

# Excluded – documentary 2020

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, exclusion, excluded, education, issue, children, schools, school, support, teachers, Scotland, London, rights, local authority, pupils, feel, poverty, work, terms, point, child

**Kadeem:** As a person affected, I'm sick of running around, not knowing my next step. As a person affected, I'm marginalised and upset. As a person affected, I'm up all night, insomniac getting no rest. But they excluded my protest.

**Jordane:** If you tell a young person so many times, over and over again, that you're aggressive, you're aggressive, you're aggressive, they will become aggressive.

**Cristian:** They didn't really understand where I was coming from. And the thing that bothered me was they didn't try to understand.

**Semilore:** I literally just felt voiceless at the time.

**"James":** I felt a wee bit depressed. Saying to myself, what's wrong with me?

**Cristian:** Every year, there'll be a couple of people excluded permanently. Some are dead, some are in prison and some I haven't heard from in years.

**Betty:** There isn't enough funding. There isn't enough support.

**Erin:** If we take away a young person's right to education, which is what exclusion does, then we also impact on the rest of their human rights as well.

**David:** I think our call for compassionate education matters now more than ever, because we can't afford to keep on losing people.

**Cody:** I think exclusions are wrong, because they're trying to keep you in school and they're actually giving you time off school.

**Betty:** I know a lot of people - like, more people than anybody should know - that, like, are now in prison. And, like, that is after they've been excluded.

**Natalia:** When you've been excluded, you're kind of just written off, and no one really sees you as having any potential anymore.

**Kadeem:** Schools excluding kids is harmful. Because safeguarding measures aren't properly put in place for a long-term plan. My personal experience is a lived example of that.

**Joe:** Shouldn't do it.

**Jack Satchell:** You should just never exclude someone?

**Joe:** No. If you got a student, you should keep hold of them.

**Betty:** Young people have a right to education. We also have a right to be heard. It was crucial then that these two rights formed the principles of what we were making and the process in how we made it. Because we wanted to make a different type of film. In a different type of way. Our film focuses exclusively on the voices and stories of young people whose experiences and views on school exclusions are wide-ranging. You'll hear from young people who had been temporarily, permanently, and indirectly excluded, and those that have never been excluded - often referred to as 'the other 29' in a class. But young people's voices are at the heart of making this film too.

**David:** Most of the young people in this film were involved in workshops where we talked about what we wanted to happen, and this shaped the direction of the film. When filming was unable to happen because of Covid, recording equipment was sent out so those young people could still tell their stories.

**Betty:** We used illustration to help with that and it also helped where students wanted to stay anonymous.

**David:** Young people were employed as consultants and researchers and will continue to be consulted even after the film is finished.

**Betty:** Because it's time to put young people's experiences at the centre of their story.

**Kadeem:** I've been excluded, like, 30 times, easily. The first time I got excluded, I was seven. Took a pencil off the teacher's desk. See I was writing, and the lead of my pencil snapped. So, the teacher was on the other side of the room dealing with another student. So, I got up, and I took a pencil from the teacher's desk, to carry on my work. But it was seen as an issue, maybe because I was doing it, but I didn't quite understand. So, I got sent out of class. And I feel like I had a meltdown. I found school to be quite oppressive, even as a young person. 'Cos I was often excluded from school. So, I think it was 'cos of my special educational needs and my learning disability. I think it got to a point where I preferred being at home, so I just asked for, on occasion, six weeks' worth of work, just to do while I was excluded. And I'd do it well before six weeks. So, I just ended up having to watch 'Murder She Wrote' all the time. That wasn't that fun.

