



ROOTS LDN

A **You Press** community
research project

2018



ROOTS LDN 2018

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community research project



ROOTS LDN

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The You Press Mission Statement

You Press is a Social Enterprise with the goal of using writing and creative arts to empower people to find their voice and be heard. You Press is made up of volunteers and artists who support young people with an interest in the creative arts and help their work to reach a wider audience. Since it was founded in 2011, You Press has operated with the vision of creating cohesive communities in which young people contribute and are valued. Our focus is on providing people between the ages of 16 and 30 with valuable, transferable skills and providing a voice for communities who are less well-represented in society.

We believe in the power of words and stories to change lives for the better and our mission is to use creative arts and writing to empower people to find their voice and be heard.

As an organisation, we pride ourselves on being **Pioneering, Specialist and Empowering.**

As people, we pride ourselves on being **Passionate, Co-operative and Professional.**



YOU PRESS



The ROOTS LDN Mission

Between February and May of 2018, You Press collaborated with the Greater London Authority (GLA) in order to deliver a community research project that focused on social inclusion, integration and developing civic leaderships in communities that currently do not have a voice in City Hall. Originally aiming for 12 participants from the BAME demographic ranging from 16 to 30 year olds, You Press managed to bring in 18 researchers to collect data regarding topics of communal concern. Once the data had been collected, the researchers converted their findings into an original artistic response.

The Workshops

Pre-Project Process

At the end of January, You Press had the opportunity to take part in a training session with the Greater London Authority at Conway Hall in Holborn. There they got to meet a variety of organisations involved in collaboration with the GLA for projects on Social Inclusion. This was not only an opportunity to network with each other but to learn what would be the core values for each of our community research projects. This included identifying the difference between qualitative and quantitative data, the importance of safeguarding participants as well as taking care of confidential information and consent. By the end of the day, all of the organisations present, including You Press, gained valuable knowledge to implement in their projects.

On 7th February 2018, we delivered the first workshop for our Community Research Project called ROOTS LDN at the Paddington Arts facility. Like most meetings, our selected researchers were shy in communicating with each other at first. But after three core workshops over the course of six weeks, all of us managed to open up to each other, sharing our stories and expressing our diverse range of artistic thought.

In the opening core workshop, we worked with the researchers in a group activity that involved finding the group values that we would reflect on over the course of the project. We managed to come up with five: Honesty, Trust, Empathy, Inspire and Fun.

We queried what these five core values meant to each of us and concluded:

Honesty – to be honest not only with the You Press team, but with yourself in what you will be able to commit to during the duration of the project.

Trust – to have trust in the You Press staff to provide a safe space in order to work and communicate regarding the project. Whilst utilising the trust you already have with family members to record effective and detailed data.

Empathy – to relate to the stories we share with each other. Creating a bond that not only brings the community together, but helps provide a better understanding of the plight of others.

Inspire – to inspire and be inspired. With the anecdotes you share and collect, the ability to convert what you gathered into a creative piece of art.

Fun – to have fun! In order to work effectively, there must be stimuli that helps you get your creative juices flowing. Whether through conversation or sharing your creative pieces in the workshops.

In the second core workshop, the researchers alongside project coordinators shared their countries of heritage. From that, each participant created a short piece of poetry to share back to the group. Some of the work achieved that day displayed a lot of powerful verses revealing not only the pride of each researchers' countries, but also the hardships faced through their history.

In our final core workshop, we discussed and demonstrated the literary technique used by writers known as 'Anecdotal Recollection'. In pairs, participants had to tell each other a short bizarre story with the task being to rewrite the story that they listened to. The aim was to demonstrate the core value of 'Inspired by Listening' to these stories and interpreting them into their own artistic styles in written form.



All researchers were required to record their data from a minimum of five family members and submit their creative output by the end of March 2018.

Quantitative Data

What the quantitative data collected from the researchers shows is that the respondents interviewed hail from a diverse range of cultures and creeds that represent diasporas from across the globe. Furthermore, the age range is varied with the largest group of answers coming from the 48-58 years old demographic at **27.37%**.

Two of the largest boroughs of which participants were from are Newham and Harrow at **12.63%** and **11.58%** respectively. At **95.79%**, the majority of participants know and mix with people from different cultural backgrounds. In addition to this **92.63%** of respondents feels accepted and welcomed in London.

When talking about the barriers, there is an almost even spread of what concerns respondents when it comes to social inclusion. From a choice of eight options, three categories stood out: **Housing, Employment and Religion & Belief** at **34.44%**, **31.11%** and **25.56%**. Surprisingly one of the largest categories chosen as an answer was the other option at **33.33%**.

One of the most important questions in the survey was whether the respondents felt their voices were represented by City Hall. At **65.26%**, the majority of participants said 'No'.

What does it mean to have your voice heard?

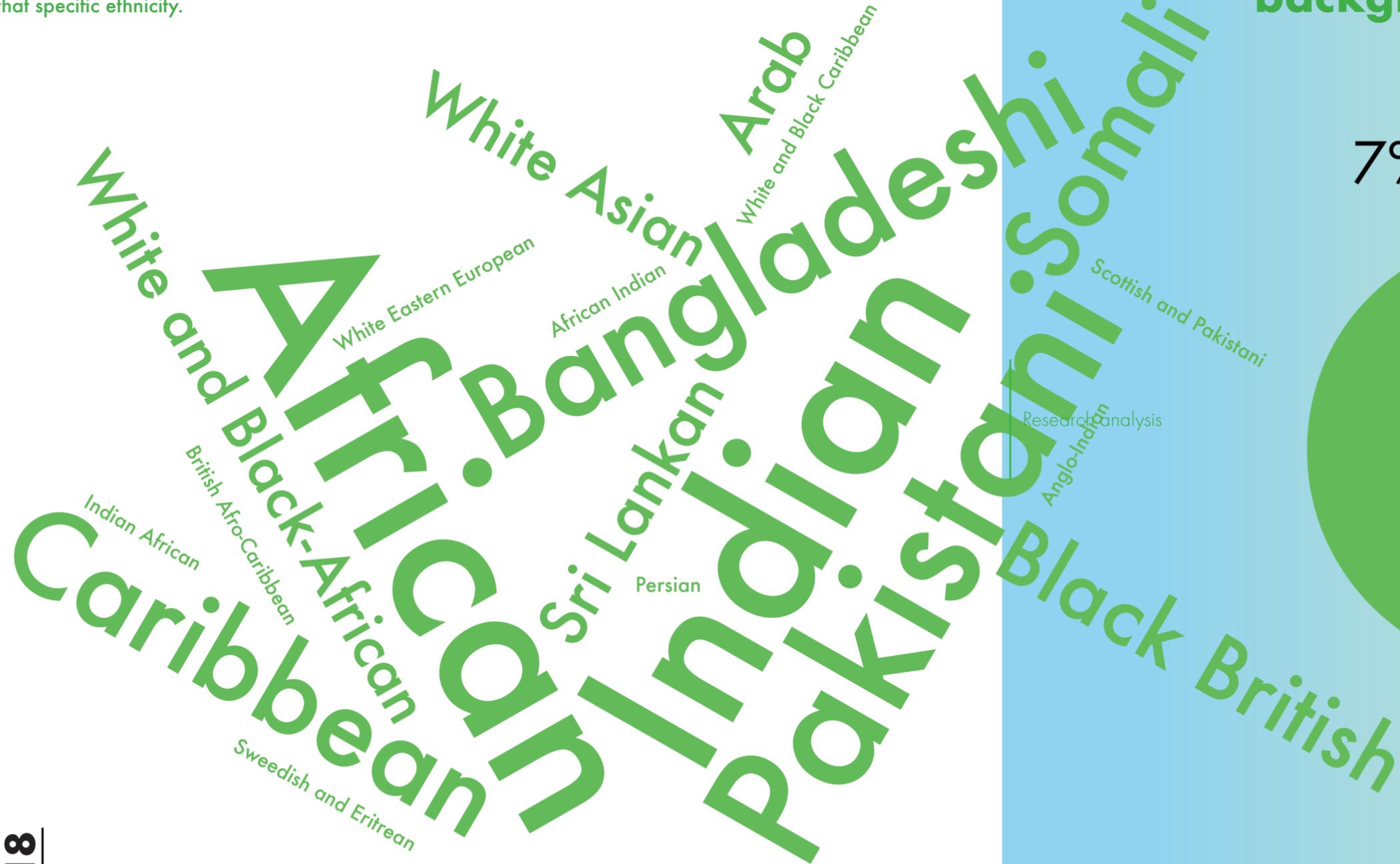
“Nothing because I am just one man. Even if a million people protest nothing will be done, so what can I do?”

What barriers have you faced when it comes to social inclusion and integration in your community?

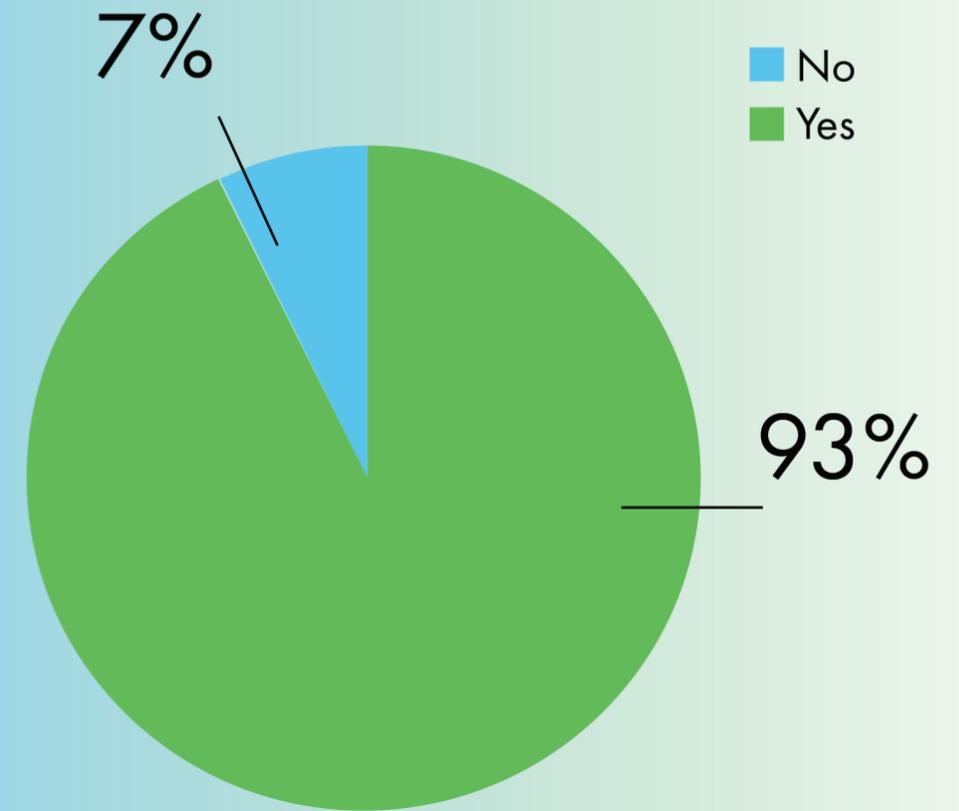


What is your ethnicity?

