MARGINALISATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN

HEALTHCARE OF UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN

SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

CARE AND ETHNICITY

Q&A: CHILDREN’S COMMISSIONER FOR ENGLAND

I would like to thank Shivani Handa who helped me in the editing, page layout, and photo research for this issue, and undertook the research and writing of key facts and news in brief.

After 44 years as a print publication, the Runnymede Bulletin will be moving online in the autumn. In order to mark this change, the Summer 2013 issue of the Bulletin will look back at Runnymede’s work since 1968.

Robin Frampton, Editor.
Email: robin@runnymedetrust.org

Have you ever been stopped and searched by a police officer?
Do you feel that you, and other people your age, are unfairly treated by the police?
Do you want to improve policing and its effect on young people, your families, friends and communities?
Are you aged 14 to 25?

StopWatch Youth Group is looking for new members! We believe young people’s voices are essential in raising awareness of the serious impact that stop and search has on individuals and their communities, and can help improve police practice in the long term. Being stopped and searched publicly can be a frightening, inconvenient and potentially humiliating experience. Many people, particularly those from black and Asian communities, feel they are being stopped and searched simply because they fit a stereotype. This fuels anger and alienation. Do you agree? Then join us as we advocate for fair, accountable and effective policing.

As a Youth Group member, you have the chance to take part in a wide variety of projects – it depends on the interests and skills in the group as it is truly led by young people themselves, and you will be supported by the resources of the StopWatch coalition. To give you an idea of the possibilities, in the past, our activities have involved film and theatre productions, flash mobs, engaging with policy makers through debates and events. We have also had training on working with the media, with film equipment and using statistics.

If you are interested in being a part of the youth group, or would like more information, email info@stop-watch.org

StopWatch is an action group of legal experts, academics, citizens and civil liberties campaigners. We aim to address excess and disproportionate stop and search, promote best practice and ensure fair, effective policing for all. To find out more about what we do and how you can get involved, check out our website www.stop-watch.org
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Male Black Youth Unemployment Soars

Youth unemployment generally has been on the rise in the UK in recent years. It reached a level of 21.2 per cent between November 2012 and January 2013 and is once again edging closer to nearly one million young people out of work, according to Youth Unemployment Statistics published in March.

Unemployment levels are disproportionately higher amongst young BME people than for young white people. The latest statistics show that 31.4 per cent of those from minority backgrounds are unemployed, compared to 21.1 per cent of white young people. In July 2012, the figures were broken down into 31 per cent for Asians and a staggering 45 per cent for African Caribbean young people, compared to 20 per cent for those of white ethnicity.

It seems that young black men have suffered the brunt of the recession. The 2012 Youth Unemployment and Ethnicity TUC Report revealed that these young men have experienced the sharpest unemployment rise since 2010: Although those of Asian or Black ethnicity from all age groups were shown to suffer a greater disadvantage in the labour market, this disadvantage increased further for young people, and still further for young males in BME groups.

On the 15 April, the housing reforms commenced trial in the London boroughs of Croydon, Bromley, Haringey and Enfield. These areas all have a large proportion of BME households.

Housing Benefit Changes: Impact on Young People

The changes in housing benefit that came into force at the beginning of April 2013 are claimed by critics to target the poorest and most vulnerable households, and could have a significant impact on young people, especially those with Black Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Housing benefit will be downsized according to a size criterion, whereby the amount of space required for a family is determined by a limit of one bedroom per person or couple in a household (with limited exceptions).

Children under 16 years old will be forced to share with another child of the same gender and children under 10 will have to share with another child, regardless of gender.

A flat rate of 14 per cent for one “spare” bedroom, and 25 per cent for two or more, will be deducted under the new reforms. What is more, an annual cap of £26,000 will be imposed.

On 14 April, the housing reforms commenced trial in the London boroughs of Croydon, Bromley, Haringey and Enfield. These areas all have a large proportion of BME households.

Child poverty is a large concern of critics of the reforms. The Department for Work and Pensions has shown that the poverty threshold for an out-of-work household with four children (at least two being over the age of 14) is £26,566. However, this annual cap will place these families firmly over the poverty line. What is more, according to the Government’s Impact Assessment (published in 2012), approximately 52 per cent of families affected by the cuts are households with four or more children.

Enver Solomon, Director of Policy at the Children’s Society, was quoted by the Observer, saying that the cuts will affect three times as many children as adults, and Alison Garnham, Chief Executive of the Child Poverty Action Group, stated last month that, with these reforms, the Coalition “is on course to leave behind the worst child poverty record of any government for a generation”.

Additionally, families from disadvantaged backgrounds are already increasingly forced to change schools in the middle of the academic year, inevitably disrupting their children’s education. This will only exacerbate the problem. The Royal Society of Arts has suggested that these cuts to benefits will increase the frequency of these mid-year admissions by
forcing families to move to areas with lower rent. Typically, these types of admissions are highest among children with Eastern European, Black African and Irish Traveller backgrounds, according to the Royal Society of Arts.

As well as this, according to studies including those conducted by Family Action, an organization that provides home-based family support and child development for families with multiple complex needs (such as mental health problems, learning difficulties and/or domestic abuse), access to high-performing schools is largely influenced by the distance that families live from these schools.

However, the latter's study also showed that housing closer to such schools had higher rents. In this way, housing reforms forcing families to move to even lower rent areas could exacerbate the problem of exclusion of children from the poorest homes from these schools.

Family Action also believes that these reforms will hinder their ability to bring structure and stability to such families if they are forced to move, as an important part of their support includes helping these families to feel secure by “[putting] down roots” and building ties in their communities. What is more, children from these types of families are more prone to developing mental illness and/or behavioural disorders, according to Family Action. Being forced to change schools and communities could be detrimental to the sense of certainty and security acquired through the gradual development of friendship group. A briefing published by Family Action on the impact of the reforms show that, on some occasions, families will have to move more than once. They have also put forward concerns that a forced increase in mobility of these families could make it difficult to track and safeguard children from risk and abuse.

Housing charities and political figures, such as David Lammy (MP for Tottenham), have also expressed worries that these reforms could lead to a rise in rent arrears and levels of homelessness – which would result in long-term costs.

There is also concern that the lack of specification on an acceptable bedroom size for one or two people could worsen the problem of overcrowding in larger families. According to the National Housing Federation, “social housing size criteria depend on the number of bedrooms in the property, and for this purpose a room is either a bedroom or it is not. There is no such thing as a half-bedroom, or a bedroom deemed suitable for occupancy by one person but not two. In principle, the size criteria regard any room designated as a bedroom as being capable of accommodating a couple or two children.

It has been suggested that requiring two persons to occupy a small bedroom might amount to statutory overcrowding under Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985. Section 326 of the 1985 Act requires that a room to be occupied by two persons should be at least 110 sq ft (10.22 sq m), but for this purpose children under ten count only as “half persons”. The corresponding minimum sizes for 1.5 persons, 1 person, and 0.5 persons are respectively 90, 70, and 50 sq ft (8.36, 6.50, 4.65 sq m), room sizes that are fairly small by ordinary standards”.

There is a strong correlation between overcrowding and youth homelessness, and studies conducted by Shelter have shown that BME families are six times more likely to be overcrowded, and they account for more than 40 per cent of overcrowded households in England. If this figure were to increase, it would have a serious impact on the amount of homeless BME young people, whose families are already twice as likely to be homeless as white British families (Office of National Statistics, UK Census 2011, and DCLG Homelessness Statistics).
**THE MARGINALISATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN**

Gianna Knowles and Radhika Holmström explore the problems faced by young refugee and asylum seeker children when coming to the UK, with a specific focus on Early Years.

**Understanding the Problem**

Young children from refugee and asylum seeker families are often pitched into nursery or an infant classroom without any preparation. Even today, many Early Years practitioners operate on the basis that families are white, middle-class, nuclear and heterosexual. As a result, the many families that fall outside this model are overlooked.

One of the main reasons for this is the demographic of the teaching workforce. Most teacher trainees are still in their early 20s and the overwhelming majority are from white middle-class backgrounds. The education system has historically not delivered properly to students from BME communities. The difficulty in obtaining the 2:2 or higher degree necessary for the admission and/or funding for postgraduate teacher training courses means that many of these very able young people do not have the necessary qualifications. Many students will never have met a refugee or asylum seeker before they encounter a child in the classroom. They may understand that the child has had a difficult time, but not grasp the full implications of this.

On top of this, the underpinnings of Early Years education reinforce the “Peter and Jane” picture of the family. The dominant discourse of the nuclear family is deeply ingrained, and whilst class and race are touched on in training courses, the more nuanced issues are not. The fact that these children have not simply emigrated from another country out of choice, but have been in danger and been forced to flee from everything they know, been put in detention, and are now being exposed to a completely alien environment, simply isn’t acknowledged or understood.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that even if these children attend school, start to pick up the English language and take part in classroom activities, many of their needs will be unmet. In addition, the culture of Early Years learning in the UK is very much a free-flow, play-based one. Families who have come from very different cultures may feel their values and beliefs about education are being ignored or marginalised, while schools may feel the families are being difficult, or do not care about their children’s education.

