

**INTERCULTURAL  
YOUTH SCOTLAND**

# **IMPACT REPORT 2021**



# CONTENTS

**(3) INTRODUCTION**

**(4) EDUCATION**

**(8) ART AND CULTURE**

**(16) RESTLESS NATIVES**

**(20) YOUTH WORK**

**(23) ADVOCACY**

**(27) OUR FUNDERS**

# INTRODUCTION

Amidst continuing and ever-shifting pandemic restrictions, and the simultaneous ‘COVID recovery’, Intercultural Youth Scotland have extended and expanded our work to levels we hadn’t even seen before the pandemic. It has been challenging, hard work but we continue to grow and develop our programme to make sure that we are doing exactly what we need to support young Black people and young people of colour in Edinburgh and beyond. We were already Scotland’s leading anti-racist and pro-Black charity, but we can never rest on our laurels. The work never stops, and we continue to lead the way in anti-racist work in Scotland.

In 2019, we started at IYS with a vibrant group of young people coming together to share their interests, sing, dance, and rap together, and learn about each other’s lives and cultures. We’ve since extended our work not just in youth work and arts, but in advocacy, education, mental health support, and employability. Last year saw us grow our legitimacy in all of these areas and find new ways to engage with young Black people and people of colour who might need or want our support.

Our education programme extended its offering to more schools across Edinburgh and engage in national advocacy to promote anti-racism in the curriculum and the Scottish education system; our employability team developed a strong relationship with the national employability support providers to supports hundreds of young people through our anti-racist employability programme in schools across Edinburgh and Glasgow; our youth work team have developed unmatched opportunities for young people’s creative expression and community building; we have established a free mental health service for Black and PoC young people across Scotland; our media and communications team have ensured that our work is engaging on a national scale, and our ideas are challenging people across Scotland, the national, and international communities; while our advocacy team continues to hold the fire beneath our policymakers’ feet.

We hope that this report will give you a glimpse of what IYS has been up to in 2021. It’s important to us that our communities can see what we’ve been doing, and that those in positions of power can see what we can achieve as a community!

# EDUCATION

# ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION PROGRAMME

In 2020, our education team developed a first-of-its-kind anti-racist and pro-Black education programme to take into schools. This year, we saw this programme taken to a new level. In the first half of 2021, the education team continued the hard work at the Royal High School, Liberton High School, and George Watson; after the summer break, we saw the programme implemented at Rosshall Academy, Boroughmuir, and Broughton High School. But what does the programme actually entail?

At the core of our anti-racist and pro-Black education programme is a weekly class delivered to students at the school. These classes cover a range of topics from the history of colonialism to the everyday effects of environmental racism. There are three modules that build one upon another, delivered to young people who sign up to take part. Beyond these weekly classes, the programme is tailored to the needs of the school. Here's a breakdown of what we do at each school:

At the Royal High School, Boroughmuir, Rosshall Academy, St. Augustines, and Liberton, our educators delivered weekly classes on topics around colonialism, anti-racism and activism to S5 and S6 students. They also ran an anti-racist lunch club, providing a safe space to Black and POC young people in the school.

Anti-racism work doesn't, however, stop with the pupils; beyond working with young people, the IYS educator worked with teachers and department heads to deal with issues of racism that come up on an everyday basis and wider questions around the decolonisation of the curriculum, and developing anti-racist policy. We're working closely with both the staff and the students at Royal High School, Boroughmuir, Rosshall, and St. Augustines to bridge the gap and help the school listen to its students when it comes to what needs to be done about anti-racism.

Our work is not a one-size-fits-all approach. At each school, there are different elements to the programme that the young people themselves lead and develop, facilitated by IYS educators.

- Muslim Girls Lunch club at the Royal High School providing a safe space for Muslim young women and girls.
- A People of Colour Culture Club planned and hosted by young people at Rosshall, where they could share film and art with one another, facilitated by our educator.
- A Black History bookcase and reading list at the Boroughmuir School library.

Through Classes, Lunch Clubs, and 1-to-1 meetings across the schools, our education team worked with 143 pupils and met with school staff over 40 times to help contribute to anti-racism in their curricula. We also supported pupils to give assemblies on anti-racism to over 700 people.

## DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

While our work in schools is essential, our anti-racist education work doesn't stop there! The education team have worked with the General Teaching Council of Scotland, in partnership with Children in Scotland, to research race and culture in the Scottish school system. We developed strong relationships with both organisations, who have championed our work and seen the value in what we do. A national project, we developed resources and activity packs for Scottish schools, and a report for GTCS to develop their own work. With this project, we've managed to reach schools all across Scotland, doing vital anti-racism work on a national scale.

Hear our education team manager, Titilayo Farukuoye, talking about the project on the Children in Scotland podacst! [CLICK HERE](#)

## RACE EQUALITY AND ANTIRACISM IN EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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**“We cannot resource our way to anti-racist change” *IYS in The Guardian, August 2021***

## ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION WITHIN IYS

It's not just with external schools and partners that the education team work; they're also responsible for the internal anti-racist education at IYS and helping develop our youth engagement through education. The team have delivered workshops on Queer Positive work, Intersectionality, and Critical Pedagogy to the staff at IYS; building on earlier work around Anti-Blackness and Colourism, and Exploitation and Tokenism in partnership work. These workshops have been essential to our own growth and development as individuals and as a community at IYS. Anti-racism is a constant learning process for us and all of those with whom we work.

Beyond this, the team are steadily building up our Anti-racist Library, in partnership with Lighthouse bookshop. The anti-racist library is a great project for staff to work across teams and build a youth-led community centred around education and community education that can be quite removed from conventional ways of learning or other formalised structures. The idea is to enable exchange and be in community with all age groups, abilities and backgrounds, while maintaining a key focus on BPOC young people and giving them a space to engage with knowledge while building a community around it.

As you can see, the education team have been doing some great work not just in schools, but at every level to do with anti-racist education. Get in touch with us if you think the education team would be useful to you!



# ART AND CULTURE



# SCOTLAND IN COLOUR

**SAT  
04  
SEP**

**A CELEBRATION  
OF SCOTLAND'S  
DIVERSE CREATIVITY**

After a smaller, scaled-down event in 2020, Scotland in Colour was back in 2021 with a bigger and better festival than ever. On September 4th, IYS took over The Biscuit Factory in Leith with an all day and night festival open to the masses.

With funding support from the Culture Collective by Creative Scotland, and the CORRA Foundation, the event took place over the course of a whole day and night. During the day, local street food vendors kept our energy up to enjoy and learn from activism workshops, explore arts & craft stalls, and feel the buzz of incredible performances from all the young people who felt like sharing their talent; from dancers to poets to rappers and musicians, the day festival saw a little bit of the best that Scotland's young Black and POC performers have to offer. Not just a space to party and enjoy ourselves, attendees also learned from workshops around Mutual Aid, artistic rebellion, and self-defense.

As the sun set, we welcomed some of Scotland's rising stars to give the audience a real taste of what Black and POC musicians have been cooking up over the lockdown. Aiitee, Grace & The Flat Boys, The Honey Farm, El Ritchie, Mother All Mighty, Billy Got Waves, and Sean Focus all took to the stage to entertain the hundreds that came to see what it's all about—and we were not disappointed!





## A Cut Above

Music has always been a huge part of what IYS do and Scotland in Colour wasn't the only way we managed to highlight some of the best talent musical and artistic talent that Scotland has to offer. While COVID restrictions remained stringent in the early parts of 2021, we launched 'A Cut Above' both as a distraction from the difficulties of lockdown (see our report on the experiences of Black and POC young people in the earlier parts of the Coronavirus Pandemic) but also as a fun way to encourage creativity in whichever forms it might come.

The idea was simple: the IYS Block Beats producer would have a beat put out on our Instagram page. Then, anybody could take the beat and do whatever they liked with it – sing over it, rap, dance, remix it, and so on – and upload it as an entry to the competition.



## sixFive Socials

As the country opened up again after lockdown, we saw to bring the sixFive social back for the end of 2021. In collaboration with Civerinos pizza, we held cosy monthly events in October, November and December inviting young people to perform on stage to an audience at Paradise Palms. This gave all the young people a chance to express themselves and their talents in a safe space, facilitated by our Youth Workers; we tried to foster a positive and creative environment. Over the course of the three months we saw more than 15 performances from young Black and POC performers!



## BLOCK BEATS

While we have always hosted events for young people to express their talents, we think it's equally important to offer a space where these talents can be developed and, most importantly, a safe space where young people can have fun with their creativity in an unpressured environment. Enter: Block Beats.

