

'I wasn't sure how much I would need to support the children with their decision making but I decided to step right back and follow their lead. I can see how a true pupil voice can be represented'.

Everyone listened to me



Learning in a Global Context

Creative Communities (CoCo) 2018

Evaluation Report

Sheila Tucker |  global thinking
LEARNING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

We are proud because we are helping people and making smiles on their faces.

August 2018

We are helping lonely people to make them feel like there are people with them and they are not alone – that we are with them

'There has been a change in terms of recognition of what the school council can achieve'.

'There were initial barriers but the project went on an amazing journey. I felt the children have created a legacy, so we can get even more out of the project'

Our school is having an open door to a local community where we care about everyone and feel that no one should be lonely or isolated, especially those living nearby to our school.

An evaluation of the second cycle (2017-18) of HEC Global Learning Centre's Creative Communities, A Community Cohesion (COCO) project with schools, facilitated by HEC Global Learning Centre which is based within Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services

Executive Summary, Key finding and Recommendations

This report evaluates the second year of Creative Communities - a Community Cohesion Project with Tower Hamlets Schools, funded by Tower Hamlets Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Service and facilitated by HEC Global Learning, based within the Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services. (p5) The project worked with teachers and representatives of school councils to facilitate pupils/ students learning, creative thinking and action for Equalities and Community Cohesion. It enabled small student-led action projects in partnership with local organisations. A small sum was allocated for evaluation to look at the impact on teachers and young people involved, assess the activities generated and comment on how this met equalities requirements and promoted local community cohesion. The evaluation was built in, rather than bolted on, collecting feedback from young people and teachers. It gave prominence to young people's opinions and focussed on impact, learning and sustainability of inputs and outcomes.

Summary of Key Findings:

- 75% of participating schools (12/16) completed the project. One moved to a similar project. (p7)
- At least 130 school council members were directly and actively involved in out of school training and in school planning. This varied from 5 to 20 per school. Many more took part in learning activities in schools. Some projects arising involved whole schools, parents and local communities. (p6)
- In the initial planning sessions, school council members' analysis of their local communities showed that even the youngest were aware of and concerned about a range of issues. They had plenty of ideas for solutions, and realistic assessments of barriers and how these could be overcome, demonstrated resilience and optimism in their responses (Table 1 pg 9).
- Back in schools, larger groups considered the question: 'what factors make up a good community?' Clear priorities and high consensus emerged from 14 groups that did the activity, ranking their most essential priorities as: 'a place to go when you are ill' (1st); 'hostels for the homeless' and 'a place where people are cared for' (2nd) and 'houses that most people can afford' (3rd) (Table 2 pg 11).
- School council members then devised and ran small community projects to address an issue of their choice. In July they gave confident and articulate presentations about their projects to other students, teachers and facilitators. The diversity of projects, and their passion and commitment indicated a high level of engagement. (Pp 15-17) They showed resilience in learning from less successful aspects and were keen to improve their ideas and continue their projects. (Table 3 p19)
- For the teachers supporting these projects in schools, the role was to facilitate (rather than lead) their school council representatives in working with their peers to enable student-led action and also to support complementary learning around equalities and community cohesion. This presented some challenges, but as the students grew in confidence, so did the teachers and most judged that they had allowed the projects to be pupil-led. (Table 4.p23 and p24)
- Additional challenges for teachers included lack of time, varying support from SLTs, being the only secondary school, finding suitable community partners and getting the wider school / parents on board. More support in these areas would be welcomed. (p25)
- Rewards seemed to far outweigh the challenges, with teachers surprised and delighted at the responses from their students and the range of skills and capacities they saw them developing through the project. These include adaptability, awareness, flexibility, initiative, commitment, resilience, planning, keenness, engagement, concern, problem solving, partnership working, communication skills, wanting to make a difference, maturity, capability, confidence at public speaking to different audiences, listening to and valuing opinion of each other, understanding local issues and applying knowledge to the wider world. (p25-26)
- Teachers were appreciative of the support they had been given, but cited the constraints of time and capacity and lack of enthusiastic support from some SLTs. In spite of these constraints, the project had had significant impacts on those involved – on young people's learning and capacity and willingness to take action, on teachers' ability to facilitate peer-peer learning, student voice and student-led action, and on

creating 12 small outreach projects that involved and improved life for sectors of the local community. (p25-27)

- Teachers felt that with additional/ ongoing support both internally from SLTs and externally from HEC/ Tower Hamlets, this Community Cohesion work could be sustained and the benefits extended to more pupils/ students. They would welcome assistance in finding Community Partners and extra resources to involve all active participants in training and celebration events. (p26)
- Of the 12 schools, 5 hoped to continue and 7 definitely planned to continue with this type of work on Community Cohesion, but could not guarantee to be able to do so, given the constraints of time and curriculum and the fact that they were dependent on SLT and external support, and did not know what their teaching responsibilities would be during the next academic year. (p27)

Summary of Conclusions and recommendations:

Feedback from pupils/ students involved and facilitating teachers, discussed in detail below, provides ample evidence to support that fact that this project met Equalities objectives and had a significant impact on the teachers and pupils involved, most notably on in terms of:

- Fostering good relations between people from different groups
- Strengthening cohesion = coordinated and joined ways of working
- Building community leadership and personal responsibility = empowering staff and residents

This evaluation concludes that the project met and embodied the spirit of Equalities requirements.

For those young people directly involved, the learning appears significant – not just about their own communities but about their abilities to change things and influence others to do so. There is depth and breadth to these young people’s articulation of their learning and how they translated this into action to address issues and promote Community Cohesion. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Creative Communities project has had a significant impact on the pupils and students who participated. The funders and facilitators (including the Teachers) can claim a fair portion of credit for this, but the real stars are the young people themselves.

The young people’s thoughtful and sophisticated engagement showed that this project nurtured positive feelings towards their communities as well as raising awareness of issues that need to be addressed. When asked to think of ways in which their communities could be improved, the young people did not just focus on problems and issues, but also on community actions, positive behaviours and community action to address these. This indicates that they are seeing themselves as engaged and proactive citizens, who can be part of the solutions. Future projects should ensure that there is a similar balance and positivity around community engagement by young people.

The next challenge is how to sustain and spread this impact beyond these extremely committed groups. To ensure wider, deeper and more sustained impact requires additional resources and capacity.

Additional support in the form of raising the profile of this approach and the positive outcomes to SLTs; providing help in finding community partners and partner schools; and enabling more school council members to be in the direct planning and implementation of projects would be beneficial.

Thought should be given to what enabled schools to join up or led them to drop out of this project. Changes might be needed in order to engage and support more secondary schools in taking part. It would be useful to evaluate the impact/ constraints on existing and potential Community Partners.

There was 100% interest from current teachers, and most students, for continued engagement. There is a momentum to be built on and some schools were participating for the second year. Some projects had great potential for growth and continuity and the first two waves of schools could play a mentoring role for new schools joining future projects.

Creative Communities Project (2017-18) Evaluation Report - August 2018

**Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you,
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.**

Kahlil Gibran *The Prophet* (1923) Published by Alfred A. Knopf

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Creative Communities Project (2017-18) Evaluation Report

'We live side by side, every day, yet we may not engage meaningfully with those outside our immediate circle of family and friends. How can schools turn some of these fleeting interactions into sustainable connections, to foster respect, understanding and eventually, celebrate diversity? These are the questions we wanted to explore through this Community Cohesion project.'

HEC Global Learning Centre 2017

Background:

This report presents an evaluation of the second cycle (2017-18) of 'Creative Communities': a Community Cohesion (COCO) project with schools, facilitated by HEC Global Learning Centre which is based within Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services. The project was funded, for the second year running, by Tower Hamlets Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Service in line with their objective to 'Work more closely with young people and schools in looking at cohesion issues and addressing these through school projects, youth centres and community organisations'.

The initial project (2016-17) pioneered ways to achieve this, providing valuable learning which was published in a handbook for school students¹. This set out a process to help students on school councils to devise and run small community projects in partnership with local organisations. The handbook provides supporting material for teachers to enable complementary learning around UN Sustainable Development Goals, Children's Rights and British Values. It includes case studies of the community projects devised by some of the 7 schools that participated throughout the project:

'The participating teachers honed their skills at facilitating student-led learning and supporting and empowering students to take responsible action. The students, already participating in school councils, were encouraged and supported to consider what issues there may be in their local communities. Once an issue was selected, they sought and developed partnerships with a community group or organisation whose mission it is to address these issues. The resulting actions were both impressive and meaningful... Through a series of training events both teachers and students were provided with tools to pursue local actions that engaged their community, through the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals².' Creative Communities Project 2016-17

In 2017/18, HEC Global Learning Centre was contracted to replicate and extend the project to involve more school councils in developing community projects; to showcase these and provide additional materials that will help develop thinking tools, and to raise awareness and understanding amongst young people around issues of community cohesion, equality and hate crime. A small sum was set aside for independent evaluation to:

- evaluate the impact the project on the pupils, teachers and the wider communities
- report on the quality of project delivery by the facilitators
- ensure that the project met equalities requirements

Scope and limitations of this project and of the evaluation: This was a small project with high aspirations, supported by an external facilitator with limited access to students and teachers. For the schools, this entails walking a tightrope to balance the demands of the curriculum on teacher and student time against the incalculable value of enabling students to develop a voice, and realise their capacity for action and critical and creative approaches to recognising and addressing issues in their local and global

¹ 'Creative Communities - Every Child Cares: A Student Handbook for Community Cohesion' by Manju Patel-Nair and Linda Ramirez Barker, HEC Global Learning Centre, 2017

² <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

communities. The project was therefore heavily dependent on the goodwill of individual teachers and school leaders to support an extra-mural activity, that additionally required the skill set of facilitating student voice and student-led action. A very slight change in circumstances or staffing can make it necessary for schools to withdraw or reduce their commitment, so a high level of flexibility and sustained support was required by the project facilitators throughout. For the 12 schools that participated fully in this project this represents a considerable investment and commitment to the outcomes.

