

FI WI ROAD 2023 – Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Rita Gayle was in conversation with FI WI ROAD 2023 interns: Rachel Muriuki, Temi Ajayi, Danielle Marshall and Brianna Gittens.

Rita Gayle 00:05

All right. Well, thank you. My name is Rita Gayle and I'm a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Birmingham. I'm working on the 'Conjunctures Strand' of The Stuart Hall Archive Project. So that's what I'm doing. It's really great to be able to join you to talk about FI WI ROAD 2023. And I've been catching up, I've been obviously watching all the developments and everything. But I always really find this really exciting to kind of come and do this conversation to find out because if you've listened to all the any of the other podcasts, you'll know that I didn't study geography, I came to geography quite late via like moving image, visual culture, media, cultural studies. So I'm always curious about that journey for people who studied undergraduate or masters, and your involvement kind of at a deeper level with the subject. So, I'm always curious about that. So I always learn something about this conversation. I feel like I'm getting my geography training right now actually, through FI WI ROAD to be honest. So you know, before we go any further and I ask my questions, you know about your experience of the internship and meeting all these interesting dynamic people, you know, it'd be good for the audience to hear a little bit about views. So, if I can start with you, Rachel, to just tell the audience you know, what you're doing, what you did prior to starting the internship, and how you came about your approach to geography.

Rachel Muriuki 01:45

So hi, everyone. My name is Rachel. I'm currently studying Geology and Physical Geography at the University of South Wales. Prior to that, I studied geography in secondary school. I'm a Kenyan international student so the systems are a little different. But I did study geography prior to that. I actually didn't have much background on geology. So kind of just getting into it with that foundation was a bit of a roller coaster, but it was, but it's fine now. I'm in my final year. On the track to graduate in 2024. I'm more on the physical side of photography. So I mainly deal with the physical aspects. And how I came across The FI WI ROAD and the Internship was, um, I think at the time I was mass applying for internships because I did really want an experience. And just to know, what if I wanted to get into the field or kind of pivot or don't get me wrong, I do love learning. I do love learning the subject! It's just that, I did really want a bit of experience in the field before, you know, actually, before graduating, and obviously, extra credit wouldn't hurt. I think FI WI ROAD was a real eye opener for me. And I'm really grateful for the experience, the experience, and I can't wait to share my insights.

Rita Gayle 03:58

Thank you. And Temi. So just a bit about yourself, you know. Your kind of, I guess your relationship to the geography subject. And, then prior to the FI WI ROAD project.

Temi Ajayi 04:11

Cool. My name is Temi and I'm in my final year of my Geography undergrad at the University of Edinburgh. So before The FI WI ROAD project, I basically.. I'd studied geography in secondary school and I did geography for my A level, but I actually first came to Uni to study Architecture instead. And I did a year of that, and it wasn't really for me. So, I switched over to Geography. So yeah, I'm in my third year. No, I've just finished my third year and I'm in my final year of my Geography course now. And unlike Rachel, I am doing the Human side of it, of Geography. And how I found out about The FI WI ROAD project? Um, so I've been following the Black Geographers Instagram account for a few years now and I actually stumbled across the internship application last year. And I was going to apply, but I wasn't really sure about what area of geography most interested me. And I remember because we have to, we had to like write out a, basically a personal statement, I guess. I wasn't really sure what I would put down. So I kind of put it off and never really applied last year. But this year, I had a clearer idea of like, what aspects of geography I wanted to go into. And also, yeah, I wanted to learn a bit more about what it would be like if I stayed in academia after undergrad. So yeah, that's why I came into The FI WI ROAD project. Yeah.

Rita Gayle 06:06

Thank you. And so, Danielle. Good to see you.

Danielle Marshall 06:12

Hello! Good to see you too.

Rita Gayle 06:14

Thank you. And so we were just introducing ourselves. So I was asking the question about, you know, your relationship to geography, what you studied geography previously, and what you're currently doing at the moment prior to starting the internship.

Danielle Marshall 06:34

Yeah, so I followed geography through from secondary school. So, did it at GCSE, then studied it further at A Level. Now I'm doing a BSC Geography degree at the University of Southampton. So yeah, I do love geography!

Rita Gayle 06:50

I think what might be useful, Brianna.. I think people do find that quite useful to think, 'Okay, what are the journeys of each of the interns?' So when I started, I asked everyone, you know, what was your journey to geography before the internship? Okay? And then, yeah. so that's the first part of the question. So what brought you to geography?

