

# Knowledge, Power and Change



The logo for Just Knowledge features the text "Just Knowledge" in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a graphic consisting of four overlapping circles in shades of green, blue, orange, and pink. The entire logo is enclosed within a dark blue rectangular border that has a slight 3D effect with a shadow on the right side.

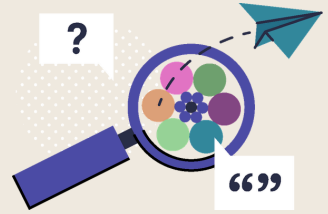
**Just  
Knowledge**

**DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. DIFFERENT RESULTS.**

**Just Knowledge is a newly registered  
Community Interest Company (CIC)  
limited by guarantee.**

We build epistemic power in marginalised communities by bringing together advanced quantitative techniques with lived-experience interpretation to support robust, evidence-based systems change.

# Executive Summary



## **Just Knowledge exists to improve how knowledge is produced and used.**

Across research, funding and policy, there is a growing demand for evidence that is rigorous and legitimate in the eyes of the communities it describes. Yet those most affected by social challenges are often positioned as data sources rather than partners in knowledge production.

Through our flagship methodology, Data Democracy, we combine advanced quantitative techniques with structured community-led interpretation. Data Democracy strengthens the credibility and the legitimacy of evidence by ensuring lived experience and community knowledge shape not only data collection, but also interpretation and application.

Our work operates at two levels. At the community level, we partner with groups to interpret data about their own lives, providing analysis that reflects their priorities rather than external agendas. At the sector level, we strengthen research standards through open data practice, new methods and advisory partnerships that help institutions embed inclusive and accountable approaches.

With backing from major funders including the Wellcome Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Just Knowledge has demonstrated proof of concept. We are now seeking strategic partners across the philanthropy, commissioning, research, and community sectors to help translate this model into sustainable research infrastructure for systems change.

# A note on language



The term ‘epistemic’ originates from the Greek word ‘epistēmē’, meaning ‘knowledge’. In modern English it is defined as ‘of or relating to knowledge or knowing.’ Knowledge, including its creation, recognition and practical use, is the focal point of our work, and the term ‘epistemic’ usefully captures these facets. By extension, the following terms are fundamental to our work:

**Epistemic oppression** is the persistent, structural exclusion from knowledge-making processes, including what knowledge is legitimate and valued, hindering one’s ability to contribute to or use shared knowledge.

**Epistemic power** is the capacity to influence what people know, believe and consider to be valid knowledge.

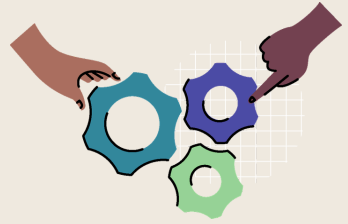
**Epistemic justice** is when knowledge about marginalised communities is produced and used in ways that are inclusive, rigorous and accountable.

## The problem we exist to solve

Knowledge production is mainly the domain of a privileged minority whose perspectives often reflect and reinforce existing power structures. Despite decades of “evidence-based” policymaking, progress on urgent societal issues has been slow and uneven. This dynamic raises a fundamental question: whose knowledge shapes decisions and whose is excluded?

Communities most affected by social issues are frequently researched yet rarely hold power as researchers, interpreters, or decision-makers. Despite their deep lived expertise, they are often treated as sources of data rather than partners in generating knowledge. Power shapes the entire knowledge production ecosystem, from defining questions to interpreting findings and determining how they are used. Although participatory approaches are increasingly common, participation alone does not redistribute power. Lived experience is too often included in tokenistic or extractive ways, and even meaningful co-production is typically confined to early stages. It is during interpretation of data and mobilisation of knowledge that power has its greatest consequences; this is when evidence is shaped into stories, recommendations are formed, and decisions about what change happens are made.

When communities lack meaningful influence across this process, change gets done to them rather than with them. Research can misrepresent realities and inform ineffective or harmful interventions. Over time, this means tackling the right problems with the wrong solutions, or even addressing the wrong problems entirely. Many interventions fail because the diagnosis was wrong from the start. Through these processes, communities are systematically denied their status as knowers, and what they know is excluded from shaping the world around them. This is epistemic oppression. Until knowledge production becomes truly inclusive and accountable, efforts to address inequality will continue to fall short.



