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The London Multimedia Laboratory for Audiovisual Composition and Communication

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Young People's Views Project Final Report:

Integrated findings on Young People's Views¹

Synopsis

This report integrates the findings from the Young People's Views pilot project (2003-4) and the Young People's Views National Rollout Project (2004-6) conducted by a team from the London Multimedia Lab for Audiovisual Composition and Communication under a subcontract from NACRO.

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¹ Including guidance on Research tools and protocols necessary for capturing the views of young people taking part in the Positive Futures programme

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a pilot research project on *Positive Futures Young Peoples' Views*, undertaken by the London Multimedia Lab at LSE during May to November 2003, the main “national rollout” project was conducted as a contribution to the evaluation of the Positive Futures Programme managed by the Home Office Drugs Strategy Directorate - Prevention Team. The project focused on the views of young people participating in twelve² Positive Futures groups distributed across England. It focused on obstacles and pathways to the creation of value at the community level in contexts where the Positive Futures is involved in local interventions.

Field research was carried out with local Positive Futures groups through face-to-face interaction with the young people and their local coordinators. Video testimonies were obtained from local coordinators, focusing on their work with the young people in the groups and their experience of the action research techniques, founded in participatory multimedia with the young people in their groups. The young people expressed and communicate their views in a rich and comprehensive way through *participatory multimedia*: making and communicating documentaries about their communities. The young people in each group were provided with a digital video-camcorder and were given a brief training in its operation in audiovisual composition and communication techniques. They decided themselves on the format and content of their documentaries, and on how and where they would shoot and edit them.

The use, by the young people themselves, of audio-visual technologies enabled the capacity and creation of new forms of expression, giving them myriad possibilities for *ways of telling, ways of viewing and ways of sharing* their reality. The documentaries they made reflected this reality and their life experiences more accurately than the restricted information that could be obtained from using more traditional pre-structured instruments like attitudinal questionnaires or procedures in unfamiliar settings, like focus groups.

Analysis of the rich material thus gained enabled understanding of how these people are situated in their communities – the context of Positive Futures Interventions – through:

1. Identifying key community stressors and community building blocks in the community as perceived by the young people themselves, and the basis for enabling change.
2. Interpretation of the design of Positive Futures through the views of the local coordinators, – it is through these local coordinators that the young people experience “Positive Futures” as an intervention.
3. Discovery of the experience and meaning of Positive Futures for the young people in the participating groups, through their own words and their own audiovisual productions, thus identifying the key emergent themes that made the difference.

² These groups were selected by the Positive Futures Evaluation & Monitoring Team according to the diversity of conditions where the groups operated.

The key stressors the young people identified - at the community level - were drugs, policing and surveillance, racism, lack of money and gangs. Understanding how young people understood and avoided or coped with these stressors was pivotal for the research, revealing a complex net of social problems in the contexts where the Positive Futures programme is operating.

Keeping out of trouble: The young people, in their documentaries, gave many insights on the existing conditions of their communities. They also suggested constructive pathways to improve local conditions and alleviate community stressors. These suggestions were generally founded on the need for “*more activities to do*”.

Providing and encouraging “more activities to do” was shown to be a key community building block, resonating with the Positive Futures agenda. The young people frequently claimed that their Positive Futures activities provided an alternative to just “hanging around in the streets”. Positive Futures did indeed keep them out of trouble by “*bringing young people together within a supportive environment where participants are encouraged to make decisions for themselves*”.

Widening horizons, raising aspirations and enabling change: The young people’s groups explored future employment possibilities and explicitly recognized the importance of education as a way to increase life chances and “stay clear” of community stressors. Positive Futures activities, particularly making the multimedia documentaries themselves, motivated young people to discover and explore ways to improve their environment and make their communities more vibrant and exciting through sporting activities and facilities, youth clubs, etc.

Sport as a catalyst: The idea of “sport as a catalyst” was interpreted and used by local coordinators to instill new ways of thinking and being in young people. The young people’s testimonies showed how use of sport provided a social space that was entertaining and offered them ‘something to do’. Sport was also a social catalyst: for the young people, engaging through sport with others was experienced as *friendship* and *socialising*.

