



Future**Black**Female



INCLUSIVE MAIN STREETS:

How BIAs Can Create Welcoming Spaces for Black Female Youth

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



We begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe Peoples, which includes the Six Nations of the Grand River. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, a treaty that represents a commitment to share the land and protect it in peace and friendship.

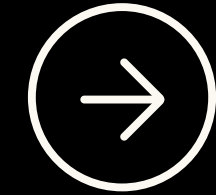
As we come together to discuss equity, innovation, and the future of our Main Streets, we recognize that systemic barriers faced by Black communities and other marginalized groups are deeply connected to colonial histories and structures. In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, we commit to building relationships rooted in respect, accountability, and shared liberation.

We also acknowledge the importance of technology and AI in shaping our collective future. As we harness these powerful tools, we commit to using them ethically and equitably, ensuring they uplift rather than harm our communities, and that they reflect diverse voices and cultural perspectives especially those of Indigenous peoples.

Together, we can create Main Streets that honour the past, meet the needs of the present, and sustain a thriving future, communities that are not only just and inclusive but also environmentally responsible and future-ready.



TODAY'S AGENDA



1 Introduction & Welcome

2 Black Women's Economic Security
(BWES) Project

3 BWES Survey Results

4 Facilitated Discussions

5 Breakout Rooms

6 Group Discussion: Solutions

7 Wrap Up

8 Our Innovative Solutions

THE IMPACT OF FUTURE BLACK FEMALE



Transforming Black Lives Through Holistic Support

2K+

Lives Impacted

Black youth served through comprehensive wellness and leadership programs

1.75K+

Therapy Sessions

Pro-Black mental health support delivered to community members

400+

Youth Empowered

Financial and entrepreneurial skills training provided

16

School Partners

Active partnerships embedding pro-Black strategies in education



Mental Wellbeing

Culturally responsive mental health care and 14,333 Virtual Hub visits



Career Empowerment

30+ professional skills sessions and 3 Black girl youth conferences



Financial Wellness

28 financial literacy workshops equipping advocacy and navigation skills



Systemic Change

21 panels and first-ever UDADA Conference advancing inclusive strategies

Future Black Female creates transformative change by addressing root causes and building sustainable pathways for Black youth to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.



DESIRED OUTCOMES

CLEAR, ACTIONABLE, MEASURABLE STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY & INCLUSION

BIAs, businesses, and municipal leaders commit to sustainable, long-term strategies that foster inclusion and equitable growth. This includes inclusive marketing campaigns, mentorship opportunities, and youth engagement initiatives that prepare Black youth for leadership roles in entrepreneurship, policy, and innovation. By creating clear, lasting pathways for participation such as internships, youth-led pop-up shops, and advisory councils, Communities can build a resilient, diverse workforce and vibrant local economies.

STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

Establish a network of allies and partners who are committed to supporting Black entrepreneurs and youth.

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY & CONTINUOUS EVALUATION

Build a culture of shared responsibility, where businesses, councils, and developers work together to uphold commitments.

Agree on tools to track progress, such as equity scorecards, live polls, or annual reporting sessions.

OUR APPROACH:



1. Mobilizing Community Partners

- Build networks with schools, businesses, and organizations.
- Create opportunities and support systems for Black women and girls



2. Advocating for Policy Change

- Push for systemic reforms that break down barriers.
- Promote equity-focused policies for Black girls and women.



