**DRAFT PRESS RELEASE**

**Special Mission to New York to Stem the Tide of Inequalities**

**Embargoed until Wednesday 15 January 2020.**

Motorsport education providers, The Blair Project based in Manchester UK, are leading a fact-finding mission to New York this January (20—26) to learn about the extraordinary impact a youth development charity in Harlem is having on the lives of disadvantaged youth using STEM activities.

The visit forms part of a feasibility study commissioned by housing and community services provider, One Manchester and Manchester City Council. The findings will be used to inform the design of a new community learning space in Moss Side providing Industry 4.0 vocational education training to prepare low income residents of all ages and abilities to fill well paid jobs in the city region’s booming tech, advanced manufacturing, engineering and digital sectors.

The five-person delegation which includes education and public sector representatives will visit the Harlem Educational Activity Fund, which boasts a 100% success rate in progressing 500 poor Black and Hispanic youth into college and university education every year to learn the secret of their success. HEAF operates two centres; one in Harlem, the other in Brooklyn.

HEAF, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, provides stimulating extra curricula learning programmes and a caring approach to develop the intellectual curiosity, academic achievement of the young people they work with along with their personal confidence and resilience. Its education partners include NASA and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 90% of HEAF’s $3 million running costs comes from Wall Street companies like Bloomberg; only $50k comes from their local authority. One of its trustees is Neil Degrasse Tyson, the world’s best known Black astrophysicist, author and communicator.

The delegation will also visit the New York’s Mayors Office to discover how their OneNYC 2050 strategy plans to upskill 2 million low paid residents so they can take up traditionally middle class jobs. The schedule will also include visits to local schools, other STEM education providers and Wall Street companies to better understand how the ecosystem works together to build the STEM capital of the most disadvantaged in the city.

The New York visit will also seek to leverage Britain’s special transatlantic trade relationship with America, and culminate in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between The Blair Project and HEAF to bring The Blair Project’s ProtoEV STEM Challenge to New York and facilitate student exchanges.

The Blair Project was founded by Black social entrepreneur Nile Henry (24). ProtoEV taps into the climate change activism of young people by providing hands on opportunities for them to participate in the green tech revolution through building, racing and accelerating innovations in electric go karts.

Teams (13 -19) learn how to convert used petrol go karts into adrenaline-pumping e-karts, which they get to test, race and experiment with applying advanced technologies to see which is the fastest and most energy efficient. The top six ProtoEV teams in the UK will get to showcase their self-build e-karts in the Fanzone area at Formula E’s London EPrix in July 2020.

CEO Nile said: “ We want to replicate the HEAF model in Manchester to equip marginalised youth and low paid residents with important new skills in 3D printing, computer aided design, robotics, and cyber security and help them transition into well paid jobs or set up their own businesses. We also want to educate a new generation of highly skilled workers who can repair, service and maintain electric vehicles.

He added: “ HEAF is able to progress 500 poor Black and Hispanic young people every year into higher education, as a stepping stone to securing a better life. If we can achieve just half that, our Manchester Educational Activity Hub will undoubtedly deliver massive social impact.

Organisations wishing to find out more about ProtoEV sponsorship opportunities, should contact Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE at info@theblairproject.org in the first instance.

ENDS

**Notes For Editors**

For further information about the ProtoEV STEM Challenge can be found at <https://www.theblairproject.org/>

Publicity photos are available for use and are free of charge, and rights cleared.

For photos, interviews with Nile Henry or further information please contact Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE on 07970 871727 or email marilyn@theblairproject.org

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