

MORE THAN A MOMENT

Annual Report
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Elizabeth Lawal
A.S. Francis



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Executive Summary

More Than a Moment (MTAM) has reached its third year of activity, and this year represents a key juncture in our work, with a focus on building a beautiful, equitable and just cultural sector through innovation, collaboration. *This report seeks to examine the transformation in the culture sector from 2020 to 2023 and galvanise the West Midlands Culture sector to embrace the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. The goal is to empower the Black creative workforce and underserved communities, and to continue building a future facing a thriving cultural sector in the midst of these challenges.*

More Than A Moment was orchestrated by the Black Creative Workforce and co-created with leadership across the cultural sector. The MTAM Pledge was created with the aim of ending the systemic inequalities and challenges faced by the Black Creative Workforce in the West Midlands, and executing solutions to address them, with an overarching goal of making radical and permanent change in the creative sector, leaving no-one behind in the process. As we enter our fourth year of More Than a Moment, we recognise that the only way to permanently eradicate inequality in the cultural sector is to build a beautiful future.

Having begun as part of the large scale responses to the murder of George Floyd in May of 2020, and the reinvigoration of the social, and racial justice movement throughout the Spring and Summer of the same year in response to this, MTAM began its work in May of 2020. At that time, almost 100 creative organisations in the West Midlands signed up to the Pledge, and promised to utilise it to take practical steps toward achieving radical transformation - but what does that look like in practice?

As the second most ethnically diverse region in the country, this is a pivotal time for creatives to contribute to the sector and elevate the region on the global stage. However, over the last three years, organisations have faced consistent challenges of underfunding and limited capacity. This has resulted in a downward trend in developing the leadership and talent pipelines, and providing paid opportunities for the Black Creative Workforce, ethnically diverse, and underserved communities.

According to the 2030 Creative Industries sector vision, across the UK the Creative industries generates £108 Billion a year - and this is projected to grow. The West Midlands culture sector alone contributes £1.2 billion to the economy (GVA)¹. Therefore, there has never been a more urgent time to explore how cross-sectoral innovation can play a role in addressing funding and capacity to harness the full potential of the region's diverse creative talent.

The region has the UK's second-largest tech sector, and is also spearheading the green industrial revolution, valued at over £12 billion², and there has been a better time for

¹ https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/qhndvaqp/1_culture-economy_west-midlands.pdf

² <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/home-of-the-green-industrial-revolution/>



diverse creative led, innovation and placemaking to take centre stage. This is a critical moment for leadership across the sector to unlock broader opportunities and to unleash the untapped potential of diverse creativity in the region, but based on this year's findings have evidenced that the sector has taken a step back to pre-George Floyd levels of impact. Black, Ethnically diverse and underserved artists are missing out.

We have seen the monumental impact the sector can make in times of uncertainty and crisis, this was evidenced between 2020-2021 during Covid, when the sector came to a halt. We measured the progress during the most challenging period for culture, and highlighted the great strides that can be made when organisations make concerted and purposeful changes, which help to build a more equitable and sustainable sector for the Black Creative Workforce, and the creative workforce as a whole, to thrive in.

These initial areas of progress included, but were not limited to, the following:

2020-2021 in progress:

- £852,601 was invested into the Black Creative Workforce from the creation of new roles and funded programmes.
- 75% of organisations reviewed their senior leadership roles and established processes in order to continually drive fresh and diverse talent, thinking and vision.
- 90% of organisations eradicated the use of acronyms such as BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) and People of Colour.

Then throughout the next 12 months, MTAM again captured the progress that not only continued, but greatly increased and expanded, prompting a hopeful and energising picture of what the future could hold for the West Midlands' creative sector:

2021-2022 in progress:

- £1,734,537 invested into the Black Creative Workforce and from the creation of new roles and funded programmes.
- 84.4% of organisations have dispute resolution processes in place to ensure action is taken when issues are raised by the Black and Ethnically diverse Creative Workforce.
- 72% of organisations ensure that artistic and associated decision-making related to Black Artist's experiences are co-designed with Black People.

The period between 2022-2023 witnessed the continuation, and in many instances the deepening, of challenges that have been existent throughout the last several years, and



have marked the 21st century so far. These include the economic crisis, cost of living crisis, soaring rental prices, global conflicts, unstable domestic politics and austerity measures, and entrenched societal inequalities. In our third year of activity, it appears that these challenges have reached a head in the cultural sector, and have posed difficulties in the continuing implementation of aspects of the MTAM Pledge by creative organisations in the West Midlands.³

Despite the many challenges, there have also been areas of progress which must be acknowledged and built upon in the years to come.

Below is a brief sample of the challenges and progress made:

2022-2023 developments:

- £870,530.02 has been invested into the Black Creative Workforce through the creation of new roles and funded programmes, however this is a significant reduction of £864,007 since last year.
- 52.6% of organisations reported that the number of Black creatives they employed had increased since June 2022.
- 89.4% of organisations reported that they have dispute resolution processes in place to ensure action is taken when issues are raised by the Ethnically Diverse and Black Creative Workforce.

This year's report presents the findings of MTAM's collection of data and feedback from creative organisations based in the West Midlands, and places these results in the wider context of economic, societal and political developments, which is crucial in order to fully understand the challenges and shifts that have impacted the creative sector, and the Black Creative Workforce.

Like the last two reports before it, this MTAM report aims to explore how to unleash the power of innovation to unlock the full potential for creatives in the sector, and explore how these findings can lead to important conversations and tangible actions regarding what work must happen in order to achieve a radically transformed, and ever-transforming, Arts and Creative sector which contributes to the development of a structure that includes, inspires, encourages and benefits all sections of humanity, and the world in which we live.

The data leads to one conclusion: the cultural sector needs diverse, innovative approaches to address the challenges faced by the Black creative workforce and the broader sector that points towards alternative solutions - but is the sector ready to embrace them?

³ Creative Industries Sector Vision: A joint plan to drive growth, build talent and develop skill



The Beautiful Futures report challenges the culture sector, Black creative workforce and underserved communities to imagine beyond the limitations of 20th century ideas and practices. Now is the time for cross sectoral collaborations, now is the time to prototype what a thriving 21st century culture sector looks like in practice, through the power of experimentation and innovation.



Introduction:

We are now almost four years into the work of More Than a Moment (MTAM), after its founding in October 2020, in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, the reinvigoration of the Black Lives Matter Movement, and global demands for an end to inequality in all its forms. This historic juncture prompted many to work to untangle the inequitable systems that surround us, and work in collaboration with others to build a fairer, more sustainable, equitable and beautiful future.

The More Than a Moment pledge encourages the West Midlands Arts and Culture sector to nurture a longstanding commitment, requiring urgent, tangible and decisive action to end the systems that have worked against Black artists, creatives, and underserved artists in the creative industries and to build a sector that leaves no one behind. Organisations who sign up to the pledge, therefore vow to undertake the work needed to ensure equity, investment in, and opportunities with and for Black artists and creatives within their organisation's culture and work. In taking on this pledge, these organisations commit to transforming the culture sector and allowing talent to harness and unlock their full potential.

As the More Than a Moment - Regenerative Futures report outlined in February 2023, since the creation of the pledge, there have been various challenges felt around the UK and across the globe, which should also be reflected upon, and which have impacted the creative sector. These challenges have of course been further detrimental to those already under-served communities including Black creatives. Some of these challenges - from the growing wealth gap, regional educational attainment gaps, ongoing cost of living crisis, and global conflicts - are stark reminders that systemic transformation and struggles for positive change are imperative to the survival of our planet, people and cultural life.

There have been some encouraging shifts in the creative sector in recent years, for example it's reported that between the years 2008-2021, demands for 'Black' art (an admittedly vague label) have increased by 400%,⁴ and representation of Black and global majority communities on screen has increased by 25.6%.⁵ Despite this, the material conditions for Black creatives are still extremely worrying, with Black creatives earning on average 35% less than their white counterparts, and as reported by the Runnymede Trust, just 2.7% of the creative sector is made up of people from the global majority.⁶ It has sadly been concluded that success for Black art is often benefited by the same individuals, and does not result in more opportunities and better pay for the wider Black Creative Workforce.

⁴ Art net, 'Introducing the 2022 Burns Halperin Report 2022', <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/letter-from-the-editors-introducing-the-2022-burns-halperin-report-2227445>

⁵ Campaign, 'The BAME Screen Test: Does Britain Lack Diversity?' <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/bame-screen-test-does-british-tv-lack-diversity/1673275>

⁶ Runnymede Trust, 'Visualise: Race and Inclusion in Art Education', <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/partnership-projects/visualise-race-and-inclusion-in-art-education>



Under such difficult circumstances as the culture and creative industries and society finds itself in, it is easy to become disheartened and burnt out by the ever-growing obstacles we face, however it is only by fostering a sense of revolutionary optimism that things both should and indeed *can* change, that we will begin to see tangible progress. Here we build on last year's theme of Regenerative Futures, which emphasises that 'the future doesn't just happen, it's up to us to create it'.⁷ In that vein, this report is aimed at analysing the present situation as it pertains to the Black Creative Workforce, putting forth solutions to the problems we face and highlighting the progress that has been made, stressing there has never been a better time to truly be transformative and to innovate through these multiple intersecting challenges.

Methodology:

Within the MTAM Pledge there are five identifiable pillars which enable us to mark the progress made in each annual report. These are as follows:

1. Governance and Leadership
2. Recruitment, Pay and Workforce Development
3. Organisational Culture, Behaviours and Language
4. Programming, Audiences, Quality and Value
5. Targets and Accountability

The organisations who have signed up to the pledge, are asked to participate in a survey to assess their progress in the above areas. This process requests organisations to be reflective, hold themselves publicly accountable and be transparent with their communities. However, out of the organisations signed up to the pledge, there has been a reduction of 10 of organisations who responded to the survey and shared their data this year. Due to organisations no longer existing, limitations due to heavy workloads/small teams, lack of resources and shifts in priorities in the aftermath of 2020 there has been a decline in the number of those organisations signed up to the Pledge who are committed to participating in the survey. The 2022 report was guided by responses from 48% organisations, in comparison to just 39% this year.

