

LUMUMBA BANDELE IN PARIS

Looking back at the events held from
February 21 to February 26, 2023

Paris, Vaulx-en-Velin, Bagnolet, La Courneuve



A decorative orange starburst graphic is positioned in the top left corner, consisting of several small star shapes connected by thin lines.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	FOREWORD
3	INTRODUCING LUMUMBA BANDELE
4	THE PROJECT
5	THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PROJECT
6	THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS
7	THE SESSIONS
24	FEEDBACKS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS
27	THE BUDGET
28	SPECIAL THANKS

A decorative orange starburst graphic is located in the bottom right corner, similar to the one in the top left, featuring star shapes connected by lines.

FOREWORD

The reason we decided to dedicate a significant portion of our resources on Lumumba Bandele's visit in February 2023 is because his coming to France was part of a long-term collective endeavor : structuring our multidisciplinary and multi-sector community which is driven by common vision and values, so as to foster collaboration on future projects and the building of successful coalitions.

Lumumba Bandele's visit aimed at providing participants with a unique collective space, and allow each one of them to discover how – regardless of field or sector – anyone can effectively contribute to our shared cause, thus increasing the impact of those who fight for their rights, for justice and for the respect of people's dignity.

A few months later, the impact of this initiative is clear :

- 20 of our community members who work in fields such as the arts, politics, entrepreneurship, training and even philanthropy joined a collective community organizing training, and have been helping each other out on a daily basis since then
- Approximately 10 of our community members – who all work in the aforementioned fields and are involved in different sectors – have applied to Harvard Kennedy School's community organizing class
- Three of our community members have taken up new responsibilities in structuring the community

In a broader perspective, Lumumba's words still echo in all of the participants' minds and now have become a shared reference within the community.

It was important for us to make our events as accessible as possible to our participants. This is why we prioritized live translation during the discussions, transportation and housing fees and inclusive meals, and paid or covered the expenses of anyone involved in the coordination of the project. As a result, this report will be the only communication material documenting this adventure, which was nonetheless a turning point in our collective progress.

We are beyond proud to share it with you.

The Next Level Team

INTRODUCING LUMUMBA BANDELE

Co-founder of the Black August Hip Hop Festival, Lumumba Bandele is a pillar of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement in New York, the co-founder of Communities United for Police Reform, and one of the architects of the Movement for Black Lives, which gathers all the organizations fighting for the respect of Black people's dignity and Black lives in the United States.



©Maonghe.M

An artist, community organizer, as well as a strategic advisor to different collectives, entrepreneurs and artists in the United States, he also teaches community organizing at The City University of New York (CUNY).

He came all the way from Brooklyn in February 2023 and stopped by Vaulx-en-Velin, Bagnolet, La Courneuve and Paris to meet with collectives and individuals that strive to bring positive change to their communities. A way for him to share his experience, and the lessons learned over the past 25 years.

This report revisits the key moments of this project, its key figures, the series of events that were held between February 21 and 26 on different topics, and the lessons our community at Le Next Level learned from it.

This project was designed with members from Cergy Demain, Destins Liés, Féministes contre le cyberharcèlement, Give and Receive, Lallab, la Marche Féministe et Antiraciste, Repairs, Rhizhome Project and Une Voie Pour Tous. None of this would have been possible without our partners, co-organizers and supporters.

THE PROJECT

The project allowed for our community to **revisit and reflect on their own experience in light of Lumumba Bandele's**, through a series of panels, intimate conversations and public events where Lumumba shared his learnings over 25 years of organizing, and the major challenges one should be prepared to face when fighting for racial and social justice.



