

## judaism

**J**ews live according to God's law as revealed by Moses, the most important of which is to believe in one God and to learn to love God through study, prayer and by celebrating the yearly cycle of holy days.

Moses, who led the 'Children of Israel' out of slavery in Egypt, was himself born into slavery and brought up as a prince in Egypt. The Jewish scriptures are known as the Tanakh, and Jews meet for worship at a Synagogue. The six-sided star known as the 'Star

**"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God,  
the Lord is one and  
you shall love the Lord  
your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul  
and with all your might"  
– the Shema**

of David' or 'Seal of Solomon' is their symbol. The traditional symbol of the Jewish nation is a seven-branched candelabrum called a menorah, which is famously depicted on the arch of Titus in Rome in a relief celebrating the conquest of Jerusalem.

**Rosh Hashanah (October 4<sup>th</sup>):** Beginning of the Jewish year when God symbolically judges Jewish people. It starts a 10-day festival ending with **Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement (October 12<sup>th</sup>):** a day to remember the previous year's sins and to seek forgiveness.

**Succoth (October 17<sup>th</sup>):** The 7-day Festival of Tabernacles commemorates the wandering of the Jews after deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Temporary shelters (Succoth) are built.

**Chanukah (December 26<sup>th</sup> – January 2<sup>nd</sup>):** An

8-day festival to commemorate the victory of the Maccabees, the re-lighting of the menorah – the light that signifies God's presence in the Temple in 168 BC.

**Tu B'Shevat (February 13<sup>th</sup>):** The New Year for trees. A time for children to plant new trees, traditionally a Cedar for a boy and a Cypress for a girl.

**Purim (March 14<sup>th</sup>):** Celebrates the deliverance of the Jews of Persia from the King's minister, Haman. This deliverance occurred partly because the King married Esther, a Jewess.

**Pesach, Passover (April 13<sup>th</sup>):** Commemorates the Jews' exodus from Egypt. An 8-day festival during which no leavened food is taken, as a reminder of the haste with which the Jewish people left.

**Shavuot, Pentecost (June 1<sup>st</sup>):** Two-day festival in remembrance of the Israelites receiving the Torah – the revelation of God's will – at Mount Sinai.



## rastafarianism

**R**astafarians worship 'Ras Tafari' (Emperor Haile Selassie I) as a manifestation of God (Jah) and believe in freedom from oppression, and that redemption can only be gained by repatriation to Africa.



These beliefs are sustained by self-discipline, meetings to study the Old Testament and the philosophy and teachings of Marcus Garvey.

**"O thou God of Ethiopia,  
thou god of divine modesty,  
thy spirit come within our  
hearts to dwell in the parts of  
righteousness. That the hungry  
be fed, the sick nourished,  
the aged protected and  
the infant cared for"  
– Rastafarian prayer**

Marcus Garvey, a Pan-African, told his congregation to 'look to Africa where a Black King shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is that hand.' Since that day he was heralded a prophet. Garvey's life work UNIA, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and realisation of the Black Star Liners that were to repatriate Africans all over the world, was proof that he was indeed the prophet who was to return the lost tribe of Rastas that were sold into slavery.

All four types of Rastafarianism purport the dictum 'One God, One Destiny'. For some Rastas, taking of the herb Ganja is sacred and a dedication. It is considered nec-

essary to wear your hair dreadlocked as the Somali and Masai soldiers did and follow teachings of the Old Testament to be a true Rasta.

The red, green and gold are a universal symbol representing the blood of African martyrs, rich vegetation in Africa and the wealth of Africa.

**Ethiopian New Year's Day (September 11<sup>th</sup>):** Rastafarians look to Ethiopia as their spiritual home, so this is a day of celebration to start the year.

**Crowning of Emperor Haile Selassie I (November 2<sup>nd</sup>):** Rastafarians take their name from Ras Tafari (Prince Creator) crowned Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. It is an all day celebration.

**Ethiopian Christmas (January 7<sup>th</sup>):** Christianity became the official religion of Ethiopia in 330 AD, and this is a day to acknowledge the life and works of Jesus.

**Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie (July 23<sup>rd</sup>):** The day on which the Emperor was born. A holiday kept with Nyahbingi – drumming, hymns and prayer.

**Marcus Garvey's Birthday (August 17<sup>th</sup>):** The Jamaican prophet who foretold the crowning of a Black King in Africa.



## shintoism

**S**hinto belief entails venerating nature and establishing communion with the 'Kami' – its spirits and deities – through prayer and ritual, to live harmoniously, peacefully and fruitfully with the natural world.

While the origins of Shinto belief go back thousands of years, the most revered shrine of Amaterasu, the Kami of the Sun, was dedicated at this time. Shinto worship takes place through matsuri (observation of festivals) at a shrine. The way into a Shinto shrine is through a 'torii', a gateway between the ordinary and the sacred.

**Birthday of Confucius (October 10<sup>th</sup>):** Heeding a friend's premonition, the scholar Huan Ching escaped death by climbing to a high place on the ninth day of the ninth moon. The day is spent climbing hills.

**Shogatsu (January 1<sup>st</sup>):** Japanese New Year is both solemn and joyful, welcomed in with a special meal and gifts of money for children.

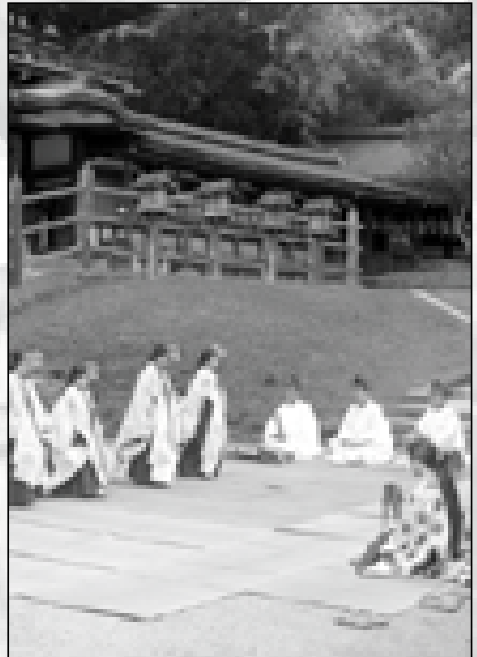
**"In each and every  
new leaf, I see  
the 'Kami' of Spring"  
– Shinto saying**

**Chinese New Year (January 29<sup>th</sup>):** 2006 will be the year of the Dog. An important event in the Chinese calendar, New Year is everyone's birthday. The dragon of the old year is driven out with cymbals and fireworks; houses are decorated with paper and painted red for good luck. Celebrations end with the **Lantern Festival (February 13<sup>th</sup>)** with lanterns of all colours but white.

**Setsubun, Spring Festival (February 3<sup>rd</sup>):** day of winter is a time to drive out evil spirits with a bean-throwing ceremony. Beans are thrown into dark corners with shouts of 'Fortune in, devils out'.