Alongside the usage of data from the respondents, we are drawing on the wider context which includes considering economic, political and social trends which have an impact on the creative sectors and the Black Creative Workforce. This report is divided into five sections, reflecting the five key areas of interest for MTAM as stated above. A glossary of key terms is supplied at the end of this report for accessibility. Throughout this body of text, the term Black is used to refer to people of African and Afro-Caribbean heritage, and ethnically diverse is used as a decolonial term to refer to people of non-white European descent (African, Asian, Latin American, indigenous, and Arab descent) who constitute around 85% of the global population.

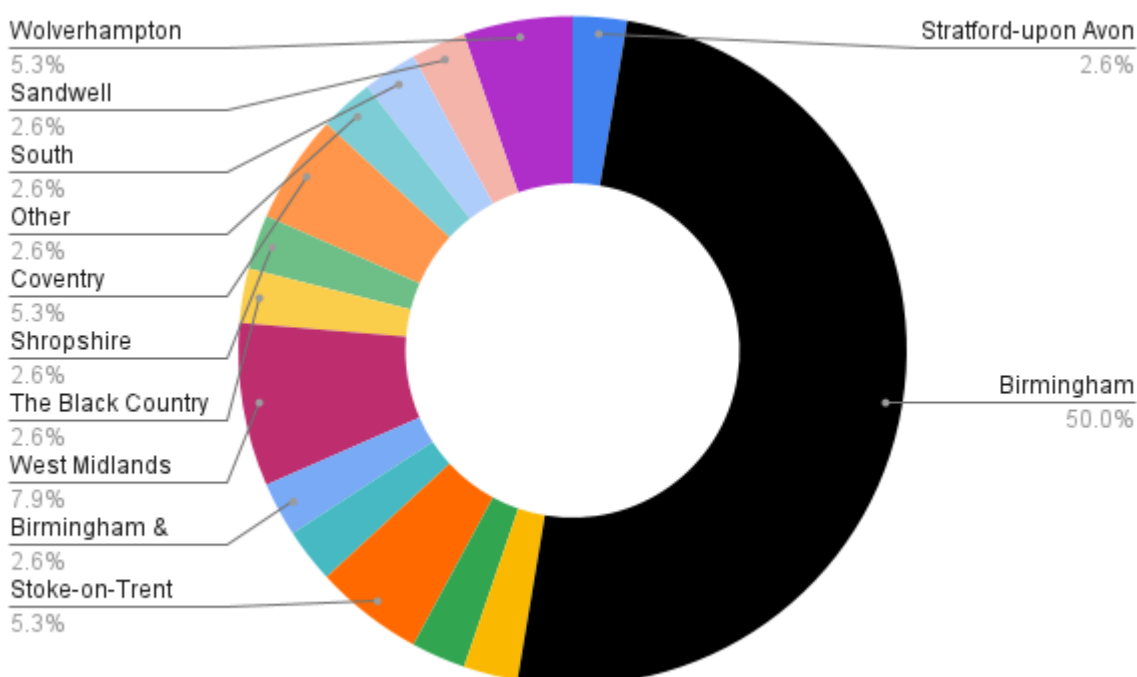
⁷ Royal Society of Arts, 'Regenerative Futures', <https://www.thersa.org/regenerative-futures>



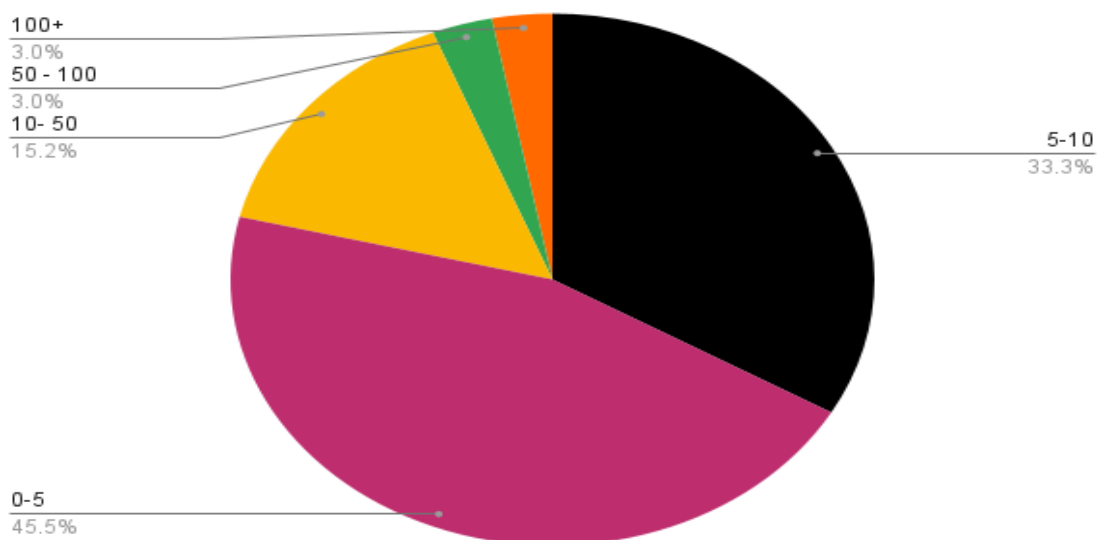
Participant Demographic Overview

This space presents a demographic breakdown of the respondent organisations, regarding the size of their organisation, locations in which they operate and the artform they are concerned with. It is presented here to outline the nuances between the organisations that have helped to provide this year's survey findings:

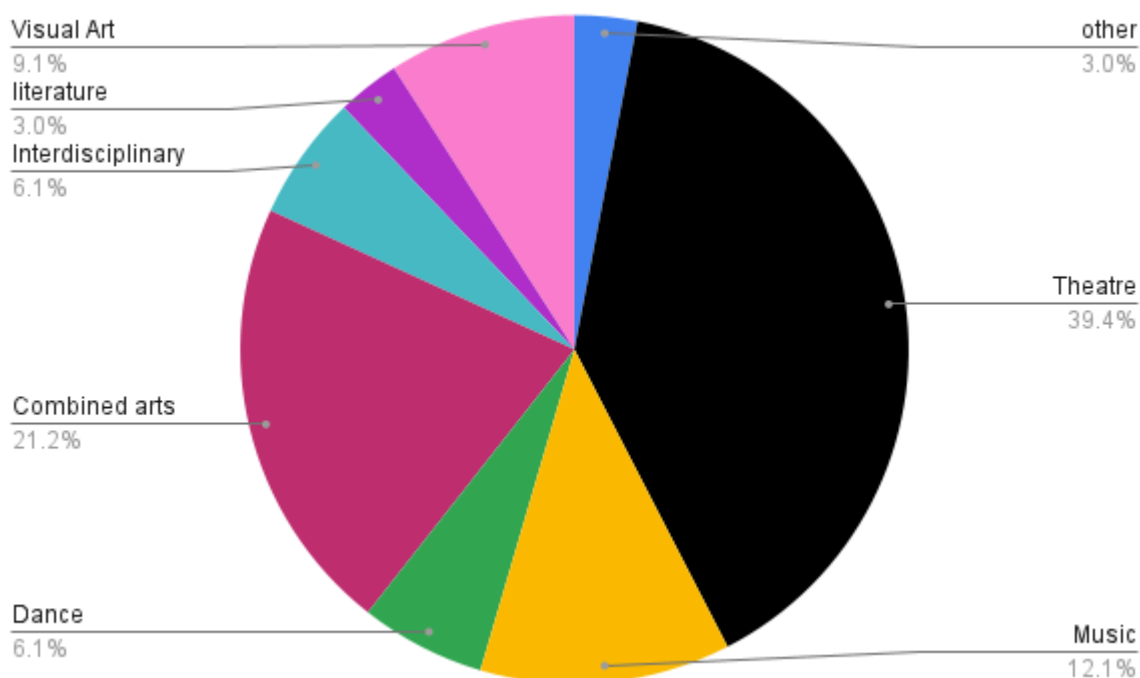
Where is your organisation based?



How many members of staff does your organisation employ?



What is the main artform of your organisation?



Governance and Leadership

"Radical change starts at the top. This is a unique opportunity to reimagine new ways of doing things at every level. We will ensure that Black people are able to prosper in every part of our organisation, at every level - and that Black people will be able to clearly envisage their future selves thriving in the arts, because people who look like them are already doing so"

- More than a Moment Pledge.

BACKGROUND:

We are living at a time when humanity faces a myriad of crises, and although they are interconnected, it often feels overwhelming to acknowledge this fact. These crises include the ever-accelerating climate emergency, persisting forms of racism, strike action, global conflicts, worsening living conditions and the cost of living crisis. Where Black creatives are concerned, these factors are compounded and make them more vulnerable to health inequality, unstable and short term work contracts, fewer employment opportunities and networks, and instances of discrimination. These factors determine that within the creative workforce they are some of the hardest hit in moments of national and global crises. For those with the power to implement change, it is essential that these opportunities for doing so are taken up. There has never been a more urgent time for governance and leadership to develop long term strategies that respond to these myriad of challenges and explore what governance and leadership models of the 21st century looks like in practice.



Alternative models of leadership

With the rise of local and global demand for transformation, this is an opportune moment for governance and leadership to exercise alternative models of leadership. *In order for all to thrive, there must be a greater effort to eradicate systems currently in place which perpetuate systemic inequalities, therefore organisations must prioritise transparency at a governance and leadership level and lower the barrier of access to leadership.*

The gap between leadership and talent has never been greater, and whilst artists are facing the multiple intersecting barriers to opportunities, the sector has reported that their biggest barrier to developing and sustaining long term relationships is the lack of time, funding, capacity and resources.