Enabling Change: In the young people’s audiovisual compositions, trust and respect was shown to be built up, closely linked to the theme of improved relationships with adults, as well as between the young people themselves. The young people spoke about the benefits of sporting activities in terms of personal development across three levels: psychological, social and health benefits. In their videos young people recognised that some of the benefits of sports are: *self-esteem*, *self-worth*, *confidence building* and *relaxation*. These are clear signs that Positive Futures is enabling change in young people through creation of an *alternative space* with a dual significance. On the one hand it refers to the physical space provided by the local projects and the activities. But it also indicates the symbolic space that is created and extended through the emergence of the social relationships initiated and created in these physical spaces, which in turn played a major part in the life and sustainability of the local Positive Futures programmes.

Participatory evaluation through multimedia production and communication: Testimonies and views, collected on video from the young people and their local

Positive Futures coordinators, provided feedback about our research approach and use of participatory multimedia. This feedback was very positive. Participatory evaluation through multimedia production and communication was described as enjoyable, educational and beneficial, not only among the key frontline workers, but also and importantly, among the young people themselves. They stressed that:

- Participating in multimedia production and communication was enjoyable and offered them “something creative to do”.
- In watching and presenting their videos they had the opportunity to learn a great deal about their own community and about other communities that shared similar challenges and difficulties.

Implications

The use of research methodology founded in participatory multimedia was found to offer a very effective and practical tool to explore the views of young people. The nature of inquiry became more personal, connected to real life and immediate to the young people who participated. Making and communicating documentaries in multimedia empowered young people to talk honestly and freely about their lives and about the stressors and building blocks in their communities. They were *empowered* through discovering and communicating *new pathways to value*, both in their own lives and for their communities.

This kind of evaluation research was perceived by the young people as *an innovative activity embedded within the Positive Futures programme*, not as an external monitoring and evaluation process in which they took part. The young people expressed real satisfaction that they had a sense of ownership and accomplishment over their documentaries

These implications will be particularly relevant when evaluating and monitoring Positive Futures in the future. Any properly grounded evaluation process must operate in a way that is sensitive to the diversity of local conditions and innovative possibilities open to the young people who are the key stakeholders in Positive Futures. Much can be achieved through implementing, within Positive Futures, an evaluation process which appreciates the tremendous advantages to be gained when the key stakeholders – the young people themselves - can develop and communicate these possibilities through participatory multimedia.

2. INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

In May 2003, The London Multimedia Lab, a research unit of the Institute of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), was commissioned by NACRO to undertake a pilot qualitative research project on “Positive Futures: Young Peoples’ Views, as a contributory component to the evaluation of the Positive Futures Programme, managed by the Home Office Drugs Strategy Directorate - Prevention Team. The project focused on the views of young people’s participating in six Positive Futures groups in London and the Southeast on obstacles and pathways to the creation of value at the community level in contexts where the Positive Futures is involved in local interventions. Between May 2004 and April 2006, the London Multimedia Lab’s Positive Futures Young People’s Views research team was commissioned to conduct a further “Young Peoples’ Views National Rollout project, building on the success of the Young Peoples Views Pilot project, but now extending the scope from the Southeast and London Regions to include new Positive Futures groups distributed across the country. The present report integrates the research results from both these projects

Aims

The involvement of young people in the development and evaluation of Positive Futures constitutes a key element of the Positive Futures programme, as initially described the Strategy Document “Cul-de-sacs and Gateways” (Positive Futures, 2003). The specific aims of the Young Peoples Views projects in this regard were

- To learn about the challenges, problems and views of young people taking part in local Positive Futures groups, as central stakeholders in the programme;
- To understand pathways to value as identified and exercised by young people themselves;
- To understand about the context and conditions in which young people are positioned;
- To identify the extent to which the Positive Futures programme is fulfilling the expectation and needs of its central stakeholders: the young people participating in the groups and the local coordinators of these groups.
- To identify an operational model of qualitative research and monitoring methodology in line with young people’s views that can be implemented within the Positive Futures programme and, subsequently, in other programmes with related aims and orientations.

This report describes our findings under these aims, in doing so, it also

- Extends and validates the model established in the Young Peoples’ Views Pilot Project for involving young people in the evaluation of Positive Futures projects, particularly through the utilisation by young people of multi-media technologies as enablers of communication processes.
- Provides the basis, and the fundamental procedures that may be employed to incorporate participatory multimedia communication as a key tool for practice and development in Positive Futures and related programmes.

Research base

The Positive Futures Young Peoples Views pilot research, undertaken between May and October 2003 involved 6 groups of young people selected from the 62 Positive Futures groups that were in active existence at the time the project commenced. The Positive Futures Young Peoples' Views National Rollout research, undertaken between May 2004 and March 2006, added a further six groups to the research pool. The groups were selected by the Positive Futures Evaluation & Monitoring Team according to the diversity of conditions where the groups operated. Some of the key variables taken into consideration were: 1) demographics indicators (e.g. age, gender and ethnic background); 2) geographical location (e.g. high crime areas); and 3) composition of local partners/institutions which run the project locally (e.g. Youth Offending Teams, Local Authority Sports Development Units, Local Sports Clubs, etc.