## Who we are and why us

**Just Knowledge combines high-quality data with lived experience and community knowledge to drive social change.**

This work is timely. There is growing demand across research, funding and policy for more inclusive and legitimate evidence. However, the capability to deliver this consistently has not kept pace with ambition. Across the sector, evidence is often judged primarily by its credibility: whether it was produced by the right institutions, using the right methods. But legitimacy also matters: whether those most affected recognise their realities in the research and whether they have meaningful authority over how it is interpreted and used. These are not competing standards, but they are rarely held together in practice.

**We exist to bridge this gap.**

We produce rigorous, community-centred research and support institutions to embed inclusive practice within their own systems, fostering a collective effort to make inclusive and accountable research the norm rather than the exception.

### Vision

A world in which marginalised communities hold epistemic power, shaping the knowledge that affects their lives.

### Mission

We build epistemic power in marginalised communities by bringing together advanced quantitative techniques with lived-experience interpretation to support robust, evidence-based systems change.

# Guiding Principles



**Change  
is Possible**



**Knowledge  
is Power**



**Working in the  
Open**



**Communities  
First**

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## The Team



Dr Celestin Okoroji



Dr Jolyon Miles-Wilson

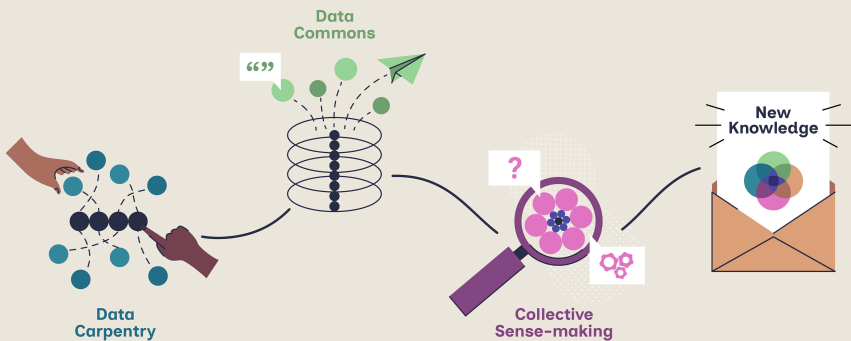
Just Knowledge is led by Dr Celestin Okoroji and Dr Jolyon Miles-Wilson, who have over 18 years of combined experience across academia, community organisations and policy research. Their partnership began at the Black Thrive Research Institute, founded by Celestin and recognised as the first Black-led research initiative to secure peer-reviewed Wellcome Trust funding, and continued at the Royal Society of Arts.

Across these roles, they developed the Data Democracy approach, the flagship methodology underpinning Just Knowledge. Together, they have led and delivered major research programmes totalling over £4 million, bringing senior research leadership, mixed-methods expertise, and advanced quantitative capability. Celestin's path to this work is also personal. His experience of poverty and the care system informs how Just Knowledge builds relationships with communities and underpins its commitment to research that is led by those it describes.

# What we do and how change happens

At the heart of our work is **Data Democracy**: a rigorous methodology that positions communities as expert producers and interpreters of data about their own lives, while we provide the technical support required to ensure credibility and robustness.

The approach has four interconnected pillars:



We transform messy datasets into clean, analysis-ready resources to enable new insights.

We publish cleaned datasets, methods, findings and lessons openly, enabling scrutiny and replication.

We facilitate structured interpretation processes so that lived experience and community knowledge shape meaning.

We integrate data analysis with collective interpretation to generate original, community-centred research.

Our distinctive contribution lies in our **methodology** rather than specialising in a single issue or policy area.

We work wherever data is **contested, underused or misinterpreted**.

## With communities...

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With communities, we begin by listening so that research questions emerge from lived experience and local priorities. We then identify, unlock or generate the necessary data and move through cycles of analysis and collective interpretation. We uphold methodological standards while communities shape relevance, meaning and conclusions.

## With institutions...

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With funders, research bodies, commissioners and policymakers, we act as:

- **Delivery partner:** leading community-centred research projects
- **Evaluation partner:** applying Data Democracy as an evaluative approach
- **Critical friend and advisor:** strengthening research design and inclusive practice

Where appropriate, we collaborate with organisations leading on policy advocacy or service delivery to connect evidence with action.

