



NO TO RACISM CAMPAIGN

SPECIAL EDITION

FUNDED BY

DRUMCHAPEL FRIENDSHIP HOUSE



Drumchapel “No to Racism” Campaign

In the wake of “Show Racism the Red Card” G15 Thriving Places invited several organisations in Drumchapel to engage in an anti-racist campaign. We produced a banner “No to Racism” in different languages, for as many organisations as possible to stand behind and be photographed. The schools took an active part producing posters on anti-racism which are currently being showcased in St. Mark’s Church. Together with Drumchapel TV, we produced a video now available online. The New Hope Community provided food for the launch of our video and the screening of the film “The Old Oak” at St. Mark’s Church, which was a success.

This edition includes stories of two people, Musa and Thusi, who were forced to leave their country of origin and have made Glasgow their home. It also presents two organisations, the New Hope Community and Drumchapel Friendship House, who engage directly with asylum seekers and refugees, known as New Scots. A piece by Bruna from Drumchapel High School, a poem

by Thusi and a clear message from Fatma drive home the importance of being anti-racist. There are plenty of photos of the many organisations who are part of this campaign, and we hope that this edition will help more people in Drumchapel and beyond, believe that another world is possible!



Some thoughts from Bruna

My name is Bruna, I’m a student at Drumchapel High School and was the President of the Anti-racism Club last year and still very active in the club. My goal for our school is to create an inclusive and safe environment for everyone. However, I also have a bigger goal, and that is to give every single young person a role model and have real knowledge about each other which will help us to understand each other better.

Removing Inequalities

Nowadays, our society is like a building, where we have people on the top and people at the bottom. What I want to do is create a nice and peaceful neighbourhood where all have the same amount of help and opportunities. I’m at the beginning of this huge change that includes every single one of us. We must educate ourselves before educating others.

I have created the website for our club and created some educational PowerPoints. We also have an Instagram account where we can share and support others more easily. Our main point with the social media is to help other students with issues related to racism in their schools.

Role Models

Our club secretary has sent a letter that we, as a club, have written to the Scottish Government to make decolonisation mandatory on the curriculum. To make it mandatory, it means all schools in Scotland need to make this change.

We believe it is important that every young person can see themselves in the classroom, have role models and have a



sense of belonging. If we publicise the artists, inventors, scientists, writers, mathematicians, sport people, together with all the activities of a wider range of people, this will help stop racism.

Work so far

Last year we had an Anti-racism week, with some events to build an anti-racist culture in our school. We made orange our colour and made orange ribbons which many teachers and students are still wearing showing their support.

At the beginning of this year, we started to work on our school board. On the board we have the opportunity to share a tiny percentage of what we are doing in our club, raise more awareness of our club, and encourage other students to join.

In our club room, our safe space, one of our members came up with the idea of having a suggestions box so we can share our thoughts of events or things that we can inform through the club. We are also making a list of topics to discuss. So far, we have spoken about 9/11, religion, The Little Mermaid film, and the World Cup. We are learning from each other, learning to be more open and understanding of other people’s beliefs.

First Languages

We have had the opportunity to teach our first language to other young people in the school, for example, Arabic and Portuguese. This helps bring more awareness of other languages to the school, removing the unknown that can lead to discrimination, and for the students that speak these languages, a feeling of belonging.

Sharing the Learning

We also want to share and learn from other schools. It is important that every school has a club to make more people feel safe and part of their school. We took part in two webinars for Education Scotland and will be running a stall for Glasgow City Council PARTIE (Promoting Anti-Racism in Education) event. We hope to do more as it is so important to share, learn and support each other.

The club has given us confidence. We are learning from each other about being anti-racist, we are more aware of other people’s cultures, and we feel anti-racism is being taken seriously in our school. We feel safer, proud, happier, stronger, and most importantly, heard.

It is the beginning of this huge change and includes every single one of us!

Friendship House

Friendship House began about 15 years ago. It was started by a team of Community Ministers based in St. Andrews Church Drumchapel.

The first meeting place for the group was the Episcopal Church in Invercanny Drive where we met for a few years. Since we left there, we have met in St Mark's Church, Drumchapel United Free Church, 3D, when they were up at The Open Gate, and finally in Drumchapel Essenside U.R. Church., where we have met for the past 6 years. The aim of the group has never changed over the years, which is to offer friendship and support within the Drumchapel community.

