

I am the mother of a 21-year-old young woman. I became a mother at the age of 15. My life growing up in London was plighted by domestic abuse, poor support and safeguarding. My options felt limited, but I had a choice to make, and did not want my daughter to experience embarrassment or isolation because of the life she had inherited.

I taught myself the bulk of my GCSE's and A Levels, became incredibly disciplined with my studies, balancing the demands of motherhood and education. Education became my way out.

Taking full grasp of the opportunities further education provided helped to shape my views on the importance of this life stage. Without the strong foundation I gained during this time I would have found it tremendously difficult to have progressed to where I am today.

Female adolescents of African descent across the world face dehumanisation, sexualisation and adultification. They are marginalised within society. We need to ensure that the structures that continue to fail young black girls; find solutions to restore dignity, opportunity and safeguarding.

We must actively dismantle societal structures that fail to support young girls of African descent.

Progressive Education and full support of women of African Descent into visible positions of leadership, which provide vision, mentorship and aspirational identification

In my current role I deliver strategic oversight for 16-19 education and 14-19 careers and progression provision. Leading on initiatives which aim to ensure inclusion and diversification in curriculum planning and operations, ensuring student pathways are not tainted by racial bias, and working within an actively anti-racist framework.

I ask that greater support and recognition is afforded to work which aims to develop education systems across the globe which ensure choice, opportunity and inclusion for black girls of African descent.