue PGM processes, including the need to remove and/or address barriers to unnecessarily bureaucratic accountability processes (e.g. if inappropriate to remove the requirement to write up, support could be provided to process participants for writing up prototypes during the social lab and prototyping phases and/or lighter touch mechanisms could be explored including removing the emphasis on writing);

Reflection:

The process of instituting processes of reflective practice for funders who are well-intentioned but will ultimately face challenges in letting go and moving away from reproducing the status quo in ways that truly devolve decision-making and power to communities.

// Practitioners look at the issue like: in the end, some of that money you got through slavery and exploitation. So, in effect, it is our money in some ways. As practitioners, we resent this power dynamics between the funder and grantees. And that is one of the main reasons why, in our group, Reimagining Funding, we came up with this new idea: A pot is created – we call it community capital budget. Philanthropist, foundations and trusts will receive tax relief for setting up their foundations and will be required to contribute money into this pot. And the distribution of this money is done by the community. //

Local Expert & Participant

Ultimately, we learned that some participants experienced this accountability measure as being more conventional and inherently aligned with traditional power relations with funders. This shift in the power dynamic was not welcome and thus future innovation is recommended to improve this phase of the process.



⁶ There are significant concerns and questions about whether funder should have a role in determining the conditions and mechanisms for disbursing funder at all, and there are good reasons to suggest that this responsibility should be devolved entirely to communities if there is to be any real shift in the balance of power between funder and grantee.

6.2. THE FUNDER IN THE ROOM

“It's good for funders to hear directly from organisations on the front line, hearing the challenges and changes that need to be made. We need more funders in the room. We need people beyond Black and brown funders in the room because they already understand the issue; we need the white funders that don't understand the issue in the room because Black and Brown funders can only do so much. They're one individual that comes from the community.I'm pretty sure the people that were in that mix have already been saying these things, in some of those internal meetings and conversations. Nothing's changed.”

Local Expert & Participant

There were questions right from the outset about whether the funder should be part of the process at all. Having funders in the room proved critical in beginning to address and move through questions about the existing funding landscape. While many of these big questions remain unresolved – and there is clearly still much to learn in the future – it is obvious that participants and implementing partners alike value having spaces to engage directly with funders regarding the issues that matter most.

“...The magic is what happens between you and the participants in the room... And that magic was added to in this project by Radhika, and Rianna, and Kamna being in the space. ...We spent a long time, Yannick and I, talking about if we wanted them to be in this space, because it could have really unsettled the space. Because they come with a million pounds, and it's a lot of power. But actually, it was wonderful to have them there because they were so generous in the way that they fought with us. There were lots of moments where some deep and difficult conversations needed to be had, and they never skirted them. They insisted that we had them. It just made the whole project so much more rich.”

Michael Hamilton, Director, The Ubele Initiative

For many, the presence of funders in the room was seen as a central aspect of how change should be done in future, even though it felt like a new, unfamiliar and strange dynamic.

“It is really wonderful that the funders have been part of this process. ...I haven't experienced that before. Often, the funder kind of sits outside of it. And I think one of the challenges with this work is it's almost impossible to translate it into paper. I hope that the insights gathered in the process might have quite a fundamental impact on at least how the funders fund future work. For me, that might eventually translate to shifts on a systemic level or systems change level.”

Yannick Wassmer, Senior Consultant, Reos Partners

WHO PARTICIPATED

WHO PARTICIPATED



Community experts who were professionals working in domains related to safety in Lambeth and Southwark



Funders from Impact on Urban Health



All participants + organizers were **Black or racially marginalised**

WHAT WE LEARNED




Everyone in the process was from a racially minoritised background which meant people shared a deep lived experience of the issues and aligned on values



Having the **funder** and those who are often **fundees** participate in a process together, with skillful 3rd party facilitation created a rich learning journey




For many, the presence of funders in the room was seen as a central aspect of how change should be done in **future.**




“ I thought it was good for the funder to be there. I think they were able to answer questions from a funder's perspective at times. They had something to contribute in the space: their experience of funding and their frustrations. That they were trying to make changes internally... systemic changes in the way funding is distributed. And they could see problems, and they could share some of those insights with us. ”

