

Geography For All

By Jasmine Roberts (Royal Geographies Society (with the Institute of British Geographers))

My first piece for *Routes* comes at a timely moment. I have been in post one year as the Coordinator for the [Geography for All](#) programme at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), and it is four months since the relaunch of this programme of work. I hope this editorial helps to spotlight the many communities open to student geographers reading this, as well as to those who support you, and encourages you to find out more and get involved.

Geography for All is about the people who make our discipline and its future. It encompasses a range of initiatives and resources aimed at making geography education more accessible, regardless of background or prior knowledge. Across higher education, we know that social and economic inequalities are limiting the aspirations and career choices of a large proportion of young people and widening the education gap. Within geography, the underrepresentation of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, minority ethnic students, and those who are disabled or neurodiverse is well documented (see Jeffrey et al. 2025; Singh et al. 2023; Hughes 2022; RGS-IBG 2020; Desai 2017).

Over the past year, my work has particularly sought to highlight the experiences of those underrepresented by race and ethnicity, while fully recognising the many dimensions of exclusion and the intersectionalities that cut across this. For me, *Geography for All* is about creating safer spaces to talk about belonging in geography and, crucially, about acting collectively to reimagine the discipline in ways that are both honest and hopeful. I hope that, with time, this programme of work can become a hub that inspires and connects underrepresented geographers with one another, and with those who are doing the work of geography and geographical research, regardless of whether they are naming it as such.

Drawing on Gillian Rose's (2020) call to rewrite and rebuild geography in conversation with one another, I should start by saying that *Geography for All* does not stand on its own, and it is not new in its efforts to shape more equitable futures in the discipline. Rather, it is a programme in response to listening, learning, and collaborating with many other significant initiatives and organisations that have long been making a difference. For example, the [Fi Wi Road](#) internship programme

and the [Equator Network](#), both of which I had the pleasure of mentoring on last year, and the work of the [Black Geographers Network](#). Many of these are now signposted through a new [Geography for All Resource Directory](#), an ever-growing, searchable collection of support that begins with geography and stretches across related disciplines, careers, networks, and the wider equity landscape. The resource directory intentionally lends itself to equity and social justice space more broadly, recognising those working within an increasingly hostile environment and, to me, represents the voices that should also be invited into conversations about geography's future. I am grateful to the many organisations featured in the directory who took a chance on a meeting request from me and left our conversations seeing geography, and the futures it can open up, differently.

I encourage anyone reading this to explore the directory, to get in touch about what else we might feature, and to connect with the organisations and opportunities listed there. I am particularly interested to learn about student-led initiatives or collectives, research you would like to connect with, or reflections you want to share about your own journeys and experiences. With time, I hope this will make it easier for students and young professionals to find clear, practical routes into and through geography, and signposts opportunities beyond the discipline.

It has been a joy to situate *Geography for All* in conversation with individuals and organisations who may not always see themselves reflected in geography, but whose lives, struggles, and imaginations are deeply geographical. More than a decade on from the formation of the [RACE Working Group of the RGS](#), and following the important provocations responding to the Society's 2017 annual conference on decolonising geography (see Esson et al. 2017; Jazeel 2017; Noxolo 2017), this work is also a reminder that geography has as much to learn as it does offer. I write this piece as a British Ghanaian woman who brings many parts of herself to this work, but who also does not and cannot shy away from what it means to be a Black geographer in a sea of whiteness. For me, returning to spaces and communities historically impacted by exclusion is both grounding and necessary. It's important to me that this work can act as an umbrella for some of the stand-alone efforts that have created community, but have not always felt in-community, recognising that the nature of this work can be difficult to sustain, scale and join up, in part due to the unstable nature of funding and infrastructure across the equity landscape.

Ultimately, *Geography for All* is about relational work shaped by people. It's about connecting the dots and translating work between our institutions, community spaces, and professions. For students reading *Routes*, I would like to end by saying that *Geography for All* is, at its core, a programme of work for you and shaped by you. I hope you feel encouraged to share your reflections through *Routes* and

through *Geography for All*, to connect with others, and to take up space in the ongoing reimagining of geography.

Resources and ways to get involved

If you are interested in engaging with *Geography for All*, or in finding support and community beyond your department, there are several ways to get involved:

- Stay connected with the latest [Geography for All: news and events](#)
- Explore the [Geography for All Resource Directory](#) and connect with community-led organisations to learn more about initiatives, networks, and opportunities aligned with equity, social justice, and social mobility within and beyond geography. Many of the featured organisations offer mentoring for students at all stages of study, host events, offer funding and provide spaces of support.
- Get in touch at geogforall@rgs.org if you are part of a project, collective, or organisation doing relevant work that you would like to see featured, or if you want to share your experiences as a student or early career geographer.
- Use *Routes* and previous editorials as a platform to reflect, challenge, and contribute to the ongoing reimagining of the discipline.

References

Desai, V. (2017), Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) student and staff in contemporary British Geography. *Area*, 49: 320-323. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12372>.

Esson, J., Noxolo, P., Baxter, R., Daley, P. and Byron, M. (2017), The 2017 RGS-IBG chair's theme: decolonising geographical knowledges, or reproducing coloniality?. *Area*, 49: 384-388. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12371>.

Hughes, A. (2022) Unsettling fieldwork: Reflections of Whiteness and anti-racist practice in the pedagogies of fieldwork. *Area*, 00, 1–5. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12835>.

Jeffery, A. J. et al. (2025, October) Empowering autistic learners in geosciences. *Geography Directions*. <https://doi.org/10.55203/FSWT6896>.

Jazeel, T. (2017), Mainstreaming geography's decolonial imperative. *Trans Inst Br Geogr*, 42: 334-337. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12200>.

Noxolo, P. (2017), Introduction: Decolonising geographical knowledge in a colonised and re-colonising postcolonial world. *Area*, 49: 317-319. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12370>.

Rose, G. (2020) Editorial introduction by Professor Gillian Rose: Diversity and Inclusion. *Routes*, 1(2): 138-141.

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) (2020). *Geography of geography: the evidence base*. Available at <https://doi.org/10.55203/XQLB9264>.

Singh, S., Pykett, J., Kraftl, P., Guisse, A., Hodgson, E., Humelnicu, U. E., ... Weightman, W. (2023). Understanding the 'degree awarding gap' in geography, planning, geology and environmental sciences in UK higher education through peer research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 47(2), 227–247.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2021.2007363>.

Cite as: Roberts, J. 2026. Editorial Introduction: Geography For All. *Routes*, 5(1): 1-4.