And all of this has to be seen in its social context: one that abounds in stereo refugee/asylum seeker families are often pitched into nursery or an infant classroom without any preparation. Even today, many Early Years practitioners operate on the basis that families are white, middle-class, nuclear and heterosexual. As a result, the many families that fall outside this model are overlooked.

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Thus, it is hardly surprising that even if these children attend school, start to pick up the English language and take part in classroom activities, many of their needs will be unmet. In addition, the culture of Early Years learning in the UK is very much a free-flow, play-based one. Families who have come from very different cultures may feel their values and beliefs about education are being ignored or marginalised, while schools may feel the families are being difficult, or do not care about their children’s education.

And all of this has to be seen in its social context: one that abounds in stereotypes, misconceptions and stigma surrounding refugee/asylum seeker families. Teachers do not operate in a vacuum and neither do the parents and other children in the playground. If the specific needs of refugee/asylum seeker children are not addressed and practitioners are not expected to address these misconceptions, this stigma will be perpetuated and these children will lose out even more.

**Making a Difference**

There are already some existing policies that should prevent the marginalisation of refugee/asylum seeker children. After all, schools have been developing an inclusive approach to education since the late 1990s. They also have anti-bullying policies, which ought to cover these children’s particular vulnerabilities. If the children are in the care of a local authority, there is expected to be a named member of staff with specific responsibility for overseeing their wellbeing, and possibly extra funding as well. However, it is a question of making all of this work in practice.

It is considered good practice to talk with the entire class when a child with a specific learning need or disability is about to join, and this could be extended to refugee/asylum seeker children. In schools with a strongly embedded inclusive ethos, this kind of approach can provide a supportive and welcoming learning environment for often bewildered and traumatised children to come into. But again, the success of this does depend on having an existing inclusion and anti-bullying policy. Obviously, it is also easier in schools where there are already children from a whole range of ethnicities; but this is not insuperable, even if it means that practitioners have to do fundamental shifts need to be made in approach can provide a supportive and welcoming learning environment for often bewildered and traumatised children to come into. But again, the success of this does depend on having an existing inclusion and anti-bullying policy. Obviously, it is also easier in schools where there are already children from a whole range of ethnicities; but this is not insuperable, even if it means that practitioners have to do

At an individual level, the most important thing is to focus on that child in particular, and find out a bit about them through talking to them directly. Often – especially if they have been traumatised by their experiences – this isn’t easy, and it is complicated by the fact that many children will have little or no English-speaking ability; but even if communication is limited to showing them pictures from the Internet, it starts making a connection. Very simple questions like: “What do you like doing at school? Have you been to school before? Whom do you like playing with?”, start unpicking a bit of the child’s background, making it possible for them to start feeling at home. It is also important to make time to observe how the child interacts with other children. They may need to be taught how to play or to work with other children, while other children may also need to learn how to play with him/her. And it may be necessary to connect them to therapists and counsellors.

The structures are there, but some fundamental shifts need to be made in practice. Above all, Early Years practitioners need to start unpicking some of their fundamental assumptions about “the family”, acknowledge that the children in their classrooms will come from families who fall far outside the “Peter and Jane” model, and work with the individual children, not just the stereotype.
HEALTHCARE OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANT CHILDREN

Nando Sigona analyses the predicament of undocumented migrants and the way the uncertainty and stress of the family struggle, as well as restricted access to healthcare services, impact the mental and physical well-being of the children.

Meeting the health needs of a growing and super-diverse, foreign-born population in the UK is a challenge for health services. However, these needs are currently only partially acknowledged and addressed. Government policy has focused largely on addressing ethnic inequality in health, leaving aside other factors that may have an impact on migrants’ health needs and experiences of the healthcare system, such as country of birth, language, length of residence in the UK and immigration status. The Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health is a case in point. While it showed that about 20 per cent of deaths directly or indirectly related to pregnancy occur in women with poor or no antenatal care, it failed to consider that one of the main deterrents to access maternity care may be the policy of charging “non-ordinarily resident” patients that was introduced in 2004. Significantly, the Department of Health did not carry out a health impact assessment of the new rules.

According to Maternity Action, “charging women for maternity care has the effect of deterring women from accessing care, irrespective of formal rules requiring care to be provided even if the woman cannot pay in advance”. Many women are not prepared to take on a debt which they are unable to pay and consequently limit accessing services until delivery. This is further exacerbated by current initiatives aimed at directly linking debt incurred with the NHS to entitlement to gain legal access to the UK. Similarly, research has focused on the health needs and outcomes of specific categories of migrants, such as refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, and thus paying significantly less attention to other categories, such as undocumented migrants, including children.

Drawing on research that my colleagues and I carried out at the University of Oxford (2010–2012) and which was funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, I will try to highlight, through the testimonies of undocumented parents, some of the impacts of that the lack of legal immigration status has on children’s health status and access to healthcare. The combination of precarious immigration status, restricted access to healthcare, and financial hardship often has serious effects on migrants’ physical and mental health and can result in chronic conditions such as asthma, migraines and depression. Michelle, a Jamaican mother, explained how her immigration status affected her: “Mentally, it’s really bad. We’re just sitting here, staring, wondering where the next meal is going to come from, when the next bill is going to be paid.”

The precarious situation that many undocumented parents experience often means that any change in their situation or negative experience can easily lead to a downward spiral. Talking about her father’s funeral in Jamaica, Jackie, a mother of three, said: “Everyone was like going over, I couldn’t go... my sisters, brothers, they all went over. I was the only child that wasn’t there. I couldn’t eat, couldn’t do nothing.”

Seventeen out of 53 interviewees in the Oxford study, both parents and independent migrant children, reported mental health issues that were associated with stress linked to their immigration status. However, signs of stress, exhaustion, anxiety and other impacts on health due to financial and immigration status insecurities were noticeable in most interviews. The majority of the interviewees who explicitly talked about their mental health problems were parents. A number of them reported that they were treated with anti-depressants and/or counselling during pregnancy. Reasons given for feeling depressed or “low” included fear of being deported or detained, not knowing what will happen in both the near and the distant future, not being able to talk about their problems, losing support networks, or not having any support in the first instance and thus feeling isolated, and being in inadequate accommodation arrangements. Princess, a Jamaican mother of two, explained the uncertainty that she experienced on a daily basis: “At the end of the day, you don’t know. It’s like in your heart you’re wondering ‘is someone going to knock at your door? Is someone going to knock at your door?’.”

Parents’ mental health status has repercussions on children. In the study, we observed that this effect often became circular, in that the parent then again worried about their children being affected by their situation. A young mother explained: “When I’m crying she always catches me, even when I don’t want her to see me. ‘Mum, what’s wrong? Why are you crying? Don’t worry, don’t worry. It will get better, I’m gonna pray. Don’t worry.’ You know, when an eight-year-old says that to you ‘it will get better’ it breaks your heart more, it breaks your heart more.”

A Kurdish mother spoke out her concern for the wellbeing of her children who had already experienced detention and deportation and had to witness how she was sat down on the floor and handcuffed by the police: “The children being in inadequate accommodation arrangements. Princess, a Jamaican mother of two, explained the uncertainty that she experienced on a daily basis: “At the end of the day, you don’t know. It’s like in your heart you’re wondering ‘is someone going to knock at your door? Is someone going to knock at your door?’.”

The full report is available at: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/Publications/Reports/NO_WAY_OUT_NO_WAY_IN_FINAL.pdf
THE “BLACK BOX” OF GOING-THROUGH

Joshua Oware discusses what transpires in the “black box” between getting-in and moving out of university and how we can improve the experience of young BME students.

In the next three months young people around the country will sit their final school exams. It will be the last hurdle of the long, difficult university application process: the end of the getting-in. In that same moment I will be sitting the final exams of my university career, passing the threshold of moving-out. Strikingly, the latest research from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) suggests that young people, racialised as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME), are disproportionately affected by various hardships during their progression through university. The journey before, between and beyond these three stages appears uncertain, unequal and unfair. What happens in the black-box of going-through?

Finding the Real Picture

It is clear that many assumptions are made regarding BME students. “BME” itself is an inadequate term, lacking specificity: it is used to describe a wide range of minority communities living in the UK (black, Asian, and mixed-race, for instance). Several trends and differences must be observed within the BME category (data from Higher Education Statistics Agency).

Black entrants into HE are usually older than white and other BME cohorts. Of these, Dr Gurnam Singh’s research in 2011 showed that Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi participation rates are half those of black Africans and Indians. It is more common for BME groups to enter HE through vocational routes rather than via traditional academic qualifications. Several studies have found that Bangladeshi and Pakistani students enter HE with lower levels of prior academic achievement. While BME participation is quite variable across ethnic groups, in relation to success the broad pattern is one of BME under-achievement (Fielding et al., Degree Attainment, Ethnicity and Gender: Interactions and the Modification of Effects. A Quantitative Analysis). The reasons for the degree attainment gap are complex, and vary dependent upon gender, social deprivation, disability and previous family experiences of HE. However evidence still suggests that, even when extant factors are controlled, there is a statistically significant impact on attainment caused by being an ethnic minority (Broecke & Nichols, Ethnicity and Degree Attainment). How is it that BME students move through the system differently?