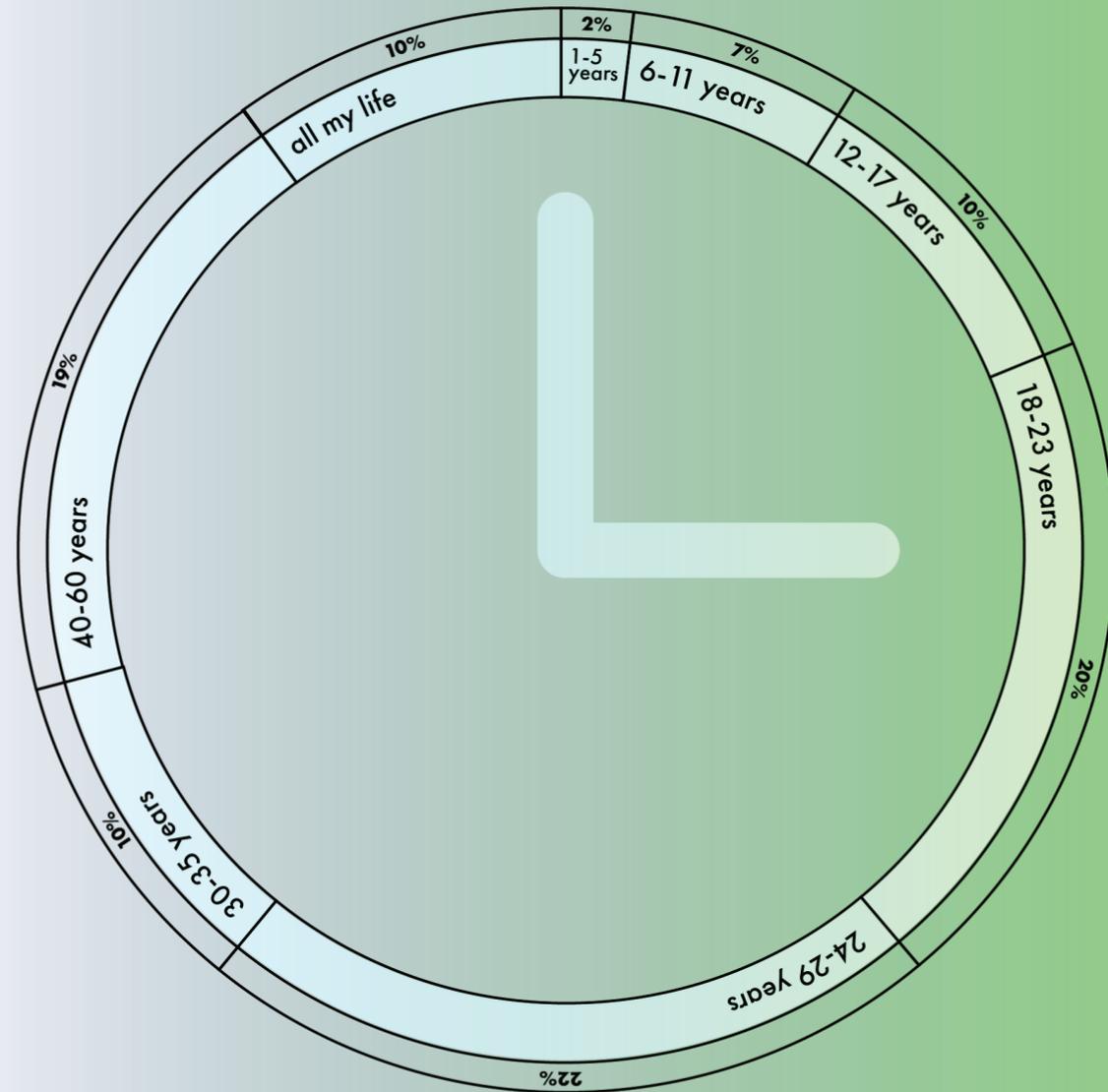
*The larger the size of the word the higher number of participants of that specific ethnicity.



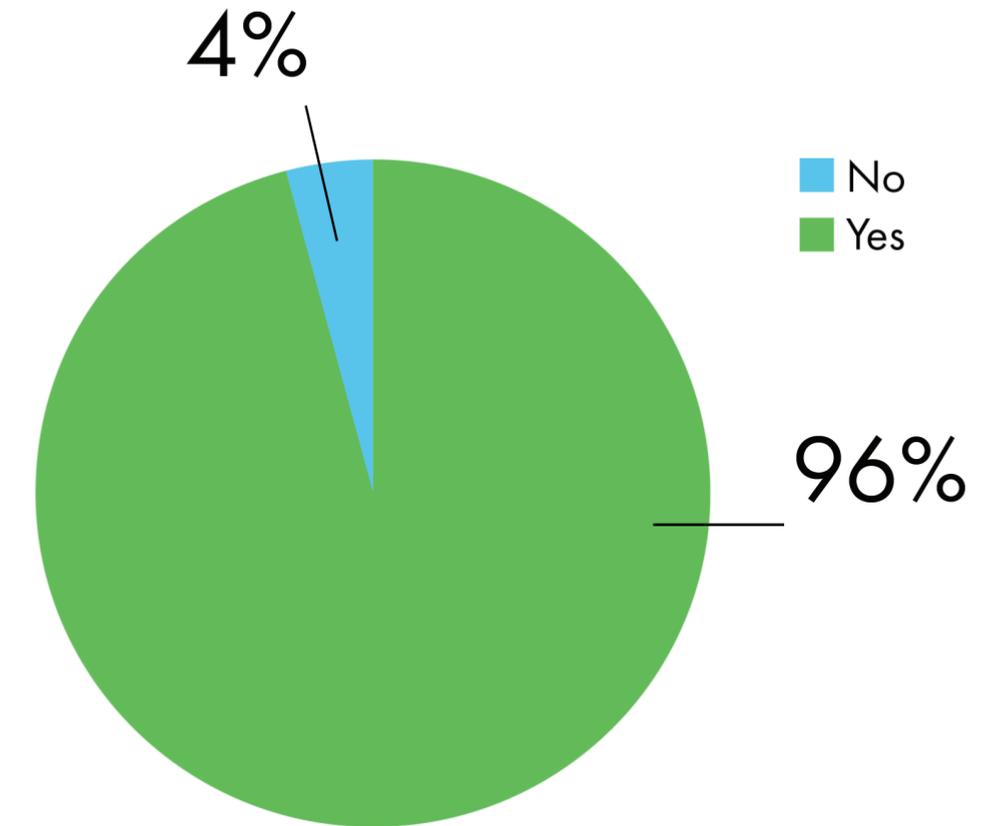
Do you know and mix with people from different backgrounds from your own?



How long have you lived in London?

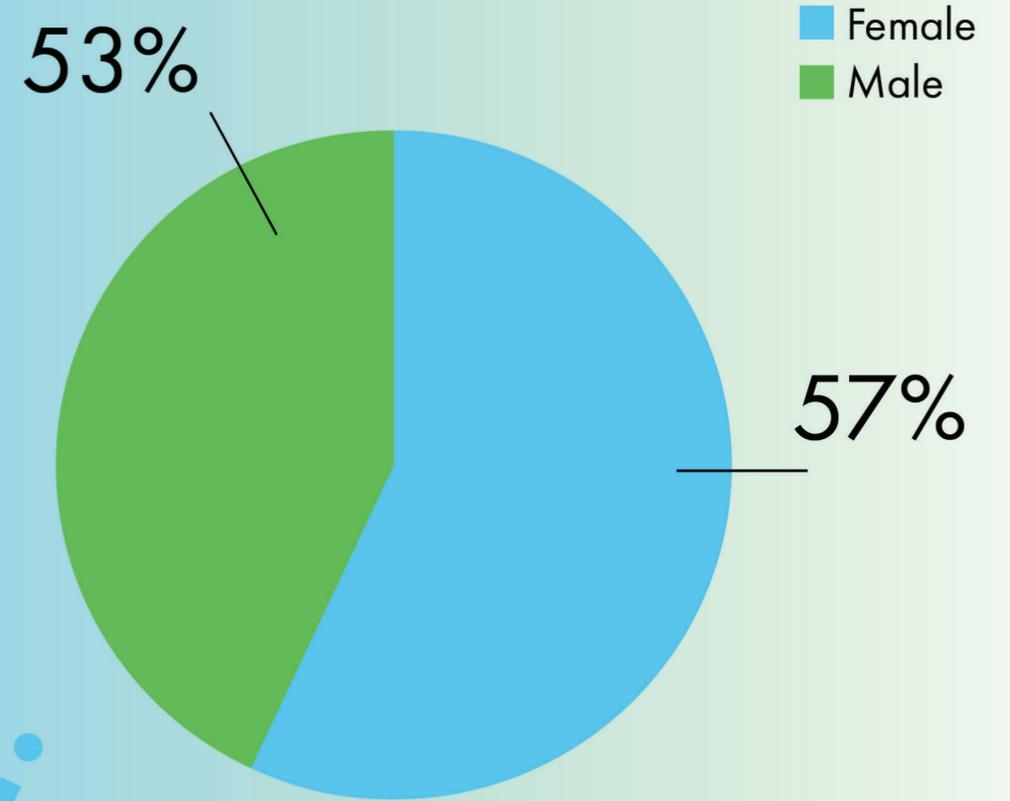
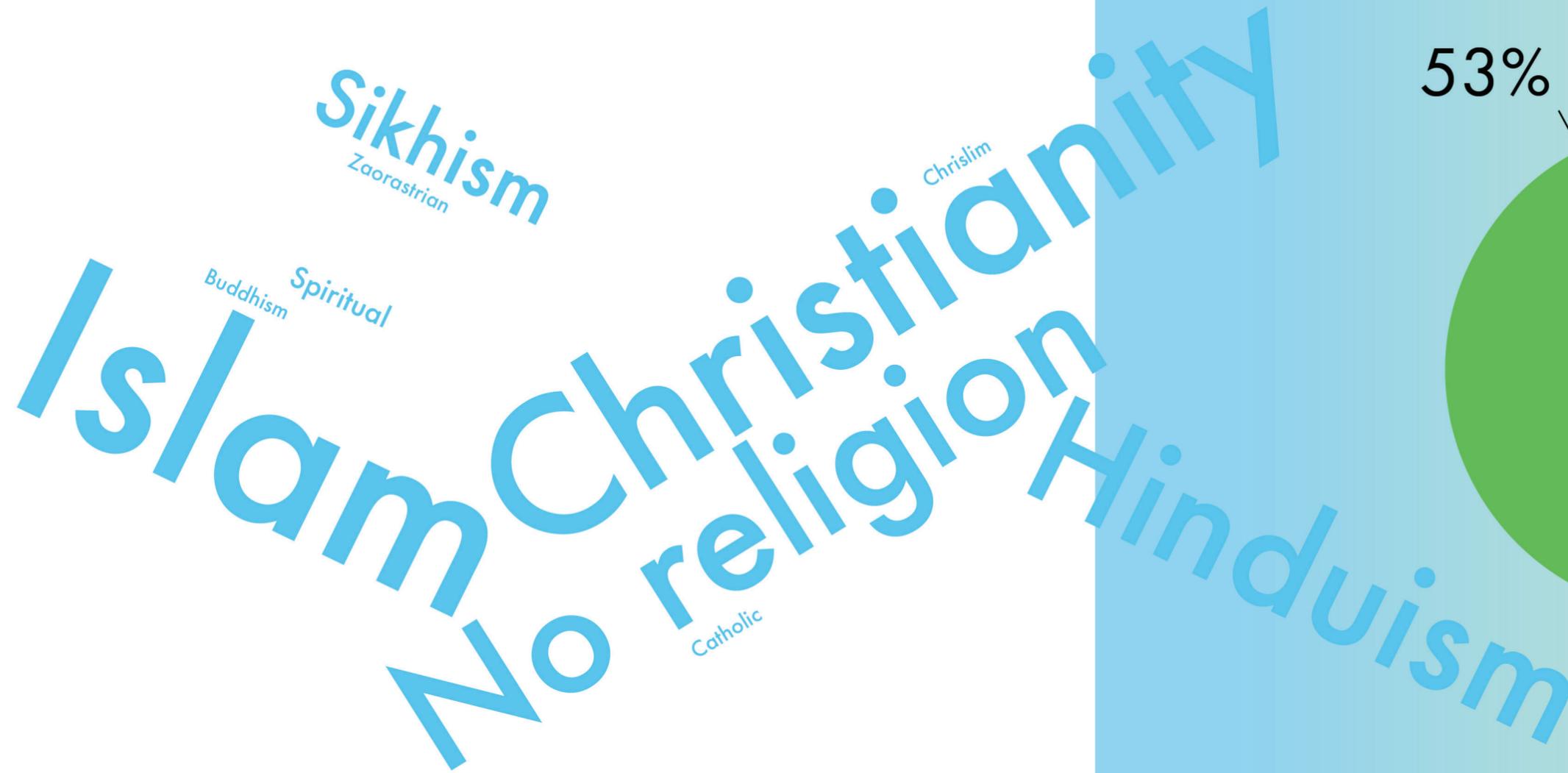


Do you feel accepted and welcomed in London?