**David:** The classroom environment in itself was very hostile towards me, which is why I felt like the exclusion was highly unfair because I think I got punished on my reaction to the hostility rather than them trying to come to an understanding as to why I was acting the way I was acting. I was internally excluded, once. Externally excluded for a day in high school. And then I had a four-day exclusion in sixth form. Internal is more isolation. So, you don't do school, you're not in your classes, you're like in the basement/loft area. And you get all of your work given to you and you're not socialising with anybody. And I did that for a day. And then external exclusion is when you're literally removed out of the school and you don't go to school until they say you can come back

**Jordane:** I'd been fixed term excluded about 13 times before I'd got permanently excluded but all the exclusions were quite repetitive. It was either defiance or rudeness to staff. At 12, I couldn't articulate myself the way I can articulate myself now. So, if there was a problem, I would feel like I'm explaining it. As soon as I'm saying something, I'm getting shut down. I was on everybody's radar. I had the most behaviour points in my year group. But I had some of the best grades as well. So, at this point, I didn't know I was going to be permanently excluded. No one said anything to me. Then they just confirmed that Jordane's permanent, like the appeal didn't go through or whatever. It just feels like everything has

just gone completely wrong - there's not much you can do to redeem or save what is left of your educational years.

**"James":** I'm deaf in one ear, so it was frustrating to try to hear the teacher, and sometimes the teacher would say to me just get out of the class because you're obviously just annoying me. Sometimes, I would even dog school just because I didn't want to go in, I didn't want to sit in that class. But most of the problems were obviously I was dyslexic. And I never knew that until I was in second year. So, when I was saying that's moving or that's shaking, they would always say "ha-ha, he's on drugs" and then I would get into more hassle and stuff like that. It was hard. It was always hard because I would come home, and it would always be "Och. He's just been bad again. You're grounded" and whatever. And some days, it wasn't my fault. Sometimes, I would just be asking the teacher "Can you say that question again?". And I would say that again and again and again, the teacher would think I would take the mickey. I felt quite angry, quite frustrated. But at the same time, I felt quite down. Like, I felt a wee bit depressed. Saying to myself what's wrong with me? You know what I mean?

**Cristian:** I felt that school, my experience of it was they didn't really understand where I was coming from. And the thing that bothers me was they didn't try to understand, ever. If I was dealing with mental health issues, when I was dealing with mental health issues, they didn't do anything to help. They didn't offer me support, counsellor, therapist. Nothing. I remember there was a time where they they even brought my dad in. And they said, we can tell that he's got problems, but they never did anything about it. They never helped, like, they said we just want to let you know that he has problems and then left it.

**Darren:** First time I was excluded from school, well, the only time I was excluded from school was in year nine. And basically, what happened was there was an altercation. Someone said something rude to me. I didn't like it. So, we got into a fight. Some of them automatically thought that you was the person in the wrong. And then that just leads to that like self-fulfilling prophecy of feeling like you're the bad one. And then it just made me more, like, anti-school. But I was never anti-school. I wasn't a bad kid. It was just that period of time, where I could see a deterioration in my education. My parents were drug abusers. So, I'll be out on the streets 'til 11, 12 at night when I was six, seven, eight years old. Because of my home situation, I never had like a stable school. My only stable school, I was probably there for like three years. From the ages of six to eight, that's when it was really bad. But then I went into foster care for a year and a half. And then after that, in year seven, I moved in with my Nan's. Year Seven, Year Eight, Year Nine, it was pretty much perfectly fine. Now looking back on it, in Year Nine, I lost contact with my dad. And I think that might have had a part to play because he would come to watch majority of, like, all my rugby matches, and it was like a good bonding time with me and him. And it just kept me focused.

**Beth:** I was grieving a lot. My mum was murdered in front of me when I was 12. It was like everybody knew about it, 'cos it was in the papers, it was everywhere. So, when I went back, I knew that everybody would be looking at me like... oh that's that lassie or whatever. And most of the teachers, they would know. Do you know what I mean? I can't remember what year I think it was, but once I got into a fight and then after that my head of year just didn't get on with me and anything I done, it was always pure targeted, so. I got counselling, but, I don't think it helped. People have got like stuff going in in our lives. And then teachers don't really take that into consideration.

**David:** There are many ways that exclusions can indirectly affect people. Sometimes not giving you the support you need can mean attending school is difficult. Like Ada, who is deaf, found that not having the help she needed in class meant that she'd rather be at home, instead of feeling anxious and alone.

**Ada:** I started off going home at break time. I would just start to go home at break time. And then like I'd explain to the teachers when they would catch me and say I have to stay in school, that I must. And I was explaining to them at that point that I started to refuse because I felt that I wasn't getting enough support. I felt like I was kind of being ignored, so I just refused to go. They said okay, we'll have a look at the support, but it just never really come for me, so. Sometimes it'd be a half day and at other times, I was just alone. So, I refused. And then I just preferred to stay home because it was easier. I just felt stressed as well, and I just felt like I had no confidence when I was there.

**David:** There are also other ways that students become excluded unofficially from school, like off-rolling.

**Semilore:** Okay, so, off-rolling is when a student is removed from a school, and there's no official data about them. Say their results, their attendance is just, you can't find it. And exclusions is when you are kicked out from that school but you go to another school. So, at least when you're excluded, they still have records of your, like, results and your achievements. But off-rolling, you're just completely like disappeared, basically. Sometimes didn't even go back to school, because the government can't pick up that they're not even in school any more. So, they're just on the streets, no school, no like, proper motivation for life, which is terrible, because you're kids. You don't know what's going on. And your school has literally just abandoned you. They're just not looked after or like cared about from the government or schools and sometimes, the parents are not really educated on the subject. So, they don't even know the rights they have to help their children. If your parents don't know what to do, you don't know what to do. The government doesn't care, the school doesn't care, like, where do they go from there?

**Kadeem:** I got put in alternative provision, special provisions, I was in a PRU for kids that deal with, I mean, staff that deal with kids with special educational needs and emotional behaviour disorders. So, I didn't suffer as much as I would have maybe in a mainstream school with teachers that wouldn't have understood me, but obviously go into alternative provision, my education was marginalised as well.

**Darren:** So, for my brother and his experience in school, one of the teachers actually called him "a waste man". Since then, like he never really liked the teachers and stuff. So then when he got excluded, he went to a PRU and then that's when things got even worse, because for me, I feel like they're just a breeding ground for gangs.

**Jordane:** I went to like a pupil referral unit for about maybe six months, before I went back to mainstream. It was hard, because there's so much stigma around Pupil Referral Units and the type of people that end up there. You go in there expecting the absolute worst, essentially. There was a lot of people that were obviously involved in, like gangs and knife crime. And there was just like a lot of people doing drugs. It was different.

**Natalia:** The wider issues of school exclusion is what we call the school to prison pipeline. So, the end point is prison. And exclusions is basically it starts you on this process. So, once you've been excluded, there's not many options to get back into formal education. There are PRUs but like, I think it's that 1% of students actually attain like an A to C grade GCSEs which means that if you don't have good GCSEs you can't really get into good employment and like opportunities are limited because people have seen that you've been excluded from school. So, not for every child who has been excluded, but for a lot, particularly like boys. The only other option for them really that they do is, they're just hanging out on the road. They get in with the wrong crowds. They do the wrong things, and they end up in jail.

**Cristian:** What really bothers me and that I'm really passionate about and fires me up is my friends and the people I've seen, and every year there'll be a couple people excluded permanently. And now

hearing back from them they're like "Oh do you hear what happened to so and so?" Yeah, he's gone or, he did this, or he did that. And it's like, a normal occurrence even seeing them... Well, some are dead, some are in prison. And some I haven't heard from in years, even though like, we were close friends. And it's normal to hear that, it's not shocking innit? If you ask anyone, it's going to be the same thing. And it's just happens again and again, it's a systematic problem, and it's gonna continue to occur.

**Kadeem:** By the time I left school, I just wasn't that bothered with education or engaging with my local authorities. My aspirations were supposed to be raised along the process. I wasn't supposed to be stuck in alternative provision for five years. And post-16, I didn't leave with any work experience. I didn't have ID until I was like 21. And I'm still having issues accessing my benefits and my entitlements now, and I don't remember ever having a social support worker. So.

**Ewan:** That's how people start going down different roads, because if you're no in school, where are you? In the streets or else you're in the house, doing nothing. No getting any education, which means you're no getting qualifications, it just ruins it. So, it's a waste, doesn't change, it's not gonna make you a changed person, it's not gonna make you a better person, it's just gonna make you want to go and do 10 times worse than what you've already done.