Our families are all new to Glasgow and our community and it must be very difficult to arrive here with no family near and not being able to speak the same language as your neighbours. Friendship House tries to ease some of the stress by providing a safe place for individuals and families to get together and make friends.

We are strongly supported by G15 Thriving Places who offer such a lot of help to all our folks. They helped to get ESOL Classes set up that run twice a week, on Monday and Friday mornings. We are also supported by The Mears Group and Glasgow Area Partnership. We have visits from the Fire Service offering advice on fire safety, from the Community Police, the Link Workers from Drumchapel Health Centre and Drumchapel Foodbank

I suppose we are essentially a Global Café as it does not matter where you come from, you are very welcome. We do our best to make people feel part of the community and to encourage them to make friends and help each other in any small way.

We meet on a Wednesday from 12 o'clock until 2pm. The New Scots women take turns in cooking lovely lunches



which we share with one another. We have lots of clothes and household goods which are kindly donated by friends and families of the Drumchapel Community. These are free to anyone who needs them.

We are a really happy group of people and it is great to see our families settle in to life in Drumchapel and they in turn tell their friends about Friendship House and invite them along too. We are essentially a typical Scottish family; we all look after each other.

We have many special occasions where we celebrate with all the families. We have a fun day in August before the children go back to school and we try to take them away for the day to somewhere like the Safari Park during July. We have a Christmas lunch and give out gift bags to all the families

The group is led by Roberta Hughes, Maureen McKinlay, Lyndsay Weir, Anne Hutcheson and Kathy Keller who are all members of Drumchapel Essenside U.R. Church with help from G15 Thriving Places.

If anyone would like to know more about us, please feel free to come along some Wednesday and join us.

New Hope Community

My name is Frank John. I am Pakistani and Christian. I came here in 2008 and for the last 4 years we have been building a community group called New Hope Community. Between 30 – 35 families come to our group every Saturday. There are people from different countries in the group, Syria, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan. They are all happy and I have only known a few people who said they have been treated badly here. The group is very appreciative to the Scottish people because of all their help.

I am from Drumchapel and have been here for 10 years. People told me that Drumchapel was a bad place to live and asked how I was coping? But I want to say that people in Drumchapel are very good, they are very friendly and help everywhere in everything. We want to say thanks to everyone.

I have heard some people complain, sometimes they are treated badly, maybe in the schools or sometimes by NHS workers, but not too much. On the contrary, in general people are very friendly here. They show love to us, especially when we have come from our country where we were persecuted; people just support and help us.

I want to say there are good people and bad people everywhere. If we go to the Holy Land, we will see bad



people there too. And those who are racist are not good and they should change their attitude. We can help by teaching people how to say no to racism from the very start at school. We should give this message also to the NHS staff because at times some people do not behave well. We should make people more aware of the need for no racism, we are against it! We want to be treated as good people, and we just want to say, please everyone, no racism, we don't want racism.

Thank you.



Building an ANTI-RACIST Drumchapel Community





Stop Being Racist, please!

By Fatma Elaraby

Society includes all of us, and community is for everyone, not for a specific category. We should come together to integrate, to fill the gaps, but then, this is a broad statement and an accepted general concept of life!

Even although it seems very easy and simple to understand, we still have some people who commit individual acts which are the opposite of this general concept of life. Those people are a minority and don't represent most of the local community. However, we can't deny that their acts harm other people.

These people also distinguish between poor and rich, black and white; they don't welcome migrants or citizens who are from different roots that are not British roots.

It's Racism!

Stop these acts please, no one should judge anyone due to their appearance or outfit.

We should respect and accept everyone. It's a question of freedom!

Stop being racist please!

We must all stick together, challenge and stop the spreading of racism, especially between the new generations. We should raise awareness about the side effects of what racism causes. Racism creates hatred in the community. We need our community to be better, or rather the best, not only better!

So please be positive, help us all to speak openly against racism.

Let's show racism the red card!