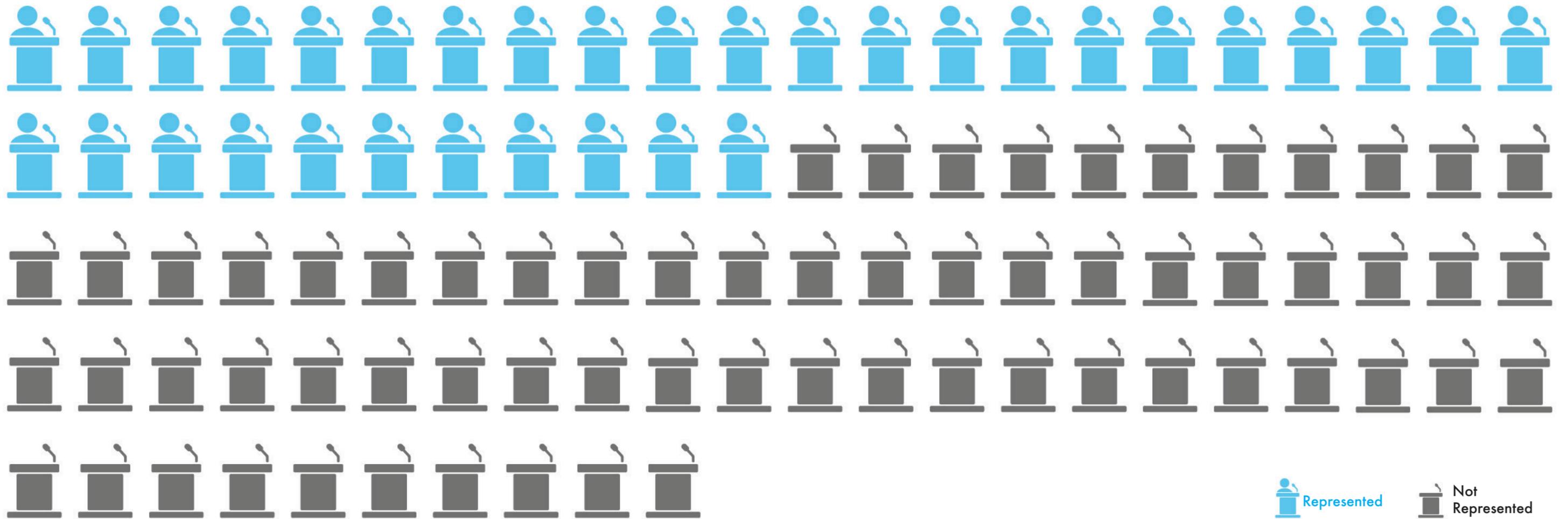


What religion are you?

Are you male or female?



Do you feel represented by City Hall?



Qualitative Data

When conducting the research, we told our 18 researchers to find at least five participants each to take part in the Roots LDN survey. Interviewees were required to fill in an electronic questionnaire concerning community engagement and the city of London. In the end what had been collected was a combined total of 96 data responses. We have analysed eight different open ended questions to which each participant has provided multiple answers. The responses for each question have been categorised based on similarity of topic and words/phrases used in their answers.

What does community mean to you?

The largest category in this answer surrounds the topic of **Building Positive Relationships**, which **31.2%** of interviewees believed what community means to them. **Building Positive Relationships** included answers surrounding the acts of supporting each other as well as helping each other in times of hardships. Respondents also mentioned being friendly, nice and providing service to their neighbours. Furthermore, sharing, caring, loving and respecting each other is what some say community means to them, all while living in peace and harmony.

The second highest category of answer at **28.1%** is **A Group of People Socialising with Each Other**. The answers for this question arguably link with another category of responses by the participants. However, the topics of socialising include taking part in discussion with people around one's locality and from the process of doing so, learning from each other.

27% of respondents believe that community is defined by **Different Cultures, Religions and Races Living Together** in the same vicinity. Some believe that culture, religion and race all play a part in building and maintaining their identities. An emphasis had been put by some in the role of religion and congregation within their communities. But all participants whose answer revolved around this topic agreed that the learning and celebration of each other's cultures is indeed important.

Two categories had the same amount of responses with both sharing **26%**. The subject matters were **Coming/Living Together** and **Working Towards Common Goals & Interests**. In the former category, people talked about the importance of community cohesion as well as getting involved with those who lived in the locality. **Coming Together and Living Together** were one of the most common phrases used in this question. One person talked about social inclusion and the importance of integrating with those who are socially isolated.

The latter category included respondents talking about how people of similar backgrounds and interests working cohesively defines what community is. Another similarly answered topic was individuals bound by shared ideas and values as well as people within a neighbourhood sharing common traits.

Oneness in Society is a category to which **11.4%** of participants shared similar answers. These included talking about the unification of people and a sense of belonging in society. **6.2%** said that **Family, Friends and Neighbours** defined what community means while **4%** mentioned **Protection of the Environment** around them.

A remainder of three categories shared **2%** each with respondents saying similar answers. Those subjects are **Regulation & Respecting the Law**; community meaning **Everything** while the remaining **2%** mention community as being **Non-Existent**.

What do you think of London?

The most common answer to this question among participants was **Multicultural/Diverse**, which about **38.5%** of people mentioned in their responses. People felt that because London is made up of so many communities, there are plenty of enclaves where people of different races and communities can settle and feel at home. Many felt that London's diversity was a positive aspect of the city and that they were exposed to a greater variety of cultures and beliefs for having lived there.

The next highest category of response to this question was that **London is a Great Place**. That answer or something along the same lines was given by about **27.1%** of participants and shows that a fair portion of them enjoy living and working in London. Other answers in this category included, "There's no place like London," "I love London," "It's nicer than what everyone thinks," and "amazing city." There seemed to be a general sense that while London isn't perfect, people who live here are grateful for the uniqueness and the opportunities that the city offers.

About **22.9%** of people wrote either that what they think about London is that it is **Vibrant and Fast-Paced** or that it has **Many Places of Interest**. For the former category, people had mixed feelings about London's pace of life. Some mentioned that because of its vibrance, London is unique and constantly evolving, and day-to-day life is well-structured. Others said that they felt tired and overwhelmed living in London, and that the city being overcrowded plays a part in that as well.

For the latter category, people noted London for having a wide range of interesting places and things to do that wouldn't be available anywhere else. The city's modernity and role as one of the world's fashion capitals were praised, as well as the history and the older architecture. People also cited London as a financial hub. Similar to the multiculturalism category, many respondents mentioned the chance to enjoy food and languages from many different parts of the world. Finally, a few people felt that all of London's opportunities are fun but also daunting at times.

The main criticism of London was financial, with about **16.6%** of respondents mentioning something in the category of **Wealth Disparity/Expensive Cost of Living**. People felt that there is an uneven distribution of wealth which results in a lack of unity and some communities being isolated and/or gentrified. Poverty, homelessness and lack of adequate housing were also voiced as concerns. Other frequently addressed problems included **Scary Because of Crime**, **Bad Government Due to Maintenance and Security**, and **Racism**. Multiple respondents said that there are systems in place in London that benefit whites and work against ethnic minorities and immigrants.

Other relevant answer categories included **Lots of Opportunities (15.65%)** and **Progressive (14.6%)**. People who answered this way felt that London was good in terms of providing chances for work and education, and that they had a high degree of freedom living in the city. **Good Transport/Public Services** were mentioned by **9.6%** of respondents, including organisations like the NHS and local Councils.

The remainder of responses receiving **2% or less** of the overall responses included topics such as **Lonely, Pollution, Bad Weather, Support Can Be Hard to Find, Prefer Living Just Outside London, and Centre of the Country**.

What would your life be like if you did not move to London?

The highest percentage of respondents (**30.2%**) cited **Less Access to Jobs/Opportunities/Career Choices** as the main way their life would be different if they didn't move to London. People said that one of the main reasons they chose to move to London was for the economic opportunity that it has to offer. There tend to be more job opportunities in cities than anywhere else, and London is certainly no exception.

A significant portion of respondents also said that London had brought them a **Change in Mentality/Personality/Culture**. Many felt that if they hadn't moved to London, they wouldn't have been as exposed to multiculturalism as they are now. London provided exposure to a myriad of different cultures and life experiences that are unique to such a global city and might not be present elsewhere. **10.41%** of respondents also said that they had a **Change in Education** because of moving to London, and **6.25%** said they had **Learned a lot from London**.

21.87% of respondents said that their life would involve **Hardship** if they hadn't moved to London. This category included answers about war in people's home countries, and situations where they felt their safety and freedom were at risk. By moving to London, they felt that their quality of life had improved and that they didn't have to worry about their physical safety as much.

A fair portion weren't sure how London had changed their lives. **12.5%** of people answered **Cannot Imagine it/Not Sure/God Knows** to the question, and a further **8.3%** said it would be **Not Better nor Worse/Okay**. A few people who weren't sure thought that not moving to London would have resulted in **Different lifestyle, Different Happiness (3.12%)**.

Another response that was frequently mentioned was **Different Social Circle**, which **8.3%** of people said they had experienced as a result of living in London. Respondents said that they wouldn't have met their current friends, family and partners if they hadn't moved here.

Other categories receiving significant percentages of respondents were **Less Hectic/Stressful (6.25%)**, **Cost of Living Would be Lower (6.25%)**, **London Made Me More Independent (5.2%)**, **No Medical Assistance/Life Expectancy Would be Lower (5.2%)**, and **Boring/Not as Interesting (2.08%)**.

Though most respondents said that moving to London had changed their lives in a positive way, there were some that they would be better off if they still lived in their home country. **4.16%** said that **I'd Have a Life of Dignity** and **More Opportunity Back Home**. Another **2.08%** for each of the following two categories said that they would have a **More Supportive/Equal Community** outside of London, and that they would be **Less Materialistic and More Genuine**.

The rest of the responses were **More Religious and More Scared of Racism Outside of London**, which were each given as an answer by one person.

What would your life be like if you did not move to London?

“Would be a lot less open minded and tolerant in not being as accepting of others.”

How has London changed your life?

Majority of the participants explained London changed their **Education and Knowledge** with **41.6%**. The interviewees believe access to information and knowledge allowed them to change their perspective on certain matters and made them more open-minded towards a variety of topics surrounding the Capital.

Furthermore, **32.3%** of interviewees stated London provided means to achieve their **Personal Goals** and become more independent as a person which increased their self worth and value.

The third largest category is **Employment and Opportunities** with **30.2%** of the interviewees providing this answer. People believe that there are better opportunities in London compared to other cities. This is supported by the answer in the previous question where majority stated there is less access to employment abroad.

28.1% of interviewees believe there is an increase in **Social Cohesion** due to exposure to different cultures increasing social tolerance. London has a diverse population which increases the chances of meeting people from other cultures while they show respect to theirs and vice versa.

7.3% of participants explained that the free, **High Quality Medical Services** have changed their lives in London. Additionally, **Freedom to Travel** and **Work Without Restrictions** has changed **4.2%** of participants.

In terms of **Family Life**, **9.4%** of interviewees started a family in the city and raised their children in London. Also, **10.4%** explained **Living Close to Friends and Family** improved their connections with them.

The rest of the interviewees explained London improved their lives by making life more interesting and access to better income.

How has London changed you life?

“It’s allowed me to experience and be a part of so many different cultures and traditions.”

What concerns do you have about your community?

Almost half of respondents, **48.96%** believe **Crime** is the biggest concern for the community with an increase of criminal activity like acid attacks, domestic violence and drugs due to an increase in gang culture and lower police presence from budget cuts.

The next biggest concern which is linked to the increase of gang culture is the **Vulnerability of Young People** with **29.16%** stating the closure of youth centres and the lack of education leads to more young people becoming exposed to gang-related criminality. Additionally, **3.1%** of respondents believe the increasing **Cost of Education** is linked to unemployment which increases the chances of criminal activity.

The third largest category is **Discrimination and Racism** with **28.1%** believing this inhibits their equal opportunity to employment. The increase in discrimination and racism is linked to the Brexit vote where **5.2%** of interviewees believe this will change the way people treat others.

16.6% stated **Housing** is a concern because the rising cost is leading to an increase in homelessness. In terms of infrastructure, **2%** express their concerns to **Transportation and Roadworks**.

6.25% of interviewees explained **Gentrification** is leading to a loss of cultural identity and language in the community. This leads to concerns with religious cohesion which could link to extremism. Furthermore, **7.3%** stated there is increase of **Impoliteness** and not caring about each other due to the absence of community values.

On a governmental level, **5.2%** of respondents believe there is no **Political Representation** which leads to the local authority spending on unnecessary things. The lack of representation prevents the community from portraying their concerns and thoughts on projects undertaken by the local authority.

Surprisingly, **10.4%** of respondents stated there are **No Concerns** that they have with the community.

What concerns do you have about your community?

“Crime, young people getting stabbed.”

How do you communicate your concerns and worries about your community?

The largest category of answer for this question is **Talking to Family, Friends & Colleagues** and it stands at **29.1%**. This shows that participants are much more comfortable in communicating their concerns to people close to them on the basis of trust. Furthermore, some believe in the importance of hearing the concerns of young people, whether offspring, sibling or neighbour. Some of the participants mentioned handing over concerns for spouses to go and communicate to members of authority.

The second largest category of answer at **28.1%** is **Group Sessions**. Interviewees believed that in order to voice their concerns, it was instrumental to congregate in meetings. This would include talking at community centres and public forums with community leaders and other members. Other methods of communication in this category included discussion boards online as well as attending protests as an ensemble. Additional answers in this category included the consultation of agencies working in the locality to give information.

Surprisingly at more than **27%**, a fraction of interviewees said that they **Do Nothing** with varying factors as to why. A lot of people believe that talking about their worries and concerns will not make a difference. One said that he wouldn't communicate his concerns as they were minor. Others mention that they do not know how to get involved in their local area or do not have any access to services.

Less than **24%** of people said that they would **Call the Local Council or MPs**. This category included people going to their local council offices as well as attending local meetings by political parties (Labour). Others talked about voicing their concerns at times of local elections and signing petitions for change.

Online and Social Media was the next category of answer and links back to the three previous answers in a way. **13.5%** of people would voice their opinions online either on group forums or posting statuses on their accounts (mostly Facebook and Twitter). This was also another outcome of the **Do Nothing** category, to either voice their opinions or share articles and videos from other sources. Petitions have also been filled online due to the convenience of personal devices.

Two categories shared **2%** of the respondents' answers. The first was a **Preference of Going Elsewhere** rather than talking to politicians. The second links to the **Do Nothing** category as **2%** of interviewees believe that they are being **Ignored by those in Charge**.

What does it mean to have your voice heard?

The most popular answer that respondents gave for this question at **36.4%** for defining what it means to have your voice heard is people **Feeling Valued for Highlighting Issues**. Being able to voice your concerns to others and having it heard brings a sense of satisfaction to the participants. Some believe that they'd feel a part of their community and represented if their queries are answered. Others also mention a sense of empowerment by talking about issues and receiving the rights that belong to them, bringing equality to the term citizenship.

In second came Interaction with **Others Gives Way to Change** at **35.4%**. Many of those whose answers fall into this category, hope for positive change should their voices be heard by those in charge. Some mentioned either seeing making a difference by voicing their concerns while others answered the question by emphasising that they would be making the necessary improvements needed and helping others.

The third popular category of answer for this question was participants being able to hear and voice **Different Perspectives**, **21.8%** of respondents said that it would allow them to acknowledge and possibly link their concerns with others in the community. A link could be made with **Feeling Valued** as 10 people said that having your voice heard would mean your point of view understood.

At **4.1%** of participants believe that having their voices heard would **Make No Difference**. Some believe that this is due to the fact that the current electoral system isn't in their favour.

Two categories for this question share **3.1%** of answers. The first is the belief that **Voices are Only Heard if you're Successful**. Success is defined by some as well-educated, rich or famous and is seen as a gateway to authority. Respondents believe only those with authority can get their voices heard by other people. The second category is **My Voice Hasn't Been Heard in a While**. People believe that there isn't enough opportunities for them to get their voice heard.

A total of five categories share **2%** each of answers to this question. These five were phrases used by participants including **Important, Great, Means a lot, Not that much and Step in the Right Direction but Action is More Important**.

Why do you feel your voice is not represented in City Hall?

The most common reasons respondents felt their voices weren't represented in City Hall was **Unawareness**, with **23.96%** of people giving a response that ran somewhere along those lines. Many people said they simply didn't know if their voices were being heard, what City Hall did specifically, or even what city hall was. Others still said that they wanted to get involved more but didn't know how because there is little outreach from City Hall. No one has asked members of the community what their concerns are, and some respondents wanted City Hall to make an effort to ask and understand their issues more. One respondent said that they didn't feel as though they could identify with any members of City Hall.

Another popular answer was **Makes no Difference/not Important**, which was given by **19.79%** of respondents. Some felt that their views simply are not powerful or effective because even when they do voice their concerns, they don't see action taken to have the problem addressed.

Many more echoed that sentiment by responding in the category of **People in Power Listen But Never Take Action (16.6%)**. There was a general sense that government officials are out of touch with the needs of the communities they are supposed to be serving, or that some just don't care. **6.25%** of respondents suggested combatting this problem by saying **Decision Makers Need to Take Initiative to Educate and be Well-Informed with More Creative Ways of Interacting with People**.

Some respondents said that the needs of ethnic minorities are not listened to by local government. **4.16%** claimed that City hall has no **BAME Agenda/Minorities Lack Representation**, while another **3.12%** said **Minorities and Working Class People are Not Listened to the Same Way as Rich Educated People**.

Other responses given by multiple people were **Hypocrisies/Misleading Statements**, which **3.25%** thought led to barriers of trust between government and the people, and **Government Initiatives don't Address the Issues I Face (2.083%)**. Crime was specifically mentioned as a problem that has not been adequately dealt with.

Finally, some admitted that their voice isn't heard simply because they choose not to be involved. **4.16%** said they had never been there or that they had a Lack of participation. **2.08%** felt that it is **Not Possible for One Person's Voice to be Represented by Itself**, and that certain people and cultures have to come together to make change.

An important figure to look at for this question is out of all of the answers provided for all eight questions, this was **Skipped** the most at **36.45%**.

Why do you feel your voice is not represented in City Hall?

"I don't know anything about City Hall and how it represents me or how I'm supposed to be represented."

What does community mean to you?

**“Everyone
respecting each
other despite their
gender, sexual
orientation,
religion and a safe
place where
people can be.”**

Artistic Responses

These are a few artistic creations in response to the interviews the researchers conducted and the things they discovered.



Shwetal created an interactive 3D art installation where the stories of the people she interviewed are written on the wings of doves. This is because birds flying represents migration and the BME communities have all come here from somewhere else.

By Shwetal Shah



Wood & Wire Art Installation

Are you afraid of having your voice heard? Do you feel like your voice is not heard by others? We all wonder why it's so hard to address our own issues and views about our community, but why? As you can see my response depicts the illusion of us as individuals being trapped by our fear of speaking out our concerns due to the fear of disagreement. Once we stand together one by one as a community and discuss our thoughts on our society, we are able to break down the barriers to listen and project our voices for all to hear.

By Heeral Sonigra



Song Writing & Studio Recording



Luis Bonnelame (writer and performer)



Asabi Hawah (chorus vocals)

(Verse 1)
I guess its time for a change
Who
For Generations its been the same
Just evolved to a different way
How long are we gonna live this way

Constantly tryna separate
I'm about to be a renegade
Cannot be British with a darker shade

Nah

I guess we just gotta keep faith
Someone's gotta lead the way
Dawg its been this way for many days
Like

How we gone make a change.
To many people in high places tryna save face like its a joke

(Verse 2)
Aye bring it back.
Everyday its black on black. Mums on lates she done broke back.
still broke so I'm cooking crack. No family unit so I'm repping gang.

Aye

We need a change
Back in the day it was teddy boys. Now a days its our own boys tryna kill our boys.

Black on black like a funeral.
Worst case its hearse.
Moving like it curse and when worst came to worse are people came first
Nowadays its lets lurk. like 6ft in the dirt that trap life don't work

(Verse 3)
Its time for a change tell the yutes that there's a different way .
Don't let that shit get away.
Before life fades away. Dawg it will hit you in your later days.
Got more than your life to give away.

Look

You have what it takes to spark a change.
Sometimes we gotta go against the grain stay focused in your own lane.

Little one You're the best.
Work hard no rest.
Try hard try your best.
Don't let no one ever say you're less.

Commit to the cause don't digress
create gold like Midas.
I wanna see you walk with a high head.

Written by Luis Bonnelame

Landmines

A young boy on the pavement
Searchin' for water
Walking through aisle 10, 11 and 12
He saw the bottles stacked on the shelves
Up above, on the TV the news was playing
A man said, 'I'm very clever & I know what I'm
talking about
I am the one and only now
We need to protect ourselves, and open arms
Before it's too late!'

They told me
'The land's mine
Better watch your step'
'The land's mine
Better watch your step'

And told them
'You people are all the same'
'Do you know who I am?'
'You better respect me'
The world is not yours
He stopped to ask me,
'Who do you think you are?'

A young boy walking through the jungle
Searchin' for water
He saw a river flow through the land
Down below, upon a rock there was a man
He asked me,
'Can you see the breath in the trees?
Can you see the tears in the sky?
I am one and there is only now
We need to protect each other, and open our arms
It's never too late!'

They warned me
'The land mines,
Better watch your step'
'The land mines
Better watch your step'
And told himself
'We people are all the
same!'
'Do you know who you are?'
'You better respect yourself'
The world is you

I stopped to ask myself
'Who do I think I am?'
'Who do I think I am?'
Who am I?
Without you....

?!