**Dragon Boat Festival (June 11<sup>th</sup>):** In memory of the poet Qu Yuan (279 BC) who drowned himself to protest against official corruption. Peasants raced to save him in their dragon boats, feeding the fish rice dumplings to stop them from eating his body. During the festival, rice dumplings are eaten and the famous dragon boat races are held.

**Tanabata, Star Festival (July 7<sup>th</sup>):** When the stars Vega and Altair have their annual meeting across the Milky Way. During the evening, children greet the stars by putting bamboo sprigs decorated with bells and wishes written in coloured paper in the garden.



## sikhism

**Vaisakhi (April 13<sup>th</sup>):** Commemoration of the day when the tenth Guru (spiritual leader) Gobind Singh, founded the Khalsa, the Sikh brotherhood. It is on this day that Sikhs celebrate their foundation.



**Diwali (November 1<sup>st</sup>):** For Sikhs a time to light up Gurdwaras as a reminder of the spiritual victory of Guru Har-gobind who saved 52 Hindu kings from imprisonment.

**Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (November 24<sup>th</sup>):** Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru was executed for his belief in the need for religious liberty and freedom of worship.

**“Real prayer needs no words, no gesture, no thoughts. A real prayer only comes from the Lord”  
– Baba Narinder Singh Ji**

**Birthday of Guru Nanak (November 15<sup>th</sup>):** The first Guru who preached worship of one God and the equality of humanity. The distinctive Sikh communal free kitchen ‘langar’ where all could eat together, whatever their caste or status, was his idea.

**Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (June 16<sup>th</sup>):** Martyred for his faith, the fifth Guru compiled the Sikh holy scripture, Adi Granth, and completed the Golden Temple at Amritsar.

## zoroastrianism

**Z**oroastrians choose to aid Ahura Mazda the Absolute Creator who is responsible only for good to defeat evil and

bring on the final judgement and the establishment of Paradise.

The Prophet Zarathustra (Greek ‘Zoroaster’) was born in eastern Iran. Zoroastrians study the Avesta, which includes the Gathas (hymns of Zarathustra) and worship at home or Fire Temples. The Zoroastrian symbol represents a ‘fravashi’ (guardian spirit) which is the good or spiritual self that exists to aid each individual.

**Birthday of the Prophet (March 26<sup>th</sup>):** Zoroastrians follow the teachings of the Prophet Zarathustra who preached worship of the Creator and that mankind is a partner in caring for His creation.

**“Good thoughts,  
good words,  
good deeds”**

**Death of The Prophet (December 26<sup>th</sup>):** The anniversary of the Prophet’s death, when prayers are recited at the Fire Temple, prayer being the spiritual weapon in the struggle with evil.

**Muktad (March 16<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>):** the last 10 days of the Zoroastrian Shensai year during which the divine hymns of Zarathustra are recited.

**Gahambars:** A series of seasonal celebrations in honour of the seven creations: the sky (April 30<sup>th</sup>); water (June 29<sup>th</sup>); earth (September 12<sup>th</sup>); plant kingdom (October 12<sup>th</sup>); animal kingdom (December 21<sup>st</sup>); humanity (March 9<sup>th</sup>); and fire (at No-Rooz).

**No-Rooz, New Beginning (March 21<sup>st</sup>):** is an important day of renewal, believed to have been founded by the Prophet Zarathustra who received his first Revelation on this day. It is a festival in honour of fire, symbol of truth, celebrated by exchanging gifts and by visiting the Fire Temple.

## kwanzaa

**A**n annual celebration of family, community and African culture and agriculture.

Kwanzaa, the African-American cultural holiday conceived and developed by Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga, was first celebrated on December 26, 1966. Kwanzaa is traditionally celebrated from December 26 to January 1, with each day focused on Nguzo Saba, or the seven principles.

Kwanzaa engages an ancient and living cultural tradition which reflects the best of African thought and practice in its reaffirmation of the dignity of the human person in community and culture. The wellbeing of family and community, the integrity of the environment and our kinship with it, and the rich resource and meaning of peoples' culture are all important.

**Umoja 'Unity' (December 26<sup>th</sup>)**

**Kujichagu 'Self determination' (December 27<sup>th</sup>)**

**Ujima 'Collective work and responsibility' (December 28<sup>th</sup>)**

**Ujuaama 'Cooperation' (December 29<sup>th</sup>)**

**Nia 'Purpose' (December 30<sup>th</sup>)**

**Kuumba 'Creativity' (December 31<sup>st</sup>)**

**Imaani 'Faith' (January 1<sup>st</sup>)**

## wicca/paganism

**T**he recognition of the divine in nature is at the heart of Pagan belief. Pagans are deeply aware of the natural world and see the power of the divine in the on-going cycle of life and death.

Pagans worship the divine in many different forms, through feminine as well as masculine imagery and also as without gender. The most important and widely recognised of

these are the god and goddess (or pantheons of God and Goddess) whose annual cycle of procreation, giving birth and dying defines the Pagan year. Paganism strongly emphasises equality of the sexes. Women play a prominent role in the modern Pagan movement, and Goddess worship features in most Pagan ceremonies.

**Autumn Equinox (September 23<sup>rd</sup>)**

**Samhain (October 31<sup>st</sup>)**

**Solstice (December 21<sup>st</sup>)**

**Mbole (February 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

**Ostara (March 21<sup>st</sup>)**

**Beltane (May 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Litha (June 21<sup>st</sup>)**

**Lammas (August 1<sup>st</sup>)**

## voudon/voodoo

**T**he word 'voudon' derives from *vodu*, meaning 'spirit' or 'deity'. Voudon is marked primarily by a belief in the *Loa*, the Gods that form the voudon pantheon.

Devotees of Voudon believe that all things serve the *Loa* and so by definition are expressions and extensions of deity. Rituals are practised primarily to make offerings to, or 'feed', the *Loa* to entreat it for aid or fortune. The voudon spirits ('*Loa*') symbolise major elements of nature such as earth, water, air or fire, and also human sentiments such as love, bravery and justice.

Festivals and holy days vary from different tribes and places. This is a summary of festivals and approximate times:

**Kabye, commemorating magic (November 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Kamou, harvest celebration (January 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Sintou, ancestral funeral dances (February 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Laking, imitation sacrifice for men (May 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Avela, peer group initiation festival (July 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Mami Ayiza, Festival of Bean (August 1<sup>st</sup>)**

**Dipontre, Festival of Yam (August 31<sup>st</sup>)**

## introduction: black perspectives

**T**his section offers the personal perspectives and accounts of a number of Black students from around the UK. Their experiences, coupled with details from national representative groups that aide Black students, reflect the enormous diversity that exists among the community.

