



My name is Kai Lutterodt, I'm a 3rd Yr Student at UAL (University of the Arts London), and founder of a platform called **Diversity Matters** (www.diversity-matters.org.uk) Thank you for the opportunity to present

I'll start with some UAL stats to give some context

Background summary student profile (2015/16):

44% of the student population are from a (BAME) background - an increase of 1% on the previous year. BAME students account for:

- 28% of UK / Home students
- 10% of EU students
- 83% of International students

UAL has a higher proportion of home undergraduate BAME students than the UK HEI Sector (21%) and other Art and Design specialist institutions (16%), however a lower proportion than London institutions (56%).

'Diversity Matters: addressing (BAME) black and minority ethnic representation within the arts' A personal reflective account of my "awakening" in UAL

"The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious, one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated." -

James Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers" speech, 1963. Over half a century later, this quote is still immensely apt.

My student experience has been somewhat unconventional. I enrolled onto the Journalism course at London College of Communication (LCC), one of 6 colleges which make up

UAL, as a final attempt to “do something with my life” aged 26. Failing a series of modules meant I had to repeat, which displaced me from having a conventional student life. And I was only diagnosed with dyslexia after going to see student support to ensure I had “my back covered” for final year. Perhaps quitting after my first year would have been more expected of me, going by what the statistics reveal.

Although UAL as a student body is diverse, this isn't the case in all 6 colleges which make up UAL, and neither is it the case with diverse representation in teaching staff. This is something that UAL are working on by putting in place a number of initiatives including a Race Champion forum with Stephen Reid, Pro-Vice Chancellor of UAL as the Race Champion.

My journey towards “consciousness” that Baldwin speaks of, or “awakening” of my black presence in a white space, started with my Students Union. I remember seeing a poster saying “Who represents You?” and responding in thought, “actually non of you do, non of you look like me.” I was encouraged to run for SU officer roles which channeled my activism.

The NUS Black Students Campaign, where I was introduced to then president Aaron Kiely and now NUS President Malia Bouatti (who gave a powerful keynote yesterday), has played an instrumental part in my student activism for representation in UAL and beyond.

On my course, BA Journalism, up until recently my lecturers were all white. In a Contextual studies seminar discussing Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, I asked my tutor why, for this “diverse” part of the course we couldn't have had some BAME representation for the guest lecture? His response was, “we just can't find any”. I remember cycling home that evening after seminar blinded by tears and taking Fanon's title as a personal reflection; “I was the wretched of the Earth”.

It's these types of moments which lead me to find creative channels to vent my frustrations. I set up a blog called “The **EFed** Student - the **Educationally Frustrated** student”. I'm no longer regularly writing that blog, which perhaps is a testimony towards actively creating change for myself and peers, rather than just complain.

The academic year of 2015/16 was a turning point in my student experience. My elected part-time role as LCC SU officer meant I had access to a wider range of students, as I felt with the UAL African Caribbean Society I previously chaired, too often felt like “preaching to the converted”. We needed non BAME identifiers in the discourse too.

So when I saw a poster offering funding a “**Student-Staff Collaboration**” project I thought “oh, money(!)”, then I thought “oh great opportunity” to curate projects leading on from some of the campaigns creating noise around race representation; “**Why is my curriculum white?**” “**Pale, Male and, Stale**” “**OccupyUAL**” etc, however bridge more of a student-staff solidarity through collaboration, rather than seeing issues as separate.

That's when Diversity Matters was conceived!

Description of the aims and objectives:

The aims of Diversity Matters is to voice the growing concerns regarding lack of BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) representation within UAL, and also the Arts.



Explanation of the origins and any consultation activity undertaken

Diversity Matters is a platform which grew from a “student-staff” collaboration project opportunity offered by UAL Teaching and Learning Exchange. The bid by Kai Lutterodt (final year BA Journalism student) supported by three BAME staff to organise “**Diversity Matters Awareness Week: Let’s Talk About Race**” was accepted with the event taking place in April 2016. It was an opportunity for BAME students and staff as well as non-BAME allies, to express solidarity and work together to address issues of underrepresentation and attainment affecting BAME students and staff. Since then, Diversity Matters has become an active student and recent graduate lead platform organising workshops, projects and events which focus on championing diversity in the Arts and Media, Education and Work environments.

