

# MULTIPLE HERITAGE CONFERENCE

**BIRMINGHAM**

7 NOVEMBER 2006



## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE REPORT**

Sponsored by

**Birmingham Advisory and Support Service & Birmingham Youth Service**

## **Why a Conference for Multiple Heritage Young People is a Great Idea.**

My Father is Black Caribbean of Jamaican Heritage and my mother is White British. When I was younger I had an experience that went something like this....

My parents split up when I was quite young and I would visit my Dad at weekends and take holidays with him and his second family. During one holiday I was called names and got into a fight with some boys. After the fight my Dad asked what all the fuss was about. I told him the boys had called me a "nigger" and "blackie". He responded by saying: "...Well, you are not black, so what are you worrying about"? This statement left me feeling slightly confused but I soon pushed the incident to the back of mind.



A similar experience happened a few months later when I was at home with my mother. I got into another argument with some boys and they made similar racist remarks. I told my Mum and she said: "Tell them you're black and proud." This again left me feeling a little confused, yet able to recognise that my parents' 'monoheritage' perspective was very different to my own 'mixed heritage'. So, I looked to my teachers to demystify some of what troubled me, only to discover that mixed heritage young people were completely invisible in school, or stereotyped.

There may be many young people across the country who have had similar experiences to me. But actually, whether the story is the same or different, it doesn't really matter. The important thing is that the lived experience of multiple heritage young people is heard, listened to and understood. With an older and slightly wiser head on, I am now able to see 'my confusion' during those tender and vulnerable years as not being mine, but a condition that was imposed on me by others.

Birmingham is a culturally diverse city. According to 2001 Population Census about 33% of residents in the City classified themselves as being from one of the black and minority ethnic groups. About 3% of the BME population in Birmingham consider themselves to be 'Mixed' and statistically this mirrors the national profile. People of mixed and multiple heritage also constitute the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United Kingdom and bears the youngest age profile of any ethnic group.

Activity in Birmingham is beginning to reflect this change is the City's demography and work carried out by organisations such as 'The Inheritance Project' and 'Mixed Heritage Voices' are ostensibly raising the profile of mixed and multiple heritage issues. Indeed, without the generosity of the Advisory Support Service and the Youth Service in Birmingham City this crucial conference for young people of multiple heritage would not have taken place an opportunity to give young people credence would have been missed. Platforms like this conference for young people of multiple heritage are crucial for a number of reasons.

For example, young people of multiple heritage tend to be subsumed under a 'black identity' where their specific concerns are rarely raised. They are often forced to choose one racial identity at the exclusion of another. Multiple heritage young people tell me they no longer want to be ignored and whilst their cultural heritage is only a part of who they actually are, it is still significant. They see their 'mixedness' as a cause for celebration and they want schools and wider society to join them in this positive recognition.



I believe that this Young People's Multiple Heritage Conference in Birmingham has already begun to fashion this movement and I continue to meet many people across the country who encourage my efforts to make a difference. In any case, the energy and vibrancy with which the young people approach this subject motivates my work on the Project to the highest degree and it is to them that I am greatly indebted that the work of the Multiple Heritage Project continues to go from strength to strength.

*Bradley Lincoln, Project Manager*

## OUR CONFERENCE DAY

Over 40 young people of multiple heritage attended the conference day held at The Bond, Fazeley Street on 7 November 2006. It brought together young people aged between 12 – 16 years from five different secondary schools in Birmingham.

The aims of the conference were as follows: -

- To create a platform for the opinions of multiple heritage young people to be voiced and heard.
- To explore issues and agendas related to young people of multiple heritage.
- To make recommendations to schools, local authority services and government on multiple heritage issues.
- To bring together a group of multiple heritage young people in one space where they could share experiences (positive and negative) and ideas in a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere.



The conference was opened by Denise Williams (an Education Consultant specialising in black and mixed heritage achievement) who reminded everyone present that this was indeed a landmark event and a space for young people of multiple heritage to have their voices heard. The title of her brief address was: "You are making history, but you're still the future."

