

Black Lives Matter.

The past week has seen the world stand up against racism and oppression of black communities, and has highlighted that so much more needs to be done to bring about real and meaningful change. The murder of George Floyd in the US (including many others before him) and the mass anti-racists protests in the UK remind us that the racial inequalities are prevalent on both sides of the Atlantic. Here in the UK, the recent Windrush scandal; the social inequalities highlighted by the Grenfell Tower tragedy; and the slow progression towards change since the Macpherson Report (20 years on) all raise questions about whether lives are valued equally.

These recent weeks and months have been marked by pain, fear and anger not just by the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the lives of our loved ones and our communities, but also by the ongoing global systemic and institutional racism that still exists. Unlike, COVID-19 which has impacted the lives of billions of people in the past few months, systemic racism is an evil that has been prevalent for centuries. Just as solidarity is critical to tackling COVID-19, solidarity is key to dismantling structural and deep-rooted racial inequalities. Racism is manifested in multiple ways, whether it is a violent physical attack, exclusion from partaking or micro-aggressions in the workplace. However racism is delivered, it is ugly. Systemic racism and COVID-19 are pandemics that we need to eliminate. It is not enough to simply commit our voices, thoughts and words to ending racism; we must show our work.

Develop LSE for Everyone.

In 2018 we saw the LSE community come together to shape a strategy that would seek to “develop LSE for everyone”. At the heart of LSE 2030 is the desire to create a leading social science institution, with the greatest global impact. For us to truly achieve this we must ensure racial diversity and inclusion is understood and championed by all members of the LSE community. We all need to be actively pushing for justice and fair treatment.

[LSE EmbRace](#) will be working with the School on practical and strategic solutions to address racial inequalities and to ensure Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff and students feel safe and included at LSE:

- Through our representation on the EDI Advisory Board, we will champion the voices of under-represented BAME colleagues and ensure they are heard and considered. We will reinforce the importance of prioritising diversity among senior academic ranks and professional services staff. We will work closely with [LSE Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#) to ensure the [Race Equality Charter Mark](#) is submitted by 2023.
- We are delighted to have Andrew Young (LSE COO) as our [Senior Management Committee \(SMC\)](#) sponsor. As our sponsor, Andrew will ensure that matters concerning race equality are prioritised across the School. We will be holding monthly meetings with Andrew (via the EmbRace Chair) to examine how we can bring about positive change for staff at LSE.
- We will work with Staff Networks, LSE SU and other higher education institutions to raise awareness and influence change on racial diversity issues.

What you can do today.

1. Sign up to the LSE EmbRace [mailing list](#) and stay up to date with our events and initiatives. Our newsletter this month comes out on Wednesday 24 June 2020 and will be themed on Black Lives Matter.

2. Read up on news and research on race equality through think tanks like [Runnymede](#). Build up your collection of [informative books on race](#) such as [Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race](#) by Reni Eddo-Lodge and [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) by Robin DiAngelo. Use [LSE Library Search](#) to find more titles as some can be read online.

3. Speak up on your experiences as a Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and student at LSE. LSE EmbRace will be organising a discussion led by LSE's [Dr Miqdad Asaria](#) to uncover the key findings on COVID-19 within the BAME community and discuss how we can and must demand better. We encourage all BAME staff and students to attend the [COVID-19 and Race event](#).

4. Stand up against systemic racism. Standing up and speaking out has to involve all voices, so we encourage our White allies to stand with us through words and action. Use our [Report it. Stop it](#) tool to call out any form of harassment and bullying. Take the time to listen and to understand the lived experiences of black colleagues in the School. We will be organising a series of events with LSE staff and students who would like to be better allies and to effect change. We will help provide examples of positive actions that you can take to combat racism in its explicit or subtle form. Sign up to our newsletter as more information will be circulated soon.

5. Write up your experiences during the current COVID-19 crisis and share your thoughts on the School's return to work plan by completing this [short survey](#). Your responses will be incorporated into our efforts to support the BAME community at LSE with the return to work plan. We encourage all staff, from all backgrounds to complete this survey.

Please look after yourselves and prioritise your wellbeing. Make use of LSE's [Counselling Service](#) and [Faith Centre](#); and access guidance from our [Employee Assistance Programme](#), a free and independent service that covers all aspects of wellbeing. Speak to [Safe Contacts](#) available to talk to you about any form of bullying and harassment.

No justice. No peace.

This is a moment of critical interrogation, of reform, of recognition that the restrained approaches to diversity and inclusion, that have been happening over the past decades, are not even remotely enough. Thank you to everyone in the LSE community who is proactively breaking the silence and pushing for real justice, diversity and inclusion.

We want to hear from our members to help us develop more resources and approaches to addressing racism at LSE. Contact us at embrace@lse.ac.uk.

Maryane Mwaniki
LSE EmbRace Chair