### Our Offer

We work across three strands:

[Research & Evaluation](#)

[Advisory & Design](#)

[Capacity Building](#)

## Growing Reach, Sustaining Impact

As we scale and build capacity, we will continue leading community-centred research while strengthening our role as a trusted intermediary and field-building partner. Over time, the expanding evidence base through the Data Commons will demonstrate what inclusive, rigorous research can deliver, while a greater proportion of our work will focus on enabling others to embed these standards themselves.

To sustain this trajectory, we will diversify revenue streams, strengthen operational infrastructure, and build a multidisciplinary team that reflects both lived and technical expertise.

**The Theory of Change that follows sets out this progression in detail.**

# Theory O

Long-standing community relationships and lived experience

Deep quantitative and mixed-methods expertise

A vision for a  
marginalised co  
epistemic power  
knowledge that o



## Different Perspectives

Epistemi

Knowledge about marginalised  
used in ways that are inclusi

### THE PROBLEMS



#### Epistemic oppression persists.

Marginalised communities are positioned as data sources rather than recognised partners in generating knowledge, limiting their authority to shape research, interpretation and action.



#### Gap in the research ecosystem.

Evidence is often either technically credible but socially distant, or inclusive but methodologically weak. Credibility without inclusion lacks legitimacy; inclusion without rigour lacks credibility.

### APPROACH

Lead community-centred research and mixed-methods evaluation projects

Unlock, clean and analyse complex datasets

Facilitate structured community interpretation and sense-making

Publish open datasets, tools and methodological resources

Provide advisory support on inclusive research design and data strategy

Deliver training and capacity-building for institutions and community partners

# f Change

Strategic partnerships across research, funding and policy

World in which communities hold power, shaping the effects their lives.

Financial and organisational resilience

Epistemic justice:

Epistemic justice is produced and is rigorous and accountable.

## OUTPUTS

Community-centred research projects and mixed-methods evaluations

Cleaned and harmonised open datasets

Open-source tools and shared code

Accessible and actionable publications

Training and advisory support for institutions and community partners

## Different Results

### THE IMPACT

#### Communities build epistemic power.

Marginalised communities meaningfully shape how research questions are framed, how data is interpreted and how evidence is mobilised.



#### Research is both credible and legitimate.

Community-centred research meets high methodological standards while remaining accountable to those it describes, integrating analytical rigour with lived experience and community knowledge.



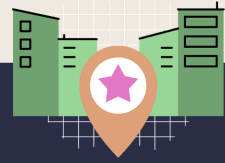
**Institutional standards reflect epistemic justice.** Funders, research bodies and policymakers commission, interpret and apply evidence in ways that combine technical robustness with community accountability.



**Open knowledge infrastructure strengthens scrutiny and uptake.** Accessible datasets, shared methods and transparent analysis enable replication, challenge and wider adoption of inclusive, rigorous practice.



# Work to date and early impact:



## Poverty Affecting Children: Northumberland Park (2025)

The Northumberland Park Knowledge project was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and delivered in partnership with residents, North London Partnership Consortium Ltd (a local community organisation supporting residents), Place Matters and Roots & Rigour. The project explored what happens when residents lead the interpretation of data about their own community.

In Northumberland Park, residents found that official poverty data told just one part of the story. While official statistics captured deprivation rates, they missed lived dimensions of stigma, resilience, housing precarity and the erosion of local services. The gap between what was measured and what was felt exposed how decisions about data shape which realities are recognised and which are overlooked.

Through rigorous quantitative analysis and structured collective sense-making, residents interrogated national datasets, generating a more complete account of poverty in their area. Celestin has roots in Northumberland Park, but proximity is not the same as interpretive authority. In this project, the authority rested with current residents, whose lived experience of the area today shaped meaning and conclusions.

The project demonstrated Data Democracy in practice: combining technical rigour with community-led interpretation to produce credible, legitimate insight. While rooted in one neighbourhood, the implications extend nationally. By offering a grounded alternative to how poverty data can be interpreted alongside lived experience, the project contributes to wider conversations about how evidence is produced and acted upon. Residents have already begun using the evidence they generated to challenge planning applications and have their voices heard.

### Impact Highlights

- Redistributed authority over poverty data through resident-led interpretation.
- Exposed gaps between national statistics and community experience.
- Strengthened the legitimacy and credibility of local evidence.
- Contributed to JRF's national efforts to improve evidence infrastructure.

# Data Democracy for the Health and Wellbeing of Black Communities (2025-2027)

This Wellcome Trust-funded project applies Data Democracy to one of the most entrenched manifestations of racial injustice in the UK: the disproportionate use of stop and search and its impact on the health and wellbeing of Black communities.