Project Manager, Bradley Lincoln then spoke about *'his journey'* as a person of multiple heritage, from a state of confusion as a youngster to eventually launching the Project. He aims to capture some of the optimism he now sees in today's multiple heritage youth as a means to encourage others who have had similar experiences to his own.

Yousiff Meah (Head of Birmingham City Youth Service) relayed his joy at an event like this taking place and shared with the young people how his own multiple heritage identity had influenced and shaped his thinking.

It was great fun testing people's knowledge of 'multiple heritage history' and attendees openly admitted that many of the answers were surprising to them. They were encouraged to research the information they had gleaned and not take anything for granted.

An 8-minute film, 'African Brummie', watched by the young people presented ways in which cultures can complement each other rather than clashing with different parts of peoples' identities and confusing individuals.

The main conference activities were themed consultation workshops where the young people explored one topic in the morning and another in the afternoon. These were:

- 1 Identity & Government Policy
- 2 Identity & Terminology
- 3 Identity & Stereotypes
- 4 Identity & School
- 5 Identity & Interracial Relationships

Each workshop was orchestrated by two adults – one Facilitator and one Scribe with experience in this area of work. Both Facilitators and Scribes were carefully briefed as to the importance of workshops being a 'young people-friendly' focus group, allowing time and space for the youth agenda to be paramount in each discussion. Scribes were careful to note recommendations and points for action as suggested by the young people. The workshops concluded with each focus group feeding back their points for action to the entire group of young people.



Nargis Rashid, Lead Adviser for the Birmingham Advisory and Support Service closed the conference in expressing her desire and commitment to see the young peoples' recommendations be taken forward into real action.

## **WHAT THE YOUNG PEOPLE HAD TO SAY ABOUT...**

### **IDENTITY**

Many different types of heritage were represented on the day of the conference. Some of the young people were amused, and sometimes annoyed, that society was fixated with their ethnic origins and that people often asked questions like,

*"Where are you really from?"*

It is fair to say that as a group the young people mostly expressed positive feelings about their identities and were not in the slightest confused.

They were pleased that improvements had been made to census forms in that they could now identify as 'mixed', but still did not consider forms to be ideal.

Things the young people liked about being 'mixed' was sometimes the feeling of 'uniqueness' that accompanied it. A few of them felt that not being 'standard' gave you more power. Some of the young people perceived this 'differentness' to be a disadvantage.

Having two or more cultures to draw on and celebrate was also cited as being a positive asset.

*"I like having two families, white and black, equal, two races together"*

*"It's like the best of both worlds."*

*"I identify with 'black' and 'white'.*

*"You're comfortable to switch between cultures."*

Some of the young people felt that being of multiple heritage was no big deal and expressed sentiments as such.

*"It's only a colour – I'm not bothered."*



## **GOVERNMENT**

It is fair to say that there was a wide range of political awareness amongst the young people and whilst they were all reminded of the great impact government has on our lives, the sentiment of many of them was summed up by one young person who said:

*"Politics is boring, boring, boring."*

The general consensus regarding government and mixed/multiple heritage issues were that 'mixed' people were conspicuous by their absence. So they had some hard-hitting questions for cabinet ministers like,

*"What does the government really think about the multiple heritage community?"*

and

*"What are you doing for mixed heritage people?"*

Questions that they wanted answers to at the highest level, were addressed directly to the PM. If Tony Blair were here I would say,

*"Why aren't there more mixed heritage people in the cabinet, or government?"*

Despite the fact the United Kingdom has been 'mixed' and 'mixing' for hundreds of years, multiple heritage youth appear to remain an absent voice in government policy. The young people were concerned about the general lack of facilities for young people across the country and cited setting up support groups for young people of multiple heritage and having a 'Mixed-race History Month' as just two ways to challenge a system where they felt neglected and ignored. Government failing to listen to and address issues raised by this group impacts the whole of society, not just young people of multiple heritage.

Many points about schools were raised in the government workshops as the young people were very quick to identify the chain of command that exists between government policy and what happens in education.