Written & Performed by
Maathulan Kajendran

East Meets West Street

Light at the end of the tunnel,
worried it might be an oncom-
ing train
As a 5th column were being
framed
Considered synonymous in the
millions that itself is a religion
of terrorism

Time of Courage the most
fundamental of moral virtues
what the others are seated
upon
One of the daughters of
courage just so happens to be
righteous indignation

If you appeal to the highest
nature of people, people are
surprising
Things in the natural kingdom
disappearing
Qualities in people fading.

Suffering from a spiritual
Alzheimer's forgotten we have
a soul
Intellectual & Spiritual awak-
enings are 2 ends of the same
pole
A deeply spiritual civilisation
that couldn't have created the
car
Instead we've aged with a
flowering of the heart

Until we address the meta-
physical we'll only be dealing
with the superficial/political
1st time in human history you
can backbite on your own,
There's no anonymity in the
unshown

Garbage in the Muslim
world garbage everywhere,
But at least we know what
that society has laid bare,
In our culture it's all hidden
we produce much more
garbage
They go into landfills, into
the ocean
A massive plastic waste the
size of Holborn.

Consumerist society can't
spread all those on the east
want to live like those on the
west,
All the big fish are dead
These mindless spineless
jellyfish are taking over
Nature has an amazing way
of showing us who we are

It's not the cockroaches and
the rats disappearing
It's the lions and the tigers
declining
These are the qualities with-
in us human beings
Our people didn't name
their sons kookaracha
Named their sons Asad/
Fahad lion leopard.

Traditional Muslim world so
stunningly beautiful some of
the most visited places
What are the assumptions
what is the world view that
produced these spaces?
Compared to that of those
who produced the plastic
bottle.

Identity is being obliterated
in the face of this globalis-
ing force
That is reimagining its own
image much of it western of
course
Imagination is a difficult
thing when you're an image
based society,

From the Greek word the
same; it's what the remains
same,
Is what gives you your iden-
tity, if you lose that quality
you lose your identity.

Star trek don't work back
home, we can't imagine the
future
Preoccupied in changing our
conditions we leave our-
selves alone
And the conditions just get
worse

Celebrate how far we have
come not how far we have
to go
If people of the past
could live together with all
the baggage of the mentali-
ties of the past
How can we not do the
same today when we've
been freed of so much of
that baggage.

>2/3 say no to religion ford
sierra
Going back to a pre-Chris-
tian era
Not voyaging bravely into
the future
But marching heedlessly into
the past

The UN code of Religious
liberty is being flouted
instead of observed
See this in Europe deeply
secularised
French governmental atti-
tude toward religion
To a degree which is being
denied

Single biggest indicator
of active citizenship
is are you a regular
attender at house of
worship
No government is
perfect
Never has been never
will be
& if the past is any
indication than govern-
ments don't last
But the institute of reli-
gion lasts the reason is
The ground of politics is
compromising principle
but the ground of reli-
gion is principle.

This disenchantment of
nature raw materials
resources are exploited
Human beings the de-
secularisation of politics,
where political service
and moral spiritual
responsibility are de-
voided,
Deconicration of
values, values become
relativised,
And secularism might
mean the here and
now and the past has
nothing to advise.
The most disenfran-
chised.

Sex and technology
threaten society, emo-
tional entanglement, the
sacrifice of having kids
Technology enabling
this detachment from
the world,
Headphones plugged
in really in a different
world,
Community is at the
essence of religion
And at the essence of
religion you have family
which extends out to
the community.

Chequered history
undeniably
Beautiful bright spots
and this idea of living
together convivia
The great poet Hafiz
said "How would you
treat others if you
realised the creator had
invited you to a banquet
and each one of you is
guests"
What right do we have
to look down at, oppress
We're an extraordinary
example of human pos-
sibility the fact that we
have so much diversity
in our ethnicities,
Yet there is so much
mutual respect this is
something stunning
incredibly proud of it
in a way that burdens
us it to spread places
that have been so long
suffering.

YouTube is a protest
against an unjust world;
it is the sigh of the
oppressed,
Facebook is the heart of
a heartless world,
Twitter is the soul of a
soulless condition,
Netflix is the opiate of
the people.

Written by Usman Bux

Where We Went

My father's generation who were born in the 50s and heralded from Western Nigeria saw the community as an indispensable part of the social system; much like our government sees it today for the purposes of reducing the size of the population and spending on benefits. But they didn't mean an area managed by a local Member of Parliament or a place in which various people just happened to live. They saw the people that lived beside them as the same, trucking through various aspects of life as they came, the survivors of traditional British colonial rule, ready to face their world and its people by any means necessary.

Father: "Yoruba cultural values were all-encompassing, fully fledged and fully integrated. All parts of the Yoruba community in Ijebu-Ode respected each other because a good family name was better than silver or gold, and families made up communities".

It was with this attitude that my father, uncles, and aunts came to London in the 1990s. London was always seen as the land of opportunity, the centre of the Commonwealth motherland and the place to be if you were to come to the United Kingdom.

Father: "You probably wouldn't be discriminated against as much because you were surrounded by other ethnic minority immigrants wanting to make a better life for themselves".

And for the most part, this was true. The occasional 'why are you stealing English jobs?' comment and the requests by members of the general public to speak in clearer English, despite the fact that Nigerians are taught the English Language and English Literature as part of their educational curriculum didn't deter them from establishing themselves and their culture within the areas they found themselves in. They added themselves to the already thriving Caribbean and Asian communities in London, especially where my family originally settled, in Peckham, South London, which is affectionately known by some as "little Lagos" because of its prominent Nigerian and African community.

The real bonds were formed through collective struggle and the understanding that although we were all affected by different levels of discrimination on racial grounds, there were some issues that as Londoners affected us all. The increasing knife crime that occurred in the 1990s and the blame placed by government on working class inner-city communities was more than enough of the gas that we needed to show that we were in some ways, in solidarity. Youth clubs promoted positive, communal relations and gave children of all backgrounds a place to be when they wanted to feel safe. People mixed with each other learned each other's cultures and learned to respect each other, almost like the Yoruba culture my father so loved.

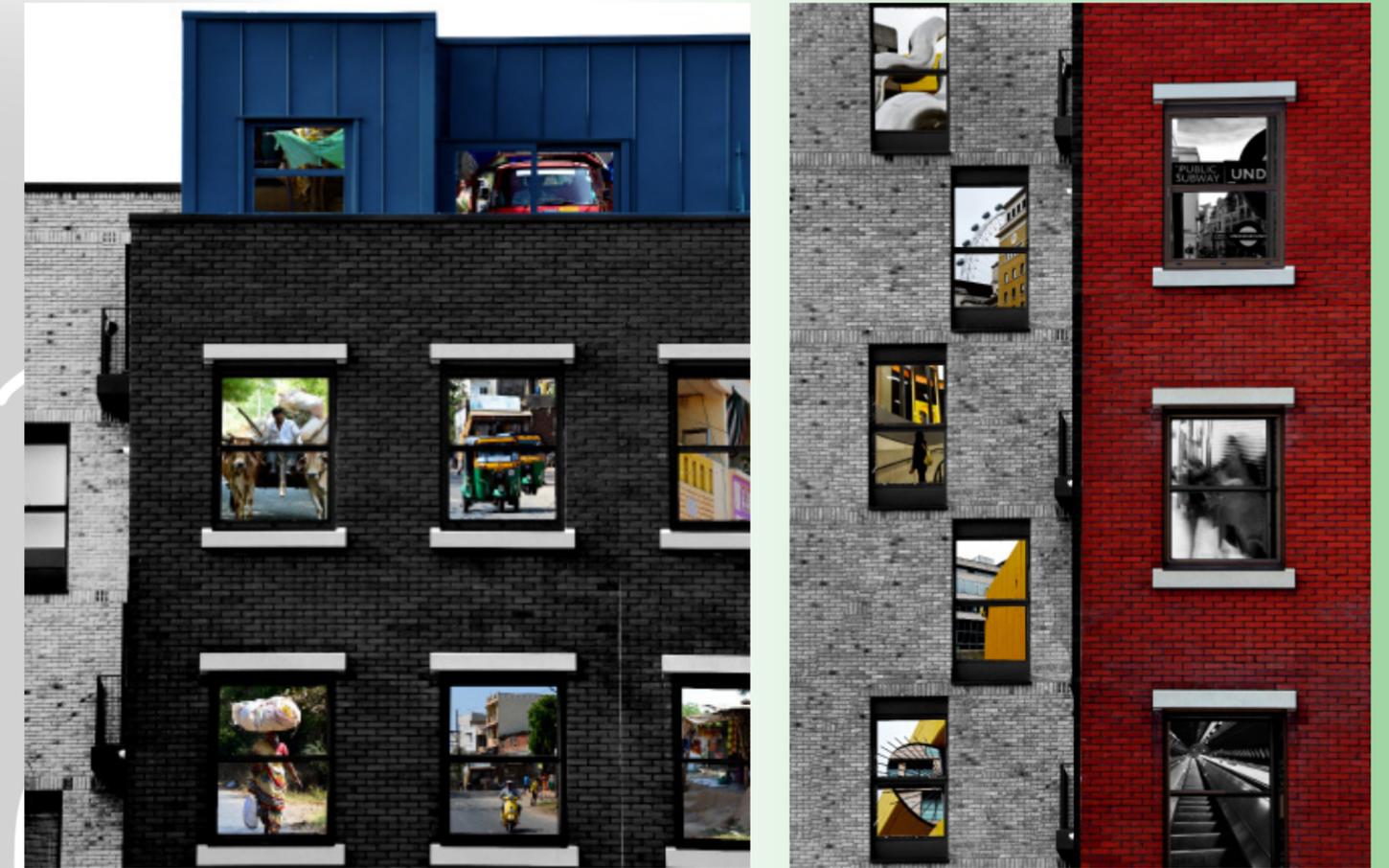
But with that, there came struggle and debate. Should cultures be shared? We increasingly asked ourselves; do we do more harm than good by allowing others into our own personally established worlds filled with individual strife? And the question was immediately answered. Bonds broke feverously as constant budget cuts in the community projects reminded us of our social and economic mentality.

Father: "There were some spaces where I wanted to work, that were owned by certain ethnic minorities who wanted people of the same backgrounds working there. Sometimes it felt like I was missing out on opportunities because I felt like I was qualified for the job but couldn't get it".

In time the questions we asked of ourselves and our interactions with others were deemed as rational. In some communities, Black people came to be known as dangerous individuals with criminal tendencies, Asians as cold and unwelcoming, Polish people as unkind and rude. We didn't wear our stereotypes, but we avoided them with effort, whilst simultaneously closing the door on our past bonds, assuming that others were doing the same.

Doors, however, open as much as they close. London is seen as an immigrant city because of the large amounts of people that came here as people ready to face the global world and live the best lives they could by any means necessary. It is now where my father, aunts, uncles and so many others have gone and conquered and resides with others, both together and apart.

Written by Temi Dawodu



The building in the foreground of this image was photographed in my local area of Harrow. This building represents my community in this project.

The images used in the window are ones that I photographed in India; they present my roots as well as the family members are interviewed.

The image used in the windows of the second image represents how my respondents view London. The one word that was used frequently to describe London was vibrant; I tried to showcase in this image, as well as the many other things that they love about London such as art and the energetic atmosphere.

