

ECONOMIC (IN)JUSTICE

FACTSHEET - STORY

Name	Khady Gueye
Details, area of experience	Organised local Black Lives Matter event; set up the Local Equality Commission
Interview date	December 2020
Issues addressed	Racism, economic inequality, online abuse
Injustice category (linked to economic injustice)	ability <input type="checkbox"/> age <input type="checkbox"/> class <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> faith <input type="checkbox"/> gender <input type="checkbox"/> neuro-diversity <input type="checkbox"/> race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sexuality <input type="checkbox"/>
Dates mentioned	Summer 2020
Locations referenced	Forest of Dean, Lydney
Campaigns, movements, protests	Black Lives Matter
Historical context	Murder of George Floyd in the USA, Black Lives Matter Movement 2020
Tactics	Demonstration, publicity, media coverage, lobbying council, enlisting support from police and councillors, setting up organisation and securing funding, working with other organisations.
Key words	Black heritage Solidarity Identity Ingrained racism Backlash

	Social media abuse Economic empowerment History
Key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The experience of being mixed race and distanced from black heritage growing up; being in a minority: feeling of wanting to fit in. Overlooking racism, allowing it to happen: wanting to be accepted. ● How to make BLM relevant to areas where there aren't as many black people. ● The strength of the backlash and how ingrained racism is. Threats, being followed home, abuse on the street and on social media; racial hatred. ● Attention from the press/media. ● Support from the police who pointed out a loophole in the legislation to the council; police being aware of racism within the force. ● Getting support from others to start an initiative; working with existing structures, outreach programmes ● Economic empowerment is the cornerstone to tackling racial injustice; without economic justice there is no racial justice. A decade of austerity has only served to deepen social divides. ● Racism is taught, not born with. Mindset of equality and diversity. Understanding history, equality and teaching skills to interact with each other. ● This event has provided her with a platform. ● Some days it gets too much, can't cope. Look at the bigger picture for social change and justice.

Story summary	<p>Khady Gueye tells the story of organising a Black Lives Matter demonstration in 2020. She received a fierce backlash and racist abuse as well as tremendous support including from the local police. Khady recognised the need for a long term approach to counter racial and economic injustice which are so connected. She set up the Local Equality Commission, working with partners to tackle racial, political and economic injustice collaboratively.</p> <hr/> <p>Growing up as a mixed race child in an area of rural England only 0.3% Black, Khady felt distanced from her Black heritage but was always aware of racial prejudice. Wanting to fit in, she feels she overlooked racism. After the murder of George Floyd she felt compelled to respond in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and decided to organise a demonstration. She approached councils asking for space and Lydney town council offered Bathurst Park. When she started publicising the event,</p>
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	<p>opposition led to a petition by local residents and the council cancelling the meeting ‘in support of All Lives Matter.’ She says she underestimated how severe the backlash would be – threats, followed home, daily abuse. The local MP spoke in the House of Commons against allowing the event and his tweets generated racist comments. Following national press and media attention, the council called a meeting. The police – who were progressive, supportive of the demonstration and recognised there were issues within their force – pointed out to the council that they could face legal problems if the event was banned. The council voted 8 to 2 to allow the event and it went ahead.</p> <p>Khady recognised the need for a long term approach, addressing ingrained racism while maintaining good relations in the community. She decided to set up an organisation with help from others: the Local Equality Commission. Working with local organisations (charities, schools etc) to educate and tackle racial, political and economic injustice in a more formal, structured, collaborative way. “The people we are working with are passionate that there is some change and we become more progressive and move forward in the Forest of Dean.”</p>
Stand-out quotations	<p>“What am I going to do to play my part in those places where the conversation and dialogue isn’t happening?”</p> <p>“I’m fighting something I don’t believe I should have to be fighting for.”</p> <p>“I owe the police our event.”</p> <p>“Economic empowerment is the cornerstone in tackling racial injustice and for systemic equality and social change.”</p> <p>“Racism is taught, not something we are born with. In primary schools that is evident, children have an understanding of equality. We can unteach racism. We need to provide children with a mindset of equality and diversity.”</p> <p>“If somebody had said to me six months ago that I would be in the position I am in now, I just wouldn’t have believed it.”</p> <p>“I’ve struggled with whether or not I can do this and cope with it, and some days it gets too much, but actually, looking at the bigger picture and thinking about my motivations and my daughter and the reasons why we’re doing this for social change and for justice, I’m so honoured that I have been given the platform to do that. It’s something that I never thought I would have. I hope that I can do it some justice.”</p>

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Main themes for learners	<p>How economic and racial inequalities are interlinked.</p> <p>The experiences of people of colour and the need to open up discussion of race and identity in predominantly white working-class communities.</p> <p>How education and history can transform children’s attitudes and effect long-term change. “Racism is taught – we are not born with it.”</p> <p>The importance of solidarity. Building partnerships and alliances (e.g. with the police in this case). Using the media.</p> <p>Dealing with racist abuse and backlash.</p>

<https://www.economicinjustice.org.uk>