Within this context, evaluation becomes the art of the possible – to collect meaningful, current, longitudinal information, whilst keeping it proportional to the scale of the project and the level of accessibility. Attitudinal change is notoriously hard to capture and measure and cannot be accurately recorded in retrospect. To record how the students and teachers progressed through a project and how it impacted on them as thinkers, teachers, learners and members of a community it was decided that, at each stage, small amounts of information would be collected directly from the teachers and students, to give a sense of how they were feeling and acting over time. Activities were identified and questionnaires developed to facilitate this. The capacities, context and starting points of each school varied, so it is only appropriate to consider relative rather than absolute progress.

The evaluation plan:

This evaluation considers three aspects:

-  **Impact**
-  **Learning**
-  **Sustainability**

Key indicators of success for this project were identified as:

- The **number of schools** joining /remaining involved (including returners from 2016-17)
- The **impact on students** – through observing and recording the ways in which students’ thinking, capacity and actions developed over the year. As this is a project about student voice it is fitting that the students were asked to speak for themselves about this.
- The **impact on teachers** – recorded through periodic self-assessment of how they felt about their facilitation / support roles
- The **range and creativity of community partnerships and projects** aspired towards /arising; including plans for future activity
- **New materials and case studies** available for future projects
- The **dissemination** of the projects’ processes and achievements
- The **post-project thoughts** of the facilitating organisation
- The **quality of the project delivery** and how well the project **met Equalities requirements**

Evaluation Tools: The evaluation was built in rather than bolted on. In collecting data to report on the indicators above the evaluator drew on a number of sources³ and resources to develop evaluation materials, including research into pupil voice, published online by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner, Equalities materials from Tower Hamlets, Parliament Education Service materials on Diversity, Equalities and the Law in the UK, and UNICEF’s paper on Children’s participation from tokenism to Citizenship.

³ <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/100-childrens-participation-from-tokenism-to-citizenship.html>
www.parliament.uk/education Diversity equality and the Law in the UK
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Creative Communities Community Cohesion (COCO) Project 2017-2018:

➤ Facilitation, Logistics and Planning:

The project was facilitated by HEC Global Learning, and was marketed to local schools by HEC as follow:

Following on from last year's successful project, we are running the Community Cohesion project once again this year. The project is completely free to your school. The project will involve training the students to run a manageable community cohesion project, with help from us. They would pick the issue they would like to work on and then build a project around this in partnership with a local community partner. The teacher would facilitate the project at the school and be our main contact but students would lead on the actions. Each training session will support them with their project and outline how to get to the next step. Once you make a start, our trainer, will also come into your school for a meeting with the student group to help them with project planning. There will be 3-4 afternoons of training at Tower Hamlets PDC for student council reps or other student groups and their teacher across the year. The first session will take place on Nov 16th 2017, 1:30pm-3pm at Tower Hamlets PDC and is for teachers only. Subsequent training sessions will also include the students. In July 2018 we will host a Celebration Event for all schools to showcase their work. Last year's school projects included: Homelessness, Community Literacy and Affordable Housing. Schools will be supported throughout to develop their projects.

The facilitator and the HEC team fulfilled this timetable of support and training for the teachers, school councils and pupils both in and out of school in accordance with this plan.

As well as face-to-face support and training sessions, teachers and school councils were provided with supporting activities and training materials to help them to engage with concepts of equality, diversity, engage with community issues, choose a project and put it into action. For the project facilitator one of the greatest challenges was:

'..having to chase teachers for paperwork and updates. They were very committed but overloaded with timetable commitments. Some found reaching out to community partners challenging at times but they were persistent! The teachers I worked with were inspiring, the way they juggled all their responsibilities and still made sure the project got the time it needed.'

➤ Numbers of schools participating:

At the start of the year 16 schools signed up to participate, of which 12 completed the whole year, including one secondary school and 11 primary schools. Three of these schools had taken part in the first cycle of the project, one of which left to become part of another project run by HEC Global Learning. By comparison, in the first year, 14 schools joined and 7 completed the year.

Some falling by the wayside was to be expected (as discussed above) so the fact that 75% of participating schools stayed the course is both a positive indicator of success and of a considerable feat of coordination by the project facilitator.

A: The Pupils/ Students

- **The numbers of school council pupils /students directly** involved were variously 5, 7, 8, 8, 10, 10, 18, 20, 20, and 20. Smaller numbers participated in the PDC training events, including the presentation and celebration days. In some schools, wider project activities involved up to 90 children, parents, whole school activities, a partner school, the local community, local councillors, community groups.

There was clearly some disappointment amongst the students that, because of school time and project budget constraints, not all who were very involved in the planning could attend the out of school sessions, particularly the celebration day.

- **Pupils / Students on Students Councils at the heart of the project:**
Teachers played an invaluable role in facilitating, sustaining and motivating the Creative Communities projects but observing the role and enthusiasm amongst the students it is clear that they themselves are the stars of this show.
- **The evaluation has tried to give them a genuine and prominent voice:**
The voice of the students is included through **four evaluation activities**. The first two activities are derived from the Parliamentary Education Service Activities Diversity, Equalities and the Law in the UK⁴ At their first teacher and student training day the students were given an activity to complete to 'benchmark' their thoughts about their local communities.

Students then did an activity called 'What makes a good a Community?'⁵ - sourced from 'How do we know it's working?' a toolkit of resources to measure attitudinal change developed by RISC with European Partners including HEC Global Learning. In this project the lead was taken by school council members, who, when possible, cascaded their ideas and activities to other school students. This activity was then shared with other school council members and in some schools with whole classes. In an ideal world this activity would have been repeated at the end of the project but time and capacity did not allow for this.

Further evidence of student voice was captured in transcripts of verbal presentations and posters to other schools and teachers about their school's project and a questionnaire completed by 22 school council members from 12 schools attending the final training and presentation day at the PDC.

- **Student Activity I: Thoughts about their local Communities**

At the first joint teacher student council PDC training day students were asked on a scale of one (not at all) to 10 (very)

- a. How equal is your local area for all the different people living there?
- b. How fair is your local area for all the people living there?

This was a discussion activity so responses are from small groups, not individuals. As shown in **Table 1**, below, most respondents 7/16 scored their communities as 5/10 for equality 4 gave 6/10 and 3 7/10. There was a wider spread of scores for levels of fairness. Homelessness, housing, racism, loneliness and inequality were common themes cited.

These young people clearly observed people who lacked access to these things within their own communities and considered this unfair and a sign of inequality.

⁴ Students Activities 1 and 2 were adapted from Parliamentary Education Service Opening and Closing Activities 'Diversity, Equality and the Law' in the UK www.parliament.uk/education

⁵ <http://toolkit.risc.org.uk/collection/what-makes-a-good-community/> A toolkit of activities to measure attitudinal change

Table 1: Student Activity 1 - Thoughts about their local communities

How <u>equal</u> is your local area for all the different people living there? 1 = very unequal to 10 = very equal		How <u>fair</u> is your local area for all the people living there? 1 = very unfair to 10 = very fair	
Number of respondents who chose that score and comments			
1	0	0	
2	0	2	Homeless people don't have shelter. People don't have choices. They are lonely and no one talks to them. We think the local area isn't fair to the different people. Some of us have experienced racism
3	0	1	Homeless people don't have houses. Some people ask for money even if they have some. Some people might starve to death because they have no food. People don't have education like we do
4	1	3	There are lots of homeless people
5	7	2	We have homeless people and it isn't fair to them No there are many injustices locally Some people don't care about the homeless, so that's not fair
6	4	4	Some people still do things they shouldn't Some people charge more for those whom they deem to be rich and less for those who they deem poor.
7	3	3	Kids are getting good education Not everyone is treated fairly
8	1	2	We think it's fair Everyone is always included. All people have the same rights

➤ Student Activity 2: Deeper Engagement with Community Issues

Students were then asked to share thoughts about their local communities from four aspects:

1. Problems: What makes our local community/area unequal/unjust?
2. Solutions: What might help this? How could this solution be put into place?
3. Obstacles: What barriers might there be to overcome this?
4. Evaluation: To what extent could this be overcome?

This activity showed that even the youngest of students were aware of and concerned about issues in their local communities. Issues cited included:

Old people being sad, lonely and isolated; poverty and homelessness; unemployment, high house prices, crime, pollution, antisocial behaviour, lack of jobs; low wages, discrimination, litter, health care; people not being listened to; lack of care for others; disagreements and different beliefs; lack of access to good education; bullying; lack of recycling facilities; racism; graffiti; inequality of pay (men and women) and home ownership; road safety; high taxes; finding places to park; antisocial driving.

Along with awareness of plenty of issues the students also had plenty of ideas for solutions, and some realistic assessments of barriers and how these could be overcome.

Visiting the elderly, free skills training, job creation, affordable housing, provide homeless shelters, tree planting, electric cars, food banks, raising awareness, newsletters, adverts, facts, working with charities, persuasion, education, grow vegetable, pick up litter, campaigning against homelessness, turn off car engines, write to your MP, parents and pupils work together, equal pay, pedestrian zones, promoting all religions as equal, don't blame other religions for problems, anti bullying strategies and councillors, less tax and more income, free education for all, ban zero hours contracts and pay the national minimum living wages.

The format worked well at eliciting thoughts from students and getting them to think constructively about obstacles and solutions. Overall students showed resilience and optimism in their solutions:

'Start new actions for future generations'

'It will take time but we can overcome this'

➤ **Student Activity 3: What makes a good Community? ⁶**

This whole groups/whole class activity can be adapted in several ways and pitched at different age groups. It stimulates discussion and decision making, using 31 subtitled images of aspects of community life. Students are asked to consider the images according to their view of which are essential, important or not important to a good community. The images are placed in position on a large sheet of paper with a target drawn on showing 'essential' as the centre circle, then 'important' and 'not important' on the outer circles. Students can explain their reasons for their placements, discuss, debate and change them around until consensus (or agreement to differ) is reached. The discussions are documented by the teacher and the final positions photographed. The activity can be used as a before and after evaluation tool.

⁶ <http://toolkit.risc.org.uk/collection/what-makes-a-good-community/> A toolkit of activities to measure attitudinal change
HEC Global Learning Centre | Creative Communities Community Cohesion (COCO) Project 2018
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Table 2: Student Activity 3

What is essential/ most important/ not important for a good community?

Results from 14 groups of pupils' discussions representing 13 schools

- One school did the task with two groups.
- Not every card was used every time so numbers do not necessarily add up to 14

Card number	Theme/ image of card	What is Essential (no)	What is Important	Essential + Important (no)	Not Important	Essential (%)	Essential + Important (%)	Not important (%)	Essential Rank	Essential + important Rank	Not important Rank
5	A place to go when you are ill	12	0	12	0	86	86	0	1	3	8
3	Hostels for the homeless	11	1	12	0	79	86	0	2	3	8
4	A place where people are cared for	11	2	13	0	79	93	0	2	2	8
2	Houses that most people can afford	10	4	14	0	71	100	0	3	1	8
13	A place where the police treat everyone fairly	9	3	12	0	64	86	0	4	3	8
16		9	3	12	1	64	86	7	4	3	7
24	Local shops	9	2	11	2	64	79	14	4	4	6
25	A place where criminals are put into prison	9	1	10	0	64	71	0	4	5	8
	A place where prisoners are helped to stop committing crimes										
7	School that welcomes everyone	8	3	11	0	57	79	0	5	4	8
23	A place where green spaces are looked after	8	4	12	2	57	86	14	5	3	6
27	Nuclear energy	8	2	10	5	57	71	36	5	5	3
28	Energy from renewable sources	8	2	10	0	57	71	0	5	5	8
29	People are encouraged to recycle	8	3	11	0	57	79	0	5	4	8
18	A place where people can grow their own food	7	4	11	1	50	79	7	6	4	7
19	Plenty of safe spaces to play	7	4	11	0	50	79	0	6	4	8
10	Good roads	6	4	10	2	43	71	14	7	5	6
12	Safe spaces to cycle and walk	6	5	11	0	43	79	0	7	4	8
21	Somewhere to practice your religion	6	3	9	1	43	64	7	7	6	7
14	A place where adults can vote	5	4	9	1	36	64	7	8	6	8
15	A place where everyone is asked for their opinion	5	6	11	0	36	79	0	8	4	9
9	A school with good results	4	7	11	2	29	79	14	9	4	6
20	A shopping centre	4	5	9	3	29	64	21	9	6	5
30	People are expected to reuse plastic bags	4	5	9	2	29	64	14	9	6	6
11	Good public transport	3	7	10	1	21	71	71	10	5	7
17	A big supermarket	3	4	7	7	21	50	50	10	7	2
26	Energy from fossil fuels	3	4	7	7	21	50	50	10	7	2
31	Waste is take to landfill sites	3	4	7	2	21	50	14	10	7	6
6	Health Care for those that can afford it	1	3	10	4	7	71	29	11	5	4
8	A school with the best resources	1	5	6	5	7	43	36	11	8	3
22	A place to meet and celebrate	0	5	5	3	0	36	21	12	9	5
1	Expensive houses	0	0	0	9	0	0	64	12	10	1

Students' comments are listed below against each Community Theme

Comments made by pupils during discussions (listed according to their rank as 'Essential' for a good community 1=highest ranked)

1	A place to go when you are ill	<p>'We must have medical care. It is very important.'</p> <p>'It is essential because some people may get so ill they need to be cared for...they could even die!'</p> <p>'We are all lucky to have free health care.'</p>
2	Hostels for the homeless A place where people are cared for	<p>'It is important that there is hostel for homeless because they need a place to live.'</p> <p>'There should always be a place for the homeless to go.'</p> <p>'This is essential. There are lots of people who are homeless around here so they would have a place (if there were more shelters) to sleep and not be homeless anymore.'</p> <p>'If people don't have a lot of money there should be a safe place where they can go.'</p> <p>'It is important to have a place where people are cared for because some people are vulnerable and can't do things by themselves.'</p> <p>'Looking after everyone in our community - young or old'</p>
3	Houses that most people can afford	<p>'It's important to have a house but if you spend all your money on a house you might not have enough for food!'</p> <p>'If someone doesn't have a house they will get wet and ill'</p>
4	A place where the police treat everyone fairly Local shops A place where criminals are put into prison A place where prisoners are helped to stop committing crimes	<p>'Being in a safe environment is most important. Increasing the number of police officers would help to stop crime and ensure safety.'</p> <p>'It is important for police to treat everyone fairly in the community because they are just police and nobody special.'</p> <p>'Everyone deserves to be treated fairly in order to have a good community.'</p> <p>'Security cameras could keep us safe.'</p> <p>'Keeping our streets safe is really important so we can feel safe when we go out to the shops or play.'</p> <p>'Sometimes we need to quickly get something and local shops are perfect.'</p> <p>'It's important we have local shops - we need to get our groceries and shopping from it instead of walking miles to another shop.'</p> <p>'Both the prisoner and public are safe'</p> <p>'If a criminal is still doing bad things and there's no place for them to go they might still do it.'</p> <p>'This is essential because bad things might happen like murders or bank robberies. If we have a place for criminals we might have less murders and bank robberies.'</p> <p>'Having a place to put criminals but also helping some realise what they done wrong and getting them back into the community'</p> <p>'If we teach criminals they can learn from their mistake and put it right. Give them a chance even if they might do it again.'</p> <p>'Criminals can change'</p> <p>'This will help our community feel safer'</p>
5	School that welcomes everyone A place where green spaces are looked after Nuclear energy Energy from renewable sources People are encouraged to recycle	<p>'Having a school that welcomes everyone rather than good resources'</p> <p>'I think that a school should welcome everyone otherwise people will be left out and they might do bad things.'</p> <p>'A school that welcomes everyone Essential because (otherwise?) no one will be happy.'</p> <p>'We have to have clean air so we should plant trees for oxygen.'</p> <p>'People who don't have a home could come and spend time in the park.'</p> <p>'Trees help the planet as they create oxygen and also walking in parks makes you feel calm.'</p> <p>'I love my local park it's my favourite place.'</p> <p>Nuclear energy? Why? It's soo evil!'</p> <p>'If there are lots of cars the steam might get in people's mouths and they will cough.'</p> <p>'If people don't recycle more, then we will run out of room in the landfills and that will mean more pollution to the environment.'</p> <p>'Parents don't recycle because there are no bins in his area. This means that the council don't care so why should (my) parents.'</p> <p>'Do we recycle in school?'</p>

6	<p>A place where people can grow their own food</p> <p>Plenty of safe spaces to play</p>	<p>'People should grow their own food then it won't cost any money.'</p> <p>'A place where people can grow their own food would be good for sustainability.'</p> <p>'Plenty of safe places to play – Important because children need a safe place to play, not just in school.'</p> <p>'There needs to be plenty of safe places to play as well as good schools.'</p> <p>'A park is important so everyone can play.'</p>
7	<p>Good roads</p> <p>Safe spaces to cycle and walk</p> <p>Somewhere to practice your religion</p>	<p>It is important to have good roads because it will help with future traffic.</p> <p>Roads are dangerous so there should be cycle lanes' '</p> <p>'Children will make new friends there {a place to meet and celebrate} and they will be happy. It's good to be happy so but I still think it's less important than the church.'</p>
8	<p>A place where adults can vote</p> <p>A place where everyone is asked for their opinion</p>	<p>It is important that adults have a place to vote because everyone needs an opinion.</p> <p>'Everyone should be allowed to vote, not just adults!'</p>
9	<p>A school with good results</p> <p>A shopping centre</p> <p>People are expected to reuse plastic bags</p>	<p>'It is not important for a school to have the best resources because you won't get a prize for it.'</p> <p>'I think a school with good resources is really important. Children need good resources to learn.'</p> <p>'A school with the best resources – 'Not important because it's not all about having the best things all the time.'</p> <p>'Even with limited resources, a student can do well.'</p> <p>'It's not nice that birds and other animals are suffocating and getting stuck in bags that are thrown into the ocean'</p> <p>'This is important to prevent pollution in our seas and try and do our bit for the environment'</p> <p>'Important because they are doing harm to the environment if we don't.'</p>
10	<p>Good public transport</p> <p>A big supermarket</p> <p>Energy from fossil fuels</p> <p>Waste is take to landfill sites</p>	<p>'A big supermarket is not important - it doesn't matter how big the supermarket is and it most likely has food like other local shops.'</p> <p>'Big supermarkets are not important – as long as we have small local shops to go to.'</p> <p>Energy from fossil fuels – 'Not important because they are polluting the air'</p> <p>'I don't think where our rubbish goes is very important.'</p> <p>'We need to throw rubbish somewhere.'</p> <p>'It is essential that waste is taken to landfill sites because it will pollute the Earth.'</p>
11	<p>Health Care for those that can afford it</p> <p>A school with the best resources</p>	<p>'Good schools are important- children deserve a good education'</p>
12	<p>A place to meet and celebrate</p> <p>Expensive houses</p>	<p>'This is important so they can meet new friends.'</p> <p>'Expensive homes are not important because big homes are just big.'</p> <p>'Unfair on those who can't afford them' 'Expensive houses cost a lot of money so we shouldn't have too many.'</p>

Table 3 above shows the result from 14 groups who did this activity, including how they prioritised each theme and their comments. Very clear priorities and high consensus emerged from the 14 groups. The highest ranked theme as 'essential' to a good community was 'a place to go when you are ill' followed by 'hostels for the homeless' and 'a place where people are cared for' (2nd most essential) and 'houses that most people can afford' (3rd most essential). These positions changed slightly when 'essential' and 'important' rankings were added together. Teachers gave very detailed feedback on this activity and how the students responded (Appendix 1) indicating that this activity was effective and was very impactful.

