

For Public Access



Leadership and Community Development Programme for BPOC Team Members

1-year Evaluation Report

Introduction from the CEO

I am so proud to share our evaluation of the first complete year of BGP's Leadership and Community Development Programme for BPOC team members. Devised at the end of 2019, we have had the honour of working with some brilliant people to ensure that not only is BGP a diverse and inclusive place to work, but that those who come into the organisation are able to thrive, not just survive in the UK charity sector. In turn, this work, coupled with anti-oppression training for the whole team, ensures that as an organisation, we are able to carry out our work with asylum seekers, refugees and people who are less likely to access period products in a careful and caring way, which challenges the systems of oppression we exist within.

This programme would not be in place without Nova Reid, who worked with the trustees and myself over 2 years ago in a warm and encouraging fashion to challenge us to change the roadmap of BGP. Similarly, I am indebted to Seyi Falodun-Liburdu who created and runs the programme with a wealth of warmth, expertise and enthusiasm. You'll hear more from her below. I am also so grateful to the team and trustees of BGP who have actively and passionately encouraged this work and make me proud every day to lead them.

We wanted to make this evaluation publicly available in the hope that other charities and institutions create similar opportunities to work to undo racism within the sector and beyond.

Why did we decide to create this programme?

"Racism affects who works in the charity sector, who gets funding, what issues are prioritised, how strategies are developed and who is prioritised to receive help."

Charity So White¹

Bloody Good Period has prided itself on being an organisation with anti-racist values from its inception. From refusing to use "poverty porn" which disproportionately exploits Black and Brown people, to placing refugee women and people who menstruate at the forefront of the

¹ <https://charitysowhite.org/faqs>



conversation without mining them for traumatic stories in order to fundraise, as an organisation we have insisted on rejecting the colonialist style of charity. Instead, as a proudly Jewish woman, I wanted to build the organisation via the Jewish values of Tikkun Olam (Healing the World) and “justice, not charity”.

However, as BGP grew into more than just one founder it became clear that without realising, I was creating a workforce which looked like me, with white (and white functioning) women at the helm. I had set out to do this work to challenge the white saviour approach I saw so often in the menstrual charity world, and yet here I was, perpetuating it! It was clear that an intervention was necessary, and in 2019 I was lucky enough to meet anti-racism consultant, Nova Reid, and we started working together on ensuring a more diverse and inclusive staff, who felt supported and safe, and free to bring their whole selves to work in an industry which is notoriously racist. We have since worked with the brilliant Seyi Falodun-Liburd to create the programme you can read about below.

What you will read about below, is just one facet in our work to become an anti-racist organisation, and focuses on supporting our amazing team to ensure people who need them get the period products and menstrual education they deserve.

We know we still have work to do - being even more inclusive of people of all socio-economic backgrounds and different immigration status, as well as continuing our work on trans-inclusion, and bettering our work in disability inclusion. We also know we have work to do in engaging and centering the voices of the people we work with. Periods are still, to many, the source of great shame and trauma. Early on in BGP, most of the women I met told me they did not want to talk about them publicly, and only wanted to receive the products they needed, but I can see this changing, and more of the people we work with are keener to speak out. Adamant that we should avoid anything which felt transactional or extractive, we have, up till now, relied on knowing in ourselves how important it is to ensure anyone who needs them can access period products. However, we are now looking forward to bringing you more carefully sourced information about how the work we do helps people. 2022 will see us working on how we can record the impact of our work in a fair, caring and anti-racist way. These are just some of the ways we will continue our work, but for now, I'm excited for you to read about the first year of our leadership development programme.

Truly, our work is never done, but that doesn't mean for one bloody second that we are going to stop trying.

In solidarity,
Gabby Edlin



A note from the Programme Lead, Seyi.

The Leadership and Community Development Programme has far exceeded my expectations of what I thought care in the workplace could look like. Through this programme we have nurtured a space where staff receive support and space to explore their needs, advocate for themselves, build community and reflect on their learnings. It is unlike most professional programmes because it does not require one to erase parts of themselves, and it could only happen at an organisation like Bloody Good Period - a workplace that is deeply committed to learning, listening and acting.

Vitality, this programme was developed with an anti-racist lens to ensure that it is actively dismantling existing power structures, and giving care and attention to where we may unknowingly recreate violence against Black people and people of colour. I hope it offers an alternative model to what we know development in the workplace to be; and I hope it inspires people in positions of power to start making space so that their BPOC peers and colleagues can start bringing themselves to work as whole people.

