

## LEARNING FROM THE PANDEMIC

### How Race and the COVID-19 Pandemic affected Young People

#### The Co-POWeR project (Consortium on Practices of Wellbeing and Resilience in Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Families and Communities):

- Spoke to 66 children and young people (aged 12-19) from Black, Asian and dual heritage backgrounds
- They talked about the combined experience of racial discrimination and the COVID-19 pandemic
- How it affected their everyday lives
- How they coped and received support
- And what changes would improve their lives
- The 2 key messages were around **Support** and **Trust and Safety**



Where did young people find support?

## Family and Siblings

Being together helped young people manage the difficult periods during the pandemic and lockdowns.

## Friends and Peers

Communicating allowed young people to cope with the isolation, stress and boredom during the pandemic.

## Schools

Some felt they had adequate support, but many described feeling unsupported and struggled with online learning and completing homework.

## Community and Support Networks

Youth clubs/community groups were seen as important safe spaces. Churches, mosques, temples and community centers provided food and necessities that supported their families' cultural and everyday needs. Many voluntary, community and religious groups provided culturally- relevant services and support for many ethnic minority communities struggling during the pandemic.



## What were the TRUST and SAFETY issues affecting Young People?

- Talk of **Black Lives Matter** during the lockdown on social media led to discussions about race, identity and racism. It increased awareness of everyday microaggressions within schools, friendship groups and wider society.
- There was a **mistrust in public services** - including the police and children's services. Schools were also not necessarily experienced as safe and supportive spaces. All were seen as prone to stereotyping and bias.
- During the pandemic young people sometimes **felt unsafe** when out on the streets due to **inconsistent and targeted policing** of lockdown rules.
- The **need for 'safe spaces'** was considered crucial to support mental health and wellbeing - environments where young people feel valued and secure, and which contribute to improving their wellbeing beyond the pandemic.
- Young people wanted **more funding for grassroots-level workers** and public services who have better cultural understanding, shared knowledge and lived experiences of their communities and are able to provide non-judgmental support.



“I think the Black Lives Matter movement and the incident with George Floyd, I think it affected me and, actually, quite a lot of people around me. So, there was a movement going on on social media, such as Instagram. They would just post awareness and information about the Black Lives Matter movement. And I think that affected me.”

,(Dual heritage, F,17)

“COVID plus Black Lives Matter made it very, very clear that it doesn't matter how long you've been friends with people....If they're not willing to fight for ethnic minorities and, you know, queer rights and multi - similar things, then there isn't the space for them. Because we were already socially distancing but they further distanced themselves from me.”

(Black F, 18)

## Who are we?

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## Links:

Full report

<https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/33712/13/Consortium%20on%20Practices%20of%20Wellbeing%20Report%20WEB%20v2.pdf>

Executive Summary

Photobook <https://www.pahus.org/co-power>

Graphic Narrative <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/research/projects/co-power/graphic-narratives>  
Co-POWeR website <https://co-power.leeds.ac.uk>



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