This calls to question - who is developing the leaders of the future? And How can the sector close the gap? Black and Underserved artists are shifting to new models of leadership, which explores community oriented visions of collective leadership and empowering creatives and sharing leadership responsibilities horizontally within artistic collectives and skills sharing based on mutual aid in order to continue to develop work within the sector.

This is taking place on a local and international scale.

CASE STUDY: MEOW WOLF USA

Meow Wolf's journey began in 2008 as a loose collective of artists and musicians struggling to find opportunities in New Mexico. Driven by a shared passion for experimentation and pushing the boundaries of art, they created their first immersive installation, "The Due Return," in an abandoned warehouse.

The success of this initial project laid the foundation for their signature blend of art, technology, and storytelling, and paved the way for their transformation into a full-fledged company.

Economic Growth for their region

Meow Wolf's success has had a significant impact on the Santa Fe economy. The company has created hundreds of jobs, revitalised a formerly neglected area of the city, and generated millions in tourism revenue. Their commitment to local sourcing and partnerships with other businesses has further strengthened the community's economic fabric.



Economic opportunities

Balancing the desire to address systemic and racial inequalities and financial planning can go hand in hand. According to the Mckinsey Diversity matters Even More report, over the duration of 10 years, diverse leadership teams continue to be associated with higher financial returns⁸. Organisations must continue to prioritise this in the short, medium and long term, taking responsibility for both implementing and demonstrating the changes they wish to see. This requires Governance and Leadership to examine, re-imagine and re-design what it takes for the workforce to thrive by building closer relationships with the creative workforce and artists.

Accountability

For those in positions of leadership and governance, there is also the added responsibility of ensuring any identified areas requiring urgent change are acted upon, and that the action taken is meaningful and embedded across the culture of the workforce. As levels of trust are starting to decrease across the sector. Within organisations, those in positions of governance and leadership have the power to direct the general activities and preoccupations of the wider workforce, as well as oversee the maintenance of existing structures, and therefore shift toward new ones.

The sector is well positioned to lead the charge in horizontal, collaborative, peer to peer led leadership structures. However this requires radically listening to the needs of artists within the sector.

It is also true that in times of great crises, Arts and culture are even more important for communities to continue pushing forward for transformation, as Toni Morrison surmised: 'This is precisely the time when artists got to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal.'⁹

⁸ Mckinsey & Company, 'Diversity Matters Even More'<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/diversity%20matters%20even%20more%20the%20case%20for%20holistic%20impact/diversity-matters-even-more.pdf?shouldIndex=false>

⁹ Toni Morrison, quoted in KUAF, 'Art as a tool of liberation', <https://www.kuaf.com/local-podcasts-stream/2021-10-20/art-as-a-tool-of-liberation>



CASE STUDY: THE LAUNDROMAT PROJECT (NEW YORK)

The Laundromat Project advances artists and neighbours as change agents in their own communities. They envision a world in which artists and neighbours in communities of colour work together to unleash the power of creativity to transform lives. They make sustained investments in growing a community of multiracial, multigenerational, and multidisciplinary artists and neighbours committed to societal change by supporting their artmaking, community building, and leadership development.

Model:

The LP founder, Bed-Stuy resident Risë Wilson, left the corporate sector to build a life around art and community service.

Risë's original idea for The Laundromat Project was to meet people where they already were and use art as a tool for turning strangers into neighbours. A belief in creativity as a powerful means of self-determination—and a keen desire to redraw the lines between art maker and art consumer, art as luxury and art as necessity—led Risë to the laundromat: “No matter what was happening in the economy, people had to do their laundry, and this was a kind of de facto public space.”

The idea of a laundromat as a primary place for engagement has expanded over time. It now serves as a metaphor for a variety of settings in which artists and neighbours transform their lives and surroundings. Their programming has evolved to take place in community gardens, public plazas, local cultural organisations, and other places where people gather.



The MTAM pledge laid out key areas of focus for organisations to implement radical change from the top down and bottom up:

Principles:

- The leadership of our organisation will own accountability for driving positive change and banning tick box attitudes to equality, diversity and inclusion. Instead we will track and act on data to ensure faster and long-lasting progress.
- Have representation from Black professionals on our Board, within decision-making conversations throughout our organisation, and in all areas of our practice.

KEY FINDINGS:

91% of organisations reported that they have a policy in place to combat racial discrimination within the workforce. **This represents an increase of 6% since the last annual survey, which found that 84% of organisations had a policy in place to combat racial discrimination in the workplace in 2022, in comparison to 69% of organisations in 2021.** For those organisations who did not report having such a policy, their explanations below suggest that they are either in the early stages of development, or are embedded in other anti-discrimination policies:

“We have developed an Anti-Racism Vision, Mission and Action statement. We have begun internal discussions with the entire company about the development of a Racial Safeguarding Policy”

- Organisation no. 10

“Not specifically, it is included in our Equal Opps, Bullying & Harassment policies and our Code of Conduct. Rules about racial discrimination are the same as rules about discrimination based on other protected characteristics”

- Organisation no. 30

“It forms a part of a lot of policies”



- Organisation no. 37

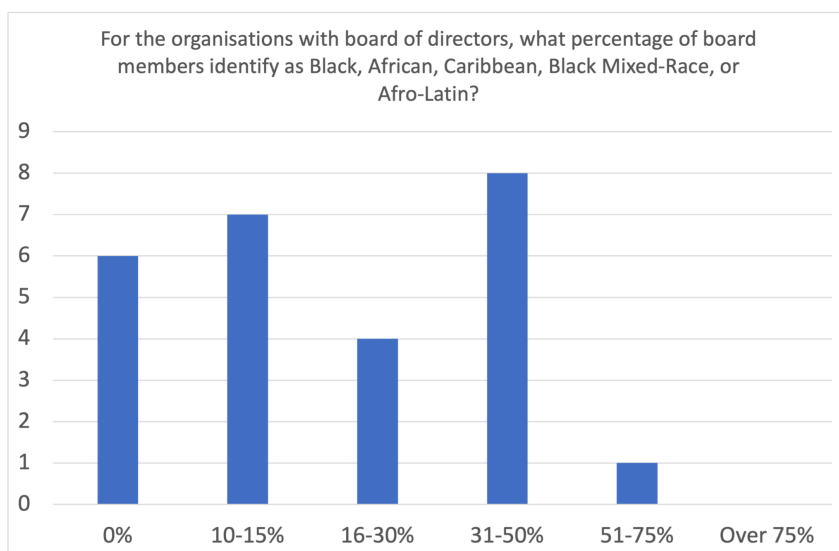
While written policies are fundamental steps in committing to radical change in the workplace, it is the responsibility of those in leadership positions to ensure the policies are exercised practically and become a pillar of the workplace culture. Measurements of this include training provided by the organisation for their workforce, as well as reporting systems and procedures used for dealing with instances of discrimination.



The data received this year presents a worrying picture of regression. **For example, in this year's survey just 50% of respondents stated that they've had training since June 2022 to tackle racial discrimination, in comparison to last year's report that indicated 64.4% of organisations had done so within a 12 month window.** Alongside this, 76% of organisations declared they have a Zero-Tolerance Policy for Racial Discrimination - here it is important to state that such a policy is required under the Equality Act of 2010, and if organisations do not adhere to this they can be found in breach of the law.

39% of organisations declared they have an Anonymous Reporting Mechanism for Incidents. For those organisations that do not have such a system in place, it is recommended that they urgently work on designing a reporting system that protects the identity of the reporter and those involved in the incident, and allows space for transparency to raise issues without repercussions.

Another key responsibility for those in positions of leadership, is the task of capturing, monitoring, assessing and openly communicating data regarding representation, progression of the Black Creative Workforce. **This area has seen some progress with 50% of organisations reporting that they have such a system, in comparison to 47% last year.** Although it is a steady increase, more work is required by those still without a data capturing system in place. Without one, organisations will find it difficult to track progress, consider any areas that require improvement, and generally consider the experiences and wellbeing of the Black creative workforce.



One area which highlights a setback in the creative sector, is Black representation within an organisation's Board of Directors. **Last year's survey found that 73.3% of respondents had between one and three people on their board who identify as Black. This year, just 67.7% of organisations with a Board of Directors had Black representation.** One aspect of progress worth highlighting, is that for the majority of organisations with Black representation, they had between 31-50% of Black Board members. This suggests that those **organisations who commit to having better representation in leadership, are excelling in doing so, and can be used as positive models for other organisations.**

Therefore, it is important to create spaces that welcome collective and community oriented opportunities for feedback, iteration and implementation, and to co-design systems that work well for everyone, with the core aim of building a thriving culture sector. In order to achieve this ambition at a governance and leadership level, there must be a reinforced effort to:

- 1) Recognise harmful practices such as worker exploitation, this is defined as '*Labour exploitation is the abuse of people in the workplace for profit. But its impact is devastating for victims; psychologically, physically, emotionally and financially.*' In the culture sector an example of this is unpaid consultation, exploiting creative and intellectual property without credit or fair remuneration.
- 2) Address wealth inequality by designing policies for transparent pay structures and fees, and developing fair opportunities for progression or professional development across the workforce. This starts by ending unpaid labour in the sector, developing volunteer opportunities for those who have the economic capacity to afford it, or programs that aim to address the skills gap with a guarantee of paid opportunities at the stage of design.
- 3) Identify and address and eradicate all forms of racism, marginalisation and ableism within the workforce, through education and accountability.



- 4) The West Midlands is driving cross-sectoral innovation, therefore now is a time to build a board that reflects that, with Black, Ethnically diverse and underserved talent representation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Organisations should schedule regular training opportunities at least once every 12 months.
- Assessment of how representative an organisation's board of directors and leadership figures are of the organisation's workforce, of the local area and the diverse makeup of the UK.
- Anti-racist policies and statements should be a practical outcome of any training training/workshop activities, if an organisation does not have an existing policy.
- Develop governance and leadership programs with tangible outcomes for up and coming talent.

