

Digital Fundraising and Racial Justice

Challenges and Opportunities
for Funders and Fundraisers

November 2021

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Introduction

By 2018, brutal government cuts to local authority budgets had been passed onto frontline services for years, particularly specialist services working with communities facing racial injustice and marginalisation.* Seeing this crisis unfold across our community of clients and partners, we at I.G. Advisors (I.G.) decided to make it one of our Sector Transformation focus areas for 2018.

We sought to contribute to a solution - targeting two areas of overlap from what organisations and funders wanted: collaboration, and diversifying income. Making best use of what we had to offer, in partnership with The GMSP Foundation and Social Misfits Media, we invited a selection of frontline BME-led women's organisations to join a collaborative crowdfunding campaign, and ended up supporting five brilliant partners in the development of their long-term fundraising and communications skills, whilst also directly raising funds online.

Everything we did together was based on best-practice expertise in digital fundraising and crowdfunding - on which Social Misfits Media literally wrote the book.[†] So, imagine our frustration when we didn't meet our targets for the campaign. We extended it for another year - even securing a slot in the Big Give Christmas Challenge - but still fell short of what we had wanted to raise. When we did our debriefing sessions with the organisations, we heard a lot of similar comments:

- "Online fundraising is completely different when you talk about race, and approaches needed to succeed are also completely different."
- "Our communities are tapped-out, there's nothing more to give"

- "Funders seem to think that our struggle to raise money online, or diversify our income, is because of a lack of skills, tools, or effort - and sometimes we believe them."
- "The donors we were trying to reach online with this weren't our usual suspects who 'get' our work."

It was this experience that led us to **Unbound Philanthropy**, who had seen similar challenges in supporting digital fundraising within their Migrant grantee portfolio, and **Lightful**, who had noticed the differing needs of BAME users on their BRIDGE[†] training programme. Together with **The Ubele Initiative** and **Money4YOU**, who both provide specialist support for BAME-led organisations, we embarked on a research process to support the sector to see more success when digitally fundraising for racial justice work, and highlight opportunities for funders to support organisations with getting there.

An important part of this process was to listen to and fund those who experience racial injustice to bring their perspectives to the table, and we're so grateful for the time, wisdom and insights shared by the many partners we worked with on this project. We have also cited the many incredible pieces of research, thought leadership and advocacy that have come before this.

“If you're a fundraiser, we hope you feel seen through the shared experiences in this report, and more empowered to navigate the landscape of digital fundraising in a racialised world.”

[†] We recognise that many ubiquitous terms (e.g. BAME, BME, people of colour, BIPOC, minorities, racialised groups) are imperfect and do not fully capture the racial, cultural, and ethnic identities that experience structural and systematic inequality in relation to racialisation. Whenever possible, we attempt to name individuals and groups as they themselves prefer to be named, and use 'communities facing racial injustice' when speaking in general terms.

* Building Resilience in Digital Growth & Engagement.

We hope this report will provide learnings that go beyond standard fundraising advice, to pragmatically unpick and address the racial dynamics at play in digital fundraising. We know it is not as simple as a lack of skills or effort.

That is why we want to disrupt the way the sector understands, talks about, and addresses the challenges of digital fundraising and racism.

If you're a **fundraiser**, we hope you feel seen through the shared experiences in this report, and more empowered to navigate the landscape of digital fundraising in a racialised world.

If you're a **funder**, we hope you find this new framing of digital fundraising illuminating, and can see your path to creating an enabling environment for your grantees who tackle racial injustice to safely and sustainably gain online traction for their work.

And if you're an **everyday donor**, we hope you can see the power you have to combat the challenges organisations face when trying to engage you online, and you can be part of a new movement to change that.

Finally, we hope that everyone makes full use of the references provided at the end of this report as an essential reading list of guidance, insight, and calls to action on racial justice.

Emily Collins-Ellis
Managing Director
I.G. Advisors

Executive Summary

CCOVID-19 has led to a rise in the number of organisations turning towards digital fundraising to sustain their work and rise to new pandemic-induced challenges. Increasingly, digital skills and expertise are what underpins the success of organisational, political and community objectives for all organisations. The need to explore alternative fundraising approaches has proven particularly urgent for organisations working on racial justice during the pandemic; yet, these same groups continue to face a number of unique barriers to successfully engaging in, and benefiting from, digital fundraising mechanisms and campaigns.

The aim of I.G. Advisors’ research is to support organisations working on racial justice to successfully leverage digital fundraising practices, and ensure funders know how to contribute to that success. This report pools knowledge and insights to better understand and make visible the barriers different groups face, and offers solutions for funders and fundraisers to proactively and meaningfully address them.

Our research on digital fundraising and racism has uncovered a number of key obstacles to success, each falling under one of the following three themes:

1

Hostile Digital Environment

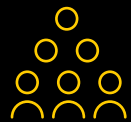
The bias, stereotypes, discrimination, or outright bigotry that impact interactions online and the building blocks of donor relationships.



2

White Donor Normativity

The self-reinforcing phenomenon of assuming that white donors are the ‘norm’, and tailoring fundraising practice, training and data accordingly.



3

Triple Glazed Glass Ceiling

The perfect storm of challenges with capacity, confidence, and competition when it comes to digital fundraising.



Opportunities

Dismantling white supremacy culture and eliminating the systemic racism underpinning many of the barriers to digital fundraising will not happen overnight, but there are promising opportunities within arm's reach to make the online fundraising environment safer, accessible, and more welcoming for those carrying out vital work in the racial justice space. Both funders and fundraisers can play a pivotal role in tackling these challenges. At the end of this report we share ten opportunities through which each of these groups can support digital fundraising for work on racial justice issues. In short:

‘**Digital skills and expertise are what underpins the success of organisational, political and community objectives for all organisations.**’



For Funders

- **Rethink What You Fund**
Invest in organisations' storytelling capacity for success on digital platforms; commission research, specialist training for fundraisers, and consultancy style support for organisations from BAME-led providers; and direct funds towards online safety and racial justice infrastructure initiatives to facilitate an enabling environment.
- **Adapt How You Fund**
Loosen restrictions on grants and support anti-racism initiatives setting meaningful expectations for anti-racism practices with your grantees.
- **Build on Your Own Offering**
Consider how to contribute beyond funding; build your own digital skills and knowledge of anti-racist practices to better support fundraisers.



For Fundraisers

- **Refine Your Approach to Comms**
Define your audiences carefully to target the 'Politicalisation' opportunity gap, building new relationships based on shared goals and solidarity (not pity); explain to peers how your work is done (not just why); tell stories which centre 'Black joy'; apply 'newsdesk' thinking to respond quickly to new opportunities; and ditch the written word.
- **Develop Your Organisational Practices**
Develop anti-racist practices within your own organisation; budget for digital costs and include these in grant requests; and collect data on what your donors want from their partners.
- **Reshape Your Environment**
Work collaboratively with 'competitors' and create an enabling environment where digital fundraisers don't have to 'tone down' their messages.