Black British people are stopped and searched at far higher rates than their White counterparts, yet the research that shapes public understanding rarely centres their expertise. While official statistics exist, they are typically analysed without meaningful community input. This is epistemic injustice in practice: communities most affected are denied power over how evidence is framed and used.

To address this imbalance, the project has developed `policedatR`, an open-source tool enabling analysis of over one million stop-and-search records across time and geography. It makes examining racial disproportionality, generating visualisations and exploring links to health and social outcomes significantly more accessible.

However, data infrastructure alone does not shift power. Through structured collective sense-making with Black communities and stop-and-search monitoring groups, the project enables lived experience to shape interpretations and conclusions. Early engagement is already challenging dominant narratives in policing and public health research.

By combining technical rigour, open data practice and community knowledge, this project goes beyond analysing inequality - it redefines who has the authority to interpret it.

## Impact Highlights

- Redistributing power in the interpretation of stop-and-search data.
- Reframing how racial disproportionality in policing is measured and understood.
- Challenging dominant narratives in policing and public health research.
- Setting new standards for integrating lived experience into quantitative analysis.

# What We're Seeking

**Just Knowledge is entering its next phase of development.**

We are seeking flexible, multi-year partnership support to strengthen our organisational foundations and extend the reach of Data Democracy.

This is not simply about resourcing projects. It is about consolidating and scaling a model that integrates methodological rigour with meaningful community power, while contributing to higher standards for the production, interpretation and use of evidence.



## What Strategic Support Would Enable:

**Multi-year, flexible backing would allow us to:**

- Sustain core methodological and strategic leadership
- Invest in operational capacity that underpins consistent, high-quality delivery
- Further refine, document and share the Data Democracy approach through open tools, training and accessible resources
- Deepen and seed community partnerships in ways that restricted project funding does not always allow
- Strengthen financial resilience to support measured growth and responsible risk management

**Our focus is steady, disciplined development: strengthening what works while expanding influence thoughtfully over time.**



## **A Partnership for Field-Level Impact**

To date, our work has secured competitive project funding. The next phase is about establishing Just Knowledge as a strong intermediary and infrastructure body within the research and social impact ecosystem.

We are interested in conversations with funders and aligned institutions who recognise that improving evidence standards requires both innovation and institutional stability. Support at this stage would help embed inclusive, rigorous research practice across communities, funders and policy environments.

With the right partners, we can move from proven methodology to embedded practice, strengthening both communities and the systems that rely on evidence.

# What Partners Say



'Just Knowledge came prepared to work with those already here, partnered with us in co-designing and agreeing the best approach, was prepared to be guided by residents, listened actively to what they had to say and contribute. Others often come with conclusions drawn, just seeking a rubber stamp.'

**Eduardo Araujo - North London Partnership Consortium**

'Stop and search, policing, mental health aren't abstract research topics for the people we support. They're daily realities. What's made the partnership with Just Knowledge valuable is that the research actually connects to what our communities experience. On the excited delirium and stop and search projects, the people most affected are shaping what the evidence means and what should be done about it. That's not how research usually works, and it's why we've kept working together.'

**Lynette Charles - CEO Mind in Haringey, Chair of Mind in London, BlackThrive Haringey Lead'**

'Just Knowledge's approach to data combines rigorous academic standards with genuine involvement and empowerment of communities. Doing one of those well is hard enough, and doing both well is unique. They are paving a new way of developing evidence that centres communities and drives practical outcomes.'

**Nick Lancaster - Associate Director, Neighbourly Lab**

Tottenham Hotspur  
GVA reportings 2021  
- 2022 season



London  
£478 million

Triborough  
£344 million

Haringey  
£296 million

Tottenham  
Hotspur GVA



TOTTENHAM  
HOTSPUR  
STADIUM

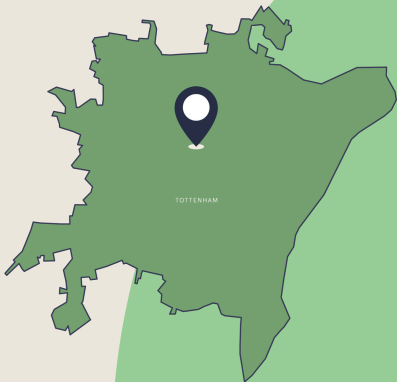
DIFFERENT RESULTS

Data democracy empowers communities by centring their knowledge. In Northumberland Park, it became clear that prevailing narratives of the economic benefits of Tottenham Hotspur Stadium are selective with the facts. The focus on broad geographies such as London and the Triborough area has until now masked the residents' truth: that the area around the stadium has seen no economic growth since 2016.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