CONCLUSION:

This year has provided many challenges for organisations in the creative sector, and many organisations have not prioritised creating positive change and building policies, practices and structures from the governance and leadership levels in comparison to the previous year. Despite that, for those organisations who *do* have Black representation in leadership, they are demonstrating a positive approach, with the majority of organisations containing between 31-50% of Black individuals.

In addition to this, there is a need to engage the entire collective in discourse around building structures in the workplace, by utilising non-hierarchical modes of decision-making practices, mobilising the entirety of an organisation. It is the duty of those in governance and leadership to ensure this is properly exercised in the workplace, and all staff have the opportunity to participate in moulding the organisation's ethos.



Recruitment, Pay and Workforce Development

Background:

The aftermath of the pandemic has sparked years of industrial action, with striking workers across sectors, demanding fair pay, better working conditions and contractual improvements. This general context leads us to consider to what extent creatives have been impacted. Due to financial constraints and rising rental prices, some Black creatives have reported having to make tough decisions such as moving out of urban areas which impacts their access to creative work, and even having to leave the creative sector altogether.¹⁰ In 2019 it was found that Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities were the furthest behind on pay and labour force participation, earning 15-16% less than their white counterparts.¹¹ Taking into account that Black creatives are on average earning even less (35%) than their white counterparts in the same industry, we can determine that they will be some of the hardest hit by the worsening economic situation, and require urgent support from the creative sector. The overarching question to consider here is, how are organisations responding to this? Are they ensuring fair recruitment practices and opportunities, decent competitive wages, and generally equitable treatment in the workforce?

With the injection of funding for innovation in the region, there has never been a better time for organisations, freelancers and collectives to design workforce development programmes that respond to the multiple intersecting challenges of our time. This surge in collaborative spirit offers an alternative lifeline for the sector, injecting fresh energy and unlocking the immense potential of Black creatives and historically underserved creatives. However, the data shows that the sector is regressing, but what are the impacts of these missed opportunities?

Research by Mckinsey & Company demonstrated that organisations with robust global majority representation at leadership level are 33-36% more likely to outperform their peers in profitability.¹² Alongside this, closing the pay gap could translate to a 30% increase in the average salary of Black women, and women from ethnically diverse backgrounds. What's known as the 'unconditional' pay gap is caused by disparities in groups of peoples' occupations and the seniority of their position.¹³ Therefore, pay disparity cannot be addressed without also addressing career progression and the pipeline from entry level positions to senior leadership. Where recruitment is concerned,

¹⁰ Ayla Angelos, "Creativity thrives when we feel safe": How is the rental crisis affecting creative practices?,"

<https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/rental-crisis-and-creativity-thematic-creative-industry-130623>; see also: Ben Quinn, 'Artists in the UK Public Sector making far below minimum wage, survey finds', <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2023/mar/12/artists-in-uk-public-sector-making-far-below-minimum-wage-survey-finds>

¹¹ Mckinsey & Company, 'Race in the UK workplace: the intersections/experience', <https://www.mckinsey.com/bem/our-insights/race-in-the-uk-workplace-the-intersectional-experience/>

¹² | Mckinsey & Company, 'Race in the UK workplace: the intersections/experience', <https://www.mckinsey.com/bem/our-insights/race-in-the-uk-workplace-the-intersectional-experience/>

¹³ Ibid.



it has been well proven that Black workers will on average have to apply for more jobs than their white counterparts in order to successfully obtain employment. As such, fairer recruitment practices are needed to ensure an equitable application and interviewing process.

The MTAM pledge outlines the following elements for creative organisations to practise:

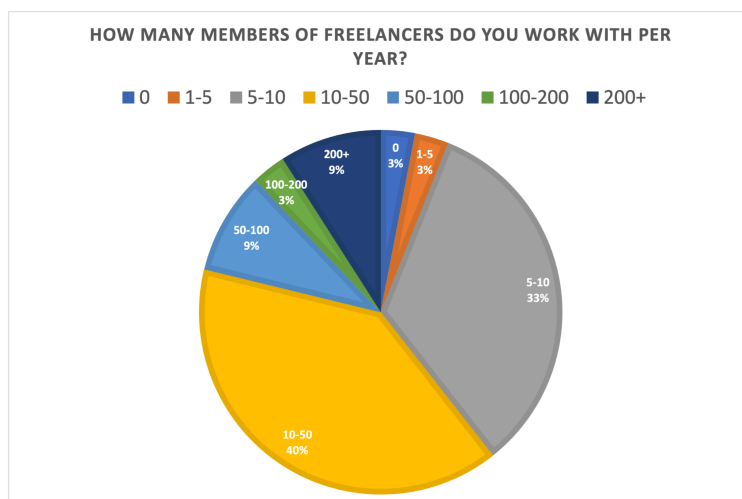
- Ensure fair representation of Black candidates for employment, contracts, commissions and procurement; and ensure fair and equitable pay for Black employees, freelancers and consultants appointed to these roles.
- Commit to increasing representation in all areas of our workforce, at all levels.
- Demonstrate our commitment to career development and artistic development in the Black creative workforce through all of our processes.

KEY FINDINGS:

From 2020-2021, the arts council invested £ 154,252,274 to the region, and in the following year (2021-2022) the region saw a further increase of £91,028,435. This trend continued in 2022-2023 with an additional £86,361,062 being invested in the region.

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Between 2021-2022, organisations had doubled their impact in regards to direct investment in the Black and Ethnically Diverse creative workforce, to £1,734,537.



Despite initial progress, organisations scaled back their efforts in 2022-2023. Investments in the Black Creative Workforce through new roles and funded programs reached approximately £870,530.02, reflecting a decrease of £864,006.98 a 50% decline compared to the previous year.

With a reduction of opportunities, Black Creative freelancers are caught in a cycle of declining opportunities and low paid gigs, leaving limited space for networking, career development and work life balance. For all working class creatives, every opportunity is a lifeline. Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that in the West Midlands, 23% of residents live in poverty.¹⁵ For ethnically diverse people the picture is worse, in 2020/21 across the UK, half of all people in Bangladesh households were in poverty, increasing to over four in

¹⁴ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-01-05/8114>

¹⁵

<https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/bitc-factsheet-race-raw-regional-insight-west-midlands-march23.pdf>



ten for people in Pakistani and Black households - more than twice the poverty rate of people in white households'.¹⁶ The juggling act of multiple projects and unconventional hours defines the freelance life, but maintaining work-life balance can be especially challenging for Black creative freelancers. Our survey of freelancer-hiring organisations confirms this reality: all engage Black talent, with half working with small teams (1-5 individuals). Given this prevalence, addressing well-being should be a top priority.

During our Radical Listening sessions in Autumn 2023, a freelancer highlighted important issues specific to freelancing in the sector part-time and having temporary/casual work, such as the feeling that many freelancers have regarding lack of work/life balance and free time:

“More of a balance between work and play. As a working class creative that is freelancing, I’m always working and my brain never turns off. It’s like you never have that moment to just be you. You need to have breaks. You need to have access to resources that allow you to just be without feeling like a failure”.¹⁷

The need is further underscored by a lack of readily available support. In a recent study, 66% of surveyed freelancers stated that they were unsure of where to find support for their mental health at work.¹⁸ One important aspect of ensuring mental wellbeing is financial stability. It is reported that around 29% of freelancers in the UK are paid late, and this can have major financial consequences especially given the economic crisis.¹⁹ In this year’s survey, 97.4% of organisations pay their freelancers on time. While we should celebrate that the grand majority of organisations are organised in paying creatives on time, this should be the standard and as such no organisation should be reporting that they make late payments for work received.

Another important point raised during the Radical Listening sessions was the topic of schemes, volunteering or internships in the creative sector which can be used as a route for those in the early stages of their careers. Again, finance can be a barrier for accessing these:

“It’s always going to come down to pay. When you’re looking at access into the sector it can be very challenging because there’ll be schemes that are helpful but it’s just when you dig down into it there’s limited spaces that you can say “if I’m not already in the

¹⁶ REGIONAL INSIGHTS ON RACE FACTSHEET: WEST MIDLANDS, March 2023, <https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/bitc-factsheet-race-raw-regional-insight-west-midlands-march23.pdf>

¹⁷ Alima Rico, Black Creative Workforce - Radical Listening Week 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21Dkjc6kq-8&t=1450sn>

¹⁸ Make a Difference, ‘Why (and how) you need to make freelancer wellbeing a priority in the new world of work’, <https://makeadifference.media/culture/looking-after-freelance-mental-health/>

¹⁹ Moxie, ‘The Unpaid Invoice’, <https://www.withmoxie.com/blog/the-unpaid-invoice-what-freelancers-can-do-to-get-paid-on-time>



sector this is something I can do that's not on top of an entire day's work, this is something you can feed yourself with".²⁰

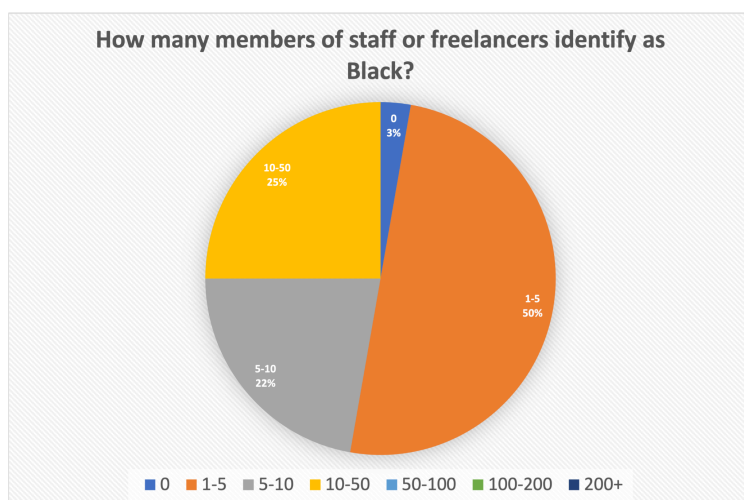
In consideration of this, below is an example that of the organisations has developed, as a deliberate and conscious move to provide enriching paid opportunities for Black and Ethnically Diverse creatives, and encourage their professional development in the creative sector:

"We seek to promote opportunities exclusively for global majority participants such as Masterclasses and Workshops where we know that certain groups are not represented in key areas of the workforce. 50% of this year's cohort are ethnically diverse. These four artists are employed on a freelance basis and are receiving paid training to become artist practitioners in community settings, or paid as facilitators / mentors on the programme.