Methodology & Partners

Our research process involved four main approaches:

1

Informal interviews and conversations

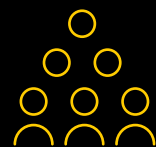
With funders, membership organisations, sector leaders, and networks who support racial justice and BAME-led organisations, to further develop a birds-eye view of the sector's challenges. In total, we spoke to 15 different people, working across 20+ different organisations or initiatives. They are included in the acknowledgements below.



2

Focus groups

With organisations working with communities facing racial injustice, to explore their experiences of those challenges in more detail. We hosted two focus groups, one with Ubele Initiative network members, and one with Money4YOU BAMER HUB members, involving a total of 14 people from organisations across the sector. They are also included in the acknowledgements below.



3

Surveys

Directed at organisations working with communities facing racial injustice, to capture broad data and inputs on their experiences of digital fundraising. We conducted two different surveys, with Ubele Initiative network members, The Big Give participants, Money4YOU BAMER HUB members and I.G.'s social networks, and gathered responses from 70 organisations, which ranged from Micro (less than £10k turnover) to Large (£1m+) ones.



4

Data Reviews

Our partners at The Big Give, Money4YOU, GlobalGiving and Lightful provided reviews of their member databases, collecting insights on the fundraising challenges and successes for organisations working on racial injustice as compared to others.



I.G.'s Commitment

Some of I.G. Advisors' basic costs for delivering this research were kindly covered by Unbound Philanthropy, in addition to the costs of some interviewees and peer reviewers for the report.

As a white-led firm, we never want to unduly benefit from or appropriate the work of those who face racial injustice. We therefore contributed 60% of the staff time and direct costs of delivering this work pro bono, as well as passing on 25% of Unbound

Philanthropy's contribution to Black-led charity partners and individuals who took part in focus groups and interviews.

We are committed to ensuring our role is solely to provide a platform for these important voices and issues, and have ensured all content is referenced and linked. Future paid opportunities that might stem from this report will be referred to partner organisations led by and for communities facing racial injustice.

About the Author

Emily Collins-Ellis is the Managing Director of I.G. Advisors, an award-winning strategy consultancy specialising in social and environmental change.

I.G. Advisors builds the capacity of non-profits, businesses and philanthropists to achieve impact and growth - from grassroots organisations working tirelessly in their communities through to those seeking large-scale, systemic change at a global level. Emily's work focusses on social justice, particularly LGBTQ+ rights, anti-racism, mental health and feminism. She is also Co-Chair of the Good Night Out Campaign, which seeks to end sexual harassment in nightlife, and a Fellow of The RSA.

Research support was provided by Caitlin McLoughlin, a Junior Advisor on the I.G. team. The final product was supported by Lee Dibbens, Junior Advisor and Michela Siuni, Marketing and Communications Manager also from I.G. Advisors, and designer Roger Chasteauneuf (Fred Design). In addition, Guppi Bola gave extensive helpful comments on earlier drafts, and Fozia Irfan and Martha Awojobi helped to shape our early stage thinking with their insights. Errors which remain are I.G.'s alone.

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Special thanks to our partners:



Why Digital Fundraising Matters

It's impossible to report on anything in 2021 without referencing the context of COVID-19. Organisations of all kinds have had to urgently pivot to new avenues of income generation, and Blackbaud found three quarters of organisations in the UK have done digital fundraising for the first time during the coronavirus crisis, with 60% now participating in some form of it.²

75% of respondents to our survey said they are spending more time doing digital fundraising now than they were before the pandemic, and 85% of respondents to Civil Society Media's Fundraising Leaders 2021 survey reported that the pandemic had accelerated digital transformation in their charities.³ Even in 2019, roles with a digital remit were spiking by 8% in the charity job market⁴, and the move further towards a 'cashless society' during the pandemic means digital approaches to fundraising are likely to remain the norm, even during in-person engagements.

Outside of the pandemic, digital fundraising, and fundraising from the public in general, are important priorities for any organisation wanting a sustainable and diverse funding base. For almost every type of organisation, **online giving is key to growth and resilience**, and mass market fundraising underpins the success of most large or mainstream charities. Digital fundraising success also intersects with digital communications, which is increasingly the main



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way stakeholders (including volunteers, funders, commissioners, staff, and the media) engage with organisations – it can support other organisational goals, such as raising awareness, campaigning, recruitment, movement building, as well as credibility.



12.9%

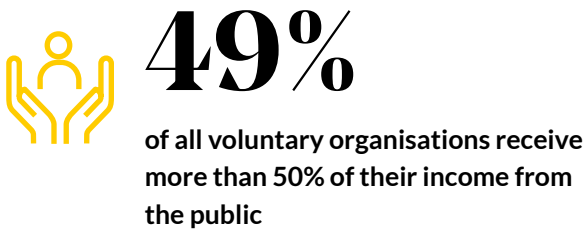
of total fundraising came from online giving, which is the highest percentage ever

At a broader level, **the use of digital fundraising is also lauded as a way to 'democratise philanthropy'**⁵, by distributing the power of donating across large groups, and enabling the participation of communities in funding their own services and movements rather than concentrating power and influence with a few foundations or funders. Those funders (such as government and foundations) often also expect a certain level of income diversity when assessing the viability of a potential grantee, so lacklustre digital fundraising can threaten other funding streams too.

“ Giving is a form of participation. Philanthropy by the rest of us—across geographies and cultural traditions—begins with and builds on active commitment to our communities. ”

Lucy Burnholz (Author of How We Give Now)

The importance of digital fundraising is also skewed by organisational size. Micro and small organisations are more likely to rely on the public than larger organisations, with over half (58%) of their total income coming from the public (compared to 45–49% for organisations of other sizes). Almost half (49%) of all voluntary organisations receive more than 50% of their income from the public⁷, and in 2020, 12.9% of total fundraising came from online giving, which is the highest percentage ever.⁸ Organisations who want to sustain their work can no longer afford to ignore the need for a digital approach to fundraising.



“Covid or no Covid, it’s just the way things are going. Nonprofits who don’t get the support they need to digitalise will get left behind.”

Priscilla Akutu-Carter (Encouraging Her)

In this report, we explore three major themes we found in our research on digital fundraising and racism:



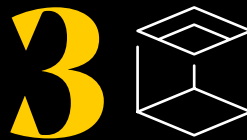
Hostile Digital Environment

The bias, stereotypes, discrimination, or outright bigotry that impact interactions online, and the building blocks of donor relationships.



White Donor Normativity

The self-reinforcing phenomenon of assuming that white donors are the ‘norm’, and tailoring fundraising practice, training and data accordingly.



Triple Glazed Glass Ceiling

The perfect storm of challenges with capacity, confidence, and competition when it comes to digital fundraising.

And – we offer our **Top 10 Opportunities for Fundraisers and Funders** to address all these elements.

