



# LARISSA LORRACHER

AGE: 20 years old FROM: England

**TOP FIVE CHARACTER VALUES:** LEADERSHIP | RESILIENCE, PERSEVERANCE & DETERMINATION | COMPASSION | HOPE / OPTIMISM | CREATIVITY

*“My social action has given me the skills of perseverance, resilience and commitment, which allows me to keep going even when I feel rejected or feel frustrated in achieving my goals. I will use my experiences to be a voice for young people in less advantaged communities.”*

I first decided to get involved in social action after a close friend of mine passed away. It was really challenging to deal with my grief whilst being committed to my studies. During this, I realised that there is not enough discussion of mental health in Black African and other BME cultures in the UK. So many of the people around me were feeling low and struggling, but they wouldn't express their feelings or seek help. I spoke about these issues on BBC Radio during Mental Health Week.

My blog 'Live Your Movie' aims to break the stigma around mental health, as well as to bring a voice to young people and unite the community around these issues. I also know from my experiences growing up in London the issues that young people face, from gangs to a troubled home life.

I currently sponsor a child's education in Ghana with PLAN International. As an ambassador at university, I support first year students. I recently joined a mentorship group that aims to work with young people in London schools - I know from my own life the cultural and environmental challenges that we face on daily basis.

It was really inspired to see Stormzy on Channel Four discussing his experience of depression, his feelings of shame, and his challenges in dealing with that as a black male - he encouraged young people to find their voice, and I have found mine. It has been hard to find the right support for my social action, but I am determined to carry on, to reach more young people and enable them to have a voice.

On my degree course in Paediatric Nursing I have completed placements with young offenders and children and adolescents with mental health problems and attended meetings and conferences about children. I can also make an impact on young people in the community through nursing placements in schools. I want to continue to make a difference through my career by studying for a Masters in Public Health.

Taking part in social action has given me the skills of perseverance, resilience and commitment, which allows me to keep going even when I feel rejected or feel frustrated in achieving my goals.

*... use my experience as the first of six siblings to go to university to advocate for mental health support for young people in less fortunate areas. I want to provide a voice for young people, especially those involved or associated in gangs, troubled situations, or those who struggle with the environmental and cultural challenges. I want everyone to be aware of the importance of youth mental health, especially for young people with chronic illnesses.*