A place to celebrate and meet people; 'This is important so they can meet new friends.' (Y1 pupil)

'Trees help the planet as they create oxygen and also walking in parks makes you feel calm.' (Y4 pupil)

Helping people in prison not commit crimes again – 'This will help our community feel safer' (Y4 pupil)

Re using plastic bags – 'This is important to prevent pollution in our seas and try and do our bit for the environment' (Y 6 pupil)

'From doing the audit, I have learnt that there are many things needed to have a good community.' KS3 Student

'I think equality makes a good environment. People need to live equally for there to be peace and respect.' KS3 Student

'We ran this activity with our KSI school councillors aged between 5 and 7. The children passionately debated each area with some disagreements. However, they always found a way to compromise.' KSI Teacher

'They did very well and there was some excellent discussion around some of the pictures.' KS2 Primary Teacher

'The students felt that sustainability and recycling were an important part of a good community. This is because people should take responsibility for protecting their environment. There was some debate regarding police and whether more police would solve the problem of crime or if other solutions were needed to get to the root cause of crime. Students agreed that care for the most vulnerable, such as the elderly, homeless and the ill was very important.' KS3 Teacher

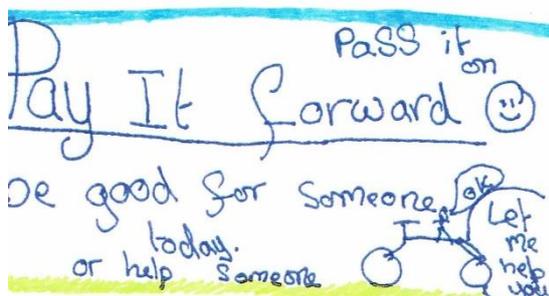
➤ Creative Communities: The 12 Projects devised and run by students⁷

In July representatives from the 12 school councils involved attended a presenting and sharing event at the PDC. They gave confident and articulate presentations about their project to the other students, teachers and facilitators. There seems to be no better way to summarise each project than in the words of the students who designed and implemented them.

Primary:

- ❖ **Project Golden Age: (KSI)** The things we do in the project is colouring, drawing, doing puzzles and playing on the magical table⁸, A place where elderly people go and each class in our school go there every Friday to play with the elderly people. Usually on Friday we have our golden time but some people give up their golden time and spend it with the elderly people ...We started to bring parents who come as well. We were also on the news... (SKY)
- ❖ **Choir for the elderly:** We asked residents of the local care home how we could collaborate and they told us they loved to sing. The project is about bringing older and younger members of the community together. I was one of the choir members, the volunteers for the project. I enjoyed finding out about their times - one of their children was in WW2. I asked lots of questions. We want to keep collaborating with the residents. Choir are planning more visits and making a blog to share with them – we have made lots of new friends and invited them to our performances at school.

- ❖ **Community of Kindness and pay it forward** Our project is called the Community of Kindness and it is about making the community of kindness name for people being kinder to each other. We have thought of the idea of 'pay it forward' which is about when you do something kind for someone and you don't expect anything in return, but hoping they will do something kind for someone else. We have made these tickets for if you are kind to



someone and you give one to them and say be kind to someone else, they will pass it on – it creates a chain reaction. So far a lot of people in our school such as children in the class were struggling and the teachers don't really help that much because they were struggling to help other children and now lots of children are helping other students in their classrooms. Because of all the kindness we have done we have become kindness champions. We made these badges that show we are kindness champions... The next step is that we would like to go to local shops in Brick Lane and hand them out to the shopkeepers and we will ask them if you see any acts of 'pay it forward', or you can pay it forward, to give the tickets to them. And we would also like to go to big stores such Asda and Tesco and have a big space and we are going to perform a little play of pay it forward and at the end we will give pay it forward tickets. After we feel a little bit recovered we will be looking around ...

- ❖ Our project is called **Family Friday Fitness**. Every Friday morning families are invited to school to do some exercise and improve their fitness. We chose this project because we found out that obesity and unhealthy lifestyles is a problem in Tower Hamlets and we wanted to help. Another reason for choosing this project is because when we sent out surveys to parents, children and staff and they said that they wanted to bring the community together. To promote our project we sent letters out to all families in the school. We also spoke in assembly and made posters. Our head teacher included our project in the newsletter and we sent text message reminders. We are really proud of the fact that lots of school council members have come in to school to run the project and families are enjoying the project. Families can take part in a range of activities including

⁷ <http://www.globallearninglondon.org/training-focus/current-projects/one-community-one-heart/>

⁸ Magic table is an i-pad that projects on to the table you can play games on it – research showed that the residents played more games when the children were there.

basketball, football cricket and one to one dance. One of the problems we have faced is the numbers of families taking part - currently it is Ramadan and the number of people taking part has dropped. We have decided to take a break until after Eid. At the end of the project we intend to give certificates to families that have taken part or made a special effort on the project. We hope to continue our project next year and that we can make it even better.

- ❖ I would like to talk to you about a project that our school council have come up with. I thought with many other school council members that '**Safer Schools**' would be good. Between our road we have two schools - we have worked together with them together to try to make the road there and around it much safer. We wanted to link both schools together because we haven't done much with them even though they have been available. We have identified the road as being dangerous and would like to focus on it and make it safer. We are planning the school travel plan. This will be better for us. We think that much too many people are using cars. It makes it dangerous to cross the road and makes the area our school polluted. The school travel ambassadors in our school had an assembly about the work we have been doing. Thinking about how we can go on our bikes to school more and make the world a better place. We have already had one successful meeting with (the other school) Soon we will be working together with them to make the roads all over London (or trying to at least) safe. We think that for us it would be best to go to the local councillor and have a meeting with them in with both school councils in both schools to try to see if we can get anything arranged. We are going to have a poster competition in both schools reminding the people not to park in yellow lines, encouraging safe and fair use of the roads.
- ❖ **Stop Plastic Pollution:** We have sent out questionnaires and they were about what are the problems with our local community. We found out that plastic is not being recycled. We went in a big group thinking about what we could do. We could help with our own school. On Friday 4 May we got lots of buckets and filled them up we went in a big line and we passed them along a big line to see how it felt for others who had to do this. We collected bottles to build a sculpture. We are going to recycle all the water bottles in school.
- ❖ **Interconnection** Our school is having an open door to a local community where we care about everyone and feel that no one should be lonely or isolated, especially those living nearby to our school. Our project is about creating friendship between people - creating an atmosphere of fun, laughter and creativity to bring our community together. The school council is speaking with parents, carers and community members about the work our COCO project. We have been building relationships with the elderly residents at our local care home. Literacy was the focus for our project. Coffee mornings have been taking place. The problem is we haven't had much interest from people locally. Even parents can be lonely and isolated too. We plan to create a big talent show that showcases talents and abilities of our children one evening in July. Food and drink will be available. Special invitations will be sent to local to our community and attendants of our coffee mornings. For the next year we already know how we are going to improve our initial foundations. Advertising locally and contacting local charities. We are reorganising our school council to develop it so pupils will have a big impact on the project as there will be more people to work on our project.
- ❖ **Cleaner Living:** It is about encouraging our community to up cycle the household objects rather than throwing them away or dumping them illegally. In our community there is a lot of fly tipping in our area and we wanted to share ideas on how to prevent it happening. We carried out a survey with parents who also raised concerns about fly tipping in our area and wanted something to be done. We invited school councillors who are members along to a coffee morning to share with them ways of up cycling ways household products. For example you could turn a fridge into a storage unit for boxing gear. Old toys could be used for a tooth brush holder; you can even turn a mug into a plant pot or a baking tray into a notice board. Our next stop is to organise a workshop at our local community to share out tips on up cycling.... we are setting up a stall at our school summer fete where you can buy a plant in old pots we are collecting. We hope we will continue to carry on with up cycling.
- ❖ **Helping the Homeless:** Our project is about helping the homeless people in our community. We also want to build a good relationship with organisations that help people and make them feel part of our community. Our initial plan was to cook and prepare a variety of food, sandwiches, salad etc but unfortunately because of safety

reasons we are not able to do this, so instead we will be asking our school community to donate food for sharing. On 5th June Whitechapel Director is coming to our school to help us and work with us on 23rd June he is coming to collect our things. We had 2 assemblies. We are proud because we are helping people and making smiles on their faces.

- ❖ **Operation Audio:** We love reading! One of my favourite books is called 'Maze Runner' by James Dashner. It is about this boy called Thomas who only remembers his first name. He is welcomed by a group of boys in the glade, a giant Maze filled with moving walls, with a bottomless pit below it. My favourite book is *Double Daisy* by Kes Gray it's a two story in one, *Daisy and the Trouble with Kittens* and *Daisy and the Trouble with Coconuts*. I really liked it because it was very funny. Our project is called Operation Audio. Our aim is to get families to develop a love of reading. We believe that reading should start at a young age, and that parents should read to their children every night. But sometimes this is not possible; either their parents have trouble reading themselves, or they don't speak the language, or they are way too busy before bed and they come home by the time their children are in bed. We then tried to think of a solution to this. We decided to record audio books on CDs and here is an example of one of the CDs. 'This book just ate My Dog' by Richard Byrne. As we are in year 5 and 6 and we are leaving soon, we want to leave a legacy for years to come. Soon we will build a library of audio books like that one you have just heard.
- ❖ **Bridge between two generations** Our project is called Al Mizan Community for All, between the two generations of adults and young children. It is about getting two generations to better understand each and to share experiences and skills but understand that the elderly can be frightened and security and also to show that the children are quite a lot annoying and disturbing. We held a school competition to create a poster. We have contacted the hospice and set up a meeting to visit them. We are proud that we are looking to the community especially those who have no family or friends. We are planning to be part of their coffee morning to talk to some of their residents. Also to meet members of their club and help them with a variety of activities and pastimes and from research and discussions to create resident profile sheets or a newsletter to share their experience and a week where children bring objects and photographs that tell the story of an elderly person.

