

It could be your one dream that changes the world.

When I met Aaron McDonald, we were interviewing for our Engage and Futureleaders programme. Aledina and I had advertised the opportunity on the Clapham Park estate, and here we were interviewing for our first apprentice community development worker, employed and paid by Olmec at the London Living Wage.

Aaron spoke passionately about the issues leading to high numbers of black young women and men from his community being out of employment, training and education, and his dream of doing something about it, and find a career helping people. He spoke of how it felt to go the job centre in cheap clothes, and he pointed out the hole in the best jacket suit he had, which he was wearing. There are many stories that Aledina and I could tell about the journey of his year with us.



But 3 weeks after Aaron left us, he found a job as a hostel support worker, and subsequently has been promoted twice. His earnings are well in excess of the London Living Wage and he is being encouraged to study at University alongside his work. Aaron has achieved what he said wanted to do in that interview. He spent a year with us doing something about young people facing unemployment and has gone onto a career helping people.

The project itself reaches out to other young people who are unemployed. Janeice Ladner is one such person. A young black graduate, unemployed when Aaron interviewed her. Olmec supported her into role with 3 Stones Media, the makers of Rastamouse. Janeice did well. Her 3 month work placement, turned into a paid role. In December, her paid role turned into a permanent contract as their social media officer. I received an email from a director at 3 Stones Media, introducing me to a BBC producer, whom Janeice had met at a focus group. She spoke highly of Olmec.

We have heard this evening from some of the 16 fantastic social entrepreneurs, graduating from our Inspiring Black and Minority Ethnic women into Social Enterprise programme.

I was delighted, that amongst those women accepted onto our programme, there was an architect, a solicitor, a scientist and a young lady studying a masters in criminology.

Hana, who cannot be with us this evening, is our scientist. In her early 20s, she is studying at Imperial College, and has developed an eco-friendly cellulose material grown from bacteria. She is considering commercial applications for this. Hana could have a purely commercial approach to business, but in common with all true social entrepreneurs Hana wants to create social change as well as run a profitable business. In her case, she wants to create employment opportunities for migrant and refugee women.

16 women joined our programme with social enterprise ideas. I have one last job on this programme, that of conducting a final one to one session. I have completed 11 of these, and from that group, 10 either have or will test trade as they set out on their demanding business journey.

Olmec's dream is race equality through economic and social justice. The way achieve this is very practical. It is supporting people into jobs, not just any jobs, but jobs that people really want. Between April last year and January this, I am proud to share with you that our small team helped 127 people into work. Arlette, Annette, Brian, Katie, Leon, Thomas, Moses, Aledina: thank you, respect.

As you have heard and seen, we help people set up business, but not any business. Social enterprise generate wealth and good in the community.

Tomorrow a film about one of the most significant figures in the movement for race equality, Dr Martin Luther King Jr, goes on national release in the UK. It is 50 years on from the 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights march. Picking up Dr King's famous 1963 speech, the tagline is "One Dream can change the world."

FutureLeaders Session 5 was on public speaking. Students were set the task of picking a figure that meant something to them, and to present to the group for 5 minutes. One student picked Jeremy Kyle. Each to his own. But I was very proud of Moses for choosing Martin Luther King and sharing an inspirational quote. I shared that story, in October, when I was invited to speak at Heidelberg University . Moses, you are famous in Germany.

I ask of everyone here this evening, never to lose sight of what it is that you want to achieve in this life.

With passion, with sweat, with the right breaks, you can achieve. With the humility to listen and accept the right advice, you can achieve. By taking control and responsibility and owning your own situation, you can achieve . If you have a dream or vision you can get there.

Let us take us inspiration from Dr King. It could be your one dream that changes the world.

John Mayford, February 2015.