

More than half of ethnic minority young adults in the UK experience racial prejudice, new national survey reveals

By Ebum Bamigboye

A major new national survey has found that 58% of 18- to 24-year-olds from ethnic minority backgrounds have experienced racial prejudice in the past two years, compared with 18% of ethnic minority people aged over 65.

More than 5,000 adults across the UK responded to the survey commissioned by British Future and conducted by Number Cruncher Politics, and the findings were then explored further in 12 in-depth regional focus groups, providing deeper insight into how different generations and ethnic groups across the UK view race equality issues and experiences.

The full findings from the first phase of British Future's three-year RDUK research study are published in their State of the Nation report on what the population thinks about race equality in the UK today. This research illuminates the priorities and perspectives of ethnic minorities and how they align with the wider public's views. The huge generational divergence in experiences of racial prejudice is one of the report's many findings, and the one we chose to explore with Dr Barbara Adewumi, lead senior researcher on the British Future study.

Barbara explained that social media offers a key explanation as to why younger people are more likely to report experiencing racial prejudice. Not only are they more engaged with social media than older generations, and therefore more likely to encounter the racism in social media's anonymised spaces, but for today's young people social media also operates as an educator and a way of sharing lived experience. This helps younger people to be more astute at recognising and calling out behaviours such as racist microaggressions, misogyny, and implicit forms of discrimination.

Sharing examples from the focus group research, Barbara relayed the experience of a young Black student who described being hyper-visible but also invisible at his institution. He and the only other Black male student in his school were intentionally separated by staff from the moment they joined because it was assumed that they would always stick together. This was an action he felt was motivated by racist stereotyping of young Black men as aggressive. Many other experiences of prejudice and stereotyping were reported by the younger focus group participants.

In the next phase of the study, British Future will be focusing on young people's experiences and priorities for racial justice. Barbara and the research team will conduct qualitative focus groups with young people aged 14 to 18 and carry out a nationwide young adults' survey. To ensure young voices actively shape the project, the team will establish a regional Youth Advisory Board to advise the development of a Young People's Manifesto.

For more information about this project visit: <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/voices-for-equity-moving-from-evidence-to-action>

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