

ROOTS LDN

2019





CONTENTS

4

ROOTS LDN MISSION

6

THE WORKSHOPS

7

THE RESEARCHERS

16

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

32

ARTISTIC RESPONSES

49

THE TEAM & YOU PRESS



ROOTS LDN

Between June 2019 and March 2020, You Press collaborated with the Greater London Authority (GLA) in order to deliver a follow-up community research project that focused on social inclusion, integration and developing civic leadership in communities that currently do not have a voice in City Hall. Based on the findings from last year, ROOTS LDN 2019 focused on the communal concerns of Youth Violence and Crime. This project involved 15 researchers from the BAME demographic ranging from 16 to 30 years old. Once the data had been collected, the researchers converted their findings into original artistic responses.



THE WORKSHOPS

Following the ROOTS LDN 2018 model, participants attending four core workshops bi-weekly between June and August 2019 to not only learn research methodology but also think of the many different ways they could express their findings creatively.

In the introduction session, we established five group values for each researcher to follow:

1

RESPECT

2

LISTEN

3

COMFORTABLE
BUT MINDFUL

4

HONESTY

5

FUN

MEET THE RESEARCHERS



KATHERINE MEJIA

Katherine is a student ambassador and supporter of You Press who wants to better understand the root of crime and youth violence. She also wants to know how to improve the community in order to provide a safer world for future generations.

Sagal is a 20 year old spoken word poet who has been performing for the past 4 years now. She aims to create awareness through her poems and writes about social issues including: immigration, youth knife crime, poverty and gender issues. Sagal is a published poet and has also had her work appear in exhibitions. She has performed in theatre, at festivals and at the British Library for an event that the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, opened.

SAGAL FARAH



LUIS BONNELAME

Luis is a recent Psychology graduate as well as a talented musician who is looking to pursue a career in the creative field. He is interested in knowing the causes and implications of some of the disturbing statistics related to youth violence in London and would like the opportunity to do something about it.





ABANOUB BOCTOR

Abs is a musician who is currently working on his first EP. He feels like he needs to get back in touch with his own roots as he has spent years trying to figure out his identity.



ANNIE ROCKSON

Annie currently works as a Development Manager for a youth charity. She is a spoken word poet who is very passionate about exploring serious youth violence pertaining in the BAME community.

HEERAL SONIGRA

Heeral is an art student currently studying Illustration at Ravensbourne University. Having been part of the ROOTS project last year has allowed her to share a message through her artwork.



LEAH PATTEN

Leah is currently studying in college and would like to understand the issues as well as the reasons behind them and what could be done to prevent them. She is a singer who took part in The Collective music programme in 2018.





GEORGIA COURTNEY-COX

Georgia is a vibrant and creative content creator. As an English Literature undergraduate she produces analytical and thought provoking weekly radio content. To showcase the live shows she edits and uploads them onto her SoundCloud account named Too Triggered. The show has gained listeners from across Europe, the Caribbean and Africa.



ASHA MOHAMMOUD

Asha is a Law graduate (LLB) and is a legal consultant of You Press. She enjoys community engagement and collecting raw data which can have a wide-scale applicable use.

NYASHA DURI

Nyasha is a proud Londoner and first-generation immigrant who has strong ties in the UK. She is currently studying International Humanitarian Affairs. She is very keen to follow up on the research conducted in 2018 to gain insight on people who are affected by serious youth violence in London.



NIMRA SHAHID

Having previously participated in the ROOTS project, Nimra enjoyed contributing to voicing the different communities of London. She is very passionate about solving youth violence, something which has deeply affected people of colour and many close to her. She wishes to create a social impact.





AMANDO DA COSTA

Amando is a filmmaker and footballer who likes to be creative and enjoys keeping fit. He would like to demonstrate the different ways in which crime affects us all.



FARRAH HAMZA

Farrah is a freelance translator who is passionate about writing, language and the arts. She currently works as a medical interpreter for the NHS but most of her work involves subtitling documentaries. She is passionate about helping others and spreading social messages.

AYESHA ABDUL-RAHEEM

Ayesha is a singer-songwriter from North London. Who previously took part in the Collective music programme with You Press.



MERIUM BHUIYAN

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.





QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

When conducting the research, we told our 15 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 youth violence and crime around London. In the end we collected a combined total of 87 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.

HOW HAS YOUTH VIOLENCE AFFECTED YOUR COMMUNITY?

FEAR AND PARANOIA

35%

People are scared of becoming a target of crime based on the things they heard were going on in the local area. Those with fear/paranoia are less likely to walk down the street alone or at night. As a result of youth violence, many parents are worried for their children and keep them indoors.