Brianna Gittens 07:10

So geography is something that I've always been quite interested in from a very young age, looking at climate change. And just like, I guess, helping out locally in the recycling.. and just little things. But then obviously, like going through school, I noticed that the sort of like demographics or that geography surrounded people that didn't really look like me. And I think, in a weird way, that's what inspired me even more to like, get into geography, because I wanted to do something that. I guess in a way, like breaks the barriers of what you're expected to do for example. And sort of like by doing something I genuinely enjoy. So I think that's what inspired me to like, go on with this geography as well, because I think it's something that is really important, and is also going to affect, like, my own background, like, people from back home, things like that. So I feel like it's important that I decided for instead of something that was more, I guess, expected of me. Like something like STEM or Law, those sorts of degrees. So yeah, I think that's what inspired me into geography is kind of doing something a bit more unconventional, but also something that I think is really crucial for our futures, especially people of colour going on with all the global affairs of the world.

Rita Gayle 08:45

And what are you currently studying at the moment, Brianna? Or what have you completed studying, if you have finished already?

Brianna Gittens 08:51

Yes, I'm in the second year at university. So I'm studying Geography.

Rita Gayle 09:00

And why did you decide to apply? I mean, how did you find out about FI WI ROAD first of all or Black Geographers? And why did you decide to apply for the internship?

Brianna Gittens 09:13

I got an email from my Uni. I think a lecturer.. she emailed me with the application process. And looking at it, it was something I'd never heard of before, so I looked more into it and realised like I really want to apply and see what it's all about. But yeah, that's what introduced me to FI WI ROAD.

Rita Gayle 09:33

Thank you. So we're all up to speed. So what would be good now would be for us all to open up on mic so we can all just jump in. Okay? We're gonna move the questions along. So my question to all of you is, you know, what did you do? So obviously, you were all very successful with your applications. Congratulations! But then what? What happened? What did you do? Who's gonna start?

Temí Ajayi 10:03

I can start. So, first we had like a introductory meeting, I remember what it was called. But it was like we were in London for two days. Just to like, get to know everyone, see all the faces and like chat to Pat (Professor Patricia Noxolo, University of Birmingham) and Cynthia (Cynthia Anyadi, Black Geographers). And I think that's where we got an overview of what the internship was going to be like, and got to meet our mentors as well. And also started thinking about planning The Fair, which is going to, which was going to be the very last thing, the last event to cap off the internship.

So, yeah, we started to decide on the themes, and like, what ideas that we had for the fair, and it was just a nice time to like, meet everyone. Because obviously, we're going to be working with each other throughout the summer. And then after that. I think it was the BSG Geomorphology. Seminar? Um, this was a few months, like a month later. A bunch of us helped to organise The British Society for Geomorphologists (BSG) online seminar on Caribbean research and research that's being done in the Caribbean.

Danielle Marshall 11:32

We had... So we were.. We had a partnership thing with The Iroko Theatre network. So we did that on like, I want to say I think it was like late June. No, it was late July, we had our first meeting, and they just helped us with skills like how to hold interviews and like what you do in an interview setting. How you talk to people and let them share their story. From there, I think we started to begin, we went kind of went our separate ways in the internship. Temi was like in between. (Temi was doing like quite a lot!) But some of us were working mainly with The RGS (Royal Geographical Society) and then some of us with The BSG to help themselves with their conferences. So it was really like, behind the scenes stuff, working with like setting up the programmes and things like that.

Rachel Muriuki 12:21

The first month, or month and a half of the internship were quite quiet and more on the chill side. And then everything kind of just rushed. So it was it gotten more fast paced towards the end.

Rita Gayle 12:38

And how did you all because obviously, you're involved in two conferences or seminars. How did you find that experience? Sort of spending kind of quite a lot of time with sort of academics?

Danielle Marshall 12:48

I mean, I think it was, I found it really eye-opening like just to see how, how passionate like academics are about their research and like, how interested they are to just talk to you about it, and like getting hookups. And they'll be like, 'Oh, pass your email' and if you're interested. Like that networking opportunities is not really something, I mean, it's not something that I'm used to. So I think that was really eye-opening as well. And like people we met at the conferences were invited to our own, like, private thing that we set up. So that was quite cool to see them come down and support us as well.

Temi Ajayi 13:28

Yeah, I really enjoyed being in those conference spaces as well. I don't know, I think it's, it's really cool to see academics in a more relaxed setting as well. Because I guess we are used to seeing like, lecturers and like, urm, like really stuffy and like you don't feel like you can chat to them. But at the conference, everyone was a little bit more relaxed. Actually saw a few of my lectures there, which is really strange! And also it was nice to like go to some of the sessions and like, here what research is happening. I would say the highlight of The RGS (IBG 2023) Conference that I went to, was right at the end, Pat (Noxolo), who co-runs this internship. She delivered like a lecture, and it was amazing! So it was great to hear the up and coming research in geography. Yeah.