In 2021 we launched our groundbreaking Block Beats Studio and music programme, a place and service that gives young people all the tools to make their music under the guidance and with the support of our two IYS producers. We make the beat, help them with their lyrics and performance, and then record, mix, and master the track for them. By the end of the process, each participant has a fully-fledged professional-quality track for them to do whatever they like with. Many of the tracks were performed at our sixFive Social events, and at the Scotland in Colour festival.

Block Beats has developed a range of exciting partnerships across the Scottish music industry and in the wider arts and culture sector. We've worked with the Scottish Music Industry Association, Creative Scotland, Drake Music, and more. Our partnership with the Scottish Ballet has been especially successful, with young Black and POC performers working with Scottish Ballet dancers to create their own dance, poetry, and music projects for the Safe to be Me festival in February 2021.

Over 30 different young people have made use of our Block Beats studio and support from our producers and youth work team, with 15 young people recording at least one full track. Seven of those involved in Block Beats went on to perform at sixFive Social events.





## Leith Late at the Biscuit Factory

Based in Leith, we're always excited to collaborate with other local events and organisations. In November, IYS were invited to the Biscuit Factory by 'Leith Late', an arts charity based in Leith, to talk art, life, and activism; and to perform ourselves. Three young people hosted a Q&A with Joseph Malik and Kokumo rocks about a recent documentary they released on their connection to Malcolm X. Then, we saw four performances of poetry and rap from young people involved in IYS.



## Underbelly

Over the early parts of 2021, we had been working with a few different organisations who host events at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival on what they might be able to do to become a more anti-racist workplace. As a result of some of these discussions, we were offered the opportunity to bring some performers to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with Underbelly. In August, we programmed two days of performances from Black and POC young people, offering the opportunity to perform at the world's biggest arts and culture festival!



# CHANGING THE CREATIVE SECTOR

While we try our best to provide as many opportunities as we can, we know that we can't fill in all the gaps ourselves. Black people and people of colour are woefully underrepresented – and underpaid – in the Scottish arts scene, not receiving the same level of support and attention that their white colleagues receive. That's why our Media and Communications team are always hard at work pushing for change in the arts and culture sector. Here are some of the highlights of what they've been up to...

## RESURGENCE

The biggest project we undertook over the course of the year was the Resurgence project, in collaboration with Scottish Youth Theatre, Pure Potential Scotland, International Teaching Artist Collaborative, The Indra Congress, and Youth Theatre Arts Scotland. The nine-month long project set out to present an enquiry into various inequalities in the creative sector through a series of young artist's collectives known as 'Revolution Collectives'. These groups led the development and delivery of the project to produce the Resurgence Inquiry, a "[digital portfolio](#)" which contains all the works produced by the collectives of young artists.

*"Resurgence was a Scottish and international creative inquiry into the public concern of inequality, to support the recovery and renewal of youth arts provision as it emerged from the confines of the pandemic. Spearheaded by three Revolution Collectives of young artists and one Evolution Collective of creative professionals, RESURGENCE gathered evidence, gave testimony and made recommendations in artistic form, for greater equity in the arts and wider society." SCOTTISH YOUTH THEATRE*



## AMPLIFY – Culture Collective

Creative Scotland's Culture Collective was a fund that aimed to support community-engaged creative activity, where funded programmes were required to work collaboratively not just with their local communities, but with each other as well. As part of this process, in December we were invited to speak at one of the Culture Collective events. The series of events brought together groups of organisations working in similar fields and encourage them to share their learning from their work, issues they might have faced, and their visions for the future of the sector.

We were invited to contribute to the AMPLIFY event, focussing on minoritized voices and the ways the sector considers or might engage them.

## UNCON 3.0

We also partnered with Creative Scotland to produce some work for UNCON 3.0, an event in January 2021 that was “designed to showcase and celebrate the best of youth arts and creativity in Scotland”, this year focussed on the experiences young people and children had with trying to stay creative during the COVID-19 pandemic. We consulted with a group of young artists on how COVID might have impacted the arts and culture sector, and their hopes for the future. As a result, we produced a short film featuring conversations between young Black artists and artists of colour on their cultural needs in the sector, and the steps necessary to recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic. As well as some visual reports on similar topics, available to view [here](#).