Thanks to Nova for the spark; to Gabby and the trustees for holding themselves accountable; and to the BGP team for championing this work.

The biggest thanks goes to the programme participants who shaped and co-created the programme with me this year - look at what we built!

Gratefully,
Seyi

What is the Leadership Development Programme?

The Leadership Development Programme was designed at the end of 2019 to support and map the career development of Black employees and employees of colour at Bloody Good Period who are working towards leadership roles in the social justice space. The plan aims to help those individuals to:

- Develop the necessary skills and experience
- Develop meaningful and purposeful networks
- Deepen their understanding of the charity sector through training, mentoring and goal setting
- Deepen their understanding of organisational issues, i.e. menstrual equity
- Explore other roles and interests

Intentions of the evaluation:

- To outline the current status of the programme
- To feed back findings from the survey
- To highlight considerations moving forward

An overview of the programme

Since April 2020, there have been 5 people on the programme in total - each person has been integral in shaping the programme's intentions, outcomes and value. There are currently 3 people on the programme. All people on the programme are anonymous for their privacy. Their experiences are outlined below.

Team Member A

Team Member A was the first person on the programme when she joined in April 2020. In September 2020, she began her mentorship with Mentor A which is still ongoing. As Team Member A's first year on the programme drew to a close we agreed to remove the 1-year time limit and continue to provide the programme on an ongoing basis.

Team Member A's experience in her words: *I am really happy with my experience on the program. This programme has really built my confidence with goal-setting, voicing my opinion and reflecting in a safe space. I feel like I previously lacked confidence and have felt well supported whilst adjusting to a new role and industry in the midst of a pandemic.*

At first, I was really nervous about mentoring as previous attempts did not work out. I did not know what to expect, and I also hadn't focused properly on what I wanted to get from the programme. I now realise that mentorship is also dependent on the compatibility you have with mentor. Luckily for me, the first person who I matched with as a mentor was a really good choice for me. Navigating through my first year at BGP was definitely enhanced by this development programme, and was really helpful to have an objective voice outside of the organisation help to shape my professional development.

Regular meetings with my mentor gave me an opportunity to discuss my career aspirations with someone who held space for me to think openly without judgement. Overall, I have found the programme to have a profound effect on my personal life by boosting my confidence and creating a safe space to grow.

Note from Seyi: I've really enjoyed working with Team Member A! She's embraced the programme wholeheartedly, and her thoughts and opinions have helped to improve the programme for others. Really proud to see the growth in Team Member A's confidence and recognition of her own power.

Team Member B

Team Member B joined the programme in February 2021. She has had a coaching session with Mentor B and we're currently exploring the possibility of shifting that relationship into a mentorship.

Team Member B's experience in her words: *Extremely supportive and validating in my first few months at BGP!*

Note from Seyi: Team Member B is so enthusiastic about the potential of the programme so I'm really looking forward to seeing how she continues to develop and challenge herself, especially once we get a mentor!

Team Member C

Team Member C joined the programme in February 2021. Due to her heavy workload in the first few months of her role we agreed that Team Member C would benefit more from one-off coaching sessions rather than a consistent mentor. We are currently organising time with someone with campaigning expertise to support Team Member C's work on BGP's upcoming campaign.

Note from Seyi: *Team Member C's been great at letting me know when she needs space from the programme, which is vital! I'm looking forward to testing out the coaching model with Team Member C, I think it could really be valuable going forward.*

In the last year the programme has also included Team Member D and Team Member E.

Team Member D

Team Member D was on the programme from September 2020 to June 2021. In that time she began a mentorship that didn't get an opportunity to get off the ground due to lack of communication from the mentor. Towards the end of Team Member D's contract we agreed to aim towards securing her a mentor before she left.

Team Member D's experience in her own words: *Slow to get going. I didn't get a mentor until I left. The mentor I am hoping to go aheads with after leaving the program is the first person I suggested at the 1st or 2nd meeting so it's frustrating that it took so long. Especially because as soon as I asked her she said yes. But I waited to ask her until I'd meet with Joe's suggested mentor, who I had a bad feeling about. She took ages to reply and then dropped out after one meeting.*

I really like Seyi, she's great! Very knowledgable and helpful. The outline is great but I never got the chance to try it out

Note from Seyi: *Team Member D had quite a bit to contend with on this programme - different time zones, an unresponsive mentor and a temporary contract. I do think there is an important lesson around leaning into a gut feeling, which I can emphasize more when meeting new participants. I'm glad we were able to secure a mentor to support Team Member D as she decides what to do next.*

Team Member E

Team Member E joined the programme in September, during her 3 month internship at BGP. This gave us an opportunity to develop a more condensed and concise programme which consisted of short-term goal setting and one-off coaching sessions with BGP's trustees.

