

the latest edition of...

# Perspectives

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by the MCC







pers·pec·tives

[noun]

2. Particular attitudes towards or ways of regarding something; Points of view.

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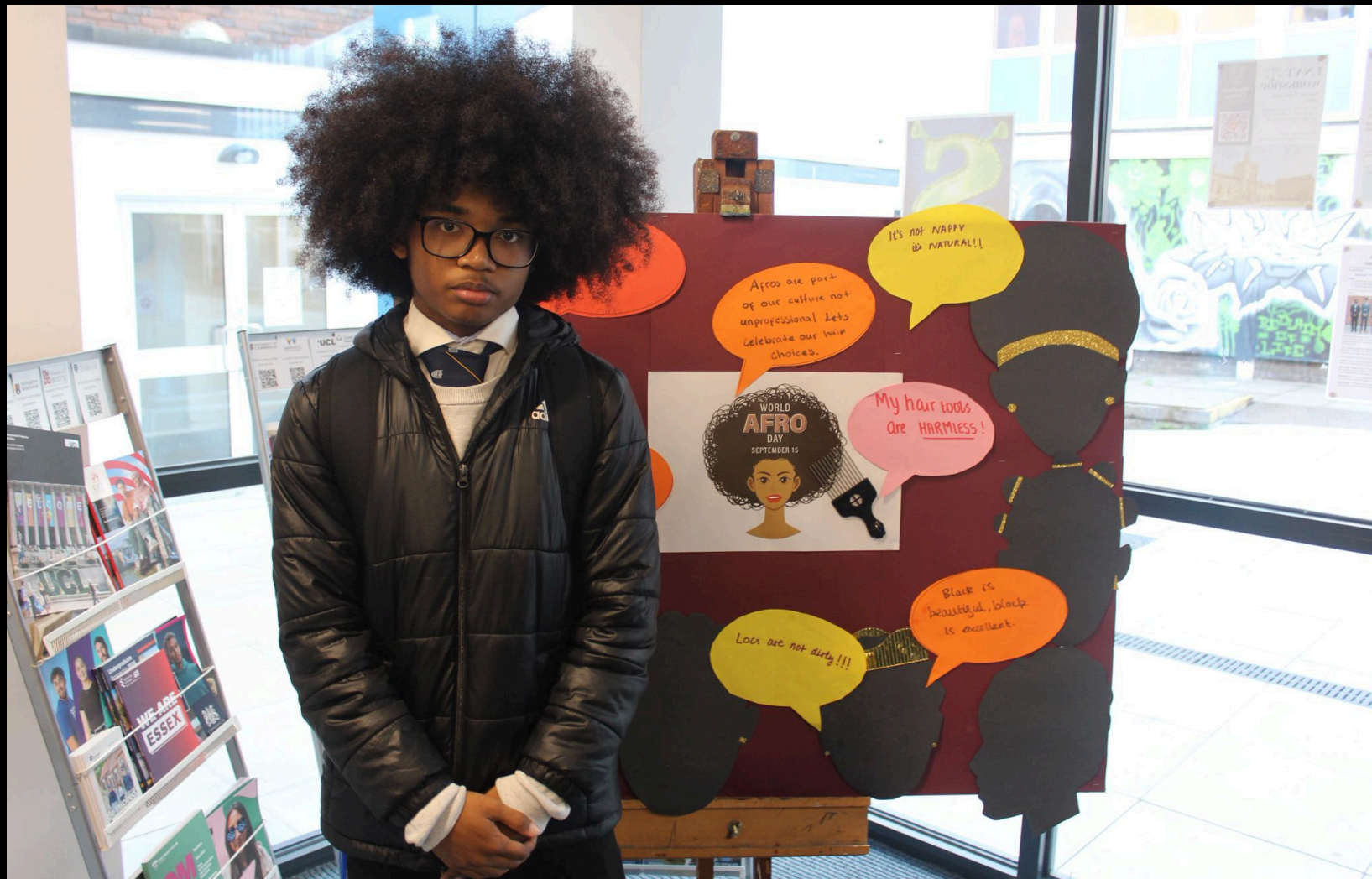


