The Ukuaji

Wrap Up Report
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Prepared by

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words, lessons,
opportunities

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Insights

When our agency was approached by Metro United Way, to provide "grant writing support", to their youth serving agencies back in 2021, I was clear about restating that the *ask* includes the focus o*f capacity building and agency development*. I was also adamant about the fact that grant writing was more holistic in nature, and was not black and white; in regards to paperwork. I argued that it was more of a process that involved the clear cooperation of the "capacity builder and the agency itself." With this understanding, we were able to move forward with establishing the *Ukuaji*.

I see the *Ukuaji*, as an adaptation of an initiative that our agency had already established, called the *Douglas Project Initiative*. This initiative was born out of the challenges brought about by the pandemic, which centered around providing proposal/program development services for grassroot agencies (for profit and nonprofit), who were in dire need of pandemic related resources and funding. Our initiative pulled together a local pool of BIPOC scribes and agency developers; in order to address the real needs of these growing and or struggling agencies. The initiative, currently, has garnered a total of $657,101 in funding for grassroots agencies (this total currently includes agencies located in the state of Ohio).

I would like to send a shoutout to Felicia Young, via this report, who was a part of our original conversations about the Ukuaji, as well as the one tasked with finding the appropriate name for what I call a "community endeavor." Thank you and bless you Mrs. Young, for naming the *Ukuaji,* which means "growth." in Swahili. I would also like to send a shoutout to Reedmywords Inc., for serving as the collaborative scribe agency that assisted with proposal development and submissions.

In regards to reporting the current funding totals related to the Ukuaji (which are reported in the totals section), I would also like to add that, in our agency's opinion, funding is not the ultimate determiner that should be integrated into impact, as it relates to fortifying grassroot agencies. Components such as; *agency organization via an established narrative, developing an appropriate agency structure, proposal/program development, and acknowledgement of BIPOC and or grassroot agency models within an environment that is wrought with philanthropic redlining*, plays a big role in assessing impact.

Regards,

T. Semakula, principal (Buttafly Communications)

Agency Narratives

This proves to be an area that needs to be addressed as we look at the agency narratives that were assessed; per the Ukuaji. I would like to include the results of narratives that were assessed in Cohort one, who were grandfathered into Cohort two; yet they were only able to be engaged with consulting/coaching resources. Collectively, 20 agencies, were assessed and interviewed about their narratives. It is important for an agency to work from a strong narrative; as it contains the agency's mission, vision, programs, and activities. We are able to select an initiative that can be developed from the narrative; therefore composing a succinct program proposal that can be funded. It becomes a challenge when there is no solid narrative and or agency plan to refer to; which leads to questions about an agency's knowledge about structure and programming.

Narrative Key

- **Separate Narratives**– Established narratives, with mission, vision, programs and activities, and fact sheet included (presented as a document).

- **Brochures/ One page Write Ups**– Agency narrative on developed brochure and or brief write up, summarizes programming

- **Website Narrative**– Agency mission, programs and or services, provided via a website

- **No Distinct Written Narrative Exists**
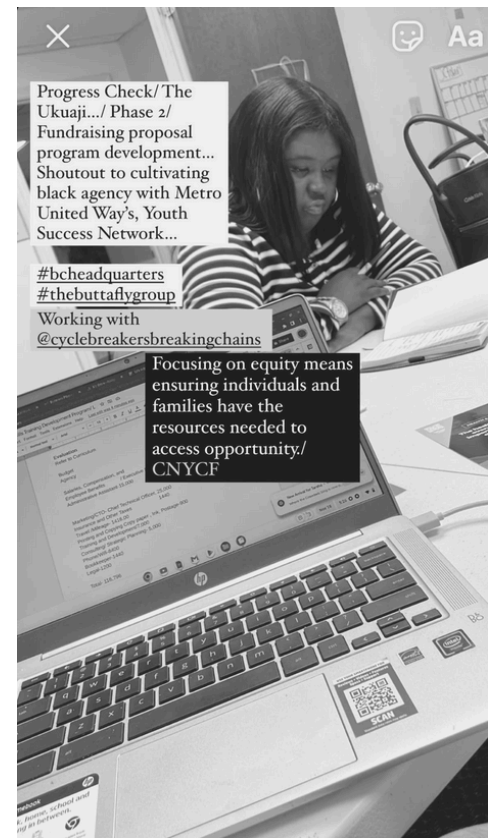
Agency totals , per Ukuaji/ Cohort 2			
Established Narratives/ Separate Document	Brochures/ One Page Write Ups	Website Narrative	No Distinct Narrative Existed
5	4	6	5