*"Government ministers should go and look in schools to see what is going on."*

However, some young people pointed out how quick schools can be to make things look good for (whoever school leaders considered to be) important people. It was suggested in one workshop that 'whistleblowers' or undercover

government officials go into schools as members of staff to see *what is really going on*. Whilst not all the suggestions for government were this highbrow, the young people were keen to see government influencing and directing schools in some real ways and felt quite strongly that the government needed to be held directly accountable for what happened in schools.

*"Change the way teachers talk to us."*

*"Give teachers more training on understanding the needs of mixed race students."*

*"Make lessons more interesting for schools."*

Young people visualised school improvement as both an internal and external process. They argued for an in-school advocate, who was 'independent' and on hand for them to discuss problems and issues with - much like high schools in the USA where there are student counsellors on staff. They also felt some kind of external body was appropriate to challenge teachers and pupils who behaved in a racist way.



Creating politically and emotionally aware young people is a huge feat for schools. Using school councils is one method. However, if student consultation is merely a tokenistic exercise that wields no real power, it is any wonder that youth are so readily turned off by politics? Students need to see school councils in action in a way that makes them believe real change is achievable, so they see the importance of voting at election times and recognise a political model that may truly make a difference to their every day lives. This is important for people of multiple heritage, not just because the United Kingdom is more 'mixed' and 'mixing' than it has ever been. But because the social injustices that young people of multiple heritage tend to face on a regular basis creates in them a heightened sense of fairness and equality. What a first-rate resource for authorities to tap into? Maybe the start of that discussion is about recognising people of multiple heritage as a political body with a 'voice.' Many of the young people stated on the day how good it felt to be with other young people who had had similar experiences to their own and to discuss issues *they* felt were important.



## TERMINOLOGY

The way in which perceptions inform language and language shapes perceptions easily justified an entire workshop on terminology for people of multiple heritage. When it came to terminology, the young people were able to list a multitude of negative and offensive terms used to describe people who are 'mixed'. It is fair to say, that they just rolled off the tongue. Language they felt was appropriate included 'mixed heritage', 'dual heritage', 'multiple heritage', the most comfortable and popular term being 'mixed race'. Some felt that the use of the word 'heritage' was too formal and unwieldy. However, vocabulary that clearly referred to them as not being whole (eg 'half-caste', 'half-breed', 'half-chat') was considered inappropriate and some of the young people spent time coming up with their own terms that related specifically to their own personal heritages. Their inspiration was the golfer, Tiger Woods, where he coined the phrase 'Cablinasian' to recognise and celebrate the fact he is a mixture of many different nationalities (ie African American, Chinese, Native American, Thai, and Caucasian.)

In all of the discussions around terminology, what was important for the young people was to have their heritages acknowledged positively and not ignored. Even the young people who stated that,

*"Being mixed race is no big deal,"*

maintained that whilst they did not think about it much of the time, they would not want their identity ignored.

Some of the white/black Caribbean young people referred to themselves as 'black' because that is how others saw them and because they tended to spend more time with the black side of their families. Others were far less content with this term as they saw this as rejecting their 'non-black' side. Deconstructing notions of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' proved a very interesting exercise with the young people, as some of them could only draw on stereotypes when they attempted to unpick 'acting black' and 'acting white'. Some of the young people clearly had a tension to be resolved in themselves around 'black' and 'white'. Many of them described 'whiteness' as being dull and uninteresting, whilst 'blackness' had currency and kudos. If this perception is held by so many – how do they make sense of being 'mixed' and living in extended white families, as some of them do, with little or no contact with black members of their family?



## STEREOTYPES

It was very encouraging to hear from young people who felt that they had little or no experience of racism in school. Some of the young people felt society made negative assumptions about them based on their appearance. They felt that some staff in school stereotyped them and assumed that they would misbehave in certain situations even when there was no evidence for this or prior knowledge of them. They felt certain students were favoured above others and that there was a clear link to ethnicity around this.

*"Black students are scapegoats."*

*"Teachers stereotype black and mixed race students."*

*"Teachers discriminate – they don't listen. You're moved or excluded. You should be treated equal."*

Some of the young people saw this stereotyping as having a direct affect on their behaviour.