# WORLD AFRO HAIR DAY

**Martin Litchev**

Head of Perspectives

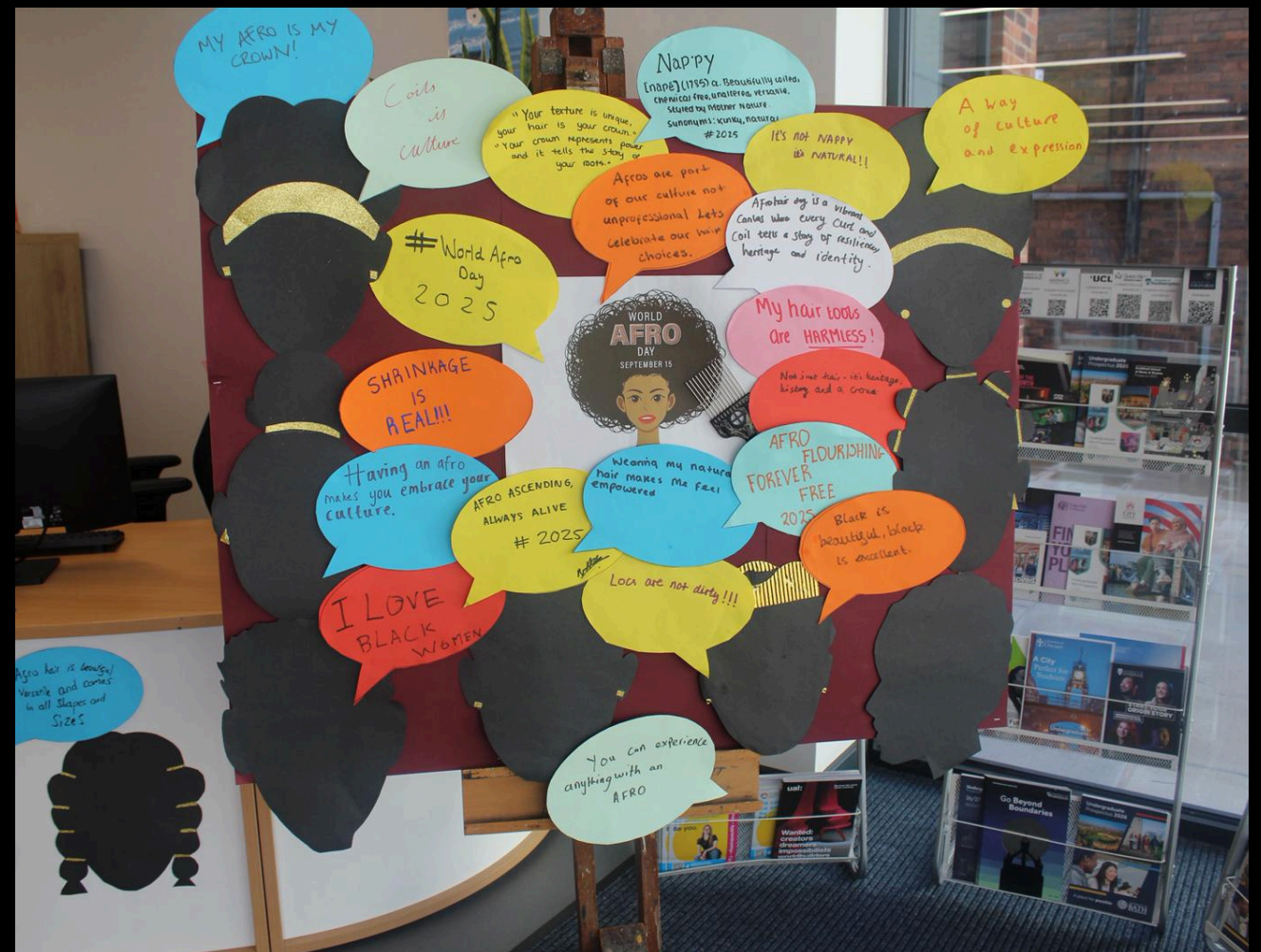
On September 15th, Beths celebrated the 9th anniversary of World Afro Day, a celebration of Afro hair, culture, and identity as well as challenging the negative stereotypes surrounding it. Hair is a personal choice, and no one should feel pressured to style their hair in a certain way to fit in; this is the core message of World Afro Day.