**Kadeem:** By the time I got to 14. All the students that were, obviously when you're 14 you're in year nine, all the students that were in year 10, they just started going to jail, everyone started going to jail. I don't know why they was in jail. But it was a theme that was evident.

**Darren:** My brother's exclusion affected me more than my own exclusion. He had troubles, the troubles came to our door, it affected my education, because instead of going college, I was staying home to make sure that when these people knocked nothing bad was gonna happen and stuff like that. But then that also led down to him being more involved with like police and stuff, which meant I had to be more involved, which then in the end, resulted in there being an argument, which meant I became homeless. The thing is, I've always felt like a bit of a black sheep in my family. Because my family's like, generations down, have always been involved with crime and, you know, poverty and stuff. And from a very young age, I didn't want that at all.

**Ewan:** It's like, in school it's genuinely like, it's like Pablo Escobar with police always after him because they're always trying to get something on him so they can like get him gone so that he's in jail for life. That's what it's like with school because they try to like constantly put something onto you, just so they can get you either suspended, kicked out. That's what some of the teachers are like, they constantly just want you gone out the school so they'll just put anything on you that they can.

**Ben:** I just got sent home like every day for a year. I think I just got sent home so much and they just told me not to come back.

**Natalia:** I know talking from my uncle's experience, like he was excluded in year seven. He came out he was home-schooled for, I think it was three months and then the home-school stopped. And once that finished, like he was literally just on the roads, doing whatever. He went into the young offenders. Then he went into main prison, he came back out. And he like tried to go into sixth form. But it's so hard when you've been out of formal education for so long, and there's not enough support. My uncle was excluded in year seven. So, he was 11 years old. And he never re-entered the schooling system. He was kind of just left his own devices, mixed with the wrong crowd. And, you know, the rest is history. He ended up in prison, and, for as long as I can remember, that is where he has been. He would write letters to me and I would write letters back. I wanted to read a little bit of one of the letters that he sent back to me. "What did you do for Easter? I bet you had a lot to tell me. I hope you had fun. How many easter eggs did you get? Anyway, Easter holidays should be over by the time you get this letter. How is

school? What year are you in now? And what's your favourite lesson? I used to like every lesson except maths when I was your age. Anyways, Nat, thank you for writing to Uncle to see how I am. Your letter put a big smile on my face and made me happy. I'm even happier with your writing skills. Trust me, it's emotional. Just keep up the good work in school and continue to make Uncle proud and write a quick letter when you can. Love you loads. PS: I miss you."

**David:** When the January school census went live in 2019, 16,134, pupils were being educated in state-supported alternative provisions. Only 1% of students who complete their GCSEs in alternative provision pass five GCSEs compared to the national average of 64.5 percent. But maybe there are things to be learned from some of the attitudes of teachers and the set-up in these spaces - that classroom sizes are smaller, which helps students focus, and some students found they were listened to in certain PRUs more than they had been in school.

**Jordane:** When I first started at unit, I made it very clear that if there's an opportunity for me to go back to mainstream school, I want to get back to mainstream because that's when I had the stigma of Pupil Referral and I didn't really want to be there that long. But classroom sizes were a lot smaller. So, it was only like maybe five or six of in in a class. It was easy for the teachers to gear towards abilities, because they didn't have to cater to a class of 30. And then when I started getting used to unit and stuff like that, I didn't really want to go back to mainstream because I realised, I could get like nine or 10 GCSEs in a place that listens to me and caters to me.

**Josh:** The school that I was at sent me here, so I got excluded three times. It's quite different, because less people in a class. No school uniform. I've been more happy. Because I don't have to worry about when I was going to get excluded next.

**Cody:** I think it's quite helpful actually. They're just nicer, more supportive. I've been more polite, and all that. More nice than at my old school.

**Josh:** I used to be angry 24/7 and now I'm more relaxed. should be angry 24 seven then more relaxed. I don't really shout at teachers.