Among the topics addressed during these six days:

- **The interdependence between community organizing, service, the arts, canvassing, the role of philanthropy** and their role in the evolution of public narrative, policy making and initiatives that have an impact on racialized communities.
- **Building of sustainable social movements in the face of disruptive factors**, both internal and external (public attacks, coercion, internal conflicts, divergent interests, violence against women and members from the LGBTQIA+ communities...)
- **Effective strategies against police brutality**, through copwatching and know-your-rights efforts
- **Organizing for the rights of incarcerated people** with their families

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PROJECT

The dedicated team at Le Next Level

★ Barry Sy-Valade



★ Asma Belhassan

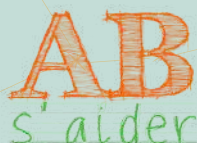


★ Tara Dickman



★ Fatima Hammouch

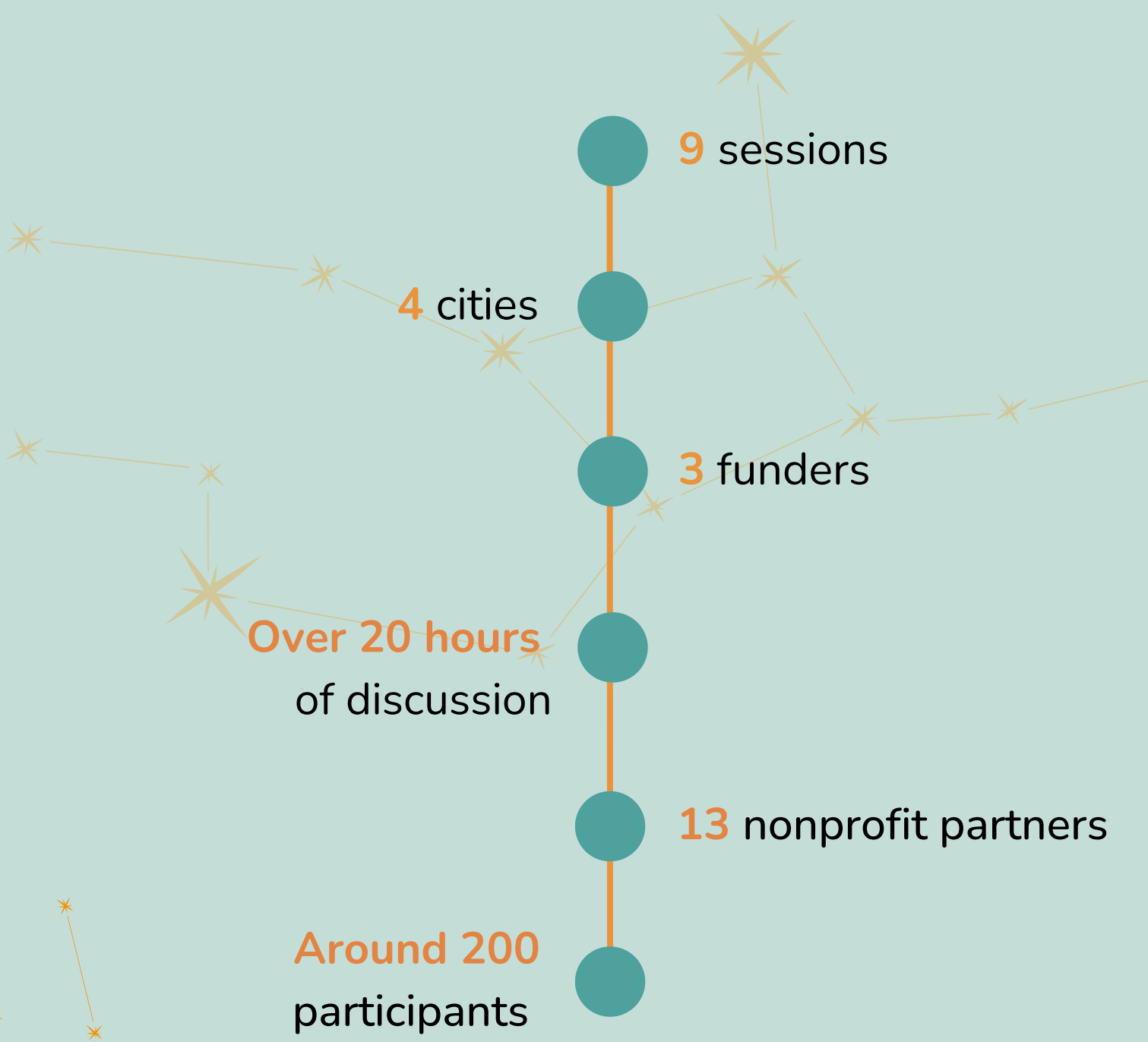
The co-organizers

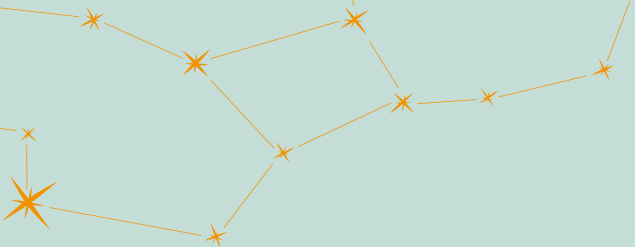


The funders



THE PROJECT, IN NUMBERS





THE SESSIONS