The research was participatory: using multimedia technology to engage young people. As such, the evaluative research is embedded in the programme's activities. The research team from the LSE's London Multimedia Lab worked with the young people in the Positive Futures groups, providing them with audiovisual equipment, training and support for critically authoring and sharing stories about their lives, their communities and their participation in the local Positive Futures programme. The young people themselves expressed their views through working in groups to make their own video presentations describing their views about the Positive Futures initiatives in which they were involved, about their own communities, about the issues that mattered most to them in their present lives and in the future for themselves and their communities.

Field research was carried out with local Positive Futures group, mainly through face-to-face interaction with the young people and their local coordinators. Video testimonies were also obtained from local coordinators, focusing on their work with the young people in the groups and their experience of the action research techniques, founded in participatory multimedia with the young people in their groups. All the Positive Futures groups participating in the pilot actively co-operated with the research team and provided the inputs required by the research plan. We would like to extend our thanks to all those who participated (young people and local coordinators) who gave us their valuable time during this research.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Positive Futures Young People's Views participatory evaluation research model

Cul-de-Sacs and Gateways (Positive Futures, 2003) states:

“The primary focus of the evaluation will be on identifying and establishing the value that Positive Futures projects have for the communities in which they operate. In achieving this aim, it will satisfy the demand for immediate ‘state of the intervention’ and long term impact profiling...just as individual projects can learn from their own and others; experiences, the evaluation strategy will also help to identify overarching themes which could be fed back into the policy-making process”

Our participatory evaluation research model, developed for this purpose on the Positive Futures Young People's views project, focuses on the themes and pathways to value which emerge in this respect in the 12 Positive Futures groups studied in this project, and their communities. Our fundamental focus is the young people themselves; their experiences of their communities and of their participation in Positive Futures and the difference it makes.

In Chapter 3, we develop an understanding of how these young people are situated in their communities – the context of the Positive Futures interventions – identifying key community stressors and community building blocks and the basis for enabling change.

In Chapter 4, we examine the interpretation of the design of Positive Futures through the views of the local coordinators, since it is through these local coordinators that the young people experience “positive futures” as an intervention.

In Chapter 5, we look at the experience and meaning of Positive Futures for the young people in the participating groups, through their own words and their own audiovisual productions, and find the key emergent themes that make the difference.

Within our model, Participatory Multimedia, involving the young people themselves is both an activity in which they engage and an empirical grounding for evaluation. Thus, to validate our model, in Chapter 6, we examine how successful this strategy was in practice, in the context of the Positive Futures Young People's Views project, by examining (in retrospect) what the young people thought of the audiovisual research and how they would like to improve the production of audiovisual research material.

Table 1 contrasts some of the key factors and premises of the traditional evaluation research model with our participatory evaluation research model – developed to be in line with the views and needs of the main stakeholders – the young people themselves.

Table 1: Distinctive features of the Positive Futures Young People’s Views Participatory Evaluation Research Model

Factor Considered	Traditional Evaluation Research Model	Positive Futures Participatory Evaluation Research Model
Motivation:	Young people need to be helped to develop	Young people can help themselves to develop
Assumption about Young people:	They lack the ability and resources to develop themselves	They have the ability to develop themselves
Learning relationship:	Specialists know and teach and young people have to learn about the reality of the situation they are in	Everybody has something of interest to share in teaching and learning about the reality of the situation
Valuation of knowledge:	Expert know-how is better	Local knowledge is equally or even more relevant in some cases
Key agents of local change:	Policy-makers or implementers	Young people themselves, with the support and encouragement of local coordinators
Young people seen as:	Targets, objects	Subjects, actors
Group leader position:	Director, monitor, regulator	Co-ordinator, facilitator
Media use:	Mass Media (promotional material – “telling you”)	Participatory Multimedia (“Showing and telling together”)
Communication process:	Top-down, one way	Bottom-up, two way
Mode of communications:	Monologue - telling	Dialogue - showing and telling
Activity planning format	Blueprint: pre-set format - planning for young people	Process approach - planning with young people
Evaluation material developed by	Outside agency or authority	The young people themselves (Supported by testimonies from local coordinators)

(Adapted from Olmos, 1999)

The Positive Futures Young People’s Views Participatory Evaluation Strategy

The introduction and use of audio-visual technologies for qualitative research within the Positive Futures Young People’s Views projects, was grounded and conceived as a tool to facilitate self-expression and articulation for young people. The key assumption was that young people would prefer to tell rather than read or respond to lengthy questionnaires. Thus, the LSE research team recognized - in young people - the centrality of the oral culture and dialogue in forms of conversations as powerful systems of symbols that express and verbalize thoughts, enriched by the use of audio-visual language to show as well as tell.