Going-Through

The seminal reports produced for the DfES in 2003 and 2004 by Connor et al. indicate that BME students face systemic inequalities. Strand’s 2007 DCSF Research Report highlights that Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi students do not lack aspiration; instead, they lack the knowledge and networks to successfully navigate through HE and exploit available opportunities. All students face (to varying degrees) situational, institutional and dispositional barriers, but what is particular about the BME experience of HE? Does success have a colour?

The 2011 NUS Race for Equality report found that BME students are suffering inequality at all levels of HE. The data suggests that BME students are not satisfied with their learning environment, and that inequalities are perpetuated by institutional practices. The 2010 Higher Education Funding Council for England report found that of new undergraduates 86 per cent of white entrants continued into their second year, compared to 82 per cent of Black entrants, and 79 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi entrants. Personally, I have observed that a disproportionate amount of BME students take time out due to stress, mental illness, isolation, and dislike of the course or university. It may be that BME students feel the insufficiency of prior academic preparation, and also find it hard to assimilate socially in HEIs.

Conclusion

Institutions must act against discrimination faced by BME students during the entire HE journey, through support services, and collaboration with third parties, such as Rare. These must address psychological well-being, self-belief, belonging, career strategy, academic support and the day-to-day social and racial climate. It seems common that BME students experience greater financial difficulty, and are less able to discuss problems with tutors, relying on family or friends instead. Institutions may fail their students. We must attend to the stickiness of disadvantage. Indeed, upon leaving, BME students are less likely to be employed six months after graduation. Moreover, even in initial employment, they can “expect to earn up to nine per cent less for the same work as a white graduate over five years”, according to research from the Elevation Networks and the Bow Group. HE is not an analytical container; the experience transfers beyond a person’s time at university, and thus addressing its inequality is vital.

Crucially, the denial of fair access, experience and opportunity at all levels of the HE system has effects beyond our current generation. Entrance into, experience within, and outcomes after HE are closely interwoven processes, leaving traces capable of remaining with individuals throughout their own, and their children’s, lives. Higher Education Institutions must acknowledge the complex category of BME and act to provide support and institutional change that creates more welcoming, fair and transformational environments (curriculum, counselling, mentoring). We must look at the entire journey through HE and trace racial inequality’s entrenched presence. With fewer jobs and an increasingly inaccessible or undesirable HE system, we risk disenfranchising our talented and aspirational young BME people.
PREVENTING A LOST GENERATION

Martina Milburn, Chief Executive of The Prince’s Trust, explores the severity and consequences of youth unemployment and shares the struggle of a young BME man seeking to find his footing.

A young person once told me that they had been so depressed and close to giving up that they did not think they would make it to their next birthday.

The news that one in ten young people in the UK feel that they cannot cope with day-to-day life is an alarming reminder that many young people are starting 2013 with very little hope for their future. This figure increases to more than one in five among unemployed young people.

Every year, The Prince’s Trust Youth Index measures how young people feel about their lives today and how confident they are about the future. Our fifth annual index reveals an overall decline in young people’s well-being, with the index rating returning to the lowest level since the study was launched five years ago.

These statistics may come as a surprise to those who were comforted by the drop in youth unemployment in the last quarter of 2012. However, while on the face of it unemployment did fall, there was a dramatic rise in the number of young people facing long-term unemployment.

With no job and no income, the long-term unemployed can face other issues such as poverty and homelessness. They often fight a mental battle too, as their self-esteem all but disappears. Many young people who come to The Prince’s Trust for help talk of depression, anxiety and feelings of isolation. It is these long-term unemployed who need urgent attention and help before they become a lost generation – moving from unemployed to unemployable.

Sadly, we know that it is often those who have faced significant challenges while growing up – abuse, neglect, homelessness – who end up furthest from the workplace. They can become trapped in a demoralising downward spiral – from a chaotic childhood into a jobless adult life. The longer young people are out of work, the more likely they are to struggle to get back on track. Our research shows how more than one in four young people out of work for over a year believe their confidence will never recover from their time without work. Unemployed young people often feel unable to cope and life can be particularly tough for those who lack support. More than one in five young people claim they did not have someone to talk to about their problems while they were growing up. According to the index, young people who are not in work today are significantly less likely to have had someone to talk to about their problems.

It also shows that while more than one in four young people in work feel down or depressed “always” or “often”, this increases to almost half of those who are not in work, training or education.

These figures put the spotlight on the alarming difference between young people who are in work and those who are not. These unemployed young people need support to regain their self-worth and, ultimately, get them back into the workplace.

Case study: John-Michael

Before getting help from The Prince’s Trust, John-Michael was unemployed and worried about his future.

After completing a business diploma at college in 2010, he applied for hundreds of jobs, but did not receive a response from any. His confidence was affected and he hit an all-time low.

John-Michael applied for work experience at a school to gain more skills, but due to budget cuts he was told they could not take anyone on.

Determined to progress, John-Michael applied to university, but, at the final hurdle, failed a maths test in his application and was told he could not re-apply.

“Before I came to The Trust, I never believed I could have a job. I had heard about other young people going on the Prince’s Trust course. I decided to apply after hearing about the success stories of others. The Prince’s Trust has given me the confidence I need to return to the workplace.”

“Before getting help from The Prince’s Trust, I didn’t know where my life was going. I wasn’t getting any replies from employers so I didn’t understand what was wrong with me. I thought it must be because I didn’t have any work experience but I really didn’t know. Some days I would feel quite depressed and lacked any motivation. I felt like I was getting nowhere.”

“Before I came to The Trust, I never believed I could have a job. I had heard about other young people going on the Prince’s Trust course. I decided to apply after hearing about the success stories of others. The Prince’s Trust has given me the confidence I need to return to the workplace.”

It was a real life changing experience going on the Prince’s Trust course. I used to have no confidence in social situations but my Prince’s Trust mentor worked with me and helped me to develop my self-esteem. I’m a completely different person now.

“I have a great job and I’m really confident about the future.”
The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s recently published report *They Go The Extra Mile: Reducing Inequality in School Exclusions* drew on the findings of a research project commissioned from a team at the University of Sussex. The aim of the research was to provide insights into good practice in reducing inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion from secondary schools in England. This follows stark evidence of persistent inequalities for specific groups of young people presented in the Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s previous report *They Never Give Up On You*.

If you were a Black African-Caribbean boy with special needs and eligible for free school meals you were 168 times more likely to be permanently excluded from a state-funded school than a White girl without special needs from a middle class family.

The task of identifying good practice in relation to inequalities in exclusion from school is by no means straightforward, however, given ongoing concerns about unofficial exclusions. Following a policy focus on reducing exclusions, schools are also increasingly likely to be making use of alternatives to exclusion, to what is referred to in the report as a continuum of provision and to which issues of equity and over-representation are also relevant. (Page 25 of the University of Sussex report provides an illustration of the continuum of provision associated with exclusion.)

Mindful of these challenges the research began with tutors in two Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers and key personnel involved in school exclusion processes in four Local Authorities. Interviewees were asked about the characteristics of schools successful in managing issues relating to exclusion, inclusion and diversity and whether they knew of any that might be approached to participate in the research.

Publicly available data for these schools (e.g. attainment data and Ofsted reports) were then reviewed for evidence of positive outcomes for groups known to be over-represented in school exclusions. Of the six schools that eventually participated in the research, five were located in ethnically diverse urban areas where the proportion of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals was above the national average. In these five schools, attainment gaps for ‘disadvantaged’ pupils were found to be below the national average (the proportion attaining 5A*-C at GCSE including English and Maths according to DfE performance tables.)

The Young People’s Advisory Group facilitated by the Runnymede Trust was consulted at key points during the research, initially to seek its views on ways of exploring questions about inequalities in rates of exclusion with the young people involved in focus groups in the participating schools.

As part of a review of the main findings the group was also asked about the emphasis on reducing rates of permanent exclusion given evidence of over-representation in other areas associated with school exclusion. The Young People’s Advisory Group was clear, however, that it is important to pay particular attention to permanent exclusion as it has a particularly significant impact on young people.

During the course of the research, focus groups were also held with young people with experience of school exclusion in five of the six participating schools and with representatives of school councils. These young people talked about the importance of having access to staff with time to listen to them and of providing second chances and opportunities to put things right.

Within all of the schools there was evidence of a strong commitment to inclusion and of whole school approaches to behaviour management that were proactive and positive rather than punitive. Interviews with school staff highlighted a strong sense of community with collective responsibility demonstrated through a focus on working as part of local partnerships. There was an emphasis on respect for all, with ethos and values made explicit and an expectation that these would be modelled by all.

Interviews with the ITT tutors suggested that similar emphases characterised their approaches to initial teacher training and questions were raised about whether schools would prepare trainees as effectively to be inclusive practitioners in the future.