DIRECTLY AFFECTED

26%

More than a quarter of participants have either been affected directly or know someone who has been affected. 26% know a young person, family member, friend or colleague who have either been killed or victimised due to serious violence. Sadly, one participant lost his son due to youth violence.

TYPES OF CRIMES

20%

A fraction of interviewees listed the different types of crimes which have affected their neighbourhood. 20% mentioned a variety of crimes in their local area including: Gang Violence, Knife Crime, Drug use, Fighting, Robbery. Some participants knew a few people who were involved in crime within community.

CATALYSTS

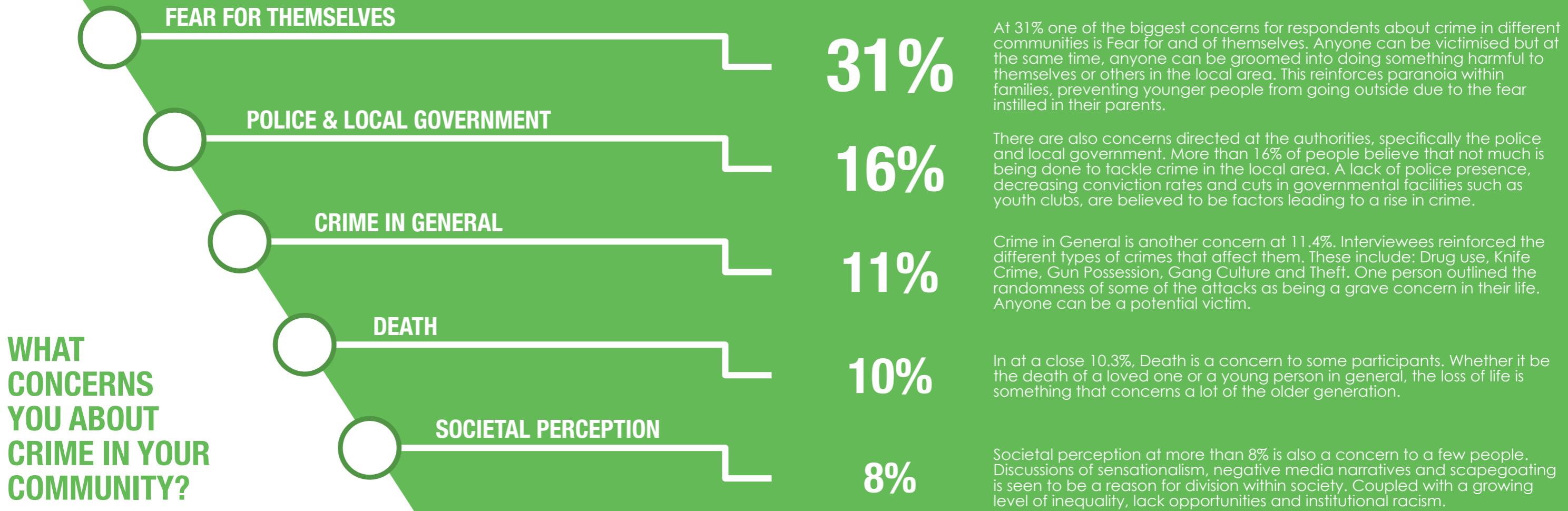
10%

Some listed the catalysts and indirect effects for youth violence in their area. 10% believe that youth violence is a direct result of poverty, gentrification and the marginalisation of ethnic minorities. Surprisingly only one person mentioned Mental Health in this category.

NONE

6%

A small 6% explained that youth violence and crime had little to no effect in their community.



HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE YOUR CONCERNS?



26%

To no one as they believe no action will be taken.



43%

By talking to people they know, including friends, family members & colleagues

11%

To the local authorities which include the police.

7%

At resident meetings or social gatherings.

6%

Through a creative output such as filming, blogging, illustration or music.

7%

A combined total of 7% either go through their political sphere or use social media



**HOW WOULD
YOU DESCRIBE
THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN YOUNG
PEOPLE IN YOUR
COMMUNITY AND
THE POLICE?**

61%
BAD
HATRED
HOSTILE
MISTRUST
NON-EXISTENT

A majority carry negative feelings when talking about the relationship between young people and the police. Mistrust, Hostile, Bad, Hatred and Non-existent are some of the words used to describe the plight of the situation. Some believe there is a friction between the youth and police. Others either feel scared or don't like the police.

15%
WEAK RELATIONSHIP
OR
NO RELATIONSHIP

10%
GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE

7% of people were not sure about the relationship between the youth and police

15% believe that there is either a weak relationship or no relationship at all between both groups, with a lack of communication being the root of the problem.

Some answers were influenced by a generational difference. While young people feel like they are being marginalised, some elder respondents emphasise that the youth need to respect the law in order to build a good relationship with the police.

