

HS2 apprentice celebrates success at BAME awards

October 13, 2021



- Project management apprentice Bintou Keita wins Apprentice of the Year 2021 (Transport & Logistics) at the BAME Apprentice Network Awards.
- Attending the event, Andy Street, Metro Mayor for the West Midlands spoke about the importance of apprenticeship programmes and their role in supporting the UK's economic recovery.
- HS2's apprenticeship programme continues to attract diverse talent, recently welcoming a new generation of 26 apprentices.

Over 500 people attended this year's BAME Apprentice Network Annual Apprenticeship Awards with HS2 apprentice, Bintou Keita, among those recognised as a rising star in the UK's BAME apprenticeship community.

The event, held at the Edgbaston Cricket Club, signalled a welcome return to in-person gatherings, with organisations across the West Midlands in attendance. For her contribution to the industry and her involvement in HS2's BAME Network, HS2 Project Management apprentice Bintou Keita was awarded Apprentice of the Year in the Transport and Logistics category. She joined 9 other winners on the stage representing sectors including marketing, construction, engineering, digital technology, and hospitality.

Bintou, from Kings Norton, Birmingham, joined HS2's apprentice cohort in 2019 and studied at the National College for Advanced Transport Infrastructure (NCATI) to complete her apprenticeship standard. COVID-19 meant that face-to-face learning was paused, but this didn't stop her from successfully completing her qualification from the Association for Project Management and helping to organise events on behalf of HS2's Race Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Network. Bintou also plays an active role in HS2's Future Talent Network where she supports the next generation of apprentices and organises social and virtual events aimed at improving their industry knowledge.

HS2 Project Co-ordinator, Bintou Keita, said: "My apprenticeship journey has been filled with incredible experiences and opportunities. I have been lucky enough to get involved with many exciting events including the 'Work It' Group for the Careers and Enterprise Company where I recorded videos to encourage young women to consider an apprenticeship in engineering.

"I recently started a new role at as a Project Coordinator for HS2's Interchange Station in Solihull, where I will continue to champion diversity in the construction industry. HS2 has given me a platform to share my voice as a female BAME apprentice."

HS2 aims to promote the inclusion of diverse talent across a range of apprenticeship programmes, including roles in non-construction focused areas such as stakeholder engagement, finance, HR, IT, and Corporate Assurance. Apprenticeships at HS2 provide individuals with the opportunity to learn from the very best in the industry, gaining hands on experience working towards recognised qualifications.

HS2's Talent & Development Manager Karen Davis said: "The BAME Apprenticeship Awards highlight the benefits that diversity brings to organisations, regardless of the industry they represent.

"Throughout her two-year apprenticeship, Bintou has consistently championed the role of BAME communities and women in the construction industry and we are so happy that her efforts have been recognised externally by the BAME Apprenticeship Network.

"The HS2 project provides a unique opportunity for career development for anyone enrolled on its apprenticeship and graduate programmes. HS2 has committed to creating 2,000 apprenticeships during the life cycle of the project and has already welcomed over 650 new apprentice starts."

Having successfully completed her apprenticeship this September, Bintou is now a permanent employee in HS2's project management team, where she will play an invaluable role project managing aspects of HS2's main construction contracts linked to the delivery of Britain's brand new high speed railway between Birmingham and London.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd