

TEACHERS FORUM REPORT 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The Teachers Forum was created as a collaborative space for educators, administrators, policymakers, council members, and all those involved in education, to co-design and implement creative, innovative approaches to teaching Black British history in schools across Wales. Kumbukumbu's (a project under SSAP) Teachers Forum aims to enrich the curriculum through creative workshops and lessons, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Black British heritage in Wales.

This report presents the insights and findings gathered from participants of the 2nd Teachers Forum, held in February 2026.

“*It has been great and inspiring to SSAP and especially the Kumbukumbu team to see how teachers are engaging with the project and seeing the potential impact of it within schools and communities at large.*”

Fadhili Maghiya- SSAP CEO



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THE SUMMARY

The 2nd Teachers Forum meeting held on February 27, 2026, focused on the Kumbukumbu project, which aims to make Black Welsh history accessible in classrooms. The session reviewed findings from the project's first phase and proposed a second phase involving 15 new educational resources, categorised by scale (small, medium, and large), and the use of digital technologies such as 3D mapping and AR.

KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASE 1

Data presented during the 1st Teachers Forum highlighted a significant "connectivity gap." While there is strong interest in inclusive history, 71% of participants were previously unaware of local Black history resources. Furthermore, nearly 43% of educators expressed a lack of institutional support or confidence in delivering anti-racist education. These findings underscore a systemic reliance on "tokenistic" celebrations (such as Black History Month) and a fear of "singled-out" diverse learners, rather than a sustained, year-round integration of these narratives.

STRATEGIC VISION FOR PHASE 2

The forum outlined a roadmap for 15 new resources; a central pillar of Phase 2 is technological innovation in the classroom. Although the forum captured co-design feedback regarding Phase 2, the final report does not delve into that aspect. Instead, it emphasises insights gleaned from reflective questions posed to the focus group. These questions sought to understand participants' lived experiences in the classroom, as well as the strategic changes that have occurred in their schools since the 2024 forum.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- Moving away from "hero-based" history toward "real people stories".
- Recognising that role models with lived experience are important for student aspiration and engagement.
- Stressing the necessity of Senior Leadership involvement to make anti-racism and multicultural curricula a school-wide policy.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

METHODOLOGY

The data for this report were gathered through a structured focus group session involving a diverse range of educational professionals, including primary and secondary teachers, educational consultants, and representatives from local authorities and non-profit organisations. Participants were asked a series of reflection questions designed to elicit qualitative insights into their lived classroom experiences and the strategic shifts within their respective schools over the past two years. This collaborative, co-design approach ensured that the findings were rooted in current educational realities across different regions of Wales.

REFLECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHANGES (2024-2026)

Participants were asked to reflect on the past two years regarding changes in teaching Black history in Wales and shifts in anti-racist practices

SHIFTING CULTURAL ATTITUDES AND "FEAR FACTOR"

"I'd say from speaking to Cardiff schools, it's fair to say it's a very, very different picture in every school. You've got everything from all-white schools that haven't even approached this conversation yet because maybe they've got staff who are fearful of how to approach it, how to bring it up, how to put it into the curriculum. But then you've got other schools who maybe got 80, 90% global majority in the classroom, and it's the bread and butter of everything that that teacher does"

SMOVE AWAY FROM TOKENISM (BLACK HISTORY MONTH)

Some schools are actively moving away from isolated celebrations like Black History Month because pupils "feel that... it draws attention to them amongst their peers in a negative way"

Educators argued that the topic should not be "boxed into Black History Month" but rather "embedded in the curriculum" so it becomes "the norm" rather than a special, "tokenistic" event.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

THE DEMAND FOR DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

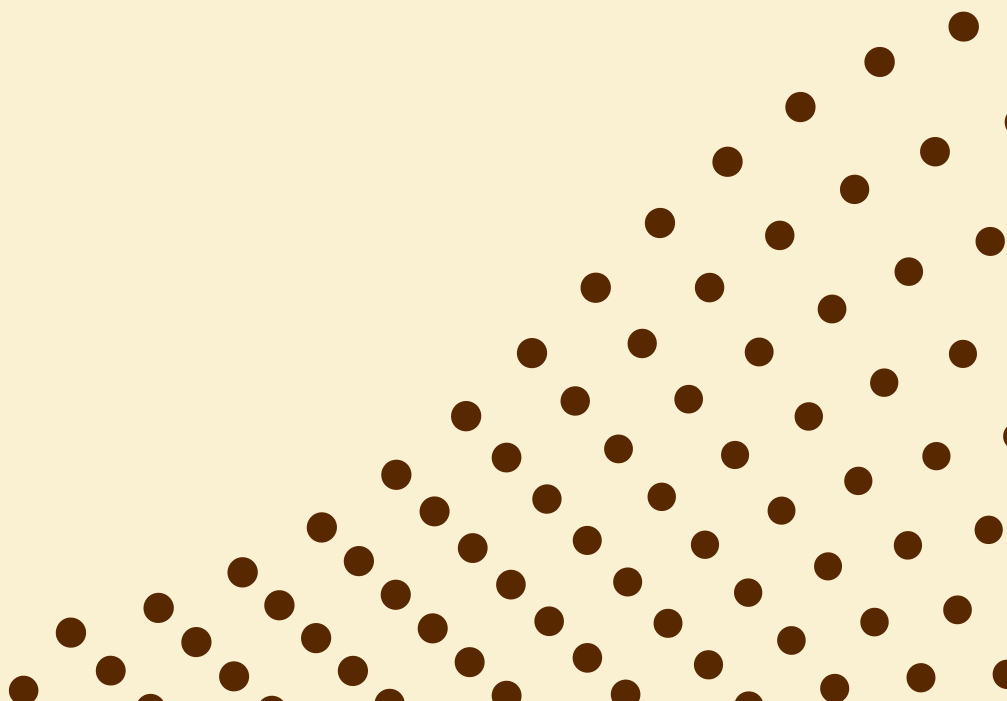
There is a growing recognition that children "model the people around them," and seeing diverse role models in everyday professions (like artists or vets) is vital for "broadening horizons" and aspirations.

A significant change is that schools are now "actively asking" for diverse contributors, such as authors from various backgrounds, whereas previously these partnerships only happened if consultants did "the thinking for them".

PERSISTENT REGIONAL DISPARITIES

In areas with less diversity, such as Carmarthenshire, teachers expressed that the topic is often not "high on the agenda" and can feel like a "battle" to embed because some "don't see the need" in a small village setting.

Educators shared that realizing the curriculum "is not set up for children" of diverse backgrounds was often an "internal journey" sparked by their own lived experiences as parents or community members.



FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

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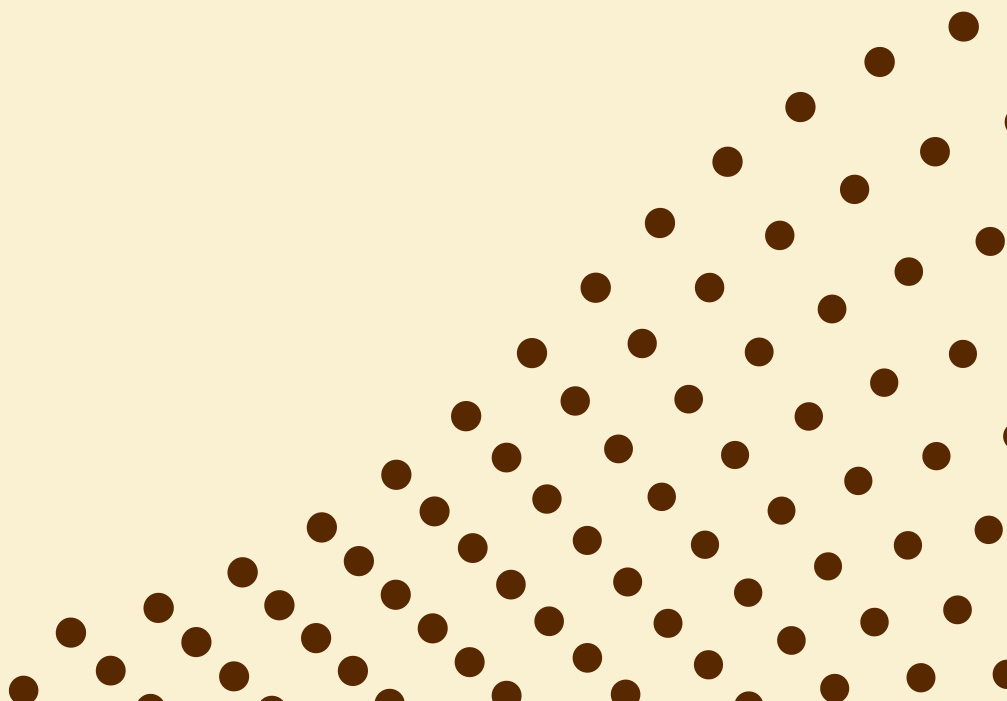
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FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

Teachers' accounts of a "different picture in every school" and staff "fearful of how to approach" Black history resonate with research showing that many teachers feel underprepared and anxious about teaching race and racism (Bentley-Edwards et al., 2020). In Wales, the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales and the mandatory inclusion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories (Welsh Government, 2021) has been accompanied by new Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning (DARPL), precisely because a lack of confidence, training and resources has been identified as a systemic barrier to implementation (Welsh Government, 2022). Professor Charlotte Williams, who led a working group created by the Welsh government to look at the teaching of minority ethnic contributions through history, similarly concluded that: "The attainment of children and young people from some minority communities is being hampered by a curriculum that has failed to represent their histories, and the contributions of their communities, past and present." (Morris, 2021)

At the same time, the belief that "all learners have to be global citizens"- a *Teachers Forum participant*- aligns with broader scholarship, which argues that understanding diverse histories is essential for developing empathetic, informed citizens (McCully, 2012; Endacott and Brooks, 2013). Moreover, exposure to eyewitness accounts and personal narratives helps learners connect emotionally and cognitively with people different from themselves, rather than treating them as abstract figures (Bartelds et al., 2022).