SESSION 1 INDEPENDENCE AS A CONDITION FOR COMMUNITY AND MEMORIAL ACTION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2023

VAULX-EN-VELIN

35 PARTICIPANTS

We started the session in Vaulx-en-Velin by visiting the National E-sport Club Community Center to **discuss the conditions under which community centers can lead independent actions to serve their constituency.**

Mehdi Bensafi, the co-founder of the National E-sport Club Community, asked Lumumba about the business models that allow nonprofits to find the right balance between their independence, but also the respect of their values and missions.

For Lumumba : *"The situation is complex in the United States. Being an entrepreneur brings capitalism to people's minds, but you cannot serve a community with a capitalist model, especially when it comes to younger generations."*



©LeNextLevel



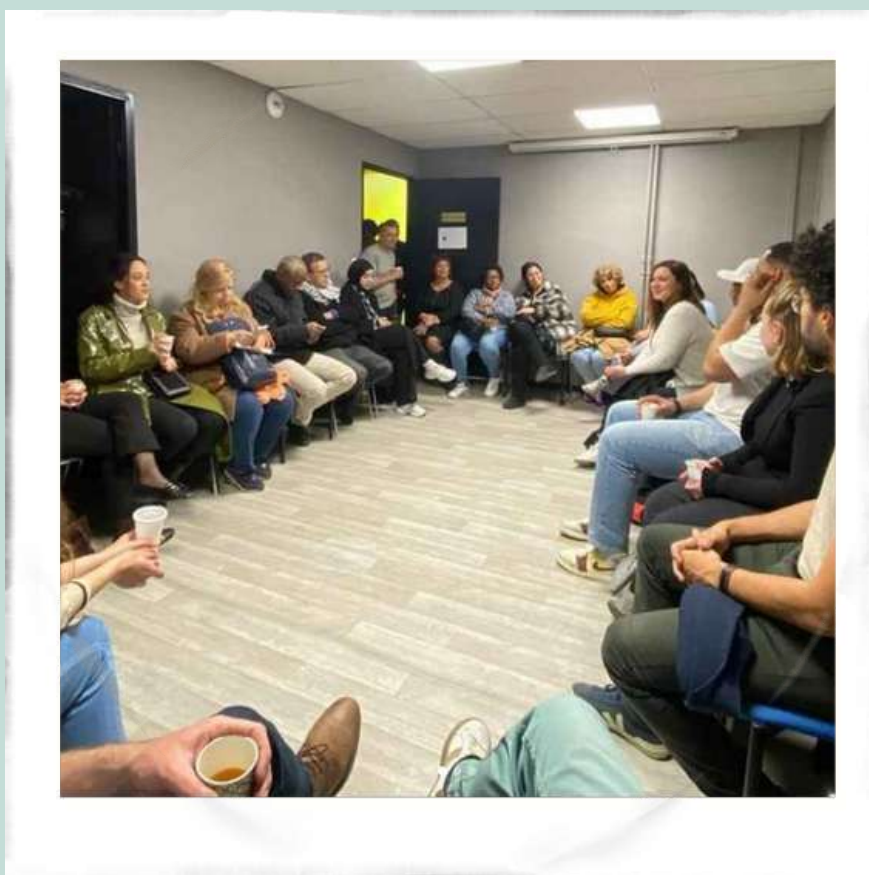
©LeNextLevel

We then joined Saïd Kebbouche, the members from the Espace Projets Interassociatifs and their partners in the working group around memory preservation, for a conversation about the arts as a tool political education.