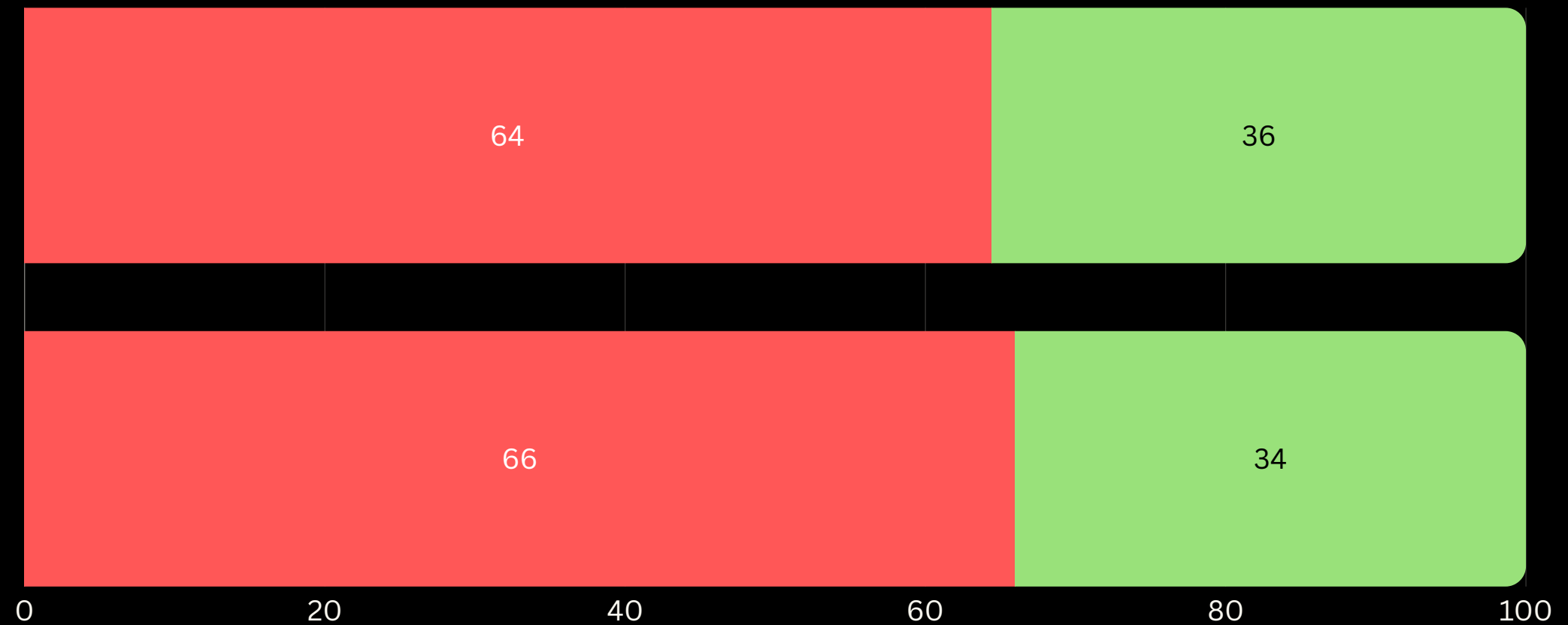
3. Empowering Young Leaders

- Support Black-focused affinity groups in schools.
- Build safe spaces for leadership and peer support.

(BWES) NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS:

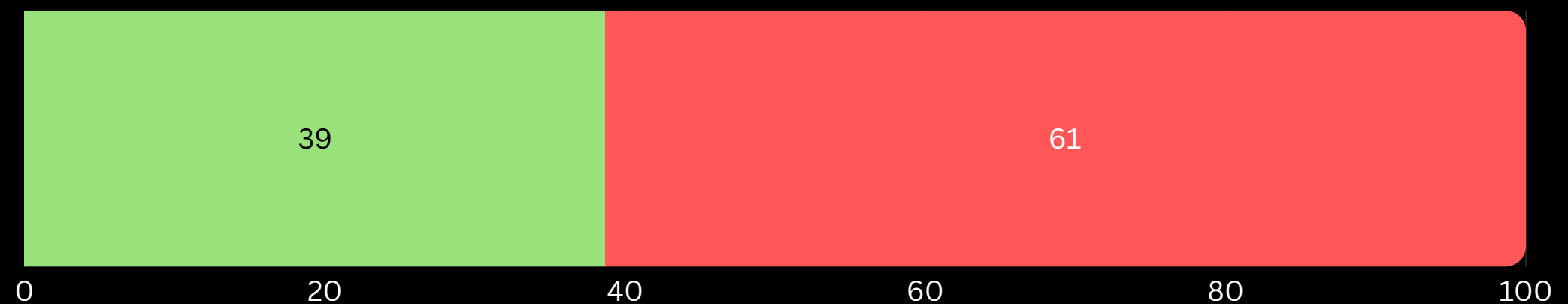
Have you faced any challenges finding job opportunities that align with your skills?

● Yes ● No



Have you experienced barriers in your workplace related to race or gender?

