



ANTI-RACISM LEADERSHIP BOOK CLUB

June 2025 session



24 JUNE 2025

Equality and Diversity UK
www.equalityanddiversity.co.uk

Anti-Racism Leadership Book Club 24th June 2025: Meeting Notes

The Anti-Racism Leadership Book Club met to explore complex and deeply personal narratives surrounding race, gender identity, belonging, and heritage. The discussion offered space for reflection and learning, focusing especially on lived experiences shaped by racism, discrimination, and systemic inequality.

Throughout the evening, participants shared stories inspired by key texts:

- *Whites on Race and Other Falsehoods* (Otetuga Uwagbea),
- *The Windrush Betrayal* (Amelia Gentleman),
- and *Slaying Your Lane Presents Loud Black Girls*.

The conversation delved into themes of belonging, heritage, gender identity, intersectionality, and the need for safe spaces for dialogue.

Claire Slade introduced Otetuga Uwagbea's essay, which critiques performative allyship and emphasises the need for genuine action to dismantle systemic racism. The conversation then turned to personal narratives from the Windrush generation the pain of betrayal felt by those wrongly classified as illegal immigrants and the emotional toll of a 'hostile environment' policy.

Deanne and Alyson both shared deeply personal stories of reunification, capturing the longing and heartbreak that shaped their families' histories.

Deanne feedback on Alyson's experience of the book *Windrush Betrayal* and read the poem Alyson wrote (these are attached).

Alyson shared that although Rick was not at the session, he had provided feedback on his experience of reading the *Windrush Betrayal* and Alyson had created a podcast from his report which was shared prior to the session this evening.

Nicole reflected on the resilience and joy within Black communities, reminding the group of the importance of highlighting Black women's voices and making space for their stories.

Selwyn Jean-Baptiste shared a poignant memory of reunification with a sister he had never met, illustrating the legacy of separation endured by many Windrush families.

The discussion concluded with a commitment to turn learning into action.

Members agreed that the October Book Club would adopt the theme of Black History Month focusing on lived experience and heritage.

The group will come together for a Human Library-style event, offering an evening where authors, storytellers, and participants can share narratives inspired by the Windrush generation, lived experiences, and intersectionality.

Agreed Theme for the October Session

“Listening to Lived Experiences — Windrush and Identity”

The Book Club will host a Human Library-style event on October 1st (the first evening of Black History Month). The event will:

- Feature authors, storytellers, and participants as ‘Human Books’, sharing lived experiences related to:
 - The Windrush generation and their descendants.
 - Gender identity and belonging.
 - The emotional toll of systemic racism and discrimination.
 - Lived experiences of being Black in the UK
- Create a safe space for questioning, listening, and learning across generations and ethnicities.
- Highlight the strength, resilience, and joy of Black communities, ensuring that narratives of pain and discrimination are balanced with stories of empowerment, belonging, and heritage.
- Incorporate space for poetry, reflection, and hopeful conversation.
- Encourage active allyship and challenge performative gestures.

Human Library Event

Personal Narration: Invite contributors with lived experience to 'host' their stories.

Listening Circles: Organise small group spaces where attendees can listen deeply and ask questions.

Poetry and Prose Corner: Dedicate a space for sharing poems and short pieces related to Windrush, identity, belonging, and heritage.

Youth Participation: Invite younger generations and students to join, listen, and ask questions.

Art and Images: Incorporate photographs, memorabilia, and artefacts representing the Windrush generation.

Facilitated Reflection: Close the evening with a group reflection, capturing thoughts, feelings, and commitments arising from the stories shared.

Summary of New Actions for the Book Club 2025-2026

1. Create a resource pack with lived experience stories for training.
2. Compile a 'Performative vs Actionable Allyship' guide inspired by Uwagbea's essay.
3. Identify three concrete ways to embed diversity and inclusivity within the curriculum.
4. Build an online repository of Windrush stories.
5. Organise a Windrush 'Listening Event' for staff, students, and community members.
6. Integrate poetry and reflection as a regular segment of meetings.
7. Balance narratives of trauma and belonging with resilience and empowerment.
8. Establish a 'Personal Stories and Historical Context' archive.
9. Organise a podcast or short film series capturing family reunion narratives.
10. Launch an annual Windrush Legacy Event.

Poster for the Book Club Event

ANTI-RACISM LEADERSHIP BOOK CLUB HUMAN LIBRARY EVENT

Listening to Lived Experiences Windrush and Identity

Date: Wednesday 1st October 2025

Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location: Zoom

“Stories shape understanding. Understanding sparks change.”

As we launch Black History Month, join us for an evening of listening and learning from lived experience.