*"Stereotypes make you ruder."*

The advice from their peers was unequivocal.

*"Don't act, how they want you to act."*

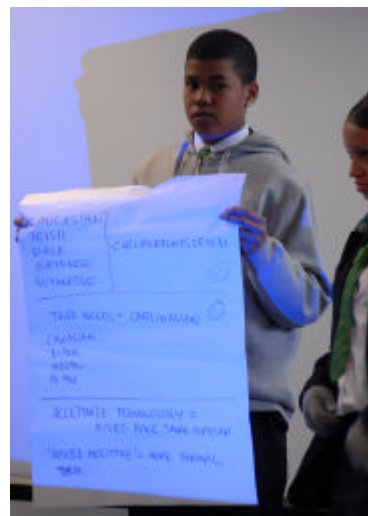
The way some of the young people had internalised stereotypes was particularly interesting.

*"Black people started liking us when we went up in the crime statistics."*

This speaks volumes in terms of what it means to this particular young person to have a 'black/mixed race' identity. Criminality and bad behaviour appeared to be a fairly popular stereotype that the young people of multiple heritage reflected on.

*"People associate badness with black people."*

These negative notions leave room for a massive discussion to unpick these ideas and explore whether there can ever exist a 'neutral space' for people of multiple heritage to have their own way



or style or method. With such diversity of 'mixedness', a 'mixed way', 'style' or 'method' seems neither achievable nor desirable. But does this mean then, that people of multiple heritage are to be forever accused or adopting a way that is 'too black' or 'too white'? It appears that as long as these cultural stereotypes are passed down from generation to generation they will. It would appear that schools have a huge job to do in challenging these negative stereotypes that are perpetuated. Some argue that it is not the place of schools to challenge prejudiced behaviours that are imported from home, yet schools regularly confront all kinds of behaviour from students that are deemed inappropriate by the institution.

The scale of the task faced by schools is illustrated by the following table created by young people in one of the workshops:

**Words to describe people of multiple heritage**

<b>Our Words</b>	<b>Other People's Words</b>
Positive Happy Intelligent Shy Bright	Bad Troublemakers Into crime Immature Scary

**SCHOOL**

The young people viewed school as important. All the young people had clear ambitions about where they wanted to be in 5 years time.

*"At university,"*

*"Working,"*

*"Making money,"*

Unfortunately, not all of them saw school as the means to realising those aspirations. Some of the young people enjoyed the social aspect of school because they met friends there, but found relationships with teachers a strain.

*"I dislike teachers."*

*"I enjoy school, but don't like teachers."*

*"I like doing well in my work, but I don't like being put down by teachers."*

Some of the young people felt that having more black/mixed race teachers would improve their prospects at school because these teachers were in a better position to understand their experiences. Conversely, some of the young people felt that good and understanding teachers came in all races and ethnicities.

The young people felt the following advice was useful for people wanting to get on in school:

*"Don't mess around."*

*"Be good, don't get involved in a bad crowd."*

*"Make good friends."*

*"Concentrate on work."*

Name-calling was an issue in school. Some of the young people felt that some schools dealt with the problem ineffectively.

*"People get away with being racist cos' they know nothing will happen."*

*"School doesn't help."*

As a result students were choosing to 'deal with it themselves'.

*"Some people get violent."*

*"I get angry and argue back – no matter who it is."*

Other 'strategies' were to swear, use humour or walk away.

Some of the young people recognised the power of language to upset and offend when it was not someone's intention to be deliberately racist. A few of the young people experienced more racism in primary school than secondary school and this is possibly because primary-aged children tend to use racially offensive language as a tool to upset without clearly understanding the connotations. That said, the young people stressed the importance of *all* schools having a clear race equality policy that was backed up with action.

*"They don't do anything about it."*



*"Teachers don't help."*

They also wanted a curriculum that reflected their experiences.