By Shirali Patil

KUMBA

Prologue

If things were better for us economically,
It might have been nicer to stay instead
Of leaving my loved ones in melancholy
Simply to get here also feeling a bit sad.
We had few viable options but to jump
Through whatever hoops you demanded,
And smooth over pain over each bump
Because back there our bodies exerted
Themselves in vain solely just to afford
Existing or living or loving or working or studying.
Ti(r)ed in two minds transmitting to a spinal cord
Broken down by heavy burdens added to by all the
straining
To prove VALU£ then be welcomed with a smile.
Will this leap of faith soon become worthwhile?
Hope

Arrival

All the overwhelming opportunities offered,
Both inspire effort to make them admire me,
Yet mire me in guilt when it seems too hard
Maybe we could request to the powers that be:
Please share with us where is the milk and honey?
Promised for being worked to our bones in this land
Of bile and wax rather wherein chattel slavery money
Is the prime way to innocently be dealt a good hand.
Even half great expectations fell way off this reality
Cause I cannot always get you to see my humanity
I'm not a temporary guest or tourist here to see the sights,
So how many years toiling till I can buy some more
rights?

Settling

Albeit it hasn't quite been everything we aspired
toward,
A1 degrees didn't translate into skilled jobs every-
where.
But surely the key point is to be moving forward
From any setbacks noyesno matter how unfair.
Those in the mother country joke about people being
Part of the BBC workforce ' British Bottom Cleaners'

I'll try focus on the million moments to cherish feeling
Fulfilled because everyone knows as us humble sin-
ners,
Nothing is without its flaws across this world ergo
moots
Points: why complain so much if still putting down
roots?

Integration

Without doubt the barbed wire words of racism stung
As they punched you wish you had them enlightened,
"I was here first" with no smoke drowning my lung.
In your media-warped imagination 10/9 blackened
Are 492% of us. Some of whose ancestors sacrificed
Equally if not more for a so-called Britishness sliced
Up unequally

Belonging

Confusion
Happiness

Written by Nyasha Duri

My Generation

My Young Generation is useless today
Because only a fool would say
Participation and progress is this generation's way.
Complain, cry and crumble under pressure, everyone knows that
No matter what, Young People in Britain would never
Come together as one and endeavour
Fighting for change and betterment for all, wherever. We always
Take to social media and spread the hate. Forever
Blaming our politicians for corrupting our State. Never willing to
Solve our problems like our parents did educate. Stopping ourselves from
Any definition of success. Our only focus is to
Help ourselves and so we transgress
The very souls we're told not to oppress. We refuse to just
Come together as one and learn to love and heal
Divided, weak and powerless is what we've become I can reveal, that we're committed to
Imitate rather than innovate, never can anyone dictate, that
We did our bit for the state, we refused to
Solve the problems of inequality so that our children can say
'The bygone generations have led the way' we can
Let this all be true and never take a stand, or we can get ready to turn this all around.

*now read it backwards!

Written by Huzaifa Abhi

'Ghar' Home

1963, or thereabouts, my granddad moved to England because he wanted a better life. In 1965, my grandma soon followed. She stepped off the plane, baby in hand. Scared. Cold. Bismillah, she would whisper, her icy breath lingering in front of her face like a ghost. In the name of God.

They had dreamed of a better life for themselves and their family:
One where they would not have to go to the bathroom in the dark,
One where they would not have to fight over the last piece of meat at the bottom of the handi,
One where they could learn.

London.
A new home.
Over the last 50 years, they have seen it grown. Once, it was a place they feared. A place they weren't made to feel welcome. Spat in the face, called a 'Paki,' told to "go home".
These were just a few of the regular incidents they would have to endure. They wondered if they had made the right choice. They wondered if London would ever feel like "home".
But they lived in hope. Hope that one day, their children and grandchildren, would not have to brave these hardships. Hope that one day, their sacrifice would be worth it.

Fast forward 50 years, and my goodness it was worth it. They see a city which has transformed. With sunset silhouette of skyscrapers and mosque minarets. Streets filled with the aroma of biriyani, jerk chicken and fish and chips. Conversations of Swahili, Mandarin and French intertwined. Hijabs, geles and kippahs adorning the heads of passers by.

The noise, the crowds, the glare of shops. A power of people scurrying like the rats that live six feet below. A place where you are both alone and in company at the same time. A place which is both dainty yet vast. A place of illimitable proportions.

This is, however, no wonderland. People still suffer, people still struggle. Our streets are still filled with crime and racist attacks. A bubble increasingly catering for only the rich, forgetting and forcing out the communities which put together and built this imperfectly perfect jigsaw of a city.

There is still a long way to go. But for now, my grandparents live in peace knowing that, finally, they belong. This is their city. This is their home.

Written by Annisa Khan

Community: An instrument of survival

Ethnic minorities who predominantly come from traditional, conservative countries tend to have a strong familiarity with the term 'community.' One definition that was relayed to me by a participant was 'a body of people who facilitate a sense of belonging in a rather unpredictable world.'

We can establish a consensus that the idea of 'unpredictable world' may easily incite the sense of threat. Western societies would attest to communities as usual, but this definition extends the term to mean vital. This was an interesting take on the term as it appears to elude to a community as a survival instrument. The necessity of a community (in this context) makes greater sense when considering some features of a developing world, i.e., poverty, unregulated public sectors and low employment.

If one is suddenly unsure of where their next meal is coming from, but the neighbours have an open door policy around dinner time, these neighbours serve a necessary function, certainly a survival instrument.

If suddenly the matriarch of a community does not have the means to seek medical treatment but one of many children she careered for became a doctor who can give her treatment for then this would undoubtedly serve as a survival instrument.

These typical or less typical examples of communities as an instrumental of survival caused me to have a deeper appreciation for those that make up the body in a community.

The participant's descriptions of the term encouraged me to communities as the great equalizers for the areas of life that are perhaps difficult to navigate. The less broad interpretation of the term looked at communities in a binary.

Namely, those that share the same or similar categories of identities. For example, those that share the same ethnicity, religious groups & place of worship or those in the same line of work.

Interestingly, the importance of the community was not compromised outside of the respective traditional, conservative countries. Instead, the need was more pronounced as a result of the 'minority/ identity.'

A big world in a single city: How global issues manifests themselves in the lives of single city.

The national security argument has been catastrophic for civil liberties since 9/11. This horrific global event permeated the lives of individuals both within the Islamic faith or otherwise. Similarly, the legacy of race supremacy. To convey the correlation between worldwide events and the lives of everyday people, I will recount the stories of three participants pertaining to the global subjects of Islamophobia and race.

One participant employed by the NHS shared the treatment she received following the devastating terrorist attacks in Woolwich (South East London). Upon returning to work at the hospital in her religious attire, she routinely provides care for extremely ill patients. It was not long before a number of her patients assigned her the spokesperson role for people who commit heinous crimes predicated on a distorted interpretation of Islam. She was asked "why are you people killers?" ironically while performing life-saving work. The aftermath of the same incident led to a similar experience with another participant who experienced verbal abuse. This time she was shopping at Marks & Spencer.

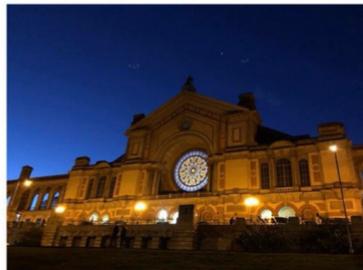
She had finally picked what she wanted and made it to the front of the queue to make the payment before the customer next to her began using vile language towards her with a loud projection of voice, he ensured the entire shop heard him. She just wanted to pay for her items and could not comprehend where the unsolicited tension stemmed from. Looking around, it was evident that no one, include the employees wanted to get involved. Once she looked around, noticed her lone position and aggression from the man spewing abuse, she proceeded to leave without purchasing anything.

One of the older participants pondered his early experiences of life in the UK during the 1960s following the wide-scale arrivals of Afro Caribbeans. He recalled how private businesses would outright refuse to serve him purely based on his skin complexion. What we would now consider an embarrassing part of history would still qualify as modern history. That is to say, there have been drastic shifts in a short time space, at least in reference to overt racism. Of course one cannot draw such broad assertions from mere anecdotal evidence, but I consider any movement toward tolerance/social inclusion a movement none the less.

Written by Asha Lul Mohammad



ROOTS LDN



A special thank you goes to Mohammed, Ferdousi, Khadija, Sheri, Amie, Jadres and Bukky for your input and support throughout this project.

“When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life: for there is in London all that life can afford”. Samuel Johnson

As a second generation 30 year old Muslim woman in London I have a lot of labels. I’m a teacher. A makeup artist. A trustee. And now, I’m a researcher. I was really happy to take on this project and explore some of the lived experiences in London. London is my place of birth. I’m a Londoner through and through. What better than to talk about home?

I selected my participants from a range of British African and Asian backgrounds that have been living in London for many years to find out whether they feel welcomed in London and represented in City Hall. These seven people are some of the closest people to me and are made up of friends, family and mentors. It’s always important to learn from the generations that have come before us. I’ve spent the last few weeks interviewing my family and friends on their views of the city. This is all primary research. It means using face to face interviews as a research method was very effective as I could gain more in-depth answers. It also means I got to spend quality time with my loved ones. That complete, I now sit here with my research data, deep in thought. I’m trying to make sense of it all. The research itself didn’t take too long. I feel like the most work has come after the interviews, when reflecting on the themes emerged.

There were a few surprises, some good and others not so good. There were also some unifying themes that I did not expect. One thing I didn’t expect was the reluctance to include names. It was interesting to see that some people did not want to be identified as they preferred to stay under the radar. This may however be quite common in first generation immigrating communities that felt they had to work harder in order to fit in with the rest of society.

I sent the questions out to participants ahead of time so that they would know what to expect and be able to prepare beforehand. I feel this was useful in answering the questions more openly and honestly. As a researcher interviewing people I know, I felt at times the participant may be trying to minimise some of the issues they faced. I wonder whether their responses would have been different had they been interviewed by someone else. I also feel they may have been trying to spare my feelings. When conducting the interviews I also had to try and avoid any bias. I must admit I had certain expectations when asking the questions and these assumptions were not always correct.

It can be argued that the longer you live somewhere, the more it can begin to feel like home. On the other hand, if newer communities are not welcomed or treated the same as the rest then it becomes problematic. The UK has an uncomfortable history of racism that has lingering effects today, something referred to consistently in the interviews. Culture is another point to consider. When moving to a new country, language, customs and traditions can be very different from home and this can have an impact on the amount of time it takes to settle. They can also become overlooked when it comes to participation.

I found that overall, my participants are happy they came to London. They have found opportunities they may not have had in their places of birth. They have worked hard to integrate and become part of the social fabric. They regularly mix with communities other than their own and have made the most of opportunities that have come their way. They told me they were really happy to be involved in this project and wished to do more.

Community engagement research is valuable because it gives a voice to those that may not feel included in society. I found some of the questions to be slightly problematic in that the closed questions didn’t allow for any more detail. It would have been better to include an ‘Other’ box for more detail. This is something I would improve if I had the chance to start over.

In terms of results it was found that my participants do not feel the same sense of identity, home and belonging in London as the younger generation. This appears to be due to a combination of having roots elsewhere with a feeling of being excluded from mainstream society here in England. I feel really sad that those closest to me do not feel accepted here in the same way I do. I wish I could do more to make it better. This project is just the beginning. As a result of my findings I will make a conscious effort to do more for those people needing more contact and engagement.

This project has made me realise how important it is to include the older generation in decision making processes. It’s quite painful when your loved ones tell you they don’t feel accepted in this society, that they don’t feel they have a place. That their voices are not heard. We need all voices to shape public opinion and policy. In terms of moving forward we have to be more inclusive and open as a community. We need to take their needs into consideration. We need to involve older people more in terms of debate and discussion as their advice and knowledge is vital for a more inclusive society. Only by doing so will older BAME communities living in London feel more included and represented in City Hall.