● Yes ● No



Have you had a mentor during your education/career journey?

BLACK WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY PROJECT



Our Mission

Empowering Black women and girls by breaking down financial barriers, building entrepreneurship, and supporting career growth through:

- Mentorship
- Skills development
- Advocacy



Leadership & Community Impact

Champions Program

12 volunteers from 3 provinces drove 27.8% of survey responses and co-facilitated leadership workshops

High School Affinity Groups

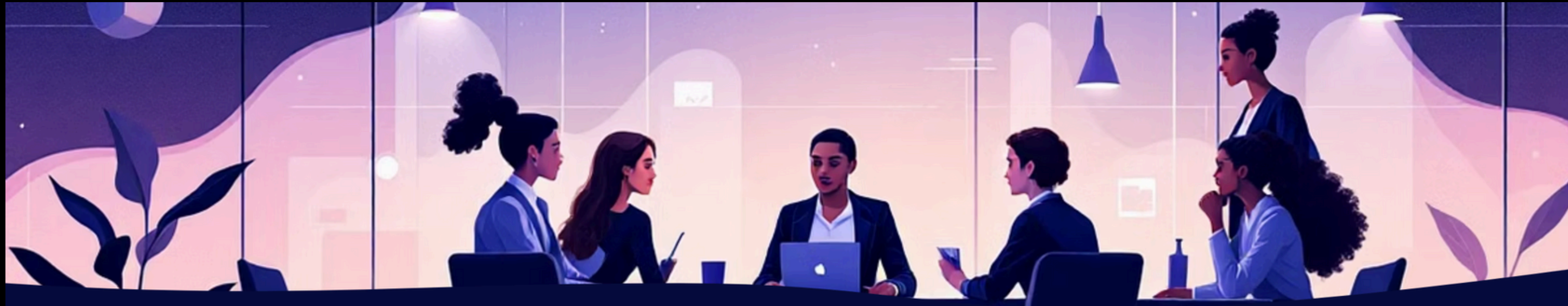
Supporting Black student groups in Niagara Region schools under DSBN and NDCSB

Youth Conferences

157 participants across symposiums and conferences focused on career development



BLACK WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY PROJECT



Her Seat at the Table Series

01

DEI Case Study

Partnership with Brock University addressing workplace navigation for Black youth

02

Real Connections

Collaboration with Women in Niagara and Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce

03

Economic Emancipation

Upcoming focus on economic advancement for Black girls and women

BLACK WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY PROJECT



Knowledge Translation Events

82

Black Secondary Symposium

Students attended "Level Up" event with Brock BSSC, featuring panels and workshops

75

Black Girl Conference

Participants in "Beyond the Classroom" event with Service Canada and career panels

Both events provided practical career resources, networking opportunities, and empowerment through community building

BLACK WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY PROJECT



Mentorship & Leadership Development



Ottawa Parliamentary Trip

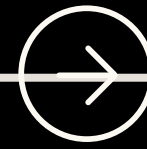
6 girls explored government careers, met MPs and policy makers, visited Carleton University