A key challenge posed by the research was to isolate good practice in relation to reducing rates of recorded exclusion generally in order to provide insights into good practice in reducing inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion specifically.

The local authority officials who contributed to the research had oversight of the data on recorded exclusions and discussed how this was addressed as an equalities issue with schools at this level. Although there was also evidence of data being used to identify trends and inform interventions at school level, and of equalities legislation underpinning the development of school policies, interviewees nevertheless tended to have a more individualised focus when discussing inequalities in rates of recorded exclusion. This raised questions about practitioners’ understandings of school exclusion as an equalities issue including: Were exclusions reducing for specific groups because exclusion was recognised as an equalities issue? Did it matter if exclusions for specific groups were declining but it was not? (See page 28 of the University of Sussex report for a diagrammatic representation of key questions relating to the conceptualisation of disproportionality in exclusions as an equity issue.)

The research provided a number of insights into how inequalities in relation to specific groups of young people currently over-represented in recorded exclusions might be addressed. In particular, there was a strong focus in the participating schools on the Pupil Premium that suggested the value of linking the current focus on the educational underachievement of this group more explicitly to reductions in both permanent and fixed term exclusions by identifying this as one of the outcomes that might be expected from this expenditure.

The University of Sussex report is available from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner at [http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_654](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_654).
I'm 12. I go to a secondary school in Essex. I've been excluded many times, for punching teachers.

Why? They are mean, they kind of shout at me. You know when you sit on a table with other children next to you, and someone talks to you and everyone else just faces at me because I'm coloured, I'm black.

When excluded I just stay at home. All the time, at the school, they put me in these mental schools, with people with special needs.

I've been excluded about 16 times. Being excluded hasn't helped me at all. If I could stay at the first school, I would be more pleased as I could have got more education. If I could go back in time I would change things I did. I would literally beat myself up if I could go back. It would be much better back at that school. The teachers are better at that school and you stay with other children. You get more education.

At the school I'm at now, I'm in a room, doing sums, 1+1, too easy work, not really learning anything from that. I just play, that's all that's allowed. I just play and play and play. I just do 15 minutes work.

How would I describe exclusions in one word? Rubbish!

I'm 16 and I go to a Pupil Referral Unit in London. I was permanently excluded from my school for constant fighting.

Basically, like, people just annoy me so I used to take action by physical action instead of verbally. Say, for example, they'd say you're better than me at basketball, stuff like that, silly stuff really. I was kicked out as I was fighting. I had to go home for about six weeks.

They sent me homework, work to do, stuff like that. They sent a letter home, saying I'm getting a managed move to the Pupil Referral Unit.

I was happy at home, 'cos I was playing games, as well as revising at the same time. I didn't like school. Then I went into the school. They said I could appeal but I didn't want to, 'cos I wanted to go to a different school, so I went to a different school.

I think I'm getting more certificates and hopefully I'll get more GCSEs than I did at my previous school.

Having gone through it, I have experiences. I don't feel better or worse, but for my CV it might be worse. But I have experience of how to control myself and stuff like that. If I was asked for advice by others in my situation then, I'd say: Just try and change now, cos if you don't you might get kicked out, and it could lead to further education issues and stuff.

I'm 16 and I go to a Pupil Referral Unit. At the moment, exclusion rates are kind of high, so I don't feel that if teachers already have the right to exclude lots of children, they shouldn't have a right to exclude even more children.

I've been excluded many times and in a managed move twice. Most of my friends have been excluded from school – permanently excluded.

In Year 7 I went to a secondary girls' school in London, there were loads of girls, it got a bit too much. I used to have loads of rows with lots of teachers, fights with other girls. I got a managed move to a mixed school. That didn't do much good, so they referred me to the Pupil Referral Unit, and I'm there right now.

I missed my first secondary school a lot. That's the longest I've been anywhere. I missed all my friends there. I wasn't at the next school long enough to miss anything. When I first got managed moved, it was me and a girl swapped schools.

I was welcomed with open arms when I went to that school, except by some teachers. It's been lots better at the Pupil Referral Unit, as it's only about five students in a class, up to six to seven children in a class, with two teachers to six students, so you get a lot of learning done.

Sometimes I do think that I should have stayed at my first school, 'cos I would have been able to do a lot more GCSEs. If I could go back in time, I'd slam my own face and say 'What are you doing? I'm positive, though, about the future. Hopefully I'll get good GCSEs and I'll get into a good college.

I'm 13 years old. I go to a small local community college in the East Midlands.

I can see where Michel Gove is coming from. Headteachers should have the last say on exclusions, but if the Head's not right, they should have Principals to make the law. But they shouldn't exclude without the Head's signature; he should have the last word. Headteachers often don't know much about the students, because he's doing his stuff. But Principals have enough time to talk to pupils, so will know if the student is a good person or not.

Michael Gove is not right if a kid is excluded for something he hasn't done. If it goes to a panel that says he has to go back to the same school, it does make the headteacher look weak and disappointed cos he had a view that the student should be excluded. But he may not be right, the head may have decided to exclude because of his colour or he doesn't want to challenge his behaviour.

Mostly it's 'coloured' [sic] people and those with special needs (maybe free school dinners) that are excluded. Maybe the headteacher thinks he's done enough for you, and you are putting two fingers up and saying get lost.

It makes me disappointed. I've got a friend who just acts like he's got problems. Teachers treat him like he's different. That makes me think I could act that way and get away with it. Teachers will do their best for him. It's not equal. If the teacher has done that for one person, he should do it for all.

Exclusion should be a last step. Getting excluded can spoil your whole life. It might mean you won't go to college. Being excluded is like your mum kicking you out of your house. You won't feel good; you'll fight to get back in. If I had a friend in a similar situation I'd say “Keep your nose clean, stay out of trouble and try to act cool. Stay friends with teachers as they are the only ones with the power to stand up for you”.

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WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO END RACISM?

Marion Vargaftig, consultant and co-founding Director of Manifesta, looks at how perspectives towards ethnic diversity have evolved over three generations.

This is the bold question posed by Generation 3.0 – a Runnymede project that investigated whether and how racism has changed over three generations. Consulting young people under 25 years old and older people over 55 years, Generation 3.0 explored the attitudes and experiences of racism between the first and the third generation of migrants.

To this end, the project devised different formats of events and activities for two-way conversations around racism – video testimonies, pop-up shops, discussions, film events, educational materials and activities – creating spaces for younger people from different communities to come together and share their experiences and views with older people and the wider community, over a three-year period.

This project addresses the fact that, as Runnymede highlights, so little is known about how attitudes to ethnic diversity evolve over generations: young people are growing up in a more ethnically diverse society than ever before; meanwhile, older people have witnessed their towns and cities change as they have become more diverse – good reasons to investigate this now.

Phase One started in Handsworth, a diverse and deprived district of Birmingham in the West Midlands, with a history of social unrest and tensions between the Black and Asian communities. Birmingham also has one of the highest populations of ethnic minorities in the UK, and was also the subject of Runnymede’s first report (Professor Gus John’s Race in the Inner City, which was published in 1970) and thus provided an occasion to revisit the subject some 40 years later.

In collaboration with local partners, Generation 3.0 organised filming sessions and workshops to collect “video testimonies” from participants of different ages, leading to the production of 70 short films of c. 90 seconds each, one per participant, encapsulating people’s experience and views on race and racism. The films were then used to trigger discussion within the community. Phase Two took the project to Greater Manchester and Croydon in South London, two further locations chosen for their mix of communities and their history. Two films were produced: Clench and Is Croydon Racist?, providing subjects for local debates. While this phase was in development, the August 2011 riots started and spread to those cities, so the debates and events that took place in the autumn inevitably included discussions on this topic.

In all three project locations, empty shops were used as “pop up” galleries and hubs for activities and workshops were used to facilitate or trigger dialogue between people from different ethnic backgrounds, exploring differences across generations and encouraging the participants to use their own experience as a starting point for discussions.

Despite original fears from some project advisers that the project would be too “researchy” in its approach, the tone/content of the films produced, and, in particular, the video testimonies (in which children, teenagers and older people were filmed while expressing their views and their experience of racism) was good evidence that the participants understood the approach, and were able to formulate their thoughts in simple, powerful words, thus making the films watchable by a wide audience.

Some older participants, who had expressed their reticence about participating in the project where delighted when they saw themselves in the video testimonies showcased on several big screens; they said they felt very proud when seeing the result, and pleased that their voices would be heard.

By testing and creating safe spaces for youth expression and interaction with other community groups – older people, policy-makers, local government representatives – the project succeeded in engaging mixed groups of young people and bringing together communities that do not usually mix, in a debate on racism – a theme that many participants acknowledged is too rarely discussed, including within schools.

The young people expressed how pleased they were to be given a space to express themselves and be listened to – to be taken seriously. They also showed an interest in discovering what the older generation had to say on these issues, and learned from their experiences.

The project’s films and video testimonies, education material, and the lesson plans are available online on the project’s website www.generation3-0.org.●
What is your role in relation to BME children and young people?