Rachel Muriuki 14:26

I think it was really interesting. I I did like I will, I really did enjoy the conference. I was more involved in the BSG, The British Society of Geomorphology Conference. I was also involved in the online side of the RGS IBG one. But what I really enjoyed was the, basically the preparation. It was quite interesting because our supervisor, it was his first time as well. So it was interesting being in a space where kind of nobody, not nobody, but they also don't know what they're doing. And so they're really, really open to suggestion. And it was just so welcoming. It was really wonderful. I did enjoy the conference as well meeting people in industry and in academia. It was very eye-opening, and I really enjoyed it.

Rita Gayle 15:41

So I'm going to talk a little bit now moving on to, I guess, The Fair really. And I wanted to sort of open up with the theme that The FI WI ROAD had determined for this, and it says here, I'm just reading off the website. It says this year's theme was, quote, 'intended as a collective mapping of Black communities, Black experiences, and Black spaces across the globe. Through this work, we hope to understand not only the roots, which have brought us together, but also what the future holds for us.' I think this is a really fantastic statement. When you initially read that, what were you thinking? What was coming into your mind as to what you could do, as a group together, in this fair?

Temí Ajayi 16:44

Was it.. wasn't you, Rachel that came up with the idea of like, mapping Black spaces?

Rachel Muriuki 16:51

Urm, it was interesting, actually, we.. this was the first meeting we ever had. And we have a theme like that. And I.. So what I I suggested.. what I think I said, as I said, "it should be mapping out a journey," essentially. And from there, I think we all just, we were spit balling and brain storming. It was amazing to be in that space. It was just creative ideas there and there, and there! And just watching it come together and fall into place was amazing. And the fair was definitely the highlight to be very honest.

Rita Gayle 17:39

Just jump in!

Temí Ajayi 17:41

Oh, I remember that was a really great discussion as well, that was literally on the first day!

Danielle Marshall 17:48

Yeah!

Temí Ajayi 17:48

Which was like, incredible. But one of the things that we thought was really important for the fair, was that it was looking at alternative ways of mapping spaces and like, challenging the forms of cartography that we see represented in geography. Yeah, and we thought it was just really important to like, just think outside of the colonial practices that we've been taught in our discipline. And we also want it to be quite a relaxed space as well.

Just like, challenging the ideas that like a conference or a fair has to be like, super rigid. And we were thinking of like, having workshops and having it be quite interactive. So yeah, we were really like trying to go outside the box for it. And I think I think we executed it pretty well, even though we changed some of our ideas, like as things went along but yeah.

Rita Gayle 18:48

Danielle?

Danielle Marshall 18:49

Yeah. So I think that first day was like, it was so refreshing for all of us, like the only way I could just describe it as like the room just felt so warm and welcoming. Like it just felt like such a safe environment to be in. Like we all had a passion for geography. We all knew what it was like to be different. And like, I think what we realised that even as a group, we're so diverse, like everyone in the group has a story to tell. We've all come from different places, or families. We all have different stories to tell. And I think we just wanted to reflect that in the pit of the fair. So this idea of mapping out these different geographies, to show that, like geography doesn't have to be this one dimensional thing. It has the space to be diverse and just as any other like form of geography.

Rita Gayle 19:36

Brianna, you okay? Do you want to respond to that?

Brianna Gittens 19:38

I'm agreeing with everything Danielle was saying. Coming to the internship, it was really refreshing to be with people from a similar background to you, who share similar interests, and were also just as excited about geography as you are. And I'm saying it's definitely an experience that I won't forget, and I will cherish because it's very unique. And I feel like now I'm sort of seeing how different demographics is. They thing about the internship is it helped me feel a lot more confident in my degree.

Rita Gayle 20:10

So I'm imagining, now you all met, and it must have been so fantastic to be in that room and suddenly see people that look like you. Who were interested in things that you're interested in, and you don't have to spend like, half your time explaining or justifying, and everyone understands you, and is excited by the things you're excited by, or things that.. or are learning from you. That must have been like that moment when you first met each other. But one of the things I think it was yourself, Danielle, who talked about that you're all really different. You've all got different experiences. And I think it came up in the conversation you had with Pat, that as a cohort, you're really diverse, right? You're very diverse. It's Black Geographies, but it's not, you know..

I think what Pat said, I can't remember her exact words and I want to paraphrase it, but she said something like, you know, you represent really, I think 'the world', you know and certainly 'our country'. That actually is, as a group of people were actually a very diverse, and actually, this is feeding into kind of this moment of Black Geographies, which even in a time since I started studying my PhD, is completely transformed when I started to now - it's like a different world.