Afro hair historically has been looked down upon, with the belief of it being unprofessional and untidy being prevalent, this extends to protective hairstyles such as braids or cornrows being looked down upon as non-traditional and as a part of gang culture. These ridiculous stereotypes restrict those with afro hair socially and more broadly within society, leaving people unable to express themselves freely via their hair and preventing black people from getting the same opportunities as others unless they conform. Michelle De Leon is the founder of World Afro Day, stemming from her belief that there aren't enough examples of natural afro hair being celebrated in the media. She wanted her daughter and other children to grow up seeing more examples of people with hair like their own, as well as people without afro hair gaining a greater understanding of it.

In the past, discrimination against afro hair was especially prevalent in UK schools. In 2009, a North London school turned away an 11 year old black child on the first day of school due to him having cornrows, which were banned due to fears that such styles could encourage 'gang culture', leading to a court case in which the High Court ruled against the Secondary School. Thankfully there has been progress on this front, the 2022 guidelines from the Equality and Human Rights Commission outlawed hair-based discrimination, moving us towards a more equal society for all people of all kinds.

On behalf of the MCC, thank you to everyone who took part in celebrating World Afro Day.





# MCC SHOWCASE

## Bolu Olojede

Deputy Head of the MCC

On Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025, the MCC celebrated its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual MCC Showcase. The showcase is a day of bringing culture, talent, and skills all on one stage. Ranging from singing, acting, dancing and sword fighting, the student community of Beths Grammar really highlighted the importance of our culture and diversity. With selling just shy of 200 tickets, everyone was able to enjoy themselves and have a day to remember.

We also had the privilege of inviting the Mayor to the Royal Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Councilor Princess Bright! She was astounded by the talent and told us how incredibly proud she was, and we should continue to represent ourselves.

Behind the scenes, we had our amazing Board of Directors who helped prepare everything, as well as some remarkable teachers, such as Ms. Brobbey, Ms. Moffatt, Ms. Twinem, Mr. Metcalfe, Mr. French, Ms. Kaur and Ms Foley.

Thank you to all the amazing acts who made the showcase even possible – your hard work and efforts will be blessed.

And most of all, a huge congrats to Uriel, Samuel and I for all the effort put in 😊.





# Identity Beyond Appearance

**Tatenda Carol Mbusa**

At our recent Culture Day, the halls were full of colour and pride. Students wore traditional clothing and flags. Each outfit told a story of heritage, faith, and family. In that moment, the differences between us were proudly on display, and yet the irony was clear: On every other day, we all look the same - with our identities masked until an occasion calls us to reveal them. But accents on the other hand, are not attires we can put on or take off. They follow us into every conversation, shaping how we are seen and how we are judged. Unlike clothing, we cannot fold linguistics away.

Accents and dialects act like invisible labels. A foreign tone or non-standard English can instantly mark a speaker as different. For example, in ‘Checking Out Me History’ (by John Agard), the speaker utilises Caribbean vernacular to reject the official voice of the classroom and assert a new kind of power. His words remind us that language does not only reflect identity but can also challenge whoever holds authority to define it.

Language can also be deeply emotional. Many bilingual speakers, including myself, tend to slip into their first language to express emotion. For example, when we are angry, joyful or grieving. For us, the mother tongue can be the most honest form of expression, yet this switch can be read as strange or unusual. The very words that make someone feel at home can, in another context, become a reason to exclude them.

Even silence can speak. Sign languages are often misunderstood as a lack of speech or a disability rather than as full languages in their own right. Yet ASL, BSL and others have grammar, poetry, and humour that’s as rich as any spoken tongue. To call signers “mute” is to miss the truth: they have not lost communication, they have redefined it.

Language should never be a barrier to belonging. Instead, it should be seen as proof of the richness that diversity brings. Every accent, every mother tongue, every sign adds to the harmony of voices in our community. At Beths, these differences do not divide us, instead, they bring us closer together.

In addition, we were able to raise a total of £519, with a donation of £258.00 donated to the National Deaf Children's Society.









# LAGOS TO LONDON

## Enioluwa Johnjo

Moving to another country is truly life-changing especially when you're old enough to be fully aware of the shift. But the impact is often underestimated. No one really talks about it, especially where I'm from. Hi, my name is Enioluwa, and this is my story my version of Lagos to London.