GVA index comparison  
with and without  
Tottenham Hotspur  
2016 - 2023

"If it's going to local businesses, or just going to the stadium ... They're mostly spending that money when they're in the stadium, because you can't bring stuff in ... and then when they go, they just go."  
- LOCAL RESIDENT



GVA index within 1km of Tottenham Hotspur Stadium



PARTNERS:



# Levels of analysis



We work with data at multiple levels of analysis. In this case, levels correspond to geographic units;

## 1 Local authorities

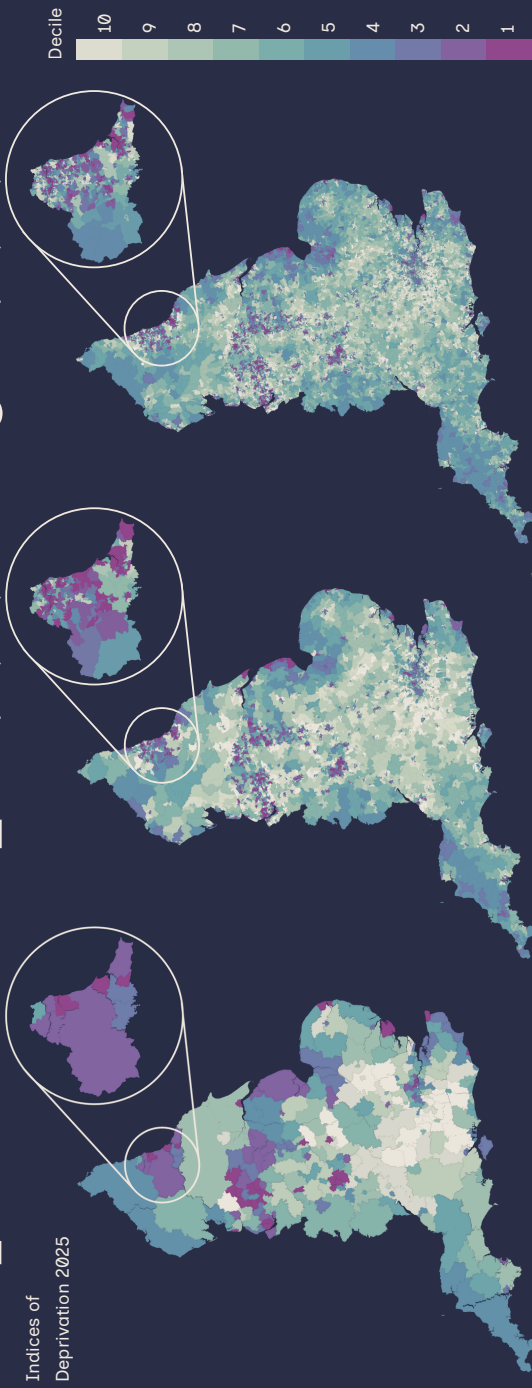
Indices of Deprivation 2025

## 2 MSOA

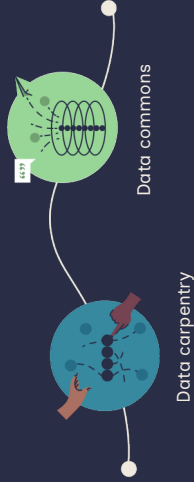
Middle layer Super Output Areas

## 3 LSOA

Lower layer Super Output Areas



Different levels allow us to ask different questions. In our poverty affecting children work, we were interested in MSOAs because the estate of Northumberland Park can be defined by a single MSOA. We therefore deployed data carpentry to convert LSOA-level data to MSOA.



We recognise the value of this kind of work to others, which is why we share data and methods to bolster the data commons. Where possible, we also provide pro bono support to people interested in accessing and using the data commons in their work.



**Connect and find out more**



### **Legal**

Just Knowledge is a newly registered Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by guarantee. During its establishment phase, Ratio Research CIC has provided fiscal hosting and governance support, ensuring strong oversight and compliance. Over the next 12 months, as internal systems and governance mature, Just Knowledge will transition to fully independent operation.