3%
BULLY MENTALITY

3% believe the police have a Bully Mentality, harassing specific groups due to systematic racism.

ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF YOUR COMMUNITY AFFECTED BY CRIME AND YOUTH VIOLENCE?



57% NOT AWARE

Most of the participants are not aware of the support available to them but believe that their needs to be more in easy access.

16% AWARE

More than 16% are Aware but say there isn't enough available due to budget cuts or were aware in the past.

14% RECEIVE SUPPORT

Some listed examples of the type of support they received through the Local Authorities and Youth Centres. This included support from police and social services, extra-curricular/after-school clubs, counselling and community programmes.

7% UNSURE

People were either unsure or don't have the direct contact to support.

2% CHARITIES

Only 2% gained support from charities



There are a variety of different things that the participants want to see from the Mayor of London. One of the key requests is for the Mayor to communicate with people. They want to see Mr. Khan get involved with communities and have direct discussions, especially with the youth, in order to build a relationship and show transparency. A lot of people want the Mayor to actively discuss and listen to the concerns of general public.

21% of respondents say that more funding should be implemented for projects, better resources for local authorities or invested directly in the community. Some say that funding should be given for more community/police officers or health and support groups.

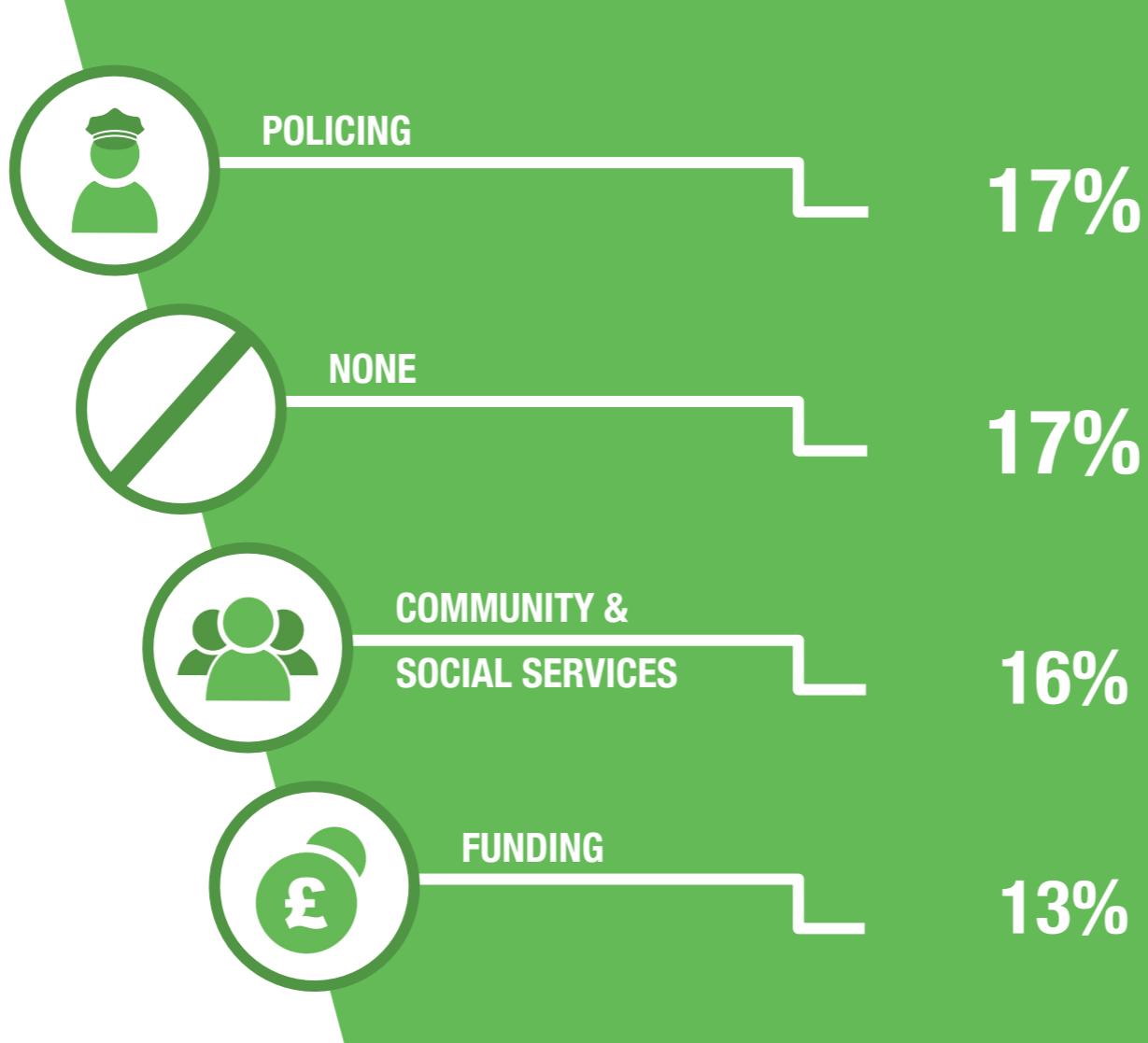
A few participants want the Mayor to help in changing perceptions, especially for the BAME community. 10% say that actions need to be taken more seriously in making sure young people feel safer and treated more humanely by authorities.