This discussion tackled **the way artistic expression can be a powerful tool to convey ideas, pass on stories, spur people to take action, and contribute to creating social movements.**

Lumumba Bandele shared stories about his parents, as well as their cultural and political Pan-African movement, The East, based in Brooklyn. He then went on to discuss the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement's approach. *"We have a lot of tools to take action, in a big toolbox. Hip hop is an educational and training tool, and that is why we created the Black August Hip Hop Festival."*

This conversation highlighted how necessary it is to get involved in the artistic and cultural fields to foster memory preservation and social change.



©LeNextLevel

SESSION 2 ARTISTS, CELEBRITIES AND MOVEMENT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2023

LA BELLEVILLOISE

40 PARTICIPANTS

How can one get involved in a social movement as an artist and/or public figure? At what cost ? What are the risks involved? How can one protect themselves from them? What are the key guidelines to make sure you follow the right moral compass, and do something both relevant and effective?

This session focused on public figures and how we can get artists involved in movements. Speakers included : **Nora Hamadi**, journalist at ARTE and France Culture, **Fik's Niavo**, rapper, co-founder of legendary battle stage Dégaine Ton Style and community leader, **Patrice Taraoré aka Humanist**, rapper and community organizer, and **Moussa "Papou" Dabo**, member of legendary Mafia K'1 Fry and entrepreneur.



©Dalal Tamri

From France to the United States and passing through Burkina Faso, we discussed what it meant for each of them to get involved in movements in terms of costs, risks and responsibilities. For Patrice : **"As artists, we, too, are accountable for the vision that we convey. But at the end of the day, we are still human beings with emotions, and sometimes face deep trauma from the consequences of joining a movement."**

Lumumba Bandele mentioned how important it is to find common existing interests with artists, and focus on those who are already aligned with our collectives – on values, principles and needs – to look at what we could build together.

According to Lumumba : **"When an artist really gets involved in a movement, it can be really powerful. After he met Assata Shakur in Cuba, Common wrote A Song for Assata. With a single song, he shared his story and our cause throughout the world."**

This is a vision that aims at rallying as many artists as possible within social movements.



©Dalal Tamri

SESSION 3: BUSINESS, PHILANTHROPY AND MOVEMENT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023
CE-REALAB
20 PARTICIPANTS

How can one take part in the fight against **structural** racism as an entrepreneur, philanthropist or company executive who is faced with – or simply mindful of – this issue? **What are the risks involved here? What are the key steps to be consistent, relevant and efficient?**

This session was moderated by Laila Bret, the founder of X&Y Corp. The conversation revolved around the way philanthropy can be used to **fight for justice and people’s dignity.**

Our **participants** mainly came from entrepreneurial, corporate or philanthropic backgrounds. We talked about their roles in social movements, their responsibilities, but also the risks involved in doing so in the face of the far right pressure and market competition.



©Dalal Tamri



©Dalal Tamri

What motivated Laila? *"The feedback from American entrepreneurs, which are is interesting, and the fact that we can support one another on issues that make sense to us."*

What also got the participants interested in the conversation was the accountability of corporations who claim they want to join the movement. **Souad Boutegrabet**, founder of DesCodeuses, asked : *"How can one avoid getting uses by companies that are looking for people to restore their image, but are actually against change and more interested in PR stunts ?"*

In relation to this, Lumumba shared his point of view by explaining a few rules the Movement for Black Lives had listed, such as not harming the community the company wants to work with.

"After George Floyd was murdered, 25 million people took to the streets to protest in the United States in a single month. It made history. Of course the movement became trendy and every corporation wanted to be seen as a contributor, so we had to establish rules.



©Dalal Tamri

If the company or foundation that employs you has activities that harm the community that you want to serve, you need to work on sparking change from the inside, before making any donations. Being this demanding on an ethical level shields us from policies or companies that want us on their institutional pictures without putting in the real work, without doing the heavy lifting. We are not here to help them look good."