## Culture Ministers Reception on Climate and Culture (COP26)

The relationship between ourselves, our artistic expression, and the environment around us (including its climate) is strong; climate justice includes racial justice. We presented at the Glasgow City Chambers as part of the culture ministers reception on climate and culture, during the COP26 summit in Glasgow. The event focussed on how we might address climate change in Scotland in the wake of COP26 and the activist movements not just during the conference – but existed far before it.

We enlisted the help of rising artist 'Chef', a regular on BBC Introducing and a prominent voice in Aberdeen's BLM movement in 2020, to help us make a point to key figures in the Scottish Government and other stakeholders and offer their experience as an activist to help determine what can be done.



# RESTLES NATIVES



## RESTLESS NATIVES' THREE KEY AIMS:

- 1) SUPPORTING YOUNG BLACK PEOPLE AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF COLOUR WITH THEIR NEXT STEPS DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL
- 2) IMPROVING ANTI-RACISM IN WORKPLACES AND ORGANISATIONS
- 3) ADVOCATING FOR BETTER GOVERNMENT POLICY AROUND EMPLOYABILITY AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE RACISM

The education programme isn't the only way that IYS has had an impact in Scottish schools. Restless Natives was originally designed to help young people realise their goals and get on the right track – whether that's a career path, a route through education, or wider support in achieving what they wanted to achieve. While the programme existed as online support and a drop-in hub (when allowed) through 2020, 2021 saw the programme develop into a fully-fledged, school-based project. With support from Developing the Young Workforce and the Scottish Government's Young Person's Guarantee, we took Restless Natives to the next level. Restless Natives works across three levels to help Black and POC young people: supporting young people themselves; helping workplaces and other organisations become better places for Black and POC young people to study and work in, and provide more opportunities for Black and POC young people; and advocating in the Scottish Government for better support for Black and POC young people across schools, Skills Development Scotland, and for more targeted support such as that being provided by ourselves.

## THE YOUNG PERSON'S GUARANTEE

The Scottish Government have set a target of ensuring that everyone between the ages of 16 and 24 years old are connected with an opportunity for work or education – a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training, or volunteering. We at IYS realised that despite generally higher educational attainment, Black and POC young people had worse post-school outcomes. With Restless Natives, we have set out to change this where the Scottish Government and local schools have previously not done enough.

# IMPROVING WORKPLACES AND ORGANISATIONS

We can't place the responsibility of finding and succeeding in opportunities on young people themselves. At IYS, we understand that the odds are stacked against Black and POC young people, so it's only right that we try to level the playing field.

**Pathways Programme** In 2021, Restless Natives piloted a pathways programme with the Scottish Ballet and Edinburgh World Heritage. For both organisations, we developed a bespoke training programme to help all of their staff improve their understanding of and ability to engage with questions of race and anti-racism. We worked alongside them to see how their workplace could be improved to become a better place for Black and POC young people to enter, and we created a positive action opportunity for a Black or POC young person to gain experience in the industry at both organisations. This meant that two new opportunities were created for Black and POC young people, and we created a model to follow of how we can expand this programme across various other organisations and industries. All of those who applied for the two 'pathways' jobs were offered support from Restless Natives practitioners, while those who got the job were offered mentoring sessions every week. The organisations continued to be supported by IYS to ensure that the workplace was becoming an anti-racist environment.

**Anti-racist Training and Workshops** In early 2021, with the support of the Workplace Equality Fund, we supported staff from over 20 organisations and workplaces to develop their understanding of issues of racism in their particular context. Almost all participants in this training programme reported that their ability to identify barriers that existed for Black and POC young people in their industry was improved, and that they felt more motivated after the session to do something about it. Beyond these sessions, we tried to work with each and every employer who was involved to narrow down what specific actions they could take in their workplace, and what they could do to improve the experience of Black and POC employees.

Beyond this initial programme, we worked in more depth with more than 10 other organisations and workplaces, as well as tens of freelance workers across various membership organisations. The Restless Natives training sessions are unique to each organisation and involve follow-up work to ensure that the learning is put into practice.