Trailblazers & Pathfinderers

33 pathfinders matched with 19 trailblazers for career guidance and networking

ACTIVITY #1



Welcoming a New Ghanaian Business to Main Street

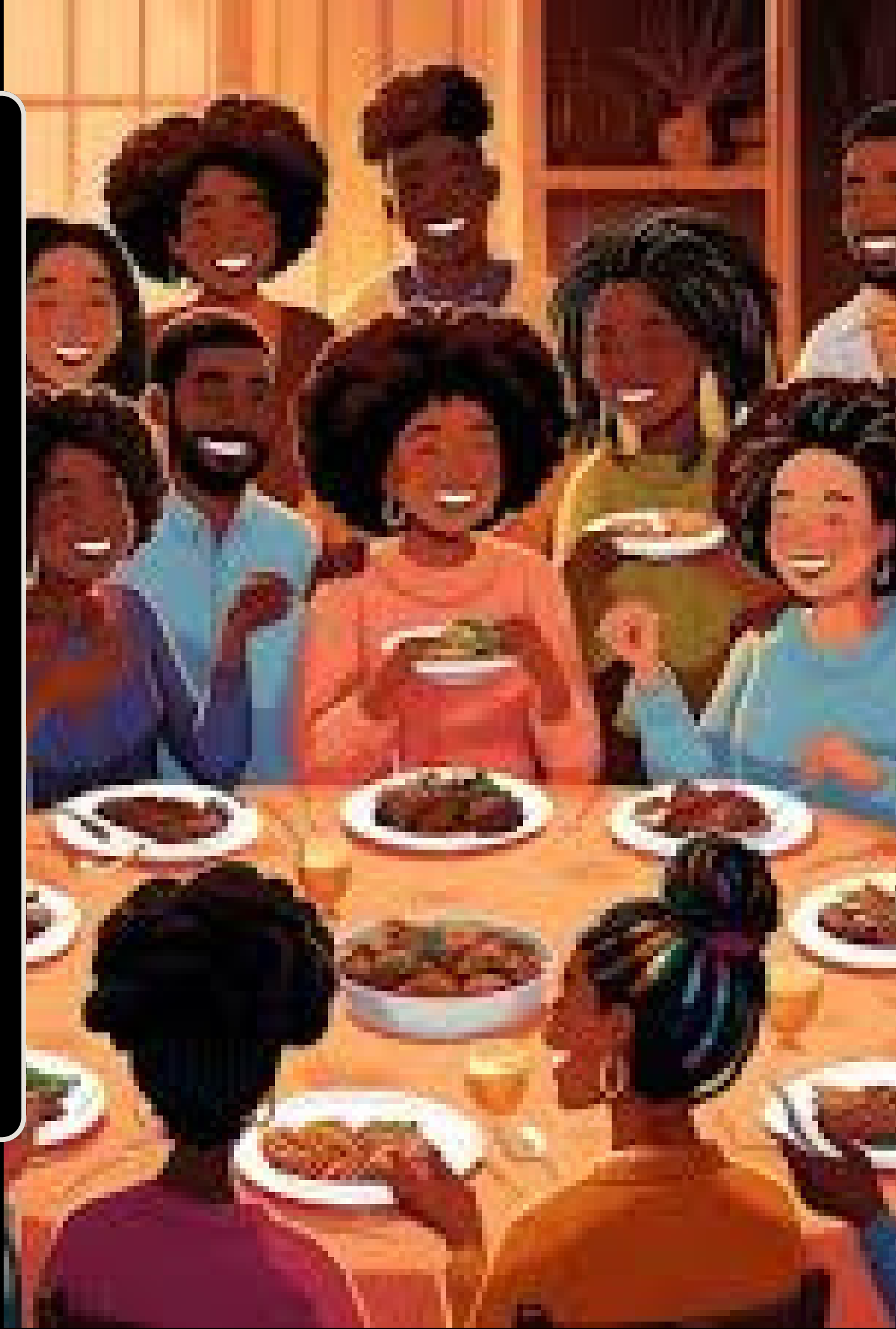
A new Ghanaian restaurant is opening on your Main Street. The owners are eager to share their culture, food, and story with the community. However, they've expressed concerns about whether the space will feel truly welcoming and supportive to them and their customers. As a BIA, what can you do to make sure this business and the broader Ghanaian and Black community feels valued, celebrated, and set up for success.

Questions:

What visible actions could make the space feel culturally welcoming? (e.g., signage, events, partnerships)

What barriers might this business face, and how could your BIA help remove them?

How can you celebrate and amplify the Ghanaian culture in a way that also strengthens your local economy?



FUTURE BLACK FEMALE – THE BLACK DOLLAR AND CONSUMPTION



An 8-hour drive for braids: Why Black haircare is hard in small-town Canada - National

For many Black women in rural communities, hair care products aren't available and neither are stylists, making it a challenge to take care of their hair.

 Global News /

Case Study : Tameeka Guy **Why Black haircare is hard in small-town Canada**

Hair expenses for Black consumers overall reached \$2.51 billion in 2018, a 2.3 per cent decrease from 2016 as more people are moving away from using at-home relaxers and are embracing their natural hair, according to a study by market research firm Mintel.

The study found that 43 per cent of Black women are likely to use five or more haircare products at home — indicating the costs of day-to-day styles.

CULTURAL HUMILITY



How can you shift from 'knowing what to do' to 'asking what is needed'?