However, it is recognised that no two peoples' experiences are ever the same, and there is no suggestion that the perspectives offered are a universal experience of what life in Britain is like – they are but one reality. Other peoples' experience are theirs and equally valid.

## national hindu students' forum

**U**niversity is an opportunity; an opportunity to experience new things, an opportunity to discover ourselves, and to shape our future lives. There are many windows yet there are those who do not climb into any – let us not be among those.

National Hindu Students Forum (UK) was formed in 1991 by students who wished to create a movement by which they, and others, could gain a better understanding of Hindu Dharma, or the Hindu way of life, and so develop themselves as rounded and cultured individuals beneficial to society.

Hindu Dharma is unique. And so those that follow it are unique. It is this heritage that is the reason behind the academic and social success of Hindu Youth today. Our Dharma instills within us a holistic attitude in which we respect and accept all others while our culture encourages us to give as much as we can to become good people.

However it is a difficult balance to find and maintain between following this ancient Eastern philosophy and integrating within the modern Western system; NHSF provides the

chance for us to be able to find this balance. NHSF helps Hindu youth to connect and develop an awareness of Hindu Dharma and apply it within our lives. It is also a vehicle to increase Hindu representation and involvement within university life so that Hindu students have the voice and play a the role that they have a responsibility for.

There are local Hindu Societies, affiliated to the national network, in over 50 educational institutes across the country. Each runs a range of educational, cultural, social and sporting activities such as lectures, discussion groups, study sessions, festival celebrations, cultural nights and charity dinners. At the national level NHSF annually organises a youth conference, sports tournament and 'Sewa Week' (charity week) as well as publishing campaign leaflets and HUM – the termly student magazine.

Getting involved with Hindu activity is easy through local events or by getting in touch with us. Anyone can be a passive member but you can get a lot more satisfaction by becoming part of the local committee or national team and organising the most popular activities on campus!

**Email:** [info@nhsf.org.uk](mailto:info@nhsf.org.uk)  
**Web site:** [www.nhsf.org.uk](http://www.nhsf.org.uk)  
**Tel:** 07092 377304



## a hindu student

Traditionally Hindu students have been high achievers, especially in demanding disciplines such as medicine, engineering and law. Although this is due to our hard work, some of the credit must be given to the immense support networks ingrained within our culture. The inherent sense of duty and the will to succeed drive these achievements.

As a Hindu student, I understand that I have a rich heritage, but I also understand that many young students find it challenging sometimes to integrate their Dharma with their local setting. Occasionally this goes far enough to create a 'cultural cringe' when some students around me neglect our culture in an attempt to become people that they are

not, just to fit in. This gives them neither the respect or confidence that will allow them to prosper. Unfortunately this is becoming more widespread as it is becoming more difficult for new students to maintain links with our legacy.

It is this gap that can be filled by organisations such as NHSF which gives ordinary Hindu students in colleges and universities around the country the opportunity to tread a path that can make the best use of both worlds — so that Hindu students can carry on being successful, while preserving their faith and cultural dignity. This also allows students to get something extra from their student life, apart from academics, to encourage their transition from aspiring students to successful members of the community and nation.

*Pulkit Agrawal*

## a muslim student

At a time of war,  
I bring you an image of peace.

At a time of supposed hatred,  
I'll tell you stories of friendship.

At a time of misunderstanding,  
I can show you a channel of truth.

At this time of fear,  
We can unite to banish insecurity.

things. Yet I myself, along with thousands of other Muslim students in the UK are branded in this way. This is what I mean when I refer to insecurity.

I am insecure about the way the people who share my belief are viewed. I am afraid that this lack of understanding results in the mistreatment of Muslims up and down the country.

However, this dark tunnel does have light at the end. This light is the student body. This light is the beautiful people who don't believe everything they read and stand up to defend those who are misrepresented. So thank you to those beautiful people, you know who you are.

*Nazia Ali*

In a nutshell, this verse is what it means to be a Muslim student in the UK. At least, to me.

I would also describe my experience to be largely similar to the bulk of the student population. Like most students I go out with friends, try new things, meet different people... and attend lectures, of course.

However, I must admit that I am haunted by others' perceptions. Preconceived ideas generated by the state of affairs today. Ideas with no basis in truth, yet ideas that can surface at any time, and strike me down like lightning. "You're a radical... a fundamentalist... an extremist..." I am told. What? Hello? I am none of these

## fosis

**“Hold fast to the rope of Allah,  
all of you together,  
and do not disunite”  
- Surah Al-Imran, 3:103**

**F**OSIS, the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, is the premier representative body for Muslim student in the UK and Ireland.

The youth-led organisation was established in 1962 after a meeting held in Birmingham by students from London, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, Dublin and Wolverhampton who had come to the realisation that there was a need to co-ordinate the work of Islamic societies in fragile times.

FOSIS strives hard to uphold the maxim: “And hold fast to the rope of Allah, all of you together, and be not disunited” (Qu’ran, Surah Al-Imran, 3:103).

Organised and run by Muslim students – men and women – FOSIS has represented over 90,000 students in colleges and universities across the country in many ways. Recent work has encompassed:

- Preparing freshers’ packs for Muslim students with information and literature.
- Organising speakers’ tours across campuses by inviting national and international speakers.
- Campaigning on student issues like education funding and student debt, and international solidarity issues such as Palestine, through a range of seminars, conferences and campaign materials.



- Representing Muslim students’ concerns in the political arena, to bodies like the NUS, and to a host of other organisations and the government.
- Interacting with other faith groups in order to build bridges and create dialogue.
- Organising an annual conference which is held over a three-day period in June, attendance at which has been increasing year on year.
- Educate the student body about the positive contributions Muslims have made to education and society.
- Spreading the message of Islam across campuses, through one-to-one dialogue and organised events that foster a better understanding of Islam, and Muslim values and practice.

**FOSIS has taken on  
greater responsibility to  
ensure that the rights  
of all students, not just Muslim  
ones, are upheld**

In the current challenging time for Muslim students, FOSIS has taken on greater responsibility to ensure that the rights of all students, not just Muslim ones, are upheld, and also that their needs are better understood.

FOSIS works to equip the hearts and minds of Muslim students across the UK and Ireland about their duties and what they can offer and above all to ensure that as a Muslim student they have the chance to express themselves in a clear and coherent manner.

For more information please contact:  
FOSIS, 38 Mapesbury Road,  
London, NW2 4JD  
Tel: 0208 452 4493,  
Fax: 0208 208 4161  
Email: [info@fosis.org.uk](mailto:info@fosis.org.uk)  
Website: [www.fosis.org.uk](http://www.fosis.org.uk)



The **SikhStudent** organisation was set-up four years ago by current students and recent graduates looking to support the Sikh student community throughout the UK. The main objectives of **SikhStudent** include:

- Supporting students in striking a healthy balance between mental, physical and spiritual well being at college and university.
- Providing Sikh students with relevant information and resources, including advice on education and careers.
- Encouraging young Sikhs to explore their roots and self-identity.
- Inspiring Sikh students to become positive role models for youth in their community.
- Facilitating Sikhs in setting up projects/activities that support the needs of the wider community.