My post was established by the 2004 Children Act to represent the views and interests of all children in England to the people who make decisions about their lives. The Children and Families Bill, which is currently before parliament, proposes that my role is strengthened so that I have a legal duty to both promote and protect children’s rights.

In particular, I have a duty to speak on behalf of those “whose voices are least likely to be heard” and I must also make sure that my work takes regard of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the UK ratified in 1992. The Convention is the UN’s most-ratified Human Rights Treaty and all children and young people should know about it and the entitlements it promises them.

My staff and I listen to what children and young people say about various issues and try to make sure their views are taken into account, by policymakers, service commissioners and providers, and others in wider society.

My office is comprised of fewer than 25 staff to represent the views of all of England’s 12.04 million children so, naturally, we have to be focused and prioritise. This year our work encompasses projects on: education; youth justice; child poverty; health; children’s complaints systems; safeguarding; bullying and the sexual exploitation of children and young people.

Equalities, including ethnicity, gender, poverty and disability, and how society ensures that children’s rights are fulfilled, are the themes that cut across all of our work.

Our work on children excluded from school found that some children, including Black Caribbean boys, Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller children, and those with special educational needs, are far more likely to be excluded from school than others. As a result, we have made especially pointed recommendations as to how policy and practices should both change to improve matters for these groups. Our work on youth justice, and on the sexual exploitation of children in gang and group contexts, has also done much work with, and stands four-square behind improving outcomes for children from England’s BME groups. We also led the call on the Government to end the detention of children within the immigration system, a practice that ceased almost three years ago. We are monitoring how the alternatives are now working.

It is important to celebrate how well very many children and young people from BME communities do, in and beyond school. Whilst for some members of some communities the playing field is nowhere near level, we also know that some BME children, operating multilingually in a competitive school system, excel. Organisations like the UK Youth Parliament and many children and young people’s representative groups in localities are also as diverse as the communities from which our young people come. BME children are as heterogeneous as those from White British backgrounds, and whilst never stopping challenging inequality, we must also find ways of celebrating their greatness as a generation.
How are you tackling the effects of racism on children in the UK?

Equalities cut across all of our work. All of our projects address equalities issues and where we find that there are groups of children or young people who are discriminated against, we challenge these, ask questions and make recommendations. We do not hesitate to challenge wherever either policy or practice negatively affects, or even denies, the rights of any group of children whose circumstances are brought to our attention. We also work with many other organisations across the statutory and voluntary sectors, from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to charities campaigning on behalf of marginalised and vulnerable groups or communities, to bring issues to light so they can be tackled across society.

What do you recommend to help combat the very high unemployment rates of young people, especially Black young people?

We have not done specific work on youth unemployment, but our work on child poverty (some of which we have submitted to the Government as it seeks to define and continue to address the issue) highlighted the fact that young people living in poverty find it particularly challenging to gain employment for a number of reasons. For example, they find it hard to afford travel costs to attend interviews and to buy interview clothes. They also have far fewer opportunities to take up internships. We know young people from some ethnic groups are far more likely to live in poverty, and to find it harder to access employment opportunities than others. Our report made a number of recommendations about how the Government should seek to address child poverty, rather than youth unemployment specifically. We have also spoken out critically about issues such as changes to benefits and cuts in youth service provision, all of which affect young people from BME communities.

Do you have a good measure of child poverty in this country?

As I mentioned above, this is one of the areas we are currently focusing on. My staff and I have listened to many children and young people talk about what it is like to live in poverty and what the Government should do about their circumstances. We helped a group of around 40 of them to challenge senior civil servants on these issues, face-to-face, earlier this year. My young people’s advisory board, Amplify, is also carrying out its own online research into child poverty and will write this up later this year. We have already contributed to the Government’s consultation on how to measure child poverty and will be reporting the findings of our current work and Amplify’s within the next few months.

What involvement has your office had in combatting child trafficking?

We have advised the Home Office on research into social care provision for trafficked children, and the specialist who works on asylum and related issues in my office continues to work with officials from the Department.

I have also used my legislative right of entry powers to visit Millbank in Kent, a residential facility for young asylum seekers, some of whom have been trafficked. A team from the Office and I listened to young people at the centre and made recommendations for both UKBA and local authorities.

We have also worked with the Crown Prosecution Service on guidelines for agencies handling young people arrested for working in cannabis factories, many of whom are trafficked into the UK from Vietnam. Where we find they are still being arrested as perpetrators, we report their situations to the Crown Prosecution Service and action follows. One issue we are currently considering looking into, with regard to trafficked children being brought into the
UK, is how well the national referral mechanism (which aims to support children who are suspected of being trafficked) is operating, because we are aware a number of voluntary sector organisations have expressed concerns about it.

The work, led by Deputy Commissioner Sue Berelowitz, on the sexual exploitation of children in gangs and groups is also concerned with children who are trafficked within the UK, between communities, to be sexually abused and exploited. We are aware this happens, as are the authorities. We now have a shared duty to act to stop it.

What are your concerns about exclusions from school of BME young people?

My 2012 report on school exclusions found that, whilst in many schools there is very good practice to ensure all children succeed and are helped when they are troubled or challenging, Black Caribbean boys, Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller children, and those with special educational needs were far more likely to be excluded from school than other children. The report made a number of recommendations to help address this and also highlighted the characteristics of those schools that are particularly good at making sure all pupils are included. We hold the Government and others to account for living up to their responses to the 2012 report, and have continued to work on these issues in 2012–13.

The inequalities we found last year continue to be a serious issue, and we published a second report in March 2013 that re-states the challenges, and makes it clear that teachers and teacher unions are saying they want better, more consistent training and development on all issues of equality and diversity so that they can do the best by their pupils. I must stress that, all over England, we have also seen very good practice on including children in high attaining and aspirational schools, children from all backgrounds and with a wide range of strengths and needs. My challenge is, if some schools can do this, all schools should.

Do you have a view on Stop and Search?

As Children’s Commissioner it is my responsibility to base my views on evidence from children and young people and to always act in their interests. I have not done any research in this area so it is difficult for me to express a particular view. I am aware that young people tend to have very polarised views on the police, though, and that these views tend to divide on grounds of ethnicity and other factors. It is clear from publicly available statistics that certain groups are far more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than others. Finding out why this is so and fearless action must follow on what is found so that some groups are not disproportionately affected. The police have a job to do. How they do it must be fair.

As a society, do we pay enough attention to the mental health of our young BME people?

I would say that, as a society, we do not pay enough attention to the mental health of all young people! We have reported on our concerns about the rising number of young people exhibiting mental health conditions and we know that some BME groups are far more likely to have diagnosed mental health conditions.

The previous commissioner worked hard to ensure that children with mental health conditions were no longer treated on adult wards and helped to change the law. More recently we have worked on the mental health of young people in custody in the youth justice system. We have also published influential research on neurodevelopmental disorders and how these often go undiagnosed in young people in trouble with the law.

From 2012–13, I have also carried out a programme of visits to young people’s forensic mental health units to listen to what their young patients (some of them both ill and convicted of serious crimes) had to say, and to understand things from their perspective. We have reported common themes and issues identified during these visits to commissioners, service providers and inspectorates.
1. In July of last year, youth unemployment was 21 per cent. However, for people from BME backgrounds it was much higher, reaching 31 per cent for Asians, and 45 per cent for African-Caribbean youths compared to 20% for those of white ethnicity.

2. BME groups are around six times as likely as white households to be overcrowded, accounting for more than 40% of overcrowded households in England, a significant factor leading to youth homelessness. As a result, BME households are also more than twice as likely to be homeless as white British households.

3. Recent statistics have shown that while 62.6% of all UK students obtained a 1st or 2:1 degree, 38.1% of black UK students obtained the same degree.

4. Mental health is a major concern among BME young people. There is a significant lack of cultural sensitivity in approaches to addressing their specific needs and a distinct overlooking of young BME people in the planning and provision of services in the Coalition’s No Health without Mental Health Strategy.

5. Black people are six times more likely and Asian people twice as likely to be stopped and searched compared with white people.

6. Black, mixed race, Asian and “unknown” young males [are] all more likely to be charged with robbery offences than White males [who are] more likely to be charged with criminal damage offences.

7. A lower proportion of black young males and mixed race young people receive pre-court disposals compared to young white people.

8. The overall BME population is much younger than the general population. 2010 statistics show that approximately 19% of the white population is under 16 while 30% of the BME population is under 16 and in 2011 20.4% of England and Wales’ under-18’s were BME.

9. Nearly three quarters of 7 year old Pakistani and Bangladeshi children and just over half of 7 year old black children are living in poverty compared to 1 in 4 white 7 year olds.

10. The number of young people in custody is decreasing, but the proportion of young people from BME groups is increasing. In 2010/11, 39% of 15-18 years olds males in custody were from a BME group.
Introduction

We have known from the literature for at least 30 years that BME children are overrepresented in the care system in England and Wales compared with the wider population, but are still unclear about the explanations for this finding and what it represents in terms of policy and practice. In the general population 88 per cent of all children in England are white, four per cent are mixed, two per cent are black or black British, and six per cent are Asian/Asian British, according to a 2012 report from the Office for National Statistics. For children looked after by local authorities, we find that 78 per cent are white, nine per cent are mixed, and seven per cent are black or black British.