THEME 1

Hostile Digital Environment

Oppression Rendered Digital

For organisations working on racial justice, the urgency to find alternative income during COVID-19 has been even more marked. Alongside the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on communities facing racial injustice, FREA* found that of all the emergency funds available to the UK black and minority ethnic voluntary sector during the first wave of COVID-19, only a quarter focussed on 'human rights and justice'⁹ (in other words: tackling racism), meaning organisations tackling racial injustice needed to turn to online donations more than before.

Digital fundraising cannot happen in a vacuum - at its core is a need to engage with the public in a digital environment that can include everything from ignorant celebrities to dangerous trolls, not to mention organisations competing to fundraise for related work. Digital fundraising is fundamentally a 'one-to-many' approach, which can scale up the racial dynamics to the size of the digital community (which can be incredibly large, on mainstream social platforms). One researcher described it as 'rendering oppression digital'.¹⁰ It can also be extremely challenging to address complex or nuanced social justice issues when the format, and attention economy, of online spaces requires messages to be reduced to 'soundbites or one-liners that only work for superficial understanding of most issues' (Guppi Bola). This overall effect increases the likelihood of bias, stereotypes, discrimination, or outright bigotry impacting interactions with organisations, and can also damage the building blocks of good donor relationships - trust, empathy, community connection, understanding, credibility, and the perception of virtue.

“Up until last year, we were always really nervous about promoting the project because BME young people get a really bad stereotype and there's this perception that there's no racism here because we're all middle class and left wing.”

Vanessa Crawford (BMEYPP)

In addition to this, the digital environment is particularly hostile to people who face racial injustice, and the platforms on which digital fundraising takes place are not always safe places to talk about racism. Whilst fundraising-specific data does not yet exist, we know Black and Asian women MPs receive about 35% more abuse than other groups of MPs¹¹, and Black women are 84% more likely than White women to be mentioned in abusive or problematic tweets¹². During the pandemic, online hate towards Asian people also spiked 900%¹³. As the platform algorithms are biased towards growth in attention, they can often serve to boost the content or comments of antagonists and racists when they respond to an organisation's work. In some cases, especially for small organisations, this can make digital fundraising unsafe, taxing, or just not worth it, especially when many platforms do not have appropriate, or equitably enforced, policies and practices for safety and moderation.



84%

Black women are 84% more likely than White women to be mentioned in abusive or problematic tweets

Reactive Giving & Culture War Peddlers

The spike in attention and action on racial justice issues in the wake of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020 also impacted the digital fundraising experiences of most organisations. We found that 28% more 'minority group' charities applied for The Big Give Christmas Challenge in 2020 as compared to 2019, and 20% more of them were successful in securing matched funds, showing a sharp increase in online crowdfunding approaches.¹⁴ However, whilst some organisations, particularly Black Lives Matter UK, saw a huge spike in giving¹⁵, and efforts were made to circulate crowd-sourced lists of other relevant groups in need of donations¹⁶, it does appear the giving and involvement of these new audiences has wavered along with the news cycle, presenting a continued barrier to sustainability for organisations working in the space. We also heard from some smaller organisations that, in addition to not directly experiencing an uptick in donations, they also experienced a backlash (online and offline) because of the increased public attention on race and racism.

“ The urgent desire to help during an emergency can drive a surge in impulsive, one-time giving. And then, once the moment of crisis fades, those new supporters fade away at rates that we would not see for repeat donors. ”

- M+R Benchmarks Study, 2021¹⁷

“ Because of [...] how institutional racism plays out in this country, many [...] feel that last year is likely to represent a high tide that simply will not last. ”

The Ubele Initiative, 2021²¹

The erasure, trivialisation and weaponization of the experiences of people who face racism, and the denial of the role racism plays in other social and environmental issues can mean donors of all kinds are often primed to see the topic of racism as divisive, offensive, sensitive, awkward or 'too political'. Research finds this polarisation and discomfort to be the exact intention of culture-wars peddlers.¹⁸ In addition, racism comes into play in every aspect of life, so organisations fundraising for work on other intersecting issues (such as violence against women, mental health, refugee rights, criminal justice or education), expect their messages to perform less well if they centre the significance of race or talk about racism.¹⁹ Research finds that 'in-group' fundraising (on issues that relate to your social group) does not typically have a significant impact on generosity, but 'out-group' fundraising (on issues that relate to a different social group) can result in negative reactions that can go as far as halving donations.²⁰ 33% of respondents to our survey said they avoided mentioning race in their online messaging.



33%

of respondents to our survey said they avoided mentioning race in their online messaging

Racially Neutral Support

In addition, racial justice work is often cross-cutting, and not a category of work or organisational type in itself. Through our research, we heard from organisations that funders tend to apply 'top-down' solutions and ideas for digital fundraising that focus on 'skills and capacity', without exploring the reasons for the differences between success rates of racial justice work versus other small, underfunded organisations who also struggle online. Often, this is provided in a 'racially neutral' way, centring organisational challenges, rather than racialised problems in the system that organisations must navigate to succeed. We found that organisations focussing on racial justice are 8% more likely to struggle with fundraising, and 6% more likely to struggle with digital communications than other organisations in the BAME space.²²



We found that organisations focussing on racial justice are 8% more likely to struggle with fundraising

“It’s not about who is ‘doing the racism’, it’s not about saying funders, online donors or fundraisers are racist – it’s saying ‘racism makes everything we’re doing harder’ and trying to rebalance that.”

Anonymous Survey Respondent

THEME 2

White Donor Normativity

The professionalisation of fundraising over the last two decades has imported a number of practices from the commercial world – particularly marketing and advertising. Two key tenets of modern fundraising are: audience segmentation (who you are targeting) and messaging (what you are saying to them). This involves understanding the personality types, values, attitudes, and beliefs of your current and prospective donors, and tailoring your ‘case for support’ to them, in the hopes they will be more likely to give. Donors are often grouped into archetypes or personas by characteristics like their socioeconomic status, generation or age, geography, and gender, to enable these messages to be more accurately targeted.

In our conversations with organisations about who they were targeting, we regularly heard the opinion that building strong racial justice work requires intra- as well as inter-community giving. This means the ‘groups’ or archetypes of donors being targeted boil down to: (1) privileged groups who have a responsibility to give to marginalised groups; and, (2) marginalised groups who want to build their own resources within their community. In practice, what we have found is that neither group is being consistently nor effectively reached online. Privileged groups are being ineffectively targeted as a homogenous mass with generic interests and motivations, and marginalised groups are being ignored or inconsistently targeted, with most asks being made of the most marginalised members. White people are much more likely to be solicited for charitable causes²³, despite others giving generously at similar levels²⁴, and marginalised communities’ new innovative ways of collective action, mutual aid, and grassroots funding oftentimes struggle to grow beyond their immediate networks.²⁵

“ BAME-led organisations cannot solely rely on the good will of ‘benevolent’ funders to survive. Fundraising is so much more than writing bids to white-led foundations. Because of the myths surrounding people of colour’s capacity to donate many organisations do not know that there are alternatives. ”

Martha Awajobi (JMB Consulting)²⁶

At the root of all of this appears to be what we’re calling white donor normativity: the unspoken (and sometimes unconscious) assumption that white donors are the ‘norm’, and that any other groups are outliers. Even organisations with almost no white donors on their databases or social media pages admitted to using generic ‘Dorothy Donor’ type personas or simply targeting ‘people with money online’ when doing digital fundraising. Or, conversely, organisations shared that they did not do any fundraising beyond their current community, because other ‘online donors won’t get it’. This phenomenon is self-reinforcing – the more fundraisers tailor their practice to white-norm donors, or forecast their likelihood of success based on white-norm attitudes online, the more the training and data centre on the same, and the more the sector replicates these approaches.

