

Name of your organisation	Oxygen Arts CIC
Date of TFN event which you pitched at	20/04/2023
Name of the project TFN funded	Black British Ballet
Were you able to undertake your project as you outlined in the application?	Yes
Can you describe and/or demonstrate the specific impact that TFN funding has had against your initial objectives?	<p>The Black British Ballet project aims to document and celebrate the history of Black dancers in British ballet. BFN allowed us to create the Island Movements Windrush themed ballet show, which aimed to demonstrate two things. That there is a cost effective way to bring ballet to a wider range of community venues and that there were diverse audiences who were prepared to see a different type of ballet, one that felt more rooted in their experiences.</p> <p>After just two weeks of rehearsals, we previewed an excerpt of the show in Brixton as part of Lambeth's official Windrush 75 celebrations in June 2023. This creation included the employment of two dancers from the project who had all but left ballet behind as choreographers, as well as engaging the youth music charity, Kinetika Bloco, to create an exceptional original score of calypso, reggae and jazz for the performance.</p> <p>This seed money was essential to supporting our Arts Council funding application, as so much of the development costs were covered we were able to make a small lottery grant application for the subsequent show tour in October 2023. This tour took place in 14 libraries around England, from Blackpool to Wiltshire, culminating in a performance at the Royal Opera House's Live at Lunch series to an audience of over 500 people.</p> <p>The tour was supported by a key partnership with Central School of Ballet, which offered us free rehearsal space as well as an informal sharing session with their students which gave us another opportunity to present the history of black dancers in British ballet to future professionals; an important objective in the wider project. It also allowed us to create a partnership with a community centre run by Berkeley Homes in south London, which offered us free more rehearsal space as well as paying for two performances of the show for their local community. We gained some lovely coverage for the June tour also, including a feature on ITV Evening News: https://blackbritishballet.com/articles/island-movements-in-the-news Survey feedback showed that 28% of our audiences were under 25, 42% were from the global majority and 42% had never been to the ballet before. Every single person who responded to our survey also stated that they wanted to see more shows like ours in their communities.</p> <p>The performances in libraries were so successful that it led to a further grant from the government's Windrush Day fund to support a second tour in June 2024 to 11 libraries in England and Northern Ireland, as well as Northern Ballet and Birmingham</p>

	<p>Hippodrome. This second tour also allowed us to create another important partnership with the Royal Academy of Dance, which hosted most of our rehearsals for free, followed by a dress rehearsal for over 200 of their local schoolchildren in Wandsworth. This is especially important as we'd previously struggled to engage them in the project and they are vital to our future plans to improve diversity within the wider industry as they train current and future ballet teachers on every level.</p> <p>In both tours, we also gave younger audiences aged 4-8, the opportunity to take part in the project by including a free interactive dance and book workshop based on our children's book Onisere and the Ballet Queen. Although this was not the intent, the workshops led to our original run of 400 books selling out as many of the libraries, schools and families who were involved in the workshops ordered copies of the books. We have now restocked!</p> <p>The original tour also helped to cement our partnership with Libraries Connected which has just led to the successful award from Heritage Lottery to fund an exhibition 15 month tour of 24 library services with a range of supporting activities (including the show!) supplied by Oxygen Arts which will generate regular income for our organisation through to the end of the financial year ending April 2026.</p> <p>Finally, the MSN fund has also just agreed to fund the extension of our pilot mentoring programme for young Black dancers to encourage them to remain in ballet. This extra funding means that we will be able to recruit more dancers to the pilot and to pay our dancers from the project, who will act as mentors, a fee that reflects the value of their contribution.</p>
What portion of the project did TFN fund?	100%
How many direct beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	Four dancers, two choreographers
How many indirect beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	Audience of 250
Were you able to leverage further funding as a result of TFN support?	Yes
If yes, how much were you able to raise and from whom?	<p>£29,950 Arts Council England, September 2023 £35,515 Windrush Day Grant Scheme, March 2024 £4,900 MSN Fund, June 2024 £246,795 (Joint with Libraries Connected), Heritage Lottery Fund, July 2024</p>
Did you receive any pro-bono support, volunteer offers or introductions as a result of the event?	Yes

<p>If yes, please can you provide details of the support you received?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buff Studies, whose director, Emmanuel Anyiam-Osigwe MBE, was present at our original pitch agreed to produce our project documentary, The Colour Barre, giving us valuable support and insight into commercial film distribution. 2. The MSN fund has also offered us pro bono finance management support as part of our grant agreement.
<p>How important was TFN funding in helping you achieve your objectives?</p>	<p>We wouldn't have been able to achieve our objectives without TFN funding</p>
<p>Has the training you received from TFN better prepared you in pitching your organisation to potential funders?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Has TFN increased your capacity to raise further funds?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of the project?</p>	<p>'Excellent, powerful messages communicated with passion. Loved exploring the issues via the Q&A.'</p> <p>'Excellent, much needed in this town to raise aspirations.'</p> <p>'Very powerful and emotional. I could relate to the racism/discrimination being a grandchild of a person of colour. This story should be performed in schools in predominantly white areas to increase awareness.'</p> <p>Audience feedback on Island Movements in October 2023.</p> <p>Please can I, on behalf of Redditch Council, thank Darren, Wesley, Taylor, and the other dancers for their magnificent performance in Redditch Library this afternoon? The amount of work that this company have put into telling such a poignant and relevant story is enormous and to bring it free to the community was an amazingly generous gesture.</p> <p>I feel strongly that the Windrush story needs to be made an integral part of history education in this country and not just one month a year. I have championed it since I learned about it in 2009 and sharing it with my classes ever since. Island Movements was a terrific way in... thought provoking and poignant, and promoting a terrific discussion after the performance.</p> <p>Please keep me updated with whatever Black British Ballet Company does in the future so that I can give better advance warning to our town. I'm a complete fan. Thank you.</p> <p>Many thanks, Cllr Juliet Barker Smith</p> <p>'Middlesbrough Library Service hosted a performance of 'Island Movements' in October 2023. The event was a huge success, and was held at a centre where members of the community would not be able to access heritage events or ballet. As a service, we have hosted many events over the years, however we have never hosted an event where the audience were so engaged and</p>

	involved with the performance, and clearly wanted to know more.’ Diane Fleet, Library Development Manager
Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any other significant changes?	We’ve been able to take on a freelance Creative Producer who is supporting our fundraising and project management. We also have someone who has volunteered to support our fundraising who has already secured us £6000 to deliver project related activities in East London as well as promoting our organisation to individual givers. Finally, we are now exploring a social investment opportunity with Trust for London to help improve our financial resilience and increase our unrestricted income.
Do you have any other comments or feedback on the experience of the TFN process?	We could not have imagined at the start of this process the immense impact that the BFN grant and network have had on our organisation. The ongoing support and networking has also brought huge benefit to us and to the project.