

MSP wants schools to teach children about Scotland's colonial past

Responding after hosting a roundtable in the Scottish Parliament on Education Reform, Lothian MSP, Foysoḷ Choudhury said:

"The Education Reform Roundtable I hosted at the Scottish Parliament was a great success.

"The fantastic speeches from our esteemed speakers and the consequent discussion concluded that the history of slavery and colonialism should be in the curriculum of all schools and should be taught as rigorously as any other subject.

"We unfortunately cannot change our history but, if we act now, we can change the future consequences of that history, such as racism.

"There is currently no statutory requirement to teach the history of colonialism in Scottish schools and many children leave school with little understanding of Scotland's role in the British Empire and its contribution to colonialism.

"A recent YouGov poll indicated that 32% of respondents thought of the British Empire as a good thing and 33% shockingly believed that colonised countries were better off after colonisation.

"It's therefore important to me to highlight the benefits of teaching children, from a young age, about Scotland's colonial

past.

“Education of colonial past can contribute to building a better future by raising awareness of the past, present mistreatment of BAME people and how it contributes to the unfair systems of power at the foundation of our modern society.

“My recent roundtable aimed to start a discussion on the possible steps Scotland can take to educate children about our colonial past from a young age.

“Despite fantastic work done in similar areas through campaigns, museums and working groups, notably the steering group on Empire, Slavery and Scotland’s museums led by Sir Geoff Palmer, the education sector in particular faces notable challenges in integrating lessons on empire and slavery due to the lack of mandatory curriculum.

“That’s why important work lies ahead and why collaboration on this issue is vital to enact lasting and significant change.

“Thank you to all the speakers at the event, including Sir Geoff Palmer, Sarah Cowie, Irene Mosota, Katie Hunter and also Councillor Simita Kumar, Councillor Amy McNeese-Mechan and Stuart McMillan MSP for attending to lend support.

“Action is needed now to change attitudes that will reduce racism and promote equality in the community.”