The use, by the young people themselves, of audio-visual technologies enabled the capacity and creation of new forms of expression, giving them myriad possibilities for ways of telling, ways of viewing and ways of sharing their reality (Olmos, 1999, Humphreys and Brezillon, 2002). In addition it consists of genuinely grounded forms of data because it gives a rich approach to the symbolic world of the subjects and their views (Flick, 1998). According to Collier and Collier (1986) using videos is a valid way to observe, document and illustrate interactive processes.

“The special value of video lies in the ability to record nuances of process, emotion and other subtleties of behaviour and communication that still images cannot suggest... it is precisely with not just 'what' but also 'how' behaviour happens, not only to see but also to understand the sparkle and character of an event, a place, a people” (Collier and Collier, 1986) p. 144)

In this way the young people were able to compose, express and communicate their own views in multimedia. As indicated in table 2, below, This involved interplay between: what is being conceptualised and communicated, through the language of observation and the language of action (c. f., De Zeeuw, 1992) and how it is being conceptualised and communicated in telling through spoken, (text-based) language and showing through rich audio-visual language (c.f., Lorac and Weiss 1982, Humphreys, Lorac and Ramella, 2001, Lorac, 2002).

Table 2: Interplay between language models and composing in multimedia in the communication process

		Language of Observation	Language of Action
Mode of Composing in Multimedia	Spoken (voice over, interview)	Telling about what is / could be	Telling what is / could be done about it
	Rich Audio-visual (mise-en-scene)	Showing about what is / could be	Showing what is / could be done about it

Adapted from Humphreys and Brezillon (2002)

The use of participatory multimedia in this way enabled open understanding of young people in their naturalistic and ethnographic settings. The multimedia communications they made reflected their reality and their life experiences more accurately than the restricted information that could be obtained from using more traditional pre-structured instruments like attitudinal questionnaires. It is important to highlight that the aim of the evaluation strategy employed in this project is not to make generalisations on the basis of the data gathered. Rather, the aim is to explore, illustrate and uncover how the internal dynamics and processes work among young people in the programme. Therefore, the content and context of this report should be understood as providing a series of working hypotheses founded on cases studies of particular Positive Futures young people’s groups.

3. THE CONTEXT OF THE POSITIVE FUTURES INTERVENTION

This chapter describes the context in which the Positive Futures intervention strategy takes place. The strategy is described in the policy literature as operating in ‘neighbourhoods that have been identified as amongst the 20% most deprived in the country’ (Positive Futures 2003). The purpose of this section is to understand, from the perspective of the young people what it means to them, to live in such a neighbourhood.

This chapter also illuminates what being ‘marginalised’ and ‘at risk’, also policy language descriptions, means in the lives of young people. Through our research, we were able to better appreciate the different contexts in which the Positive Futures programme takes place.

The groups we worked with were located in and around London, the South East and North of England. Although in different locations, there were several commonalities across young people’s experiences of life in their respective locales. Young people’s life experiences could be described in both challenging and encouraging dimensions. The challenging experiences we conceptualised as *community stressors*, while the encouraging experiences we explored as *community building blocks*.

The first two sections of this chapter describe these life experiences. Then, in the third section, we turn our attention to how, given these community stressors and building blocks, change may be enabled.

3.1 Community stressors

Five thematic commonalities were identified by young people as stressors facing their communities: drugs, policing, racism, money and gangs. Table 3, below, highlights in grey blocks the thematic commonalities identified in each of the groups.

Table 3 - Thematic Commonalities: Community Stressors

Group	Drugs	Policing	Racism	Money	Gangs
Brighton & Hove					
Lambeth					
Reading					
Southampton					
Southwark					
Westminster					
Wandsworth Youth Centre					
Wandsworth School					
Liverpool					
Keighley					

Drugs: An important stressor for all the groups was the problem of drugs. The young people spoke about drugs as a major source of worry and identified drugs and drug-taking behaviours as the causes of complex social problems in their areas. In their documentaries and in the focus groups, the young people spoke out against drugs and, especially, against drug dealers. Some of the key issues they raised regarding drugs were:

- There is easy access to vast range of drugs near their community.
- They face continuous harassment from drug addicts in their community.
- Drug addicts cause great public disorder and damage to private property.
- Police can help to solve the problem.