***"Together (Scottish Alliance of Children's Rights) would like to extend a big thank you to Intercultural Youth Scotland for a very insightful and thought-provoking Anti-Racism training session ... [T]he interactive nature of the session and time for discussion and reflection were extremely valuable and we're looking forward to making changes to the way that we work."*** TESTIMONIAL FROM TOGETHER SCOTLAND

## BPOC Support Program

In early 2021 the Restless Natives programme was re-designed to engage even more young people, not just in Edinburgh but beyond. We worked with two schools in Edinburgh (St Augustines (St Augustines and Tynecastle) and two schools in Glasgow (Knightswood and Shawlands) to get our practitioners involved. In these four schools, our practitioners have tried to help young people with anything they might have needed for their next steps. Focussing primarily on school leavers but open to other students at the school too, our practitioners have helped with things from simpler tasks like looking for opportunities, to connecting workplaces directly to young people who might be interested in them. A highlight included the chance for Restless Natives participants to talk to Black and POC staff at the BBC about career paths, what it's like to work in TV, and what challenges they might face in the industry.

But we know that school isn't the place for everyone, that's why we also have a practitioner who works specifically with those who might have already left school, or those who might not find school to be the best place for them.

**"Thanks for helping me out with the UCAS application. After sending my application away some universities came back to me with great news! I appreciate your help. I was really worried that I could not do this by myself, but you helped a lot." – Ano, Restless Natives Participant.**

## RESTLESS NATIVES ADVOCACY

Beyond the young people, workplaces, schools, and other organisations, there exists a whole system of support and policy administered by the government to try and help young people into the workplace or into education and training. These bodies, however, are imperfect and have for too long ignored the specific issues encountered by Black and POC young people.

Based on our work with Young Scot in 2020 on ['Mapping the Young Person's Journey'](#)

In 2021, we delivered anti-racist training and workshops to staff in Developing the Young Workforce, Skills Development Scotland, as well as some members of staff from the Edinburgh and Glasgow local authorities. We also worked with the Young Person's Guarantee Implementation Group to offer them the opportunity to develop their own learning with regards to anti-racism and what they can do better. As part of the wider Young Person's Guarantee effort, we tried to represent the interests of Black and POC young people in the Young Person's Guarantee Implementation Group (alongside other stakeholders) and in the related Young Person's Guarantee Equalities Subgroup. In these groups we have tried to ensure that all policy considers its specific relationship to racism and how any specific measures might be taken to ensure all work is anti-racist and equitable.

**Young  
Person's  
Guarantee**

# YOUTH WORK



## THE BLOCK

The Block is the original IYS community, the root of so much of our work. At The Block, we encourage a safe, open, and understanding space for young people to share their lives, cultures and creativity. As young people from marginalised groups, the opportunity to have space away from home and mix with peers, develop community ties, and connect with other groups can have an incredible impact on wellbeing and mental health; it's our aim at the Block for young people to enjoy themselves, to learn from each other, and to share with each other.

While the pandemic created some obstacles for our Youth Work team, we navigated the restrictions on youth work and gatherings with adaptability to make sure that the Block was always there for those who wanted or needed it. At various times across the year, the Block was hosted indoors at Duncan Place, outdoors on Leith Links, and sometimes moved online to always be safe and open to all. Whether it was online, in-person, or outside, the Block always tried to do what the young people themselves wanted. We had workshops in meditation, music, dance, and writing rap music, as well as jam sessions, open mic nights, and talent shows.

The Block summer programme made the most of the sunny, albeit short, Scottish summertime and kept a regular place for young people to come and meet with each other at a time when school's out and there's little else to do in the city. Over 40 young people attended outdoor activities across the summer with our Youth Work team.



# TLC (Formerly Known as 'Gyals Group')

Until September, we were running the IYS 'Gyals Group' with a group of young women and girls achieving their Duke of Edinburgh Awards, gathering to talk about female empowerment, and receiving specific support related to the experience of being a Black woman or woman of colour.

Since September 2021, the Gyals Group became Truth, Love, and Culture (TLC), as a way of signifying the groups openness to non-binary Black and POC young people, as well as those who identify as female or a woman in their own way. TLC is a safe space where marginalised young people can come together, talk, create, and develop themselves in a relaxed and non-judgemental environment. Key to TLC is facilitating a space where Black and POC young people can develop their own support networks and ways of being in the world. While we try our best to reach out to all of those to whom TLC might be helpful, we know that not everyone can reach us at IYS. For this reason, we have started running TLC in two schools, and soon hopefully more, facilitating spaces to explore identity and self-care.