Teachers' critiques of Black History Month as something that can "draw attention" to pupils in a negative way and make them feel "boxed" rather than embedded are strongly supported by academic and professional commentary on tokenism. Scholars and practitioners have argued that Black History Month is treated as a once-a-year event, which means routine practices persist for the rest of the year (Henry, 2012). In this context, the status quo implies that whiteness is the default perspective while other racialised perspectives are treated as add-ons (Leach, Voce and Kirk, 2020). This tokenistic approach reinforces the idea that Black contributions are peripheral rather than central to national narratives and may inadvertently reproduce the marginalisation it seeks to challenge. Meaningful inclusion requires Black experiences, voices, and knowledges to be considered throughout the curriculum, rather than confined to special occasions.

Participants' need to see diverse role models in everyday professions is also well supported by research on representation and teacher diversity.

FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

Studies show that when students encounter teachers and professionals who share aspects of their racial, cultural, or linguistic background, this can reinforce a sense of belonging, increase engagement, and broaden perceptions of what futures are possible (Kearney and Levine, 2020; Gottfried, Freeman and Egalite, 2025).

The reported “battle” to embed Black history and anti-racist practice in less diverse areas, such as small villages in Carmarthenshire, as mentioned by a participant, reflects a wider pattern in which diversity and anti-racism are sometimes misframed as relevant only to urban or demographically mixed areas (Yip et al., 2025). Policy strategies in Carmarthenshire and other rural authorities have tended to prioritise language and access issues (e.g. Welsh-medium and bilingual provision) (Carmarthenshire County Council, n.d.), with less explicit focus on race and ethnicity, which may contribute to the perception among some staff that racial diversity is “not on the agenda.” This mirrors international research that finds rural schools often view multicultural (Anthony-Stevens and Langford, 2019) or anti-racist education (Dunn et al., 2014) as less urgent due to low visible diversity, despite evidence that learning about diverse histories positively shapes all learners’ lives- including rural learners (Mardhiah et al., 2024).

The personal “internal journeys” described by some participants, sparked by their experiences as parents or community members, imply that meaningful change often begins with critical reflection on one’s own position, experiences and assumptions. As a result, we should encourage educators and SLT to engage in ongoing self-reflection and dialogue to better understand their own biases and perspectives. This can foster a more inclusive and empathetic approach to teaching, ultimately benefiting both educators and their students.

LIMITATIONS

Both the focus group data and the supporting literature have limitations. The focus group is relatively small, so its perspectives may not capture the full range of views or practices across Wales, particularly in schools or regions that did not participate. The literature used to support the analysis is constrained, as much of it focuses on policy intentions or broad Global North discussions of anti-racist and global citizenship education, which may not fully reflect everyday classroom realities in specific Welsh contexts. Moreover, there is a temporal limitation, with some literature over 10 years old, meaning its findings may not fully capture contemporary understandings of anti-racism and multicultural curriculum, or recent classroom practices.

FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

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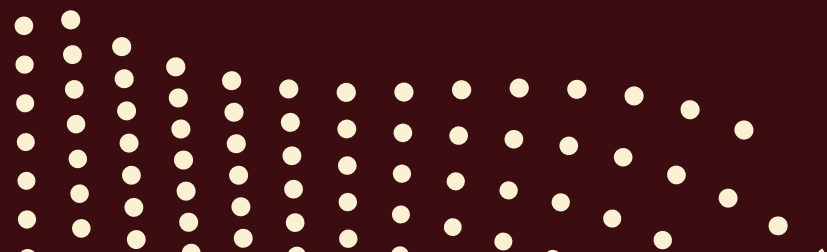
THE VALUE OF AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION AND LIVED EXPERIENCE.

Educators emphasised that the most impactful classroom experiences occur when creative practitioners with lived experience visit schools. Successful Kumbukumbu workshops, such as those featuring artist Pascaline Maghiya, shifted the focus from "Black history" to relatable careers, which boosted student aspirations. There was a strong call for resources to feature "real people stories" in familiar local communities rather than just focusing on "exceptional" historical figures.

