

OUR SCOTLAND

OUR FUTURE

Intercultural Youth Scotland Manifesto 2026



Justice

Belonging



OUR VISION

CHAMPIONING ANTI-RACISM AND YOUTH WORK IN THE SCOTTISH ELECTION

We envision a Scotland where every young person — regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or background is valued, empowered, and supported to thrive.

As the 2026 Scottish election approaches, we call on all political parties and candidates to place anti-racism and meaningful youth work at the heart of government policy and practice. A fair and inclusive Scotland is not built by aspiration alone, but by deliberate action, sustained investment, and shared accountability.

Anti-racism is not an optional initiative. Youth work is not a secondary service. Both are essential pillars of a just and forward-looking nation.

Sadia Hussain-Savuk

Deputy Director



**This is a
movement.**

OUR COMMITMENTS AND DEMANDS

1

EMBED ANTI-RACISM ACROSS GOVERNMENT

Anti-racism must be woven into every area of public life. We call for:

- Comprehensive antiracist strategies across all government departments and public agencies
- Mandatory anti-racism training for public servants
- Inclusive recruitment, progression, and leadership practices
- Transparent systems to monitor racial equity outcomes

Anti-racism must move from rhetoric to measurable action.

2

INVEST IN YOUTH WORK AS ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Youth work transforms lives. It builds resilience, leadership, and belonging.

We demand:

- Increased and sustained funding for youth organisations
- Targeted investment in organisations serving minority and marginalised communities
- Recognition of youth work as a core public service, not a discretionary add-on

Safe spaces and skilled youth workers are critical to young people's personal and social development.

3

AMPLIFY YOUTH VOICE AND POWER

Young people must not simply be consulted — they must be heard, respected, and empowered to shape policy.

We call for:

- Formal mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making
- Dedicated platforms centring intercultural and underrepresented young people
- Meaningful co-design of policies affecting education, employment, health, and justice

Nothing about young people without young people.

4

ADDRESS STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES

Racial disparities in education, employment, health, and justice are systemic — and they require systemic solutions.

We urge policymakers to:

- Remove barriers facing young people of colour
- Ensure equitable access to apprenticeships, extracurricular activities, and higher education
- Collect and publish disaggregated data to track inequality
- Develop targeted interventions that close attainment and opportunity gaps

Equality requires structural change.

5

PRIORITISE CULTURALLY COMPETENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Racism and discrimination have profound impacts on wellbeing.

We demand:

- Expanded access to culturally competent mental health services
- Increased funding for early intervention and community-based support
- Recognition of racial trauma within public health strategies

Mental health care must reflect the lived realities of Scotland's diverse young people.

6

DECOLONISE OUR CURRICULUM

Education must prepare young people to live in a diverse and interconnected world.

We call for:

- Integration of intercultural learning and accurate histories into the national curriculum
- Resources that challenge prejudice and promote understanding from an early age
- Support for schools to embed inclusive practices and diverse representation

Scotland's diversity is a strength. Our education system must reflect it.

7

STRENGTHEN SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION

Young people deserve safety; online and offline.

We demand:

- Robust responses to hate crime, bullying, and discrimination
- Clear reporting mechanisms and accessible support services
- Coordinated action between schools, youth organisations, and local authorities

Safety is foundational to opportunity.

8

FOSTER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Change cannot happen in isolation.

We call for stronger collaboration between:

- Schools
- Youth organisations
- Local authorities
- Families and community groups

Shared challenges require shared solutions.

9

ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND MEASUREABLE PROGRESS

Commitments must be matched with transparency.

We urge the next Scottish Government to:

- Establish clear benchmarks for anti-racist and youth-focused initiatives
- Publish regular progress reports
- Engage independent evaluation and youth-led scrutiny

Accountability builds trust. Measurement drives improvement.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Young people are not only the future of Scotland, they are shaping its present. Their experiences of inclusion or exclusion will determine the society we become.

Quality youth work fosters leadership, confidence, and community cohesion. Anti-racism advances justice, dignity, and equality. Together, they form the foundation of a stronger Scotland.

By centring these priorities, the next government can ensure that Scotland remains a leader in social progress and inclusion.

A NOTE FROM OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people across Scotland still experience racism in schools, online and in their communities. These experiences affect how safe, confident and included many of us feel. Organisations like Intercultural Youth Scotland create important spaces where young people from diverse backgrounds can come together, speak openly about their experiences and support one another.

Continued government support for IYS is important because it allows young people to learn, build confidence and take part in leading change. Through programmes, workshops and youth led opportunities, we are able to develop the skills to challenge racism and promote understanding in our communities.

Anti-racism work cannot be temporary. It requires long term commitment and sustained support. When the government invests in IYS, it is investing in a more equal and inclusive future for all young people.

Adam, on behalf of Youth Ambassador for IYS

OUR CALL TO ACTION

We call on all candidates and political parties to publicly endorse this manifesto and commit to implementing its recommendations.

This election is an opportunity to move beyond statements and towards structural change.

Together, we can build a Scotland where every young person, in all their cultures, identities, and experiences, has the opportunity not just to succeed, but to belong.

For endorsements, partnership, or further information, contact us and stand with young people for a more equitable and vibrant Scottish future.

CONTACT US

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