There are different explanations for these figures regarding child placements: “same race wherever possible” policies, variable mini-policies by social workers, cultural issues about BME families’ experiences, professional perceptions of BME families and poverty. In terms of service provision, Caballero et al (2012) argue that understanding the diversity of children’s needs and wishes, and providing appropriate services involve a cultural repositioning within most service provision agencies. Thus, racial and ethnic diversity also intersects with family background and patterns, social class, gender, faith, and age, to produce multidimensional family identities. We focus on formal kinship care in this study, or full-time care by a relative or friend, subject to statutory children’s procedures (“informal kinship care” refers to arrangements not subject to statutory procedures).

Childcare Placements - “Getting it Right”

Legislative and policy changes brought in by the 1989 Children Act, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 2011 Munro Review of Child Protection have recommended that social services focus on child participation and “getting it right”, rather than focusing on rigid, bureaucratic “tick box” procedures. When principles, such as removing the overreliance on unnecessary bureaucratic processes, are applied to child placements; it becomes much more possible to consider the individuality of each child and their family by considering wider criteria such as education, community, extended family, class and religion.

Kinship Care and BME Communities

Of the 143,367 children living in a kinship care arrangement (in England), there are 136,497 children in informal kinship care and 6,870 in formal kinship care (Nandy and Selwyn, 2011). Children from ethnic minority backgrounds are overrepresented in informal kinship care: 30 per cent of children in kinship care in England are of minority ethnicity origin, half of whom are Asian. Children from Chinese and black backgrounds were more than twice as likely to be living with kin as white children. Children from mixed ethnicity and Asian backgrounds were one and a half times more likely than white children to be living with kin.

Among many BME groups the concept of “the family” can be different from Western norms of the nuclear family, where parents assume primary responsibility for bringing up their children. Indeed, female relatives are often regarded as substitutes for the parents in providing care for children (Reynolds 2005, Bauer and Thompson 2008). In formal kinship care placements, BME children have again been found to be overrepresented (Broad et al 2001), with the largest single group of kinship carers being grandparents.

Discussion

It is recognised that the decisions surrounding the removal of children from their birth families are complex and challenging. For children within the care system, it is the very fact they are in care come from fractured and difficult backgrounds (Caballero et al, 2012). These experiences give rise to particular needs, sometimes around their racial and ethnic identities, that must be taken into account.

Bob Broad and Annabel Goodyer explore how the experiences of BME families can influence the ways in which childcare needs are understood in formal kinship care.
But crucially, as Peters (2010) has noted in her study of young people in foster care, these needs are not just about their BME backgrounds, and such an overemphasis ignores “the range of circumstances, narratives, experiences and textured complexity of their lives”, thus hindering their attempts at rebuilding these.

Is there a greater cultural preference in BME families for children to be cared for informally in kinship care? Or for them to access other non-kinship care services? Or do social workers draw more on BME communities when making an assessment of a child’s needs to be placed in kinship care? What services are suitable for, offered to, and requested by BME and other kinship carers? These are key questions and there is no single answer or explanation. Social workers and policy makers may need to give a wider recognition within childcare, drawing on the experiences of BME families and noting:

- That racial and ethnic diversity intersects with family background and patterns, social class, gender, faith, age, to produce multidimensional family identities
- The importance of personal or family identities in placement decision-making
- Children’s and families’ rights to participate in placement selection and options
- The primacy of child protection considerations
- The value of stability and inclusion of neighbourhood, education, culture
- A greater recognition of the experiences of BME families may be necessary to challenge rigid “same race” considerations

**THE CULTURE OF CARE AND ETHNICITY**

Omar Khan of the Runnymede Trust discusses Runnymede’s Caring and Ethnicity project and its exploration of the diverse experiences of childcare, care for older people, and the care of the young disabled among different ethnic minority groups.

Runnymede’s Caring and Ethnicity project aims to understand better how people from different ethnic backgrounds in Britain balance caring and work, particularly among those on lower incomes. As this is a broad topic with many research gaps, our project seeks to understand better how particular caring situations impact three specific ethnic minority populations: Caribbean, Pakistani and Somali people. While we thereby hope to offer a fine-grained description of the experience of balancing different kinds of care and work, this should also highlight more general concerns that apply to anyone in similar situations.

We hypothesise that ethnic minority communities do not have generic attitudes to “caring” as such. For example, while a Black Caribbean mother may be happy for their child to enrol in childcare, she may be less willing to see her father live in a care home with few other black residents. And the experience of caring for a disabled family member is likely to involve still different concerns and preferences for different ethnic minority groups. Our research aims to unpick some of these questions by exploring three different caring situations: childcare, caring for older relatives, and caring for disabled younger people.

In addition to a desk-based literature review, our study will involve primary research including 15 interviews in each ethnic group on their attitudes to and experiences of childcare, as well as five further interviews in each group on their experience of caring for a disabled young person. To understand the issues involved in caring for older family members, we will re-examine the extensive research Brunel University (a partner to this project) has already conducted on this topic with 1,200 respondents across the six largest ethnic minority groups. We will also build on existing Runnymede research on older BME people, touching on similar issues and including over 300 people, again from across the UK and in different ethnic groups.

Our findings will therefore include a range of data, but will be focused on understanding the particular experiences of different ethnic groups in particular caring situations, and how this influences their relationship to the labour market. The research is not, therefore, a comprehensive overview of caring, ethnicity and employment, but will shine a light on this understudied area and likely resonate with those in similar situations as our interviewees.

**REFERENCES**

- Caballero, C et al (2012) *The diversity and complexity of the everyday lives of mixed racial and ethnic families*, in *Adoption and Fostering*, 36, 3 and 4, 9–24
Anurak* has been at the Juvenile Correctional Facility in Thailand for almost a year. He has little self-confidence and is having difficulty making friends. During Global Money Week, he will have the chance to join other kids from other schools as well as national VIPs. He will learn basic (financial) skills, involving communication, problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork and leadership. Anurak is looking forward to learning these skills to improve his chances of earning an income and establishing a good career after his rehabilitation.

Mary* comes from a little village in Ghana. She has never been to the city before. Today, she is visiting a bank for the very first time. Her parents have never stepped foot in a bank before - they simply do not trust it.

Such were the stories from across the world during Global Money Week. Organized by Child and Youth Finance International in collaboration with governments and schools in 80 countries, Global Money Week is a mass annual campaign for financial education and inclusion for all young people.

Financial education and access provide an empowerment that should be enjoyed by all children – no matter what their background.

The roots of Child and Youth Finance International originate from the work of its founder, Jeroo Billimoria, with street children. Jeroo noticed that street children were entrepreneurial enough to generate a small income for themselves, but were unwilling to save. They did not have a safe place to store their money and would hide it under their pillows. However, this money would often get stolen. So instead, they preferred to spend it. The lack of security that they felt reinforced this behaviour further; there was no knowing what tomorrow would bring, so it was better to spend it today.

This behaviour is characteristic of street children and a large number of socially excluded children. It is, unfortunately, a vicious cycle: financial knowledge and management is typically a skill learned from parents, many of whom do not have financial access themselves.

Thus, having a bank account becomes all the more important. For many children it becomes a safe place to store money. Having an account that they can operate gives children sense of ownership, and with that comes choice: to spend or to save – it is up to the child.

Therein lies the basis for empowerment and the making of an entrepreneur. Will financial inclusion and financial education for youngsters become a reality? Just take a look at the global momentum that Child and Youth Finance International has gathered: The fact that 80 countries participate in Global Money Week is a sign that the world is starting to realize the importance of increasing financial access and financial education for children and youth. This is the first step to ensuring that financial education is offered as a standard item on school curricula, and that it finds its way into informal education. It is also the first step to ensuring that all banks provide a simple savings account.

By reshaping the norms of financial behaviour, we will be able to empower the next generation and help them become the agents of change for themselves, for their families and for their countries.

*Names changed to protect the identity of children.
EXPLORING “DIGITAL RACE”

Sanjay Sharma and Ash Sharma discuss their “Digital Race” workshop on how online platforms shape racial discourse.

The rise of Web 2.0 technologies has led to the proliferation of social media and networking sites, offering users (especially young people) unprecedented opportunities to interact online and share information. Arguably, it is often stated that we become “too connected”. There has been an eruption of racialised discourse online, such as everyday racial banter, ambiguous humour, “griefing”, race-hate comments and anti-racist sentiments.

“Real world” social research approaches to explore the virtual realm. The workshop interrogated these approaches, and explored alternative practices that stress the primacy and ecology of the online environment for engaging with “digitally native” phenomena.