Secondary:

- ❖ **Calling the Community- Eating Healthy:** We believe that we should eat healthily, and that we should help the community. East London is a place that is full of pollution and lots of fast food. We decided to go around the schools and invite them on a day and teach them about planting and healthy eating. This is a strawberry plant planted by a member of the school council and nurtured by all.

➤ Pupils and students Feedback on the Creative Communities Project

In keeping with placing student voice centre stage in this evaluation, the opportunity was taken to gather the views of the 22 student council members from 12 schools attending this presentation and sharing event about the project they had taken part in.

The students completed questionnaires, having been assured that their opinions were valued and would help us to improve future projects, and there were no right or wrong answers. There was very little time for this and not every student answered every question but results are very useful. **Table 4**, below, summarises their responses.

Pupils/ Students - Analysis of Findings:

Impact on pupils/students participating in this project

This diverse range of projects and obvious passion and commitment with which the pupils and students had devised and implemented them indicate a high level of engagement by each of these schools. They had shown resilience in learning from aspects of their ideas that had been less successful than hoped and were looking ahead to how they could improve their ideas and continue their projects in the community.

Following on from these presentations, the participants were given a brief to design a poster summarising their project to be displayed at the final celebration event which was to be attended by representatives from the funders and the local council.

Their responses indicate a thoughtful and sophisticated engagement with their communities, both in terms of the positive and the negative aspects. This is very important as it shows that the project has nurtured positive feelings towards their communities as well as raising awareness of issues that need to be addressed.

It is especially heartening that, when asked to think of ways in which their communities could be improved, the young people did not just focus on problems and issues, but also on community actions, positive behaviours and community action that could address these. This indicates that they are seeing themselves as engaged and proactive citizens, who can be part of the solutions.

Table 3: Pupils and student feedback from the Creative Communities Project

Did you enjoy the Creative Communities Project?	I enjoyed it a lot 15	I quite enjoyed it 2	I haven't decided if I liked it or not 2	I didn't enjoy it very much 0	I didn't enjoy it at all 0
If you had the chance would you like to do another project like this?	Yes 15		Maybe 5		No 0
Were there any things you didn't like?	No - 10 There is nothing I didn't like Nope I liked everything I had a really good time I loved it very much, thank you so much		Yes - 5 Finding people to work with – not that many people came Not much talking Not everyone was able to do every part of the project Not everyone could help to do it Being the only secondary school		
How would you describe this project? (Descriptive words and number of times each circled) Other words added	Interesting (16) fun (16) exciting (16) good (16) active (14) a chance to give my opinion (14) I learnt a (14) (12) it made me think (9) tiring (6) different (6) mixed (6) ok (5) busy (3) long (3) varied (3) boring (2) Fantastic (3) awesome (3) creative (3) amazing (2) captivating c (2) phenomenal excellent nice fine I loved it brilliant sporty helpful awkward				
What were your two most favourite things about this project?	Playing puzzles with them/ Playing fun games/ Games Sharing our belongings to make stories Helping the environment/ Walk for water (2)/ Up cycling Going on trips (3)/ Going places Gave a chance to meet new people/ Making new elderly friends Finding out things/ Learning about our community/ We got to find out about the people/Asking questions to elderly/ Meeting people that help the community/ Meeting others Having meetings/ Planning/ Creating the project/ Having meetings/ Sharing ideas To listen to different opinions/ Listening to other school councillors Sharing our idea of a project with other schools/ Communicating/ Creativity Making the posters/ Making posters/ Designing a poster/ Creating the poster Interesting / It made me think/ It made me appreciate what I have				
How would you describe what you did to a friend who didn't take part?	We are helping lonely people to make them feel like there are people with them and they are not alone – that we are with them Helping the homeless /We did a lot of stuff about the homeless It's about trying to get families develop a love for reading Our projects is about helping elderly and getting more near to the elderly It helps our community in a good way I think it brung the community together and made new friends Collaboration and friendships To work with parents and the community to have a cleaner living To work with the parents and community stop fly tipping and up cycle instead You could play any sport you liked We go to (hospice)/ We always play, read do puzzles and play a magic tables We came up with an idea, we then tried ways to advertise, our next step is to actually successfully present/ We came up with an idea, we tried ways to advertise it we then presented it hoping it would be a success It's fun /It was fun /It was so much fun and interesting /Very fun/ Fun - Wet/ I found it really enjoyable/ Wished you were there it was great fun too/ Busy and creative weird /How fun it looks and colourful (the poster) Everyone listened to me				

Table 3 cont...	Pupils and student feedback from the Creative Communities Project
<p>What are the two most important things you think a good Community needs?</p> <p>(These comments have been grouped into themes)</p>	<p>Support and infrastructure: Good schools Good roads 2 no homeless people recycled and clean environment Equality(2)/ Fairness /Equal rights</p> <p>Community Action: To help the homeless more/ Helping poor people/ people helping more/ looking after the elderly/ Helping people if they were hurt /Helping people (2) No littering</p> <p>Qualities and behaviours Respect Kindness (4) /everyone being kind to one another/To be kind more (2) Be friendly Tranquillity / Endless harmony</p> <p>Community action, cooperation and participation: A leader People Working together (2)/ Collaboration (2)/ To work together as a team / teamwork /teamwork /Share ideas in the whole group /Ideas /Sharing ideas (2)/ People listening to people Being together/ Friends/ Friendship/ Meeting others /Coming up with a project</p>
<p>What 2 things do you like best about the community where you live?</p> <p>(These comments have been grouped into themes)</p>	<p>Facilities: It has lots of shops / The shops /good restaurants /having a park near our house / The parks/ Blackberry trees/ Play areas (2)/ Houses and parks/ Flats /Building looks nice/ Education /Local school /Police /</p> <p>Qualities and characteristics: Everyone is kind to each other That most people are kind They work together/ You can share your ideas with everyone / we work together/ Like one big home/ Safe That most people are improving their ways That some people are nice and forgiving /People are helpful/The people and friends/ The people (2)/ People play together/People from different backgrounds/ religions /multicultural /Diversity/ Going down the hill /Go places together/New friends/Fun (2)</p>
<p>What 2 changes do you think would improve your community for everyone in it?</p> <p>(These comments have been grouped into themes)</p>	<p>Facilities: a library/ give good homes/ good roads/ more trees/ more resources to help the elderly/ a restaurant that we don't have to pay for/ a cd shop/ having a trampoline/</p> <p>A safer community: less killings/ more security /less crime</p> <p>A cleaner environment: less pollution (10) less litter (4) more recycling (3) fewer cars, less plastic, quieter</p> <p>Community Cohesion attributes: giving back/ help others be kind to everyone equality /fairness ideas /more communication respecting people fun meeting more inspiring people no racism</p>

Pupils/ Students' Learning

The young people recognised their own learning and growth and were very positive about the possibilities of doing another such project. Their views are underpinned by the comments of their teachers below (section B) listing things which they had observed in their pupils / students as surprising and rewarding. The project aimed to stimulate thinking around community issues, but it is important to see the whole picture and focus on positives as well as negatives.

'What makes a good Community' gave opportunities for thinking around positive aspects. Other activities brought out more negative aspects, but in constructive ways to elicit critical and creative thinking about how communities can play a part in addressing issues.

For those involved directly the learning this appears significant – not just about their own communities but about their abilities to change things and influence others to do so. Future projects should ensure that there is similar balance and positivity around community engagement by young people.

Sustainability of pupils / student learning

This is best summed up in the eloquence and passion of the eloquence of the young people themselves.

- Our aim is to get families to develop a love of reading. We believe that reading should start at a young age, and that parents should read to their children every night. But sometimes this it is not possible;
- We chose this project because we found out that obesity and unhealthy lifestyles is a problem in Tower Hamlets and we wanted to help.
- It is about getting two generations to better understand each and to share experiences and skills but understand that the elderly can be frightened and also to show that the children are quite a lot annoying and disturbing.
- We wanted to link both schools together. We have identified the road as being dangerous and would like to focus on it and make it safer. We are planning the school travel plan.
- Our project is about creating friendship between people -creating an atmosphere of fun, laughter and creativity to bring our community together
- It is about encouraging our community to up cycle the household objects rather than throwing them away or dumping them illegally
- We believe that we should eat healthily, and that we should help the community.

The learning shines through. There is depth and breadth to these young people's articulation of their learning and how they translated this into action to address issues and promote Community Cohesion.

It is always hard to apportion credit for attitudinal change but it seems reasonable to conclude, from all the evidence collected, that the Creative Communities project has had a significant impact on the pupils and students who participated.

The funders and facilitators (including the Teachers) can claim a fair portion of credit for this. The challenge, looking forward, is how to sustain and spread this impact beyond the extremely committed groups that have taken part so far.

B: The Teachers:

For the teachers supporting these projects in schools, the role was to facilitate (rather than lead) their school council representatives in work with their peers to enable student-led action and also to support complementary learning around equalities and community cohesion.