### **Our current activities include support to university Sikh societies in the form of advice, resources and equipment**

Our current activities include support to university Sikh societies in the form of advice, resources and equipment, the **SikhStudent.org** website (launched later this year), the **SikhStudent** academic year wall-planner and resource CD-ROM. Our Summer and Winter Sikh Camps and the **SikhStudent** Careers fair are part of a rapidly growing Alumni network. We have lots more activities and projects planned for the coming year. We are always open to new ideas! If you would like to find out more about us please contact us at [info@sikhstudent.org](mailto:info@sikhstudent.org).

Today, Sikhs are diversifying into many different professions from doctors, accountants and lawyers to soldiers, actors and teachers. **SikhStudent** hopes to enhance the prospects of Sikhs in the workplace by of-



fering guidance and assisting them to gain jobs, by actively advertising and promoting employers who have positive ethnic minority

### **'For unity and understanding'**

programmes, CV workshops and putting potential workers in touch with those who are in similar fields. **SikhStudent** also hopes to offer work placements and gap years abroad to students, expanding the experiences and horizons of able people.

**SikhStudent** works closely with LINKS (London's Integrated Network of Kaur and Singhs). LINKS is run by students for students and aims to provide on the ground support to young Sikhs and Sikh Societies in the London area. This could be through organising speaker events, marketing Chaa and Samosa parties, paint-balling events, arranging yoga classes, planning trips to Alton Towers or providing a support network for students at an individual level. LINKS is a young organisation and needs your support. Get involved!

Check out [www.sikhstudent.org](http://www.sikhstudent.org) for all future and past events!



## a sikh student

As a child, my parents always expressed the love they had for their religion, and as I grew up I began to appreciate this. As I was lucky enough to have an insight into Sikhi, I found great benefit from my university Sikh society.

Being a Sikh student in Britain means facing many hurdles that test our faith, from the temptation of drugs and alcohol, to having to explain the wearing of the turban and carrying a Kirpan. Following 9/11 and 7/7 we, as a community were also attacked by bigots who failed to recognise us as Sikhs.

Sikhi promotes the equality of men and women, in both community life and in the home. These rights were granted 500 years

before the fight of the suffragettes, by our first Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji:

*So kiyō mandaa aakheeyai, jith jamai rajaan  
Why call women bad?  
From her kings are born*

It is this love for all humans, that the Gurus emphasised,

*Maanas kee jaat, sabhai ek hee pachaanbo  
Recognise the whole human race as one*

which makes me raise my head up high and take pride in calling myself a Sikh!

Raj Karega Khalsa!

*Simrit Kaur Sandhu*

## a christian student

When I first started university, I did not have a clue what lay ahead for me, being the first in my family to attend university in the UK. However, the one thing that I did know was that I was excited by this very prospect.

I grew up in the predominantly Black populated East London borough of Hackney where I went to school with Indian, Pakistani, Turkish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Kurdish, Arab, Greek, West Indian of various islands and African children, all of whom also practiced various religions which were celebrated during the school year. I had concluded that the whole of Britain, and especially Liverpool, which accommodates Britain's oldest Black community, was going to be as culturally diverse as this.

I was to be rudely awoken when I got to my 'original redbrick university', by the significantly small proportion of Black students and the even smaller minority of Christians. The first few weeks took a lot of adjusting to. Of the 16,000 students present at the university, I seemed to be meeting the same person over and over again - white, middle class, mainstream, non-Christian small town teenager who had just obtained some freedom. It was hard to relate.

The African Caribbean Society helped me to meet people more like myself and the people back at home, and through the society I was introduced to my local church which has enabled me to maintain my faith and beliefs. These two institutions have greatly contributed to my being able to maintain a large part of who I really am during my university experience.

*Phyllis Acheampong*

## black majority churches and FE

For young Black people, the local FE college is the main route to vocational and academic qualifications and to jobs – and to higher education. Black youngsters are twice as likely to go to college as white youngsters.

In colleges, young people are in a less protected environment than in school – they are free to go in and out of college when they have no classes; there is less control over attendance, and outside college, they are subjected to a range of powerful temptations.

### **The mainstream Churches have historically failed to recognise and involve Black communities**

Colleges are taking increasingly seriously their responsibility for the spiritual and moral development of their students – often through FE chaplaincies, which have responsibility to the development of all students, and to offer guidance where it is needed. They also work through Christian and other faith societies and student groups – and in partnership with local faith communities.

Some chaplains are ordained ministers, but many chaplaincies are organised as teams – with members who are often volunteers.

But of the nearly 500 volunteers of chaplaincy teams, only a few come from the Black communities. This is partly because of the historic failure of the mainstream churches to recognise and involve Black communities, and because of racist attitudes in the Churches, but also because Black members of congregations have not come forward. Most of them have been in full-time (and of-

ten double-time) jobs, and have not had time to make this type of commitment. But now there is an opportunity for many members of the community to get involved.

### **purpose**

The National Ecumenical Agency in FE has committed funds from government to increase Black involvement through College-Faith Community Partnerships.

The aim is to enable parents and others from the communities to contribute to chaplaincies, and to provide appropriate support and mentoring for students from their own communities. By this it is hoped:

- to recruit more students to gain qualifications, jobs and entry to universities;
- to prevent FE students from dropping out by offering advice and help;
- to ensure FE students have access to guidance in relation to their spiritual welfare – especially at times of temptation;
- to assist FE chaplaincies to become centres for the spiritual and moral development of all in partnership with local faith communities.

### **way forward**

A meeting between Bishop Joe Aldred, Black Majority Churches Officer at CTBI, and Alan Murray, Churches' National Adviser in FE, agreed to draw up a set of objectives to bring members from Black-majority churches together.

[www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

*Alan Murray,  
Churches' National  
Adviser in FE*



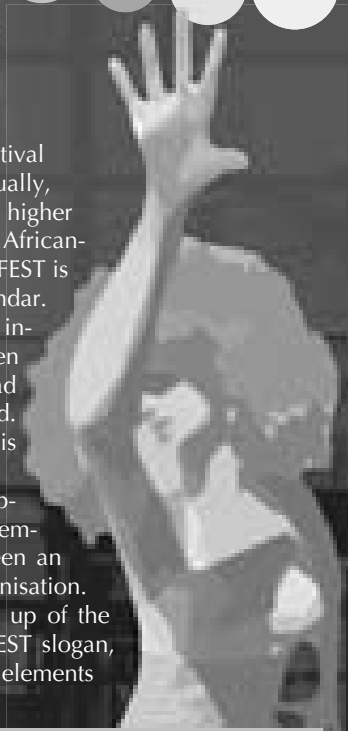
## acfest

The African Caribbean Festival (ACFEST) is a three-day festival incorporating Sport, Edutainment and Culture. Held annually, ACFEST is a celebration of African-Caribbean students in higher education. With a nationwide attendance, it is now the largest African-Caribbean student festival in Europe. Now in its 16th year, ACFEST is the focal event on any African-Caribbean student's social calendar.