From our surveys and focus groups, we found that organisations working on racial justice usually do one of three things when digitally fundraising:

1

Pity Approach:

Target a generic mainstream privileged audience by highlighting the challenges faced by people experiencing racial injustice, with an underlying assumption that the audience does not experience racism themselves. The messaging tactics become about ‘speaking to whiteness’ and evoking pity or horror. Often this results in ‘poverty porn’ or ‘white saviour’ narratives²⁷, and also underpins many of the individual crowdfunders that proliferate online. We also heard about pressure to tone down messages that could be perceived as ‘too political’, meaning fundraisers must often resort to a focus on sad circumstances, rather than speaking about systems of oppression, or advocating for change. This approach is the easiest to get across online but is the least sustainable: it does not usually translate into understanding, engagement or long-term giving, and can sometimes even damage public perception.

2

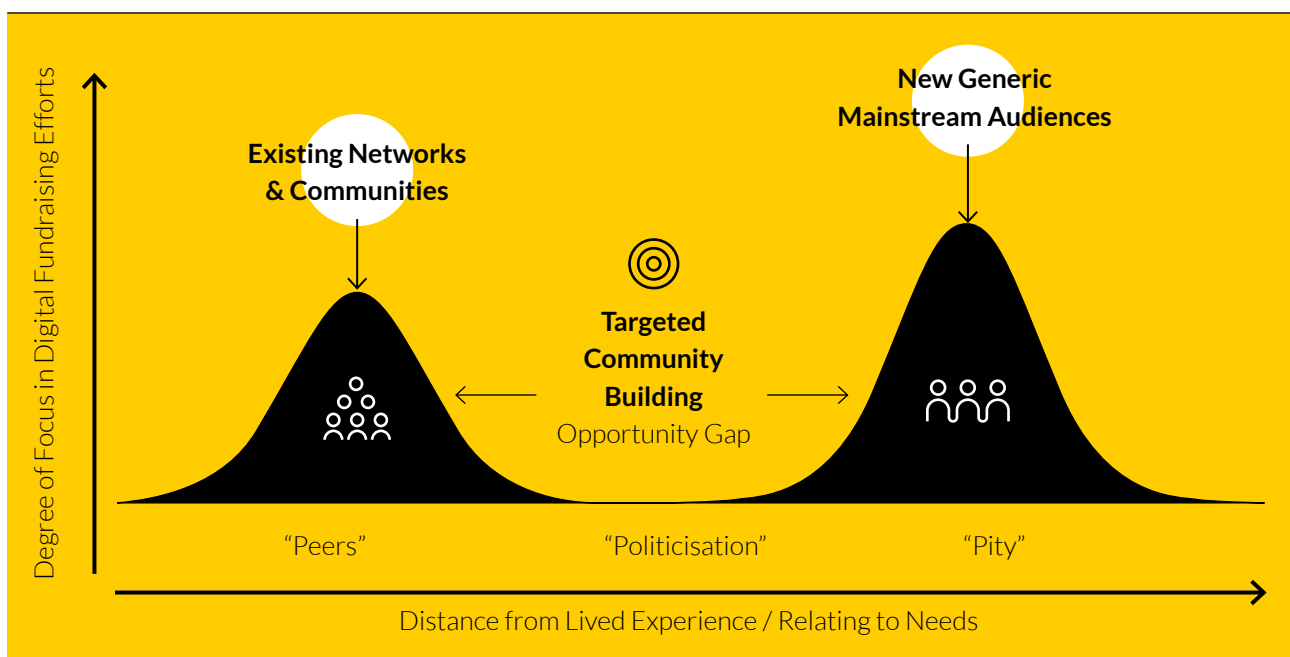
Peers Approach:

Hyper-focus on existing community members, communicating how the work is being done, rather than why, or what the impact is. This is with the assumption that community members will just ‘get it’, and wider audiences would be uninterested in the work. In our focus groups no participants felt that expanding their online audience to reach new demographics would be possible for them. This approach can be effective, but is limited unless the community itself grows as communications aren’t applicable to those outside of it.

3

Politicisation Approach:

The largely unmet opportunity gap between these two approaches is what we are calling the Politicisation Approach - building connections and community in a targeted way, telling the story of the work through consciousness raising, inviting solidarity and action from all donors by framing the work around nuanced, respectful, and dignified messages about racism with an ‘our fates are tied’ sentiment. This approach moves away from the construct of race being viewed as biological, and racism being a problem for racialised people to deal with, and moves towards a framing of racism as a systemic issue that impacts everyone, and requires everyone to tackle. This approach can be used to reach audiences who do not experience racism, as well as to grow the community of peers who do. This is obviously the most complex to get across online but is also at the root of the most sustainable long-term donor relationships, and social justice movement building successes.



Generic Training & Lack of Data

Whilst many great training programmes and capacity building initiatives exist for non-profit organisations to learn about fundraising and using digital tools, most of them do not address racism at all. There are very few resources tailored to the behaviours, motivations, keys to trust, preferences or effective messaging for ethnic or religious groups other than White Christian online, and, in most trainings, even the basic tenants of giving such as Zakat are ignored or over-simplified.²⁸ 50% of respondents to our survey said working on racial justice means their organisation has unique needs that were not addressed by mainstream fundraising training.

“ Fundraisers, by failing to acknowledge a more nuanced understanding of racial categories, are limiting their ability to serve minority communities by promoting scripts that ignore real, lived experience and perpetuate white privilege. ”

Courtney Jensen (Eastern Washington University)²⁹

 **50%**

of respondents to our survey said working on racial justice means their organisation has unique needs that were not addressed by mainstream fundraising training

 **67%**

of survey respondents said ‘not having data or insights on audiences we’re trying to reach’ was their biggest challenge when fundraising online

When it comes to using data insights for fundraising, researchers also do not often include ethnic identities in their analysis of charitable giving or consumer behaviour. Acorn consumer classifications refer to ‘multi-ethnic’ groups solely based on scales of deprivation.³⁰ Even the CAF Giving Report limits their analysis at gender and age, and Blackbaud’s 2020 Status of UK Fundraising report³¹ doesn’t mention ethnicity at all. It is not enough to know about wealth levels, or general consumer behaviours. Due to its economically unusual traits³² charitable giving can be conversely related or even totally unrelated to these things. In addition, many of the algorithms that support online fundraising (by targeting ads, providing audience insights, etc.) work on built-in and machine-learned assumptions that exclude or ignore the experiences or behaviours of people who experience racial injustice. 66.7% of survey respondents said ‘not having data or insights on audiences we’re trying to reach’ was their biggest challenge when fundraising online.