Mohamed Musa Ahmed' Story

My name is Mohamed Musa Ahmed and I am from Sudan. I left my country in July 2017. My village was attacked by Janjaweed, a militia group with links to the government, so we moved from my village to a camp in Kalma in South Darfur. My family lives there now in the camp. I left my family because when we moved from the camp to another city, we were in a coffee shop with my friends, three of us, and people came and asked us why we were there. I think they were from Government Intelligence but did not wear any uniform. They took us to their offices and asked why we came from the camp, because they said that all the people in camp belonged to a revolutionary organisation, so they arrested us. They kicked us a lot while we were there for three days in prison and then we were released and moved to another camp. After one week we heard that they were looking for us again and so we escaped from the camp to El Fashir and then to Libya.

In Libya, we didn't have any money, nothing, and when we worked, they didn't give us money, our salary. We were taken to a house where they put us in a special room like a prison and asked for money. If we didn't have any money, they said to call our families and friends to give them money otherwise we would stay there and die. They continued to kick us, and it was a very difficult situation, so it was not safe now even in Libya. From there, me and my friend managed to escape and move to Italy, then France and finally the UK.

I have two brothers and three sisters, and they are all in the camp. My older brother is now in the Sahara, and I heard that he was mining on the border between Libya, Chad, and Sudan. People came and took him somewhere else, and we don't not know where, as we now have lost contact with him. Many months have passed, and we do not know where he is, but my other brothers and sisters still live in the camp.

I was in Libya for a year, and I worked cutting trees. I also worked on a farm where we had to do everything, even building. People who owned the farm did not give us money because they said that we were illegal, so they only gave us food.

On Sundays there was a market which sold vegetables and food, so I worked in a vegetable shop with a guy from Gargaly for 6 months and from there I got money to pay for the boat crossing.

In Libya they have a big type of camp, and you need to pay money for the boat. I went from Libya to Italy by boat. The first time I did not make it because of pirates at sea called Asawia, and we spent 11 days in prison in a village called Zawia in Libya. On a second attempt I managed to arrive in Italy on a boat with many other migrants.

All this was a bad situation because Sudan and Libya were not safe, and every day you could end up in prison because there is no government.

In the UK I feel safe now and more comfortable. When first I came it was very difficult, thinking about my family back home, and because of the bad situation

in my country and Libya, I was having nightmares remembering my journey but now I feel safe. People here are friendly, and they help us, with paperwork, food, and everything. I am very proud and happy to stay here in the UK.

All my country is now at war. When I left my country only my region of Darfur was very bad, now there is war everywhere and it is not safe. No one wants to leave their homeland because I was born there, and my grandparents were born there but because of this situation I can't go back. I am worried about my family now because there is no law and no government, and because of the loss of contact I haven't heard anything about my family so I cannot go to my country now because the situation is very difficult.

In Sudan I worked as a farmer. We had cows and camels but unfortunately, they were taken from us when our village was attacked by the militia. They took all our cows and everything, so we went to a camp. At the camp there were many organisations to help us, with food, everything we needed, but in 2009 the government and our president were called to the International Criminal Court for having attacked innocent people and he told all organisations to leave Sudan. So, since 2009 to today there are no organisations to help people.

About my future, I want to improve my language and to study some subject to make my CV stronger to find a job and bring my wife to a safe place here in the UK. She is at a camp just now. I married in 2017 when I was in France and my wife was in Sudan because as married her situation is better in Sudan; it is in our culture that you can marry in this way. My family and her family made an agreement at the Mosque, and we are married through our religion.

I wanted to start the process to bring my wife here, but everything has stopped because of the war, there is no UK Embassy in Sudan now.

In Scotland the people are all friendly and help us and now everything is ok, and I feel safe.

I still have a health condition, mental health issues, due to my past and what happened to me. I am now taking medicine, but need to attend the GP regularly as my health is still not good.

I want to thank all the G15 Thriving Places team, Tracy, Charles, Michelle, and Ted because they help us all with many things, all sorts of applications, housing for example, as I don't have a permanent house.

Thank you.



Thusi's Story

I'm not a famous person and this is not a happy story, but it is my true-life story. It might disturb you, but if you feel sad after reading it, I apologise for making you feel sad. I have excluded certain incidents as they are too difficult for me to talk about and have focused on the main parts of my journey.

