

Institution: Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU)		
Unit of Assessment: 23 – Education		
Title of case study: Challenging racism and promoting equality in educational organisations		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2019-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Sheine Peart	Reader in Education and Programme Leader for the Educational Doctorate	23/04/2019 to date
Dr Hadiza Kere Abdulrahman	Senior Lecturer in Education	07/01/2019 to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/09/2019 – 31/12/ 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Impact was achieved within the domain of ‘understanding, learning and participation’. Central to this were challenging the issues of inequality and promoting equality in education. Modes of impact were developed through appreciating the experiences of Black and minority ethnic (BAME) students and encouraging their increased involvement in university activities, while also enhancing awareness of issues through engagement with staff and students through the BGU Students’ Union and curriculum development. Related impact was achieved through the development of website resources and engagement with the <i>Black History Month (BHM) Magazine</i> and ‘Museumand’ as part of a curriculum development project with trainee teachers.</p>		
2. Underpinning research – References in section 3 are indicated by number (e.g., R1)		
<p>Underpinning research stems from a well-established and wide-ranging background of interests encompassing exploration of issues of ethnicity, racism, discrimination, inequality, postcolonialism, and decolonisation (e.g., R1, R2). This has been progressed further from early January 2019 through additional and ongoing investigation and publication (R3, R4). Research, more specifically, has considered issues around inclusion and equality in education, through three major themes. These have generated related impact agendas in educational settings and beyond.</p>		
Understanding the nature of inequality		
<p>Research identified a range of issues that impact on the possibility of race equality in educational settings. Accepting that all children should have the right to be equally valued in educational environments, happiness and well-being become important issues (R3). However, systemic and developmental issues are considered in this research as being barriers for the inclusion of all children in educational communities, and which, if left unattended, may lead to prejudice (R4).</p>		
<p>This has built on understanding and approaches concerning: language and everyday discourses of educational organisations; highlighting the lack of understanding amongst educational professionals regarding statutory obligations relating to equity legislation; and consideration of bullying and the exclusion of black boys and men in further education settings, and the impact that this can have on both their experiences and outcomes in education (R4). Research was founded on outlining and understanding these issues as a basis for changing</p>		

perceptions and practice.

Challenging inequality

Ongoing investigation has confronted the practices and characteristics uncovered through the insights gained. The research challenges educational organisations regarding policy, culture and support systems, and urges organisations and individuals to reflect on their use of language and how this impacts on practices and structures. The research, therefore, takes the understanding and insights it uncovers and challenges inequality as a basis for promoting positive change and more equal educational environments (R4).

Promoting Equality

Through the research, it is emphasised that promotion of equality has to be a multi-channel, whole-organisation process, which includes the raising of awareness and greater understanding by the wider educational community, and acting as a starting point for wider and deeper work. Such work is then outlined in relation to processes such as curriculum, general institutional cultures and the development of positive support structures (R3, R4). This ongoing research not only challenges inequality, problematising many day-to-day practices in education, but goes on to explore how greater equality can be fostered to create fairer and more inclusive educational environments. These changes can include the creation of systems to foster greater awareness of legislation and more inclusive use of language, as well as more culturally relevant approaches, such as in the greater inclusion of black males in further education colleges (R3, R4).

3. References to the research

1. **Kere Abdulrahman, H.** (2019) Distorted narratives about Islamic schools deflect ugly truths about Nigerian society. *The Conversation* 8 December. Available from: <https://theconversation.com/distorted-narratives-about-islamic-schools-deflect-ugly-truths-about-nigerian-society-127834>
2. **Kere Abdulrahman, H.** (2020) Begging bans in Nigeria: why they're not fit for purpose. *The Conversation* 30 April. Available from: <https://theconversation.com/begging-bans-in-nigeria-why-theyre-not-fit-for-purpose-132900>
3. **Kere Abdulrahman, H.** (2020) Am I Different? Social Identity, Difference, Exclusion, and the (Un)happiness of the 'Black and Minority Ethnic' Child, in Efstratopoulou, M.A. and Sofologi, M. (eds) *Bring My Smile Back: Working with Unhappy Children in Education* (New York: Nova Science Publishers), 1-16.
4. Thondhlana, J., **Kere Abdulrahman, H.**, Chiyevu Garwe, E., & McGrath, S. (2020) Exploring the internationalisation of Zimbabwe's Higher Education Institutions through a decolonial lens: postcolonial continuities and disruptions, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, online.

4. Details of the impact – Sources in section 5 are indicated by number (e.g., S1)

Impact was reflected in the following areas of engagement:

- Adapting professionals and organisations towards changing cultural values;
- Enhancing cultural understanding of issues and informing attitudes;
- Stimulating wider engagement in research;
- Challenging established norms, modes of thought and practices;
- Collaboration with museum professionals;
- Research-led engagement with marginalised or diverse groups;
- Teaching.