“ We weren’t capturing ‘racism’ as a category on our platform at all - it was missing as a way to define projects when fundraising or donating. We have the power to change the narrative with donors, and so we have now added ‘Racial Justice’ as a Top Theme, and shifted our language towards more nuanced justice and equality work. ”

Anonymous Respondent

THEME 3

Triple Glazed Glass Ceiling

Many of the issues we have shared so far in this report are quite overt, but there are additional, invisible barriers preventing many organisations working on racial injustice from gaining a sustainable foothold; these factors impact access to fundraising success, and other resources, such as brand awareness and political support. This is not just a glass ceiling - it's triple glazed. The ecosystem of organisations working on racial injustice are caught in a perfect storm of challenges with capacity, confidence, and competition when it comes to digital fundraising.

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Capacity

On average, UK organisations focussed on 'people of a particular ethnic or racial origin' get 8% less income than others, and rights-based work only gets 29% of funding from the public, compared to 49% on average across all charitable work.³³ 'Black and minoritised community groups [tend to be] micro or small [and] operate at the grassroots level' due to this funding imbalance³⁴, and being under-resourced in this way simply makes online fundraising harder. Growing an online audience can be quite time consuming for anyone, and all participants in the Money4YOU focus groups reported that, when it comes to digital fundraising, time pressure (i.e. organisational capacity) is overall a bigger problem than the lack of expertise.

This time pressure is part of a vicious cycle with money pressure; organisations need unrestricted or flexible funding to invest in new ways of generating income, and without it they cannot prioritise digital.

“We literally jump around from platform to platform playing catch up with the different online social channels. It's on a list of things that we should be doing but our capacity is very limited.”

Mark Nesbitt (The Urban Fitness Collective)

In addition, the capacity to showcase impact (which is a central key to success in online fundraising), is not something many under-resourced organisations have the systems in place to do effectively. Oftentimes they are collecting impact data solely for the purpose of reporting to larger funders, and targeting donors who already 'get it'. The powerful storytelling that is needed to expand digital reach and fundraising, as well as the process of 'polishing' content for online audiences, requires time they simply don't have. Especially when producing content invokes the White Supremacy Culture's worship of the written word³⁵, and language or dialect barriers come into play.

“We need more help or concessions because we are not native English speakers, so I feel like we’re a step behind.”

Melanie Ngangen (Ensemble Manchester)

Competition

Every fundraiser is competing for the funds they are raising, but racial justice organisations and UK based work that targets communities facing racial injustice, are competing on an unusual number of fronts. ‘The scarcity of resources for Black and minoritised community-led groups can lead to a highly competitive landscape which finds groups pitting themselves against each other’,³⁶ , and research finds that ‘nonprofits will [sometimes] work to convince that they, rather than their competitors, deserve resources.’³⁷

“Open competition means that Black and minoritised organisations are subsumed and their work is appropriated over time.”

The Ubele Initiative³⁸

Peer organisations are not the only things prospective online donors can be lured away by. Organisations communicating about racial injustice in the UK are competing with a whole litany of other forces online, and 66.7% of survey respondents said ‘competing with bigger or more well-known organisations’ was their biggest challenge. Other things that present major competition include: the white saviour narratives and predominantly Black subjects of international development messaging³⁹; larger mainstream organisations that provide similar work but without a racial focus (e.g. women’s shelters); larger organisations that might appropriate or co-opt their work online; and, crucially, everything else their prospective donors might want to do or spend money on. Now more than ever, time and money used for anti-racist work is being used outside of charitable giving: for example, paying for resources to learn about anti-racism, supporting black-led businesses, or giving money to peers or personal crowdfunders. All of this points to a crowded online market that requires high calibre approaches to navigate.



66.7%

of survey respondents said ‘competing with bigger or more well-known organisations’ was their biggest challenge.

Confidence

One major consequence of the Hostile Digital Environment and all other issues detailed above is that many leaders and fundraisers struggle with the confidence to start or sustain online fundraising. 60% of respondents to our survey rated their confidence in digital fundraising as 'quite low' or 'very low'. Mass marketing of any kind involves some risk taking – a risk of failure, scrutiny and harm – and so the confidence required to 'put yourself out there' can present a real barrier, particularly in the face of racism.

“I always found it difficult to talk about racism, I didn't put our organisation out to the public. It has been a bit easier since George Floyd's murder and Covid and BLM.”

Vanessa Crawford (BMEYPP)

Many organisations also have a lack of confidence in the 'market' – feeling exhausted at the prospect of having to justify their work to donors outside of their community who may not understand or care, and therefore seeing little value in using online spaces to reach them. A part of this is the isolation many organisations feel from their peers in the sector, particularly due to pressure to compete for funding. Leaders can also feel hesitant to compete with their peers, feeling conscious of taking away space or opportunities from others in the racial justice movement, and sometimes wanting to drive attention to other 'more worthy' fundraising efforts, particularly in times of crisis.

The small organisations we spoke to shared their concerns about never being able to address the problems of digital fundraising alone, saying it always felt safest to do what the status quo demands (e.g. play it safe with existing funders, avoid digital spaces, tone down messages about racism). Many respondents said that it is unfair to expect each individual leader or fundraiser to take on the burden of challenging racism, or challenging the myth of financial scarcity in such a wealthy nation, whilst also needing to resource their work. It takes confidence and resilience to be a lone wolf doing something different whilst the rest of the sector does something else, so organisations end up reverting to the safer norm.



60%

of respondents to our survey rated their confidence in digital fundraising as 'quite low' or 'very low'.

“Racial gaslighting across all institutions in society means Black and minoritised people are already suffering a crisis of confidence from being made to feel that they do not deserve funding, even when they need it.”

The Ubele Initiative⁴⁰

Opportunities for Funders

In the current climate, where holders of wealth are facing a reckoning with racial, gender and climate justice issues, it's vital that responses don't solely produce transactional solutions (e.g. bigger grants, adapted grant programmes, new funds), but also provide a sustainable way for organisations to generate income beyond the transient 'moment' where funding follows attention.

Organisations need support to exist in the hostile status quo, and the status quo needs to be challenged. We asked organisations what they wished funders would do differently, and alongside our other findings, we have 10 opportunities to share:

1 **Build Storytelling Capacity** – digital platforms are tools, but the materials that fundraisers need to build success are about storytelling and narrative skills. Funders must invest in digital tools alongside supporting organisations to be able to speak about their work in a compelling, accessible and equitable way, and to help 'build public commitment to change on racism by illustrating systemic racism and justice in more tangible, relatable ways and by painting a vivid picture showing that another world is possible'⁴¹. This could be through the funding of specialist training and guidance around communicating race (similar to Garfield Weston Foundation's Communicating Climate programme)⁴², but also providing robust, nuanced feedback on grantees' communications, or investing in external expertise from BAME-led providers to do so (remembering that funders' perspectives on what narratives are effective may not be aligned with what online audiences respond to, or what is most effective in creating change overall). It is also vital that this focus does not replicate White Supremacy Culture's worship of the written word⁴³ - writing is not the only (or even the most effective) way to tell stories online.

