

## History Matters!

### A Project Encouraging the Development of Young Historians of African and Caribbean Heritage wins National Lottery support



The Young Historians Project (YHP), has been awarded a National Lottery grant of £19,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Formed by young people working with the History Matters initiative, the project hopes to encourage the development of young historians of African and Caribbean Heritage and enable people to engage with Black British history, through the creation of digital learning resources and workshops aimed at young people.

The project emerged as one of the outcomes from the 'History Matters' conference held in April 2015 at the Institute of Historical Research, highlighting the alarmingly low numbers of history students and teachers of African and Caribbean heritage in Britain. Statistics indicate that History is the third most unpopular subject among Black undergraduates, and that there are less than 10 Black PhD students studying History in the U.K.

Sherrie Gasana, one of the young volunteers at YHP, says: "In our university history department, there is very little historical discourse based outside Europe. , "It is very much a Eurocentric curriculum. Even with the little we do have, finding resources proves quite difficult."

The current team includes ten young people aged between 18-25 who all have an interest in history. Professor Hakim Adi, who founded the History Matters initiative said: "The YHP was developed with the support of the National Lottery and in partnership with the Black Cultural Archives to counter the apparent unpopularity of history amongst young people of African and Caribbean heritage. YHP

has encouraged young people to design their own history project and provides them with the skills to present hidden histories through a film and exhibition that can inspire their peers."

Paul Reid, the director of the Black Cultural Archives, explains: "It's really important that young people view history from their personal, family or community perspective. Facilitating young voices in this way has the potential to change the narrative from being possibly interesting to empowering which is why we are thrilled to be partnering on this project."

The first project looks at political activism in Britain through the experiences of the Black Liberation Front. Founded in 1971, the BLF had a significant and often overlooked impact on the Black British political landscape. By establishing supplementary schools, community bookshops, affordable housing for black families and support for black prisoners, the movement focused on developing Pan-African consciousness, consolidating black political identity and challenging the impact of racism in Britain.

Ansel Wong, one of the editors of the BLF's Grassroots Newspaper, was approached by the YHP to take part in their project: "Capturing the history of our political struggle as evidenced in the Black Liberation Front is an important 'past' that young people of today need to know to help them build on that wisdom in shaping their future. We are not doing enough so it is particularly heartening to know that a group of young historians have taken up the challenge to capture the history of the Black

Liberation Front and engage in reflective learning that will benefit us all."

As part of the project, young volunteers will be creating a short documentary and curating an exhibition to be presented to secondary schools in London. Amelia Francis, one of the young volunteers, said: "The project has given me the opportunity to meet those whose lives are a part of the story we are trying to tell. "I have learnt so much, and it is great feeling to work with such talented, clever and likeminded young people!"

The response to YHP has been enthusiastic and they are hoping to launch similar projects in the future. Aleema Gray, one of the founder members, commented: "We are so pleased that we have received support from the National Lottery and the wider community. We have had such a positive response and we hope that through looking at the contributions of the BLF, and through future projects, more young people of African and Caribbean heritage will rediscover history and develop the skills to become the historians of the future. Each one, Teach one!"

Notes to Editors



### About Young Historians Project

We are a non-profit organisation formed by young people working with the History Matters initiative encouraging the development of young historians of African and Caribbean heritage in Britain. We're a team of young people aged 18-25 working on dynamic projects, documenting pivotal and often overlooked historical moments.

### About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #HLFsupported.

### Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact YHP at [younghistoriansproject@gmail.com](mailto:younghistoriansproject@gmail.com) or see <https://www.younghistoriansproject.org/>