

Trailblazers



The Trailblazers Fellowship was an annual professional development programme initiated in 2003 to support UK-based dance artists, practitioners, performers, choreographers, dance teachers and researchers working in the field of dance of the African Diaspora. The aim was to cultivate excellence in African people's dance by providing training and mentoring to ensure there is sustained investment in these talented individuals.

In its duration, there were over 40 Trailblazers, with the final cohort taking place in 2017.

Trailblazers featured two strands of development, which alternated annually: **Starters** was for first time applicants in the early stages of their careers who demonstrated a creative spark, ambition and leadership potential, and **Champions** for past recipients of the fellowship who demonstrated strong leadership and entrepreneurial spirit.

WHAT IS A TRAILBLAZER?

An innovative leader in a field, a pioneer. A person who blazes a trail for others to follow through unsettled country or wilderness.

Each participant received:

- A bursary towards a project of their choice (£2000 for Starters and £3000 for Champions*) **Champions were required to seek match funding or support in kind of a minimum of £1500*
- A tailored development programme including training, career coaching, mentoring and peer learning
- A range of networking opportunities
- An opportunity to share their learning in a public showcase

“Everything I am now doing artistically is due to having been a Trailblazer. The scheme fuelled me as an artist, it empowered me and gave me confidence.”

— Vicki Igbokwe Trailblazer 2007-08 & 2012-13





“I will never finish being a Trailblazer. I still have my application form and goals and revisit them.”

— Akosua Boakye; Trailblazer 2006-07

The Trailblazers Starters programme was open to UK-based dance artists working in the field of dance of the African Diaspora as dancers, choreographers, teachers or researchers. Starters were chosen through open applications and an interview. Trailblazers Champions fellowships were selected by nomination, chosen from the Trailblazers Starters Alumni.

Performances by Fellows took place at venues such as Sadler’s Wells, the Southbank Centre, The Place and ROH2 and were also featured on Channel 4. Some achieved awards, such as the Place Prize Commission and Bonnie Bird Awards. A previous Champion, Vicki Igbokwe, was subsequently invited to be a Mass Movement Co-coordinator for the London 2012 Olympics Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

TRAILBLAZER PARTICIPANTS

Trailblazers Starters 2017-18

Dickson Mbi
Iris De Brito
Jamaal Burkmar
Zinzi Minott

Trailblazers Champions 2016-17

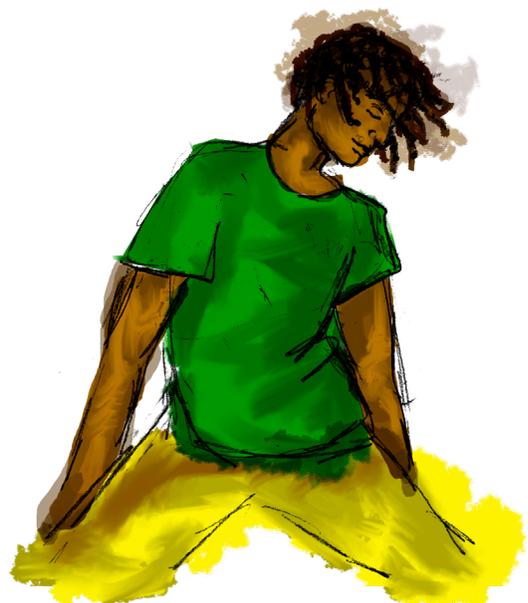
Adesola Akinleye
Ithalia Forel

Trailblazers Starters 2015-16

Nathan Geering
Yami ‘Rowdy’ Löfvenberg
Rachael Nanyonjo
Mbulelo Ndabeni

Trailblazers Champions 2014-15

Alesandra Seutin
Freddie Opoku-Addaie





Tamar Dixon by One Dance UK, Dani Bower

PAST TRAILBLAZERS (pre-merger)

Vicki Igbokwe

Trailblazer Champion 2012-13

Denise Rowe

Trailblazer Champion 2012-13

Idrissa Camara

Trailblazer Starter 2013-14

Cindy Claes

Trailblazer Starter 2013-14

Kenzi Ireland

Trailblazer Starter 2013-14

Cleo Lake

Trailblazer Starter 2013-14

H Patten

Trailblazer 2009-10

Alesandra Seutin

Trailblazer 2009-10

Annette Walker

Trailblazer 2009-2010

Ithalia Forel

Trailblazer 2009-2010

Karensa Louis

Trailblazer 2008-09

Freddie Opoku-Addaie

Trailblazer 2008-09

Lola Adodo

Trailblazer 2008-09

Roni Cheesman

Trailblazer 2008-09

Sean Graham

Trailblazer 2007-08

Vicki Igbokwe

Trailblazer 2007-08

Imani Jendai

Trailblazer 2007-08

Donna Lettman

Trailblazer 2007-08

Adesola Akinleye

Trailblazer 2006-07

Akosua Boakye

Trailblazer 2006-07

Chrissie Adesina

Trailblazer 2006-07

Naomi Green

Trailblazer 2006-07

Ukachi Akalawu

Trailblazer 2005-06

Zela Gayle

Trailblazer 2005-06

Paradigmz

Trailblazer 2005-06

Denise Rowe

Trailblazer 2005-06

Jane Sekonya-John

Trailblazer 2004-05

Bawren Tavaziva

Trailblazer 2004-05

Jeanette Brooks

Trailblazer 2004-05

Flavia Chevez-Le Messurier

Trailblazer 2004-05

Maria Ghoumrassi

Trailblazer 2004-05

Leo Kay

Trailblazer 2004-05

Jean Abreu

Trailblazer 2003-04

Simone Foster

Trailblazer 2003-04

Irven Lewis

Trailblazer 2003-04

Diane Mitchell

Trailblazer 2003-04

USEFUL LINKS

One Dance UK archive:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190504023723/https://www.onedanceuk.org/careers/professional-development/mentoring/trailblazers-fellowship/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170826145026/http://www.onedanceuk.org/careers/professional-development/mentoring/trailblazers-fellowship/trailblazers-starters-2017-18-2/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170904220700/http://www.onedanceuk.org/careers/professional-development/mentoring/trailblazers-fellowship/trailblazers-champions-2016-17/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170904220700/http://www.onedanceuk.org/careers/professional-development/mentoring/trailblazers-fellowship/trailblazers-starters-2015-16/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170904220700/http://www.onedanceuk.org/careers/professional-development/mentoring/trailblazers-fellowship/trailblazers-champions-2014-15/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170904220700/http://www.onedanceuk.org/careers/professional-development/mentoring/trailblazers-fellowship/past-trailblazers/>

ADAD:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20110927184827/http://www.adad.org.uk/metadot/index.pl>



RJC Dance at U.Dance National Festival 2022 by One Dance UK, Dani Bower