Education is somewhere people think the Mayor of London can put his efforts into. Educating both young and old people to resolve the matter within their communities. Some were asking for potential schemes to be put in place which included mentoring, financial literacy, empowerment, vocational skills for excluded students and more invested into youth centres and after school clubs.

9% of people question the Mayor's power and how effective his efforts would be in resolving communal issues. Some feel that Mr. Khan does not have enough power and the process would be expensive.

A small proportion of people believe in investing into the bottom-up approach by empowering advocacy groups and promoting grassroots work.

DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE ADDRESSING THE CONCERN IN YOUR COMMUNITY YOU PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED?



17% of people believe that there needs to be changes made in policing. Some believe that there needs to be an increased police presence in different communities while others say that the police need to change their approach, especially in BAME areas. While some support harsher sentencing, the people in this category believe that the law enforcement need to stop discriminating and promote racial equality.

Another 17% said they either did not have any recommendations or provided the answer in the previous question.

More than 16% recommend investing in community services and social services, including youth clubs.

Funding is yet again mentioned as a solution for addressing the previous concerns. Participants believe more funding needs to be put into policing, youth programmes, community-based workshops, leisure centres and investment into poor areas.



ARTISTIC RESPONSES

The participants used their results from the surveys they carried out and turned these into creative pieces. This included artwork, poems, songs and short films.

You can find the full collection of artistic responses at YouPress.org.uk



GONE TOO SOON

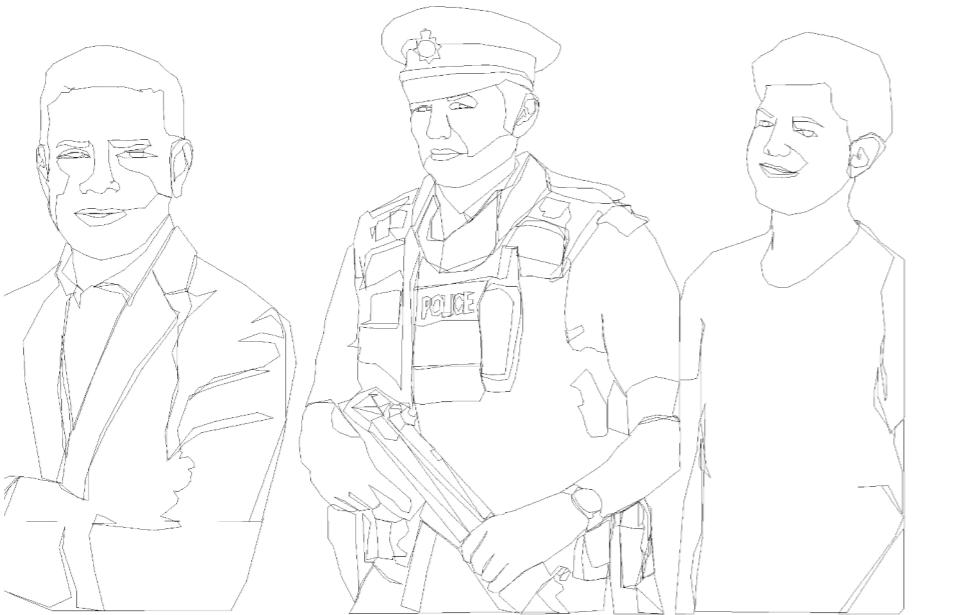
BY GEORGIA
COURTNEY-COX



There is no singular cause of youth violence
Some people would blame socio-economic upbringing
Many critique the influence of friends and family
Others the questionable motivations of the Police and Mayor of London
Media coverage breeds these assumptions
Planted into the minds of local citizens
Fears multiplying with each story reported



Too many lives are being cut short
Parents burying their children
Local communities paying their respects with flowers, cards and pictures



Finding the causes of youth violence starts with giving voices to local groups

Listening to the stories of the youth

Establishing transparency between all parties involved

The Mayor of London, the police and local communities

If we don't work together the cause of youth violence will never be solved

**Use your voice
and speak UP
against Youth
violence**





STELLA (REPRISE)

BY ABANOUB BOCTOR

Stella never fell in love...
Had a rough time growing up...
Then she started smoking drugs...
Stella never fell in love...