*"Schools should teach everyone about mixed race history, it's important for everyone to accept and understand."*

*"We need to learn more about mixed race history."*

*"Tell us more black history."*

Some of the young people felt a focus group in school for young people of mixed heritage would also be beneficial as the area they lived in meant they often felt socially excluded.

*"I experience lots of racism because I live in a white area – at school I'm more accepted."*

Others felt that multiple heritage forums like this should be accessible to all.

*"Schools should have meetings and talks for everyone, no matter what colour."*

And some preferred not to talk about how they felt.

*"I keep my feelings to myself."*

Being the target of racism from 'both sides' was also a feature of some young people's pain.

*"Black racism is more acceptable, they get away with it."*

*"It hurts more if black people say it."*

The idea that understanding heritage reduced racism was a theme that young people visited time and time again in each of the workshops. Many of them felt schools were best placed to equip students with the skills to challenge racism effectively.

## **INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS**



The young people perceived that interracial relationships were becoming a more common occurrence and felt that mixed couples nowadays were generally viewed as more acceptable than they had in their parents' day. They felt that relationships were probably more common between black men and white women than any other, but that any mixed relationships were acceptable.

Interestingly, there appeared to be a gender split on choice of partner. Whilst most of the boys felt that a potential partner for them could come from any race, the majority of the girls felt that their preference was for a black or mixed race partner.

The young people felt that interracial relationships were clear evidence that overt racism was on the decline, but they also felt that this varied greatly from area to area.

"I come from an area with lots of mixed relationships."

"I have a lot of white friends."

"I like to have a balance of friends – white and not white."

Most of the young people felt it was unfair for people of multiple heritage to feel pressured into choosing a partner from a particular race and that to have friends and a choice of partners from different backgrounds was an encouraging prospect for the future.

## **EVALUATIONS**

The young people stated that they enjoyed being treated like adults and appreciated being given 'a voice' that was taken seriously. They remarked that they found a day to reflect on what *they* considered important an invaluable opportunity. For some of them it was the first time they had had a space to discuss what it is like to be of mixed and multiple heritage with other individuals.

*"It feels good to be in a room with mixed race people."*

Many of the participants remarked how much they enjoyed making new friends and thought that a consultation exercise should be completed for other young people of multiple heritage across the country. It is the intention of the Multiple Heritage Project Team to repeat the conference in at least three other UK cities over the next two years. Some of the young people felt strongly that young people of monoheritage should be involved so they could learn more about 'a mixed race experience.' Some thought that a conference for individual schools was the order of the day so they could discuss issues and experiences peculiar to their own institutions.



## **CONCLUSIONS**

One of the facts that astounded some of the young people on the day was that according to official census data people of mixed and multiple heritage are the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the country. How prepared is society for this alteration in its demography? People with mixed ethnic identities have the youngest age profile of any ethnic group in Great Britain. 55% are under the age of 16 (ONS, 2006.) There is much urgent and crucial work to be done with schools if they are to feel adequately prepared for this trend.

The Advisory and Support Service and Youth Service have created even more of an opportunity for real dialogue between young people and key organisations in Birmingham City. Young people have also been offered the chance to be part of



a Youth Forum facilitated by the Inheritance Project. Everyone has a part to play in improving outcomes for young people of multiple heritage in Birmingham.

Schools cannot afford to waste opportunities where they can get to know young people better. Educational institutions must not dismiss critical areas of work simply because 'they do not understand'. The sentiments expressed by the young people in this report presents huge challenges for any school, *work with young people is meant to be challenging*. Children and teenagers of multiple heritage must also step up to the challenge and take responsibility for *their* learning.

What is apparent from these discussions with students is that young people are clear about what action they want. *Let's give them voice! Let's use this dialogue to improve our practice!*



## TIME TO REFLECT: TIME TO ACT

### MULTIPLE HERITAGE YOUNG PEOPLE

ALWAYS   MOSTLY   SOMETIMES   NEVER

I make an effort to find out about icons of multiple heritage and their 'journeys' to individual success.			
I try to find out about icons of multiple heritage who are famous for more than sports and entertainment.			
I take responsibility for my own learning.			
I can resist pressure from my peers to act like I don't care about schoolwork.			
I can confidently challenge authority where appropriate without losing my temper.			
I feel good about being a person of mixed race/multiple heritage.			
I am a good role model for other young people.			