Local Expert & Participant




“ It felt really strange to have the funder in the room, and you could tell that there was kind of trying to move it on and trying to move it to certain places. But they just had to allow us to see through the process because the journey itself in that process unlocked a lot of our dormant thinking or unknown areas of thought. ”

Local Expert & Participant




“ The funder has been amazing. They are so committed and understand the work that we're doing and have had our backs, in a sense. ”

Local Expert & Participant




“ For me the next step would be to work with multiple funders in the room... for them to experience this way of working. ...this might lead to a different way of how things are getting funded. ”

Local Expert & Participant



“ I don't think any funder could have been part of the process. Yes, it was of critical importance that they have a shared lived experience... AND I think it also required something of the people from IoUH in the way they showed up in the process. ”

Yannick Wassmer, Senior Consultant, Reos Partners



Critically, though, several noted that the funders present in the room were already known to them and people who were also from racially minoritised backgrounds. This, participants felt, meant they 'got the issues' local experts were trying to address and were aligned on values – perhaps because of their own lived experience.

6.3. INSIGHTS ON POWER AND PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

“ This project has helped us explore how we share our power as a funder – letting go of decision-making around the criteria and scope of local initiatives we invest in. In many ways the practice of letting go has been even more valuable than devolving decision-making about funding; it’s fundamentally challenged how we, as funders, understand and assign meaning to local issues. It’s allowed us to understand how local issues are experienced by the people our work is intended to support. This has meant participants have been able to speak for themselves, assigning meaning and value to local initiatives based on their lived experience. Ultimately, it’s pushed us to recognise the agency and expertise of local communities in ways that are positive. ”

Kamna Muralidharan, Programme Director, Impact on Urban Health

Learning about participatory grantmaking has been important for several reasons. Firstly, it democratises funding by empowering communities and individuals to have a say in how funds are distributed. This shift in decision-making power from a select few to a broader group promotes inclusivity in resource allocation.

Additionally, the approach enables communities to identify and interpret their own needs and priorities, ensuring that resources are allocated to relevant and meaningful projects. It also taps into local expertise and fosters innovative solutions that may not be apparent to external grantmakers.

Trust can be built between funders and the communities they serve. Communities are more likely to trust the intentions of funding organisations when they have a voice in decision-making. By involving the community in grantmaking decisions, there is a greater likelihood of achieving long-term impact, with projects more likely to be sustainable and responsive to evolving community needs.

Furthermore, participatory grantmaking can address systemic inequalities by giving marginalised and underrepresented communities a bigger voice to advance social justice and equity. Lastly, funders can gain valuable insights about the communities they serve, informing future funding strategies and priorities through the lessons learned from participatory grantmaking.



Insights from our exploration of participatory grantmaking reveal transformative potential in how funds are distributed. Addressing power imbalances and historical injustices between funders, local experts, practitioners, and communities is paramount, focusing funding on effective interventions.

True participatory grantmaking involves not only who distributes funds but also sharing power throughout the entire grant cycle, from setting priorities to managing accountability and even questioning grant mechanisms themselves. Effective participation of funders hinges on genuine power-sharing and shared perspectives with participants, fostering mutual understanding.

However, participatory grantmaking is challenging; discussions about money can stir emotional dynamics and require ample time to build relationships, trust, and internal capabilities before financial talks. Investing in local experts and process facilitation incurs costs beyond grants but yields direct and enduring outcomes.

Our process showed the power of racially marginalised groups engaging collectively, facilitating smoother discussions and quicker progress on shared understandings. The timing proved critical; sufficient upfront investment in relationships and capabilities primed the process for success, highlighting the value that participatory grantmaking brings to leaders through systemic understanding, collaborative capabilities, and new relationships. Embracing such transformative approaches necessitates significant shifts in funder practices and collaborative methodologies.