Stella never went to school...
But she says that it's okay...
She never knew love at all...
She's throwing it all away...
For someone else to...

*Try and reach her heart....
Cause I tried all them times but I just can't pass...
And I heard from the ones who got caught in the dark.*

*And they tear themselves apart...
Cause they lose, the ones, they love...
Yeah, they lose, the ones, they love...*

Stella never had many friends...
Told me that it's for the best...
Stella moved out from ends...
Wanted more from life, I guess...

Stella got a call from Tash...
Cause she wanna know if she's okay...
But Stella never wanna come back...
So, she let the phone ring all day...
For someone else to...

*Try and reach her heart....
Cause she tried all them times but she just can't pass...
And she heard from the ones who got caught in the dark...
And they tear themselves apart...
Cause they lose, the ones, they love...
Yeah, they lose, the ones, they love...*

Yo, I thought the feeling would go,
I'm having paranoid visions about myself going broke,
I ain't tryna go to prison with these thoughts that I hold,
I guess based on my decisions I don't care anymore.
Walking through this place I hate the look anyway,
I don't know where to go it's like I'm just in the way,
I feel this itch in my soul, it's shown all over my face,
I've seen somebody I know; believe me nothing has
changed.

Don't know where to turn so I turn to the stage,
Then the feeling would burn because I know what it
takes,
I wanna make it in this world but this world is a fake,
When will I ever learn, huh, maybe someday...

Performing for the people who be doing the same,
Then we wonder why everybody wanna escape,
When everybody just at it, man, they wanna complain,
And then we wake up in the morning do it again...

For someone else too...





CIRCLE OF LIFE OR CYCLE OF VIOLENCE?

BY MERIUM
BHUIYAN

This piece is a mapping and culmination of the ideas and views expressed by the research participants about youth violence, knife crime and life in London. It can also be viewed as an exploration of the contrast between life and beauty and cursive calligraphy, and the ugliness of murder and pain and death.

Colours used:

Black, white and brown,
this issue affects the wider community as a whole.

Blue represents the River Thames,
dividing the capital into north and south.

Red represents blood and life and passion.

How do you feel about young people and their experiences in the city?

emotion sentence cemetery
hospital stabbing knife painful
youth judge austerity family anxious
pain prison
escalation
lottery
friends streets bleeding blood City
anguish reputation illegal Mayor life stress
solve target epidemic
jail London siren loss gang
attack rip seeing
violence blade solution rise attitude ambulance
killing fight tear statistics tough
trauma crisis weapons race murder
crime danger risk wars heartbreak anger away
danger arguments rage
fear agony service
postcode investigation guilt
threat opportunity carrying
morgue funeral
running



THE LONDON MAYORS CITIZEN LED ENGAGEMENT TEAM BY ASHA MOHAMMOUD

So, WHO ARE CURRENTLY THE INVISIBLE COMMUNITIES?

ASHA L MOHAMMOUD, 09 2019

In 2018, The Mayor's Citizen Led Project was launched with the same albeit improved objective of better bridging the communication gap between City Hall and otherwise silent communities in London. So which communities, in this instance would be seen to 'currently not have a voice' in City Hall? For this purpose, we are highlighting the perspective of the family member(s)/ relationship(s) of the assigned researchers who would otherwise not engage with City Hall.

These findings were categorised within groups of age, relationships (to the researcher), ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, London boroughs and duration of residence in London. These categories would allow for patterns and trends to be deduced from the data and then later be used as an insight to inform policy and practice in City Hall.

It is exponentially more common to be exposed to crime and violence to varying degrees and at varying levels. Two strong examples of how we collectively are exposed to the broad topic of crime and violence can be demonstrated in two branches; one may be how crime is defined internationally and the other may be an example of how crime/ or youth violence is outsourced from UK territory.



Picture Caption: Art work by Jonathon McHugh presented in the Financial Times 2018

SOCIAL INCLUSION, INTEGRATION AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT WITH UNREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES UNDER CITY HALL

For me on a slightly more personal note, my first major exposure to youth violence was when I was 14 and my 15-year-old friend was stabbed for stepping on someone's shoe. I remember it altered my view of the world and introduced me to a new kind of cynicism. In the context of crime and youth violence, I felt that this project was rather unique as it considered these themes from a place closer in proximity.

It is exponentially more common to be exposed to crime and violence to varying degrees and at varying levels. Two strong examples of how we collectively are exposed to the broad topic of crime and violence can be demonstrated in two branches; one may be how crime is defined internationally and the other may be an example of how crime/ or youth violence is outsourced from UK territory.