Written by Merium Bhuiyan

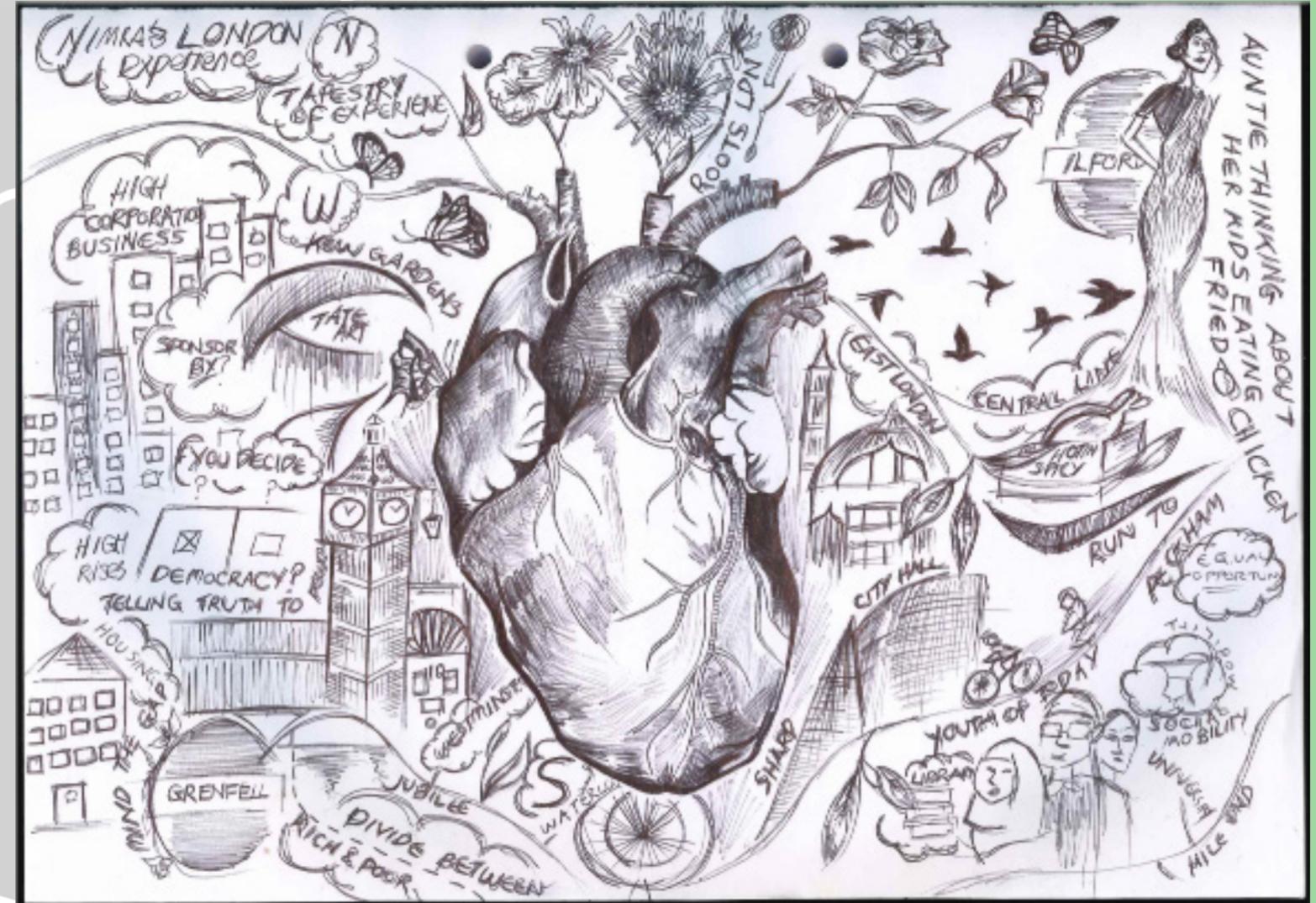
Sisterhood

You came from a culture that was immune to the idea of liberated women... of men who felt insecure when they can't control 'em and give her the dirtiest look if she's well spoken and don't forget to call her disobedient women coming from a man whose books are half open what kind of women are you raising all the poor voices you're silencing expect her to tolerate disrespect whether she's stepping for the sake of the family portrait, gotta keep it squeaky clean and if she's got something to say better keep her lips sealed and let a man speak for her mama, I'm pissed for you you don't need a man to pattern 'em for you how you got the same blood but there's no compassion for you as if you weren't fashioned in one womb I know you can't live without their presence in the same room but more time it feels like the edge of the map is the safe route No point in tryna prove your worth to these people when they'll chat shit about the noble but clap for the corrupted deep down you're just a kid who can't bear the silent treatment where are the people who listen with good intentions self-healing, feels like you're the doctor and the patient I always heard of families that had late gatherings in the dessert at night, that was guarded by floating, golden lanterns, surrounded by caravans that were invaded by the laughs of my uncles that you can hear from far, as if they were rooted to megaphones we would nest over warm coloured carpets and feast on Turkish delights and mint tea to keep the family awake, even the annoying little cousins I heard of a neighbourhood that makes you feel like royalty who cook you food when you're ill and insist to help around the house without your permission and everytime we visited our country

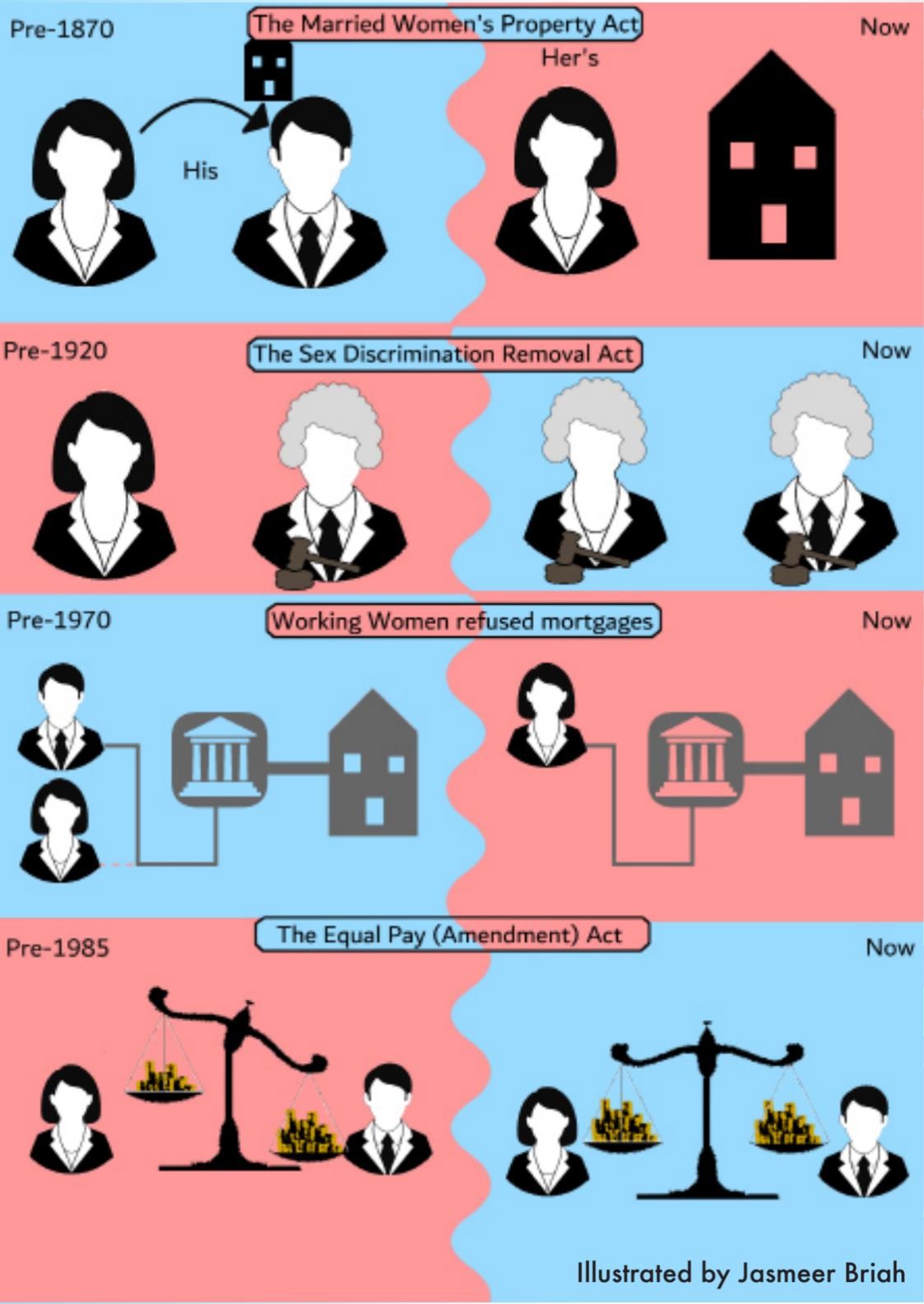
we saw that, but didn't experience that type of community in our very own country. That's why you were shocked when you stepped foot in a stranger's land and met that same type of community elsewhere. It was like a fairy-tale that was stored further back in the book shelf, covered with dust, the kind of story that every parent wanted their child to be immune to. You were astonished to have met atheist people with righteous intentions who helped out more than your religious friends did. For the first time ever you have other contacts on your phone besides my aunties and uncles. You have found therapeutical conversations that didn't need to be a long distance phone call but in a cafe sitting opposite each other You don't need to stoop to culture's level of gossip and oppression just to fit in with the rest, now you have meaningful discussions that you pass onto me and for that I am very pleased I am your child but I feel like a very proud parent, to have seen your struggle of learning how to walk and talk again in a different country, to have seen your worries and tears on my first day at an English school, a six year old girl who knows nothing but the words yes and no But I turned out just fine, and so did you. It's not easy to raise a child in a country with foreign traditions and normalities that opposed to your way of upbringing, but what's harder is to try understand and get used to them whilst raising a child with foreign traditions and normalities that opposed to your way of upbringing. But mother, you've turned out just fine, with well-brought up children

who are loyal to their religion no matter what is thrown at them which is something you always brag about to your family abroad. And whilst changing your way of thinking for the better, evicting the toxic inhabitants of a mentality that you were dangerously raised by, you still kept important traditions such as staying firm to our roots when it comes to cooking our food, when it comes to dressing in our tribal wear at community gatherings, being proud of speaking our mother-tongue on the phone when in public, being proud to share our stories of how my great grandfather fought in the war with victory at the end of a dark, tormenting tunnel and of course, you still want me to get married at a certain age but that's another discussion which I'm sure we can negotiate You have become the women you always wanted to be but in another country. Back there, it wasn't necessary to reserve a corner for books or certificates of attainments, because ridiculously, you "already a privilege since you were a woman" You have become the women you always wanted to be with the help of a group of people who made that possible through their ways of empathy. they were your teachers who never once taught therapists who never held a title or degree they had the qualities of the royal, but have never once wore a crown that small group of people you now consider not only a community, but a sisterhood.

Written by Chifa Khelfaoui



Illustrated by Nimra Shahid



Illustrated by Jasmeer Bria

The Researchers



Amando Da Costa
British Indian
 This project was a new experience for Amando where he wanted to find an alternative perspective from mainstream media on social issues. Additionally, Amando wanted to develop his creative side and further develop his skills to benefit those whose voices are not heard.