The following are characteristic comments, concerning drugs, from the young people's documentaries.

Community Stressor 1: Drugs
<p><u>Interviewer:</u> What else is bad about Whitley? <u>Respondent:</u> The <i>drugs</i>, the amount of <i>drugs</i> you can get hold of. Um, you've only got to move a five-minute walk from where you are and you can get <i>drugs</i>. You find needles in kids play parks. I take my nieces out, you find needles. And, it's just mad <u>Interviewer:</u> What sort of <i>drugs</i>? Heroin, hash, anything you want. You name it you can get it. And there's a lot of scagheads that go around threatening people. <u>Interviewer:</u> A lot of what? <u>Respondent:</u> Scagheads. (<i>Laughs</i>) That go round threatening people because, obviously they're on <i>drugs</i>, they're on heroin, they're on? um coz they wanna steal from shops to get their money to get their <i>drugs</i> and if people catch them, they go round and threaten them, they wait for them after work and things like that, which I don't think's fair. Source: Reading AV composition ('Whitley')</p> <p><u>Dan:</u> There is some like <i>druggies</i> in the estate here, like we need to get rid of them, the police and stuff <u>Michael:</u> They are doing stuff like throwing stones, windows smashing them, mugging people. They shouldn't really be doing that stuff. We should get the police to stop them, is not as bad as Peckham somewhere, but still some times bad stuff Source: Westminster AV composition ('Hitting the Ball')</p> <p><u>Question:</u> So, what kind of <i>drugs</i> do you have, you mentioned about weed, what other kind of drugs do you have on thee state? <u>Respondent:</u> Um, there is <i>weed</i>, <i>they smoke um</i>, <i>there is heroine</i>, <i>crack</i>, everything just around the estate you could, there are some places where you find like tin foil which was burned, and syringes and stuff like that around the state on um buildings that are about to be knocked down, so these are some of places where people smoke and all that. Source: Westminster respondent Final Workshop, LSE</p>

Policing and Surveillance: The young people identified policing, and in particular the relationship between young people and the police, as a key community stressor. Young people expressed why, how and what they felt about the policing activities around their neighbourhood and were often critical about police activities and their relationship with the police, both on and off camera. A recurring theme across the groups, related to policing, was surveillance and surveillance cameras. Young people were very aware of surveillance technologies operating in their local communities

however, depending on their age group responded to surveillance in different ways. For example, amongst the older age group (e.g.: 16 – 18 year olds), neighbourhood policing and surveillance cameras were considered an invasion of privacy and sign of the low levels of trust within the community. Conversely, amongst younger members of the groups (e.g.: 11 – 15 year olds) the police and cameras were identified as desirable and positive factors, providing them with a sense of security and helping to reduce crime, delinquency and misbehaving on the streets.

Community Stressor 2: Policing and Surveillance
<p><u>Neil</u>: Do you think the community is helping you? What will be helping you like in the community yeah? What would you need in the community to help you?</p> <p><u>Bob</u>: More love out here in it. <i>Less harassment</i></p> <p><u>Neil</u>: More love out there isn't it</p> <p><u>Neil</u>: <i>From the police yeah. They just trouble you for no reason and thing.</i></p> <p><u>Bob</u>: <i>Yeah. Do you get me bro</i></p> <p><u>Neil</u>: <i>They think you are just criminal like that</i></p> <p><u>Bob</u>: <i>Yeah it's nuts isn't it. It shouldn't be like that searching you and harassing you do you get me bro</i></p> <p><u>Neil</u>: <i>Yeah take your name and everything in front of people is not good stuff.</i></p> <p>...</p> <p><u>Neil</u>: Everyone is chilling here and for no reason</p> <p><u>Mat</u>: wave to the camera (<i>pointing out police van stopped in the middle of the estate</i>)</p> <p><u>Neil</u>: <i>we've been stopped by the police, these lovely guys like, I don't know they just want to harass us. It's the way it goes. Nice to see you young guys have a nice week or some. We are just chilling here minding our own business – out of the blue – and now we are in the estate and look – it is a closed estate as you can see [camera pans around inside of estate showing police van in the centre] and we get stopped. This is why you young black people don't make nowhere in life. That's right. Bye. (Waves to police van which is now leaving the estate)</i></p> <p><u>Girls</u>: say that white policemen most are racist...racist, they don't know what is going on so, you get me</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>Neil (voice over)</u>: <i>Camera for a camera here. Is all big brother around here, that's just the way it is. Cameras everywhere. I don't see the point look. There is no need for all of that. Cameras look. You can tell they don't trust us around here.</i></p> <p>Source: Lambeth AV composition ('South Siderz')</p> <p><u>Marco</u>: Bad thing, yeah. Sorry, sorry to interrupt, one of my bad things is that [pointing at the police car]. This is what I call bad things in the area. Things like this. I don't like the way <i>police</i> just charge through my area.</p> <p>One more, one more.</p> <p>(<i>Silence</i>)</p> <p>Dark side (<i>pointing to one side of the street</i>) and...(pointing to other) I'm not gonna say anything for that side.</p> <p>Source: Southwark AV composition ('Soul Sistaz')</p>