I'm a 33-year-old mother of three children from Sri Lanka. I wasn't born in a nice and peaceful place. When I was born my country was engaged in full war. Everywhere there were bombs exploding, gunfire and a strong smell of blood, with lots of people crying. When I was six months old my family moved to India to protect us because they received life threats. We stayed in India for nearly 5 years, but then the political situation in India forced us to move back to my country.

On returning to my country, I started my primary school education. I still cannot remember many happy moments because my life was full of terrifying moments. When I started my secondary school, the war was in full swing. Women could not go freely anywhere. Not only women, even small girls, or children, because they could be raped brutally by the Sri Lankan army.

One day, when I was 16, something unforgettably horrific happened. The army used to attack common people and when that happened most of the people would take refuge in a church, temple, or school, but then they became easy targets to ambush. Suddenly, early one morning we heard a bomb blast and gun shots. We all ran to the church, but while we were running the gun shots came nearer. We had spent time before in the church because of a previous army attack. After we reached the church, I saw four army people with two motorbikes. They pointed at the church and shot at us. A man was shot in the shoulder but fortunately still managed to close the main door. There were four soldiers, and they didn't give up. They became angry and tried to kick down the door, but the door was too strong for them. If the door had opened, many people would have died on that day. So, they shot under the door and nearly 45 people were injured, and an old lady died. I was also hit by a bullet in my shoulder. After they left some people took the injured to the hospital, but due to army restrictions we were moved to the district hospital, and I was admitted to hospital for several weeks.

When I returned home, the church presented a case against the army and the government, because the attack was illegal. They should not attack public places. The priest asked me to present a witness statement, because I was the youngest person injured, and I'm also a Hindu. So, I gave my witness statement at the court hearing. Following the hearing I faced a lot of problems from the army and CID, even life threats. So, me and my family were very scared. Following advice from my schoolteachers and the priest, my mom decided to move from the country. Our finances were tight, so my dad and my younger brother stayed behind in Sri Lanka. We went to India in a small fishing boat which was dangerous. We had faced many struggles already, but with God's grace we reached the Indian border, and thought we were safe, but that was not true.

The Indian police took us to a Sri Lankan refugee camp. After we reached the camp, they asked a lot of questions. The problem began after they found my shoulder injury. They suspected that I was a terrorist, even although me and my mom tried to explain, but they never believed us. They put us into a separate jail. Two days later we were sent to another refugee camp by the Police department. After a few months my dad and brother joined us after my dad faced several threats. In the camp I had lots of problems with the

police. Since I left my country, I've experienced everything a sixteen-year-old girl should never experience!

With my family support I started my education. I studied hard, and finished my dentistry degree and was awarded my certificate to practice. During my college years, I met my husband in an inter college cultural meeting. He is a kind and caring person and respects other people. Gradually our friendship became stronger until he asked me to marry him, wanting to protect me and to make me happy. His words made me cry, but I trusted him and said yes. Unfortunately, his parents didn't accept our love because I am a refugee. They created many problems, but he always stood by my side, and even against his family's wishes, we married.

However, this added to our problems. Once married we did not live a happy life. Now we had problems with his family and the police as well. We thought that it would be solved one day, but we were wrong. After one and a half years married, we were blessed with a baby boy. Unfortunately, our happiness was short-lived because my husband's family tried to kill my son. They considered my baby as shameful for them because I was a refugee. My husband and I agreed that we could not stay in India so we moved for our own safety.

We came to UK in 2019 through traffickers and they took all the money that we had and put us in a room for two weeks. We didn't know what to do, so they gave us a lawyer's contact and she applied for asylum for us. We only had £20, and an old Tamil lady took us into her home until the Home Office contacted us. Then the Home Office sent us to Glasgow. When we reached Glasgow, it was after midnight. I was really scared because it was a new place with new people. The next day I met an old man in the Migrant Help office. He spoke with a proper Scottish accent, and I couldn't understand anything because of his accent. He was a kind person and contacted an online translator to explain the rules and my rights. He took us to a house and, honestly, after many years we at last slept peacefully. We were safe at last, but I felt guilty about my parents and my younger brother still back home in a horrible situation, facing problems because of me.