Description of the practice:

Diversity Matters have organised workshops at three of the six colleges which make up UAL; CSM (Central Saint Martins), CCW (Chelsea, Camberwell and Wimbledon) and LCF (London College of Fashion), targeted at both students and staff to discuss in safe spaces, race matters within UAL, and what can be done to improve the attainment gap BAME and International students currently face.

Other practices include organising an exhibition on Diversity Matters’ reoccurring theme “**Let’s Talk About Race**”, exploring “**non-binary**” identity and intersections with LGBTQ+ community through zine-making workshop with Black Queer creative Rudy Loewe and Travis Alabanza (for a Stonewall Season workshop), and **Diversity Arts Project** which gave 16 BAME students an opportunity to create work which reflected their diverse backgrounds, be mentored and gain enterprise skills through selling at Camden Market over the summer, to name a few.

Diversity Matters projects within UAL have been supported by UAL Teaching and Learning Exchange, GEMS (UAL Black Staff Network), UAL Diversity Team, ARTS SU, and UAL Careers and Employability.

Results of any formal evaluation (qualitative or quantitative):



- Feedback from Diversity Matters Awareness Week (April 2016):

“It provides a space for staff and students to discuss important matters and needs to be much more than a one off” - attendee at DMAW’s Let’s Talk About Race

“The night was pronounced and very moving. To see staff students and Senior Management in one safe space was one of a kind. We want more of this. Open debate. Real life voices. Feelings shared. A space for the universities bodies to express their actions and hopes to improving important matters.” - attendee at DMAW’s Let’s Talk About Race

“It was very encouraging to have people of colour come together and discuss common victories and obvious difficulties within the UAL environment. I think the standard of event(s), particularly the one I attended, was not just eye-opening and relevant, it is absolutely essential for (BAME) staff to have a collective voice.” - attendee at DMAW’s Let’s Talk About Race

Due to the positive response received, planning is in place for Diversity Matters Awareness Week 2017

- Divercity Arts Project (July 2016):



“(I most enjoyed) the opportunity to meet and work with other BAME students across the University colleges” - student participant in Divercity Arts Project

“(I most enjoyed) creating and then selling things in Camden Market, as this time I was on the other side of the stall which gave me a chance to experience maybe the lifestyle of either an artist, seller, entrepreneur etc may go through or start of with on a daily basis. It was also good to connect with shoppers and a chance to show what we do.” - student participant in Divercity Arts Project

The overall feedback from 16 UAL students on the project suggests that there needs to be more enterprise opportunities targeted at BAME students (or at least not segregating them from such opportunities as many of the posters tend to have a dominant white or “white-passing” BAME person on the cover). Also offering enterprise opportunities and funding business projects for (or inclusively targeted at) BAME students can help curb the attainment gap statistics, and well as the poor statistics which highlight BAME graduates discrimination in getting a job after graduation in comparison to their white peers.

Students expressed 100% satisfaction with the Divercity Arts Project, and we’re keen to place a bid organise a winter Divercity Arts Project Summer 2017.

Explanation of why it would be of benefit to other institutions:

Diversity Matters is an example of the positive outcomes of students’ initiatives when they supported by staff members, and funded. There are common barriers both BAME staff and students face. Working together to voice and address advocates solidarity and a greater support system.

Further information from about each of the projects mentioned and others can be found on the Diversity Matters blog www.diversity-matters.org.uk. Please feel free to contact me and share any feedback kai@diversity-matters.org.uk

Diversity Matters: Let's Talk About Race video can be view online on the **Diversity Matters YouTube channel** =>> <https://youtu.be/tQmxUq9txYg>



Thank you!