The Ubele Initiative – Data and Insights Project

The Ubele Initiative supports Black and racially minoritised communities to strengthen their organisations, assets and leadership, helping them build long-term sustainability and influence.

This proposal seeks £104,300 funding from Access for a one-year data and insights project examining community asset ownership, barriers to acquiring and sustaining assets, and organisational and financial resilience among Black and racially minoritised-led organisations in England. The project would produce practical evidence, tools and guidance for funders, investors, policymakers and organisations providing enterprise development and investment readiness support.

1. Context

Black and racially minoritised-led charities, social enterprises and community organisations have historically received less grant funding, social investment, investment readiness support and enterprise development support. The proposal argues that these organisations are also poorly represented in existing national data on community asset ownership, financial resilience and investment readiness.

The proposal identifies the following connected challenges:

- **Lower levels of asset ownership.** Many organisations operate without secure premises, which can restrict their ability to generate income, access borrowing and build longer-term community wealth. Existing datasets do not provide a clear picture of asset ownership across different racialised communities.
- **Multiple barriers to acquiring and retaining assets.** These can include limited collateral, historic underinvestment, limited access to appropriate investment readiness support and structural inequalities within property and finance markets. These barriers are not generally examined together using integrated data.
- **Limited measures of organisational and financial resilience.** Existing assessments can favour larger and more established organisations, rely on inconsistent information or fail to reflect the structural factors affecting smaller or newer organisations.

2. The proposal

The Ubele Initiative proposes to develop an integrated data and insights project.

The project has three objectives:

Understand asset ownership and financial resilience

The project would explore patterns of asset ownership, barriers to acquiring and retaining assets, and the relationship between asset ownership, financial resilience and investment readiness among Black and racially minoritised-led organisations.

The project would map levels and types of asset ownership among Black and racially minoritised-led social enterprises and community organisations in England. It would examine issues such as premises ownership, tenure and balance-sheet information, alongside the funding and investment secured by organisations.

It would also analyse systemic and operational barriers to acquiring and retaining assets and develop a more disaggregated approach to assessing organisational and financial resilience.

Improve evidence for funding, investment and policy

The project would develop shared data standards, analytical tools, dashboards and guidance. These resources are intended to help funders, investors and policymakers understand demand, investment readiness and community asset ownership more clearly.

Evidence would be shared openly through reports, shorter insight digests, online tools and dissemination events. Ubele also proposes engaging relevant All-Party Parliamentary Groups to share learning and contribute to policy discussions.

Inform future support for organisations

Ubele intends to use the findings to improve the design of programmes focused on enterprise development, investment readiness and community asset ownership.

The work would be England-wide and would initially draw on organisations already connected to Ubele and its partners. Relevant programmes and networks include Agbero 2100, the Enterprise Development Programme, Flexible Finance and Phoenix Community Trust. Where feasible, the project would extend its reach beyond these existing networks and incorporate national, government, partner and regional datasets.

A full-time Data Insights Manager would lead the design and delivery of the project, including data-sharing arrangements, data collection and integration, analysis and the development of outputs. The role would work with colleagues across Ubele's research and policy, impact, finance, assets and enterprise functions.

Social Investment Business would act as a strategic partner, providing data (compliant with governance and permissions), technical input on investment and financial resilience, and support with insights and policy recommendations. MyCake, which specialises in third sector financial analysis, would provide consultancy support covering financial and organisational benchmarking and analysis.

3. Budget and costs

The Ubele Initiative is seeking **£104,300 from Access** for the one-year project. Ubele would contribute a further **£10,000**, primarily towards co-design and dissemination activities, bringing the stated total project value to **£114,300**.

Costs would cover:

- Data Insights Manager role
- internal staff contributions to project direction, research, policy, and impact management
- data infrastructure and integration

- licences and technical development
- specialist consultancy
- research, analysis and development of dashboards and other tools
- co-design, learning and dissemination events.

4. Key outputs

During the one-year project, Ubele proposes to produce:

1. **An integrated evidence base on community asset ownership, organisational resilience and barriers faced by Black and racially minoritised-led organisations**, including:
    - an England-wide asset ownership map;
    - analysis of barriers to asset acquisition and stewardship; and
    - an organisational and financial resilience framework.
2. **Shared data standards** to support the consistent collection, integration and analysis of data across participating organisations.
3. **Open-access data tools and insight products**, including dashboards, evidence summaries and analytical outputs for funders, investors, policymakers and infrastructure organisations.
4. **Practical guidance and resources for organisations and leaders**, focused on leadership, investment readiness, resilience and long-term sustainability.
5. **Recommendations** for future funding, enterprise development and capacity-building programmes.
6. **Sector learning and dissemination activities**, including partner events and policy engagement.

5. Key outcomes

In the short to medium term, the proposal aims for:

- Improved quality and use of data on Black and racially minoritised-led organisations, increasing their visibility within the evidence base used by funders, investors and policy makers.
- Improved understanding of community asset ownership, financial resilience and barriers faced by Black and racially minoritised-led organisations, leading to more equitable funding, investment and capacity-building support.
- Stronger collaboration knowledge sharing between Ubele, funders, policymakers, investors and other partners, contributing to improved sector practice.
- Strengthened organisational capacity within Ubele to collect, integrate, analyse and maintain data, enabling the long-term use of evidence to support Black and racially minoritised communities.