In excess of 120 universities are approached and receive information annually on the event, and as a result ACFEST has seen attendance steadily increasing each year. The last ACFEST had an overall attendance of 8,000 students within a single weekend. With a small proportion of black students nationwide, ACFEST is a unique and therefore a well-received event.

Past, current and future students, along with the general public, all make up the audience. Their dedication to promoting themselves, as well as their faithful continued attendance, has been an integral factor in the success and longevity of the ACFEST organisation.

The traditional structure of the weekend has been made up of the same fundamental components since its inception. The ACFEST slogan, Sport-Edutainment-Culture incorporates the main entertaining elements of the weekend.



*Are you a student union officer or student governor at an further education college?  
Not sure what your role involves?*

*Want to learn about communicating, elections, negotiating and representation?*

**Help is here...**

## NUS FE essentials

FE essentials provides training for FE student officers to identify their roles within their unions, how to involve their students and set them off on a year of effective campaigning and representing.

## NUS FE Student Governors Convention

NUS has teamed up with the Association of Colleges and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership to provide student governors with comprehensive training on everything from understanding the FE sector to understanding the role of the Clerk.

For more information on these training events or the NUS FE campaign for 05/06 please contact your NUS Regional Officer or Ellie Russell, NUS Vice President Further Education at [ellie.russell@nus.org.uk](mailto:ellie.russell@nus.org.uk) or 07725124411

## union of jewish students

The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) represents the interests of Jewish students within the community and a national level. We aim to provide a safe environment for Jewish life on campus, and to promote Jewish student interests in the education context. The long-term aim is to create a positive Jewish experience that can translate into good leadership for the future of Anglo-Jewry.

Jewish student activity has evolved greatly over the years towards a more proactive approach, particularly in its campaign work, concerning the education of Jews and non-Jews on subjects like Jewish life and practise.

A particular concern to UJS is campaigning against racism and fascism. This is an area where we co-operate with other organisations. UJS' concern for anti-Semitism is part of its wider campaign against all forms of intolerance on campus. Outside the student environment, Jewish students have mobilised in campaigns in the wider community against the BNP and other far right organisations.

Over the course of its history, UJS has grown from being a small embryonic organisation to a large professional student society. In its early days, it was treated almost like an alien organisation on many campuses, corresponding in many ways to the difficult situation for Jewish

students, both collectively and individually. This took place against the background of complex international politics, where Jewish students feared speaking out and when the calls for banning Jewish societies on campuses were prevalent.

Universities themselves have a duty to provide for the religious welfare needs of students, such as provision of prayer rooms and support for chaplains. In many ways, these kinds of provisions and support are common sense, and failure to take account of issues such as festivals, amount to a form of institutional racism. The UJS is concerned to raise awareness and to bring about some form of change.

From being a small 'reactive' entity, UJS has grown. It has forged pro-active and co-operative links with a number of anti-racist, religious, inter-religious organisations and this has become both its hallmark and its project for the future.

For more details, contact:  
UJS, Hillel House,  
1-2 Endsleigh Street,  
London, WC1H 0DS  
Tel: 020 7387 4644  
Web: [www.ujs-online.co.uk](http://www.ujs-online.co.uk)



## an african student

**A**s the Vice President Education and Welfare at Coventry University Students' Union, it's good to know that Black students can make inroads into our unions. When I was first asked to write about being an African student I tried to come up with ideas on what it was like. It was almost like I was looking for something to say – that I had a different experience at university compared to the experiences of other students because I was African.

As a Black African student at university my background encouraged me to work that little extra. My parents often told me that as a Black African student I would have to work ten times harder than my fellow students to make progress.

I wanted to make the most of my university. I love football so joining the women's football team was something that I really wanted to get involved in at the union as well as many other activities that university life offered me. I was a student ambassador at the university for three years before doing this job. When election time came round I thought that I would go for this position because I wanted to get people involved in the union, open their eyes to what is around them and what the students' union and university experience had to offer them.

*Ama Uzowuru*

**As a Black African student at university my background encouraged me to work that little extra**

## a caribbean student

**I**went to university not expecting to be included in the "great student experience" so boldly marketed to prospective students. Why? Because this social 'experience' promoted by students' unions mainly consisted of the cheap beers and roaring nightlife to be had. Great if that's what you want to be included in, but what if that's not your lifestyle or value system? There must be some of us who don't subscribe to that ideal.

As a Caribbean, Muslim woman and a valid member of my SU, my needs were not being taken into account. Walking through campus, I guess my headscarf reciprocated a respectful assumption that I would not be interested in SU club nights and bar crawls, so promoters simply wouldn't 'flyer' me. It seemed one lifestyle was being promoted as the norm. The only alternatives were the Black societies, who themselves operated on the fringe and weren't part of the mainstream decision-making body of the SU.

Recognising the SU wasn't representative of Black students, I endeavoured to find out about how Black students could get involved and contribute to the decisions that would affect them.

Once the SU began making decisions with consultation and inclusion of its Black student community, it ceased to define the student experience according to its existing value systems and needs. Today my SU attempts to recognise all student lifestyles and include them in the mainstream as part of the definitive student experience. It now cites celebrating Black History Month and providing alcohol-free social space amongst its great achievements. The great university experience is about socialising and developing life-long friendships but it can be done in a place or situation that is comfortable and inviting for all.

*Aliyyah Balson*

# black perspectives: international students

Being a Black student from a different country often means making a whole new set of adjustments. When you first arrive some will note your 'exotic' accent, others your colour and, in the case of most international students, that you are slightly older or have come here for graduate studies. On the flip side, most home students you encounter are white, straight out of school and British. And yet, it is not at all as awkward as it sounds.

There are many international societies, from Singapore & Malaysia, Caribbean to the European Society, where you can meet people from your own country.

When you get to your university you should contact your students' union's International Officer whose role it is to represent you and highlight your needs. They can help if you are having problems, for example culture shock or if you need language support sessions, or help to open a bank account or navigate the expensive and sometimes baffling visa process.

Unions, in addition to their representative role, offer welfare, social and academic services and information to international students who form 13 per cent of the UK student population.

If you feel the union's confidential support is not what you want, you can turn to UKCOSA.

UKCOSA is the Council for International Education, an independent organisation that facilitates international student mobility. It promotes and protects the interests of students from other countries studying in the UK, and the interest of students from the UK studying abroad.