**Jordane:** The head teacher of that unit said to me, oh, yeah, we found you a school that you can go to. And I was like, I don't really want to go. What made me like the school, a good first impression was the fact that it wasn't just one teacher that came to see me, it was three teachers. So, I felt, a bit special and I felt like they really wanted me and they listened as well, which was important, because every single problem I had, they went through it in detail, they didn't brush over any problem. So yeah, I started at that school. They could have easily removed me from mainstream and just sent me back to unit and it wouldn't have impacted me so much. But they were very persistent in keeping me in that school, and really tried to do everything they could to keep me in the school. So, once I started to realise that they weren't trying to get rid of me so easily is when I started to relax a bit and started to settle. And that's when things started to get better. I felt a lot more comfortable with these teachers to say, I need help, or I need more work. I feel like there was more of that, the ability to have those kind of conversations with your teachers and be able to get that help or be pushed in that way. I study law at the University of Warwick. The grade requirements for Warwick were very, very high. Year 12 and 13, I dedicated my life to my A levels, and they went well. People like me don't go to Warwick. A lot of people assume that if you're black and a female, you're asking questions, you're not conforming to what they believe femininity to be, you're supposed to be passive and not ask questions and be yeah, just in a box. So, I think because I didn't conform to that ideology, it was taken as me being defiant or aggressive, Yeah, that's what I mean by like, people like me don't go to Warwick. Even now, when I tell any of of my friends or speak to any of my friends at Warwick that, oh yeah, Like I've been permanently excluded they're like WHAT? And you're at Warwick, what? It's just not the norm.

**Betty:** Jordane is not the norm. Only 46% of students who spend time and alternative provision returned to a mainstream setting. What happens if schools take the time to take a breath, to listen to their students, to find out what's going on, to give them room? What happens if there's a more compassionate approach to education? In 2021, the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child will be incorporated into Scottish Law, which has far-reaching implications for the rights of young people. We met representatives of the Scottish Youth Parliament in Edinburgh to hear more.

**Liam:** The SYP has quite a strong relationship with the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government. And so, a lot of MSPs regularly meet with our MSYPs to discuss issues that are concerning young people. The Scottish Government are always up for listening to what young people have to say, which is amazing. The Scottish Government is one of the only governments in the world that we know of anyway, that will annually hold a joint cabinet meeting with the Scottish Government cabinet ministers and young people, sat side by side around the cabinet table and discuss issues that affect young people. And that's a change in society in the way people are thinking, purely through the work young people do, how fierce they are, and through Scottish Youth Parliament's advocacy and things like that. SYP focuses on the UN CRC. And it's underpinned by Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. And we campaigned on that. And indeed, Scottish Government listened, and they are incorporating that in Scottish law. The bill's going through Parliament just now. And it's really quite exciting.

**Erin:** I think by incorporating the UN CRC will prove to young people that their human rights do matter and will make them more aware of their human rights and empower them to reclaim them when maybe they hadn't done before.

**Liam:** When a young person is removed from their educational setting, that takes an impact on them lifelong. We know, during the Covid-19 pandemic, one of the main focuses of the governments of the UK is getting kids back in school. And quite rightly too, because the long-term effects of taking a young person out of school are more damaging, than you can know. That young person might not think it because they think "the school doesn't care about me" etc. And I can understand how they feel like that because it's an awful thing to go through, but it's a sign of an education system doesn't work to be quite simple about it. It's a sign that if you have to get to the point where a young person feels, it gets to the point where the only acceptable thing to do is remove them from school. That's a failure. And there's no two ways around that. And something needs to be addressed about it.

**Erin:** All our human rights are completely interdependent. Without the right education, then you may not have other rights. So for example, your right to good mental health. Education is absolutely fundamental in that. So, if we take away a young person's right to education, which is what we believe exclusion does, then we also impact on the rest of their human rights as well. And we also believe that it's fundamental to include young people, who might have disabilities, additional support needs and mental health problems in that as well and make sure that they're getting the equal support that their peers would be getting as well.

**David:** In Glasgow, school exclusions have dropped by nearly 87% since the 2005/6 academic year thanks to a groundbreaking programme of change called the Nurture Programme. St Roch's School is in Glasgow, in one of the most deprived postcodes in Scotland. But St Roch's breaks the cycle of exclusion by adopting an inclusive and supportive approach. It's all about finding the right level of support for each student.