Just last summer I remember reading about how Brunei will issue punishments such as limb-amputation for theft, imprisonment for abortion and death by stoning for homosexual acts. I recalled reading how according to AFP news agency, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah stated "I want to see Islamic teaching in this country grow stronger and more visible" The laws in question are predicated on the strict and literal interpretation of Sharia law, particularly a category referred to as 'Huddud'. These punishments are reserved for most 'egregious sins' and must only be applied after satisfying a specific set of conditions. Other countries that have adopted Sharia law include Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran. With the exception of these aforementioned countries, homosexuality isn't legally



Picture Caption: Art work by Nathan Owen displayed at Bellingham, South London, UK, 2019

defined as a crime demonstrating how the definition of crime may vary in different contexts.

The recent case of Shamima Begum and others like her stateless after the revocation of her citizenship by Home Secretary. In such particular instances, there are increasingly traceable trends of young people leaving the UK for arguably violent causes demonstrating how crime/youth violence can be outsourced from UK territory.

However, this project allowed for unique insight into the subject of crime and youth violence and its impact on the local, smaller communities.

The research focused on the interviewee's concerns of crime rates in the city of London, if youth violence has affected their community and how they communicate or express those concerns. These research questions were designed to gauge a general approach to the broad topics of crime and youth violence however, the questions were then expanded to include their thoughts on the Mayor's response to these concerns.

My findings show that 20% of those questioned felt that the mayor of London was doing enough to tackle



Picture Caption: Street art displayed at Old Street (London) encouraging an end to knife crime.

crime in their respective communities. Interestingly, those that responded as such identified as male(s) between the ages of 46-55 and over the age of 66 years. Similarly, those holding this position also felt that lack of law enforcement was more responsible for youth violence and general crime in London rather than the Mayor's efforts.

My findings indicate that 80% of those questioned felt that the mayor of London was not doing enough to tackle crime in London or felt unsure whether his efforts in their respective communities were sufficient. There were variables within the age range but all of which expressed concerns.

Interestingly, 100% of my findings (of which identified as Muslims) were unaware of any available support (or resources) to their respective communities affected by crime or youth violence.



ME YOU AND US

BY AYESHA ABDUL-RAHEEM

when will i see peace
in my home town
in my home town
when will i not be afraid to sleep
when my brothers are out
when my brothers are out

see i pray for change
and change
will come one day
but for now I can't be idle
I have to make the change
I wanna see one day

when will i want to talk to the police
and trust they can help
and trust they can help
when will i not be mourning a friend
over a violent death
over a violent death

see you pray for change
and change
will come one day
but for now you can't be idle
you have to make the change
you wanna see one day

see we pray for change
and change
will come one day
but for now we can't be idle
we have to make the change
we wanna see one day



CAN YOU HEAR?

BY LEAH PATTEN

Can you hear the voices of our young people dying?
How all of them, without knowing, die trying.
People who haven't lived long years,
put families and loved ones in tears.
How selfish these people are, how can they
easily take someone's life is so bizarre.

Can you hear the distraught in people?
How every one of us is turning feeble.
People carrying weapons for protection,
in case of problems coming in their direction.

Living in a place where crime is normal,
how people don't see a better way to live is awful.

What can we do to change these actions?
All we need to start with, is a faction

Can you hear people crying out?
Constantly fearing and living in doubt.

Why is all this happening, we ask?
Maybe we just need to take off the masks.

It's sad to see what this country has become,
dealing with crimes we can overcome.

Things need to be put in place,
so that we can have a solid base.

Local Youth centres, counsellors and
places young people can go to,
helping them to not result to the things they do.

More attention and care towards them,
instead of them living just to be condemned.

We need to work together, as people, as family.
So that we may all live in peace and happily.

We can change it all today, marking this day as that day.