UKCOSA provides information and advice about the various aspects of support for international students. It works with the providers of education to ensure a quality educational experience for international students, monitoring trends and developments, promoting good practice and lobbying government and other agencies for improvements to policy and legislation.

## UKCOSA's advice service

UKCOSA's advice service gives expert guidance on topics related to international students' education.

The service is accessed by telephone: 020 7107 9922 and provides up-to-date advice on key topics like immigration and employment law, financial aid and the regulations on fees and grants.

## HOST

HOST brings together international students at universities and colleges in the UK with friendly British residents who welcome students to their homes for a short visit. It is a unique opportunity for both students and hosts to make a positive contribution to international understanding. For more information visit: [www.hostuk.org.uk](http://www.hostuk.org.uk).



## Other links of interest to international students include:

Association of Commonwealth Universities:  
[www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)

The British Council: [www.britcoun.org/index.htm](http://www.britcoun.org/index.htm)

The Council for International Students:  
[www.cisuk.org.uk](http://www.cisuk.org.uk)

NUS International Students' Campaign:  
[www.nusonline.co.uk/campaigns/International-Students](http://www.nusonline.co.uk/campaigns/International-Students)

## an international student

**C**oming from a non-English speaking African country, I was nervous about language and culture shock in the run-up to my first term. I was bewildered by the wealth of British accents I encountered for the first time, but I took this to mean that my own accent must not matter. I've always found it useful to avoid taking offence if people do not understand me at first, just as I have difficulties understanding some regional accents. Being honest is the best help in these situations, and a useful side effect is that it actually builds up your confidence to interact freely with other people.

I spent most of my first year trying to 'identify' with many local activities. It wasn't until I realised that in my vain effort to 'assimilate', I was giving nothing of myself to the community that the real fun began! I joined the Amnesty International group which gave me the chance to get involved in running university-wide campaigns and social events, and within a term I had made many new acquaintances. This, unlike much of what I had done previously, was something I felt very natural with, as was my involvement with my students' union. So, as far as social life goes, I think that not burying your interests just because you think they don't 'fit' or you're not 'good enough' is the thing to avoid: the rest works itself out!

So while you may not help feeling homesick sometime, as a Black student from overseas, it is still a very worthwhile experience.

*Richard Nkulikiyinka*

## a female student

**S**o what's it like to be a Black woman in education? The truth is the answer will be different for everyone, with some similarities. Ultimately it's about what you make of it. I think I respond to things because of my particular experiences so not everything is simply about being Black. Some of it is to do with moving from a city. For example, I live in London and have always been used to seeing a mix of people on the streets and on the tube. So it was strange to find a sea of white faces all the time. I must have gotten used to it though, because on my first trip home in the middle of the first term, I was surprised by the number of Black people I saw in the first thirty seconds of being in King's Cross Station.

I'm lucky because my year group has quite a few Black people which made things easier. I haven't had any experiences of direct racism, although that's not to say it doesn't happen, because I know of cases where it has. But to be fair, it's the exception rather than the norm.

Another thing that I was conscious of was that you might be one of the first or few Black people that some students have spent a lot of time with. If you begin to think that they're forming their impressions of Black women through you (which isn't unlikely), then you can feel some pressure even though it's not your sole responsibility.

*Andrea Richards*

**T**he Late Edward Said once said: “The vast majority of our people are now thoroughly sick of the misfortunes that have befallen us. On the other hand, I have never met a Palestinian who is tired enough of being a Palestinian to give up entirely.”

This is a fact about Palestinian people – they never give up and continue to struggle against unbelievable odds. Even after the catastrophe of 1948, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from their homeland and were made refugees and deserted by many in the international community, they turned to this resilience to carry on.

Education became the top priority for children of the refugee camps, and in just a few years, thousands of Palestinian students were joining universities all over the world. In 1958 the general union of Palestine students was established to help the increasing number of Palestinians seeking education. GUPS rapidly

## **The middle east has long been plagued by stereotypes and misrepresentation**

developed into an organisation with thousands of members and branches across the world.

In 1968 the GUPS UK branch was established to ensure the participation of Palestinian students in the academic and cultural life of institutions, be engaged in the preservation and presentation of Palestinian culture and identity to the British people, and to build bridges between the two societies, fostering a spirit of international cooperation and understanding of the Middle East, which for so long has been plagued by stereotypes and misrepresentation.

GUPS UK is a student organization and the permanent address for Palestinian students: that is to say GUPS tries to receive newcomers, help them settle in and get accustomed to life here. We also try to support

students and represent them at all levels to help them achieve their potential academically and socially.

Preserving Palestinian culture is another key task of GUPS, which is why we organise functions showing traditional Palestinian dances and music as well as teaching this culture to new generations.

The other task that GUPS carries out is a patriotic one, to raise awareness of the Palestinian struggle and to gather support for our just cause of freedom from occupation. We

## **Our struggle is an international one**

do this by organising seminars, meetings and other events.

GUPS believe that our struggle is an international one, and reflects the struggle against oppression across the world. In just the same way that the British student movement led the campaign against apartheid in South Africa, so we hope to build strong support and relations with student organisations to help end the occupation of Palestine.

GUPS is the oldest student organisation in the Middle East and we pride ourselves on this. GUPS is also the organisation for other Arab and Middle Eastern students, as we believe our experience can be deployed to serve students regardless of their origin.

We believe that our job is to help Palestinian students, and all peace and justice lovers, so that they can help to build a free Palestine in the future.

For more information contact us at:

[www.gups.org.uk](http://www.gups.org.uk)

or email:

[gupsinuk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gupsinuk@yahoo.co.uk)

c/o 5 Galena Road,  
Hammersmith,  
London  
W6 0LT



**T**he **Chinese National Healthy Living Centre** was founded in 1987 to promote healthy living and facilitate access to health services for the Chinese community in the UK. The community is widely dispersed across the country and currently makes the lowest use of health services of all minority ethnic groups.

The centre aims to reduce the health inequality experienced by the Chinese community compared to the general population. Language difficulties and cultural differences present major obstacles to many Chinese people in accessing mainstream health provision.

## **The centre has helped thousands of Chinese people find a way forward to better health and well-being**

These barriers can result in their being given inappropriate health solutions and social isolation. The Chinese National Healthy Living Centre is currently funded by the Big Lottery Fund and works closely with both statutory and community organisations in order to deliver its mission.