**MJ:** I feel like we're all equal in this school, so nobody gets treated differently. It doesn't matter who you are, or what age you are or like whatever, we all get treated the same way. So it doesn't really matter.

My teachers are amazing. They're there for you no matter what. Even if you're not their biggest fan or they're not your biggest fan. They'll still be there for you. So, for instance, my maths teacher, I go to her on Thursdays and I just go to her, and we just talk about if I'm alright, how I'm feeling, outside the school and inside the school and she's somebody that I can trust. I feel like if it wasn't for her than I probably wouldn't really like school, but she's advised me, like "you're going to get through it and you're going to go to university and you're going to have an amazing life." She's amazing.

**Ada:** I was really difficult for me. My mum forced me to come at first to try to get things going again. The next year, I kind of understood that this school was better. People were nice and they were trying to teach me a lot and give me a lot of support. So, I understood that. And when I knew it was better then, I came. I've got a lot of different deaf support workers here, and we've got a lot of different deaf students too. It made a big difference. It's more easy for communication. It's easy to be involved in a group.

**Liam:** The SYP wholeheartedly welcomes the Nurture programme in Glasgow. It's an amazing approach, I personally think. It puts compassion at the heart of schooling, and that's exactly what it should be. I think we can pride ourselves on a compassionate education system, but there's always more that can be done. I fundamentally believe that young people should be consulted about anything that's going to affect them. The Nurture programme is a shining beacon in the education system that could be not copied and pasted, because everywhere is different, and but definitely replicated in other local authorities.

**Betty:** Glasgow doesn't just have a Nurture programme, they have an ambition to be a nurturing city. A nurturing city that has schools in which children and young people feel they belong; they are listened to, and they and their families are valued. These values are exactly the kind of thing that No Lost Causes are placing at the heart of their campaigning.

**Semilore:** No Lost Causes is a campaign for a more compassionate approach to education. We started in August 2018. We applied to the Advocacy Academy which is a programme that teaches youth about social justice issues and how we can fight them. So, we've been lobbying with people in Parliament. And then from there, we had a meeting with the whole of the Education Select Committee, which was interesting, because it showed that older people do care about issues. We are in the process of making packs for schools, parents and students surrounding education. Our parent packs are around school now, to teach them what school is like now and how they can get. So, we want to do workshops in schools targeted for teachers and students as well, about the education system, the issues in it, how we can face it, and how students and teachers can work together. Because it's not, it doesn't have to be a fight all the time. Like, we want to succeed, you want to help us succeed.

**Natalia:** So, we all came together, and we essentially presented to the Head of Ofsted, why our campaigns were so necessary. So, for No Lost Causes, we were saying how what we have is we have schools are not understanding students and they're not understanding the kind of things that happen outside the school gates. And that's what our campaign is trying to do. So, when we have things like exclusions and like pastoral support, Ofsted doesn't, doesn't measure that effectively. Right now, we're trying to work on like youth engagement. So, we really want to get more involved with people our age, because previously like the campaign has been going since 2018. But a lot of the work we've been doing is like lobbying in Parliament. So, with like policymakers, with a lot of adults and while it's really important to have adults involved, we need to empower young people to empower themselves.

**Betty:** We spoke to Education Not Exclusion campaigners and compiled their interviews to preserve their anonymity.



**David:** The Education Not Exclusion campaign was very relevant to all of us because we all have either been excluded or we know people that have been excluded. It was easy to feel passionate about it because everybody has a story about exclusion, everyone. We designed the School to Prison pipeline in the style of a tube map. You'll see there's an image of the pipeline and who we are, and that we're asking for compassionate education funding.

**Betty:** We used this piece of design to replace the tube map on Northern Line trains the night before GCSE results. We went for the Northern Line because it has the most stops, which meant we could get more information onto the map. There's a small piece of writing saying that today there's going to be a lot of articles on the kids that did really well in their GCSEs and have gotten into that dream college.