Principal beneficiaries were:

- BGU students and its Students' Union
- BGU staff
- Heritage sector partners

Raising awareness and enhancing understanding

In the Autumn of 2019, student participants were recruited to collect data on student perceptions of the academic and social experience of Black and minority ethnic students (BAME) studying at Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU). Five BAME students agreed to take part as those participants.

The insights that they gained were disseminated across the university via the annual BGU Teaching and Learning Conference and as part of a seminar series, both in the summer of 2020. The positive feedback received from these events included focusing on changes in practice as a result of participation (**S1**). In addition, the perspectives emerging from the project were shared with the University's Access and Participation Committee.

The participation activity drew attention to:

- The Eurocentric nature of the curriculum, and how, though omission, it excluded the contributions of BAME communities;
- The limited direct support provided by the Students' Union, and the additional advice required to enable BAME students to be more pro-active;
- The value and benefits of the Students' Union and academic staff working together to develop activities for Black History Month in October 2020.

Working collaboratively with BG academic staff the SU organised a series of events for Black History Month 2020 spread over the four weeks of October, with accompanying social media (**S2**), as follows:

- Week 1 – Decolonising the Curriculum, A Practitioners Perspective – Abdulraham, Elefuya and Peart recorded a panel session on their experience of working in different educational environments and how they had challenged inequalities;
- Week 2 – Simple Caribbean Cookery – Building on the SU's cooking on a budget events, Mia Nadesen gave a Caribbean inspired cookery demonstration;
- Week 3 – Black Dolls and Play – Peart gave a presentation on the representation of Black dolls over time;
- Week 4 – Black and British Quiz – Using the regular SU quiz event 'Black and British' section was included which highlighted the contributions of Black British people to the life of the nation.

This programme built on BGU's first Black History in 2019, with a public lecture and workshop supported by a presentation and artefacts from Museumand – the National Caribbean Heritage Museum (**S3**).

Influencing attitudes and changing values and norms

The participation activity led to the establishment of an internal online staff forum (*BGU and Race, Telling It Like It Is*) (**S4**), where staff can share ideas, post comments or raise questions in relation to effective ways to decolonise the curriculum and to make it more inclusive. The group has 16 members in total and has been operating since summer 2020.

Working collaboratively with the University Library and utilising existing collections, a further physical forum was established to provide an opportunity for face to face meetings, the Telling It Like It Is (TILIs) Teaching Resource Group (**S5**). This group meets twice each semester, four times over the course of the academic year. It has 15 members, including the University's Vice-Chancellor, and met three times before the onset of new lockdown circumstances. The work of the forum is also sustained through the hosting of work completed by staff and students at the University that promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

One of the participants stood for election to the Student Union Executive, as a consequence of engaging with the project, and was elected to post of Equality Officer 2020. Mia Nadasen's election pledges included working to promote race equality at the University and to make BGU a more inclusive environment (S6).

Partnership work with *Black History Month (BHM) Magazine* and Museumand from 2019 culminated in a commission in December 2020 for BGU to produce 14 packs of new teaching materials covering Art, Classics, Drama, English, History, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages (French and Spanish), Music, Physical Education, Religious Education and Science. These will be produced in 2021 for distribution by *BHM Magazine* to schools nationwide (S7).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Testimonial, Jonathan Memel, BGU staff:

- The research underlying the presentation developed my awareness and understanding of the perspectives of BAME students at BGU and I found their comment that much of the teaching came from a Eurocentric viewpoint particularly revealing. As a result of this research I adjusted the choice of primary texts I assign on my second-year module in English Literature.

2. Social media: BGU SU Facebook 1038 impressions and 789 engagements.

3. Webpage, BGU Black History Month 2019 at:

- <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/news/national-caribbean-heritage-museum-helps-bgu-celebrate-black-history-month>

4. Webpage, BGU TILIs at:

- [Telling It Like It Is - TILII | Bishop Grosseteste University](#)

5. Webpage, BGU TILIs Resource Group at:

- <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/student/research/telling-it-like-it-is-teaching-resource-group-tilis>

6. Testimonial, Mia Nadesen, BGU SU Equality Officer:

- Taking part in the research gave me the confidence to stand in the Student Union election for the position of Diversity and Tolerance Advocate. This role has sought to support students from all backgrounds, with BAME students being a demographic. This role has ensured that BAME students on campus know they have someone who represents their views and opinions, as well as a confidante. Being the first role within the SU to support students from BAME heritage, it has been a pleasure to be the founder of a great position.

7. Correspondence, Director, *BLM Magazine* and Museumand.