

#BuildingBridges

Celebrating diversity and promoting partnership and community cohesion



Campaign Book

The Changing the Culture Initiative



Challenging anti-immigration rhetoric

On Thursday 23 June 2016, the EU referendum took place and the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. A sharp increase in hate speech and reported and recorded hate crimes immediately followed¹.

The UK's most divisive, hostile, negative and fear-provoking campaign of the 21st century

A study from King's College London² analysed almost 15,000 articles published online during the Brexit campaign and found immigration to be the most prominent issue in the 10 weeks running up to the vote, with the issue leading on the front pages of national newspapers almost 100 times.

Rather than sighting the vibrant and rich array of cultures, tastes, colours and sounds, people from all over the world bring to the UK, or the ways in which our economy is indebted to the sustained contribution of migrants throughout the country's workforce³, the researchers found a commonality in the media outlets' framing of migrants as "job stealers or benefit tourists", and in the same breathe to assign them to "rape, murder or violence".



Hate Crime and Discrimination

With the rise of hate crime following Brexit, it's good to know there is someone to talk to.

The Brexit campaign is “the UK’s most divisive, hostile, negative and fear-provoking [campaign] of the 21st century”, according to the researchers, and although it is impossible to prove a direct link between hate speech and the reported and recorded increase in hate crimes following the referendum, ‘explicitly blaming migrants for economic and social problems [...] is almost certain to stoke resentment.’

It’s really important therefore that, in this new-wave era of fake news⁴ and Fox news dominance⁵, that we all try to unpack and understand the reality that sits behind anti-immigration rhetoric.

So, just for the record...study after study has found no evidence of significant undercutting of wages⁶. Analysis published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that the people who come to live in the UK from other countries are much less likely to be on benefits or in social housing than their UK-born counterparts⁷.

And, rather than take jobs, they create them. For example, immigrants pay billions more in taxes to Britain than they take out in public spending and far from squeezing hospitals and schools, they subsidise and even staff them⁸.



Our diversity is our strength

This strength rests on our mutual respect and understanding for one another and our commitment to building open and non-hierarchical spaces that encourage different cultures, with their different languages, to come together and learn from one another.

The language and cultural heritage of all members of our community matters, not least because of the value each different language and culture brings to our community and in turn strengthens the University.



Language Barrier

Callum Rayment, Aaron Bootland

In a post-Brexit-vote Britain, xenophobic attacks are on the rise, targeting those who express themselves in languages other than English.

Hate speech

Hate speech is any form of communication or expression which advocates, promotes, or incites hatred, discrimination or violence, against any individual or group, because of their personal characteristics.

It can happen publicly (for example at an event, on public social media posts and websites) or privately (for example through social media, in a letter, or something said in person).

Those who deliver hate speech often hide behind the idea that all they are doing is expressing an opinion or a belief. However, freedom of expression does not cover language and actions that incite violence, hatred or discrimination. Everyone has the right to be protected from discrimination and violence and everyone at Middlesex has a duty to respect other people's rights.

Write a hate speech that affected you

Patryk Orzel, Loren Floyd

A student invites others to share the hate speech they have experienced in a very powerful and shocking way, before reflecting on these shocking encounters.



Curry Breath

Tuhin Ahmed, Sam Mostajo

A poetic personal account of growing up in a migrant family in the UK.



Black History Month

Just as relevant and important today

Black History Month serves to remind us all of the significant and considerable contribution that countless black people have made to the UK over hundreds of years¹.

By making black history accessible and meaningful, Black History Month battles an historical amnesia which all too often renders the stories of black people invisible² – stories of individual success and achievement, stories of resilience and struggle, stories of the lives of ordinary people, such as those who laboured in the textile mills in the north of England³ or those who participated in the Bristol bus boycott⁴.

Black History Month helps us all understand what it means to be British by reminding us that black people are very much entwined in the fabric of British history and society. Retelling stories of black struggle and success helps to inspire and instil pride of community among black people but it also reminds us all of the many ways the black community has shaped and informed aspects of identity that have touched every single one of us.



Between the Lines

Zac Gbadebo, Samuel Piper

The father of one of our students shares his experience of the complexities of living with racism.





In essence, Black History Month is both an examination of a people's journey but also a nation's story⁹.

In an ideal world, we wouldn't need to have Black History Month. All education would look at history from a worldview with lots of different narratives presented - celebrating black history would just be part of that worldview. Unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world. The reality is there needs to be space to challenge the imagery and stereotypes in popular culture and the media which all too often depict black people in a negative light¹⁰.

Racial discrimination and prejudice is not something which is confined to the realms of history - it is a lived reality for many black and minority ethnic people¹¹. Black History Month provides a space to confront this prejudice and work together in the struggle for racial equality¹².

Holocaust Memorial Day

Lessons from the past, paving the way for a safer future

Each year, Holocaust Memorial Day¹ brings together a range of people from the diverse strands of our community and neighbourhoods to learn from the past and to pave the way for a safer future for all. It's a day of defiance, a message to say hate will not win. One such act of defiance followed an act of hate crime in 2013 towards the Barnet Somali Bravanese community. When their centre was burnt down, the local Jewish community responded by inviting their neighbours to pray at the local synagogue.

For Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 the local community partners of Barnet came together once again in another act of defiance, this time in solidarity with all those affected by the shooting in a synagogue in Pittsburgh only several months earlier which had cost the lives of 11 people. In planting a memorial garden, the community remembered the 1.5 million children who died in the Holocaust and everyone who has lost their lives as a result of religious persecution².

BRAUSEBAD





Holocaust Memorial Bulb Planting

Nikoleta Slezakova, Cloe Peker, Sara Veiga, Dariush Asadi,
Randy Mankoto, Patrycja Lisowska, Bruna Ventura

People of all faiths and none come together for a community bulb planting to mark the lives of children lost in the Holocaust.



Middlesex is a home for...

Eoin, Olly

This film asks "What is MDX a home for?" We hear directly from our students how they perceive the Middlesex community.



are you
changing
the
culture?



Changing the Culture Initiative

Tackling sexual violence, harassment and hate crime

Be an agent of change

Are you tackling sexual violence, harassment or hate crime?

Are you promoting tolerance, empathy and understanding?

Let's change it together
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