In Glasgow, we met a family from my country who, in the beginning, were like family and friends. We trusted them. We missed our own family so their kindness made us believe in them and we shared our problems with them. The traffickers were torturing my parents back home because of money, so when this family in Glasgow offered to help, we accepted, because I wanted to save my parents. After six months, they said they would help us financially because we needed to pay the traffickers to arrange the visas.

However, after they gave us the money, their behaviour changed. They wanted to force my husband to work in the shop and we refused, because we were not allowed to work, but they said, it wasn't work just to help. The shop owner said that he needed another man to work so told my husband to work and he would reduce the money he lent us every month. So, my husband decided to go as we did not have any choice. Once he started work, they slowly increased his



hours every day. He worked sixteen hours per day, seven days a week for almost one and half years.

During this time, I fell pregnant, and gave birth to twins. During my pregnancy time, my husband could never be with me due to work. I was alone. I was not well; I had continued sickness during my pregnancy and couldn't handle my physical and mental health at the same time. Every time my clinic and scan appointments came, I showed the appointment letter to my husband's boss and asked permission for my husband to accompany me but was not allowed. One day I fell on the kitchen floor, and there was no one with me. After few minutes, I couldn't feel my babies movement, I was afraid. I called him but his boss didn't allow him to go. So, I took my son to the shop and left him with my husband and went alone to the hospital. All during those months they continued to threaten us and harass us. They said we couldn't do anything because we were asylum seekers. He said that he could do what he wanted because we were voiceless and that we had to obey him otherwise he would report us to say that my husband was working illegally, so we had to keep quiet.

After my twins were born, the family continued to tell my husband to come to work. I explained my situation to them, but they did not care. At one point, I told them, that I would give them their money back to let us go but they did not accept. They came to my house and tried to assault my husband and threatened us. Then, I contacted my brother, who lives in Sweden, for help. He came and I explained everything to him. I then found out that those people had cheated us and had taken a lot of interest money from us. When I discovered this, we went to the shop. I asked him

about his cheating and why he did this to us, how we had trusted him and now he cheated us. He brought his father in who shouted at us and used very bad words, which I prefer not to repeat. He threatened us and said that when I crossed the road with my baby's pram, he would hit us with his car and declare it an accident. He said that it would not bother him but we, as asylum seekers would lose everything. So, we decided to go to the police to register a complaint and protect my husband and kids.

The police came, Migrant Help were involved, and we were eventually supported by an organisation called Refuweegee who support asylum seekers and refugees. The Home Office then moved us to Drumchapel. In the beginning I was really scared, but then slowly, I started going to a local charity called Friendship House. There I met many good people who help us a lot. Then I found another organisation called 3D who also help us a lot. Now I feel quite safe here rather than in my old place, but still I've felt some fear on occasions.

It's hard when you have qualifications but no work. Especially, with kids you feel guilty, because when they need something, you can't afford to buy what they need. I'm begging people for everything that we need. I feel bad for myself. I've faced some racism and discrimination, but only from a few people. However, I have met some kind- and good-hearted people here. I like Scottish people. They never expect anything from us. They always give with unconditional love. I feel proud with myself because I have now found some good-hearted people around me.

Thank you.

Thusi

RACISM IS A KILLER

Even the animals, in the forest, are united.
Only we, in the towns and cities, live apart.
Animals have borders, only in the zoos, but for their protection.
But we humans have created borders and developed racism.
So, our life also is a kind of zoo, but not for protection.
Humanity is broken by race, language, and religion.
People are not united in today's world.
Why the division, and why this violence?
You and I have the same colour of blood.
God has given you and me the same knowledge.
Then why this discrimination in colour only?
No more racism, we want more humanity!
Written by Thusi

A Short Story from Neda

The first feeling that came to me after entering this country was the feeling of freedom!

Of course, for a long time it was freedom with fear, which reminded me of the situation I left in my country. Here in Scotland, we were given a house with all the basic facilities, but when you are an asylum seeker, you are not allowed to do simple things such as work, or study for a certificate, open a bank account, or have a travel document. All these issues affect people differently according to their different backgrounds and conditions. Once you become a refugee, then you feel like everyone else; you can work and pay taxes, travel, and have a bank account.

Anyway, I am happy to be in this country and to be able to work with kind people, even though I always miss my country.