“ I don't think any funder could have been part of the process. Yes, it was of critical importance that they have a shared lived experience... AND I think it also required something of the people from IoUH in the way they showed up in the process. ”
Yannick Wassmer, Senior Consultant, Reos Partners

By the end of the process, implementing partners and participants agreed that they had met their shared objective of devolving funding decisions to local experts. However, it was also obvious that engaging in the The Black Systemic Safety Fund process had thrown up new and important insights and learnings that both challenge and go well beyond a focus on participatory grantmaking alone.

Having local leaders and experts in the room meant far deeper questions could be raised about shifting power within philanthropy (i.e. transformational philanthropy). Ultimately, this involved participants directly questioning, challenging, and reimagining approaches to funding beyond participatory grantmaking.

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARGARET PIERRE...


What's changed for you now in your relationships and conversations with funders as a result of being part of this process? And, in particular, what changes do you notice when you're talking directly to funders in the room?

// I think it's fair to say that the process we went through together has fundamentally challenged our perception of safety in the context of our relationships with funders.

I now think of safety as something to embody rather than explicitly articulate. ...The major change I see in myself due to participating in the safety lab is a repositioning of how I show up in conversations with funders.

In the past, I might have looked up to or somehow been nervous to 'show up' and stand in the authority of my knowledge and experience in a conversation with funders. But now, I see myself, and all of us that have been involved in the social lab as community leaders, as being more on an even keel with funders. I have this embodied sense that there are things that they, the funders, need to learn from us; this sense that funders need to respect what we bring to the table individually and collectively as community leaders.

When we're having conversations with funders now as part of our work on Reimagining Funding, we make sure to set up and hold the space in a way that feels safe for us, rather than simply allowing funders, as people with the money, to take over the space and set the terms by default. Having been through the social lab, I feel safer to have funding-related conversations in ways that help to shift power. I know what's required, and I feel more confident to advocate for those issues.



"I've also discovered there's a strength and safety in taking conversations to funders as a collective; as a group of leaders working to solve these problems with a united front. We've been through this process together, and we understand each other more deeply. So when we go into a conversation with funders now, we trust that it's going to be a different type of conversation.

For example, we had a conversation with an invited group of funders online during the final residential of the social lab. The tone of that conversation was very collaborative. It felt like we were on equal footing. Yes, they've got the money. But we've got the communities that they need to serve. We've got the lived experience. And we have some strong ideas about how funders can have better impact. This shift in our mindset could mean a different relationship with funders and, therefore, better outcomes for the communities we serve.

So it feels like I'm taking away from the social lab process a sense that collaboration can take place between the funders and ourselves, so long as we can do that in a way that feels safe for all of us. And that safety piece is not just important for us, but also those funders that we're engaging with as well. //

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the process has concluded, some additional questions have emerged, including: How are the outcomes different from this funding process versus a more conventional grant design? Do we think that the funding is going to impactful places? Did the process of allocating funds generate any additional or unexpected outcomes?

Having conversations about money and resources can be tricky and challenging. While adopting participatory grantmaking processes and devolving funding decisions to communities is an incredibly important step in transforming philanthropy, and funders clearly have a role to play in facilitating networks of collaboration rather than competition amongst grantees, there is still much to learn about what more can be done in partnership with Black and racially minoritised communities.

Critically, much of this learning should involve exploring ways of improving and going well beyond participatory grantmaking processes, which some process participants have perceived as not going far enough. As we work towards change, we've recognised that it is valuable to have the funder in the room. Doing so can help to transform and equalise the relationship between funder and grantee, at least relationally if not yet structurally. But this work requires that a safe enough container is formed for all present. While having more funders in the room has potential to create a bigger impact in shifting mental models and, eventually, the culture and system of funding, **it is important to ensure this work is done well.**

This might mean doing upfront work with especially white and/or class-privileged funders – or those simply drawn into reproducing existing systems – to consider new ways of being and acting before moving into conversations with communities. Part of this work might include **creating spaces for funders to reflect bravely and with curiosity on their own power and positionality** and to develop a tolerance for difficult conversations around resourcing racial justice-oriented work before moving to action.

Ultimately, the success of such interventions can only be measured by action and community perceptions of how well funders are able to **share power with those directly affected by local issues.**

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

The concepts used throughout this learning report have mostly been defined according to Sanjiv Lingayah and Nina Kellys "[A Guide to Talking About Racism](#)" (July, 2023).