A decorative orange starburst pattern is located in the top left corner of the page, consisting of several interconnected lines forming a network of star-like shapes.

SESSION 4: FIGHTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MOVEMENTS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

FGO BARBARA


20 PARTICIPANTS

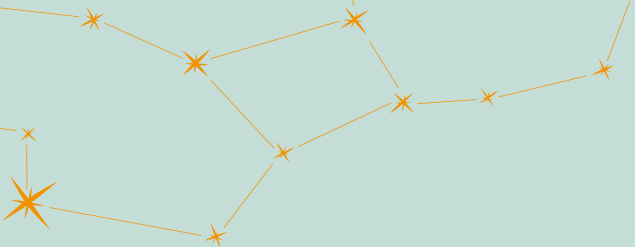
How can we **address violence against** women in movements? How can we set up effective principles and rules that are aligned with antiracist, feminist and anti-carceral values ?

In order to launch the discussion, **Massica** from **la Marche Féministe et Antiraciste**, **Johanna-Soraya** from **Féministes contre le Cyber-Harcèlement** and **Fatima** from **Lallab** moderated a workshop open to all genders on the spectrum on a case study about gender-based and sexual violence. The goal was to get us to share our personal experiences, our internal dilemmas, and come up with solution ideas.

They started the workshop by putting the feminist issue within social movements into context. They went on to focus on a case study that required participants to handle, in groups, a fictional situation that involved gender-based and sexual violence within a nonprofit.

The workshop ended with a conversation in gender-separate groups, allowing us to dig deeper on specific situations and providing our participants with a safe space to express worry, exhaustion, or even frustration with the situation regarding gender-based and sexual violence, and discuss long-term solutions.

A decorative orange starburst pattern is located in the bottom left corner of the page, consisting of several interconnected lines forming a network of star-like shapes.



This workshop and discussion allowed us to discuss the processes we could collectively implement to leave the beaten **violence-to-prison tracks, foster victim support, and find reparation solutions, without it being exclusively the burden of women.**

The conversation ended on **Monifa Akinwole-Bandele's** words, who reminded us of the essential role that women have always played within social movements in the United States: **"Eighty per cent of the Black Panthers were women."**

As Massica concluded: **"Feminism was a major blind spot within our fights for justice. It induced a lack of consideration about gender-based and sexual violence, as well as a bad management of these acts of violence within our movements."**

This conversation allowed us to understand how important it is to lift each other up in order to create safe spaces with shared norms. By comparing different points of view in a respectful and kind environment, this workshop allowed us to lay the first foundations of this initiative.



©Dalal Tamri



©Dalal Tamri



A decorative pattern of orange starburst shapes connected by thin lines is located in the top left corner of the page.

SESSION 5 ORGANIZING FOR THE RIGHTS OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE


FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2023
REPAIRS HEADQUARTERS
10 PARTICIPANTS

In a country whose prisons put the remainder of the continent to shame, where do we even start to make sure incarcerated people and their families' fundamental rights are respected? What options and strategies are at our disposal to get tangible and consistent impact?

Organized by **Rhizhome Project, Cergy Demain and Repairs**, this conversation centered around the incarceration and the rights of both those who are incarcerated and their families. On that specific occasion, Lumumba spoke as a member of the **"Alliance of Families for Justice"**.

Zohra Harrach, the co-founder of Rhizhome Project, who works with people who have been or are at risk of being incarcerated, opened the discussion with the following words : **"The experts on this matter are those who experienced jail firsthand. We listen and support them."**

Throughout the evening, some of **the participants talked about how dehumanized one is behind bar, but also how families suffer the same mistreatment.** One of the participants testified: **"My son was not considered a human being anymore, but a number. I was not seen as my kid's mother, but as someone who had to be held accountable for his wrongdoing."**

A decorative pattern of orange starburst shapes connected by thin lines is located in the bottom left corner of the page.

The same could be made about how unsanitary, loud and undignifying prison environments are, which led France to be sentenced by the European Court of Human Rights in 2020.