I mean, I can't even keep up with all this, why I do this. And when Cynthia said, 'you want to do it again'. I said, 'Listen, I need to keep up with this 'cause I don't know what's going on, you know!' And so that's why I do it to keep up with what you young people are doing. Okay. And I'm very excited and feeling very inspired. Because when you're on the campus, you don't always see. I am looking, but I still don't always see. Right. So when you got together after that first buzz of excitement, anyone can jump in here. How did you go about really discussing, 'Okay, you had an idea?' You're very excited, you know, you're going to do something interesting. But then how do you go about making a decision about what it is? What's going to actually going to be the topic of discussion?

Temí Ajayi 22:13

So I feel like it's, it was kind of difficult, initially. Okay, because we mostly, the internship was remote, it's kind of hard to, like, keep that momentum going. So what was really crucial was that we had a really clear idea, and like, had a really strong vision from the start. Yeah, so initially, we like, we had the idea of mapping out a journey and like, looking at all our diverse experiences, and different ways of representing Black spaces. And also, we like, split up the different tasks that each person would need to contribute for, to like, make up the entire fair at the end. So I can't remember what I was, I think I was, I was in charge of the in-person fair space, and like, making sure like, it looked, okay. And we had some people in charge of social media, reaching out to speakers, that kind of thing. So it really like gave us like, a vision and a role so that we knew what we were doing. Between the first meeting and there. But actually, the most crucial part was Cynthia keeping us on track, and like, sending us emails and like giving us like a timescale to work with. Because sometimes, I guess, because we are all in different places, and doing this remotely, it's hard to like see everything coming together. But it's good to have like someone to oversee everything to be like, actually, we need to be doing this by this time, you know? Yeah.

Rita Gayle 23:58

Let me interrupt there. So big up, Cynthia because she's just on it, on it, on it! And I know this for a fact. 100% on it. I don't know how she does it. But I'm very impressed. So you know, Cynthia, I'm giving you a shout out. She's very humble person, you know. So we have to give thanks to people like that. Actually, this is good to point actually, that you just mentioned, Brianna, the posters because I saw them in the image, but I also didn't see them close up close up. So could you each describe a poster that you designed and and what it meant, what it what it represented? Rachel, Danielle, maybe you want to start first.

Temí Ajayi 24:03

Yeah! On it!

Danielle Marshall 24:35

I can go first. Yeah so, the poster that I created was about let me think back now because it feels like it was like not that long ago but was two months ago now. So the one I made was on the history behind cartography, and just like how cartography has been exploited, the reasons why it's been exploited, mainly linking it to colonialism. And then, modern forms of like counter colonialism that includes counter mapping and how the new ways people using maps that don't have to be like the western standard.

Like, I'm drawing this map to conquer this space kind of thing, but a really different way of looking at the world. Again, shout out to Pat for her work with Sonia E. Barrett on 'Dreading the Map' (2021), because I found that really interesting to research. So yeah, that was me.

Rachel Muriuki 25:32

My poster and research was based on urban resilience. Which funnily enough was because of another internship position I applied for. Because I really want to get into the urban planning kind of urban resilience space. And prior to this research, I hadn't done any research on the field of urban resiliency, specifically. And my poster was on mapping urban resilience in the African context. So how it's come, how it's understood in different African contexts in different African countries. How it's understood here, and how it's understood there and how it's kind of effective or how it's and how it's kind of executed (delivered) in the African countries. And doing that was really.. the research was really eye-opening, because even what the application required of me, I don't think I delivered. Because I didn't understand I didn't understand what it was. And this, the panel, pushed me to. It took me doing this and to push me to actually further do research.

And before that, I was mainly focused on the GIS aspect of it, which is just mapping the town and doing that I wasn't really focused on the human side of it, and caring about the people and about how the spaces are going to be affected. And the research I did was about how it's going to affect the people. And there's so much, I didn't know, and there's so much that people do not consider even now, as I continue to learn on my course, I've noticed more on the physical side, I've noticed that a lot of the physical geographers do not really pay attention to how their planning and strategies and most of the work like, you know, the mining and everything affects the people. So that was, I'd say, one of my key takeaways from the internship. And I really, at first, I was really nervous because we, there was a suggestion of us doing the panel because we didn't have.. was it because we didn't have enough speakers or we just I think we just wanted to. And I at the time, I didn't want to because I I feel like I have nothing to say I felt like I had nothing to say. I didn't feel like anything I had to say was viable. Um, so I was really nervous. And I'm really, really glad that you guys push me because it's a video, guys. Thank you.

Rita Gayle 29:23

Thank you Temi and then Brianna.