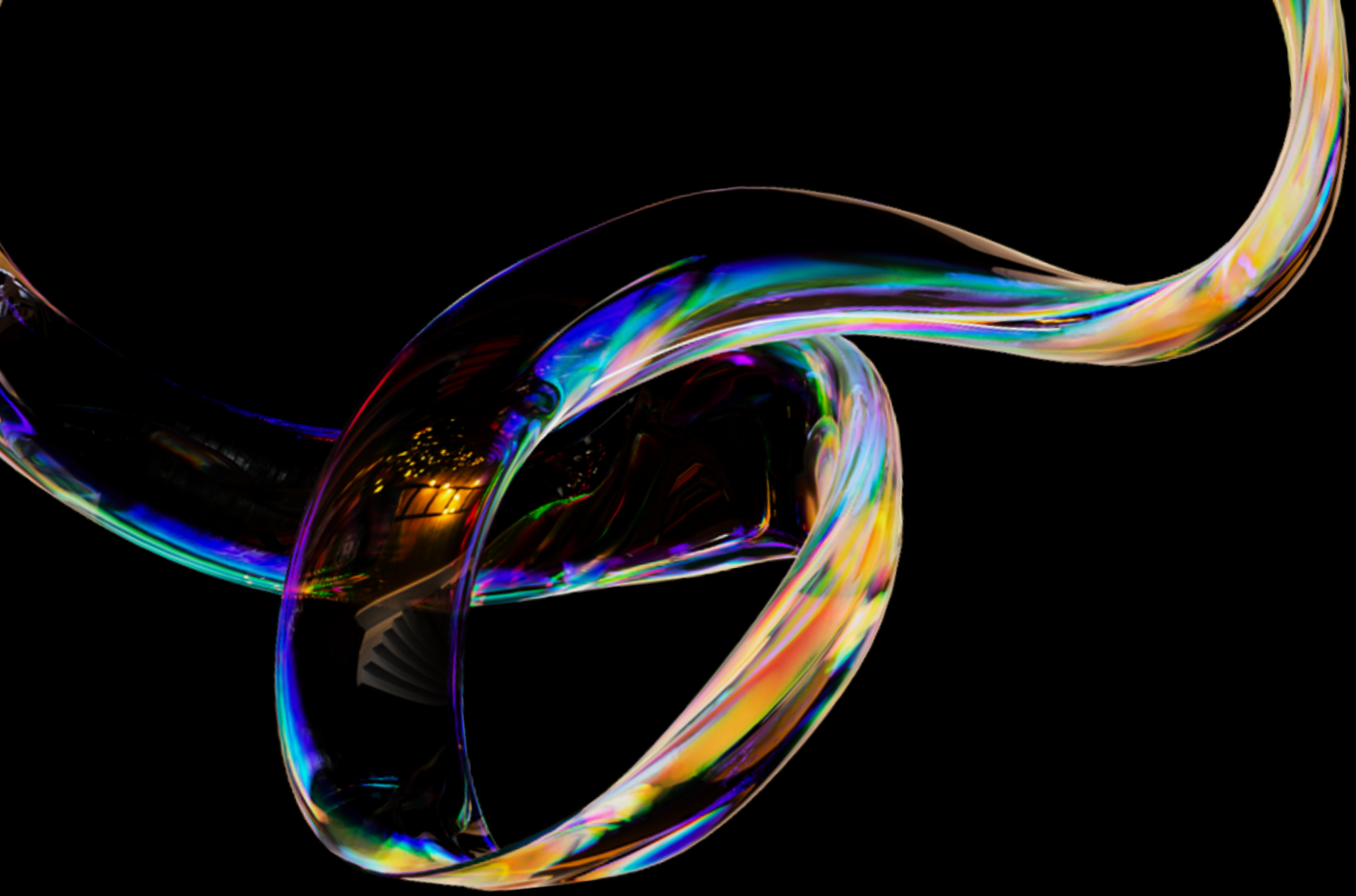
Cultural Competency assumes culture can be mastered through training or checklists

Cultural Humility is a lifelong practice of self-reflection, learning, and accountability