Annisa Khan
British Pakistani
 Annisa's aim was to elevate the voices of those who are marginalised in society and believes listening to those within the community is the key to building trust. Annisa's view on identity is tied with the social integration and acceptance of diverse cultures in the community and she wanted to further research this topic.



Asha Mohammoud
British Somali
 Asha believed this project will likely to bring change in policy by collecting qualitative data for the government to analyse.

Chifa Khelfaoui

Algerian

Chifa wanted to gain an insight of people's stories within the BAME community.



Jasmeer Bria

Indian

Jasmeer believed this project will develop his research and narrative skills. Additionally, Jasmeer wanted to gain an insight in other people's opinions



Heeral Sonigra

Indian

Heeral believed this project will give her a unique experience to gain more knowledge of her community. Also, this will help her further develop her research skills which will benefit her in the future.



Luis Bonnelame

Black Caribbean

Luis enjoys conducting research especially when looking at how people integrate in society.



Huzaifa Abhi

British Indian

Huzaifa wanted to build on his existing skills and improve his creative side. Huzaifa also encourages this platform for young people to participate and build bridges in the community.



Maathulan Kajendran

Sri Lankan

Maathulan's reason to participate in this project was to meet people who have had similar experiences. This project allowed him to talk to people and gain an understanding of their lives in London.



Merium Bhuiyan

British Bangladeshi

Merium is interested in research and enjoys conducting interviews because she has a passion for communication and arts as well as motivating young people to aim higher.



Nabil Ibrahim

British

Nabil's aim for this project was to learn new things.



Nimra Shahid

Pakistani

Nimra is passionate in creatively narrating a story with diverse experiences. As a first generation Briton, Nimra wanted to share her narrative and the other interviewees in explaining the experiences they had living in London.



Nyasha Duri

Black African (Zimbabwean)

Nyasha wanted to participate in this project because it is another great initiative aligned with her passions from You Press. Nyasha has a background of working with different organisations to advocate diversity but she believes the connection between the ethnic minority community and City Hall needs to be improved.



Qayum Mannan (Q.)

Bengali

Qayum was motivated to do this project because of being racially abused as a child. Therefore, he dedicated his life's work towards social cohesion and integration issues.



Shirali Patil

British Indian

Shirali wanted to discover views from different social classes and ethnicities to see how they differ or overlap.



Personal Development

Shwetal Shah

Indian

Shwetal has been searching for various ways to create role model representation and used various mediums and initiatives to tackle this. Also, this project would enable her to further carry on that work and reach out to wider audiences in different



Temi Dawodu

Black British

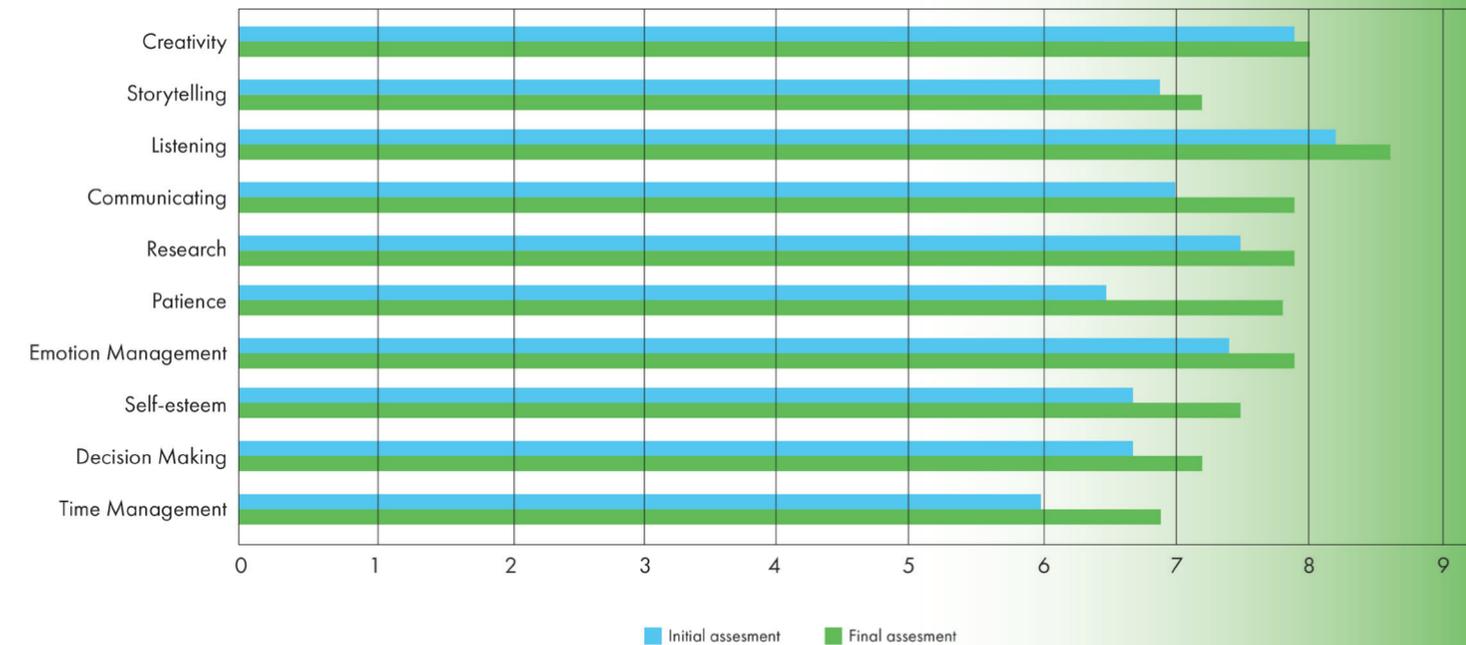
Temi understand this project as the need to find realistic ways in which members of different communities can interact with each other more. Temi believes a lack of social cohesion and integration will reinforce the prejudicial notions held within the community.



Usman Bux

British Asian, Indian/Pakistani

Usman wanted to gain an insight in the disenfranchisement of ethnic minorities in the community. Also, Usman wanted to understand the economic spiritual vacuum that might be sweeping across London though globalisation and neoliberalism in order to work out strategies to promote active citizenship.



The project was successfully completed in May 2018 and we had the following impacts:

At the beginning & at the end of the project we assessed the soft skills of all the researchers. Overall, the group has shown noteworthy improvements from the first assessment to the final assessment.

With the project, we have successfully gone above & beyond the aims and objectives. For example, the project had a very positive impact on everyone and everyone received high quality support & relevant training. Furthermore, the workshops and the artistic responses increased our researcher's communication, patience, self-esteem and time management skills. This also included new transferable skills that they will take forward into their future careers.

The Project Team

What does community mean to you?

**“Building
positive
relationships
with the
people living
the area.”**

Facilitators



Farah Mohammoud

Farah is a passionate social entrepreneur, with over five years experience of training people, managing volunteers and turning a social action campaign into a social enterprise. At You Press, Farah’s main activities involve training and developing young people’s talents through the creative arts and writing.

Photographers



Aimee Valinski

Aimee is a talented photographer with a great passion and a steady focus for life, for social justice and for the true beauty of the world; rejoicing each new day that brings a new opportunity. Throughout her work, love, passion and wonder, she has embraced many cultures and she energetically loves working with diverse peoples (communities) and environments. Aimee is You Press’ Photographer and she is keen to support You Press to achieve its vision and mission to empower people to find their voice and be heard through writing and creative arts.

Anrike Piel

Anrike Piel is a visual artist, photographer and director. She left Estonia as a teenager to discover the world and its possibilities with the accompaniment of her camera. Her journey has led her to having a well established career in photography and sparked her interest in directing. In the recent years, she has gained recognition for her activism focused fashion photography which challenges the issues regarding humanity.



Filmmakers

Afshin Rohani

Afshin is a filmmaker based in London previously he has been involved in using film to campaign for human rights and is a keen advocate of collaborative and disruptive approaches to documentary film-making.



Dominic Brough

Dominic is a volunteer at You Press, dedicating his time towards his passion; filming and editing. Assisting Afshin and Anrike whenever he can, Dominic is gaining experience and working towards a future in the creative industry.



Illustrators

Aliyah Coreana

Aliyah is You Press' Graphic Illustrator who produces our comics and graphic designs for ScribersHive. She is a very versatile artist who enjoys experimenting with different mediums and combining the use of colour to help convey emotion and imagination. A graduate in Animation from Ravensbourne, she is able to animate and video edit too. She strives to highlight the importance of diversity in all her work because people of colour are under-represented in illustration, animation and art.



Teona Teodorescu

Teona is a graphic communication designer, passionate about community research and wishful to use her practical abilities, in visual communication, in initiatives for the social good. She hopes to be able to create bridges between researchers and designers, by working with these on collaborative projects. She is a graduate from University of Westminster and a current student at the MA Information Design course, at University of Reading.



Aisha Afifah

A Writer & Researcher based in West London. She has worked as a Live Sound Engineer and stage-crew member since she was young. Working in live music, theatre and comedy allows her to explore a range of methods to deal with the weird and wonderful people that the entertainment industry is full of. Aisha has been an active Youth Arts Worker for many years. Having worked in the West Midlands, London and Bethlehem, Palestine, she has nurtured the ability to work with many different types of people. She also has experience in Film & TV, working towards her passion of telling amazing stories.



Data Analysts/Writers

Samir Sattar

In the latter stages of secondary school, Samir found his passion for creative writing and interest in daily affairs. This led him to get a degree in Creative Writing and Journalism from Middlesex University in 2017. After eight months of volunteering for different organisations, Samir has finally found his first steps into the world of Journalism and Media, working for You Press as both Editor and Writer of articles uploaded weekly to ScribersHive.



Kaled Ahmed Abdi

Kaled recently started volunteering at You Press and is currently studying a Masters in International Business and Politics at Queen Mary University of London after graduating at University of East London with a Bachelors in International Politics. Kaled is not shy to express his views and write primarily on issues related to politics on ScribersHive. Kaled enjoys watching and playing football and is a massive Liverpool fan.



Cameron Koubek

A journalism and International Studies student at Elon University in the United States, Cameron spent this semester in London and joined You Press as an international intern in March. He has written articles for the ScribersHive website on a wide variety of topics, including politics, sports, environment and lifestyle. Cameron is passionate about telling stories and understanding what makes people tick. He strives to shine a light on issues of importance that might otherwise go unnoticed. You Press has helped Cameron develop his professional writing skills while also presenting him with new opportunities, such as attending events to speak on behalf of You Press.



Conclusion

The overall data shows a few key trends that the respondents felt were particularly relevant to their experience living in London. Many people had positive things to say about London. Some of the most common responses praised the city's multiculturalism, which they felt had exposed them to a much greater diversity of people than they would have been otherwise and had broadened their perspectives.

People were also grateful for the opportunities London had given them, especially education and jobs. London was credited with helping people achieve their personal goals by providing the means to become more self-sufficient. Many said that their overall quality of life had improved as a result of moving to London.

Yet most voiced concerns that need to be addressed. Nearly half the respondents felt that crime is the greatest problem their community is facing, and that to this point the government hadn't taken adequate steps towards improving the situation. Racism, cost of living, gentrification and vulnerability of young people were often mentioned as well. There was a fear among some that Brexit will change the way people treat each other.

When asked why they didn't feel that their voice was represented in city hall, people said that they wanted to see more tangible action from government. More still said they were simply unaware of how to get involved and could benefit from more outreach from City Hall. Hopefully, the collective response of the people who participated in this study will bring about change from the Greater London Authority.

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GREATER
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What does it mean to have your voice heard?

“It means that someone is genuinely listening to you. It makes you feel empowered and allows to make a difference.”