Lumumba then shared his experience by bringing up the high incarceration rate in the United States. He sees the similarities between both countries but adds a key distinction: **"When slavery was abolished in the United States, the law included one exception : prison. Thousands of people therefore work for 25 cents an hour for the account of major brands today."**

Lumumba told us the story of Attica prison uprising, where those who were incarcerated stood up for their human rights, and were ultimately massacred in 1971. Today, their families and those of prison wards who worked there at that time have joined forces to get the facility closed. Lumumba also underlined how crucial narratives are in bringing these voices into the media to humanize them and shatter biases.



©LeNextLevel

SESSION 6 & 7

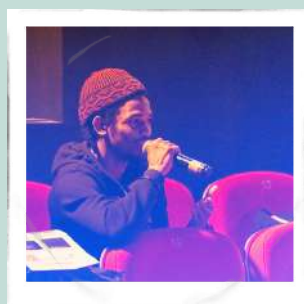
- **SCREENING : BLACK AUGUST HIP HOP PROJECT**
- **BUILDING MOVEMENTS THAT LAST, FROM THE GRASSROOTS TO THE NATIONAL LEVELS**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2023
CENTRE CURIAL
35 PARTICIPANTS

Using hip hop as a way to raise awareness about political prisoners in the United States and encouraging them to take action on this matter : that was the reason why the Black August Hip Hop Festival was created. **The international festival, initiated by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement,** gathered thousands of people between 1998 and 2010, thanks to the contribution of major hip hop stars. The use of hip hop as an organizing tool had been strongly suggested by those who were in exile and under the scrutiny of the American authorities, including **Assata Shakur** (Tupac Shakur's aunt), who lived in Cuba at the time.

In this session, we organized **the screening of "Black August Hip Hop Project"** (a documentary directed by Dream Hampton) at the Curial community center. The project revisits the inception and impact of the festival.

African-American journalist and film critic **Essimi Mevegue** commented on the topics raised in the documentary : the use of the festival as a tool for a greater cause, the way the MXGM were perceived as Americans overseas, and the documentary's role in itself.



Lumumba addressed how strong the movement was back then : *"The Black August Hip Hop Festival was in tune with its time and helpful to the cause. Of over 20 people who were incarcerated because of their ideas at the time, 17 were released from prison. Today, we need new actions that match our current social context."*

During the second half of this session, **Barry, Léo from Repairs and Fatima** moderated a discussion involving the attendees. **It was about the conditions that allow us to build long-lasting movements, from local to national initiatives.** Lumumba rooted his reflection in his experience within the MXGM and the Movement for Black Lives: *"We also need to rally people from outside our own sectors: within the arts, the business field, communication and law experts... Coalitions can make a huge difference in our actions, and impact them in a great way."*

The evening gave us much to think about our collective responsibility to consciously invest time in building movements that reflect our values and principles, and that are designed to lead us to tangible victories.



©Maonghe.M



©Maonghe.M

A decorative graphic of a constellation, resembling the Orion constellation, is overlaid on the page. It features several yellow star-like symbols connected by thin, light-colored lines, forming a network that spans across the text area.

SESSION 8 THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING - PASSING THE REALITY CHECK

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2023
LALLAB HEADQUARTERS - BAGNOLET
15 PARTICIPANTS

This conversation was open to the members of collectives who use community organizing as a tool on the daily, and those willing to learn how to do so.

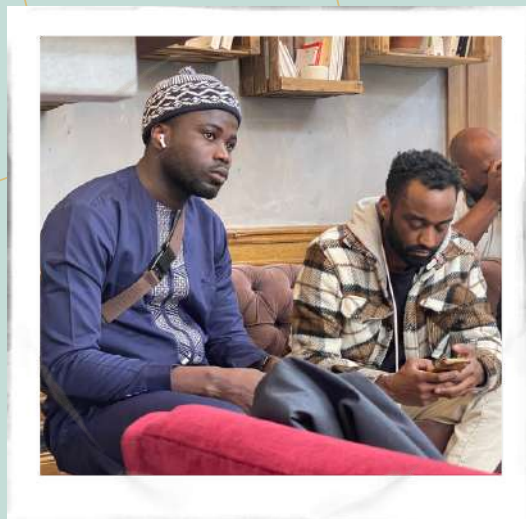
*It was joined by members of **Destins Liés, Lallab, Repairs, Une Voie Pour Tous, Balance Ton Boss, École Pour Tous**, as well as local elected official Ayodele Ikuesan. We discussed the principles of community organizing, the creation of healthy and ethical communities, and the use of distributed leadership and norms.*