“““

How we talk about 'race', racism and racial justice matters if we want to call more of the public more powerfully to our cause and create demand for action. We need to access the range of public thinking on our issues and speak in a way that is mindful of this.

Sanjiv Lingayah, Elena Blackmore and Bec Sanderson (Runnymede Trust)⁴⁴

2 **Solidarity Against the Reactionary Backlash** – racism, particularly relating to the Black Lives Matter movement and reckoning with the UK’s colonial past, is a key battleground in the growing media-hyped ‘culture wars’ in this country. This contributes to many of the issues organisations find in communicating effectively and safely about racism online. Progressive funders wanting to act in solidarity could consider emulating a surprising sect of the philanthropy world: far-right philanthropy. The proliferation of far-right economic and social ideas in the public and political spheres is in no small part due to the funding of think tanks, research, polling and market testing, as well as the development of key messages, frameworks and toolkits, provided by right-wing philanthropists (particularly in the USA⁴⁵). As well as supporting organisations with their own storytelling around racial justice, investing in a high-calibre ecosystem of materials for organisations working on racism - materials they can use in solidarity with each other - has the potential to make the sector greater than the sum of its parts. Think tanks like Runnymede Trust and their work on ‘Reframing Race’, and New Economy Organisers Network’s ‘Divide and Rule’ work on the ‘culture wars’⁴⁶ are great places to start.

“”

Grant conditions can be an effective way to accelerate progress [towards anti-racism]. The fact is what donors ask for often immediately becomes a priority for fundraising organisations. This power dynamic is problematic, but if there were ever a time to wield your power for good, this is it.

Aanchal Clare (Grant Givers Movement)⁵¹

“”

Funders, whether of political parties or civil society, can make a huge difference to whether the solidarity playbook is adopted. (...) Progressive philanthropists have much to learn from the conservative funders about coordination, strategic patience, embracing risk and taking an ecosystem approach that helps deliver paradigm shifts.

Kirsty McNeill and Roger Harding (Fabian Society)⁴⁷

3

Support Anti-Racism Initiatives - the majority of leaders in UK charities are white. 9% of all fundraisers are BAME, and even in BAME-focussed organisations it’s still only 13%⁴⁸, meaning even organisations that are working on racism can sometimes be fundraising in a white-normative way or fostering workplace cultures that are impacted by racism. Tackling racism is about more than diversity. Yet, the organisations we spoke to wanted support to build the pipeline of racially diverse workers entering the charity sector and fundraising professions to enable their online fundraising success. Funders can help by setting meaningful expectations with grantees around anti-racism, as well as supporting sector-wide organisations addressing this from practical, political and transformative angles⁴⁹. This need also echoes a main recommendation from the Voice4Change Home Truths report⁵⁰ that funders should invest in a ‘DEI Transformation Fund’ for the sector.

“““

We can't extrapolate the third sector's problems from American society or even British society. (...) It's said we have loads of data and people aren't acting on it, but [there is still a need to] help us establish what is unique about the charity and community sector.

Kunle Olulode (Voice4Change England)⁵⁴

5

Commission Specialist Support - there have been explicit calls for umbrella organisations and specialist membership groups for charities facing racial injustice for a long time⁵⁵, and initiatives like Money4YOU's BAMER HUB, Ubele Initiative and Imkaan exist to meet this need but remain sorely underfunded. Fundraisers often benefit most from accessing training from within their communities, rather than parachuted-in specialists from outside. Funders can therefore support the development and delivery of specialist training, conferences and capacity building programmes (such as AVOCADO+, Money4YOU's BAMER HUB, Lightful's BRIDGE programme for racial justice, and #BAMEOnline), but also commission more hands-on consultancy and agency style support from BAME-led providers.

4

Commission Research & Support Open Data - this report, alongside many others we have referenced, highlights the dire need for more data and information on the needs, experiences, motivations and behaviours of donors that distinguishes between ethnic, religious and otherwise marginalised groups. Blackbaud's US-focussed 'Diversity In Giving' report⁵² is a good example of what could benefit the UK fundraising sector, and Black Fundraisers UK (a group within The Chartered Institute of Fundraising) is already doing some research on the Black Philanthropic Pound⁵³, but much more funding is required to provide the kind of information that could help change, inform and improve practice within the sector. Funders could also play a role in influencing existing report providers and benchmarking tools to include race and ethnicity in their methodologies going forward.

“““

One can learn about generic things on these courses, but it means different things to every single organisation. What we need is consultants so that all these great ideas can happen but in a sensible order. We are the creatives, what we need is the time and capacity and strategy.

Priscilla Akutu-Carter (Encouraging Her)

Influence Membership Groups – as well as specialist support, the need for general membership groups to mainstream a racial lens within their work is essential. This means not only providing spaces by-and-for people who face racial injustice, but also incorporating an awareness of race, and a practice of anti-racism, into everything that the largest sector bodies – such as NCVO, CIOF, and ACEVO – do, thereby reaching more organisations and fundraisers, and ensuring ‘generic’ training and support is useful for more groups. Funders have the potential to champion these changes, and playing a part within umbrella organisations enables funders to impact engagement with online donors via routes other than the efforts of their own grantees.



Funders assess applications and measure success through taken for granted ways of recognising value. These ways are bound up with race, class, gender and all other forms of inequality and prejudice that exist within society, and lead to misrecognition of groups that fall outside the dominant culture. For user led organisations to be recognised as valuable they often have to decode how value is recognised within funding spaces, rather than telling their stories in the ways that are most authentic to them.

Farah Elahi (Greater London Authority)



Organisations are often excluded from fundraising conferences due to prohibitive costs, but also excluded by the lack of representation and not being able to see themselves reflected in the programmes and the audiences.

Jon Cornejo (#CharitySoWhite)⁵⁶



7 Give Up Restrictive Control – as with every other piece of research we have ever done in every field and sector, 100% of survey respondents and focus groups shared that unrestricted, core funding would enable them to spend more time on organisational development priorities, including digital capabilities. Most organisations are tied down by siloed pots of project funding and top-down funder priorities, with no room to manoeuvre on any overhead costs, and no capacity for any other approaches. Loosening restrictions, encouraging mission-based grant proposals rather than project-based ones, taking a strengths-based approach to assessment, and allowing larger proportions of budgets to be used for overheads and fundraising, could be a silver bullet for many of the problems detailed in this report. Setting the overall objectives of a particular funding programme in a less-restrictive or top-down way may also enable more organisations to set their own agendas in relation to digital and sustainability.



We can expect our grantees to have greater expertise than us on programmatic things, but when it comes to operational expectations we have of them (around strategy, finance, fundraising, technology, management), we cannot ask of them what we cannot do ourselves.