"Young people... weren't talking about a black woman coming in, but the impact of taking... someone who was a role model and as... a successful artist... [and saying] look at your creative skills can be harnessed". - Participant who experienced a Kumbukumbu workshop in their class

Representation matters because students model their aspirations on the people they see around them (Fletcher, 2023).

Respondents noted that current Black Welsh History materials center teaching the stories of "exceptional" individuals, rather than encompassing the broader historical experiences and contributions of Black communities in Wales. This approach can inadvertently reinforce whiteness as the norm. If learners are consistently shown that whiteness is the standard, and Black individuals are heroes or victims, pupils may learn that Welsh history's norm is to be white, and that racialised people are exceptions to this.



WHAT TEACHERS NEED

The (8) participants were asked the following questions relating to Black history in school:

- **Authentic and Relatable Content**

- Lived Experience: Teachers emphasised the need for "real people stories" from their local communities rather than just focusing on "exceptional" historical figures.
- Authenticity of Source: There is a high demand for information from authentic sources, such as people with lived experience in the countries or cultures under discussion.
- Relatable Role Models: Educators noted that learners need to see role models from diverse backgrounds in everyday careers to help broaden their own aspirations.

- **Practical Classroom Resources**

- Variety of Access: As schools have varying levels of access to technology and transport, teachers need resources with multiple "avenues to access," such as a digital version, a classroom-based version, and an option for a site visit.
- User Guides: For newer digital tools, participants mentioned they would need clear user guides to feel confident implementing them in the classroom.

- **Organisational and Systemic Support**

- Centralised "Umbrella" Organisation: A major need is a single, trusted "umbrella" body to pool all resources in one place, as time-poor teachers currently struggle to find materials scattered across dozens of different websites.
- Senior Leadership Buy-in: Participants highlighted that getting senior leadership on board is crucial for ensuring that anti-racist policies are adopted school-wide.
- Institutional Confidence: Findings from the 2024 Teachers' Forum showed that 42.9% of teachers felt unsupported by their schools or organisations to deliver Black history education. They need a school environment that embeds Black history year-round.

- **Professional Development and Understanding**

- Confidence in Language: Teachers expressed a need for more confidence in using appropriate language related to Black history and discussing race in the classroom.
- Staff Education on "The Why": Teachers noted that all staff need to understand why teaching Black history is important to prevent the responsibility from falling on just a few individuals.

“ALL LEARNERS NEED TO BE

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CONCLUSION

- **Persistent Fear Factor:** While there is a growing desire to teach Black Welsh history, many staff members (particularly in predominantly white or rural schools) remain fearful of "saying the wrong thing" or causing students to feel "singled out."
- **Centralised Hub:** Teachers are overwhelmed by a fragmented landscape of resources. There is a critical need for a centralised, "quality-assured" hub to prevent time-poor educators from having to search dozens of individual websites.
- **Leadership Buy-In Needed:** Successful integration of anti-racist curriculum depends heavily on Senior Leadership Team (SLT) buy-in; without it, efforts remain isolated to individual "passionate" teachers rather than becoming school-wide policy.
- **Moving Beyond "Exceptionalism":** Participants concluded that centring only "famous" or "heroic" Black figures reinforces whiteness as the norm. Future resources must focus on "real people stories" and broader social movements to normalise Black presence in Welsh history.
- **Tokenism:** There is a strong consensus to move away from "boxing" Black history into Black History Month and instead embedding it year-round across all subjects, including art, science, and geography.
- **Local Relevance:** Students engage most deeply with history that is physically linked to their own communities. Identifying local Black history "on their doorstep" is more impactful than teaching abstract global figures.
- **Value of Lived Experience:** The most successful classroom interventions involve creative practitioners with lived experience.
- **Resource Accessibility:** To accommodate varying school budgets and IT capabilities, Phase 2 resources must offer multiple "avenues of access," including digital, paper-based, and physical experiential options.
- **The Global Citizen:** The forum concluded that Black Welsh history is not just for diverse learners; it is essential for all Welsh students to become informed "global citizens" who understand the true multicultural fabric of their country.

Black History Month Workshops:

We want to connect with schools or settings that may be interested in having a creative Black history session in October led by one of our artists. If you are interested please contact hannah.ringane@ssap.org.uk or robert.oros@ssap.org.uk.

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Logo by Kevin Adams Design

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- **Glamorgan Archives**
- **Amgueddfa Cymru**
- **Heritage Fund in Partnership with the Welsh Government**

THANK YOU

KUMBUKUMBU

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Sub Sahara Advisory Panel (SSAP) is a charity located in Cardiff, Wales and is incorporated in England and Wales as a CIO under the Charity Commission (Reg no 1159990).

The charity seeks to inspire and inform policy and practice which lead to the reduction of poverty and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods in Africa, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa. SSAP do this through practical policy advice, policy-focused dissemination, debate and applied research. SSAP also works with partners in the public and private sectors across Wales and the UK more broadly.

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