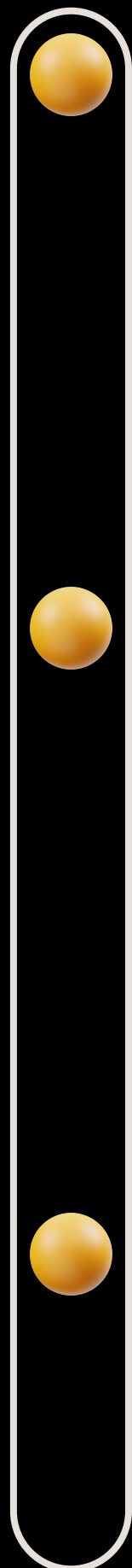
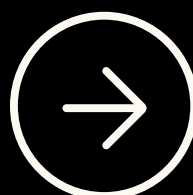
Humility prioritizes building relationships over expertise

It recognizes power imbalances and challenges bias actively

For BIA staff and municipal leaders, this means showing up with openness, curiosity, and a genuine commitment to learning , ready to listen, reflect, and be transformed by the perspectives and experiences shared by the communities you serve.



EQUITY IN PRACTICE: HOW BIA'S CAN CHAMPION BLACK GIRLS AND WOMEN



- **Create mentorship, networking, and internship opportunities**
- **Support youth entrepreneurship and leadership development**
- **Ensure BIA districts are socially and culturally inclusive.**
- **Engage in supplier diversity with Black-owned and women-led enterprises**

