

# REKINDLE



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Youth-led research, films and programmes taking shape across the UK.
- Conversations and action – from young people to communities.
- Community spaces in focus, from the Rekindle Pantry to the legacy of the Nello James Centre.
- New insights into how people experience difference and connection.

AND MORE ....

Hello all,

It's been a while since we last had the chance to pull together a newsletter. I'm writing this just days after the local election results and, if I'm honest, it has taken real effort to lift my head, smile again, steady my spirit and keep moving through the daily reality of running a small charity in straitened times.

And yet, even in moments like these, important things continue to grow. The past few months have been full of change, challenge and hope.

In March, I turned 50 and finally had to accept that I'm now firmly one of the 'adults in the room'. I was lucky enough to celebrate surrounded by people I love, and I felt deeply grateful: for my life, for this work, and for the young people who continue to trust us with their stories, struggles and hopes.

Just two days later, we achieved something we once only dreamed about: we bought our beautiful Manchester building.

Since moving into the space (pictured below) as tenants in 2022, we have loved everything it represents. For years, we appealed to the owners to consider selling it to us - and finally, they did!



Thanks to their generosity and belief in our work, we are now custodians of a listed building with deep local significance: a place rooted in organised resistance, intergenerational learning, radical community care and collective growth.

This is now our forever home.

We are committed to protecting the spirit of this building and continuing its legacy as a place where people can gather, connect, think critically, and build a more hopeful future together.

# FROM RUTH'S DESK

**Alongside this, we've launched incredible new Rekindle programmes nationwide. In London, we've begun work focused on food poverty in South London. In Manchester, young people are exploring programmes centred on identity, confidence and self-expression. Our brilliant Scotland Youth Pioneers have been reimagining what a more joyful state school system could look and feel like, while also beginning the groundwork for a new Dundee Rekindle provision.**

**We are concluding our powerful Rekindling Nello James Programme.** This has been an exceptional year of Community remembrance and celebration of a special space in South Manchester hearts. We have a feature about it in the newsletter, but I want to take a moment to thank both Bianca and Nicole for their extraordinary commitment to this incredible programme. We've all learned so much about somewhere very special. Watching community members laugh, cry, reminisce and re-activate around a place that remained precious to them has been an honour to observe.



# FROM RUTH'S DESK

Most significantly of all, we've made the bold decision to merge the two organisations I lead: Rekindle School and The Roots Programme, into one small but mighty force: The Rekindle Collective.



**Our focus is clear: creating Compassionate Critical Thinkers.**

We believe the UK urgently needs more spaces where people of all generations can think deeply, question bravely and connect meaningfully across difference. We are setting ourselves a 20-year mission for change because we do not want this work to be necessary forever. Our role is to help build communities strong enough, connected enough and courageous enough to sustain this work themselves eventually.

At a time when fear, division and performative cruelty dominate so much public debate, we want to create welcoming, kind spaces rooted in compassion, curiosity and solidarity.

Spaces where young people and their communities can access not only critical conversations, but practical support too - through community pantries, free evening classes, intergenerational learning, conferences and academic masterclasses.

What if, before anything else, we chose kindness and compassion, and worked together towards community-led solutions?

What if we held working-class young people closer - giving them confidence, reassurance and the belief that they do not have to face the difficult years ahead alone?

There is so much work to do, but we also know we are surrounded by people with the heart, courage and imagination to help build something better: a future for the next generation that is more connected, hopeful, educated and thoughtful.

Thank you for supporting us so far. It means more than we can say, and we will need that support in the months and years ahead.

**As a small, northern-based, Black-led charity with limited resources and a huge vision, we know the road ahead will not always be easy. But we also know we are not walking it alone.**

**Thank you for standing alongside us.**

Ruth

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ruth', written over a red horizontal line.



## WHAT WOULD REKINDLE LOOK LIKE IF IT WAS DESIGNED BY YOUNG PEOPLE?

Earlier this year, young people at Rekindle Tulse Hill took part in a series of creative workshops exploring exactly that – shaping a set of values, priorities and ideas for the space.

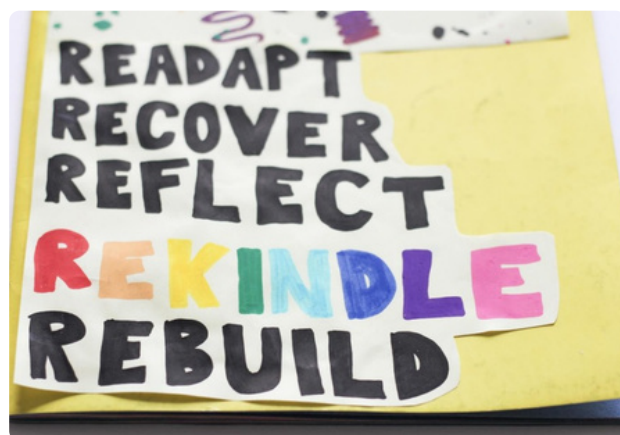
Working alongside researcher Vanessa Lefton, the process used film, photography and creative methods to explore everyday life and what matters most to them.



The result is a youth-authored 'Playbook' (right) that will help guide how the programme develops.