During the sessions in schools, participants also have the opportunity to achieve their Duke of Edinburgh bronze award, we have so far helped over 20 young people with their DofE award process.

## TLC and the Scottish Ballet

As part of TLC, participants got to work for 6 weeks with the Scottish Ballet, taking part in workshops and collaborating to create a contemporary dance piece with an original harp composition. This was filmed and showed our young people's creativity confidence and development. The young people involved didn't have dance experience (bar one) so being able to see yourself in a completely different way builds self-esteem and resilience. At the end of the workshop, the young people were invited to a production by The Scottish Ballet at The Festival Theatre 'Starstruck'. As some of our young people (and youth workers) had not been to the ballet before, this experience was invaluable. Some young people who didn't attend the sessions came along to the theatre too to share the experience.

## TLC: Female Poets of Colour

The next set of workshops were facilitated by another guest at Duncan Place and focused on Female Poets of Colour. These sessions were held both online and face to face so that as many young people as possible could take part and helping those who were at greater risk of contracting COVID to take part and stay connected with the group without having to endanger themselves. During these workshops we read poetry and wrote our own, inspired by the stories which we were listening to. These sessions allowed participants to tap into their own creative minds and to reflect on themselves. A notable quote from one of the attendees was "I could have gone straight home from work but I'm glad I didn't. I had the best time".

## TLC Zine

The TLC zine will be a platform for female and non-binary young people to showcase their talents. This includes writing, poetry, art, drama, reviews, current affairs and personal blogs. This group meets once a week to discuss the growth of the magazine and all the young people involved will have the opportunity to work alongside professionals in journalism and creative digital design and will ultimately build the foundation of a project which we hope will go Scotland wide. We ensure that the young people are involved with every step of the production and decision making allowing them to feel like this project is theirs. One of the young people involved is a BBC young reporter of the year and this project is helping her, not only network with others in the field of journalism but work on her personal development.

# ADVOCACY

# ADVOCACY

As an organisation, most of our work carried out on a grassroots level directly with young people and with the communities which we ourselves are a part of. However, to make longer lasting and more drastic change, beyond the local level, we try to link grassroots concerns with national decision-makers. Our advocacy team work tirelessly at every level of decision-making to try and effect a shift towards community leadership, and consultation-based decision-making.

Across all sectors of our society we need radical shifts in the way we do things. We don't just need anti-racist resources, but complete restructuring of the way things are done. Here are some of our efforts to try and make that happen...

## National Youth Work Strategy

National bodies for youth work and wider membership groups along with the Scottish government are not doing enough to ensure that the youth work sector and its practitioners are truly anti-racist, and that there is specific funding and a targeted approach for those who experience racism or who are marginalised from wider youth work.

This past year, after hearing about work on the National Youth Work Strategy and seeing that no Black or POC led organisations were being consulted, we have been incessantly knocking on the doors of stakeholders trying to seek out a solution. We have built partnerships in solidarity with other organisations who have been similarly excluded and developed a collective agenda for change. Our biggest concern is the lack of true, direct engagement with Black and POC young people, and others with protected characteristics.

As a result of our knocking, we have developed a presented extra consultation work for the National Youth Work Strategy, submitted evidence for a report on the marginalisation of Black people and people of colour during the National Youth Work Strategy development process, and co-founded the equalities youth forum alongside Glasgow Disability Alliance, Article 12 in Scotland, and LGBT Youth Scotland to advance the intersectional needs of young people in the sector. As an organisation, most of our work carried out on a grassroots level directly with young people and with the communities which we ourselves are a part of. However, to make longer lasting and more drastic change, beyond the local level, we try to link grassroots concerns with national decision-makers. Our advocacy team work tirelessly at every level of decision-making to try and effect a shift towards community leadership, and consultation-based decision-making.



## Museums and Galleries Scotland Consultation

Breaking ground in another field, in 2021 we began working with Museums and Galleries Scotland on a research project around Empire and the history of Enslavement in Scottish Museums, and the potential for a museum of enslavement and empire.

Importantly, this research is being carried out by young people themselves. The advocacy team at IYS and our freelance researchers are facilitating the process in order that we can hear the true voices of young people without subsuming their views into our own narrative. This means that not only will we produce a vital report for the future of the museums and galleries sector in Scotland, but also allow for several young people to develop their research skills.

Find out more [here](#).

