

Sahara Nutrition

Learn, connect and engage for a healthier life, the African way!

Hibbah Osei-kwasi

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Project profile

What is your idea

Poor nutrition disproportionately affects the BAME community. The vision of Sahara Nutrition is to improve the lives of Black Africans across the UK. We will achieve this through awareness raising, and empowering of local community using an innovative community-based model. Our goal is for BMEs to be able to take charge and better manage obesity and hypertension. We will create a digital platform where people can trust and have conversation about their health and lifestyle. We will provide quality education and training, ongoing nutrition support and build cultural competence amongst Nutrition professionals. We will provide tools for healthy living the cultural way!

What problem are you solving

Obesity and hypertension are major health issues within the BME community. Data shows that 75% of Blacks are obese (Every 3 in 4 black adults). Living with obesity and/hypertension can be challenging, especially for the BME people who have migrated from a context where health care is shared, which is a missing link in the UK. Patients get lost when they have chronic diseases. Also, current interventions are not tailored to the cultural context. The purpose of Sahara Nutrition is to contribute to address the gaps, and provide that missing link using a trusted platform and network so people living with these conditions do not feel socially isolated. Our intervention will help support their journey towards better health and also support others at risk to prevent these conditions.

What is your progress to date

We already work with community groups in Greater Manchester and through this we have access to several influential community groups, organisations, community and religious leaders and Black owned media (e.g. radios stations). Since March 2020, we have collaborated with the Caribbean and African health network to deliver 15 tailored nutrition educational sessions. We have delivered 10 tailored sessions on live radio shows, and several webinars. We have a growing social media community with over 200 African followers, and we use these

platforms (YouTube videos and Facebook) to answer specific nutrition questions from the African community. We run at least one weekly public engagement event, on either radio, zoom or social media targeting the Black community.

What resources can help you grow

We are looking to partner with the Health and Social Care department and other charities who have an interest in ethnic minorities and hypertension. We are also looking for partnership to build the digital platform for engagement. To be able to provide a comprehensive life style package, we would also be interested in partnering with sports organisations.

How will you spend the £50k money

The £50,000 will help us to undertake the pilot project amongst the Ghanaian community in Greater Manchester in order to gather local data for scaling up to other BME groups.

Currently, we are working with just two religious groups and this money would allow us to train community volunteers and cover 10 other churches/mosques and 10 community groups within the Ghanaian community in the next 18 months pilot period. Specifically, it will be used for the development of the online platform to start the community health engagement; purchase teaching aids and food models for the nutrition education, video production and marketing.

About your team

- Dr Hibbah Osei-Kwasi is the founder and Dr Robert Akapribo is the co-founder. Our Nutrition experts are: Dr Tokunbu Oluanju, Dr Evans Asamane, Fatiha Walker. We also have other experts: Dr Gertrude Nyaaba (Social scientist), Dr Daniel Boateng (Epidemiologist).
- Advisors: Prof Charles Agyemang; Prof Basma Ellahi and Dr Alice Ojwang
- Collaborators: The Caribbean and African Network, Pazito radio, UK, Ghana Union of Greater Manchester

