

BSA Activism in Sociology Forum Annual Report 2018-19

The BSA Activism in Sociology Forum (ASF) was established in 2013. Its purpose is to aid those inside and outside academia working on social justice projects to connect with one another for collective action, and to bring academic-activist practices into conversation with research and teaching about activism. ASF members continue to be very active in their respective fields. We recently recruited an additional co-convenor, Karim Mitha, who is a doctoral student at the University of Glasgow and will have a particular focus on improving our social media presence. He joins the other co-convenors Rumana Hashem, Spyrso Themelis, and Tom Vickers.

The forum has 626 Followers on Twitter, 785 Followers on our Facebook page, and 199 subscribers to our Jiscmail list. The convenors have recently decided to also launch a newsletter, to encourage sharing of members' activities, with the first issue distributed at the BSA Annual Conference 2019 and subsequently online.

The ASF organised two fringe events in conjunction with the BSA annual conference 2018 Newcastle. Both events were organised in partnership with the Newcastle-based Migration and Asylum Justice Forum (MAJF), under the title 'Fight Everyday Borders and Racism: Defend the Right to Health Care, Housing and Education':

- On 10th April a public forum organised by ASF and MAJF heard from a panel of activists, who were all themselves asylum seekers or refugees, speaking about struggles facing asylum seekers in Newcastle attempting to access health care, housing and education. ASF co-convenor Tom Vickers added to the sociological context of these issues, by giving a talk on the changing character of the British state in the context of capitalist crisis and austerity. The meeting then split into three working groups to plan action.



One of the outcomes of this event was that the Migration and Asylum Justice Forum have launched a new area of campaigning to increase asylum seekers' access to Higher Education in Newcastle. Another consequence of the event was that the panel were invited to give another presentation at an event at the Tate Modern.

- On 11th April 2018 ASF and MAJF organised a street protest in the centre of Newcastle to speak out against the hostile climate and growing hostility toward refugees and asylum seekers. A group of attendees at the BSA conference gathered in the foyer and braved the rain and cold to march and join the protest. The protest heard from academics and people with first-hand experience of the UK immigration system, distributed information and engaged with members of the public.



- On 12th March 2018, during the UCU strike, ASF made a public statement as a way of intervention to the pension dispute. Specifically, we took a stance against the ACAS deal which was eventually rejected by UCU's members. The statement, signed by the three convenors, was publicised via Facebook and twitter as a form of solidarity and our support to striking staff and students.
- During the 2019 BSA annual conference, the ASF organised a fringe meeting, co-hosted by Glasgow Autonomous Space and with speakers from Extinction Rebellion Scotland and Pulbari Solidarity Campaign. Around 20 people attended, with a mixture of local activists and conference attendees, and engaged in a very productive reflective discussion on the recent experience of environmental movements and their future direction. Images are included below.



- In addition, the forum convenors and members have been actively engaging with diverse publics, including taking part in advocacy work and expressing solidarities with social movements by communities in direct actions on issues such as climate change, job cuts and save the NHS, defending pensions of university workers, and movement for anti-detention and anti-racist policies in post-Brexit vote Britain. Examples of this activity is given in our newsletter.

Co-Convenors:

Rumana Hashem

Spyros Themelis

Tom Vickers

Karim Mitha

April 2019