To begin with, the weather instantly became my enemy. Who would have thought that going from 33°C to 15°C could be such a shock? Well, I will tell you it is. Every time I stepped outside, I had to bundle up like I was preparing for war. The cold wasn't just uncomfortable; it was personal. I was lucky to arrive in the UK during the holidays and with the right qualifications to move straight into the next academic year. But that didn't come without its fair share of stress and exhaustion. You might wonder why. Well, back in Nigeria, I was already qualified for university. But the moment I landed in England, I was told I'd have to repeat a year. Not only that, I had to complete a two-year course before I could even think about setting foot on a university campus.

I didn't really have a choice. So, I accepted it. I told myself, "It's just two years." Still, the thought lingers: "I could be in university by now, just like the rest of my friends." And honestly, that thought still haunts me. Someone once wrote, "The one-way ticket to a new country makes you realise how linked you are to your heritage once you leave." That line resonated with me deeply. Coming from a country rich in culture and tradition, stepping into England felt like being dropped into an entirely different dimension.

Even the smallest gestures felt unfamiliar. "What do you mean you don't kneel or bow when greeting an adult?" Or the way teachers are casually addressed with barely a nod or "Hi"—was shocking. Back home, respect is woven into every interaction. Then there's the structure of the country everything so orderly, systems that actually work. Life here is undeniably easier, and that was one of the main reasons I made the move. But still, as a proud Yoruba babe, I cannot help but miss home the warmth, the loudness, and especially the food. No matter how comfortable England gets, no meal here can quite match the spice and soul of Nigerian cooking.

Speaking was very tough. Everyone talks about language barriers, but no one really mentions accent barriers. It's sad we are speaking the same language, yet communication still feels like a struggle. I was constantly being asked to repeat myself. At first, it was frustrating. But over time, I stopped blaming them, because I also found it hard to understand their accents too. Still, it took a toll on me. It played a major role in knocking down my self-esteem. Even when I knew the answer in class, I often stayed quiet, just to avoid the stress of repeating myself four times before being understood. I slowly became the quiet friend the one always on her phone. My friends thought I was being nonchalant, but deep down, I was just trying to avoid the pressure of speaking.

And then came the master of all my self-doubt, Physics. It genuinely felt like the end of the world when I started struggling and failing in a subject I once excelled at. The way Physics was taught in England just didn't sit well with me. The methods felt unfamiliar, and the pace overwhelming. Suddenly, the "Physics scholar" from Nigeria was failing Physics class. It was a humbling experience. But looking back, it taught me something valuable: resilience. I needed to learn that it's okay to fail sometimes and that failure does not define me. It's not the end of the world. In fact, it was the beginning of a new kind of growth.

Amid all the chaos, I found a bit of bliss in the support of the school community. One of the biggest differences I noticed was their awareness and willingness to help. That alone was a major relief, especially coming from Nigeria, where you're often expected to always be fine, no matter what you're going through.

But here in England, the school recognised that I was struggling to adjust. They noticed that I might be finding it hard to blend in, and instead of ignoring it, they reached out. They extended help in every way they could and that made all the difference.

Lest I forget to mention one of the biggest blessings in all of this was finally reuniting with my family. They had moved ahead of me, and I had stayed back in Nigeria with my grandmother. So yes, beyond the challenges, this change brought joy too.

England has offered me more than cold weather, non spicy food, and the challenging physic, it's given me access to a stronger educational system, better opportunities, and, not to be overlooked, stable electricity something that remains a major issue back in Nigeria.

Now, it's been a year since the move. As I write this, I realise that, even if I were given a second chance, I wouldn't want to experience life any other way. My 16 years in Nigeria shaped me grounded me in my roots and culture. And now, England is giving me the tools, the exposure, and the opportunity to apply everything I've learned. That's something Nigeria, despite all it gave me, couldn't quite provide.





Editor  
Bolu Olojede

MCC  
Uriel Akinbode  
Samuel Saliu  
Bolu Olojede

credits

Authors  
Martin Litchev  
Bolu Olojede  
Tatenda Carol Mbuse  
Enioluwa Johnjo





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