

## **Blog: Interning with RACE**

### **Morayo Omogbenigun**

I was initially interested in working at the Research Action Coalition for Race Equality (RACE) as it was a unique opportunity to be a part of research relating to race equality, and a chance to work with a diverse team, which as a Black student in Bristol, was both rare and exciting. Working with FUZE Bristol as a blog writer from 2020-2021, I was already aware of the work the Black South West Network were doing in the Bristol area. Furthermore, as a Social Policy student, it was intriguing to see what I learnt about in University being applied in real life and have an insight into how policy is made and influenced at the local level. Moreover, this was a chance to engage with the Bristolian community outside of the University.

I took part in a research project funded by Bristol City Council which mapped the race equality sector in Bristol, culminating in an interactive map with different race equality organisations, all with the goal of increasing access to data and creating synergy between BCC, the University and community organisations. The initial stages of the project involved researching different race equality organisations in Bristol and the South West in order to understand what work was being done around the city, and any gaps that might exist. After this, my colleague Lottie and I were able to create a script, then contact each organisation and interview them on how they judged impact in their organisation, what data they needed and if they had research which was publicly available. The purpose of this was to create a Data Hub on the RACE Coalition website which could appease the data needs of all the organisations, while providing an open platform for data to be shared. Alongside this, Tobi, the third RACE Coalition work placement student, collated raw data on ethnicity in the South West, highlighting how both qualitative and quantitative data collection complement each other.

Speaking to individuals who worked at these organisations was an insight into the realities of the VCSE Sector: funding, liaising with BCC and the University, and ensuring service users were satisfied. Throughout the process of interviewing these organisations, Lottie and I were able to use qualitative interview and data collection techniques which we learnt at the University. Learning about the VCSE Sector from the experienced BSWN team also provided us with a history of what race equality work looked like in Bristol. I immediately felt a part of the office culture, and as one of my first experiences working in an office, was a wholly positive one.

Alongside my colleague Lottie, we learned how to use qualitative interview techniques, including how to conduct semi-structured interviews, and how to securely manage large amounts of data on Excel. We also got involved with the Commission for Race Equality (CoRE) and Bristol Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group, and were able to figure out how to turn the

demands of the commission into actionable points. This was a valuable insight into Bristol's goal of looking into racial disparities, and ultimately alleviating them.

I would definitely recommend a work placement at BSWN and the RACE Coalition, because it is a chance to be on the frontline of innovative research relating to race equality and community justice. Moreover, as a Social Policy undergrad, it was amazing to be part of the processes which contribute to evidence-based policymaking.