



RECLAIM

Creating a fair and just world with
working-class young people:
strategy brief (2024-2028)



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Foreword: Becky Bainbridge, RECLAIM CEO

Since 2007, RECLAIM has earned a strong reputation for developing young working-class leaders who engage in social action and create youth-led change.

Historically, we have achieved this through short-term projects and multi-year programmes delivered by skilled youth workers that address the intersections of class inequality, working with thousands of young people across Greater Manchester and beyond.

However, over the past decade, we have seen class inequality deepen, with working-class young people bearing the brunt of this. From the impact of austerity to our inequitable education system, we must build power with working-class young people to collectively meet the challenges we face now and in the future.



Our Full Time Fierce 2023 graduation group, the next generation of gender justice change makers

A working-class identity is a strength, not a weakness. And if we want to continue championing working-class young people to build a fair and just world with them, we need to adapt our approach.

Over the past 12 months, we have explored who we are, and what we want to achieve - reassessing our organisation's approach to develop a new strategy for the next four years (2024-2028).

What challenges have we faced?

Before developing our new strategy we analysed the challenges we face with our team and with our young people when creating change with young working-class youth. Here's what we discovered:

1. Creating and sustaining long-term change

While many young people involved with RECLAIM have gone on to become activists and lead impactful campaigns as part of our after taking part in our programmes, our work hasn't always allowed us to create impactful long-term change.

Also, after participating in our programmes many of our young people want to engage in broader activism and campaigning and feel connected to a wider community, but currently we can only support this ad hoc.



Our Manchester Manifesto campaigners were invited to tour Parliament and listen to a panel of politicians speak about youth engagement in politics.

2. Reliance on funder-driven outcomes

As the funding landscape has tightened, much of our work has increasingly been shaped by funder-driven outcomes rather than by the priorities of working-class young people.

Since most funding is tied to specific programmes, it has become challenging to maintain long-term relationships with young people in our network unless they transition into another programme or develop the infrastructure needed to build power and community.

3. Too much is left to young people

Recent years have shown that for young people's activism to have a lasting impact, adults must stand alongside them in dismantling oppressive systems and practices. We can't expect working-class young people to thrive in organisations, workplaces and civic spaces unless they adopt class-inclusive practices.



“RECLAIM must evolve to meet competing challenges it’s operating in. From tackling the socio-economic conditions our young people face to finding ways to ensure our organisation can remain both sustainable and impactful, RECLAIM’s new strategy will take us boldly into our 15th year.” - Kay Polley, Chair.

Evolving our work

Our new strategic direction is an evolution of the work RECLAIM has delivered for the past few years.

Historically, the main aim of our approach to creating change has been to build the skills and capabilities of young people through a personal empowerment model whilst exploring issues with a class-based lens. Whilst this approach has allowed us to do some work we are proud of, it hasn’t allowed us to build collective power with working-class young people.

However, to effectively achieve the social change we want as an organisation, we must develop new ways to challenge institutions, systems and structures with young people.

This doesn’t mean we stop building the skills and capabilities of young people in our programmes. But instead, we recognise that development is a core activity in creating wider change.

Connecting our communities

To do this work in a long-term and sustained way, we also need to be able to develop and support networks of working-class young activists who are connected to each other, RECLAIM and their wider communities.



Partnering with Muslim Northern Women to campaign and dismantle barriers around class and Islamophobia.

By articulating that to shift power with working-class young people we need long-term community building as part of our campaigning, we hope to secure more flexible funding that will allow us to be responsive to this need.

Our approach

RECLAIM is a bold charity committed to building a fair and just world for and with all working-class young people. We do this in three ways:

1. Community: Creating spaces that grow a sense of belonging and solidarity.
2. Campaigns: Challenging institutions, systems and structures.
3. Consultancy: Supporting organisations to become class-inclusive.

Our vision

To create a fair and just world for working-class people.

Our mission

To build knowledge, power, community and solidarity with working-class young people and campaign on issues that affect them the most.

Taking a youth-informed approach

Working-class young people are the heart of our organisation, and we are proud to maintain a youth-informed approach. Working-class youth thoughts, views, and advice always shape our programmes, strategies, and operations.

A formal Youth Board play a key role in scrutinising and challenging our policies and practices.

Equally important are the informal contributions from programme sessions and one-to-one pastoral meetings, often leading to successful campaigns and initiatives.

Scaling up our organisation for national impact



Upskilling our current staff and hiring new staff will be crucial to helping us achieve our vision

Our work spans Greater Manchester, the North West, and beyond. Through strategic partnerships and our consultancy services, we are delivering national impact.

We are ambitious to extend our reach to new communities and geographic areas, engaging even more working-class young people across the UK, whilst continuing to build our base within Greater Manchester.

Achieving this will require scaling up our existing programmes, supported by funders and allies who share our vision and are willing to provide the time, space, and capacity for us to innovate and grow.

Diversifying our income streams

Historically, our financial stability has relied heavily on support from Local Authorities and Trusts and Foundations. However, youth sector funding competition has intensified after over a decade of austerity and cuts to council funding.

As a result, we must continue diversifying our income streams, exploring areas where RECLAIM needs more presence.

Throughout this strategy, we will prioritise income from consultancy services and focus on building public and corporate support to secure a sustainable future for our organisation and community.

Our consultancy service will help organisations adopt class-inclusive practices in workplaces, public spaces, and educational settings. Informed by the young people we work with, this consultancy aims to create environments where their talent is recognised and rewarded, and they experience a true sense of belonging.

Not only does this initiative drive meaningful change, but it also generates revenue that is reinvested into our youth programmes.

Building a strong grassroots network

RECLAIM has a longstanding record of successfully working with grassroots partners, and fostering social capital by connecting young people into local and regional networks. We will continue to build on this work within Greater Manchester while expanding our reach through national partnerships with organisations with shared goals and values.

Our 2024-28 strategy will outline our commitment to further building national partnerships, enabling us to create a broader and deeper impact for working-class young people countrywide.

Our strategic themes

1. We are youth-informed; working-class young people are at the heart of everything we deliver.
2. Our ultimate goal is to make long-term, systemic change. Everything we deliver should lead to this.

Our strategic objectives

Community

1. Establish and sustain a regional community of young working-class activists.

Campaigns

1. Become the organisational lead in terms of working-class youth voice
2. Secure real-life change with and for working-class young people

Consultancy

1. Grow our reputation as the EDI consultant of choice for Class Equity in the workplace.

Sustainability

1. Increase organisational autonomy and sustainability through the expansion of unrestricted income streams.
2. Futureproof our organisational infrastructure to ensure the sustainable delivery of our objectives and desired outcomes.

You're invited to join us

Whether you're a young person wanting to create change, a funder looking to forward the interests of working-class youth or someone who wants to see a change in existing systems; we're inviting you to join us on this journey over the next four years and beyond.

To ask any questions or get more information on our strategy email:
info@reclaimproject.org.uk