Youth Assistants work weekly with our groups supporting our delivery, developing facilitation skills and assistant directing. Up until September, we had 4 regular Youth Assistants and 3 out of 4 were from a Black background. This year (from September) we have 5 regular Assistants/Co-directors and 4 out of 5 are from a Black background with all 5 being Global Majority"

- Organisation no. 3

One area of optimism is the number of Black staff employed in creative organisations over the last 12 months. Regarding this, 52.6% of organisations reported that the number of Black creatives they employed had increased since June 2022, which is an encouraging development, increasing since last year's survey which indicated 34.8% of organisations had increased their number of Black staff since June 2021. In addition to this, 73.6% of organisations stated that they are helping to get more Black and ethnically diverse artists into the sector by paying for training, offering special development programmes or other initiatives. The increase in Black creative staff in the organisations surveyed would suggest that such initiatives are having a positive effect. Below are some examples of the processes organisations are



²⁰ Naomi Bennett, Black Creative Workforce - Radical Listening Week 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21Dkjc6kq-8&t=1450sn>



implementing, which demonstrate good practice in reviewing employment practices and striving for improvements:

“We implemented the spirit of the Rooney Rule in 2021 and continue with this; we also increased our use of targeted advertising within publications and through networks embedded in specific communities; we have operated an anonymous recruitment system for a number of years, pre-dating MTAM”

– Organisation no. 5

“We feel our recruitment process was always fair; however we have consciously become more proactive in the commitment we make and the words we use to encourage applicants. Plus we look more at where to advertise and use partner organisations more”

- Organisation no. 6

“We haven't recruited since June 2022, however, I have undertaken training with Healing Justice London in Reimagining Employment Contracts which we have implemented in our employment practices”

- Organisation no. 16

In comparison to this positive development, the number of Black individuals in senior paid roles in the sector is a cause for concern. MTAM’s findings for 2022 revealed that there were 14 Black senior leaders across the sector, representing a 367% increase since 2021. This significant growth was driven by 20% of organisations in the sector that have paid senior leaders who identify as Black.

Unfortunately, this year, surveyed organisations reported only three Black senior leaders across as many organisations, meaning that not one organisation has more than one Black paid senior leader, and 92% of organisations have none at all. The data is clear, in suggesting that despite more Black creatives entering the sector and taking up paid positions, there are still major hurdles in obtaining leadership roles which are so essential to driving radical change from within individual organisations, and across the creative sector and West Midlands’ communities more generally.

While the West Midlands' creative sector faces challenges, it also holds immense potential, particularly for Black and underserved artists. Deloitte predicts a 40% global expansion in creative supply chains, shared IP, and creative technology, offering exciting opportunities for skilled creatives. To equip our local artists for this future, we need to focus on building their expertise in these areas. The sector must make increased efforts to nurture Black and underserved talent in the region by finding innovative ways to combat financial insecurity, and wellbeing. The culture sector can play a role in the green



industrial revolution, which has been identified as a future economy for the West Midlands. For Black and underserved artists there is space to develop leadership programs, organisations, projects that respond to this and fuel innovation across the sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Organisations should invest time in developing strategies to ensure the Black creatives they employ can have an improved experience of the pipeline, from entry level positions to leadership, this can be done via progress meetings, mentorship programmes and collecting feedback from Black creatives on their experiences. The organisations who are quoted in this section also offer examples of good practices for other employers who are finding this challenging.
- Better signposting freelancers, and assurance that Black creatives are receiving a livable and competitive wage.

CONCLUSION:

The creative sector has implemented strategies which have created a positive shift in the number of employed Black creatives, and Black creatives accessing key skill-building opportunities to aid their professional development. This is evidenced by the 17.8% rise in organisations who have increased their employment of Black creatives since last year, a significant change which indicates that initiatives and targeted opportunities to support the professional development of Black creatives is working effectively, and the talent pool of Black creatives in the West Midlands region is also expanding.

The issues that Black freelancers have raised relating to struggles with a work/life balance, mental wellbeing and pay, must be taken seriously by the sector - especially as the presence of Black creatives in the workplace has increased so notably. Despite the rise in the number of employed Black creatives in organisations, the number of Black senior leaders is still an area requiring drastic improvement, and suggests that while Black creatives are accessing more job roles, the pipeline from entry level positions to leadership requires specific strategies for Black and global majority creatives, to ensure they are not being excluded from career progression.

Moreover, addressing financial insecurity and wellbeing remains crucial for nurturing talent. Micro-grant programs to support independent projects, career development initiatives like artist retreats, and access to affordable mental health resources can significantly impact artists' lives and careers.

According to the data, progress in the culture sector has stalled, the West Midlands holds a unique opportunity for groundbreaking innovation. This untapped potential lies not within individual disciplines, but at the dynamic intersection of diverse sectors. Therefore, addressing issues of recruitment, pay, and workplace development is imperative in order



for both the Black Creative Workforce and the creative sector to thrive and to unlock the full potential of the region.



Organisational Culture, Behaviours and Language

“An absolute and non-negotiable commitment to active anti-racism will be woven into the fabric of everything we do. This will be stated publicly and proudly, built into our governance, organisational mission, projects, performances and events. Regardless of the cultural makeup of the communities we serve, we will ensure that our organisation and the spaces in which we operate, are places where Black people can trust that they are safe, can be their whole and authentic selves, and can thrive”

- More than a Moment Pledge

Organisational culture, or workplace culture, is influential in shaping an organisation, and the relationships that workers, stakeholders and communities have with the company in question. It can therefore either elevate, or hinder, an organisation's success depending on the dominant culture it exhibits. Organisational culture refers to the shared values, practices, behaviours, and outlooks of an organisation and those who operate within it. For organisations - it is mission critical that learning is embedded throughout the organisation, if process and producers are put in place without the entire workforce, including freelancers, volunteers etc playing a role in shaping and understanding the culture it will be impossible to implement long term change. In relation to anti-racism and decolonial practices, these are important components for any organisation to embed within its culture, to ensure a positive, empowering and nurturing environment for its workers and the communities it serves.

The practical application of this throughout the organisational culture is the twin identifier of a safe, sustainable and productive working environment. Any practical initiatives should not be treated as short term projects, but a part of a continuous journey - as stated by the former Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, a radically transformed workplace culture is dependent on this approach: “The key to the success of this work is that it be never-ending. It must be continuous, it must be evergreen, and it must be sustainable”.²¹ Below is an outline of the principles identified in the MTAM pledge related to Organisational culture, language and behaviour:

PRINCIPLES:

- Commit to rebuilding trust with the Black creative workforce - within and outside of our organisations - by listening, understanding and acting, to deliver tangible progress and solutions; building long term relationships based on worth and

²¹ Marie-Claude Landry, 'Walking the Talk: An Open Letter on the Canadian Human Rights Commission's implementation of the Clerk's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion', <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/Open%20Letter%20-%20Call%20to%20Action%20on%20Anti%20Racism%2C%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion.pdf>



contributions.

- Ensure safe spaces for all in this process: encouraging sharing, active listening, non-defensiveness, generosity, curious questions, learning, adaptation and accountability; recognising that this is difficult work and we won't always get it right.
- Enable and empower people to raise concerns safely, with confidence that they will be dealt with appropriately and with care, and without fear of repercussions.
- Recognise that if someone is speaking up, this takes emotional labour and needs to be acknowledged and understood.
- Deal with all reported cases of racism to scale - it's not good enough to say it's a 'misunderstanding'. We will compassionately centre the individual reporting the case in the first instance, to ensure they feel emotionally safe before taking action.
- Acknowledge that language has the power both to include and exclude, and we pledge to be inclusive, welcoming and respectful. Words hold great power, and we will use them with care and compassion.
- Recognise - whether we are based in a city or in more rural / less multi-cultural settings - that we need to work to make Black people feel valued and safe to not only work with us, but come to our spaces and venues as audiences. This applies to the working environment, being a leader and audiences.

KEY FINDINGS:

A major step forward in organisational culture occurred during last year's survey, when it was found that 100% of organisations had rid outdated terminologies from their workplace language. Such terms included BAME and People of Colour (POC). As MTAM reported, this signified that there was a growing understanding within the sector of the need to cultivate safe spaces and support the wellbeing of Black and global majority creatives, and the importance of language within this mission. The findings for 2023 confirm that organisations have succeeded in moving on from these terms, with 100% of surveyed organisations confirming they refrain from using them in workplace language.

In addition to this, we asked organisations if they are communicating values, expectations, and behaviours through job descriptions, codes of conduct, visitor/audience charters, or similar documents. 92% responded that they are. One organisation also shared an example of good practice in this area, demonstrating how this can be implemented as early as application and hiring stage. This statement also highlights how transforming organisational culture is an ongoing process:



“All recruitment information and job descriptions include our anti-racism vision and statement of intent and a question about anti-racist values is included in all interview processes. We are currently reviewing our code of conduct and we don't have a visitor / audience charter (because we don't have visitors or audiences in a traditional sense)”

- Organisation no. 10

Where practical solutions within workplace environments are concerned, there appears to be a downward trend. This is evidenced by a decrease in the number of organisations who offer opportunities for Black and Ethnically diverse creatives and staff to check in (i.e taking time to listen, provide feedback). This year, 89% of organisations reported they do this, whereas the year 2022 had seen 93% of organisations do this, which had been an increase from 2021's figure of 88.6%. This year's figure, which has almost reverted to that of two years ago, is a backslide in tangible evidence of commitment to cementing wellbeing initiatives into workplace culture. In any case, holding spaces for Black and global majority creatives to check in is only a useful practice if their feedback is seriously considered, and any challenges identified are met with meaningful action.

