

MaCTRI (MEaP Academy Community Training & Research Institute)

The Permanent Forum on People of African Descent
United Nations Headquarters
New York

Dear Members of the Permanent Forum

RE: Education recommendations for third session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

In the UK, state education consistently fails children of African Descent. Although children of more recent African Descent are doing marginally better than children of Caribbean descent, both groups still lie below the national average for GCSE attainment. This gap widened during the pandemic where teacher assessed GCSE grades were used instead of exams. This discriminatory behaviour was identified all the way back in landmark parliamentary reports in the 1980s (Swann and Scarman) that identified institutional racism towards the then West Indian pupils which facilitated the use of educationally subnormal units where Black pupils were placed. Community education groups known as supplementary schools had been set up around a decade earlier to counter this mainstream neglect of Black children. But this neglect continues today because teacher training programmes have evolved to omit cultural competency training, so where opportunities do exist to integrate a tiny bit of African history and culture especially in the English Literature curriculum, most teachers are ill-equipped to teach these areas, so they are left out.

As Headteacher for MEaP Academy Twilight School, an African-led online supplementary school based in Manchester, UK, where we work to mitigate much of the neglect in mainstream schools for our mainly African heritage pupils, I would like to make following recommendations. We need:

- Greater recognition of the importance of supplementary schools (i.e. grassroots education groups) through UNESCO as part of its Rights Respecting Schools Programme (this would seem to be a logical extension of its current provision, since we are its first supplementary school in the UK to have gained its Bronze Portfolio Award)
- Greater funding and support of supplementary schools, if not through member states through UNESCO as part of its Rights Respecting Schools Programme
- Greater recognition for the need of training programmes for community educators working in these settings through UNESCO as part of its Rights Respecting Schools Programme

Yours sincerely



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