During the planning of the workshop, participants were encouraged to consider the following questions:

1. How is “race” being transformed via online platforms? For example, how does a “real-time” web propagate race, and how do contagious network effects propagate racial discourse?
2. Are existing research methods adequate for grasping the proliferation of race issues online?
3. How the seemingly spontaneous nature of online racialised expression can lead to difficulties in collecting relevant data, and accessing social media “big data” due to corporate control.
4. The difficulties of grasping the virulent nature of racialised expression, which can rapidly spread across social media (e.g. YouTube, Twitter and Facebook), and the need to identify methods that can track data across different online platforms.
5. The importance of taking seriously the ways in which digital technologies (e.g. interfaces, menus, design, comment spaces etc.) and network relations can determine how the concept of race is produced online.
6. Identifying the specificities of online platforms and how they can produce differing modalities of race and racism (e.g. YouTube’s visual regimes of race in comparison to Twitter linguistic discourses).
7. How the ethno-racial background of online users and participants can be identified without reproducing existing racial categorisations.
8. Further research that focuses on the ambivalence of online anti-racist sentiment and the challenge of situating it in relation to broader anti-racist practices.
9. Tracing the histories of race and online technologies in order to situate current developments and explore how race has been (en)coded by technology.
10. The analysis of racialised discourse in online spaces requires collaborative efforts involving researchers and groups with a range of skill-sets.

The issues raised in the workshop led the participants to conclude that additional workshops would offer further opportunities for exploring the questions in greater depth. It was proposed that collating existing research studies and projects in the field of digital race via the production of an online bibliography would provide a valuable resource. This is currently being compiled.

Further documentation of the workshop will be available on: (http://www.darkmatter101.org).
Media Culture Needs a Rehaul

This conference report focuses on the media's relationship to the civil disturbances in England in 2011. It critically engages the key issues raised by participants and attempts to identify a way forward. The report successfully captures the rich discussions and synthesises the complex debates that took place. However, the recommendations fall short of addressing the full scale of the concerns outlined.

Part One observes the reactions of young people and community members living in riot-affected areas to the media coverage of the riots. This section is framed in binary terms, which perhaps does not fully represent the collective and cumulative nature of the discussions. However, the author skilfully engages with other investigations and research into the riots and in doing so highlights how pervasive the media can be in society. It raises important questions over the cultural practices of the media in regards to truth, rumour, scepticism and ethics. The reader is encouraged to think about the purpose of the media, what makes good journalism and whether we need to redefine our journalistic standards.

The report argues that journalists are drawn from an increasingly narrow section of the community and goes on to explore the resulting class divide. It also raises the concern that journalists are too often white males with little or no connection to the community they are reporting on. As Roy Greenslade, Professor of Journalism at City University London, states in the foreword, “there is… plenty of evidence to show that too few [journalists] are black”. In this way, the conference report echoes the Runnymede Trust's research findings illustrating how it was particularly black young men who were demonised, stigmatised and stereotyped by the mainstream media reporting of the civil disturbances.

We learn that the media was more likely to take the moral high ground and issue condemnation rather than report the facts or search for the truth. The report provides examples of journalists reproducing information rather than analysing and critiquing official sources. Newspapers were seen to be doing the police's job by helping to identify those involved in the disturbances and acting as the state's mouthpiece. The misinformation surrounding the fatal shooting of Mark Duggan was reported rather than challenged. Many have attributed this, and the spread of rumours to building the tensions that led to the civil disturbances in Tottenham.

The report considers the views of the journalists who often find they have to “produce more work, particularly scoops, more quickly with fewer resources than ever before”. It goes on to show that in the absence of well funded, quality local journalism and the growing commodification of the national news media, journalists are no longer able to play the role of “watchdog”.

Part Two identifies five areas in which citizens can challenge stigmatising representations of communities and enable marginalised voices to be heard. One important way forward is to build on the links made by the conference and create more opportunities for community members and young people to engage with working journalists. Conference participants identified citizen journalism as a way for communities to tell their stories and the recommendations also outline important schemes and initiatives to increase the diversity of the newsroom.

This report is helpful in providing a snapshot of the mainstream media's role in the riots. In many ways the recommendations for a way forward are important and well thought through. However, it is not tough enough to tackle the structural causes for the decline in journalist standards. If we are to improve the quality of journalism at a local and national level, the conditions and broader structures that journalists work in need to be challenged. In a post-Leveson environment there is room for us to make more demands on the media to take responsibility for producing good quality journalism.
The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent

Review by Kamaljeet Gill

Briggs concludes with a discussion of how riots allow “politicians and moral entrepreneurs to ... reach in the usual suspects cupboard and pull out a straw man at which they can attribute the disorder”. From this point, his conclusion turns to editorialising and becomes something of a jeremiad. He covers the crises in global capitalism, globalisation and exploitation as well as environmental issues, yet continues to deny that the riots are completely political. Instead, Briggs describes the participants as “flawed consumers”, and the riots as a symbol of corrupt, decadent, consumerist society. Justified or not, this strident and unreferenced opinion sits uncomfortably within an academic text that, till now, had managed to maintain an admirably critical perspective not just on the riots, but also on the shrill reaction they provoked in others.
Although Islam has been a significant presence in British public life since the 17th century, the last decade has seen it become more visible than ever. In this context, it is important to reflect on how Religious Education represents Islam in a global context.

Exploring the historical rationale and frameworks behind RE teaching, as well as materials and resources available for teachers, Dr Revell, senior lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University, identifies one of the main issues as being that the approaches and policies operate in an outdated framework: the canon of world religions, which classifies faiths through fixed typologies and understands them through the traditional prism of a Christian model and western liberal values.

Revell argues that using the canon places Muslim values in opposition to British values. Furthermore, the author argues that the development of the canon, the inclusion of Islam in the RE curriculum and the emergence of multiculturalist practices to education in the ‘60s and ‘70s was not borne of a proactive approach or consideration of inclusivity or equality. Instead the issue at stake was how to reconcile the powerful and dynamic force of Islam with the desire to place European identity at the centre of modern civilization, and how to adapt to increasing secularism and ethnic diversity.

Chapters start with experiences from the classroom or relevant news clippings, which help to draw the reader in and contextualise her arguments. Exhaustive analysis of over 60 textbooks from between 1968 and 2011 sheds light on the problem of associations between Islam and anti-democratic values like oppression, insecurity and violence. Revell argues that instead of acknowledging these issues, which every British Muslim would probably concede are a problem, RE’s main problem is seeking to portray a sanitised image of Islam which omits subjects like the relationship of women and Islam, forced marriage, race and discrimination or religious extremism. Likewise, most UK education policies and initiatives tend to represent Islam solely as a religion rather than as a culture, a civilisation and a source of identity with broader social implications. The result is a representation of Islam which does not and cannot challenge Islamophobia or clarify misconceptions that, in the aftermath of 7/7 and the Taliban, all students surely carry into the classroom.

There is thus a dual discourse; the ‘soft’ Islam that is taught at school and the ‘hard’ Islam that is discussed or inferred by debates in the political arena, the media and internationally.

Revell concludes by highlighting some best practices and recommendations for teachers and educationalists that might shift the ground for RE, things like field trips to mosques, interactive activities, using mixed materials for teaching and greater involvement of Muslims in curriculum-forming bodies. Revell also insists that a critical and reflexive approach must be adopted, one which takes into account relative diversity of the area and local conditions. As a book for practitioners, it might have benefitted from being slightly less academic and breaking down chapters more, as is the case in Chapter 5, which identifies solutions and recommendations to specific problems. Overall though, for teachers, educators, curriculum-makers and other interested parties, there is much to heed here if RE is to serve a more productive role in British education and make a more significant contribution to the national conversation on religion in Britain.
Vittorio Longhi opens with a quote from the New York Times’ Matthew Carr, describing the current situation for immigrants, legal or otherwise, in Athens:

“The de facto apartheid that I witnessed in this rundown district was only one episode in a relentless war…that is beginning to recall some of the darker periods of European history.”

The language used is a stark introduction to a carefully researched account of immigration and work around the world, particularly the Persian Gulf, the United States, France and Italy. Longhi notes clear links between the treatment of migrant workers – currently numbering 214 million internationally – ranging from Nepalis in Saudi Arabia to Mexicans in the US and Libyans in Italy.

A central idea throughout the book is that of the migrant labourer as a maligned necessity: immigrants are the builders, the carers and cleaners of modern nations, but they are also the harassed and ostracised, the ultimate “fall-guy” in any nation-based labour debate. In this sense the book provides an account of marginalisation and oppression of minorities with a pan-national focus.

The book successfully draws parallels between its examples without falling for generalities about “the West vs. the Rest”. Kafala, the practice in the Gulf region of individual worker sponsorship by employer for employee, is shown to trap immigrants in exploitative work environments in much the same way as the H-2A visas of the United States. In both cases, “dependency on employers is total”.

Longhi does more than just expose the reader to individual horror stories. His research uncovers systemic and large-scale assaults on collective bargaining, trade union formation and industrial action. In his own words, “the stories collected in this book…show the complete inadequacy of what is a unilateral, temporary and often repressive approach to mobility”.