Organisations were asked if they actively work to create an open and transparent culture. This resulted in many examples of good practice, and work in progress. Below are some excerpts which highlight practical examples used in order to achieve this:

“All Board and staff have taken part in a two day anti-racism training programme with a follow-up training event planned for October 2023. Part of the focus for that training was for the organisation to normalise conversations about race and racism. We have established a More Than A Moment working group, consisting of three members of staff who meet once every six weeks to explore issues of relevance that have arisen, both in terms of working practices, commissions, opportunities etc.

Formally, we have introduced More Than A Moment / anti-racism as a standing agenda item at Board meetings, whole company meetings and as part of quarterly staff development reviews and annual appraisals.”

- Organisation no. 10

“Yes, open decision-making meetings. Using restorative practice circles techniques to encourage open communication and develop trust within a safe space.”

- Organisation no. 16



“Whole staff involvement in creating our Responding to Discrimination procedure, annual working culture survey and responses from senior management, transparent pay structure and frequent check-ins, and anonymous reporting mechanisms.”

- Organisation no. 14

“We work democratically as an organisation and invite feedback from the creatives we work with, and support through creative activities, using methods such as listening space times. We openly share our discussion when there is permission from all involved.”

- Organisation no. 33

“Yes - established new organisational values reflected in our business plan as well as in our reviews and staff awards. Annual employee engagement surveys where results, findings and actions are openly communicated. Inclusion and Anti-Racism, and Wellbeing Working Groups made up of the workforce and Senior Leaders. Regular all staff briefings and meetings.”

- Organisation no. 5

“We recognise we have more work to do, but we feel we are making progress. We are being more broad about our recruitment, in terms of the language we use and the places we advertise. WE are then creating more opportunities for staff and freelancers to contribute and feedback. We have an open weekly company meeting attended by all staff, where all are actively involved and we talk about all aspects of the organisation. We want to be able to do more staff (including placements and freelancers) to be able to contribute ideas and feedback.”

- Organisation no. 6



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continuing open, horizontal dialogues for all staff to participate in, and putting procedures in place to ensure Black and global majority staff feel safe to participate in these processes without exposure to harmful language or behaviour.
- Designating time and space for Black creatives to check in regarding their perspectives on the organisational culture, and the creative sector more generally - through peer meetings, Black and global majority internal community groups, or staff representatives.
- Emphasising wellbeing, and creating wellbeing provisions that are specific to the needs of the Black creative workforce.

CONCLUSION:

There are various instances of good practice as it pertains to organisational culture, behaviour, and language in the workplace. This is evidenced by the testimonies from the above organisations, many of which report utilising open dialogues with all staff, and the collection of feedback from the workforce to implement necessary changes in the organisation.

Here we can appreciate the value of moving away from traditional hierarchical decision-making structures, in cultivating a safe, productive and holistic creative sector that is constantly evolving in line with sustainable visions of the future. In regards to the language used within organisations, this continues to be an area in which the creative sector is challenging regressive terms and moving beyond them.

However, there have been challenges in maintaining progress in other aspects - for example, the 4% decrease in the number of organisations who offer opportunities for Black and Ethnically diverse creatives and staff to check in. Whether by creating Black and Global Majority community groups and forums, 1:1 peer meetings or having designated staff representatives to check in with, this aspect of an organisation's culture is extremely important and must remain an area of importance in organisational strategies.



Programming, Audiences, Quality and Value

“We recognise, value and respect the Black Talent, ambition and creativity that fuels the cultural Sector in the Region - and we Pledge to invest in and support Black Artists to thrive, to take centre-stage, to tell their own stories on their own terms in their own words.

We recognise that the perceived quality and value of artistic work has too often been related to its proximity to whiteness. We promise to comprehensively and honestly review how we assign value to artistic work, and ensure that what happens in our spaces and in our communities is valued equally for the relevance, importance and positive impact it has for audiences and participants.”

- More Than a Moment Pledge

BACKGROUND

This year has seen exciting developments highlighting the richness of the Black creative workforce across the UK, including shows, exhibitions and projects driven by Black artists and creators, who are breaking down barriers to access existing cultural spaces, and creating new ones to reflect the interests and needs of Black communities. Some examples include Claudette Johnson’s *Presence* at the Courtauld, and Isaac Julien’s *What Freedom Is To Me* at the Tate Britain. Insofar as West Midlands-bred talent goes, Abdulrazaq Awofeso made waves with his work featured in South London Gallery. Birmingham-based Awofeso is well known for creating sculptures made out of discarded shipping wood as a metaphor for migration.²²

Locally, GirlGrind UK has been developing its work by partnering with established creative institutions such as B:Music and Birmingham Hippodrome. GirlGrind UK describes its ethos as aiming to spark “a revolutionary fire in the way Black, Asian Minority Ethnic women*, girls and gender expanding people are supported and empowered”.²³ In order to carry out this mission, GirlGrind UK facilitated ‘She Don Did It!’, a series of workshops and events that supported the professional development of 100 emerging music artists.²⁴ Via Birmingham Hippodrome, the organisation and its founder are developing a musical which showcases the experiences of the Windrush generation through music and performance. This is referenced here as a model for how established institutions with the required resources, funding, reputation and experience, can support the development of Black and Global Majority-led organisations to become established in their own right, and

²² Mr Porter, ‘Seven Buzzy Black British UK Artists To Know’, <https://www.mrporter.com/en-us/journal/lifestyle/emerging-black-british-uk-artists-to-know-art-2459741>

²³ GirlGrind UK, ‘ABOUT’, <https://www.girlgrinduk.co.uk/about>

²⁴ B:Music, ‘Girl Grind announces the highly anticipated return of ‘She Don Did It!’’, <https://bmusic.co.uk/news/girl-grind-announces-the-highly-anticipated-return-of-she-don-did-it>



encourage the development of more safe spaces and projects which cater to the needs of historically under-served communities.

In addition to this, the Reframe project was launched across several cultural institutions in the UK including Midlands Art Centre. Reframe forms part of Apple's global Racial Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI) – marking REJI's expansion into Europe. Its broad aim is to support the skills and ambitions of emerging Black creatives, in recognition of the fact that they have prior to been locked out of opportunities and pathways to careers in the industry.²⁵ These above developments provide us with optimism and encouragement, it is crucial that the potential and talent of Black creatives at all levels of their careers, are nourished by cultural institutions, and that through collaborations, the creative sector is utilising its resources to support Black creatives in the long term. In order to attain representation at all levels across the creative sector, opportunities provided to Black creatives by cultural organisations must be tangible, and the sector must resist offering short term projects without considering the wider legacy for Black creatives, and the local area it seeks to engage.

KEY FINDINGS

Last year's survey found that in the context of having called upon organisations to prioritise value exchange, progress had been made in this specific area. It was reported that organisations had made progress in transforming their practices to promote inclusivity and equity. How this translated into practice, included efforts to centre Black creatives in decision-making processes, and ensuring that Black creatives played a leading role. The data from last year's survey backed this up, as 72% of organisations reported that artistic and associated decision-making related to Black Artists, was co-designed with Black people. This was a 20% increase from 2021, wherein 2023 only 52% of organisations reported having done this.

Sadly, this year's data suggests that the current state of decision-making processes and collaboration has declined to a worse state than two years ago, with just 50% of organisations having achieved this. The importance of involving Black individuals in the design of artistic and decision-making processes related to Black artists, cannot be understated. Due to the decrease in this process in such a short amount of time, it appears that organisations have failed in continuing to prioritise this aspect of the pledge, and that project outcomes developed during this year, could have been made more inclusive, conscious and representative of Black experiences and the perspectives and skillsets of Black creatives.

Below are examples of how organisations have implemented strategies that foster collaboration, co-creation and include Black creatives in decision-making conversations and processes. These examples are presented to celebrate the developments that are being made despite the worrying decline across the West Midlands cultural sector more

²⁵ MAC. 'Reframe', <https://macbirmingham.co.uk/reframe>



widely. They are also presented to serve as inspiration for those organisations who have struggled to achieve this in the last 12 months:

“Freelancers Consultation Group - six freelance colleagues represent the wide range of freelance theatre makers that the RSC works with on a daily basis. Two Black and one South Asian freelancer are represented in this group and have informed and contributed to strategic thinking about future vision and priorities, systems and culture change initiatives. Our Talent Development programme is aimed at supporting artists from a range of ethnic backgrounds”

- Organisation no. 1

“Powering Up: Was conceived by two Black creatives on our board after attending a MTAM listening and learning session. This was handed over to our Black learning & inclusion lead to develop a proposal and secure funding and schools partnerships for a 3 year programme intervention.

Having secured the funding, she hired a young Black producer to deliver this work in schools for predominantly Black children (including, coincidentally, the school the producer attended herself).

Mother Nature: We employed a Black gamer to develop this proposal and foster links with Black and ethnically diverse young people who will now shape the Mother Nature character and game narrative”

- Organisation no. 26

CASE STUDY: GRAND UNION AND BRUNTWOOD SCI TECH:

The Grand Union x Bruntwood Artist in Residence Program is an example of how collaboration can nurture and amplify the voices of underrepresented artists and drive innovation. This unique program provides a haven for Birmingham's thriving art scene, offering free studio space for a year to talented individuals like Pauline Bailey, a Birmingham-based artist and co-founder of the Daughters of Africa Foundation in Gambia.



