Revisiting Racism + Integration Recognition:
Reflections from Critical Youth Work Theory and Practice

Dr Rick Bowler
YAV Mission Statement -1996 – to-date

• ‘Young Asian Voices believes in working for equality of opportunity and social justice for all the people residing in the City of Sunderland, irrespective of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation and cultural background’
Main Concerns Today

• Negative perceptions specifically narrated through ‘fact faking’ (Alexander, 2000:243).
• A systemic lack of ‘support’ to families
• Anti-Mosque Activity
• Racism and on-going racist abuse persist
• Girls and young women tell us their life-world has become more restricted
Current Reality

• ‘Without critical youth work the young people are doing their own thing – googling the answers.
• Successive cuts in funding have limited time for Critical Dialogue.
• Some young women state they feel more vulnerable
• Some young men exhibit behaviours that are more ‘risky’
"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."
-Albert Einstein
People Respecting ‘Others’ Understand Difference

‘..people need to create modes of belonging, accountability, and justice that are not predicated on someone else’s denigration and dehumanization’ (Ioanide, 2015: 112)
‘Everyone belongs to more than one community; every community influences and has an impact on, and in turn is influenced by, others. None is self-sufficient, entire of itself. ‘Britain’ is the name of the space they all share. Some have far more weight and power than others, but no group, no community, own Britain. It is no one's sole possession’ (Parekh, 2000: 105).
‘I have some serious issues with’
Critically Contemplating British Values

• ‘Britishness, as much as Englishness, has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations. Whiteness nowhere features as an explicit condition of being British, but it is widely understood that Englishness, and therefore by extension Britishness, is racially coded. . . . Unless these deep-rooted antagonisms to racial and cultural difference can be defeated in practice, as well as symbolically written out of the national story, the idea of a multicultural post-nation remains an empty promise’ (Parekh, 2000: 38-39).
Critical youth work

• ‘..requires an ability to listen carefully, constantly reflecting on what is being said and the aim is to seek moments of possibility to open up more critical alternative explanations on how experience can be known’ (Bowler, 2013: 152).