The only shortcomings of this important contribution to the debates on labour rights and immigration result from the high journalistic and theoretical standards that the book sets itself. When Longhi writes,

“In fact many companies deliberately diversified the composition of the labour force, based on nationality, to prevent groups of workers forming that were too united,”

the reader is left searching for a footnote or reference simply because of the high standard of citation up to that point.

Equally, when Longhi bemoans the Obama administration’s failure to progress on immigration reforms, he notes that “the best thing perhaps has been the new policy put in place in June 2012”. This kind of language sits uneasily with the otherwise more precise and clear-cut prose.

Nonetheless, this remains a timely and expert publication. With immigration top of the national agenda in the US and the scandals in Germany surrounding Amazon’s alleged hiring of neo-Nazi security guards for the intimidation of its foreign workers, Longhi goes a long way to showing the distance between formal policies and the reality of informal practices and such work is clearly needed.

The Immigrant War transcends the usual “investigative-journalist-turns-author” fare thanks to Longhi’s academic analysis. Linking his observations on the architecture of Dubai and “consumer capitalism” with Frank Lloyd Wright’s comment on the “tyranny of skyscrapers” gives the work character and adds depth to what is already an engaging read.

The use of Ahmed Kanna, Maryse Tripier and Michel Foucault, along with the inclusion of a summary of the history of citizenship in the United States, may be felt by some to go too far, but these theoretical excursions ensure that the book remains rewarding beyond the stories it uncovers.

The Immigrant War is a good entry point for non-specialists, as well as a resource for researchers and policymakers, and an engaging long-form piece of journalistic integrity. Longhi does well to collect the facts of immigration across a wide range of regions, particularly the Persian Gulf, the United States, France and Italy. Longhi notes clear links between the treatment of migrant workers – currently numbering 214 million internationally – ranging from Nepalis in Saudi Arabia to Mexicans in the US and Libyans in Italy.

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The Immigrant War is a good entry
Migration to the UK from Nepal, though still relatively low in volume, has experienced a drastic change in size and demography in the past two decades. However, there is precious little research into this overlooked migrant population (aside from the occasional small study of Nepali communities such as the one carried out by Runnymede for the Home Office in 2008). This timely book forms “the first systematic attempt to understand Nepalis in the UK”. It flags up some burning issues facing Nepalis while presenting a goldmine of unique primary data and information that will prove invaluable for future research.

Until the 1990s the small number of Nepalis living in the UK was almost exclusively comprised of ex-Gurkha servicemen or their relatives. Renowned for their motto, “better to die than to live a coward”, Gurkhas began serving in the army of the British Empire 200 years ago and many chose to settle in the UK upon retirement. A recent growth in economic migrants from Nepal has meant that there are now 72,173 Nepalis estimated to be living in the UK, and 60 per cent are thought to be Gurkhas or their relatives.

Spurred on by these demographic changes, editor Krishna P. Adhikari led a grassroots-level ‘census’ in 2008 that relied on Nepali networks of individuals and organisations and was partially funded by Nepali community organisations themselves. The results are combined with other research by the Centre for Nepal Studies United Kingdom (CNUK) and the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Oxford University.

The team of contributors (including ex-British Gurkha and academic Chandra Laksamba, David N. Gellner and Sondra L. Hausner) cover a diverse range of topics, from demography, religion, health, education to employment - although, as is noted in the book, more could have been done to cover the experiences of women. The recent campaign for citizenship and full pension rights for ex-Gurkhas in Britain is discussed in an excellent chapter by Laksamba.

Information is complemented by a wealth of tables, figures and maps that aid in understanding most of the time, especially the comprehensive list of geographical distributions of Nepalis for each town in the UK. For example, it may be surprising to read that there are between 4,000–5,000 Nepalis living in Farnborough and Aldershot, and up to 4,000 in Reading. Adhikari’s description of a typical summer weekend in Farnborough, where community halls are full to the brim with Nepali residents and “one may find dozens of big gatherings and barbeque parties taking place at the same time” gives a rare splash of detail to this wide-ranging data set. Indeed, this book would have benefited from featuring some case studies to provide a set of first-person glimpses into Nepali life in the UK. Instead, the work invites further in-depth research to build upon these findings with qualitative analysis.

Nepalis in the United Kingdom signals some burning issues facing Nepalis in this country. The UKBA changes to the visa regulations, including the attack against post-study work routes and the right to bring dependants, will significantly affect the Nepali population as 25 per cent of Nepalis of active age in Britain are students. Adhikari notes that “what looks certain now, with decline of Nepali students, is that the balance and size of the UK Nepali community will change”.

This matter has become even more pressing since the book was published, for example with Theresa May’s push in December 2012 to radically extend the interview scheme for non-EU student applicants.

Another salient chapter for policymakers concerns ‘pathways to integration’, in which Adhikari and Gellner specify the key difficulties facing first and second-generation Nepali migrants. Issues include lack of social capital, access to power structures, links to mainstream society, as well as those concerning housing, employment, language barriers and so on. The book clearly explains the sheer diversity of the Nepali population, which numbers some 100 distinct castes and janajati, or ethnic groups, as well as a variety of religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Kiranti and Christianity. Interaction between these groups can be difficult, adding to the challenge of successful integration in UK society.

Also, it is particularly worrying that only 32 per cent of Nepalis in CNUK’s 2008 survey reported that they mixed fully with people from different ethnic backgrounds in everyday situations, while two in three were “not mixing that much”. The book commends initiatives such as the one by Rushmoor Borough Council, whose Nepali population has reached about 10 per cent. The council has published booklets explaining the resources available to Nepali residents as well as countering local stereotypes about Nepalis.

As three in five Nepalis reportedly felt that they had been discriminated against due to ethnicity, language and religion in the 2008 survey, other local authorities with significant Nepali populations would do well to obtain a copy of this book. For those considering further research into Nepali migrants in the UK, it is an indispensable first port of call.
Racial justice a youth issue

Youth issues and racial justice are intertwined. Rob Berkeley asks if are we doing enough now so that another generation does not have to face similar levels of racial inequality

One in five British people under 18 years old are from minority ethnic communities. One third of the minority ethnic population of the UK is under 18. These facts combined mean that the struggle for greater racial justice is closely intertwined with the challenges facing young people in our society. It also means that any efforts to support young people in overcoming these challenges must take into account the impact of racial inequality and injustice. In this Bulletin we have highlighted a number of ways in which young people from minority ethnic, refugee and/or migrant communities face particular disadvantages and discrimination.

Some have identified solutions to the inequalities faced by young people from minority ethnic groups as being related to their levels of integration in society. This has been the current government’s analysis and has seen them pump resources into community music events, uniformed groups and additional support for learning English. This analysis has also seen government focus on measures to improve social mobility, role models and access to the professions. However welcome these initiatives may be, the articles in this Bulletin suggest that patterns of inequality and discrimination also need to be addressed directly in order to support integration and, more importantly, to give young people from minority ethnic communities an equal opportunity to thrive and fully contribute their skills and potential to our society.

We recently entered the sixth quarter in which around half of young Black men are seeking work (compared to 20% of young white men). With youth unemployment at crisis levels for Black communities the public consciousness about this problem and its impact is remarkably low. Government responses appear weak with little investment in positive action to address the particular problems and challenges faced by young people in Black communities in gaining access to the labour market, or significant attempts to crack down on the high levels of discrimination practised by employers. Instead colour-blind approaches are advocated; approaches that so far have not delivered, such as the Work Programme. In response to such inaction in face of a crisis it would not be unreasonable to ask whether Black youth unemployment is seen as ‘a price worth paying’.

In education, welcome improvements in attainment for some groups serves to highlight other areas of persistent failure. Black children and those with special needs are still much more likely to be excluded from school. Recent legislation removed the right to reinstatement after a successful appeal against exclusion, and ongoing fears about the arbitrary, unfair and illegal use of exclusion has prompted the Children’s Commissioner to intervene. For those who achieve at school, improvements in attainment are not matched by improvements in attainment at university with a significant gap emerging between students of different ethnicities. This has a knock-on effect in terms of graduate employment, with minority ethnic graduates more likely to be underemployed.

As government seeks to change the measure of child poverty to one which is less challenging to address, on current measures Black young people are twice as likely as white young people to grow up in poverty; Pakistani young people are three times as likely. How confident are we that the efforts we are making now to improve opportunity are sufficient to respond to these entrenched patterns of inequality?

In the face of these challenges it is heartening to hear from young people who are determined to overcome the barriers that they face with surprising levels of optimism and drive. It is also great to hear from so many young people that they are engaging in the struggle against the racial injustice that they witness. The StopWatch youth group, and the participants in our Generation 3.0 project, have shown me the importance of engaging young people more fully in our work as their insights and leadership are a crucial tool in our collective armoury in the drive for change.

Development of the Bulletin

In our ongoing drive to improve both the quality and the reach of our research analysis and networks for change, we have decided that The Bulletin will be developed in a new online format. We hope that this new format will give us the opportunity to bring more timely analysis on race equality issues to you and enable us to work with a wider range of voices in debates about action to address racism in our society. Please ensure you have signed up on the Runnymede mailing list on our homepage to stay informed about developments.