Temi Ajayi 29:27

I thought doing the posters was really fun. Just because I feel like we rarely get the opportunity to research anything in geography that we could like, anything that we fancy. Doesn't have to be marked. Just like a little passion project. So that's kind of how I approached it. And my poster was researching Black Roller Skating spaces in the UK, because I love roller skating. And I've been roller skating for like, a year and a half. And I'm so obsessed with roller skating, that I take my skates with me wherever I go. So, yeah, and I'm based in Edinburgh. That's usually the place that like I'm out and about roller skating through my city. And just getting to know different spaces around me that way. I feel like it's a really unique way to get to know a city because obviously, you're really in tune with the surfaces, the urban fabric.

Edinburgh is quite a hilly city, lots of cobblestones. So you really like, I don't know, you look at the city in a completely different way. So yeah, that's what I found, like, great about like roller-skating in Edinburgh. But, I wanted to explore what other spaces that were in the UK, that were that Black people were finding community, but also like, basically reappropriating, the urban environment to be a space for fun. Um, so yeah, I thought that was really fun to research.

And also, because on social media, I like, I'm always seeing all the roller skaters in London, in specific parks as well. So I was always a bit jealous. So it was nice to properly research the different areas. For example, I think it was Flippers (Flippers Roller Boogie Palace) which is the roller rink in White City (London) which is a massive hotspot. If anyone who's Black and roller skates in the UK knows where Flippers is. So it's fun to like research all the different communities and the history behind Black roller skaters. I actually ran into someone who is doing like a photography project on Black roller skaters in London. And it was nice to just talk to him to get to know the roller-skating scene there. So yeah, for my poster I made a map of all the different places in London, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and like, just made it very visually appealing.

Rita Gayle 32:16

Thank you. Brianna.

Brianna Gittens 32:20

So my poster was about like nature access, how that like affects Black communities in the UK especially. And what initially like triggered me into researching about like nature access was just the fact that I never really saw a lot of people of colour, especially that the Black community is like being involved in the sort of like nature world, if that makes sense. And like even watching nature documentaries and stuff like that. They're very rarely like narrated by like (us). I just wanted to know more about like, why that is. And also, I think growing up in London, you really do see like the disparities in even just housing and where like houses are (located). Being further away from like nature and like forests, things like that.

So what really interested me was like The Windrush Generation and seeing like, even historically, how, there's no coincidence that it just so happens that communities of colour and Black communities are usually like well separated from like nature spaces and green areas, and looking at how, like, in the past that you have landlords and things like that, literally refuse to allow Black people to rent houses that were considerably nicer, or in nicer areas, things like that. So I just wanted to look into how that affected Black communities and ways that we can improve that, or, like, get Black people (to nature), I guess (experience) that sort of element of it, and how like, there are so many benefits to nature access. Like improving your mental health and just also physical health and mental health. Well, that was really important to look into. And like also understand the history behind like why certain groups are excluded from certain topics and sort of bring more awareness to that.

Rita Gayle 34:11

So you know, I mean, this is really, you know, the conference and these, I'm really getting a picture now of the kind of different spaces that you are creating. Yeah. Because and that's hard to do, you know, in an academic space, right, because, you know, you're kind of taking over that space, and recreating a space for those people coming in, who then add to it right. And the conversations, then I think the kind of things that people felt comfortable to discuss kind of speaks to, really how the group of you how you all came together and kind of really engineered that, you know, that has to come from somewhere. And people feel that kind of energy and then they feel safe to kind of share those things. But I'm wondering now, with all of these conversations, that sounded really rich, and really fed into the research that you're all doing that, you know.

How has it impacted your own personal research? So thinking about the, you know, your posters, and the research you've done, you know, in your undergraduate level, how does that? How does that affect you now, as far as you're kind of moving forward with your own research? How does it change it or alter or add to it?

Temí Ajayi 35:27

I think the fair, specifically the collective mapping workshop, that I was really fortunate to help lead alongside Nathaniel Télémaque. That has really given me a lot of the skills I'm using right now to write my dissertation. Because as part of that workshop, I was basically leading, trying to like prompt the people that attended the fair to like, talk about their experiences, and also draw and use, like, create a collective map, essentially. And as part of my dissertation, I'm using that same idea of like, drawing and representing space in an alternative and like a creative way. Which I found that that experience of like helping lead the workshop has really helped me, like, craft my research in a way, because it's kind of a weird methodology. It's not one that's like been super well studied. So I think like having that practical experience really helped. Yeah.

Rita Gayle 36:49

Who's next? Brianna?

Brianna Gittens 36:53

Yes. I think, well, at the moment, I'm not really doing any particular research. But I think coming on to starting my dissertation, I think at the fair of doing my own personal research and like, looking at different sources, all of those things. I think that's been like really beneficial to me. And it's given me like, I guess, a newfound confidence. Leading a panel, being able to also just speak a topic at length, you know, that you've done your own research for has like helped me a lot personally. And I think it's given me like, more skills that I need that can help me in the future, for when I do start doing my own research, and especially for like my dissertation that's coming up soon. I think it's also introduced me to like a lot of new topics and new ideas and like, the new methods of like, connecting things. And I think also coming away from the fair, like attending the conferences and things like that, I also made quite a few connections with like, people outside of the internship. Or on the whole, like, just a connect to like going out for other events, things have really helped me in that way. So that gives you that confidence.