Appropriate Agency Structures

As we approached capacity building and funding proposal support for the Ukuaji, we included in our process an assessment of the agency's structure. The agencies that we assisted, required the structure of a 501c3, that was active and approved by the IRS, in order to be adequately prepared to seek funding. In our conversations, via the assessments, we became aware that not all of the agencies had achieved this required structure. Despite this challenge, we were able to submit proposals, on behalf of these agencies, however, this delayed some of the funding submittals and kept some agencies from applying for opportunities, earlier on in the process.
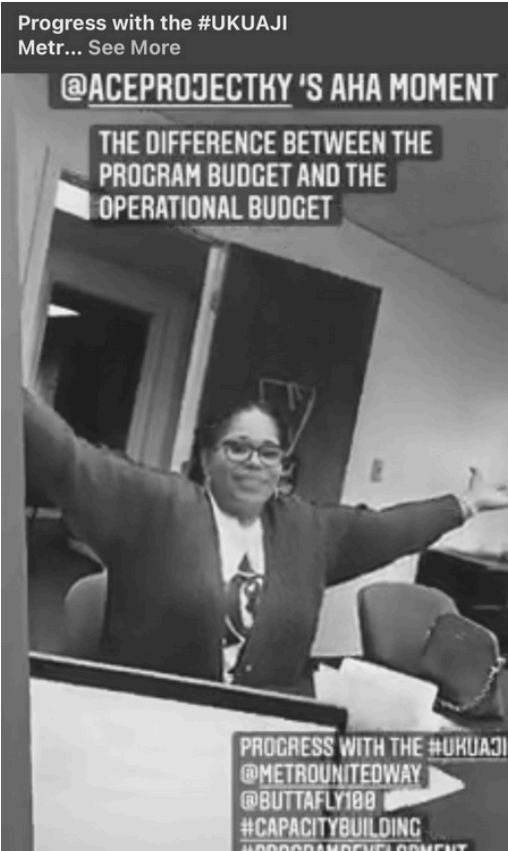
Cohort 2/ Agency Structure- New agencies for Cohort 2/ 14 agencies in total

Established 501c3	Incorrect Structure/Community Agency (Utilized a Fiscal Sponsor/Delayed Submittals	No 501c3 until After February, 2023/ Delayed Submittals/ Note- Buttafly served as a fiscal sponsor for one of these agencies, until approval was obtained.
11	1	2

Program/Proposal Development

As we look at the discussion about capacity building, we come to the dialogue about developing a complete program proposal that can be utilized as a tool via two ways (as a template that is referenced for grant applications, as well as utilized as a stand alone proposal, that can be funded). We have had participating agencies achieve funding success by utilizing these two paths, and we see this as a way to engage agencies with best practices, which requires them to be seen as "change agents" in the community, with their developed plans. We also see this as a way to get agencies to work on crafting their own programs. In our discussions with agencies, we emphasize the importance of developing programs and initiatives that are not just formulated from questions that they have to answer on a grant application. It is important that agencies formulate their own initiatives and programs based on the needs of the community that they serve. Plus, this forces funders to respect the sound programs that have been created by grassroot agencies. It also starts to push away the desires of some funders , which, at times, are counterproductive to the real needs of the community.

Currently, via the Ukuaji, we have composed 21 program proposals that serve as examples of program initiatives for 20 grassroot agencies. Click on the link to view the proposals

The Edge
L.A.S.T
R.E.D
Ace Entrepreneurship Program
Dare To Dream Program
The STEAM Project
Family Fun Math Explosion
We Can Achieve
The Braid School
The Leadership Program
La Escuelita Learning Hub
Ignite The Leader In Me
Choices and Consequences
PROM
Arts of Music Education
Tryp Proposal
All About Boys
Changing The Game
The L.I.F.E Program
Project Inspire Academy
Workforce Ready
Inside The Lines (Afterschool Tutoring)

One aspect of the Ukuaji ... shoutout to Metro United Way and its partnership with Buttafly

Shoutout to ACE Project

Programs are one major aspect of the non-profit's structure. The typical non-profit organizational structure is built around programs, that is, the non-profit provides certain major services, each of which is usually formalized into a program. / Source- Advice on Grant Seeking and Proposal Development

Stay tuned for Choices and Consequences (The Real World Tour). .. Supporting , cultivating, and developing Black Led agency models and programs...