### SCHOOLS

ALWAYS   MOSTLY   SOMETIMES   NEVER

We are aware of the issues affecting multiple heritage young people in wider society			
We are aware of the range of multiple heritage identities in our school.			
We deal confidently with students of multiple heritage by supporting them where necessary.			
We challenge multiple heritage students' inappropriate behaviour.			
We challenge students in a way that does not escalate into direct confrontation and/or exclusion.			
Multiple heritage students feel listened to and understood in our school.			
We feel confident in identifying racist incidents.			
Racist incidents are effectively dealt with.			
We discuss issues of race and identity when we analyse achievement data.			
We survey our students to monitor levels of satisfaction by ethnicity.			
We undergo training in issues specifically related to black & multiple heritage achievement.			
Our Race Equality Policy is applied with			

consistency.			
We use language and terminology to refer to ethnic groups that is appropriate.			
Multiple heritage students are set by ability and not behaviour.			
Our curriculum positively reflects the lives and aspirations of multiple heritage students.			
We issue sanctions fairly and consistently.			
Students of multiple heritage are proportionately represented in school rewards.			
Images used in school reflect the diversity of wider society.			
Our School Council reflects the ethnic make-up of wider society. Students of multiple heritage are attaining levels on par with the national average (for all groups).			
(Recorded) exclusion rates for multiple heritage students are proportionate.			
Exclusion rates for multiple heritage students are monitored by 'reason'.			
Multiple heritage students' exclusion rates (where they remain on the premises) are proportionate.			
We are keen to seek the opinion of parents/carers of multiple heritage students on issues relating to students' school careers.			
We put strategies in place for parents of multiple heritage young people to articulate their fears and expectations.			

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>MOSTLY</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
We ensure training is offered to schools on multiple heritage issues.				
The EMAG Service supports and challenges schools on multiple heritage issues (see 'SCHOOLS').				
Other School Improvement Professionals support and challenge schools on multiple heritage issues apart from EMAG staff.				
School Improvement Professionals are aware of local levels of achievement/rates of exclusion for multiple heritage students as set against national ones				

**If you would like help with any of the above areas please contact the Multiple Heritage Project.**

# Birmingham Multiple Heritage Conference

## Programme for the Day

- 9.30 – 10.00** Registration: Collect packs and browse stalls
- 10.00 – 10.10** You *are* making history, but you're still 'the future'  
(Denise)
- 10.10 – 10.20** How did we get here?  
(Bradley)
- 10.20 – 10.30** Head of Birmingham Youth Service  
(Yousiff Meah)
- 10.30 – 11.00** Are you clued up?  
(Bradley & Denise)
- Mixed Voices:  
'Good News, Bad News' (Students)
- "African Brummie" DVD

<b>11.00 – 11.15</b>	<b>Break</b>
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**11.15 – 12.00** **Workshop/Focus Group (am)**

### **THEMES:**

- 1 Identity & Government Policy*
- 2 Identity & Terminology*
- 3 Identity & Stereotypes*
- 4 Identity & School*
- 5 Identity & Interracial Relationships*

<b>12.00 – 1.15</b>	<b>Lunch &amp; Photographs</b>
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**1.15 – 2.00**      **Workshop/Focus Group (pm)**

**THEMES:**

- 1 Identity & Government Policy*
- 2 Identity & Terminology*
- 3 Identity & Stereotypes*
- 4 Identity & School*
- 5 Identity & Interracial Relationships*

**2.00 – 2.30**      Workshop/Focus Group Feedback (am & pm)  
Points for action:  
“What we would like to see happen is.....”