‘Children need to be involved in meaningful projects with adults... An understanding of democratic participation and the confidence and competence to participate can only be acquired gradually through practice; it cannot be taught as an abstraction. Many western nations think of themselves as having achieved democracy fully, though they teach the principles of democracy in a pedantic way in classrooms which are themselves models of autocracy. This is not acceptable. There are a multitude of examples of children who organize themselves successfully without adult help.young people can design and manage complex projects together if they feel some sense of ownership in them. If young people do not at least partially design the goals of the project themselves, they are unlikely to demonstrate the great competence they possess. Involvement fosters motivation, which fosters competence, which in turn fosters motivation for further projects’.

Hart R. A. (UNICEF 1992)¹

For some this facilitation role presented a real challenge - to support without over directing, to guide young pupils and students’ learning without over-influencing their thinking and their choices and to enable them to act on their creative ideas where these were safe and realistic. These concerns are apparent in early comments of participating teachers. These show varying levels of confidence and concerns about lack of time, lack of experience at this type of facilitation, and tensions between making sure that students’ ideas are realistic and informed and stepping back from over-directing their choices.

Teacher Self assessment:

At the first PDC group training session (January 2018) and again at the final group session (July 2018) the lead Teachers were asked to rate and to comment on their levels of confidence from 1 (not confident) to 10 (very confident) at both a) facilitating pupil-led learning on equalities and community cohesion and b) facilitating pupil-led decision making and action in this project. They were also asked to sum up their feelings about their role in facilitating the project. This provided a means of comparison of the impact on teachers over the life of the project.

They were asked to consider this with reference to Roger Hart’s ‘Ladder of participation’ (Hart R. A. UNICEF 1992 p8), which presents stages of youth participation as 8 rungs of a ladder:

The first three rungs are seen as non-participation:

1. Manipulation
2. Decoration
3. Tokenism

The higher 5 rungs as increasing degrees of participation:

4. Assigned, but informed,
5. Consulted and informed,
6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children and
7. Child-initiated and directed and
8. child-initiated, shared decisions with adults

Initial information was collected from 16 schools and at the final training session, from 12. The most useful results to consider are the before and after comparisons from the 12 schools that stayed the course (**Table 4 below**).

Table 4: Teachers' Views about facilitating this project and of the level of pupils' involvement/ January 2018 and July 2018

1. Level of confidence at facilitating Pupil-led learning on equalities and Community Cohesion 1-10 (1=lowest)		Hart's ladder						
2. Level of confidence at facilitating Pupil-led decision making and action in this project 1-10 (1=lowest)								
1	2	1	2	July 2018	1-8			
5	5	January 2018		I feel the children will need support and guidance in areas that they will be unfamiliar with.	8	8	Confident in facilitating children's ideas and supporting their thinking. As the children grow with the project, confident to let them dictate/decide	7
6	6				9	9	Was impressed with the children's commitment and problem solving. Biggest challenge was logistics e.g. school leaders reaching decision /authorising. Children were often able to suggest and decision make when problems arose. There were initial barriers but the project went on an amazing journey. I feel the children have created a legacy, so we can get even more out of the project.	8
6	6				9	8	After attend sessions I am very confident. It was great how each project developed over time There has been an improvement and I really think it depends on the cohort of children you have. There has been a change in terms of recognition of what school council is trying to achieve. Collaborative, large scale involvement, cohesion, togetherness.	6.5
6	6	/	/	Have got to where we are quite quickly. It has been hard to meet the students but when the children have met they have made decisions and come to conclusions quickly. We may need to take a step back.	10	10	As PSHE Coordinator and Rights Respecting Schools lead I feel confident in facilitation projects of this nature. Over the course of the project it has become easier to take a back seat and put in place measures to allow children to be at the centre of decision making.	7
7	6	7	5	I am confident, but sometimes it is hard to withdraw yourself and let them make the decisions. It is hard when decisions made by pupils are not exactly linked to SLT expectations. At the moment I feel like I am giving a lot of support and direction to my students to help them become more independent and proactive. It makes me feel very happy and I would like them to be able to run the project independently.	8	8	I feel more confident at facilitating child-led decision making but it's the aspect of getting the SLT on board that's still a problem. I feel like I am supporting the children but they have started supporting each other and feeding off each other more.	6.5
6	6			I feel that I am able to let the children have views and steer them in making feasible choices. I am working with the children and the support of the SLT.	8	8	I felt I was able to effectively guide the pupils in developing their project.	6
7	7				7	7	Need to give students clear guidelines and suggestions at first before moving to a facilitator role. Confident at having made progress, but still more work to be done	6
5	7				8	8	Feel confident that the children will be able to continue this project in future. Children embraced this project and took it upon board to have their voice	8
7	7			School council children are highly motivated and generally have realistic expectations about what can be achieved. There seems to be good communication and training to ensure successful outcomes. Slight worry about how much time we can find with school council to meet. I can work on this project but I am not quite sure what to expect.	6	6	Find it hard to get the children to think practically - to lead me. Children happy to vote but not to bring their ideas forward practically. Wanting to encourage school council to move forward.	5
7	8			Only concern is lack of time. All the decisions so far have been their own. Optimistic about the outcome of the project – seems like a lot of work ahead.	9	9	I am confident in my ability; however, time available can be an issue sometimes. I now have a clearer vision of the project. Routines have been established	6
6	7			I feel fairly confident in how to support. I lack confidence/ knowledge in how much support is needed. I feel optimistic about the project – working together as a team and building on the project. That won't be easy due to my commitments and the short time we have together as a council.	8	8	Initial ideas / past projects to generate ideas. The children have really come together and led different parts of the project	6
5	6			Working with a colleague, who is teaching me about how to think about the project which will make the greatest impact on pupils and how to work with students to help empower them to make the best decisions about how to help the community.	10	10	(From the mentoring colleague): I wasn't sure how much I would need to support the children with their decision making but I decided to step right back and follow their lead. I can see how a true pupil voice can be represented. We are on a journey; with cohesion between children, parents and staff.	7

Impact on Teachers and schools

➤ Teachers confidence and competence at facilitating pupil led-learning:

In 11/12 cases the lead teachers' confidence had increased during the project. On average confidence increased from 6/10 to 8/10 for both facilitating learning about equalities and community cohesion and about facilitating pupil-led decision making and action. When considering the extent to which the projects were student led, with reference to the 8 rungs of Hart's ladder, the teachers each self-assessed their projects as being on the upper rungs of the ladder, so they were in the zone of 'degrees of participation' rather than non-participation:

- 1 on the 5th rung (Consulted and informed)
- 6 on the 6th rung (Adult initiated, shared decisions with children)
- 7 on the 7th rung (Child-initiated and directed)
- 2 on the top 8th rung (Child initiated, shared decision with adults)

As the project progressed some of their earlier concerns were reduced. Several comments (Table 1) indicate that teachers were surprised and impressed at the way their students had **'embraced this project and took it upon board to have their own voice'**. Children **'grew with the project'** and **'were able to suggest and decision make when problems arose'**.

The point was also made that it depended on the cohort of children that were participating and clearly some needed more support in the early stages or in taking the lead or developing ideas to fruition. The school ethos and level of support from the SLT was also a positive or negative factor.

As the students grew in confidence, so did the teachers. Before/ after comments illustrate the point:

Jan 18: I am quite confident in the principles and have a good understanding of how it should work, however so far with the time restrictions plus the age of the children being young have found it difficult not to chip in a bit more than I know I should.

Jul 18: Over the course of the project it has become easier to take back seat and put in place measures to allow the children to be at the centre of the decision making.

Jan 18: At the moment I feel like I give a lot of support and direction to my students to help them become more independent and proactive. It makes me feel very happy, but I would like them to be able to run the project independently

Jul 18: I feel I'm still supporting the children but they have started supporting each other and feeding off each other more.

'I wasn't sure how much I would need to support the children with their decision making but I decided to step right back and follow their lead. I can see how a true pupil voice can be represented'.

'There were initial barriers but the project went on an amazing journey. I felt the children have created a legacy, so we can get even more out of the project'

'There has been a change in terms of recognition of what the school council can achieve'.

✚ Teachers' Learning

➤ Challenges:

Q. What were the most challenging aspects of this project?

- **Time:** The most frequently challenging issue was one of time, mentioned by half the respondents. This included the pressures on teachers' and pupils' time, conflicting priorities, the limited time which school councils had to meet and managing this limited time effectively.
- **Support within the school:** Some faced challenges of getting Senior Leaders on board: 'Senior leaders keeping momentum e.g. not committing to dates, giving time and priority to project; seeing the project as a one off so needed a lot of convincing that the project should be ongoing'
- **Getting the whole school on board and getting parental engagement** were also cited, but there were also cases where projects had very successfully engaged the SLT, parents, whole school and wider community.
- **Logistics:** Some mentioned the problems of communications and identifying appropriate issues and agencies to support / work with toward the project or implementing aspects of the projects chosen. There were some challenges in working with the chosen partners. One school felt that it was not a project suited to a large school council with a wide age range.
- **Supporting the pupils:** One teacher mentioned the challenges of encouraging children to take the lead, another, the personal challenge of stepping back to enable the children to decide and another children's lack understanding of community and issues in their local area.