HUSH OF NIGHT

A SHORT FILM
BY AMANDO
DA COSTA AND
KATHERINE MEJIA

View at
YouPress.org.uk

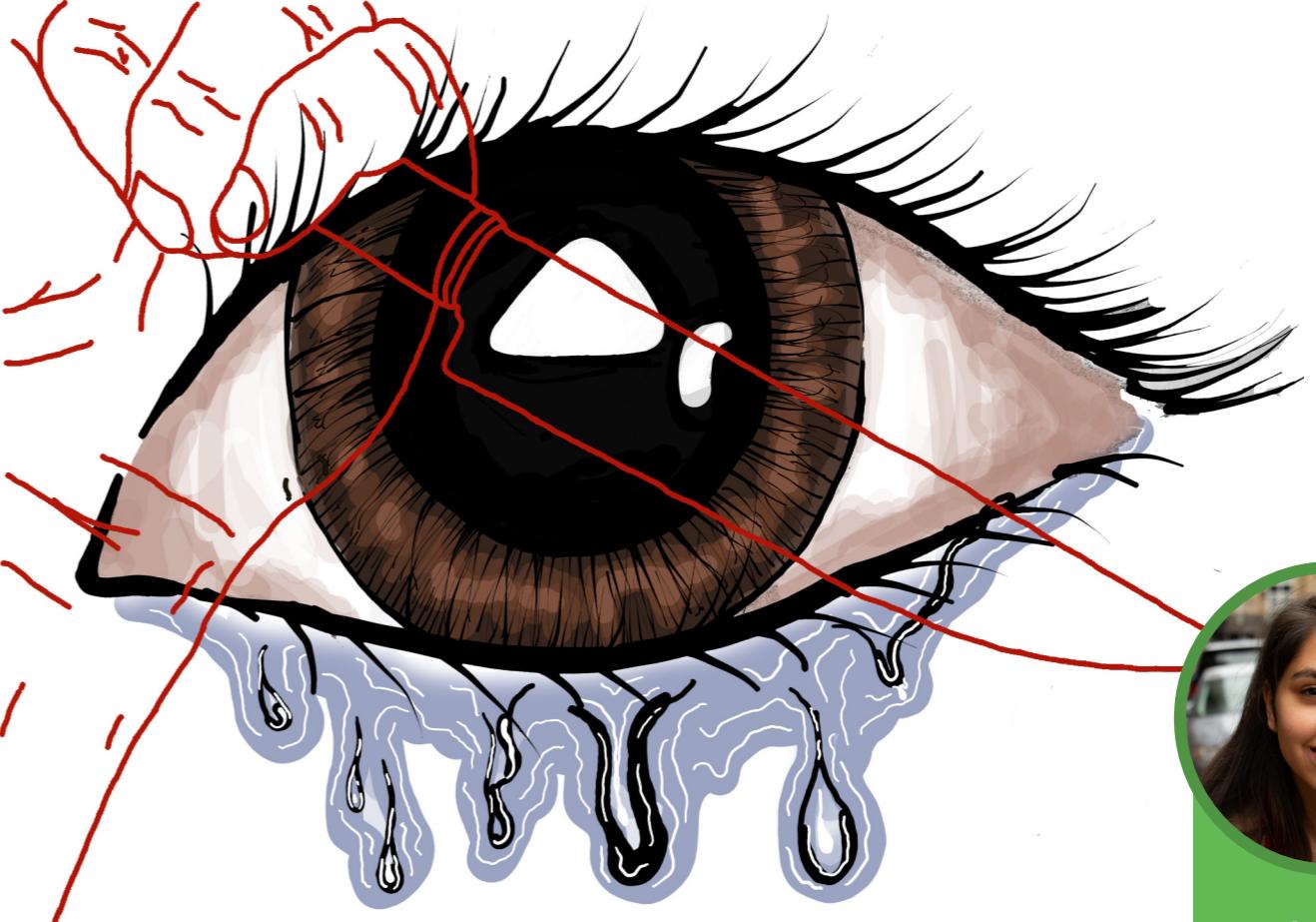
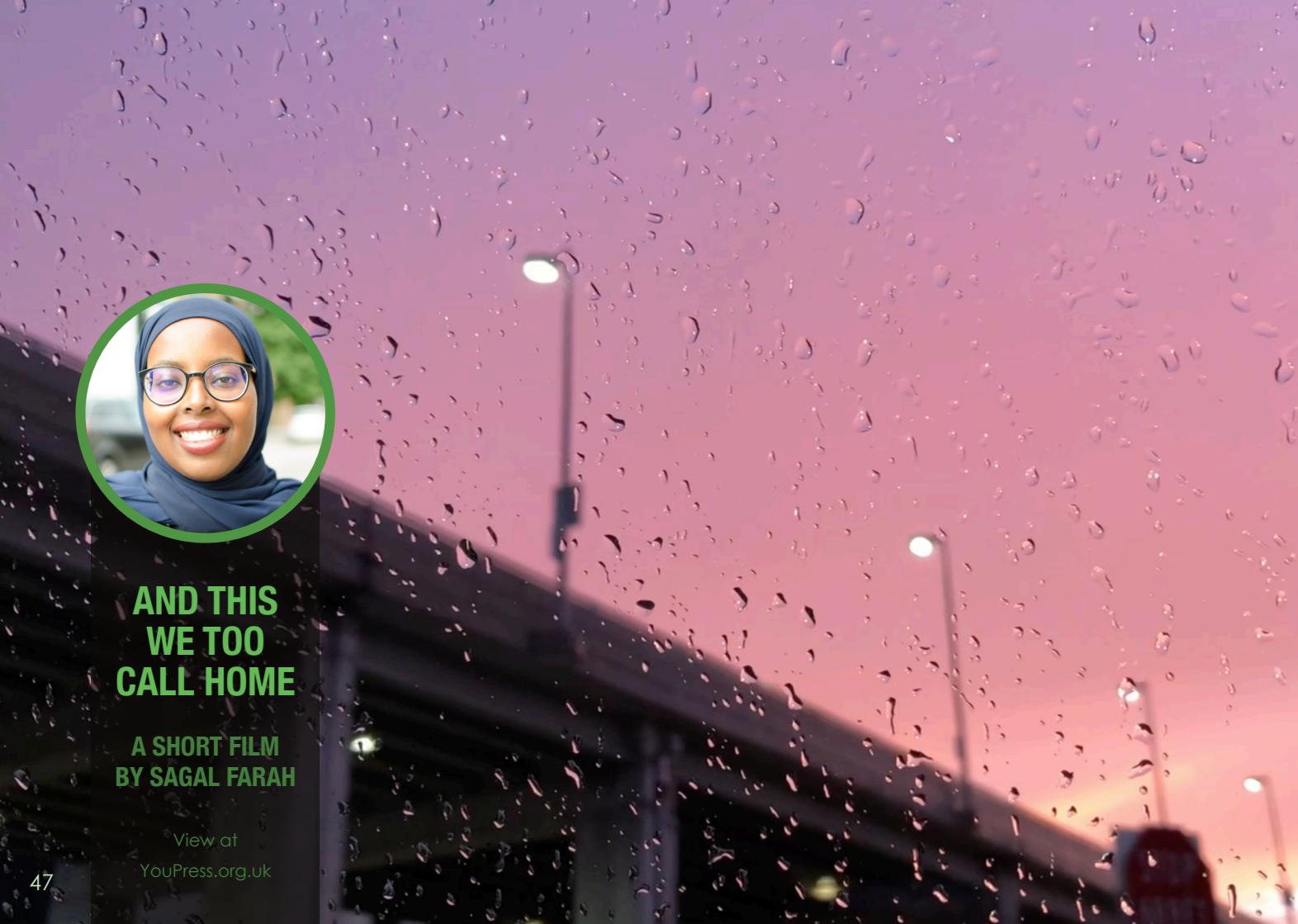




