

# REKINDLE



## SUMMER UPDATE

# Change

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Bold ideas, youth agency and soulful education from those leading the charge

#### Grounded Futures

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Stories of connection and change - from House of Lords to Dundee

....and more





# FROM RUTH'S DESK



Dear Rekindle Family,

The current global moment has given many of us a chance to reflect more deeply on the systems that shape our daily lives and futures. I've been thinking a lot about power: who holds it, how it's exercised, and what happens when it no longer serves us. I've also been thinking about what it takes to challenge that power, and where we begin.

At Rekindle, we start with education. Because education is never neutral. Every decision about the curriculum, the history taught, who gets to be heard, is shaped by power. It's shaped by who gets to tell the story, and who is left out. That's why our work begins at the margins, where some of the most profound knowledge lives - often overlooked, but never lost.

We exist to uplift the thinkers, communities and narratives that have too often been ignored or erased. We create spaces of learning rooted in deep remembering: of who we are, where we come from and what we carry forward, together.

In this edition, you'll see what this vision looks like in action. From our Reimagining Education event, where six brilliant young people helped redesign what education could be, to the Rekindling Nello James Project, a powerful act of collective memory and cultural reclamation in South Manchester. You'll also meet our newest group of Youth Pioneers, who are stepping into their roles in Manchester to help ensure our work stays rooted in what young people really need.

This summer has also taken me to The Gambia, where, wearing my Northern Soul and Roots hats, we've continued to build a creative exchange between Danso School and Brentwood School in Essex. Through creating their own books and sharing stories and perspectives, young people are connecting across borders through curiosity and creativity



(and yes, running three organisations can be a wild ride, but this kind of work keeps me grounded in their shared purpose).

With love and determination,

Ruth 



## MEET OUR NEW MANCHESTER YOUTH PIONEERS

**In May, we officially welcomed our eight new Manchester Youth Pioneers!**

Selected from nearly 30 applicants, this brilliant group (aged 16–23) includes both fresh faces and returning voices. They'll be working closely with Rory Dickinson (National Head of Learning) and Cara Kennedy (Community and Corporate Partnerships Lead) to help shape the priorities and activities at Rekindle Manchester for the year ahead.

Our Youth Pioneers across Manchester, London - and soon Dundee - will ensure their lived experience of today's education system guides our work and stays rooted in what young people really need.



**Josh, 16** - a former Rekindle young person and aspiring rapper, Josh has just finished his GCSEs and can often be found making beats and music in his spare time. He is keen to challenge stereotypes of young people and make a real difference in his community.



**Malak, 17** - born and raised in Moss Side, Malak recognises the lack of opportunities and limitations of mainstream schools in supporting working-class young people. She is passionate about ensuring they have the same access to educational resources, bridging the digital divide and levelling the playing field.



**Elijah, 16** - also a Rekindle alumni, Elijah recently finished Year 11 and wanted to stay on as a Youth Pioneer because he wants to transform the education system and use his voice to spark real change.



**Annalyse, 17** - Currently in Year 12, Annalyse is a youth leader for her church and wants to develop her leadership skills and be a voice for other young people. Having missed a big chunk of school in Year 11, she thinks that the way people are examined in school needs to be reformed.



**David, 16** - After hearing Cara speak at a sixth form assembly, David resonated with Rekindle's mission to put youth agency at the forefront of education. A quiet and confident leader, David wants there to be more freedom and flexibility in the education system.



**Moss, 18** - Now finished with their A-Levels, Moss has been very open about the struggles they faced throughout their educational journey, having autism and ADHD and not receiving the necessary support they needed. An advocate for neurodivergent, non-binary and disabled young people, Moss spoke eloquently on the panel at the recent Rekindle Campfire event.



**Eli, 17** - a self-taught piano player who recently performed at the Rekindle Foundation's Campfire event, Eli was encouraged to apply to be a Youth Pioneer by four teachers in his sixth form on four separate occasions. Having "always been a person with big ideas," he wants to help people on a bigger scale.



**Farzana, 23** - Farzana recently finished her degree in Education Studies and has been supporting Rekindle from afar since attending the Big Education Conversation that Rekindle Foundation hosted in London in March 2024. An advocate for teachers' mental health and better SEND support, Farzana is an excellent public speaker who wants to address inequalities and injustices in education, having experienced the impact first-hand.

We're so excited to have the Youth Pioneers on board and can't wait to see what they bring to the table.





## WHY REKINDLE MATTERS: A VISIT FROM ANDY BURNHAM AND BEV CRAIG

At the end of May, we welcomed Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council, into Rekindle for an evening filled with food, poetry, and powerful testimony from our community.

They heard directly from our young people and elders about what Rekindle means, not just as a space, but as a living example of soulful, community-rooted education. Their visit reaffirmed the value of protecting places like ours, where culture, care and critical thinking are central to how we learn and grow.