Authors, storytellers, and ‘Human Books’ will share powerful narratives about lived experiences, heritage, belonging, identity, and the Windrush generation.

This special evening will foster reflection, dialogue, and active allyship.

Why Attend?

- **Hear first-hand stories** and deepen understanding of heritage and identity.
- **Explore Windrush narratives** and gender identity in a safe and respectful space.
- **Participate in conversations** that connect lived experience with the ongoing journey towards racial and gender equity.
- **Share reflections and learn** from one another in an intimate, facilitated setting.

All are welcome. *Come to listen, to learn, to understand, to empathise and ask questions, and not to minimise lived experiences. Together, we create understanding and move towards change, commitment and impactful positive outcomes.*

To register, contact: Alyson by 29th July 2025 (places will be limited)

Email: alyson@malach.co.uk

With warmth and solidarity,

Alyson Malach

Anti-Racism Leadership Book Club Organiser

Notes from Alyson: Used and read on 24th June session

Welcome to Our Book Club

Welcome to this space we've tended with care,
A space for listening, learning, and sharing what's rare.

We come as ourselves hopeful, open, and true,
And now this circle finds room for you.

Here, every voice and every review has a place,
Each story, each thought, leaves its trace.

Here, belonging is more than a word we say,
It's a feeling we nurture every day.

Through pages and poems, through moments we share,
We challenge, we witness, we stand, and we care.

Through stories of struggle, strength, and of light,
We walk towards belonging, towards doing what's right.

So welcome, new joiner we're grateful you came.
You're part of this story, you're part of the flame.

With open hearts and hopeful ways,
We walk, we read, we learn we rise and we stay.

Here, you are seen. Here, you belong.
Here, we're a chorus and with you, we're strong.

Welcome

24.6.2025

Thinking out loud first: The Anti-Racism Leadership Book club

The book club started in 2022 and has kept going, growing steadily to around 18 people. Not everyone can make every session, but that doesn't matter their review write-ups and learning reflections are also part of the collective growth.

- The group has largely been women with a couple of men, which itself shows diversity and richness of perspectives.
- What have people learned? Likely:
 - New ways to understand racism and anti-racism beyond theoretical ideas.
 - Deeper connections between lived experience and literature.
 - The ability to listen better, to speak openly about discrimination, privilege, belonging.
 - Courage and language to take lessons from the book club into workplaces, families, communities.
 - An understanding that anti-racism is active — making changes to policies, challenging language, reshaping narratives.
- The right people are here those committed to making a difference, regardless of role or background. Not everyone has to be present every time, because belonging goes beyond the meetings.

OPENING CALL-AND-RESPONSE: *Belonging and purpose*

- **Call:** We come together to listen and to learn
Response: We come together with open hearts.
- **Call:** We come to witness, to read, and to reflect
Response: We come together with open minds.
- **Call:** We come as ourselves every voice, every experience, every story
Response: We come together, and this space is ours.

To Our Anti-Racism Book Club Members

To those who came, and come, and keep on learning,
To those who read, review, and quietly ponder,
To those who speak aloud and those who write their reflections,
Thank you.

Since 2022, we have turned pages together
Pages of truth, pain, belonging, and resilience.
Through words, we have found ways to listen,
To witness, to understand, and to rise.

Not everyone can be here every time,
But every voice, every thought, every review
Weaves itself into the fabric of this space.
This space our space where learning lives.

We have learned more than lines on a page.
We have learned how stories can shift a room,
How lived experience can open a heart,
How belonging can create belonging.

We have carried this knowing beyond the book club.
Into workplaces and communities,
Into conversations and policies,
Into moments that matter when no one is looking.

The right people are here and always will be
Because it's not about quantity, but quality of heart.
It's about being present, being brave, being hopeful.
It's about belonging to a purpose bigger than ourselves.

Thank you for showing up, for sharing openly,
For making space where change can grow.
Thank you for reminding us that together,
Through words, through listening, through action,
We can create the world we deserve.

CLOSING CALL-AND-RESPONSE: *Sending you away inspired and hopeful*

Call: You leave with new words, new thoughts, and new strength

Response: You carry these with you, and this space goes with us.

Call: We leave with belonging knowing every voice, every reflection, every review matters

Response: We carry belonging out into the world.

Call: We leave knowing that the right people were here tonight

Response: We carry this knowing as we walk, as we work, as we live.

Call: We leave hopeful, proud, and ready for change

Response: We carry this hope, this pride, this change with us.

Our Current Members

Alex

Alyson

Becky

Cheryl

Deanne

Deborah

Elizabeth

Frances

Hebe

Jax

Jax

Jo D

Jo TA

Mayson

Nicole

Rick

Selwyn

Tina

Zarman

Zvikomborero