Anti-racism

Anti-racism is the practice of identifying and ending racism by changing the values, structures and behaviours that enable it (Lingayah and Kelly 2023).

Black vs black

Most race scholars – especially those focused on anti-black racism – capitalise when referring to Black people of African descent. This is to distinguish people of African descent from other racially minoritised people who identify as politically black (lower case) as part of historical struggles for recognition by the state and systems (Meer 2014: 13).

Coloniality

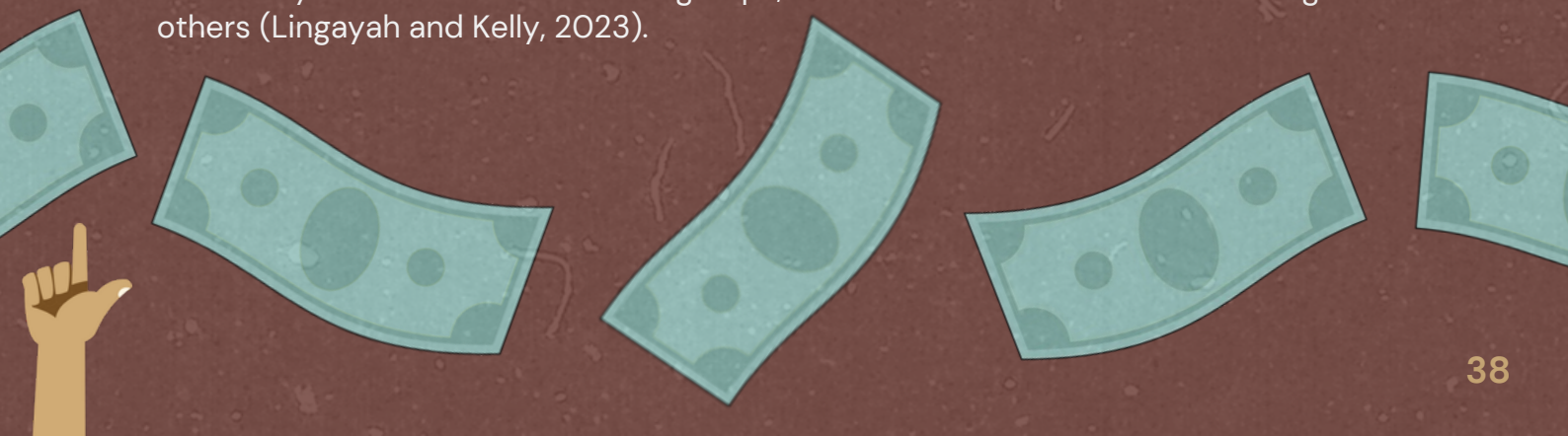
Coloniality' is a concept first defined by Aníbal Quijano and later developed by Walter Mignolo. Quijano described coloniality as an encompassing political, cultural, epistemological, and symbolic condition (Quijano, 2008). He illustrates coloniality of power as the inter-relationship between modern forms of exploitation and domination, and coloniality of knowledge as the influence of colonialism on domains of knowledge production.

Ethnicity

A related concept to 'race' is ethnicity – used to describe people who share a common history, geography and culture. Ethnicity can be self-selected, whereas 'race' is more usually imposed by others to classify groups in a hierarchy. However, ethnic categories are also socially constructed. And they can be intertwined with or become racial categories, e.g., African-Caribbean, Indian and Muslim, and can also be a basis for racist discrimination (Lingayah and Kelly, 2023).

'Race'

'Race' is a socially constructed concept used to group humans, often based on physical appearance. 'Race' was constructed as a hierarchal system of classification to identify and differentiate some groups, in order to elevate some and marginalise others (Lingayah and Kelly, 2023).



Racialisation

A dominant concept used to describe the processes through which people come to be seen as members of particular racial and/or ethnic groups (Delgado and Stefancic 2014:8; Meer 2014:125). Processes of racialisation serve as the mechanisms through which individuals are “socialised into a socio-systemic hierarchy” (Suyemoto et al. 2020), in which positive and/or negative attributes and values (i.e. stereotypes) can be ascribed to particular groups, based on their real or imagined shared characteristics, values and attributes. Dominant groups claim possession of superior qualities, corraling power and privilege in ways that uphold their interests, while asserting the inferiority of Others, who remain subservient, marginalised and oppressed (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011).

