

TACKLING RACIAL INEQUALITY WITHIN ECOLOGY

Our vision is a world in which nature and people thrive. One of the ways we will achieve this vision is by fostering a strong and diverse ecological community. Inclusivity is a value that lies at the heart of everything that we do.

In the UK, systemic racism disproportionately affects people of colour and their welcome into and retention within all sciences, but especially ecological science career pathways.

Following the Black Lives Matter movement, we produced a statement and received feedback from the membership, both UK-based and internationally. This feedback is shaping how we will move forward in the coming months. Four main themes were identified; none were surprises, and all were things that we have already made a start on addressing:

- How do we ensure that ecological course routes are attractive and relevant to Black British, and British South Asian 17–18-year-olds?
- How do we better retain ecologists of colour within ecological research in the UK?
- How do we better represent the diversity of the ecologists of today and tomorrow within our staff, governance and Special Interest Groups?
- How do we better support ecologists living and working in African countries and other low-income countries where the opportunities to interact with the international community are limited by the associated costs?

There is always more that we can and must do. Since 2016 we have been seeking to implement activities that address the lack ethnic diversity in different areas of the Society:

- Our annual meeting planning committee has made a point to actively invite a more diverse group of plenary speakers from across the international

research community. Talking about the lack of ethnic diversity in the ecological community is uncomfortable and so we (the E&D working group) created the challenging conversations workshop series for the annual meeting. It was a hugely successful event and will be continued.

- Our publications team have worked hard to increase the diversity and the international representation of our editorial boards. *The Niche* continues to highlight the diversity of our membership.
- Our 16–18 Summer School works directly with students who identify as BAME (primarily Black British, British Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian but is open to any student identifying as BAME, low income or first in family).
- Our 2020 work plan for our equality and diversity work has been to look at the progress we have made in the last five years and to explore what more we need to do.

2020 AND BEYOND

We are currently exploring how we better support the international research community and we are committed to listening to all our members. A number of events and opportunities will be taking place throughout the remainder of this year, please do get in touch!

THE BAME UK ECOLOGISTS NETWORK

The BAME UK Ecologists network is about to be launched and has been founded to specifically support Black British, British Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian ecologists along with those people from other communities affected by systemic racism.

It is a group that will provide peer support, advice and mentoring to BES members and non-members. The group will also highlight instances of, and work towards, reducing systemic racism within the UK.

Language matters. We acknowledge that BAME is a shorthand term which excludes some people and does not address the variety of inequalities and racism faced by individuals and communities. Wherever we can, we commit to using language that is specific to an individual or a community and we will continuously reflect on and seek feedback on the language we are using, accepting that no one word or phrase truly encompasses the diversity of individuals directly impacted by racism.

This group welcomes everyone who identifies as Black British, British Pakistani, British Bangladeshi, British Indian and others who self-identify as a BAME ecologist or scientist. We also welcome any international ecologists studying and working in the UK who feel their career progression is being negatively impacted by systemic racism.

There are very few BAME students across the UK studying ecological and related sciences and many are the only individual on their course. There are fewer still who are post graduate, employed in higher education or in the wider environment sector. This network is a chance for BAME ecologists to come together, to build personal and professional networks, to support each other in tackling the systemic racism we face each day. ✨



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED IN THE NETWORK

Please contact karen@britishecologicalsociety.org to be put in touch with the group and to declare an interest in becoming actively involved.

Join the Leadership Team: Reuben Fakoya-Brooks is working with us to develop this network and is an early career ecologist having recently graduated from the University of Nottingham. We are seeking other members who have some time to spare and would like to get involved in shaping the direction of the network.