Rita Gayle 37:55

Danielle, and then Rachel.

Danielle Marshall 37:58

Yeah, so I think one key skill that I've learned from the conference itself on the day was like, just to be mindful. I feel like, like what Rachel said before, like when you're in specifically, like physical geography spaces, a lot of the time, a lot of the professors like say, 'Oh, that's just your human geography site. That's just the human stuff, I don't really care, I don't need to worry about it'. And like, I remember what's something that really stood out to me on the first panel was, I think it was someone (Lauren-Lois Duah) from The Resolve Collective. When she (Lauren-Lois Duah) was speaking, it was about how, when things like when doing remote sensing, and like observation of like Earth and how it changes.

People will just put cameras down in places where, like, for example, where local communities will use as loos (toilets), and they won't know that there's cameras watching them. And like, it's a really bad invasion of privacy. So when I'm going into second year, and I'm doing these modules, and like this remote sensing and things like GIS mapping, you just, you know, that these things haven't been taken into account of. So I think going forward in the future, I think it's, it's something interesting to raise with the professors when you ask them, like, 'are the people aware there how the census has been used?' and you kind of just watch them go, like '!' Because they don't know what to say, because it's not really something they think about. So yeah, I think that's been really interesting and going forward to take that on.

Rachel Muriuki 39:17

I think for me, um, something that really impacted me was kind of to not shy away from being creative when it comes to research. Um, I think when it comes to researching things that you're maybe passionate about, like maybe because I tend to stick to like, the path that has already been done, that's already been drawn kind of by others, and kind of following them because you know, that's what's there. And you can't really research something that's not been done. But what I learned from a lot of the speakers and even like talking to people is that being creative is really important, especially in this in this field. And I think that's something that really challenged me because I couldn't even fathom creativity in geography. Because I think of it as STEM, to be very honest with you. So I think that's really something I'm working on. And also, and especially being mindful and keeping people accountable of the things that they're doing.

For example, as Danielle mentioned, one of the speakers research was on how research methods affect communities. And I recently had the opportunity actually, I took the opportunity to call someone out on something they were bragging about, and not necessarily bragging. They were talking about how.. they were basically trying to map out landslides in Uganda. And they were talking about how they have no equipment and they and how when they went, they just.. they weren't really educating the people all around about the lands because they know they have landslides, but they don't know how did it come about. And they don't know, obviously, how, like, how to stop it. And this person was saying how it was really hard to work with the community.

And I took the opportunity to call them out. Because it didn't seem like they tried to even educate the community on what's going on. They kept just they just kept saying how they think it's, it's God's work, when they didn't really even try to understand the culture and the customs of the community around. And that's something I didn't think I would have been able to do prior to this internship.

Rita Gayle 42:55

Wow, that's really fascinating. I mean, you know, this is the thing about working collectively, right? There's that sense of accountability, you know. You're being asked questions that when you're on your own, or in these isolated spaces within scholarly or even, I guess, you know, corporate spaces, those conversations often don't come up, you know, because those people that would ask those questions just aren't there. But also as well, yes, that happens abroad, but also happens at home. So as more Black scholars go into the academy, do the PhD teach, we find ourselves returning to communities, either that look like us, or communities, our own communities and doing so called research, right?

Or, you know, I guess disseminating knowledge or experiences. And the weight of that is a real thing. And I think this is something that, as scholars we're really having to kind of grapple with. Because we're, I find that this is me talking the very things that we call out other communities for doing. You know, we're not immune from doing those things ourselves, and what do we put in place to prevent those things from happening? So we don't want non Black scholars going into these spaces, but but when we go into those spaces, we've had that same training. So how do we do things differently? And for me, to do Black Geographies is about creativity, because you're constantly having to think about how do I not do it this way? How do I find another way? And this is why these collective opportunities to kind of help you through it, because to try and do it yourself all the time? Because we are creative people but to be doing it all the time is really hard work right and exhausting. But and this is why the community of learning is really really useful.

