

NORTH EAST

RACE EQUALITY FORUM

INFORMATION BRIEFING

No. 17



This is the feedback from groups' discussions at the post-McPherson conference organised by NEREF in November 2018. Some of the issues have already been taken up by the Steering Group. For more information, please contact Jenny.Johnstone@ncl.ac.uk and if your organisation is taking action on any of these issues, please let us know.

Feedback from Groups:

- Legislation needs to drive racial equality. Successive Governments have weakened access to Justice and reduced the ability of the EHRC to undertake its work;
- British Values – What are these? They cannot be divorced from Britishness and British History;
- People need to agitate for change at a local level;
- Self and Group empowerment is required – People need to learn how the system works and how those in governmental power can hide their collusions with reproducing the logics of race and the structures of racism;
- NEREF needs to submit evidence to the Parliamentary inquiry after Macpherson (link below to submission of evidence and final outcome) <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/162/the-macpherson-report-twentyone-years-on/>;
- Teachers across all sections of Education and Teacher Training in HE could do more to decolonise the curriculum;
- We could learn from other Countries about the challenge to



colonising/supremacist ideas. For example China;

- Collaboration with Journalists and others in the Media to push for an evidenced driven approach to Equality and Racial Justice. We need to be aware that ‘evidence’ for a solution to a problem may already be known. Those in HE have a particular responsibility to seek to disseminate widely. NEREF attempts to do this. Those who are concerned about racial / social justice have a responsibility to not assume the evidence is not known;
- NEREF works best when the dialogue connects everyday folk with practitioners, policy makers and academics as co-constructors of the problem / solution frame;
- Always seek to tackle ‘Unconscious Bias’. Whiteness requires exposure and critique;
- Stop and Search is a securitised answer to a socio-economic problem;
- How far have we come in 25 years since the murder of Stephen Lawrence;
- It feels like we have moved backwards and are having the same conversations that we have had before;
- Who holds the organs of the state to account? There is no longer a requirement for Equality Impact Assessments;
- We need a forum for influencing governance in the region.

Feedback from the Plenary:

1. Curriculum and decolonisation is a possibility in this region. How can we approach the teacher training agencies within our own HE institutions to develop progressive work in this area?;
2. NEREF has created a forum for building a regional picture about racist incidents in schools, institutions and public spaces. How can we better collate this evidence? Maybe NEREF via its members can undertake a

regional survey?;

3. Since Brexit the region has moved from covert racism to overt racism. A regional response to challenging this normalising of the logics of race that drive racism is urgently required;
4. Those in power in the region still rely on Community Leaders as a pathway into the BAME communities. This is a gendered and racialized practice that should be stopped. Pathways for BAME people must include the deeper and richer voices of women, young people and scope across the intersecting realities of ability, age, class and sexual orientation;
5. Austerity has dismantled and broken the knowledge and skills built up within the region by decimating services. BAME people, specifically poorer BAME people, have been particularly negatively impacted upon;
6. Community development / education and action are required to drive change from below. It is necessary to hear and listen to the storied experiences from those at the 'bottom of the well'. We need to hear the voices and be attentive to the most vulnerable people in our community of communities. In this we need to pay attention to the experiences of women and girls, children and young people and older people from whichever community they come;
7. We can learn from others, geographically and across the equality strands, to drive change.



Contact: For further information, back copies of Information Briefings or Research Briefings, or to join the Network, email gary.craig@galtres8.co.uk

The North East Race Equality Forum is a Network of around 300 individuals and organisations in the North East Region committed to promoting racial equality in the context of social justice. No one organisation is necessarily committed to every idea published in the name of the Forum. The Forum is supported by the 'Race', Crime and Justice Regional Research Network, which includes researchers from each University in the region.