



scottish universities
insight institute

mobilising knowledge for a better Scotland



PASS THE MIC

PUTTING THE EXPERIENCES OF
WOMEN OF COLOUR AT THE
HEART OF RESEARCH AND
PRACTICE TO CHANGE
SCOTLAND'S NEWS MEDIA
LANDSCAPE

SUII KNOWLEDGE
EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

SUMMARY REPORT

January 2024



MAIN OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXT

Pass the Mic is a project founded by Talat Yaqoob in 2019 to improve the representation of women of colour in Scotland's news media. It offers a database of women of colour experts for use by media organisations, and an annual Writers' programme, developing the expertise of women of colour commentators and working with media organisations to diversify their content and contributors. In 2020-21, with funding from the Joseph Rowntree Trust, Yaqoob worked with Karen Boyle (University of Strathclyde) on research to map the position of women of colour across print, online and broadcast news in Scotland. The SUII-funded programme was designed to allow us to disseminate and build on the findings from this research and from Pass the Mic's first 4 years, to extend the range of participants and activities, and provide opportunities for women of colour commentators to shape the agenda for future research and project development.

INSIGHTS RESULTING FROM THE PROGRAMME

The insights resulting from the programme are summarised in the **Briefing Report** available here: [What needs to change – insights for media from our recent events – Pass The Mic \(passthemicscotland.org\)](https://www.passthemicscotland.org/insights).

MAIN OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The key events in the programme were:

- The Writers' Programme: **22** women of colour participated in the 2023 Writers' Programme, working with media partners to develop their own content. To date, this has led to **17** written publications and **7** women additionally had the opportunity to produce [showreels](#).
- Workshop 1: this workshop allowed us to bring the women on the writers' programme together with media partners and provided a unique opportunity for mutual learning which challenged existing models of "mentorship" and "training".
- Workshop 2: the first national gathering for women of colour in public life in Scotland. The event was attended by **68** women of colour and offered a mixture of presentations, training sessions and discussion forums. During this event, women of colour were asked key questions about how media in Scotland can become a safer, representative place of influence and how cultures can change.

Feedback received from participants included:

"What an inspiring event! So much talent, expertise and enthusiasm in the room"

"It was such a privilege to deliver a workshop on podcasting at the event, I cannot praise Pass the Mic enough"

"It was a wonderful day at Pass the Mic today. Always feel so energized and good after attending events organized by them"

"How refreshing and delightful to be at an event with powerful women with shared experiences with women of colour"

"Was the highlight of my year and my development time. So inspiring to be in a room full of women of colour experts"

- Workshop 3: a workshop targeted at media and communications professionals in Scotland to share the learning from the first two workshops and from the underpinning research. This event received some [national media coverage](#) and was positively evaluated by those attending, but it was not as well attended as we had hoped, as a result of which we also produced a [Briefing for Media Organisations](#) which was shared widely with media organisations in **November 2023**. It is available on the [Pass the Mic website](#) and will be shared with communications professionals in universities and other public bodies. The workshop also identified the need for further work with student journalists and a first event targeting this group was organised by programme partners Equal Media & Culture Centre and the Association for Journalism Education in December 2023 (more details below).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR END USER / POLICY / PRACTICE COMMUNITIES

As noted above, we have produced a briefing document with the key recommendations from the project which has been widely shared and is available to download from the Pass the Mic website.

PLANNED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- As a result of events undertaken during the funded programme, partner organisations **Equal Media and Culture Centre** and **Association of Journalism Education** organised an online event on Diversity, Media and Narrative Power in December 2023 which both Talat Yaqoob and Karen Boyle spoke at. This offered an opportunity to share the learning from the programme with a student audience. More information about this event [here](#): a recording will be shared on the Engender website in due course.
- The Programme Team have been in conversation with Equal Media and Culture Centre about building on the Pass the Mic research undertaken in 2020-21 to undertake further media monitoring due the 2024 General Election.
- The SUII funding has provided a strong foundation for the next phase of work. In particular the learning outputs from the workshops with both women of colour experts and journalists, media academics, and editors has informed the next steps of the project which will focus on engaging in more influencing opportunities to transform cultures, behaviours and decisions taken within Scottish media. Next steps in this phase include:
 - Another annual women of colour gathering
 - Further showreels of women of colour expertise
 - A session for media partners based on the findings of the workshops and the briefing produced from this work.