➤ Rewards:

Q. What were the most rewarding aspects of this project?

The rewards seemed overwhelmingly to outweigh the challenges, as these comments show:

- Meeting the hospice and seeing the **children's enthusiasm** build
- **The children's satisfaction** at what they had achieved. They could see tangible impact.
- Children feeling they have **contributed and tried/ made efforts to bring change** in the community
- **Getting parents involved via their own children.** I did not expect parents to come to the project as much as they do.
- Seeing the **children spreading kindness and the children talking about the examples of chain reaction of kindness they initiated** e.g. a child helping a neighbour and then they saw them helping someone else.
- School council participation – **coming to school early**
- Getting **students to develop a passion about and caring for their community**
- Seeing the project **grow from nothing to the whole school participating** in the 'Walk for Water'.
- The progress we are now making – **new partnerships.**
- Experiencing first-hand the achievements of the children involved e.g. gaining confidence, speaking in public.
- **Seeing the children's faces when they see how much support they are getting.** For example, there was a really good turnout at the parents' coffee morning and the children got great feedback.
- **We are all so keen to develop this project to its fullest potential.**

➤ Surprises

Q. What surprised you about your own and the pupils' involvement with this project?

Comments were overwhelmingly positive, showing a high degree of respect from teachers for the ways pupils had responded to the aims and opportunities of this project. Their comments illustrate the diverse range of skill and attributes teachers had observed being developed in the pupils who benefited from the project. These include adaptability, awareness, flexibility, initiative, commitment, resilience, planning, engagement, keenness, concern, problem solving, partnership working, communication skills, wanting to make a difference, maturity, capability, confidence at public speaking to different audiences, listening to and valuing opinion of each other, understanding local issues and applying knowledge to the wider world.

- How they have **adapted and are aware of issues** with the community. The fact that **they want to help and find solutions** to issues / problems
- Pupils were very flexible and adaptable. When initial ideas didn't spark leads the children took on board the residents comments and tweaked the project.
- Sometimes to **let children get on with it**
- **Their ability to maintain the project no matter what, week in week out**, regardless of my availability – they have made it part of their routine.
- That some **children really took it on themselves to spread it in their communities**
- **Children have found the project quite challenging** – difficult concepts of community. **Children were able to come up with a clear project plan.**
- **Engagement and keenness** to get involved
- How **engaged** they were. How **concerned** they were about issues in the local community and how they **wanted to make a difference**. Also **about taking the project to the wider world**
- Really **good partnership and communication with the other school**
- The **level of maturity and capability of our smaller members** – year 2 especially
- The **ability to speak/ present in front of different audiences**. Their confidence has grown.
- How they **listened to and valued input from one another**

➤ Improvements

Q. Have you got any suggestions as to how this project could be improved in future?

Comments were largely focussed on levels of support from school leaders and project facilitators (although support provided by the facilitators were clearly appreciated and valued by participants).

The project could be improved by greater support form SLTs:

- **More buy in from senior leaders**
- **Involve the SLT and talk to them about it so they are aware that time is needed to run it**

Working with others:

- **Would it be possible to work together with a local school?**

Additional support:

- **Possibly more links with various charities/ organisations could be pre-arranged**
- **More real world examples / More guidance on how to manage activities**
- **Support from the beginning when generating ideas rather than after the project had been decided** - For someone to come in straight away.
- **More children involved/ participate in the trips to the PDC and the celebration event / Other members of school council contributed heavily** – it would be great if they could be included in the celebration session

✚ Sustainability of Community Cohesion Work in schools

➤ Q. How likely is it that your school will continue with Community Cohesion work (and what barriers might there be to this)?

Of the 12 schools, 5 said possibly and 7 definitely. The qualifying comments for the 'possibly' responses seemed to indicate that a more appropriate interpretation of this response was 'hopefully'. The decision was out of their control.

Possibly – 5:

- I hope they do
- (depends on) teacher timetable next year
- I don't think this will be a school council project as not all children were able to fully participate, e.g. two children visiting the PDC. Not all the school council were able to meet the facilitator on her visit. As such keeping the enthusiasm from the whole school council was difficult
- SLT suggested that the person taking over my role might want to do a new project. I explained that this was not my project, but the children's, and the impact comes from ongoing work.

Definitely -7:

- Finding the time
- Hoping to include more council members during the meetings taking place at the PDC
- This project took time to develop internally within our school but definitely has the potential to grow to other schools - could quickly be shared
- Fantastic project – I am incredibly proud to have been a part of. I hope the project continues

➤ Summary of findings from Teachers:

✚ **Impact:** Bearing in mind the young age of many of the children participating, overall outcomes reported by their teachers are very positive. In responding to the role of facilitator and enabler, rather than leader of the projects, teachers grew in confidence as the project progressed and their self-assessments of the extent to which the projects were student- led were encouraging. However, Hart himself cautions that whilst this is as a useful aid to self-reflection, it should not to be over used as a rigorous evaluation method. With more time and more support, teachers felt that more could be achieved. There was clearly a momentum and confidence that grew in both teachers and pupils as time went on, and there was something to be built on.

✚ **Learning:** The teachers were overwhelmingly impressed by their students' responses and achievements and the range and quality of skills and attributes they had developed and shown during the project. The limited time available meant that they had little time for contextualising the projects with learning about community and global issues and the limited scope meant that they were only able to involve a small number of children fully in the project. That said; some projects had clearly grown to attract the attention and support and involvement of the whole school, parents and local community, in their activities.

✚ **Sustainability:** The scope of this evaluation did not allow research to be carried out into why schools dropped out or what encouraged school to sign up or not to sign up in the first place, but giving the significant pressures on schools' and teachers' time, the high retention rate (12/16 completing the project and one other switching to another project) indicates a high and sustained level of commitment. They all hoped to continue the work, but could not guarantee to be able to do so, given the constraints of time and curriculum and the fact that they were dependant on SLT and external support, and did not know what their teaching responsibilities would be the next academic year.

C: Community Groups:

The scale of this evaluation did not allow for evaluating the impact on Community Groups. This would be useful for future projects. It would be interesting to explore what factors helped partnership to be more or less successfully, and whether links with Community Groups were likely to be sustained. It would also be useful to explore whether and how partner organisations' views of young people, in particular on their potential roles in promoting Community Cohesion and community acting as change makers, had changed.

D: Project Facilitators Self-Evaluation

➤ What were the best/ most successful aspects?

Project facilitators at HEC Global Learning judged this as where pupils had become really engaged, had involved others from the school and local communities and sought appropriate advice.

- The commitment of the children to connect with their local communities/community partners. Seeing the youngest ones interacting with the dementia patients at their local care home was incredible to watch - how they sang and played games together. This was featured on Sky News. Now parents, all children and staff take turns to go to the care home to help out and sometimes go after school! Termly meetings were an eye opener – to see how their plans progressed.
- The project on bringing the joy of reading to younger children was fantastic. They created audio books for the children to listen to with their parents. The School Library Service advised on copyright.
- The Community of Kindness got the whole school involved with their Pay It Forward scheme and they have embedded this in the school's plans for next year.
- Another school took on a very serious issue of road safety and worked with local councillors and the college next door.

➤ What was/were the most challenging?

- Having to chase teachers for paperwork and updates. They were very committed but overloaded with timetable commitments.
- Some found reaching out to community partners challenging at times but they were persistent!
- The teachers I worked with were inspiring, the way they juggled all their responsibilities and still made sure the project got the time it needed.

➤ What was/ were the most surprising?

- The infant school and the sheer joy they got from being with the care home really moved me!
- I was pleasantly surprised at how many schools stuck with project this year.

➤ Is there anything you learnt personally from managing this project that you'd like to share?

- To suggest a team of teachers work together to lead the project within each school.
- To model some more examples of teacher as facilitators.

➤ With the benefit of hindsight.. Is there anything you wish you had done differently (within what was possible in the constraints of the project)?

- To meet and hear more directly from the community partners and include them in one of the Training Sessions, perhaps last one?

➤ Blue sky thinking: In an ideal world what would make this project more impactful?

- More schools taking part and more funding from Tower Hamlets
- More secondary schools to join up
- Primary and secondary to work together on joint projects
- Teachers given more time if they are involved
- To have the time and resources to get the co-producing organisations involved in the training

E: Did the project meet equalities requirements?

➤ Equalities requirements:

It is a requirement of Tower Hamlets Borough Council, in accordance with their stated ethos and in compliance with the 2010 Equalities Act, that all projects funded by them should meet Equalities requirements.⁹ The equality duty consists of a general duty, with three main aims:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The act covers 9 protected characteristics, and discrimination based on any of these is unlawful:

Race, Religion/belief or lack of, Pregnancy and maternity, Age, Sexual orientation, Sex, Gender reassignment, Disability, and Marriage/civil partnership

The Borough 'promotes an all inclusive vision owned by all communities and organisations' and as 'the responsibility of all our staff' 'in order to improve the quality life for all in Tower Hamlets'.

The Borough aims to embed this within the quality and delivery of all its services in order to:

- Reduce inequality and poverty = effective and accessible services
- Strengthen cohesion = coordinated and joined ways of working
- Build community leadership and personal responsibility = empowering staff and residents

The Creative Communities Project, as designed appears to fit very well within this vision. But did its implementation match its aspirations?

➤ Project delivery:

The evidence above shows that support of HEC Global Learning the organising body in facilitating this project was valued and supportive to teachers and pupils/ students involved. There were significant constraints of time, access and which limited the capacity of the facilitators to provide support and of the schools to receive it. Within the current levels of funding and the way the project is structured as an external extra mural project this is largely unavoidable.

The project was open to any local school and there was an equal level of support and training available to all who chose to join the project. The evaluator observed the facilitators working alongside teachers and school council pupils/ students involved and noted a very cohesive and supportive environment in which both groups were able to express their ideas and feelings openly and to share their learning and experience amongst the group. Activities were inclusive and balanced. The young people's feedback indicated that most had very much enjoyed the project and valued their learning, the opportunity to express their opinions and be listened to. Teachers comments reinforced the fact that the young people had stepped up to the challenges, become very motivated and committed to the ideals and very involved with the issues and community projects of their choice.

Feedback from pupils/ students involved and facilitating teachers, discussed in detail above, provides ample evidence to support that fact that this project met Equalities objectives and had a significant impact on the teachers and pupils involved, most notably on in terms of:

- **Fostering good relations between people from different groups**
- **Strengthening cohesion = coordinated and joined ways of working**
- **Building community leadership and personal responsibility = empowering staff and residents**

This evaluation concludes that the project met and embodied the spirit of Equalities requirements.

