

ECONOMIC (IN)JUSTICE

FACTSHEET - STORY

Name	Mya-Rose Craig
Details, area of experience	Founder of Black2Nature. Ornithologist; school student climate activist; Hon. Doctorate in Science aged 18; Bristol 2015 ambassador; 2020 Women's Hour Power List.
Interview date	December 2020
Issues addressed	Lack of diversity in environmental movement; lack of access to nature in many VME (visible minority ethnic) communities; mental health issues in VME communities.
Injustice category (linked to economic injustice)	ability <input type="checkbox"/> age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> class <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> faith <input type="checkbox"/> gender <input type="checkbox"/> neuro-diversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sexuality <input type="checkbox"/>
Dates mentioned	2015, 2016
Locations referenced	Bristol
Campaigns, movements, protests	Black2Nature; Race Equality and Nature
Historical context	Long history of disconnection between young urban VME and nature.
Tactics	Camping trips; discussion groups; letter writing; organising conferences.
Key words	VME (visible minority ethnic) communities Mental health

	<p>Accessibility Connection to the outdoors Nature camps Uncomfortable conversations Barriers Global climate justice</p>
Key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health linked to access to nature. • The love for nature needs to be nurtured – changed attitudes in young people. • Equality and diversity - links between nature, poverty, and inequality. • White middle-class liberal sector - uncomfortable conversations. • Conference on Race, Equality and Nature - what the barriers are, why communities are not engaging, how to solve it. • Potential of Black Lives Matter Movement. • Being treated as an adult as a 13-year-old which enabled her activism - inspired by activism within her own family (aunties being race activists). • Bullying on social media. • The exclusion of indigenous communities from the climate change movement. • Global South suffering mainly due to a crisis created by Western richer countries who have a moral responsibility to help other countries (British Empire legacy). • Go out and do something (activism). You are still helping.

Story summary	<p>Mya-Rose Craig tells the story of how she set up Black2Nature to help give young people in visible minority ethnic communities access to nature and tackle the lack of diversity in green spaces. She also talks about the climate emergency and the need for more urgent action.</p> <hr/> <p>Black2Nature has been running five years to 2020. It was started by Mya-Rose when she was 13 and grew from love of nature and an awareness of a lack of diversity in the countryside and green spaces. Growing up in the countryside and being half Bangladeshi, Mya was aware of mental health issues in VME communities and lack of access to nature or connection with the environmental movement. So, she set up nature camps for young people from urban Bristol to offer a range of activities, some creative (e.g. photography) and some scientific (e.g. bird ringing). For the first camp in 2015, tents were borrowed from friends and family and had a very grassroots and organic feel. The camps are now well equipped with camping equipment and the use of a minibus. The</p>
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	<p>demand for spaces at Black2Nature means that now the camps are oversubscribed.</p> <p>Mya-Rose is also a climate change activist. At aged 13 she wrote to nature organisations about their diversity and discovered a serious lack of diversity in this very white middle class liberal sector. As a result of this finding she organised a conference in 2016 around Race, Equality and Nature that instructed organisations on how to solve their diversity problem and to challenging them to take the issue seriously.</p>
Stand-out quotations	<p>“Our youth think of themselves as urban people: we need to step back and think about our roots and where we really come from ... making them aware of their own health, mental and physical, and how it’s dependant on the world around them.”</p> <p>“If people haven’t experienced nature and the environment, they have no reason to try and save it.”</p> <p>“Having those conversations where they have never even thought to talk about things like that before, is so important for a lot of these kids.”</p> <p>“The most annoying thing was people telling me they were the ones who knew, they were the experts. Being told they were failing to engage with communities was very uncomfortable. They didn’t like having those conversations about race and to admit they needed to do something about it.”</p> <p>“If I’d known how difficult it was going to be, I might have questioned committing myself ... [but] ... there are people that care and next time when we need people, hopefully they will be on standby alongside us.”</p> <p>“I absolutely think that the key thing is to go out and do something.”</p>
Main themes for learners	<p>Access to nature is important for health.</p> <p>Links between nature, poverty, and ethnic and health inequalities.</p> <p>How a 13-year-old was able to start something that makes real change in young people’s lives and in organisations.</p> <p>Identifying a problem and addressing it with a practical, grassroots solution. Bringing people together, conversations.</p> <p>Moral responsibility for richer countries that created the climate crisis to help other poorer countries. Legacy of empire.</p>