Team Member E's experience in her own words: I have loved every bit of the program. It has been great having different mentors to explore the same fields with very different lenses and journeys combined with you acting as a key emotional support.

Notes from Seyi: *Team Member E was eager to learn and brimming with ideas, she brought so much in such a short space of time. I could see how much she appreciated time with the trustees, I'm hoping she's able to internalise some of that wisdom.*

Thoughts about the programme from the BGP Team

To collect people's thoughts about the programme a survey was sent out to the BGP team, programme participants and non-participants, and mentors.

Limitations of survey: 7 responses were received from BGP staff members therefore feedback from mentors has not been included. The content below includes direct quotes from the survey data..

Question: For Bloody Good Period team members who are not on the programme, how do you feel about it?

The feelings about the programme from participants have been outlined in the previous section. BGP team members who are not participants on the programme generally felt the programme was positive:

- "It's been really great to see programme participants flourishing. The team feels vibrant, supportive and high performing, and I'm sure that the Leadership Development programme has played a huge part in that. It also feels completely the right thing for Bloody Good Period to be doing."
- "Without knowing the programme inside out, I'd say it feels valuable; it feels like a point of difference for BGP; it feels empowering"
- "I hope that it's going some way to reconfigure the structures of racism in the charity sector. I hope it's also a way to ensure Black people and People of Colour feel supported working in BGP."

Question: What kind of impact do you think the programme has had on the organisation? Most people believed that the programme has had a positive impact on individual team members and BGP as a whole, particularly on its work around anti-racism and equity:

- "A positive one, I think. From what I can see, it has allowed Team Member A (who's been in the programme longest) to feel that she can be herself at work and therefore flourish. Perhaps not directly the question, but I also feel that Seyi (you!) has a positive impact on the team in yourself - offering an experienced and critical eye on things."

- “It is a huge sign of our commitment to equity and lives up to the organisations principles! It's also great to see the confidence it has given certain team members to go further within their personal development.”
- “As above. Personally it's been part of my own work on examining my own beliefs and privilege as a white woman, alongside the other anti-racism work committed to by BGP.”

Question: What would you change about the programme?

There were a range of useful suggestions focused building on the structure of the programme, some of which are already being implemented and outlined in the next section:

- “I would want the programme to change how other charities work too! (but very aware this is capacity dependant for all of us!)”
- “More time with Seyi to develop your personal path and plan!”
- “This programme was helpful however, I found it really vague and daunting in the beginning. I am happy that I stayed the entire course of the programme. I would only advise creating a handbook to go alongside the programme.”
- “If there were a way of building a pool of mentors who could be assigned sooner, that'd be good. I appreciate that selection has been bespoke up to now, but just a thought.”

Moving forward

Below are some thoughts about how we are moving forward with the programme:

- We'll be identifying opportunities for more connecting peer space that's actually embedding into the programme
- As suggested above, we are currently working on a programme handbook that gives people a clearer picture of what to expect
- Flexibility is key - adapting the programme for people's circumstances/needs has been vital to their engagement
- The beginning of the programme can be quite an intense time. Participants are settling into a new role and team, getting used to a completely different working culture, and trying to make sense of the programme - but all of that takes time. Offering a mentorship to someone on a temporary/short-term contract could feel like wasting time. It may be better to offer one-off coaching sessions with the trustees or an appropriate volunteer.
- As suggested above, we are starting to build a cohort of mentors and coaches. More on that soon!



Some thoughts from Seyi

- Name of the programme - As the programme has developed the focus has shifted away from leadership onto building community and developing learning. I think 'Community and Learning Development Programme' may fit better.
- The last year, and responses from the survey, show that a role like mine is vital, having a non-judgemental, warm and encouraging space for participants besides mentorship and line management is integral to the programme.
- Most of the suggestions and ambitions for the programme will require more capacity which I don't currently have. It would be useful to have a conversation about how we ensure this programme is resourced appropriately.

Written by Seyi Falodun-Liburd