⁹ Source: Tower Hamlets Understanding Equality and Diversity Training materials

Conclusion and Recommendations

✚ Impact and Learning achievements:

- Increased teacher confidence and skills in facilitating pupil/ student voice and facilitating learning around equalities, diversity and community cohesion
- Quality learning around equalities, diversity and community cohesion for the student council members involved in the 12 projects
- Developing life skills for active and responsible citizenship for school council members and some of their peers involved in the projects, include adaptability, awareness, flexibility, initiative, commitment, resilience, planning, engagement, keenness, concern, problem solving, partnership working, communication skills, wanting to make a difference, maturity, capability, confidence at public speaking to different audiences, listening to and valuing opinion of each other, understanding local issues and applying knowledge to the wider world.
- 12 creative pupil-led community projects with potential to be sustained, replicated or extended

✚ Prospects for Sustainability

- **Continuation of projects**
 - All of the school involved hoped to continue their Community Cohesion work.
- **Dissemination of learning and replication of processes:**
 - Now that the school year has ended, the facilitators are in the process of producing additional case studies and materials for future projects, drawing on the 2017-18 activities.
 - The model is being shared with others and will be presented at a national conference for teachers and teacher trainers involved with Global Learning and Community Cohesion.
- **Potential for Improvements** (dependent on increased capacity/ funding) that would enable this:
 - ongoing / increased support from the funders and facilitators
 - activities to generate greater understanding and support from SLT s
 - increased resources to involve all the 'hands on' young people in school councils in the training days and celebration events
 - more support on how to find and work with community partners
 - mentoring from schools/ teachers that have already taken part to new schools
 - consideration of how to engage more secondary schools

'Children learn how to make good decisions by making decisions, not by following directions.'

'Students should not only be trained to live in a democracy when they grow up; they should have the chance to live in one today.' Alfie Kohn, Author /lecturer education, parenting, and human behaviour

'Rather than standing or speaking for children, we need to stand with children speaking for themselves.

We don't need a political movement for children... [we need to] build environments and policies for our collective future.'

Sandra Meucci, Social Justice Campaigner

'A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.' Oscar Wilde

Appendix I

Comments from Teachers who facilitated the discussions

This feedback from teachers makes for interesting reading, showing both the level of teachers' commitment to this activity and how effective this was at stimulating debate and creative thought amongst the students.

Infants:

- 'We ran this activity with our KSI school councillors aged between 5 and 7. The children passionately debated each area with some disagreements. However, they always found a way to compromise.'

Primary:

- Each class completed the activity, debating and voting for 3 key priorities in P4C (Example from Year 4. Each school councillor undertook a field study talking to staff, pupils and parents and families about community issues in the playground. (Example Year 5 child. School council sorted the data collected by topic and voted from a choice of the most popular. They then completed this evaluation of the problem and how to tackle it. The councillors recorded their ideas and reflections on ideas for the project.
- Our school council ranges in age from y2-y6 and consists of 20 children. In order to carry out the activity, the children were split into two groups with each year group represented. Whilst carrying out this audit, many of the ideas and concepts such as affordable housing, good school results and universal healthcare, needed to be explained to children. For many points, children were not initially able to order points for the most important to the least important. They often put all the points as most important as seen in the picture below. It was only after deeper discussion, that they were able to order from most important to least important. On the topic of schooling, children understood the need to have a welcome and opening school and were able to relate this back to the diverse nature of their community and the need to be tolerant of people from different backgrounds. Children also understood the need to have a school which had good results. Children were able to link this back to the importance of having educated people in the community because 'we need educated people to do jobs like teachers and doctors.' Children were able to speak about the importance of religion in their community and understood that having a place where it was safe to worship was important to their local community. Children's opinions were divided when it came to the topic of shops. One child in particular, felt very strongly that a big shopping centre was very important to the local community due to the fact that you needed clothes and toys. Other children appreciated the need for shops, but felt that a supermarket was more important so that people could buy food. When talking about health care, initially children stated that only having health care that people could afford it was an important statement. However, once the concept of universal healthcare was explained to them, they all strongly agreed that only having health care that people could pay for was not fair.
- The school councillors worked in two different groups to decide what they felt was important and not so important for making a good community. It was very interesting to hear the discussions and organising of ideas. The children were drawn towards helping everyone in the community, keeping Bromley by Bow safe and giving people a voice to share an opinion. They did get into a very interesting discussion about having a place to put prisoners and also helping them to integrate back into society (depending on the crime). Hence the reason why it is in the middle.
- The students from our school council agreed that the following is essential for a good community:
 - Hospital- to allow people in the community to get medical attention
 - Local shops- to make it easy for the community to buy food
 - Schools-both primary and secondary- to make it easy for the community to be educated
 - Train station to enable individuals to commute

However, there were a few options they found difficult to agree on. One of them was a bank, some students argued that it is essential to have a bank to make a good community as it allowed people to deal with their money and pay bills. However other students disagreed and argued that it is not essential in this day and age as there is online banking, which some argued is difficult for the older generation to use. So they eventually agreed that a bank is also needed for a good community. Some students also though it was important to have a youth club locally where young people can go in their spare time instead of being in the streets. Others argued that it was not essential as people have opportunities for extra-curricular activities after school. It was then agreed it is important as not all schools provide extra-curricular activities and also it was a place where young people could socialise and do something productive in a weekend instead of getting up to mischief.

- The School Council were gathered for the last 20 minutes of lunch break to carry out the baseline audit titled 'What makes a good community?' Two A4 papers, one with 'Important' and one with 'Not Important' were placed on the carpet in different

areas, the students took it in turns to show the pictures and read out the descriptions. They then debated on whether each of them were important or not. If they fully agreed on one, they would put it next to the labelled A4 paper of their choice. If they couldn't agree upon one they would take a vote and then place it next to the A4 paper which got the most votes. On occasions they didn't understand the pictures or labels they would ask and it would be explained to them without influencing their votes.

- They did very well and there was some excellent discussion around some of the pictures.

Some believe that the homeless are lazy and that it was more important to look after elderly and retired. However it was agreed that we 'can't just leave them.' All children believed criminals were dangerous and should be punished. Children felt that having electricity was more important than how it was sourced. Many children felt recycling was important. Children felt that schools should achieve good results but having top resources less important. Some children felt that having a right to say was very important and compared the UK to countries where only a few people can vote. Religious buildings were seen as important for reflection. Overall children felt that lot's of these issues were important but had to be balanced with cost. Hostel for homeless were quite important. A place to go when ill very important every needs a place where someone will look after them. However, some children felt that a place where people would be cared for was a good idea although there was some talk about people being lazy and not sorting themselves out. Most agreed that it was more important to look after the elderly. Children felt that expensive houses were not important and that affordable housing is more important. Safe places were seen as less important because of the cost of materials by some however others thought it was worth the cost. A place where people can grow food was important so that homeless people don't have to spend money. Having local shops was seen as important to avoid people using petrol travelling to big supermarkets and shopping centres. Can't just leave homeless imagine it was you. Children felt average roads would be better than good roads as more cost effective. Prisons very important and don't have to be in good condition, everyone felt that it was important for criminals to be punished and that they are dangerous. It was agreed that it was important that police were fair. 'Waste taken to landfill' – is very important - cause pollution and effect humans. Renewable energy was seen as less important particularly wind turbines and children showed a preference for solar power. With energy it was decided that the most important thing was to have electricity and it was less important how it was provided. There was some talk about the dangers of electricity particularly people glued to Smart phones. 'Schools getting good results' is very important, as good results leads to a good education. It is really important to learn a lot. Schools having the best resources was seen as less important that the learning that goes on within them. It was agreed that schools that welcome everyone are important as was gaining and understanding of religion and where others come from to avoid racism. Some disagreement on spaces to play with some children believing it was important and others suggesting it was less important than other key factors. Everyone should have the right to have a say. It was suggested that in some countries people are not allowed to vote so it is important that you can vote here. Voting was seen as very important by some but not all. Some disagreement on the importance of plastic bags as they harm fish but are not "a life and death" problem; others argued that River Thames most polluted river in UK. Year 6 had done research on effects of plastic and found that lots of animals are becoming extinct. Many felt that recycling was very important. Religious buildings were seen as important as a place to reflect when you have done something wrong or connect with lost loved ones. It became more interesting when the children had to work together to agree on the level of importance.

This actually took a long time- the younger children made decisions that were either quick or may have been swayed by the majority of the group but C was great at sticking to her guns and debating the ideas. Unfortunately, we lost two members just as this started to take off so the group met again the following day with R to continue the debate. The following day, the whole group were able to meet again to 'agree' which resources were most/least important: Having green spaces - "Trees help the planet as they create oxygen and also walking in parks makes you feel calm." (Y4) Helping people in prison not commit crimes again - "This will help our community feel safer" (Y4) Re using plastic bags – "This is important to prevent pollution in our seas and try and do our bit for the environment" (Y 6) A place to celebrate and meet people; "This is important so they can meet new friends." (Y1) Criminals in prison- "This is essential because bad things might happen like murders or bank robberies. If we have a place for criminals we might have less murders and bank robberies." (Y6)

Secondary: General comments from the activity

- The students felt that sustainability and recycling were an important part of a good community. This is because people should take responsibility for protecting their environment. There was some debate regarding police and whether more police would solve the problem of crime or if other solutions were needed to get to the root cause of crime. Students agreed that care for the most vulnerable, such as the elderly, homeless and the ill was very important.

"I think equality makes a good environment. People need to live equally for there to be peace and respect."

"I think a school with good resources is really important. Children need good resources to learn."

"Being in a safe environment is most important. Increasing the number of police officers would help to stop crime and ensure safety."

"There needs to be plenty of safe places to play as well as good schools."

"A place where people can grow their own food would be good for sustainability."

"From doing the audit, I have learnt that there are many things needed to have a good community"