Since its establishment in London's Soho, the centre has helped thousands of Chinese people find a way forward to better health and well-being. More recently, the centre has set up regional offices in Birmingham and Manchester to benefit Chinese communities from all over the UK. Beneficiaries of the centre's work range from elderly migrants who have been settled here for more than 30 years to transitory migrants such as students. Our Manchester office is currently running a Student Placement & Volunteering Project in partnership with a number of different universities and colleges to allow students from different courses to gain fieldwork experience. In the past, students from Manchester Metropolitan University have gained accreditation for Youth and Community Work through the



project. Please contact Circle Chan on 0161-236-1793 for further details regarding this project. For details and information regarding the centre's other work, please visit our website: [www.cnhlc.org.uk](http://www.cnhlc.org.uk)

## **contact details**

### **Head Office (London & South East)**

Address: 29-30 Soho Square,  
London W1D 3QS  
Tel: 020 7534 6546 or 020 7287 0904  
Fax: 020 7534 6545  
Email: [general@cnhlc.org.uk](mailto:general@cnhlc.org.uk)  
Website: [www.cnhlc.org.uk](http://www.cnhlc.org.uk)

### **Midlands Centre (Regional Office)**

Address: 3/F Ladywell House,  
20 Hurst St, Birmingham B5 4BN  
Tel: 0121 622 1211  
Fax: 0121 622 1212

### **Northern Centre (Regional Office)**

Address: c/o CHIC,  
6-8 Houldsworth St, Manchester M1 1EJ  
Tel: 0161 236 1793  
Fax: 0161 228 3082  
Email: [general@cnhlc.org.uk](mailto:general@cnhlc.org.uk)



## a south-east asian student

Having just graduated, I am reflecting on my experiences on being a South-East Asian student in the United Kingdom. South-East Asia, like any region in the world, is one of enormous diversity. Almost a century ago, my great grandparents migrated from China to Singapore, a tiny English-speaking island state – thus there have been no struggles with language whilst studying here. The fact that English is one of Singapore's national languages is not well-known (a lot of the people I met whilst studying didn't even realise Singapore was a sovereign state), and as a consequence I've had many comments along the lines of "your English is very good".

I have really enjoyed my time studying in Britain, and things have generally gone smoothly. I did my undergraduate degree in York, a very white middle-class city. I think the biggest inconvenience for me was the lack of an Asian provisions shop in the city.

Being of Chinese descent, however, meant that I was subject to some stereotypes: that I was docile, would work all time and not have a social life. I don't conform to these and I think that was a shock to some of my peers. Apart from the stereotypes, people of Chinese descent appear to be somewhat invisible in England: Chinese takeaways were the only knowledge many of my peers had of my culture. Till the recent tragic Morecambe Bay deaths of Chinese cockle pickers, Chinese people in Britain have mostly faded into the background, and are thought of as voiceless and subservient – this is something that is changing, and I will be part of this change by speaking up about our needs, aspirations and desires.

Gary Loke

## a mixed heritage student

One interesting question for students' unions is the way mixed heritage students fit into Black students and anti-racism campaigns, yet resist pressure to self-define as either Black or white. We represent the fruitlessness of the assumption that non-white students can be lumped together and have identical needs.

I happen to be light-skinned, and many people don't consider that I might be of white British parentage. One college security guard remarked incredulously that he never knew my dad was a 'Paki'. Such a comment, which I dismissed, can cause real distress to new and prospective students.

Such comments, innocently meant, add to the feeling of 'not fitting in'. While those of mixed heritage may escape the more extreme examples of prejudice, we can also bear the brunt of an atmosphere in which the norm is to make 'concessions' for those belonging to clearly definable minority groups, but to find it harder to accommodate those who fit no one particular label.

As the make-up of the education sector modernises, society too needs to recognise the impossibility of pigeonholing people according to parentage. I am not, and students like me are not, white, nor happy to be pigeonholed as such.

The search for a balance between a unifying, supportive mode of definition, and a full understanding of the diversity of personal experience, is the steepest and most stimulating learning curve I have climbed through education.

Alison Ismail (Anglo-Bengali)

# **TELL TONY AND BOLLOCKS T**

**EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson,  
Tony Blair and leaders of other wealthy  
nations are forcing poor countries to accept  
unfair trade deals.**

**Unfair trade keeps poor countries poor -  
robbing them of £1.3 billion a day - 14 times  
what they get in aid.**

**Without trade justice we will never make  
poverty history.**

**Add your voice to a million others and tell  
the UK government to deliver trade justice.**

**Say Bollocks To Poverty –  
vote for trade justice at  
[www.actionaidspace.org](http://www.actionaidspace.org)**

**ACTIONAID  
SPACE**

**act:ionaid**

# PETER TO SAY TO POVERTY



# a student with disabilities

Things have moved on since I arrived at university. My institution has slowly but surely crept out of the dark ages.

There was only one person working at the disability resources centre when I first arrived and as a result the help I needed took longer to reach me. I also suffer from depression, which makes it difficult for me to apply myself at times. The attitude of responses I encounter at times is 'For God's sake, pull yourself together!'

This lack of understanding and ignorance does not help. However, there are resources around my university that make dealing with my disability easier.

The disability assessment centre helped me get better access to a computer which has made it easier to do my work. Another scheme allows students to attend lectures with me to take notes, which enables me to keep up, whereas previously, because of my disability, I wasn't as quick as I would like to have been. I now have the ability to listen too.

Welfare support is provided by the student listening service, Link Line, which has been a valuable service, giving me an avenue to talk and be listened to in a non-judgemental way.

Black students with disabilities need to confront the stigma that exists in our communities and be confident about getting support. Service providers often demonstrate a lack of this cultural awareness, but this will only change through us accessing the support available.

*Anon*

# an LGBT student

**As a lesbian/bisexual officer for the NUS Black Students' Campaign this year, these are just a few words of encouragement and experience to pass on to my black lesbian and bisexual sisters.**

It's always difficult for students to feel comfortable 'coming out' in college or university. I know from experience that people are either supportive towards what you've told them, or very negative towards the news. It can feel very uncomfortable to go back to your college or university if it ends negatively and facing those people day in day out can make you uneasy. The main thing to keep in mind is that those people who declare their sexuality to their peers are the bravest. Be sure to keep around you the friends who give you support. People who encourage and accept who you are is the greatest feeling in the world!

In my university there are no Black women let alone Black LGBT students! That was quite a shock when I first started but as I made more of a social group who saw past my skin colour, I plucked up the courage to say I was bisexual. Luckily enough most people were fine with the news except one or two, but hey, you tend to get the odd homophobic bigot!

Sexism, racism and homophobia are all types of discrimination and should not be tolerated on campus. To tackle this, the NUS Black Students' Committee has assigned officers like myself to hear your problems, and hopefully help towards a positive outcome.

Just remember, we are all women, Black, lesbian or bisexual and should be proud of it. After all, we are a walking liberation campaign!

*Sharon Stacey*

## a mature student

*Ad augusta per angusta*  
To honours through difficulties

This Latin maxim tells us that great results cannot be achieved easily, and the significance of this will be familiar to many mature students making the decision to return to education. It is often a difficult choice with many questions – having had a hiatus from education will I be able to keep up with my fellow students? Am I too old? How will I get on with students who are much younger? To what extent will being Black affect me personally? How accommodating is the university to student parents? Are there adequate support facilities? Will I cope on a student loan and be able to deal with being thousands of pounds in debt when I graduate?