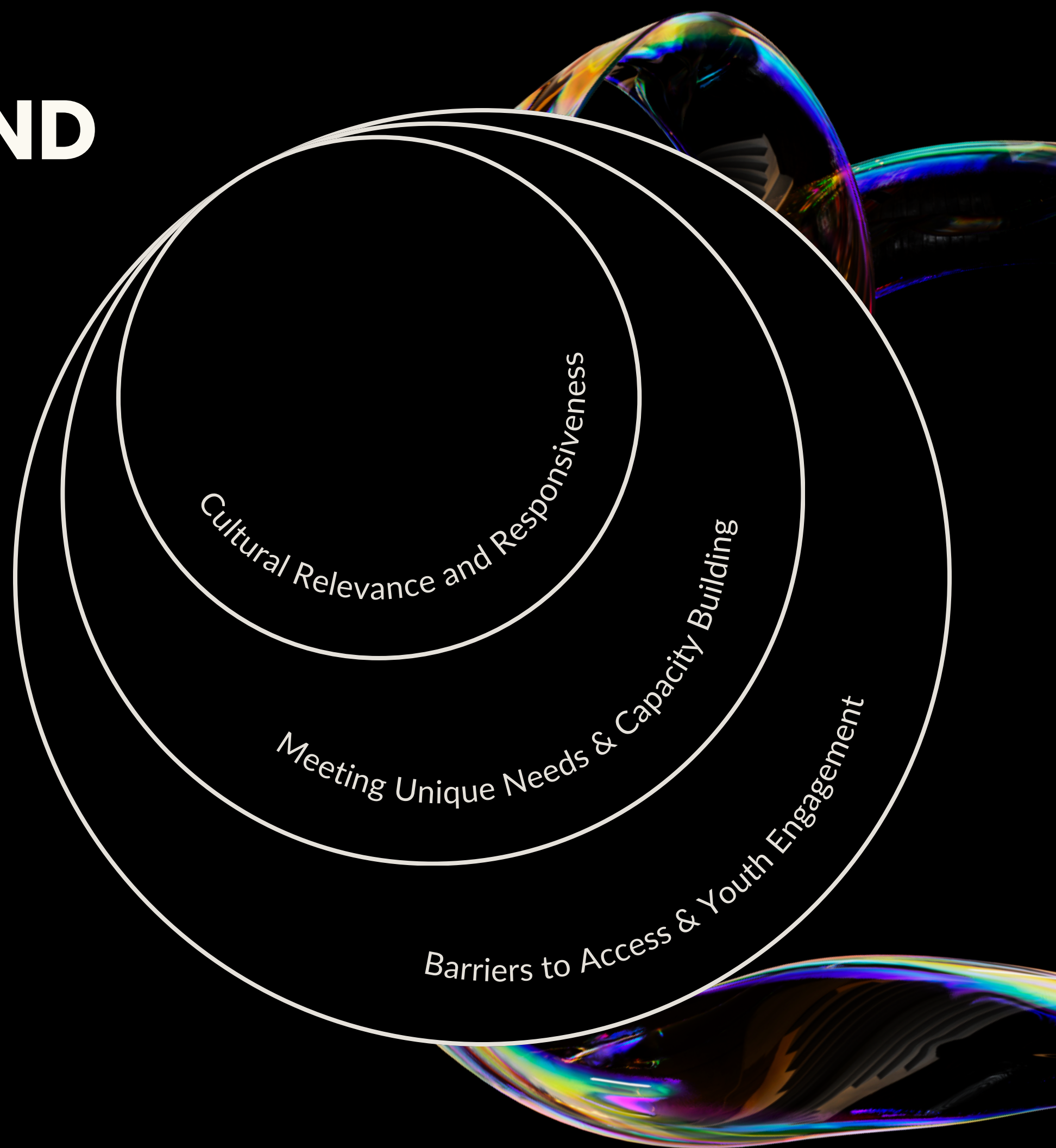
GROUP DISCUSSION AND SOLUTION BUILDING

Through small group discussions, we'll dive into (4) themes:

- Cultural Relevance and Representation
- Meeting unique needs through Capacity Building,
- Breaking down Systemic barriers for youth and Black entrepreneurs
- Putting allyship into action.

Along the way, we'll consider how AI-driven storytelling, social media campaigns, and digital branding can become powerful tools in building more equitable, vibrant Main Streets.

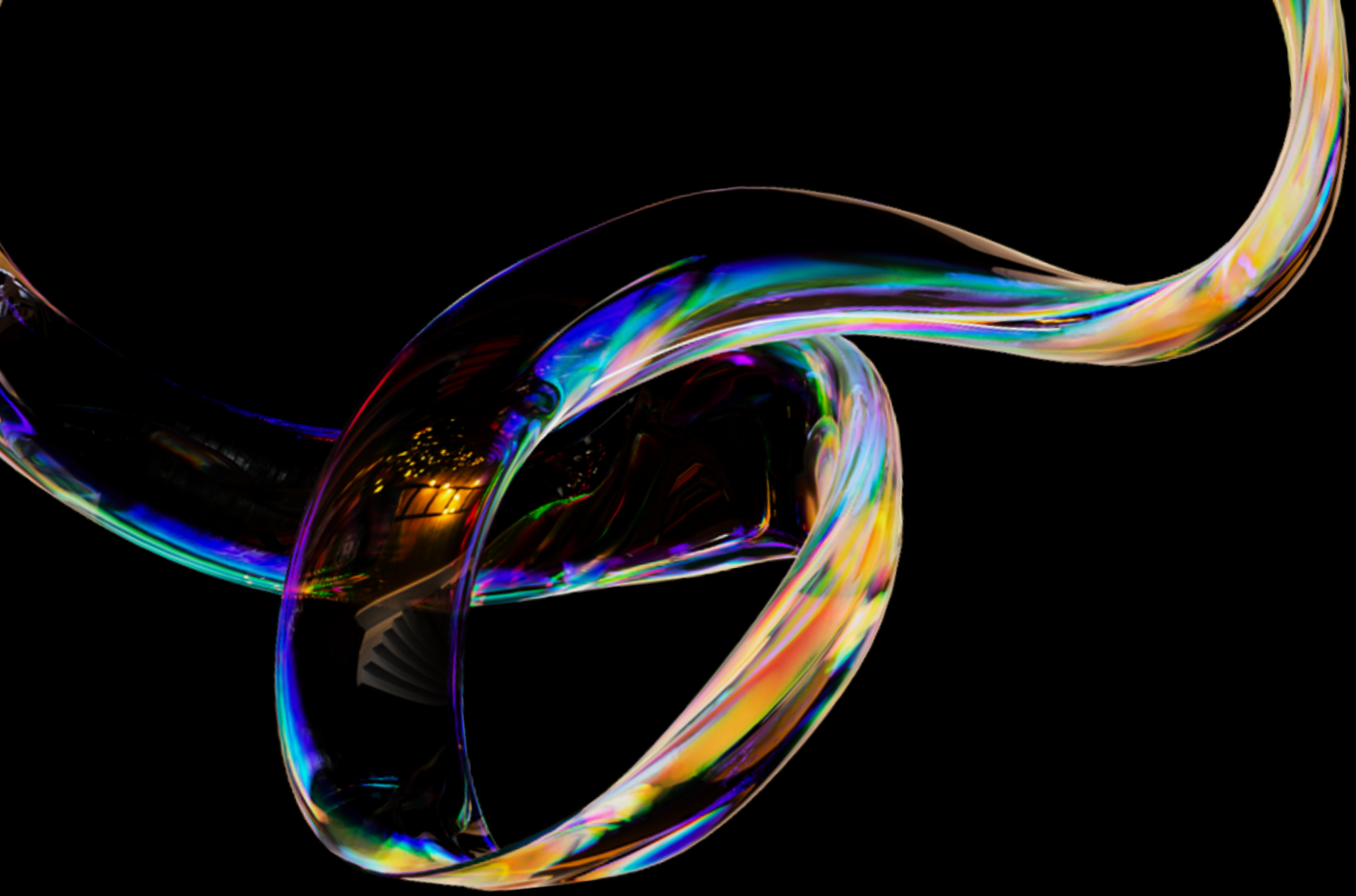
Together, we'll move beyond talk and into collaborative, tech-supported action that strengthens both community connections and cultural pride.