AND THIS WE TOO CALL HOME

A SHORT FILM
BY SAGAL FARAH

View at
YouPress.org.uk



ILLUSTRATION

BY
HEERAL SONIGRA

MEET THE TEAM



FARAH MOHAMMOUD
Project Manager

Farah is a passionate social entrepreneur who turned a social action campaign into an award-winning social enterprise. He has over six years of experience in training people and managing volunteers.



SAMIR SATTAR
Project Co-ordinator & Content Editor

Samir's passion for creative writing and journalism led him to become a content creator and editor at You Press. He also co-facilitates projects hosted by the organisation, helping young people to develop themselves.



KALED ABDI
Lead Data Analyst

Kaled has volunteered at You Press for the past year as a content writer and data analyst. He has recently achieved a Masters in International Business & Politics at QMUL. Kaled isn't shy in expressing his views and writes primarily on issues related to politics on ScribersHive.



LIV BARATH
Project Talent Advisor

Liv is a social media and marketing intern who joined You Press in October 2019. Her great passion for music and photography led her to working with You Press, where she gets to work with young people in the arts and develop herself professionally.



ANNA HICKMAN
Project Graphic Illustrator

Anna is a graphic designer who joined You Press in 2018. She has an interest in branding and web design and likes to take on projects that reflect social causes she feels passionate about.



CHRIS DIAS
Project Filmmaker

Chris Dias is You Press' filmmaker, leading on the project videos, films and documentaries. He has a deep interest in the natural world and human stories. His work is mostly in the visual medium, namely film and photography.



JESS BEVAN
Project Photographer

Jess is a Surrey based photographer, with a desire to capture the beauty of theatre, whether that is theatrically staged, or through someone's life and character. After taking part in amateur theatre for 12 years, Jess chose to redirect her focus to behind the scenes of the madness on stage.



MARCUS LORENTZEN
Social Media Volunteer

Marcus Lorentzen is a young driven and ambitious filmmaker/ editor, trying to create magic and memories on and off screen.

YUSSUF MOHAMED
Project Volunteer

Yussuf is an International Business & Economics student, with an appetite for communicating strategy and sustainability in businesses. Combining his desire for growth, creating opportunities and the development of young people led to You Press being the perfect host for his placement year.



JOANNA SAWKINS
Research Consultant

Joanna is a researcher and a teaching assistant at University College London (UCL), previously she worked in arts and culture. For this ROOTS project Joanna helped train the research team, running a workshop on research methods and best practice.



YOU PRESS



You Press is a Social Enterprise with the goal of using writing and the 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 to 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 the creative arts, writing and multimedia production to empower people to find their voice and be heard.

As an organisation, we pride ourselves on being



As people, we pride ourselves on being





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