But actually, you mentioned Victoria Okoye, who said something during your conversation (at The Fair) which I wanted to ask a question to you all. Ask the question again, really. Sorry Victoria, I hope you don't mind! Because it was a good question. You know what? We have to just, 'run it back' as they say. We have to 'rewind it'. So Victoria had asked the question about methods. Because she said, 'you've done all these amazing things'. And she was very excited, she sounded so excited. Like, 'there's so much has happened. But what now? Okay, how do you kind of share this knowledge that you have?' Because she said, 'You have a lot of knowledge?' Like she's.. I can see it. There's lots of knowledge here. How do you share it? And I'm sure she was asking not just to ask you the question. But also probably, this is something that Victoria is contesting with and I'm contesting with, you know. We're all try to find other ways to share that knowledge, because the journals and the books, it's not for everyone. I do podcasts, I do all kinds of things, to try and find different ways of kind of having important discussions with people without them having to kind of walk into a university. Because the people I'm trying to reach, they're not going to go into that university no matter what I do. Even if I tried to pay them, I still don't think some of them would go in. So it's like, 'Where else can I reach them?' Do you know what I'm saying? This is true talk now. So I'm putting that question to you what Victoria asked, (on) sharing knowledges. Your knowledge that you've gathered over these last few years, that you culminated in this experience as your internship on FI WI ROAD? How do you share this knowledge that you've gained? That you have?

Temí Ajayi 46:46

That's a big question! How do you share this knowledge? I feel like, urm, the way that specifically Black knowledge has been shared throughout history. Just orally, word of mouth, like telling people about it. Yeah, because I feel like that way you can meet people where they're at. I also think this is just me, because I love, I love making these but I want to make a zine. It's like a little magazine that can be like, you can condense all this research into in like, an accessible format and share it outside of academia. In like a very, ... what's the word? Like, I don't know, outside of these dominant systems that are trying to oppress us basically. Like finding alternative ways to like, reach people. Like, as you're saying, with podcasts, that's a great way to like use the internet, and like online space as a way to reach people. But yeah, I, I resonate with what you're saying about, like, we need to be quite creative. And like, kind of think outside of the traditional pathways that are not really doing us justice, in how we share knowledge, for sure.

Rita Gayle 48:18

Anyone else?

Danielle Marshall 48:19

Yeah, I really agree with what Temi said. Anyone who sees Temi's zines should check them out. They're always so cool! They really are. But I think it like yeah, again, like Temi said, that is such a big question. Because it's just like, where do you even start with something like that. But I think just finding ways to like, again, be in those spaces, building that network and making sure like, we are really like challenging these systems, because like, I feel like especially in a space. We're in a subject like geography where everything's just so indoctrinated, and like things are taken as fact and no-one wants to challenge them. Just being that person to ask the question and challenge the way people are thinking. I think is so important, especially in like, again, I'm coming from a physical geography background. So looking at things like creative ways to help with things like counter mapping. Like climate change is going to affect communities, communities of colour the most. So what are the alternative creative methods for dealing with these problems and mapping these problems? Like does it have to be this plain A4 map or does it.. can it be something else? So that's pretty much where I'd go with that one.

Brianna Gittens 49:32

Yeah, I really agree with like, everything that's been said. And I think like one of the main challenges as well is just getting other communities to listen to you. I think.. I think it's quite it's like, energetic when you're talking to people from your own background, your own community like and getting them to listen and getting them on board of what you're doing. So I think it's quite important that we also try to like I guess, think outside the box almost in a way, I guess to appeal to other audiences, even though that we shouldn't have to do that. But I think definitely like the use of like creativity and all these things can start to facilitate like new conversations and things like that, I think just the forms of media as well, like, I think TV programmes and stuff like that. I think there's a new show as well on BBC programme of The Windrush Generation. And I feel like these ways of informing people through creative styles also, like, is another way we could go about it. But yeah.

Rachel Muriuki 50:33

Yeah, I agree that like making all this knowledge and information accessible, accessible to all, is extremely important. And even making it accessible means making it not only making it, you know, available, but also understandable to everyone. So like Danielle said, like, how do we even start that? Yes, media goes a very long way. And it's definitely a start, but there's, there's loads to still talk about. There's loads to still start to think about and to make it, to kind of give everyone like. There's still a long way to go to give everyone a level playing field to understand what you're really trying to get out there and, how it's going to affect them and how to solve it, essentially. And I think, being in a space where we can try to bring to kind of brainstorm these things was, is should be done more often. And because it's, it's really important, like, yeah.

Rita Gayle 52:05

it is, it is important that, you know, you're the, you know, the third internship year. So I know that also, there was some interns who came from previous years to yours, which was to be really interesting, right? A bit. They were like, 'wow, yeah!' You know, you've completed it, it's been a couple of months now, see, you've had a moment to kind of, I don't know, kind of get back to life or study or work. How you feeling now, about the internship? You know, you've had a few months or a few weeks to reflect on it. And what next? Where do you go from here? Another big question!