Pauline Bailey's Journey:

In 2022, Pauline Bailey took advantage of the program's supportive environment to explore new artistic frontiers. Pauline's individual art practice is generally informed by the multiple layers of diverse cultures and heritage of the African diaspora. While her work has always embraced social engagement, her residency allowed her to delve into the world of VR, extended reality, and 3D/digital creation.

Bailey's journey exemplifies the program's ability to empower artists to experiment and push boundaries while staying true to their core values.

With a reduction of investment of Black artists across the sector and a further reduction in co-creation, the data presents extremely worrying findings and forces us to ask the question - where are the opportunities for artists coming from? Relationships play a critical part of the culture sector and this will force artists to make tough decisions, from leaving the sector to finding alternative avenues. For Black artists and underserved creatives, now presents an opportunity to upskill and to be innovative and explore how new avenues beyond the culture sector can unleash creativity, however this requires an entrepreneurial approach, according to the West Midlands Growth Company, the West Midlands has 21 key sectors which are driving innovation. These include:

- Video Games and VR
- Clean Tech
- Automotive
- Rail
- Digital Technologies

The West Midlands has the potential to become the centre of inclusive led, innovation and creative placemaking. As these challenges continue to connect the region, there has never been a better time for Black and Underserved artists to; embrace the power of cross-sector collaborations. As Arup states, "increasing equity and inclusion are crucial challenges for cities, further amplified by climate change. Making cities truly work for everyone is imperative", therefore as the second most diverse region in the UK, this is a real moment for artists and organisations to use creative placemaking as a tool to build new audiences and explore the narratives hidden across the region.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create opportunities for collaboration and co-creation between organisations, being mindful of the resources you can offer that will be of benefit for emerging Black creatives, and autonomous Black creative organisations.
- Develop rapport with Black creatives in the sector, and commit to continual investment in the ever-expanding pool of Black talent in the West Midlands and design programmes that will support the professional development of Black creatives in the early stages of their careers.

CONCLUSION:

On the topic of programming, audiences, quality and value, there are instances of Black-led projects, and projects undertaken in collaboration between Black creatives and established creative institutions, which provides an optimistic view of the future, if this development is sustained.

The creative sector is still facing challenges in broad commitment to maintaining momentum when positive change does occur. For example, the 22% decrease in organisations who reported that artistic and associated decision-making related to Black Artists, was co-designed with Black people, is deeply concerning.

The Green Industrial Revolution represents a unique opportunity for Black and underserved artists to lead innovation and shape the future of the culture in the region. The sector can foster this by establishing dedicated leadership programs for diverse creatives, developing artistic projects that respond to environmental challenges, and creating collaborative platforms for artists to connect with green tech companies.



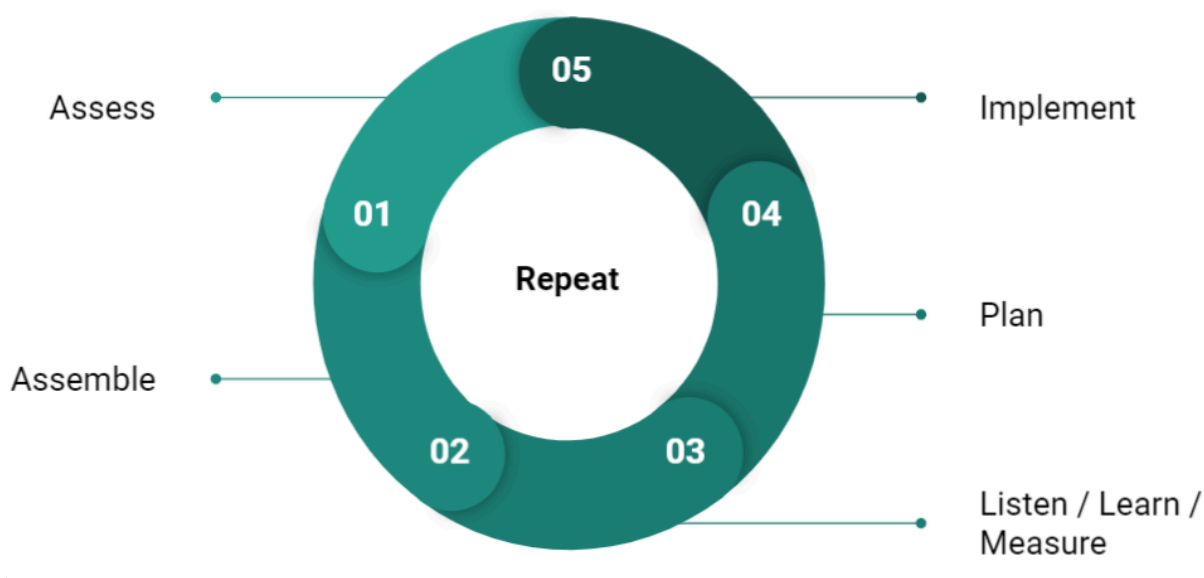
Targets and Accountability

“We will use targets to hold ourselves to account. We will set bold, radical, meaningful goals and we’ll proudly and publicly measure our progress against them. We’ll regularly celebrate the changes that have been made, speak honestly about the work that still needs to be done, and be active and enthusiastic advocates of the More Than A Moment movement. Our organisational and individual accountability goes hand in hand with making the cultural sector equitable.”

- More Than a Moment Pledge

This year's report paints a troubling picture: widespread regression despite a landscape primed for progress. The path forward demands a fundamental shift. We need measurable targets co-created through inclusive, non-hierarchical processes. However, without defined targets and real accountability, how can we navigate forward? Why are we slipping backwards when the region brims with potential for innovation? The creative industries are poised for a boom by 2030, but who will steer this growth if we lack a clear direction?

As outlined by the Anti-racist Journey Map for Organisations, targeting is relevant to three of the five stages of the cycle, these are: 3 Listen/Learn/Measure, 4 Plan, and 5: Implement.²⁶ The 3rd stage includes having conversations with Black and global majority individuals both internal and external to the organisation, researching the work of other organisations who are succeeding in making radical change, and surveying employees and the wider community to have accessible data as benchmarks. The 4th stage of planning includes utilising positive examples from other organisations, and recommendations made by Black and global majority individuals, to tailor a plan that is specific to the organisational context, the creative sector, and the specific location that the organisation operates. The 5th stage of the cycle, that of implementation, is the practical application of



the plan. Here, frequent feedback, reviews, and measurements are essential to ensuring the targets set are being met, and if not, what must be done to ensure they will be.

KEY FINDINGS:

Last year's data led us to conclude that more work was required in assessing the integrity of an organisation's HR policy, to ensure all members of staff are protected and their identities are considered in this process, for nuanced perspectives on each staff member. There was also further work required in locating the likelihood of biases, and whether ongoing training was being provided, particularly to those with decision-making power. Other considerations were the importance of developing aims and objectives that applied to entire organisations at every level, and not just senior leadership (in the case of hierarchical organisations).

The MTAM Pledge calls on organisations to:

- Commit to publicly and positively promoting the action we're taking, the impact it's having, and the work that still needs to be done.
- Commit to cultural cross-sectoral investment, and allocate resources with the core aim to build an equitable and inclusive sector, based on active accountability.

Some organisations have reported experiencing difficulties in meeting targets to increase greater representation of Black and ethnically people both in the workforce and in community engagement. As explained by one organisation below, the difficulty lies in the regional context that the organisation operates in, which is predominantly white and middle class. Work is therefore needed to brainstorm how to extend the organisation's reach outside its traditional audiences:

“The challenge is in engaging interest outside of urban settings, reaching the right audience and targeting that audience. We need help in a very white privileged county to ensure we make meaningful changes and connections and delivery has been difficult.”

- Organisation no. 1

Other organisations reported that the fluid nature of a creative workforce can make it challenging to set specific aims and implement long term cultural shifts in the workplace:

“Recruitment is hard full stop. Embedding culture can be harder in teams with high turnovers, particularly flexible working teams.”

- Organisation no. 6



“Getting staff/freelancers to complete EDI forms. We have a much better representation in our visiting companies and freelancer population than the data we have.”

- Organisation no. 2

Within the feedback collected this year, there are examples of good practice in the area of monitoring and data collection, which aids organisations in curating their services to better meet the needs of their target audiences and participants, by appreciating their nuanced experiences of wider society and harmful structures which continue to be upheld:

“Our core work is entirely delivered with underserved communities (people in prison, people who experience homelessness, people who are in recovery from addictions etc).

We are monitoring the demographics of the people who attend our projects and assessing those demographics against any baseline statistics for that institution / environment. We have been delivering discreet projects with people from ethnically diverse communities (eg: HMP Huntercombe, a prison housing foreign national prisoners awaiting deportation - a project exploring their experiences of racism within the system).”

- Organisation no. 10

In addition to this, 50% of organisations reported this year that they set specific aims, objectives and actions, and meaningfully measure progress throughout the years. 42% of surveyed organisations reported that this is something they’re working on. It is our recommendation that this work be pursued with urgency. This group of organisations should prioritise setting aims which are holistically agreed upon within the organisation, putting measures in place to ensure progress can be monitored, over the course of 2024. In order to ensure these aims are set within the time frame of 12 months, reviewing this progress and the organisation’s upholding of the MTAM pledge should be the responsibility of one specific board member or individual in a leadership position. This will better guarantee that working on such aims remain on the agenda via an organisational representative.





A positive development is the continual increase in organisations reporting that they have dispute resolution processes in place, to ensure action is taken when issues are raised by the Ethnically Diverse and Black Creative Workforce. This year, 89.4% of organisations reported that they do, a 5% increase from last year's figure of 84.4%. This relates back to the request from MTAM's February 2023 report which hoped to see improvement in organisations' HR policy suite. We can conclude that there have indeed been advancements.