**David:** But we were asking for some column time to be given to people that have been failed by the education system, who didn't receive GCSEs because 1% of people who are excluded get five A star to Cs. That's what like intrigued people on this day of celebration. We asked them to think about the people who were outside of those celebrations. We went out the night before GCSE results, around the time of the last tube in the hour between 11 and 12 when they're the quietest.

**Betty:** There must have been like 20 of us and we had a mass briefing outside the station. We were told that we could be arrested but we all cared more about this than any altercation with the police.

**David:** We were in groups of three and all used ways to look discreet and unattached to the action. We'd all have random conversations really loud. Like, "oh, have you seen the Guardian article about exclusion? It's disgusting what they're doing to these kids, disgusting." And all the while everyone else is trying to glue the posters in the right spaces on a moving tube. Afterwards, we couldn't tweet about it personally to say we did this amazing campaign as we usually do because it's illegal.

**Betty:** Instead, we sent pictures to big Twitter accounts. And we said, please, please, please, can you tweet this photo saying that you saw it this morning? And then it really blew up. It was trending.

**David:** We wrote articles for The Guardian, for ID magazine. We even got a poster into the Transport for London museum. And then Robert Halfon, the Chair of the Education Select Committee tweeted saying who are these kids? I want to meet them. We introduced him to another campaign group, No Lost Causes, who led the conversation with the Education Select Committee, which has since then got into Ofsted as well. It's been an amazing journey, from a simple ad-hack to meetings in Parliament.

**Semilore:** I feel like our biggest achievement as a campaign was actually like, our parliament speech. Because that's what we fully like, established OK, we are No Lost Causes, we can actually make change. So that was like, my proudest moment anyway. We never thought as working class kids from South London, we'd be going to Parliament, and having a meeting with the Head of Education Select Committee. We didn't even know what that was before we had the meeting. So that's why I feel like, as a campaign, we have gone a long way. And we are fighting for people who may not have these opportunities. So that was really cool for us. A it was strange because we thought people who have power, they don't really care. But he actually cared about the issue, as well. So from that meeting we had another meeting with the whole Committee. And that was cool as well, because we saw like their viewpoints on education system and we thought, OK these people are like... they're like...white old middle class people, he might not know our experiences of an education system. But they did and that really shocked us, and they actually cared so made us like more open to sharing our experiences knowing that we wouldn't be cut off or like side-tracked, that they're actually willing to listen to our stories, which doesn't normally happen.

**David:** I think our call for compassionate education matters now more than ever, because we can't afford to keep on losing people to suicide, to prison, to unhealthy living standards. We can't afford for the cycle to keep on going.

**Betty:** One thing that I'd be really happy with as like as a winner from all the work that we've done is (A) funding from the, from the government for support in schools for like, for mental health, SEN support, that sort of thing. But also like, I'd love that to be a cultural change in the way that teachers are trained to deal with bad behavior.

**David:** We asked all the young people in this film about what they thought should happen differently. We hear so often about what should happen about school exclusions from politicians, the media and educators, but so rarely from the people that they affect the most. We wanted to hear their ideas about what needs to change.

**Cristian:** I think a compassionate education system, it would look a bit like a kid can go into the school, and you can feel safe in talking about his problems to whoever he can talk to. He can feel safe in knowing that he's not going to be judged, he's not going to be labeled.

**"James":** Excluding them would be the last thing I would do. I would find out the whole story, I would have them in their classroom, take them away that period, let them calm down, let them do the work in the school and after they've settled down and the problems resolved, then send them back to class.

**MJ:** Maybe like, for instance, maybe a counsellor? Because my pals' got counsellors, and the counsellor helps them a lot. Like they tell me like, I'm at a counsellor's next period, and I'm excited to see her, I can talk to her about this and that, and counsellors can get them help, 100%.

**'Ben':** I'd take the teachers out and bring in young people to teach us, like 19-year-olds, because they've just left school, so they've already done all their years at school. Then they want to know what to do. They want to teach other people.

**David:** I think there's a clear indication that people think that age and solutions go hand in hand. When that's not really the case, because as you can see, we're not really going anywhere.