[Read More](#)

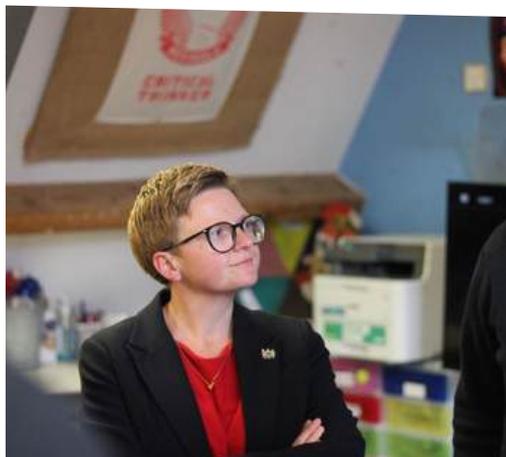


IMAGE CREDIT: ALFIE WRIGHT



## ALBUM LAUNCH AT REKINDLE MANCHESTER

The buzz from July's "Critical Thinkers" album launch is still in the air, and for good reason. This unforgettable event celebrated six months of creativity and collaboration from Rekindle's young people, led by Nehru Mckenzie (Creative Educator).

The vinyl album features a bold mix of Lo-Fi, Hip Hop, and Electronic tracks, all produced in-house. The cover artwork, created by our Artist in Residence Otis, marked his first commissioned piece.

With inspiring Q&A moments from young producers Josh and Otis, the launch was more than a party - it was a celebration of growth, talent, and artistic vision.



[Find out more](#)

## WHAT'S ON AT REKINDLE LONDON



### Summer Programme

In London, we've kicked off our free Summer Programme, which will run every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 11am-3pm throughout the school holidays and is open to 11-14 year olds.

Each week features a variety of hands-on creative workshops, fun day trips, and opportunities to connect in a relaxed, supportive environment.

[Find out more](#)



## REKINDLE AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS: SPEAKING UP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S AGENCY



Ruth Ibegbuna and Cara Kennedy (pictured) were invited to speak at the House of Lords for the launch of 'The Disengaged Teen' by Jenny Anderson and Rebecca Winthrop. A book on supporting young people's agency and wellbeing.

Thanks to Big Change for the invitation and for making space for youth-led perspectives.

[Read More](#)

## ROOTED IN COMMUNITY: REKINDLE FEASIBILITY IN DUNDEE

Rekindle has been exploring the feasibility of a provision in the Lochee area of Dundee, Scotland, with the support of The Robertson Trust.

Charli Perkins (Dundee Programme Coordinator), has spent the past six months strengthening Rekindle's links with community members and organisations, including meeting young people across the city. This groundwork has helped us better understand their hopes and needs, shaping future provision in a way that's truly rooted in the community.



As part of this groundwork, and working with The Roots Programme and the Lochee Community Hub, we hosted a Community Conversation in Lochee to explore the needs and challenges of local young people. The event brought together a fantastic mix of voices, ideas and energy across ages, sectors and the wider community.

[Read More](#)



## REKINDLE AT THE CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND CONFERENCE: LISTENING, CONNECTING, AND EXPLORING NEXT STEPS

As we continue listening and learning through our Dundee provision feasibility work, our team also attended the Children in Scotland Conference - a chance to gather broader insight from youth-focused organisations across the country.

This national event brought together a wide range of people and organisations working with and for children and young people across Scotland. Rekindle team members Nika Muthra-Shah, Charli Perkins, and Anne Marie Croal (pictured) attended the two-day conference, using the opportunity to meet like-minded peers in the third sector, reflect on key challenges facing young people, and deepen our understanding of the Scottish youth landscape. As exhibitors, we also ran



a stall to share Rekindle's story, connect with organisations already embedded in the region, and gather insights into what young people aged 11–14 might need in order to thrive. Through informal conversations, creative feedback activities, lots of curiosity, and some Tunnock's Tea Cakes (thanks to Anne Marie's Coatbridge roots!), we gathered valuable reflections and ideas from attendees.

Key takeaways included:

- The appetite for youth-led, community-rooted provision across Scotland.
- Strong alignment between Rekindle's values and the approaches of other third sector organisations.
- Insight into current gaps and possibilities around provision for 11-14 year olds.

The conference gave us an energising glimpse into the Scottish youth work ecosystem and reaffirmed the value of deep collaboration and care in how we move forward.





## REKINDLING BEGINS: BIANCA DANIELLE, REKINDLING NELLO JAMES PROJECT MANAGER, SHARES WHAT'S UNFOLDING

The Rekindling Nello James project is officially up and running, and so much has already been set in motion. With support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project is all about remembering and reactivating the stories, struggles and joy of African and Caribbean communities in South Manchester, with the legacy of CLR “Nello” James (pictured, below) at its heart.

