



Young Roots response to Black Lives Matter

Young Roots works to support young refugees and asylum seekers improve their lives and fulfil their potential. Last year, we worked with young people from 48 different countries.

As a charity working with many Black young people, we stand firmly in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. The abhorrent murder of George Floyd highlighted the entrenched racism and violence against black people in the USA. In the UK, the Macpherson Report and the Windrush Lessons Learned Review found institutional racism within government and society, and we know that racism is an everyday reality for those we work with. We recognise the continued prevalence of white privilege and this racism as having deep roots in the history of the UK, its colonial past and role in the slave trade.

Young Roots' supports many young refugees and asylum seekers to navigate the complex asylum system, find a home and improve their mental health, as well as to make friends and improve their English. We are acutely aware of the barriers that those we support face in the intentionally constructed 'hostile environment' including having their ages assessed routinely, appallingly low rates of asylum support, and detention. The asylum system is inhuman and not fit for purpose. We are committed to using our knowledge and giving young people opportunities to have their voices heard to make positive changes within these systems. We are proud to be part of campaigns including the Families Together campaign advocating for family reunion rights of young refugees, and Lift the Ban calling for the right to work for asylum seekers.

However, we also recognise that this is a time for Young Roots as an organisation to look at ourselves and understand contributions that we make to perpetuating the situation, however unintentional. We acknowledge that at Management and Board level we need address the lack of BAME diversity.

Building on our work to involve 'experts by experience' at all levels of Young Roots, we will be commissioning a diversity audit of our work - from Board level to how we run our activities and services - and this will feed into our planning and strategy from the Autumn. More immediately all trustees, staff and regular volunteers will have unconscious bias training.

We pride ourselves on working in an 'asset-based' way building on the many strengths of the young people we support. However, we also recognise that at this moment, this isn't enough and we're committed to listen and understand more about how we can be part of positive change in the future.