The members of the aforementioned organizations came to discuss their respective issues with Lumumba Bandele, who gave them feedback.

"We, the members of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement in New York, are proud to say that we are an organization led for and by Black people. Our survival cannot depend on dominant groups. But no matter how we identify, we share common stories. We need to find them and tell them to build communities that act in solidarity with each other in the face of adversity."

This conversation highlighted the essential conditions to get people together, act collectively and with kindness to give birth to long-lasting social movements, putting one's ego aside and finding solutions to the issues faced along the way.

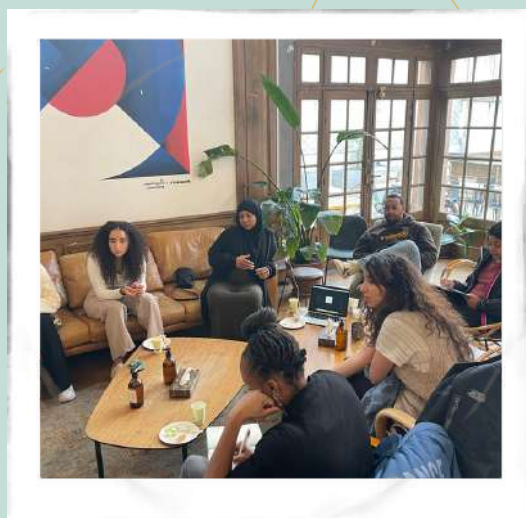
For Lumumba : **"Yes, ego can be a destructive thing. But we are responsible for our own progress for the greater good. Shared leadership can be learned. It requires difficult conversations, especially about behaviors that are detrimental to the other members of the group."**



©Maonghe.M



©Maonghe.M



©Maonghe.M



©Maonghe.M

SESSION 9 ORGANIZING LOCALLY AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2023

AB S'AIDER HEADQUARTERS - LA COURNEUVE

10 PARTICIPANTS

What approaches, tools and strategies can we use locally to deescalate, document and – overall – prevent any police intervention that could violate their rights, dignity or even cost someone their life?

We finished this week of intense and rewarding conversations on police brutality, copwatching and our dignity as citizens with **Mehdi Bouteghmès from AB S'aider, Issa Coulibaly from Pazapas, Farid El Yamni from the Vérité et Justice pour Wissam collective, Mara Kanté, Kamrane and Fardat Saïdi, who have all been involved at the grassroots level for a long time.**

Each one of them was given the opportunity to share their own story and journey, as well as their personal connection to police brutality and the issues within the justice system. Lumumba then drew a parallel with the situation in the United States, and its specificities: **"The American police was precisely created to control Black bodies after the abolition of slavery."**

He told us about the tremendous grassroots work that his organization set up around police brutality, especially on defunding the police, so that public budgets can be reinvested in services that really protect the population. He also mentioned the copwatching program that relies on exploring the 3Rs : Rights, Reality, and Responsibility in the face of the gap between the three.



©Maonghe.M



©Maonghe.M



©Maonghe.M



©Maonghe.M

FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

These sessions reaffirmed participants' views on social issues linked to solidarity and dignity. The way philanthropists and artists can contribute to making movements heard, or how we can fight injustice within our own organizations by mustering up the courage to fix things, and strive to find solutions when an uncomfortable situation comes up...

Lumumba Bandele's expertise allowed us to better grasp so many situations. His insights will allow us to collectively move forward in our respective fights while forming alliances that are based on common values.

"There is no victory without a fight."

*Maonghe Mbaitjongue,
Photographer*



PHOTO CAPTION : BRUNCH FOR THE ORGANIZING GEEKS

©Maonghe.M

"I feel very hopeful about the future, for our youth, and for all the activist communities who joined these events]."

Farida Cagniard, Director of the Collège Citoyen de France & Advocate



BUSINESS, PHILANTHROPIE & ENGAGEMENT

©Dalal Tamri



INCARCÉRATION ET COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

©Le Next Level



CONSTRUIRE DES MOUVEMENTS QUI DURENT

©Maonghe.M

"Overall, we have to trust ourselves and constantly renew our intentions when it comes to getting involved in social movements."

Assma Lbaze, co-president of Lallab

THE BUDGET

The amounts mentioned below only refer to the direct **costs** and **resources** of the project.
No indirect costs, volunteering, or in-kind contributions have been added.

COSTS

Trips and transportation (teams, volunteers, participants)	€ 2751
Housing	€ 3467
Event locations	€ 3360
Softwares and equipment	€ 168
Photography	€ 1600
Banking fees	€ 52
Food	€ 3534
Speaker and moderator fees	€ 6735
Coordination fees	€ 5400
Translation and film subtitle production	€ 2387
Merchandizing	€ 612
TOTAL	€ 30 066

RESOURCES

DesCodeuses	€ 10 000
Guerilla Foundation	€ 7 500
Funds allocated from the Porticus Foundation donation	€ 12 566
TOTAL	€ 30 066

SPECIAL THANKS

This series was designed to spark cross-sector and intergenerational discussions around topics that are dear to us to move racial and social justice forward in France. This is one more step in our collective project to build and win victories by relying on the interdependence of our sectors, solidarity and mutual assistance – in service of our values.

First and foremost, we would like to thank Lumumba Akinwole-Bandeled for passing on his wisdom to us. We would also like to thank the activists on whose shoulders he is standing, thanks to whom we were able to learn so much during this series of events which was unique both in form and in quality. Thank you to Lumumba's wife, Monifa Akinwole-Bandeled, who came to contribute to this project by his side. Thank you to Monami Maulik, who introduced us to Lumumba for this purpose early 2022.

Thank you to all the people who contributed to moderate these conversations : Essimi Mevegue, Fardat Saïdi, Farid El Yamni, Fik's Niavo, Iman Saitouli, Issa Coulibaly, Johanna-Soraya Cayre Benamrouche, Kamran, Laïla Bret, Léo Mathey, Mara Kanté, Massica, Mehdi Bensafi, Mehdi Bouteghmès, Nora Hamadi, Najet and Walid, Moussa "Papou" Dabo, Patrice Taraoré aka Humanist, Sanaa Saitouli, Saïd Kebbouche and Zohra Harrach.

Thank you to Sadia Diawara for welcoming us in an exceptional way at the Centre Paris Anim' Curial.

Thank you to the collectives and organizations with whom we built this project : AB S'Aider, Cergy Demain, Destins Liés, École Pour Tous, Espace Projets Interassociatifs, Repairs, Rhizome Project, and in particular to : Barry Sy-Valade, Léo Mathey, Anne-Solène Taillardat, Dylan Ayissi and Sanaa Saitouli for handling the overall coordination of this initiative.

Thank you to Deborah Tsamalax for translating the conversations for us, in the shadows and in our earpieces

Thank you to the Lila Sadji nonprofit from Vaulx-en-Velin, and to Chez Naj for the marvelous meals that warmed our hearts and bodies.

Thank you to Maonghe.M and Dalal Tamri for beautifully capturing this event through their pictures and videos.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Porticus, DesCodeuses and Guerilla Foundation, without whom the project would have never come to existence.

A big shout out and hug to Marwan Mohammed to thank him for believing in this project, and for being its champion, encouraging us to turn it into a reality from the get-go !

Last but not least, we would like to thank each and every one of our participants, who came to add value to these very special spaces and, and those who will be gracious enough to forgive us if we forgot to mention them in this Special Thanks section as we wrap up the writing of this report !

We look forward to seeing you again soon, with the same goals in mind : learning from each other, fighting together, and winning together.