Anonymous Grant Giver



Digitally Upskill Yourself - Funders wanting to build capacity in organisations to do digital fundraising and storytelling (or diversify their funding in other ways) do not usually have a good understanding of digital (or fundraising) themselves. They also do not often have good digital communications skills. We heard from many organisations that the expectations placed on them by funders were not backed up by expertise or examples of good practice from the grant giving team, and made them feel 'set up for failure', without clear measures or roadmaps to success. Ensuring that grant givers have, or can access, expertise on what they are expecting or requesting of grantees could have a positive ripple effect throughout partnership working. This goes for anti-racist practices, as well as digital skills.



Infrastructure is defined as support to strengthen and support voluntary sector organisations. It is a vital, if 'hidden' service. Yet all too often infrastructure groups find it hard to get funding themselves. Without infrastructure many charities would struggle to survive.

Lester Holloway (Voice4Change England)⁵⁷



Create an Enabling Environment – even the most highly trained, best supported, and equitably funded organisation will still need to take their digital fundraising out into the 'hostile environment', and funders can play a unique role in making that easier and safer. A primary way of doing this is supporting specialist infrastructure bodies and membership groups for the racial justice sector, both with their existing work, as well as innovating to meet the new and evolving needs of the digital world. Another opportunity in this regard is the funding of free or lower-cost collective access to better systems for online fundraising – such as platforms, advertising credits, databases, consumer research, marketing and brand comparisons and other prohibitively expensive tools that underpin the digital fundraising successes of larger organisations. One thing that came through very strongly in the surveys and interviews was that free or affordable access to existing high-quality solutions (for example, Facebook Ads, JustGiving, Hootsuite, and similar) was preferred over the development of bespoke solutions.



... need to provide more financial support to civil society organisations working to tackle gendered and other types of abuse and harassment online and fund digital citizenship education initiatives. Funding is particularly vital to civil society organisations working with marginalised communities.

*Glitch*⁵⁹

10

Support Online Safety Initiatives - initiatives like **Glitch** are working to make the internet a safer place for everyone, and are calling on Tech Companies to meet minimum standards around safety online. As well as resourcing this kind of work within civil society, and leveraging their social and economic position to apply pressure to tech companies to improve how they manage online spaces, funders have a huge opportunity to resource the research and evidence base for the impact of intersectional online abuse, to support organisations in advocating for protection, transparency, accountability, and remediation.

None of these opportunities are presented in isolation from the imperative for funding organisations to address their own white dominant culture. This report's focus on digital fundraising as a path towards a more equitable distribution of resources in the non-profit sector does not negate the need for funding organisations to 'get their own houses in order' on matters of diversity, power and anti-racist practices. None of these opportunities will be successful, or sustainable, for funders who are failing to address these issues holistically across their work. There is no place for tokenistic approaches.



Systemic racism received much greater national attention in 2020, but it will take much more than months of conversation for things to improve; it will take a life-long commitment on the part of foundations to help move the needle.

*Ellie Buteau (Centre for Effective Philanthropy)*⁶⁰

Opportunities for Fundraisers

What is clear from this report is that most challenges fundraisers face when speaking about racism online are a product of systemic racism, and beyond any one individual or organisation's control. Whilst the mammoth task of dismantling white supremacy culture continues, however, there are some undeniable opportunities for digital fundraising to be made more accessible, safer and successful.

The recommendations shared here are a result of advice from the organisations we spoke to, examples of success, and aspirational calls to action by some of the infrastructure bodies expertly supporting organisations in tackling racial injustice. None of the recommendations are one-size-fits all, but it is our hope that the privileges afforded by effective digital fundraising programmes will feel within reach for more fundraisers:

1 Targeting the Politicisation Opportunity Gap –

The 'Politicisation' opportunity gap mentioned in Theme 2 (White Donor Normativity) is where most organisations have the potential to access new online audiences - moving people towards action by building digital relationships based on shared goals and solidarity. This is not about targeting donors based on their experiences of racism, or about explaining racism. It is about moving people up the Ladder of Engagement⁶¹ by inviting solidarity and providing small, easy actions they can take to create the better world that you are imagining. People need to understand, trust, and feel confident in championing the work before they give, and donors also need to see the work as part of a bigger picture of addressing racial injustice, and feel like they are helping to achieve change. Advocacy messages get more than 9 times the responses than fundraising ones,⁶² and tools like MobLab's **Campaign Canvas** can help any organisation to lay-out their role (and their donors' roles) in creating change.

“““

There are people out there who can give, will give, stay giving. We need to make friends with them, friendships do not work on shame, guilt, begging, anger, judgement, disrespect. Friends take time to make. Online friends can take longer. Friendships work on sharing, learning, listening, understanding.

Anonymous Survey Respondent

2 Building Community Around 'How' (Not Just 'Why')

– If focussing on 'Peers' (local community, people who will naturally 'get it'), there must be a focus on growing the size of the community being reached, not just talking to the same people. The principles of engagement mentioned above apply here too: building a relationship is vital – but there are some unique approaches organisations can take with their 'peers'. With people who really understand the need for the work, the potential lies in engaging them in how it's being done. Why is it unique, urgent, and the right fit for their priorities? What is it about it that would make them proud to be associated? What would make them champion the work to others? Online messages that give a sense of being part of a movement with a unique identity can really help. This can also provide the added potential and security of regular or repeat giving. Tools like Social Change Agency's Movement Building Canvas can help to plan this kind of work, and examples of successful [Community Centric Fundraising](#) are an inspiration.

3 **Unleashing the Power of Storytelling** – The way we tell stories always changes depending on who is listening – and most organisations focus on getting their communications right for their most valuable audiences: typically foundations or local government. This tends to require formal, hyperbolic, or even dispassionate messaging, and it can be hard to convert these messages into compelling and appropriate online content that motivates everyday donors to engage. What we have seen and heard from our research is the power of centring 'Black joy'⁶³ and 'Black excellence' – telling stories about the work that centre dignity and ambition, and 'painting a vivid picture showing that another world is possible'⁶⁴. Most organisations already have an abundance of stories - and hopes - that could be shared but the existence of programmes like Reframing Race (that suggest effective stories, metaphors and language), OpenGlobalRights' Hope Based Communications, and generally aligning with the content of popular campaigns in the sector means generating ideas is even less of a barrier to getting started.

“”

We all want justice, but that will not happen tomorrow. What can our supporters feel part of tomorrow? This is what we ask ourselves. You want to stop being racially profiled? Tomorrow we can educate this class on their rights. You want there to be no borders? Tomorrow we can amplify this refugee's story.

Anonymous Interviewee

“”

Our focus should not be on convincing white people to work and think in a different way, as great as that would be. Instead, we should concentrate on playing to our strengths and reinvesting our diverse skill set into the political bloc we find ourselves in by default.

George The Poet⁶⁵

“““

Newsdesk thinking is more than a process, it's state of mind backed up by practical steps so when you have an idea you have the tools and processes already established to make it happen.