Racially Minoritised

The term ‘Minoritised’ points to the active processes of marginalisation involved in racist practice, including the unequal allocation of power, resources and status (Lingayah and Kelly, 2023).

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism describes the ways that individual (interpersonal), institutional and structural racism jointly produce harms to Black and racially minoritised people relative to white people. These systems are so deeply set that to reset them requires fundamental, transformational change (Lingayah and Kelly, 2023).

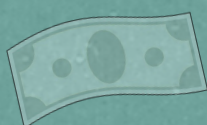




APPENDIX 2: LEARNING METHODOLOGY

Learning from the safety project was led by Ravenna Nuaimy Barker and Sarah Samaha at Reos Partners, an organisation working globally to steward systems change initiatives, and Dr Tamanda Walker, an independent consultant and researcher specialising in race, decolonial theory and Black led systems change efforts.

Sources of Learning

Key insights presented in this report were derived from:

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
<p>Four In-Person workshops</p> 	<p>A series of four in-person participatory workshops run with a group of community leaders from Lambeth and Southwark in March, May, June and November 2023. These workshops were facilitated by Michael Hamilton (The Ubele Initiative) and Yannick Wassmer (Reos Partners) and systematically documented by Debi Lewinson Roberts (independent consultant).</p>
<p>Five Learning Journeys</p> 	<p>A series of five participant-led learning journey sessions with invited experts, including David Bryan, Derek Bardowell, Dr Mahamed Hash, Dr Yansie Rolston and Dr Ariel Breaux Torres, and Dr Joe Montgomery.</p>
<p>Prototyping Sessions</p>	<p>A series of prototyping sessions within and beyond facilitated residentials in which participants developed innovative models to address Black safety issues in Lambeth and Southwark.</p>
<p>15 one-on-one interviews</p>	<p>A total of 15 one-on-one interviews that include the perspectives of 13 project participants.</p> 



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Reflection Sessions	A total of two shared reflections on learning from the project with participants – one at the final in-person workshop in November 2023, and a second following an initial draft and write up of the project learning in March 2024. Both sessions were facilitated by Dr Tamanda Walker.
Video transcripts on participant reflections	Transcripts from participant reflections on the process documented in videos on <u>the project</u> and its <u>associated methodologies and processes</u> by Veronica McKenzie of <u>Reel Brit Productions</u> .
Surveys and evaluation	Participant surveys and evaluations undertaken in the middle and at the end of the process.
Periodic reflections from the organising and implementing team	Reflections on the process by members of the Organising, Facilitation and Learning Partnership Teams at Impact on Urban Health, the Ubele Initiative and Reos Partners over the duration of the process.



APPENDIX 3: IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Impact on Urban Health

Impact on Urban Health focus on improving health in inner-city areas, which have some of the most extreme health outcomes. Alongside their vibrancy and diversity sit stark health inequalities. Impact on Urban Health, want to change this. They believe that we can remove obstacles to good health, by making urban areas healthier places for everyone to live. IoUH focus on complex health issues that disproportionately impact people living in urban areas. They partner with others to make the biggest impact. And are a part of Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation, working to support health in Lambeth and Southwark.

The Ubele Initiative

The Ubele Initiative, is an African diaspora led, infrastructure plus organisation, empowering Black and racially minoritised and Minoritised communities in the UK, to act as catalysts for social and economic change. To achieve this, they work with community leaders, groups, and organisations in the UK and beyond to strengthen their sustainability, resilience, and voice.

Ubele is taken from Swahili meaning 'the future'.

Reos Partners

Reos Partners, established 2007, is an international social enterprise that helps people move forward together on their most important and intractable issues. Reos leads processes that enable teams of stakeholders—even those who don't understand or agree with or trust one another—to make progress on their toughest challenges. Reos' approach is systemic, collaborative, and creative.

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