These are just a few of the issues many mature students have to deal with. While there are many things to think about and many hurdles to face, the choice to return to education in the end proves to be a good one as more students' unions and universities are becoming aware of our needs.

My main concerns have been the lack of facilities for student parents and the difficulties involved in meeting other mature students because of the unstructured nature of lectures and courses. Unions need to help arrange mature student events to enable all us to meet socially and build up a network.

Despite these difficulties the message is always clear: 'I have no regrets'. As a mature student, you will find the Latin maxim above worth keeping in mind.

*Lorrayne Johnson*

## a postgrad student

Some journalists feel MA degrees in journalism are absolutely essential and then there are others who think it is a waste of time. For years, I was firmly in the latter camp and used to point to the exorbitant cost of a masters' degree at Columbia University, New York, as evidence. How could I ever earn enough in journalism to pay off \$75,000 in debt?

But then 9/11 happened and the crippling recession that ensued meant journalism jobs were scarce. Despite my impressive credentials and a wealth of cuttings, many editors I spoke to wanted the reassurance of a degree from a respected journalism school. Also, the things I once wrote about – the entertainment

### **How could I ever earn enough in journalism to pay off \$75,000 in debt?**

industry and international football – suddenly seemed very frivolous. I craved more 'serious' topics, like news and business, but lacked the confidence to tackle them. So I did the unthinkable and decided to return to school.

My fellow football writers often spoke highly of City University in London, which was where I came to do my MA degree in International Journalism and honed my reporting skills. I chose the course because it was designed for mid-career journalists from countries all over the world and because it was cheap – £9,000.

One of my colleagues came from Zimbabwe, after ten years of covering the Mugabe regime, while another was a renowned broadcaster in Malaysia. They gave me a unique perspective on America and I know I would have never met them at Columbia, because some of them came from extremely poor countries.

*Leslie Lee*

# clubs and societies

**F**or many Black students their clubs and societies fulfil an important role in providing them with networks and support throughout their time at college and university.

However, students' unions do not often recognise this, and fail to support and develop them accordingly. Too often we see beer and sports clubs get large amounts of funding from the union, while smaller Black groups get little or nothing at all.

African-Caribbean societies and other Black clubs may be expected to have a constitution, committee and audited accounts in order to be recognised as a society, which will then offer: more funding opportunities, free room hire, use of the union minibus and photocopier, as well as other services. It is important to check with your students' union what the particular requirements are for your institution.

Below are a few tips on what your club or society may need to get union recognition:

## a committee

A committee is a group of people who enjoy their activity so much that they got themselves elected to run the club or society. The committee is there to facilitate the group and represent the members. In order to do this they have roles and responsibilities, some of which are outlined in the club's constitution. This often requires a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. Check to see what your institution's requirements are. Often you will need to have all of these posts.

## membership

All members of your society have to be registered with the union in many instances, or

they will not be covered by the insurance to take part in your activities. You should keep an up-to-date list of all your members.

## funding

Your primary source of funding may be the membership fee you charge people to join. You should produce membership cards to identify your members. Other sources of funding include your students' union, which will have a fund that you can apply to. Contact the union's treasurer to find out more. The treasurer will also be able to assist you in drawing up a budget for your club's activities.

Once your society is up and running, you need to make sure that people remain interested, and that you get new members.

## keeping people interested

We've all done it – gone wild at the clubs and societies fair and signed up to many groups. Three weeks later and you're seriously reconsidering your commitment to the Spice Girls' Society because it clashes with the basketball club and the membership fee refund would pay for a cappuccino or two!

This is exactly what is going through the minds of many members who signed up at the start, and to keep a hold of them it's important to know what motivates your members.

When planning your group's activities you should consider these motivations, as well as checking with your members and finding out what they're looking for.

## publicity

Getting your message across clearly is important. Ideas include:

**Banners** – making banners from old sheets can be fun and quite cheap – remember to use waterproof paint if they're going outside.

**T-shirts** – specially designed t-shirts can be a

great way of publicising your group.

**Stalls** – a popular way of publicising activities or campaigns is to have a stall in the union building. This allows you to talk to other people about what you are doing.

**Posters and flyers** – these can be a way to get your message across but often there are so many posters around the union that people don't bother reading them, so you need to use them sparingly: is the poster the best way to get your message across? Be focused: use pictures and keep messages short and snappy, and be effective: get posters designed to make them stand out, include date, time, venue, price and contact details.

## planning events

There are a range of possibilities from hosting a conference, inviting a guest speaker to putting on a film show or club night.

No matter how big or small your event you can increase the chances of success with some thorough planning and organising.

## objectives

Once you've decided what sort of event you want to hold and who it is for, you should have a goal: a general idea of what it is you want to achieve. What you then need are some objectives: things you need to do to achieve your goal. Each objective should be S.M.A.R.T.

- **Specific** (We must sell enough tickets to raise £500)
- **Measurable** (We will sell 150 tickets at £5 each)
- **Achievable** (We have funds to pay for design and printing)
- **Realistic** (We sold 120 tickets for the same event last year)
- **Timed** (Tickets must be printed by June 26)

If your committee has set the objectives together, you will have similar expectations

– and everybody will be working towards the same end, so the task can be focused with minimum conflict.

## operational plans

When your event is ready to roll, you will need an operational plan for the day itself. This plan should include things like: a named leader/manager, first aid point, emergency procedures, equipment checklist, contact numbers, contingency plan, register of who is taking part, security, setting up timetable, agenda of events, radios and a plan for clearing up.

This advice is taken from the 'Running Effective Clubs and Societies Pack' produced by the Sheffield International Students' Committee, Sheffield ACS and the NBSA. For a copy of the full version, please email Pav Akhtar on: [pav@nus.org.uk](mailto:pav@nus.org.uk)



## THERE IS A WAY FORWARD.

Catch21 is a student-run production company that seeks to engage young people with politics across the country. Created by students at Hull University, this politically independent initiative has just received a large grant from the Joseph Roundtree Charitable Trust.

The Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, and Channel 4's, Jon Snow, are among the supporters of this not-for-profit organisation.

Catch 21 is organising events across the country, dates include Norwich, October 20<sup>th</sup> in addition to 12 shows in 2006. There will be politics fused with music, theatre and comedy – not forgetting traditional debates and high profile interviews.

Catch21 is developing into an organisation with established productions at institutions across the country, so there are many opportunities to get involved. Catch21 is made up entirely of students, from different backgrounds and with diverse skills from business and finance. to expressive arts and information technology.

We are a combination of entrepreneurial spirit and original thinking and want to inspire a renewal of interest in politics from a demoralised and frustrated generation. If you want to learn more about the project or want to become involved in some way, please visit: [www.catch21.org.uk](http://www.catch21.org.uk)



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