Danielle Marshall 52:42

I mean, I can start, I just want to say like, the whole thing has been such a privilege, like, I can't even put into words how grateful I am to have like, stumbled across the (Black Geographers) Instagram and found this like. You really can't even put a price on, like the confidence and like the skills that it gives you like, just being in that space, where you're free to express all these like pent up because you go through like your whole degree, and you just need to see things and you've got nowhere to vent out to because there's no one there to vent it out to. And then to be in a space like this. It's just so like, it's just been such a privilege to work with, like Pat, Cynthia, (and) like everyone on the internship team. Yeah. It's just been such a privilege and an honour.

Temí Ajayi 53:26

Yeah, completely agree with everything you just said, like, even just meeting you guys as well. Like, it's just great to just see other Black geographers in the same room. Like, and like to share ideas and all that. I would say like the fair was definitely a highlight for me because it kind of boiled down every single aspect of the internship in that way. Like just seeing all of us in one room, and like not feeling like the minority for the first time is amazing. Um, but yeah, we've been talking about maybe making something all of us interns, like,... 'Rachel's laughing at me!' But urm, maybe like, taking the research that we've been doing individually, and like, putting something together and keeping this going, in some way because we've also had such a great time on this internship. And yeah, shout out to Pat and Cynthia, for being amazing. But yeah.

Rita Gayle 54:36

Brianna?

Brianna Gittens 54:38

Yeah. I don't even know where to start with this one, actually. I think coming away from the internship, I've like gained this new, I think, confidence towards I guess just geography as a whole. And I think it was just so inspiring, like finally being able to sit in a room and see people who look like me who also share like similar interests. And also just making that such amazing connections and also friends. I feel like we've all.. we've all gotten along really well. I think I've really appreciated that part of it as well. It didn't feel like a really cold sort of internship where we just do the work and go home, type of thing. Like I've made great friendships out of this. And in a way, it's also inspired me with my own work and like my degree, and I feel like coming back to uni, especially after the summer, and sort of being reminded that like, I am one of the few Black people in my course. I think, coming away from the internship, I know that I'm not and like, I think that's also really helps me to like-

Rita Gayle 55:35

-Yo! Brap! Brap! Rewind! Say that again! (Ambient Laughter). Because this is a real thing, you know. Because this is my third one so I can say this. There is a real theme about Black students feeling isolated. I mean, it happens in all subjects. But there's something about geography that can kind of just twist it another way, right? Where you just think, is it mean, right? Because often, they're talking about people like us, right? But you're not in the conversation. You're kind of watching it. It's almost like a dream. But it's not a dream. So yeah, that feeling you said of not feeling alone. That doing FI WI ROAD, you're not alone. You're actually not!

Danielle Marshall 56:20

Yeah. I think it's just like getting rid of that sort of imposter syndrome that you get sometimes I think, and like, just being in an environment where sometimes you don't always fit in. Or like certain conversations I had, where you'd really rather not really be a part of, when it comes to certain things that talked about. Well, yeah. I think overall, just coming away from the internship, I'm so grateful to have been a part of it. And I think it's definitely changed my perspective on geography. And I've realised like, there's a lot more to it than what we're taught in schools, or like what we see on a syllabus, or what we were even being taught at the university level. Like, it goes beyond that. And it's sort of inspiring, you know, to keep me going and to, like, sometimes do my own sort of research outside of like, the confines of like the specification, and whatnot. But yeah, I'm really happy that I'm a part of FI WI ROAD.

Rita Gayle 57:08

Rachel.

Rachel Muriuki 57:08

Urm well, first of all, just coming from a white male dominated field, and I cannot tell you how refreshing it was being in a room full of Black women, passionate about geography-

Rita Gayle 57:33

-Brap, brap, brap! C'mon!

Rachel Muriuki 57:38

It was, it was an amazing experience and feeling overall. And even though, wherever we go is still going to be, it's still a long way, before we can start feeling like Black people are more represented in the field. I am very happy that I was able to meet these amazing, beautiful, intelligent women. And I feel supported. And in no matter like, if I go into academia and or into industry, I know that I have a support system, essentially in the same field. And it's not even a support system, friends, to be very honest with you. And I'm just so grateful that I got to experience that. And I really hope I could, you know, cast my net out there, make more connections, and continue on this path and community of Black Geographers.

Rita Gayle 58:52

I think that's a powerful way to conclude that message, really, because I think that's what it's about. So I want to say thank you so much for sharing your experiences. I'm looking forward to definitely going back to and editing this and speaking to Cynthia and Pat, who will be absolutely excited about putting this work out. They're very excited for your future and I'm excited as well. So, thank you very much!

Temí Ajayi 59:21

Thank you.

Rachel Muriuki 59:23

Thank you so much for having us.

Brianna Gittens 59:24

Thank you so much.

Danielle Marshall 59:25

Thank you for having us.