Read more about the process and what they created.

[READ MORE](#)



## YOUTH-LED RESEARCH TAKING SHAPE

Since our last update, our four Youth-Centred Researchers have continued to make thoughtful and exciting progress as they bring their shared vision to life, exploring the impact of supplementary schools as spaces where young people feel safe, supported and inspired, where their voices are heard and where their confidence grows.

The group has been building on their initial research questions through structured research, discussions with young people, and analysis of data gathered through our Monitoring & Evaluation work. They have been organising and reviewing a wide range of literature, engaging critically with complex topics such as equity, culture, and inclusion, and have been refining their research questions, shaping the direction of their projects. The first practical outcome of this - a literature review and podcast to discuss its findings - will be out by the end of May.

## YOUNG PEOPLE LEADING THE CONVERSATION IN EDINBURGH



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Young people in Edinburgh recently led a Community Conversation bringing together local residents, councillors and community organisations to explore the issues shaping their city.

Originally connected through a Roots Futures programme, students from two very different schools facilitated the session - the first of its kind for Roots and Rekindle - creating space for honest, open discussion across different perspectives.

## NEW REPORT: HOW PEOPLE IN THE UK REALLY FEEL ABOUT DIFFERENCE

As Roots and Rekindle come together, understanding how people experience difference and connection will continue to frame our work.

This latest UK-wide survey – the first in a series of five – highlights a clear opportunity: many people are open to connecting across difference, but the conditions to do so aren't always there. It explores where that openness exists, what gets in the way, and why spaces like ours matter. The next phase of research will take place over the Summer.

[EXPLORE THE INSIGHTS HERE](#)



## THE VOICES OF SOUTH LONDON - A YOUTH LED FILM

Our first official programme in Tulse Hill brought young people together to create **Voices of South London** – a film capturing their experiences of growing up in the area, told in their own words.

It marked the starting point for our London work, with young people shaping and sharing their perspectives. The programme culminated in a wonderful screening of the film at Rekindle Tulse Hill, watched by young people, friends, families, residents and local community organisations.

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## EVERYONE DESERVES A FULL PLATE

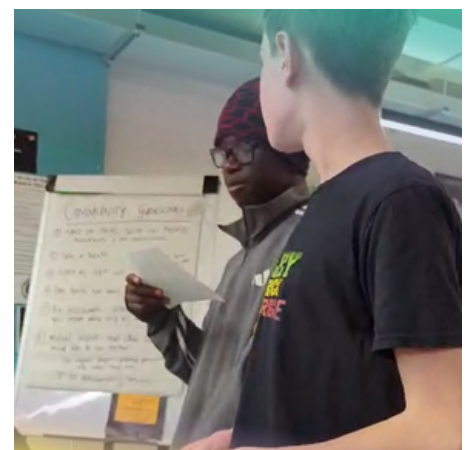
Building on **Voices of South London**, our second Tulse Hill programme – **Everyone Deserves a Full Plate** – is our social action project focusing on food poverty in Southwark and Lambeth, where over 30% of children live in poverty and significant levels of food insecurity persist.



Over 10 weeks, young people have combined lived experience, creativity and learning, including a behind the scenes visit to a food bank (left), to create a free, community-focused recipe book using ingredients commonly found in food banks. They have each created their own recipe, with contributions also from the Rekindle Collective.

The learning has also developed into advocacy, with young people presenting food poverty demands to Clare Holland and Scott Ainslie ahead of the May Lambeth elections (right).

The programme will culminate in a community meal and recipe book launch in the coming weeks, bringing people together to share food, hear from those involved and celebrate what's been created.



## ONE YEAR OF THE REKINDLE PANTRY

One year on, the Rekindle Pantry at our Manchester building has grown from a simple response to the cost of living crisis into a trusted community space in Hulme.

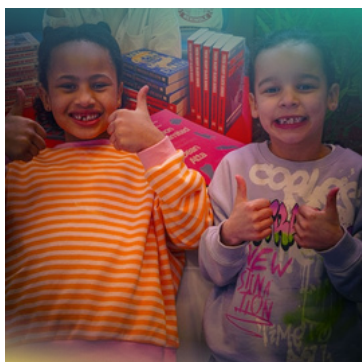
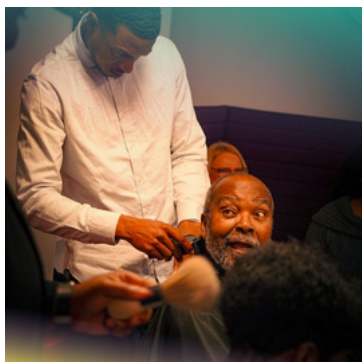
With over 360 visits and around 400 people supported, it's become somewhere people can access essentials, have a brew, and feel part of something.

As one person shared, the Pantry is a place where they “feel cared for.” Another described leaving feeling “blessed, full, joyful and thankful.”

[READ MORE](#)



## REKINDLE MANCHESTER COMMUNITY DAY



Photos credit: Miriam Akoth

Back in February, our Hulme space opened its doors to around 80 people for a community day that brought together local residents, young people, creatives and organisations for an afternoon of activity, conversation and connection.