#buttaflygroup

AN ACE PROJECT INITIATIVE

Choices and Consequences
The Real World Tour

Acknowledgement of BIPOC and or grassroot agency models within an environment that is wrought with philanthropic redlining...

It is important to acknowledge that *the climate that one is focused on nurturing agencies in,* needs to be addressed. This makes me think about the book of poetry that Tupac Shakur penned titled, *The Rose That Grew From Concrete.* I believe that local grassroot agencies here in the city of Louisville, are examples of what roses look like; once they have grown from concrete. I believe that we are tasked with growing these agencies from elements not conducive to their progress. We are working on assisting agencies who are redlined from substantial funding, due to the ethnic makeup of their founders, the demographic that they serve, and their labels; as grassroots. We have found that capacity building for these agencies proves to be a real task for local advocacy, and has fortified our agency to respond accordingly.

So, what does the current climate look like for these agencies?

*T**he current climate is unsupportive and hostile...***

Only 2.4 percent of the agencies in Louisville are Black Led (includes nonprofit and for profits)
Kentucky ranks 6th , in the nation, as a state that does NOT, support Black Agency

A Department of Justice Report, published a "recent", report on March 8, 2023, admonishing the discriminatory and exclusionary practices of Louisville Metro government, this ultimately transcends to the treatment of BIPOC and or grassroots agency, as they seek support and resources from the city. Hostility comes in the form of "very little funding," and or respect for the contributions of these agencies.

Some local funders are discouraging these agencies from "duplication", a term used by some funders to discourage creating programs with similar services. This term has been used to deny funding to local grassroots,even though they serve areas that could benefit from duplication. For example, due to the illiteracy levels of certain communities; that would benefit from a multitude of tutoring programs; some funders are investing in only one large nonprofit, for its tutoring program; and forcing the community youth to be on a waiting list for a slot.

Plus this proves to be discriminatory in nature as grassroots are "shamed" because they are small and have been told that they should be programs, instead of nonprofits. This train of thought , of course, is abandoned to areas of the community, such as The Highlands, which is celebrated for its small businesses and micro community agencies, and is seen as a progressive highlight in the city.

Agencies have been told by some funders that their budgets are not conducive enough for support from major funders, due to not reaching thresholds over 50, 000 in their budgets, and or they are too small to have what these funders call "real impact." This advice , has mostly been dished out to BIPOC and or grassroots agencies, and has created a concern for advocacy amongst activists and community change agents.

In addition, there is little acknowledgement of looking at BIPOC and grassroots agency models as valid, therefore these agencies have to over explain their program models, and they are often overlooked as they do not follow the traditional models that ignore cultural and or social mores. For example,successful Black agencies of the past and present era engender a spirit of care, meaningful dialogue, and consensus building for the benefit of the community. We call this approach "cooperative advantage" and see its roots in African traditions of cooperation such as Ubuntu, which means "I am, because we are.

Our agency has addressed this issue by creating an initiative called the "Go Lab", which encourages grassroots here in Louisville, to seek additional funding outside of Louisville; in order to be taken seriously and supported by funders who are passionate about funding nontraditional community agencies. We have been able to have some of the members of the Ukuaji take advantage of applying for outside funding; in order to lessen the incidences of redlining, agency microaggression, and discrimination. We are currently awaiting these outcomes and results.

Totals

Totals

Keep in mind that we are still tabulating results, as some submittals are still pending

Current Cohort 2 Totals

105,00 (10,000 contingent on final city council funding for La Escuelita

Building capacity and resources via the Ukuaji/ Progress Check...
@ets_braidschool_ky

<   Chyna Bradley   📞   •••

Hey love!

I wanted to reach out and thank you for everything you did for our organization this year!! I literally don't know what I'd do without you! The service you've provided is the help and guidance I've been looking for since 2018!!!!!! I know you know the impact you have on other organizations but I wanted to thank you personally!! I did our numbers today and this is how much we have bought in as of today.

ETS: $72,741 (Grants)
Braid School: $24,166.26
Braid & Go: $26,842.55

Total: $123,749.81

This would not have been possible without you!!