**2.30 – 2.45**      Plenary  
(*Nargis Rashid* and *Maurice Coles*)  
Complete evaluations and 'Wish List'

Close

*Thank you for making this day possible.  
The Multiple Heritage Project Team*

# The Multiple Heritage Project Team

**Bradley Lincoln**

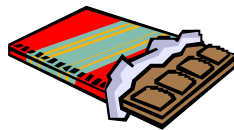
**Denise Williams**

**Maurice Coles**

**Bradley Lincoln** is manager of the Multiple Heritage Project (Manchester) which he set up last year. He has worked in education for the last ten years as a mentor and the National Co-ordinator of the Supplementary Schools Support Service (S4). Bradley brings to the Project a vast amount of academic and personal learning around Multiple Heritage issues. He is currently working with students, teachers and parents to raise the profile of this area of work. Bradley loves his job, reggae music and brown shoes.



**Denise Williams** is an Advisory Teacher for Black Achievement in Leicester City. Her role means she supports schools and colleges to raise levels of achievement for Black Caribbean and Mixed Heritage children and young people. She previously worked in Nottingham City as an Education Consultant for Black and Mixed Heritage Achievement and has taught in special and mainstream schools in the Midlands. Her independent consultancy trains educational agencies to support young people of Black Caribbean and Mixed Heritage across the country. Denise loves dark chocolate, Thierry Henry and bossing Bradley around.



**Maurice Coles** is Chief Executive of the School Development and Support Agency (SDSA). Maurice, a Brixton bwoy, has spent his educational life in confronting issues related to inequalities. He has 2 wonderful daughters of mixed heritage (white/Indian), is a convert to Islam and spends most of his time stopping the bickering between Massa Bradley and Miss Denise.



The Multiple Heritage Project Team wish to express sincere thanks to the schools that allowed students to attend.

They were:

Swanshurst Girls School  
Harbourne Hill High School  
Selly Park Tech College for Girls  
Kings Norton High School  
Great Barr High School

Many thanks to staff who accompanied students on the day.

**good news, bad news:  
an essay on being Dual/Multiple Heritage**

let's start with some good news  
the good news is  
we're in a position to get the best of both worlds  
the bad news is  
we're constantly told to choose

the good news is  
we have more options available to us apart from 'other' on official census forms  
the bad news is  
we're still expected to define ourselves with terms created by people who aren't like us

the good news is  
we begin our school careers outstripping every other ethnic group  
the bad news is  
we're the least likely to leave school with a good clutch of GCSEs

the good news is  
we no longer have to refer to ourselves as just 'black'  
the bad news is  
we still suffer racial abuse from every side (and sometimes our own families)

the good news is  
we're surrounded by Dual and Multiple Heritage icons  
the bad news is  
we can't be bothered to find out about *their* journeys in order to inform our own

the good news is  
Dual and Multiple Heritage people have fought for equality and against social injustice throughout history  
the bad news is  
we hear little, if anything, about them in our school curriculum

the good news is  
we can be anything we want to be  
the bad news is  
we're twice or three times as likely to be excluded from school as other students

the good news is  
against all the odds we achieve great feats in school  
the bad news is  
teachers' perceptions are often limiting and misinformed

the good news is  
we have families who love us just as we are  
the bad news is  
they may not always understand what we're going through

the good news is  
we have the opportunity to create our own identity  
the bad news is  
people all too often want to negate our identity

the good news is  
we are an intelligent, beautiful, talented people  
the bad news is  
we are far too prepared to live down to the stereotype and demonstrate the complete opposite of all those traits

the good news is  
we're sometimes the sole person of colour in our families  
the bad news is  
we're sometimes the sole person of colour in our families

we started with some good news  
so let's *end* with some good news  
Dual and Multiple Heritage people are the fastest growing ethnic minority group in Britain and we're here to stay.....

by Denise Williams & Bradley Lincoln





# Addressing the needs of a future generation

**The Multiple Heritage Project is  
a Social Enterprise who offer:**

**Advice and Guidance** to agencies  
working with children and families  
of **Mixed Race** backgrounds

Support for **Schools** and  
Organisations

A **Modern** Approach  
to understanding **Mixed Race** Issues

For more information contact:  
**Bradley Lincoln:**

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**Report prepared by Bradley Lincoln & Denise Williams  
November 2006**