Examples of resolution processes included Grievance Procedures, EDI committees, staff representatives, anonymous reporting systems and Whistleblowing policies. This continual increase in the number of creative organisations with such procedures in place, is essential to cultivating a sector which works to protect and respond to the wellbeing of its workers and participants, with particular attention to groups who are at an elevated risk of coming into contact with discriminatory behaviours or practices due to their identity/protected characteristic(s).

On the topic of the development of goals by organisations, we have witnessed yet another decrease in progress since 2022. 52.6% of organisations surveyed reported that they have developed short, medium and long term goals in response to the MTAM pledge. This is



down from 60.9% in our last report which has signalled an encouraging 20% increase from 2021. However, 36.8% of organisations reported that they are working on developing short, medium and long term goals, which presents an optimistic picture for the near future if these plans materialise. Below is an example of good practice by one of the organisations who have developed such a plan, and exemplifies the need for continual reflection and changes in line with staff feedback:

“We have a robust Inclusivity and Relevance plan which will continue to drive the importance of creating a work-force which is more representative of our city. We will be working with staff to discuss employee engagement survey results and create action plans for the EDI groups to drive forwards.”

- Organisation no. 2

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Being intentional in setting aims, objectives and actions.
- Creating a plan to measure internal progress throughout the years, and identifying a specific person who is responsible for ensuring this happens.

CONCLUSION:

In the areas of targets and accountability, this year has witnessed a mixed bag of challenges and successes. It is clear that in areas related to HR, such as dispute resolution processes, the creative sector in the West Midlands region have made advancements, as evidenced by the 5% increase in the number of organisations with dispute resolution processes that ensure action is taken when issues are raised by the Black and global majority Creative Workforce. In other areas, such as that of producing specific aims, objectives and goals for organisations to work toward which would include supporting the Black creative workforce, and moving toward visions of the future, this has been a challenging exercise for organisations in the backdrop of a year of intense national, global and social crises. Setting targets that enable ideas and values to inform the work of an organisation at all levels.



CONCLUSION:

2023 has been a year of increasing challenges and obstacles throughout the globe, and affecting the creative sector in the West Midlands. Manifestly, the 21st century has presented us with a crossroads, where we must choose whether or not to wholeheartedly commit to transforming traditional systems, structures and practices which have (and continue to) exclude, exploit, and discriminate against under-served communities. The More than a Moment Pledge is still sorely needed, to guide and encourage creative organisations to take up the mission of radically transforming the sector, to contribute to the wave of positive change that is essential to securing a sustainable, equitable future.

We have witnessed areas of success, and areas which have suffered a concerning decrease in positive change. Those areas of success are important to acknowledge and highlight. They include the encouraging increase in the number of Black creatives who have been employed in the sector since June 2022. Evidently, the creative sector in the West Midlands is aware of the rich pool of Black creative talent that exists in the region, and is actively working to make the creative sector representative. This is especially significant, given the fact that the West Midlands is one of the most diverse regions in the UK, with 45% of residents reporting their identity as non-white British.²⁷ Thus, it is hugely uplifting that the sector's demographics are becoming aligned with the region it serves. Another positive shift which took place this year was that of HR policies, with an increase in the number of organisations having dispute resolution processes in place, to ensure action is taken when issues are raised by the Ethnically Diverse and Black Creative Workforce. Given the increase in the number of Black individuals in the creative sector, it is crucial that such processes are in place to address issues they might face in the workplace.

However, in the majority of key areas of interest, this year has been one of declining progress in comparison to the great strides that were made during 2022. It appears that momentum to implement change, much of it stemming from the events of 2020, has been lost and requires reassessment and recapturing across the creative sector. One of the biggest indicators for that is the financial picture. As reported in the MTAM February 2023 report throughout 2021-2022, organisations doubled their impact in regards to direct investment in the Black and global majority creative workforce, with a figure of £1,734,537. Between 2022 - 2023 there has been a great reduction, with a figure of £870,530.02. It should be considered that the creative sector was greatly boosted by the Commonwealth Games 2022, and so a financial dissipation might have been expected, but this highlights the need for longterm goals and solutions which safeguards the Black creative workforce's access to opportunities.

²⁷ West Midlands Combined Authority, 'Inclusive Communities'
<https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/inclusive-communities/>



The West Midlands is full of opportunities, and the culture sector has the power to unleash the potential for all creatives, however it's clear that ending inequality across the sector requires sustained and long term action. Over the last three years the sector has made monumental progress but the data highlights how quickly regression takes place. It is also clear that the sector requires a new approach to addressing inequality and that goes hand in hand with innovation. The future of the creative economy relies on the sector working as an ecosystem.

'The creative economy is an ecosystem that comprises a wide range of occupations distinguished by the generation of wealth and jobs through individual creativity driving the generation and use of intellectual property'²⁸

Therefore in order to build a beautiful culture sector that leaves no one behind - now is the time to build the infrastructure of the future for organisations for Black Artists and underserved this means developing IP, and embracing technology, green sector and placemaking. For organisations this requires:

Governance and Leadership

- Developing Governance Models and strategies that can long term embrace economic and cultural uncertainty, remain agile and create opportunities for listening and learning.
- Designing and developing tangible governance and leadership programs for Black and Underserved talent to obtain board level opportunities.
- Developing policies that are in line with the equalities act that prevent any forms of racial discrimination.

Recruitment Pay and Workforce Development

- Invest in the pipeline
- Invest in talent development programs

Organisational culture behaviours and language

- Embed cultures of learning

Audiences, programming, quality and value

- Co-creation is key - Build relationships with smaller Black led and underserved collectives

Targets and accountability

- Continue to diversify boards
- Attend the annual More Than a Moment Summit

²⁸ deloitte-uk-future-creative-economy-report-final



Overall, the challenges that creative organisations have faced in fully taking up the five aspects of the MTAM pledge, and continuing to make annual improvements, highlight the need for those in leadership positions to appoint specific individuals within their organisations with the task of checking in with the progress being made, and utilising the five pillars of the pledge as measurement tools to hold organisations accountable. There is still much work to be done, but it must be done, and breaking challenges down into smaller areas with tailored solutions is key to ensuring progress is made, and that it is continual.



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Two thirds of adults are spending less on non-essentials due to cost of living (18-29 October 2023)

8/10 (86.5%) adults in GB report having made some lifestyle changes to help tackle environmental issues

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/mostadultsreportmakingsomechanges-to-their-lifestyle-for-environmental-reasons/2023-07-05#:~:text=More%20than%20eight%20in%20ten,between%20May%20and%20June%202023.>

West Midlands one of the lowest scoring regions in a survey that asked people whether their local area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together (17th May - 11th June 2023)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/mostadultsreportmakingsomechanges-to-their-lifestyle-for-environmental-reasons/2023-07-05#:~:text=Around%20six%20in%20ten%20>



Glossary:

Advocacy: refers to the act of supporting or promoting a cause or idea.

Anti-racism: actively working to challenge and confront racism in all forms within an organisation.

Artist-led: organisations and groups that are led by artists.

Audience: The people who attend or view the events, performances, and other activities in the cultural sector.

BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic): Acronym used to describe people from non-white backgrounds

Black Creative Workforce: Refers to the group of Black artists and creatives working in the Arts & Culture Sector in the West Midlands.

Black: Refers to individuals who identify as Black, of African descent or African origin.

Climate change: The long-term changes in the Earth's climate, including changes in temperature, precipitation, and weather patterns, caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels.

Collectivist: refers to the practice or principle of giving a group priority over each individual in it.

Cost of Living Crisis: this refers to the decrease in disposable incomes (adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits) the UK has experienced since 2021

Economic Crisis: refers to the economy of a country experiences a sudden downturn in its aggregate output or real gross domestic product (GDP)

Global Majority: refers to people of African, African-Caribbean, Asian, dual-heritage, indigenous communities to the so-called global south, and those who have previously been referred to as "ethnic minorities"

Inclusion: the practice of creating a culture and environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and supported.

Innovating: the process of introducing new ideas or ways of doing things. **Innovative leadership:** refers to the ability to come up with new and creative solutions to problems.

Leadership: refers to the ability to guide and direct a group or organisation towards a common goal or objective.



Legacy: the impact or influence that a person or organisation leaves behind after they are gone.

MTAM Pledge: a pledge launched by More Than A Moment (MTAM) to address systemic barriers faced by Black Artists and Creatives in the Arts & Culture Sector in the West Midlands.

Organisational culture: the shared values, beliefs, and behaviours that shape how a company operates

Pay disparity: refers to the differences in pay between individuals or groups of employees based on factors such as race, gender, or experience.

Programming: Refers to the selection and scheduling of events, performances, and other activities in the cultural sector.

Representation: refers to the presence and representation of diverse groups in leadership and decision-making roles

Sustainable: The practice of creating systems, processes, and practices that can be maintained over time without depleting resources or degrading the environment.

Talent pipeline: A term used to describe the process of identifying, developing, and nurturing potential employees for an organisation or industry.

Targets and Accountability: The practice of setting goals and measuring progress to ensure that an organisation is taking concrete steps to achieve its DEI commitments.

Transparency: refers to the quality of being open and honest in communication and decision-making.

Value exchange: refers to the mutual exchange of resources, ideas, and values between individuals or groups.

Value: Refers to the worth, usefulness, or importance of something, in this case, artistic work.

Wellbeing practices: the practices of creating systems, processes, and practices that promote the health and well-being of individuals and communities and that are designed to be maintained over time without depleting resources or degrading the environment.

Workforce development: refers to the process of providing employees with the skills, knowledge, and experiences they need to grow and advance in their careers.



Credits and fair usage

This research was carried out by Elizabeth Lawal and A.S. Francis, as part of the More Than A Moment Pledge and process - designed and created by the More Than a Moment Working Group, in partnership with the Black Creative Workforce and West Midlands Cultural Sector.

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