From food and music to hair, henna and community stalls, the day reflected the mix of people and energy that continues to shape Rekindle Manchester. It was also a marker of what the space is becoming – not just a learning space for young people, but somewhere where people in the wider community can gather more informally, spend time and feel part of what's growing.

Alongside ongoing work like the Rekindle Pantry and events linked to Rekindling Nello James, moments like this are helping to reinforce the Rekindle Manchester space as vital hub, one that's rooted in the community and shaped by the people who use it.

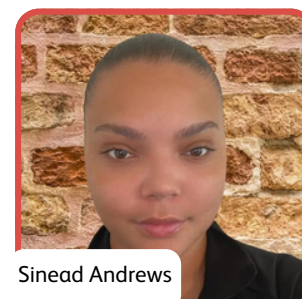
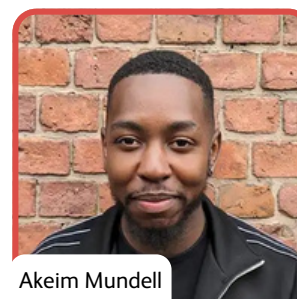
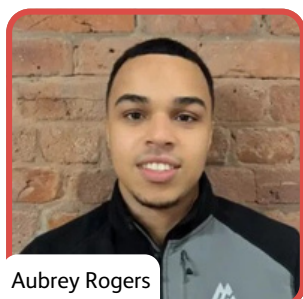
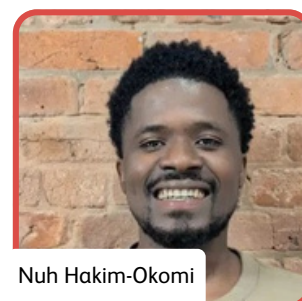
## WELCOME TO OUR NEW TRUSTEE, FIKAYO



**We're delighted to welcome Fikayo Falade to the Rekindle Collective Trustee Board.**

Fikayo is a 24-year-old sociology teacher in training at MMU, mentor and creative based in Manchester. Passionate about helping the next generation to be “bold and brave”, she is developing workshops for young people while also building community for young women with health issues who don't feel seen. After being supported by organisations throughout her own life, Fikayo is passionate about giving back.

Fikayo becomes part of nine-strong board (below) bringing together emerging and established voices from education, youth work, the creative industries and public service, who volunteer their time to help shape Rekindle Collective's long-term vision for compassionate critical thinkers.



## 12 MONTHS OF STORIES, MEMORY AND COMMUNITY

The Rekindling Nello James project has recently come to a close, bringing to an end a year of impactful, thought-provoking and deeply community-rooted work in Hulme, shaped by the history and legacy of the Nello James Centre.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project brought people together to explore and celebrate the African and Caribbean heritage connected to Nello James and the wider community. Through intergenerational workshops, storytelling sessions, creative activity and public exhibitions, it has gathered memories, recorded lived experiences and begun building a digital archive to preserve these stories for years to come. The work has created space for elders to share, for younger generations to listen and respond, and for culture to be honoured in a way that feels alive and present.

As the project draws to a close this May, these stories and materials - from films and photographs to blogs and interviews - will be archived with the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre and Education Trust at Manchester Central Library, helping ensure this legacy remains accessible for future generations.

As part of the final stages of the project, a powerful documentary has been released, capturing a gathering where people came together to share stories, memories and reflections connected to the centre. It offers a sense of both the history of the space and what it continues to represent within the community, highlighting the importance of spaces like this in holding connection, memory and shared experience.

**Watch the documentary here :**



## SAME SHIRT, DIFFERENT LIVES - OUR CONVERSATION LED FOOTBALL PROJECT KICKS OFF

**Can our love of football open up conversations we don't usually have about our lives, our communities and the world around us?**

Same Shirt, Different Lives is a new conversation-led initiative for men who support the same team. It brings fans together through a shared love of their club, while exploring the different lives behind that common ground.

We've found it can be harder to engage men in conversation-based projects – so we're using football as a more familiar way in. Starting here allows us to test and shape the approach, with a view to opening it out to wider supporter communities and other sports over time.

The pilot programme begins with 'Our stories, our club, our community' and opens out into wider questions around football, culture and society. The first session recently happened with supporters at Queens Park Rangers, with fans quickly leaning in with stories, reflections and connections surfacing naturally.



Sessions are soon kicking off with Sheffield Wednesday and Bradford City A.F.C. It's early, but the direction is clear – starting with something familiar, and using that to open up conversations that go further.



## IN THE NEXT EDITION

An update on our **Monitoring and Evaluation** work, including new insights into support, belonging and confidence, alongside a new film exploring the impact Rekindle has had over the last 12 months told through the voices of young people, families and staff.



**Rekindle Collective Launch film** - a powerful collective voice piece and call to action for compassion, courage and connection in divided times in the UK.



## BACK OUR WORK

Everything you've seen in this issue is made possible through support. If you'd like to be part of what's next, donate via the button.



## FOLLOW US ONLINE: STORIES, EVENTS, UPDATES & MORE

Follow the latest news and updates from Rekindle

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



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