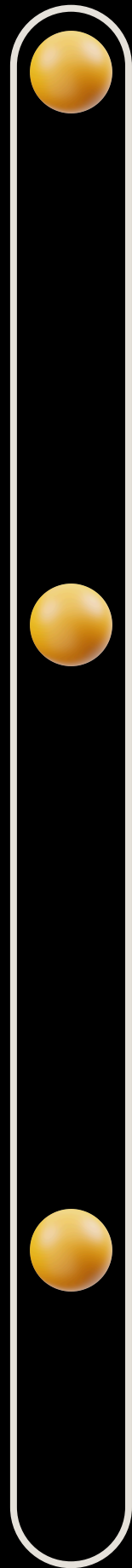
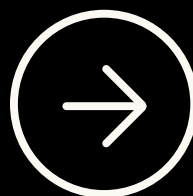
GALLERY WALK: DIGITAL & PHYSICAL SOLUTIONS

SCAN THE QR CODE TO JOIN THE VIRTUAL BOARD





EVALUATION & ACCOUNTABILITY



DIGITAL COMMUNITY FEEDBACK BOARDS

COMMUNITY EQUITY SCORECARD

YOUTH LED COMMUNITY SURVEYS

TRANSPARENCY DASHBOARDS

SOCIAL MEDIA SENTIMENT TRACKING

MEET THE (BWES) TEAM



**IJEOMA
MICHAEL**

Girl's & Women's Projects
Lead



**MONIQUE
MAISON**

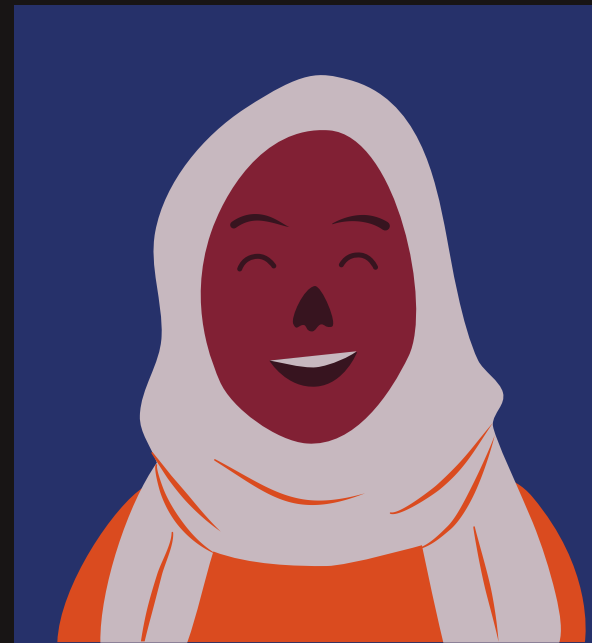
Community Engagement
Worker



**MARIANA
GARRIDO**

Social Issues Researcher





Thank you!