## Colour Collective Scotland

Black- and POC-led youth organisations have been ignored and marginalised by decision makers. From funding to decision-making and support networks, Black people and people of colour have not had the same structures and supports to help them as their white counterparts. We feel a responsibility to support others who are in the same position we found ourselves in only a few years ago. So, we co-founded the Colour Collective Scotland (CCS)

The CCS is a network of Black- and POC-led youth work organisations. The collective is designed to create solidarity, develop common understandings of issues and joint approaches for solutions, a place to come to advise each other on problems that some or others may have encountered in the past, and to pursue collective action to make the youth work sector a better place for Black people and people of colour, making youth work better for young Black people and young people of colour. The group was particularly focussed in 2021 on the National Youth Work Strategy and funding that often didn't go to any Black- or POC-led organisations.

## Youth Ambassadors

A new cohort of Youth Ambassadors started in November 2020. The anti-racist and pro-Black ambassadors are a group of 20 or so young people ranging in age from 12-25. The focus of the group is to have informal meetings every week, splitting the time given to discussions between personal development and activism.

While it's important that we at IYS are doing the work of advocacy and changemaking ourselves, it's equally important that young people are involved in (and that they should lead) these processes. All of our advocacy work is carried out in collaboration with the ambassadors, and the ambassadors can direct our advocacy work towards the issues they themselves identify. This year, this has led to the development of our Mental Health Service and the undertaking of a research project on Black and POC young people's mental health in Scotland; mental health and wellbeing was a topic that was highlighted by our ambassadors as something that is not given enough attention, especially for young Black people and young people of colour.

Read our mental health report [here](#), and see what our mental health and wellbeing service offers [here](#).

## Scottish Election Manifestos

With the Scottish election in early 2021, we sent some recommendations to the SNP, the Scottish Green Party, and the Scottish Labour Party. Read our manifesto recommendations [here](#). With these recommendations, we hoped to offer some realistic ideas to the major progressive parties to help them deal with the racism that is still so entrenched in our social structures.

Here were our hopes before the election: *"We hope that your public commitment to the fight against racism will be honest, and seek the necessary and radical longterm change this country certainly needs. We hope you can put this commitment on the public record in your manifestos, and that the promises you might make will be followed through upon election."*

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our mental health report, linked above, was one of the key projects undertaken by the ambassadors in 2021. A first-of-its-kind report, the publication details the experiences of Black and POC children and young people with their mental health and, based on the data and experiences we found, advocates for the development of specialised responses to the impact of race and racism on mental health. The report was based on consultations run by the ambassadors, involving 30 Black and POC children and young people, and feedback from counsellors who work in IYS' mental health service.

While our report recommends specific measures to deal with these issues, we often see the recommendations of reports go accepted with great applause and little action. So, we decided to put these recommendations into place ourselves. Our mental health service emerged directly from seeing the needs of Black and POC children and young people go continuously unmet. Working with a counsellor who specialises in racial trauma, funded by the Scottish Government's Equalities Unit, we developed and rolled out a specialised mental health service for Black and POC young people aged 12-25. The service is free, confidential, and involved up to 12 1-1 sessions. All three counsellors involved in the service are trained in and specialise in racial trauma, but the service is not only focussed on this. Any young person who wishes to take part can self-refer [here](#).

*Note: Counselling or mental health support with IYS is not crisis intervention. So that means if you need help right now, please contact:*

*NHS24: call 111 or ask for an urgent appointment with your GP.*

*If you just need to talk right now:*

*Young Minds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk> (text YM to 85258)*

*Samaritans – <https://www.samaritans.org> (116123, all ages, 24h)*

*Childline – <https://www.childline.org.uk/> (08001111, under 19 only, 24h)*

## IYS IN THE MEDIA

While all of these efforts have been ongoing in (online) meeting rooms and through lengthy email chains, we have also been making some noise in the media. As well as our arts and culture radio shows on community radio stations EHFM and Radio Buena Vida, we have been prominent voices in the news media in response to current events, with features on BBC News and Radio, STV, and more. Our director has written in Holyrood Magazine on her experiences of racism, and been quoted in The Guardian in response to the Scottish Government's release of 'anti-racist' educational resources.

# WITH THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND SPONSORS



**The Scottish  
Government**



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# TINY CHANGES





# **This is a movement.**

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