Paul de Gregorio (Rally) and Katherine Sladden (Chorus Campaigns), 2019⁶⁷

4

Applying 'Newsdesk' Thinking to Digital Communications

– The speed with which things move and change online can feel daunting for many organisations. A tip from Rally and Chorus Campaigns is to take lessons from the way media outlets prepare to respond quickly to new information and spot opportunities⁶⁶. This 'newsdesk' approach requires strong familiarity with your organisation's interests and values, an openness to risk-taking, and the creation of systems and tools for a more spontaneous and reactive communications style which will allow your organisation to identify relevant news and trends as they emerge and capitalise on these accordingly. This shift in mindset and method can support organisations to keep up with the fast-paced, ever-evolving digital world and leverage public interest in a specific issue while it is still high.

“““

Institutional racism is as prevalent in the charity sector as any other walk of life. Its presence feels jarring given the implicit perception of voluntary and not-for-profit organisations as places explicitly created to do good, but you never have to look far to uncover it.

Emily Burt (Third Sector Magazine)⁶⁸

5

Developing Anti-Racist Organisational Practice

– Donors respond to authenticity, and racial justice work cannot be successful if the perspectives of people who don't experience racism are centred. This means that organisations' staff must represent the communities they're working with, the stories and imagery used online must be respectful and dignified, and the ways messages and campaigns get developed must have an anti-racist lens applied. This is not only to prevent mistakes and offense, but to ensure the organisation can meet its goals in an equitable and sustainable way. Anti-racism is important for every type of organisation but it can definitely be a fatal flaw in ones tackling racial injustice.

Budgeting for Digital & Advertising Costs –

Digital fundraising is a definite ‘spend money to make money’ tool, and with organic reach on Facebook standing at around 6%, investing time in digital and money in social media advertising are two major keys to success⁶⁹. Alongside our recommendations above for funders to support organisations with resourcing their digital activities, it is vital for organisations to budget for these costs, and include them in their grant requests and overhead costs, so content about racial justice becomes more commonplace for digital users and isn’t relegated to a viral trend.



The BLM spike in donations is the exception that proves the rule - it was reactive giving, not sustainable, and not giving in response to the work being done so much as white guilt or performative giving.

Anonymous Interviewee



We thought our supporters liked us because we help them feel honourable, but someone said they found it embarrassing, so now we share stories of the difference they make, not the contributions, and we have more people interested. We always ask people how they like what we share now.

Anonymous Survey Respondent



Ask What People Want - To combat having no data on what donors who face racial injustice want, organisations can begin to collect their own insights and information. This doesn’t have to be through complex analytics or huge databases. It can be as simple as asking an online audience what they like through open questions, polls, or games that make use of platform features (e.g. ‘like this post if you...’). Asking current or historic donors why they give can also be an invaluable source of information, and help organisations to tailor their digital communications to those motivations.

“”

The competition is imposed on the community because there is a narrative around scarcity that is tiring to challenge. Working with an abundance mindset, not a scarcity one, and knowing that marginalised communities will support each other, means it's possible to not have to struggle with constantly communicating the purpose of your work.

Guppi Bola (JCWI & Decolonising Economics)

9

Creating an Enabling Environment – All organisations tend to model themselves after the funders they engage with when they feel it will make success more likely. However, emulating governance and finance practices is vastly different to ‘emulating whiteness’. The lack of diversity and tone-policing about race within fundraising is a huge symptom of this: even organisations working on racism can be perpetuating it within their fundraising and digital teams. Fundraising managers and organisational leaders can ensure they are cultivating the confidence and power of their teams. For digital fundraising in particular, where rapidly generating content ideas is key, no one should have to ‘tone down’ what they’re passionate about or avoid the topic of racism where it’s relevant. Equally, biases and assumptions around race when defining online audiences and ‘donor personas’ or archetypes must be named and challenged, too.

8

Collaborating With ‘Competitors’ – Competing for resources with organisations doing similar work is damaging to the sector overall, especially when so many of the things that underpin digital success are about investment of time, energy and money. Although it can be a difficult barrier to cross, organisations have been working in consortia or networks for decades to access foundation and government funding – so why not digital donors too? We heard from so many organisations that forming a community around fundraising, sharing the costs of fundraising expertise or marketing agencies, and uniting around a shared message had been the key to their successes. One survey respondent referred to this as ‘building our own tables, instead of asking for a seat at someone else’s’.

“”

We often fall into the trap of thinking ‘we’re doing everything for the greater good’, so we sometimes miss that the greater good can be about including people in decisions, discussions, management, training, delivery and the jobs that are available in the sector.

Kemar Walford (Black Fundraisers UK)⁷⁰

10

Ditch the Written Word – The concerns many organisations have around language barriers and the process of drafting and approving written communications are a blessing in disguise: online donors don’t like reading as much as they like watching! Social video generates 1200% more shares than text and image content combined, and viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video compared to 10% when reading it in text⁷¹. Most organisations are better off sharing images and videos that represent their work. These don’t need to be long or professional either. Most viewers watch for about 10 seconds and authentic ‘unedited’ content has become more and more of a norm for all kinds of brands online.

Conclusion

We at Money4YOU welcome this report from I.G. Advisors, which comes at a vital time for the BAMER* non-profit sector. Money4YOU exists to tackle inequality by teaching people how to make money, helping organisations to raise funds and supporting everyone to make the most of their resources.

We have been working directly with BAMER* groups since our founding in 2014, but have never seen so many varied and significant challenges for our members as we have in the last 18 months. We realised early during the COVID-19 crisis that our flagship **AVOCADO+ Accelerator Programme** was even more oversubscribed than usual, and that high-quality, online educational resources were desperately needed. So, in September 2020, we launched **BAMERHUB.com**.

One year on, our newly released BAMER HUB 2021 Impact Report⁷² found that fundraising was a challenge area for 80% of our member organisations, and 40% said the same for digital communications. BAMER groups are using their intimate knowledge of their own communities to reach out and help the most vulnerable and excluded, but they face enormous challenges: most are very small and continue to operate with desperately limited resources. Partnering with I.G. Advisors to explore this issue from the grassroots and funder perspectives has continued to show the need for better fundraising, and better resources around fundraising - we're glad to see our members' voices represented throughout, sharing the realities of their work on the ground.

As a BAMER fundraiser or leader working to support your community, it's understandable to look at online fundraising and just see a path full of obstacles: the confidence to get started, the trust that anyone will contribute to your work, the fear of detracting from other worthy causes, knowing how to do it 'properly' and how to find the right donors for you. Our message to you is: your work deserves funding, and it is possible for you to succeed! We will be bringing the many opportunities shared in this report into our training and support programmes, and hope organisations and leaders feel empowered to use digital fundraising to build communities and movements towards a more just world.

We work with some incredible funders to deliver our programmes, and keep them free for groups to access, but this report shows that resources are not being shared enough, or in the right way. Making other forms of fundraising (digital, social enterprise, crowdfunding, community-based) more feasible and accessible is a systemic change that funders have a unique power to drive for BAMER groups, and we hope the opportunities in this report are heeded by all of the funders for whom 2020 was a long-awaited wake-up call on racial injustices.

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Money4YOU



* Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, Refugee

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