**Kadeem:** Education should be more inclusive for everyone. And students that need more support should be given more support before alternative provision.

**Jordane:** Schools are forgetting that we're not just there academically. This is where we spend the majority of our time and we should be able to grow as a person. If you tell a young person, over and over again, that you're aggressive, you're aggressive, you're aggressive, they will become aggressive. If you tell them, over and over again, that you're a leader or you can do this or you can do that, they will start to believe it in themselves. You have to be very careful with the words you use with young people 'cos they're so impressionable that they will become what you say.

**Natalia:** I think that schools need to be more of a community. And it's almost like the old saying, you know, it takes a village to raise a child. And schools need to be a part of that village. They can't just exist as separate institutions on their own where you just go to study for exams. They need to take into consideration what happens beyond the school gates as much as what happens in the school gates.

**Betty:** In my dream world, schools in urban inner-city areas. They would be taught by people who are from these areas. If you are going to allow teachers from like upper-middle class backgrounds to come like teaching the schools, there needs to be like a load of training. I think that like a lot of teachers come from these backgrounds, with really low expectations of like, the schools that they're working in, and I really struggle with that because like, if you're going to have low expectations of people, we're only going to want to like, live up to that.

**MJ:** If somebody is badly behaved, they don't look into it enough and see what actually the problem is. They just think they're just doing it for the sake of it. When sometimes that's not the case, you know? Support every pupil instead of just the ones that are doing well.

**Natalia:** Giving both parents and students the right support is so crucial because while the child is the one being excluded, if the parent can't understand that process, then you can't support your child to be the best version of themselves.

**Semilore:** Sometimes some children are not comfortable to tell the situation. It doesn't mean that they're not going through stuff, they just don't want to tell you. So, a way that they can handle that in a more compassionate way basically.

**Cristian:** I hate when people say that 'what about the other kids?' Like are they disrupted? What about their learning? Like, bro that is a kid too and their parents trust you to teach them as well. And I'm not gonna lie, you can remove them from the lesson, but it's not just about that. It's about what do you do after you remove them from the lesson

**Betty:** There just needs to be a massive cultural change around the training of teachers. There needs to be more funding in SEN departments, mental health support, support for like pastoral care. Support in the classroom for teachers, because I get like, a teacher's job is not easy, I get it.

**Erin:** School exclusions are just treating a symptom of a problem. If we exclude young people from school we're not treating why young people are getting excluded, we're not addressing maybe the mental health problems they might have, problems at home. A lot of young people who are excluded from school do have problems at home. And what do we do? We just send them back there. And it's kind of like putting a plaster on an open wound, we're not really addressing how they got that wound in the first place.

**Betty:** That isn't the compassion needed for kids who externalise behaviours which aren't seen as palatable in the classroom.

**Cristian:** Keep in mind the life of a student. What they go through, outside and inside. So we don't replicate the same patterns that we see, the same students getting excluded or not getting the help they need, not getting the support they need. Teachers not recognising students who are going through difficult times. That needs to change. And that may sound a bit vague, but it's going to be complex, it's a very complex issue. And we have to look at pastoral support. And we have to look at teacher training, and we do have to look at resources. But I think the main thing that's easy to do is just talk to a kid, see where they're coming from, because these teachers, a lot of them can't really see our struggle, and it's not their fault, but I think they should try to make a conscious effort to see where we're from, and see what problems we have to deal with. And it can start from there.

**David:** Part of moving towards the creation of inclusive school cultures has to be through listening to the experiences of young people. We want this film to be the start of many more conversations about exclusion in the UK today.

**Betty:** This film was co-produced by EachOther and the 20 young people who feature in and worked on it. EachOther is a UK focused charity which uses independent journalism, storytelling and filmmaking to put the human into human rights. The film has taken 18 months to make and has always had young people's voices at the heart, reflecting EachOther's commitment to giving a platform to those whose rights are at risk. The young people in this film are speaking up for our right to education. EachOther is standing up for our right to be heard. Together we can build a movement to uphold everyone's rights. To find out more, go to [www.eachother.org.uk](http://www.eachother.org.uk)