



**Presentation by**



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Founder of World Afro Day**



# What is it?

World Afro Day<sup>®</sup> is a global day of **change**, **education** and **celebration** of **Afro Hair**.

- Successfully launched on the 15th of September 2017.
- World Record Hair Lesson involving 400 children from a range of diverse backgrounds.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

**29** pieces of coverage

**6.67B** online readership

**2.56K** social shares

**2.51M** coverage views

**1.36K** YouTube views

[View Press Clippings](#)

- Endorsed by the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Supported by celebrities and global brands such as Yahoo



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UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



# Why was World Afro Day<sup>®</sup> launched?

Global problem - hair discrimination dating back centuries which impacts these areas:

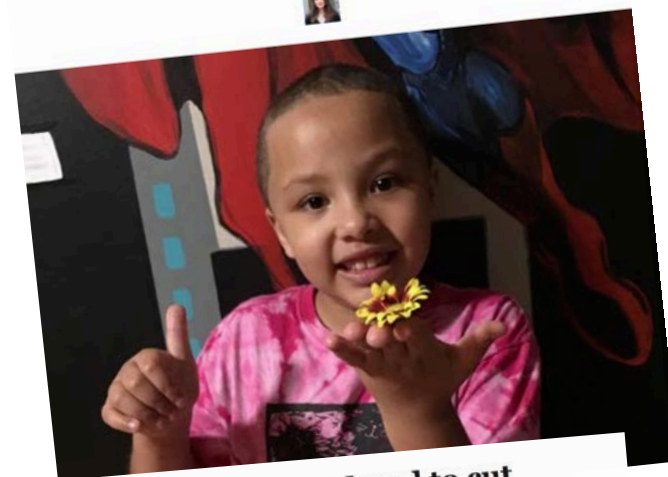
- 1) Pride/self esteem
- 2) Opportunity
- 3) Health
- 4) Economically
- 5) Politically – Military bans and US Law passed against dreadlocks on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016

**“WAD is using international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African Descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society.”**

Key ethnic feature of African people that is discriminated against internally within the group and externally from other groups. This has led to rejection and feelings of inferiority over centuries but we use to have immense pride about our hair...

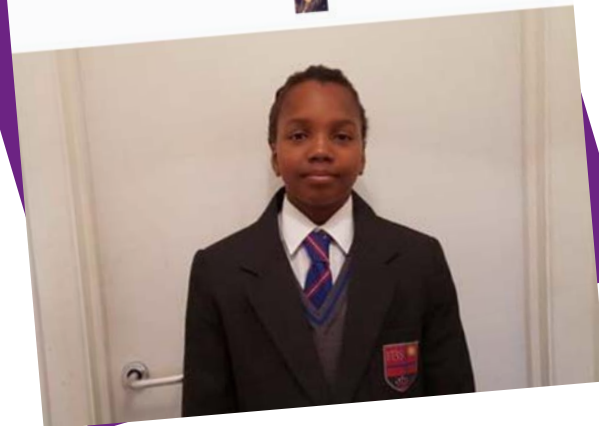
**Mum sues after school shaves mixed-race daughter's head without permission**

Ashitha Nagesh for Metro.co.uk • Monday 23 Oct 2017 11:27 am



**Mother of boy ordered to cut dreadlocks accuses school of racial discrimination**

Tanveer Mann for Metro.co.uk • Thursday 14 Sep 2017 10:14 am



# Wearing our hair like crowns...



...we literally used to style our hair as crowns but now millions of us hide our hair away, without acceptance and value.

# The Opportunity, the Responsibility

- The Decade of African Descent has an opportunity to address unique problems, that are predominately experienced by African people.
- We also have a responsibility to improve the lives of our children's children and not pass on the problems of the past.
- World Afro Day<sup>®</sup> offers a global platform for practical solutions to this problem.



# The Solution

## 1) African Child Declaration

Every child of African descent should be able to and indeed encouraged to wear their hair free in an Afro or other healthy cultural hairstyles, that promote their heritage, identity and wellbeing.

This is a time to review any school restrictions and regulations that conflict with this human right.

This is an opportunity for children of all ethnic backgrounds to learn about the distinctive thread of African hair in the diverse tapestry of humanity.





# The Solution

- The African Child Declaration is needed to offer protection for current and future generations from oppression in the school system.
- The African Child Declaration fits perfectly within the UN national and international legal frameworks, policies and programmes to combat racial discrimination.

E.g. Pretoria Girls High School in South Africa,  
distressed and oppressed



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E.g. Protests led by students at Pretoria Girls  
High School in South Africa



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# Recent cases of discrimination

**Recent case** – A 6 year old is turned away from school because of his hair in the US, August 2018



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**Recent case** – A girl was not allowed to attend classes because administrators said her hairstyle was against school policy, August 2018



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# The Solution continued

2) World Afro Day<sup>®</sup> - global Awards and local events and engagement.



3) World Afro Day<sup>®</sup> in schools - empathy, equality, empowerment.



There is a desperate need for research because so few studies have been done in this area.

# The Sad Reality

Prompted by my own experiences, I asked other women and children (aged 6-56), whether they had worn something on their heads to emulate long straight hair?



These are a sample of their responses: the most popular thing children placed on their heads were:

- Towels
- Jumpers
- Blankets
- Sheets
- Strips of newspaper
- Mops
- Headscarves
- Petticoats
- Tights
- Dishcloths
- Carrier bags

We swirled these items on our heads to imitate the length and movement of European hair. I felt quite sad after I got these responses.

# Leaving a legacy

- We can leave a legacy of change, that will outlast all of us. A legacy that means children will study Afro hair discrimination in history classes, instead of in the daily news.
- We can tackle this from the root up in schools and also peer to peer in our offices and communities



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# Final Thoughts

“My experience of having one of the first world afro day lesson was astonishing. I felt so sorry for the woman who did not get a job because she had afro hair to me that made me speechless.”



“During the interesting and exciting World Afro Day® lesson, I learnt so much about Afro culture and it was an amazing experience. Everyone should be proud of who they are and what they look like because everyone is special in their own way.”

## Final Thoughts

“The activity was fun and I felt that everyone was passionate and unafraid of what their hair looked like and it is natural to have afro hair .”



“I have learnt that people who have afro hair are not accepted and appreciated in society as other people. I learnt that they are starting to embrace their hair more.”



# The Hope

World Afro Day<sup>®</sup> lessons will enhance UN objectives to promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people of African Descent.



**“These children give me hope that we can change the world. I just need the adults, that’s all of you here to believe too.”**





**Any Questions?**



**Thank you for your time**

