



# MOVING FORWARD. UNITED AND EMPOWERED RESEARCH PROJECT



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# Research Project

## MOVING FORWARD UNITED AND EMPOWERED

BE United is an arts and cultural organisation that advocates for, highlights, and celebrates Afrocentric/Caribbean Excellence in Scotland. Our Mission is to provide a platform/voice for Scotland's Afrocentric/Caribbean creative community.

The organisations exciting, recent, three part Moving Forward. United and Empowered research project, seeks to explore the experiences of this target group adapting to the new way of working online since the COVID-19 pandemic.

### PROJECT PHASES

1. Survey- 1minute survey
2. In-depth interviews and focus group
3. Creative Partnership Event

In Scotland, the impact of the pandemic on the creative arts industry has been severe. It is estimated that some creatives have lost over £15,000 of their projected income due to cancelling of shows or events<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, over 7,000 creative artists have applied to Creative Scotland's hardship funds<sup>2</sup>.

The pandemic has played a pivotal role in bringing to light the persistent systemic inequalities of race, diversity, inclusion, and lack of representation in the creative arts and media industry in Scotland. These have been stumbling blocks to minority ethnic creatives accessing funding, resources and other opportunities that would allow them to progress in the creative industry of the country.

This growing awareness has sparked activism to challenge key creative bodies and organisations to prioritise implementing initiatives that place diversity, inclusion, and representation in the visual arts, music, and live cultural events at the top of their agenda. This has resulted in various organisations pledging to provide funding and opportunities specifically targeted at minority ethnic creatives<sup>3</sup>.

1-COVID-19-Sector-Survey-final.pdf (creativescotland.com)

2-COVID-19-Sector-Survey-narrative.pdf (creativescotland.com)

3-Black Bectu Network launched as creative industries respond to BLM | Bectu

While these opportunities have been welcome, it has brought to light additional barriers to access like the lack of diverse representation on the decision-making bodies of key creative organisations, funding opportunities not being evenly and directly distributed to multi-level minority ethnic creative organisations, a lack of transparency in the funding process, and a lack of research on the experiences of Black African/Caribbean creatives in Scotland<sup>4</sup>.

The limited recent research that does exist does not focus on the full diversity of minority ethnic creatives in the country. In fact, it has further marginalised Black African/Caribbean creatives through the "BAME" grouping that unequally focuses the dearth of research on the South Asian populations<sup>5</sup>.

BE UNITED's Moving Forward. United and Empowered research project will address these gaps in research by exploring the experiences of Black African/Caribbean creatives in over 10 creative sectors in Scotland. Addressing this gap in research is important for building the knowledge base and promoting the visibility of Black African/Caribbean creatives in sectors considered to be white Scottish dominated sectors.

4-30183-CIF Access & Diversity Booklet\_A4\_Web (1)(1).pdf (creativeindustriesfederation.com)

5-Diversifying the creative: Creative work, creative industries, creative identities. Organization. 2017;24(3):281-288. doi:10.1177/1350508417690167

## MAKING RESEARCH WORK FOR US

**Published statistics reflect a lack of diversity in the creative industries in the UK, as they are failing to reflect the diversity of the populations where they are based. In 2015 the Creative Industry Federation reported that 17.8% of the UK's creative industries should be filled by minority ethnic individuals to reflect the population at large<sup>6</sup>.**

**In 2019, the highest percentage of 14% of minority ethnic workforce in the creative industry in the UK was recorded in the IT, software, and computer service industry. While the lowest at percentage of diversity was recorded at 3% in the museums, galleries, and libraries<sup>7</sup>. Showing that minority ethnic representation in various sectors of the creative industry is way below the minimum percentage.**

**Furthermore, that organisations have the responsibility to increase their efforts to diversify each sector of the creative industry.**

## MOVING FORWARD UNITED & EMPOWERED



**In Scotland, there is a lack of data on the diversity of the creative industry and a lack of existing research on the experiences of the full diversity of minority ethnic creatives in the country. Specifically, there is a lack of research on the experiences of Black African/Caribbean creative communities. The gap in statistics and knowledge prohibits key organisations from confronting the lack of representation and inclusion of minority ethnic creatives throughout the industry.**

**Furthermore, it prohibits individuals and key organisations from understanding and acknowledging the true extent of the barriers faced by minority ethnic creatives entering and progressing in the Scottish creative industry.**

**Thereby, preventing the implementation of appropriate interventions to support this target population.**



Similarly, there is a lack of transparency by some of the creative funding organisations on the number of grant applications submitted by Black African/Caribbean creative organisations and individuals, and the number of grants that have been awarded to this target group. Reporting on this data is mostly overlooked because it has not been a mandatory in some organisations. However, without this data it is difficult for this target group of creatives to meaningfully hold key creative arts organisations accountable with regards to adhering to equality and diversity protocols.

Research evidence enables policy makers and funders to channel their support at key populations who need it the most or have been consistently disenfranchised. Like Black African/Caribbean creatives in Scotland. There is a need for Black African/Caribbean creatives to participate in this research project. As it seeks to advocate for meaningful change, robust inclusion, and representation of Black African/Caribbean creatives in research and in industry.

## CREATIVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

In minority ethnic communities, culture, family, and upbringing often play a key role in the career path individuals pursue. For some Black African/Caribbean creatives, pursuing a career in the creative arts industry was discouraged by their support network due to a lack of understanding of the creative industry, lack of minority ethnic representation to show that working in this industry is a possibility for minority ethnic individuals, and the negative connotations some sectors receive due to the uncertainty of opportunities and financial security<sup>8</sup>.

A key aspect of this project is to engage with the support network of Black African/Caribbean creatives. Engaging with families of this target group is important to understanding the experiences of playing a supportive role to a Black African/Caribbean creative. Furthermore, through this project, we hope the creatives support network will learn more about how the industry works and the opportunities available to their creative family member.

It is anticipated this knowledge of the creative industry will increase familial support that will help retain Black African/Caribbean creatives in the industry and encourage more talented Black African/Caribbean individuals to pursue creative careers in Scotland. This is pivotal to increasing the footprint of this target group in the Scottish creative industry and addressing systematic inequalities that have marginalised Black African/Caribbean creatives for years.



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