

Michelle Balach-Ali

I am Michelle Balach-Ali, a recent addition to the People In Harmony committee. I am the first of eleven children, a mother of three and teacher that lives with her Trinidadian husband Nige in Bedford, a town which has the second highest population of 'mixed race' people in the country. My mother is Serbian/Irish and my father is Grenadian, and yes, she gave birth to eleven children! When I was a baby, there were still signs that stated, "No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs" and my (part) Irish mother found it difficult to find somewhere for herself and her baby to live.

Thankfully, I have lived through huge racial transformation, and racial struggles have improved. I am excited about the recent news that we will have a mixed race princess in England!

I am currently carrying out research on mixed race individuals living in Bedford and I am also an English teacher, who has worked in Bedfordshire for eighteen years, providing me with an extensive experience of working with a range of primary and secondary pupils. My previous experience in charity involved being a director at the Multi-Heritage Organisation, where I also worked as a teacher and trainer. This involved writing and delivering educational programmes to support the needs of Black and Ethnic minority children and their parents. I am dedicated to race equality and community progress within education. My drive to be involved in PIH comes from having nearly fifty years of first-hand experience of being a mixed race individual and knowing that mixed race children and parents could benefit from my support and experience in the education.