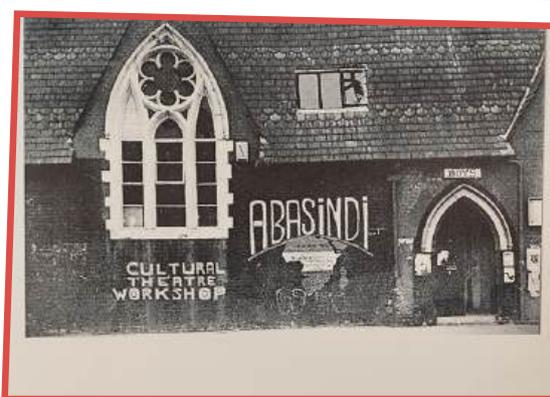
### A Room for Memory and Imagination

We began by dedicating a space at Rekindle HQ in Manchester to the project, a room to hold memory, imagination and action. We've also spent time at Central Library exploring archival images and documents, which sparked an exciting realisation: this project will be the beginning of a dedicated Nello James archive in Manchester.



### Our New Steering Group

One of our first major milestones has been forming a powerhouse steering group made up of six incredible individuals: **Jackie McNeish, Otis Thomas, Lorraine Ballentine, Keisha Thompson, Siarka ‘Simeon’ Maurisanga, and Marcus Hercules**. We all came together, bringing passion, lived experience and a deep love for our community. The first meeting was full of reflection of South Manchester's history, the Nello James Centre, and the hopes we carry forward. With the second session around the corner, we'll soon begin shaping the project's public launch.



Images from the Kath Locke Heritage Exhibition (June 2025), showcasing the radical legacy of the Abasindi Co-op, the former custodians of Rekindle's building.

## A Shared Legacy

We've also been drawing inspiration from other local heritage work. A few weeks ago, Ellie Rose and I visited the Kath Locke Heritage Exhibition - a powerful reflection on the radical history of the very building Rekindle now calls home, once run by the Abasindi Co-op. The stories shared there deeply resonated with the themes at the heart of Rekindling Nello James: memory, resistance, and community power.

## Radical Readers & Digital Horizons

We've also launched **Radical Readers**, a fortnightly group diving into the work of Black authors who use writing as a form of resistance.

Celebrating heritage, cultural language and the power of storytelling. Deeply aligned with CLR James' own legacy. And behind the scenes, we've been busy building the **Rekindling Nello James microsite** - a dedicated digital space that will host archive content, articles, images, videos, event updates, and more.

We're not sharing the full site just yet, but we can reveal a first glimpse of its visual identity: the project's brand new logo. It offers a hint of the design style to come and we're excited to unveil the full site soon!

Warmly, Bianca





## REKINDLE QUICKFIRE— MEET TARIQ SHABAZZ

Funding justice, community pride and caribbean food - our Funding and Sustainability Lead, Tariq shares his perspective in five quick questions.



### 1. What first drew you to Rekindle?

The opportunity to use my passion and commitment to right the wrongs in mainstream education.

### 2. What brings you joy in your work day?

Being able to demonstrate the importance of the work we do at Rekindle and the positive impact it has on the communities we serve.

### 3. What kind of legacy would you love to leave behind in your role?

Through my hard work and consultation with funders, I've managed to change their perception towards grassroots community organisations, particularly those being led by marginalised and disadvantaged community members. Hopefully this would encourage them to be more proactive in providing more funding to such organisations to enable them to fully deliver and serve communities to the best of their ability.

### 4. One meal you could eat on repeat and not get bored?

Caribbean style curry goat.

### 5. Who inspires you most right now and why?

Ibrahim Traore is a great inspiration as he cares very much about his community and is creating real social change to alleviate poverty and create new opportunities to improve the lives of those he serves.

### 6. You get a billboard in the middle of town - what does it say?

Rise to the Top Nonstop!

# MEET THE TEAM



## TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT - MEET FRAN QUANSAH

Fran is one of Rekindle's brilliant trustees, bringing her background in cultural advocacy, tech, and youth empowerment to the board.

As a Junior Business Analyst, founder of Kasa Kasa TV and mum of two, Fran is passionate about storytelling, identity and creating spaces where young people can connect with their roots. We asked her a few questions about what trusteeship means to her and what she sees on the horizon for Rekindle.



[Read Fran's Interview](#)

## REKINDLE ONLINE: STORIES, UPDATES & MORE

Follow the news and updates from Rekindle School and Rekindle Foundation on social media.

Join the journey as we build soulful education and stronger communities. Click the icons below to find us online - we'd love to have you with us.



# REKINDLE

## General Enquiries

hello@rekindleschool.org

## Volunteering

Cara Kennedy

Corporate and Community Partnerships Lead

cara@rekindleschool.org

## Funding

Tariq Shabazz

Funding and Sustainability Lead

tariq@rekindleschool.org

## Nominations

Rory Dickinson

National Head of Learning

rory@rekindleschool.org

## Press

Nika Muthra-Shah

Programme Director

press@rekindleschool.org

Rekindle Manchester  
St Mary's Courtyard  
St Mary's St, Hulme  
Manchester  
M15 5WB

Rekindle London  
Oasis St Martin's Village  
155 Tulse Hill  
London  
SW2 3UP