Racism: Young people identified racism as another problem on their estates. Sometimes racism was described in very concrete terms, as for example through the relationships young people had with different members of the community, and in particular the police. For example, young people from two of the groups, filmed police patrols of their neighbourhood, or deliberately set up a shot with police sirens in the background, in order to illustrate the frequency and impact of these patrols for them. Other times young people spoke about racism in more abstract terms, as something that they are aware of, something they did not like, but without giving specific examples.

Community Stressor 3: Racism

Enran: What are the bad things happening on?
Donald: Drugs and people in gangs and people fighting, against *racism*. We should have more police, more cameras and more security around, like if people fight on buses they could have more cameras.
Source: Westminster AV composition ('Hitting the Ball')

Interviewer: Ok, what are two bad things and two good things about your area?
Respondent: Two bad things?
Interviewer: Yeah!
Respondent: (*Silence*) the killings, I don't like the killings and I don't like the *racism*.
Source: Southwark AV composition ('Soul Sistaz')

Neil: Bye.
Girls: say that white policemen most are *racist...they are racist*, they don't know what is going on so, you get me.
Source: Lambeth AV composition ('South Siderz')

Money: Money was another community stressor. The term 'money', as it was put forward by the young people, has various dimensions including purchasing power, the relationship between drugs and money, and the funding young people feel their areas receive from the government. Young people argued that the need for money stem from the desire to participate in a consumer society and was an important factor behind young people getting involved with the buying and selling of drugs. Lack of money is also identified as a reason for commit criminal offences. Money as a stressor is best captured through the words spoken by one of the young people. Sitting in his room, alone, and talking directly to the camera Neil describes the paradox of money stress as follows: "money is not everything, but everything is money".

Community Stressor 4: Money

Bill: (*Shuffling a handful of twenty pound notes outdoors on the estate after dark*) You see all them queen's heads...
Neil (speaking to the camera): This is what is it now yeah this is what youngsters need to realise yeah, like money is not everything, but everything is money like - it's nuts. Why do you think the youth of today commit the offences that they commit, *it's because of the money*, it's not because of a drug habit like. Don't believe what people tell you, I've been on the streets, I know what is like. It's the money. You understand what I am saying? *Money is not everything, but everything is money, that's what you need to realise*, That how it is out here, believe me straight. I'm out.
Source: Lambeth AV composition ('South Siderz')

Respondent: I think parts of London have turned ghetto, yeah I do.
Interviewer: Which parts of London?
Respondent: I'd say South East, some areas of North and main areas of West London as well.
Interviewer: Why do you think it's turning ghetto?
Respondent: I think because a lot of people don't have...a lot of young teenagers, a lot of teenagers and young people, don't have a lot of things to do, so they turn to street crime, they turn to drugs, they turn to dealing in drugs *to get money, because they don't have money from anywhere else*.
Source: Southwark AV composition ('Soul Sistaz')

Gangs: In presenting and describing their communities, young people frequently identified the problem of gangs as one of the 'bad' things on their estates. The problem was framed in terms of young people having nothing to do and so joining gangs for something to do. Young people said they did not like the kind of group identity gangs and their members created. Instead gang activities in the community were viewed as disruptive and threatening. They suggested that various programmes

should be set up in order to help gang members feel a part of their broader community while at the same time engaging the community in celebrating its young people.

Community Stressor 5: Gangs
<p><u>Nabil</u>: It's hard to see but is ten o'clock and they are <i>gangs</i> of boys behind the trees. This is one of the main problems of the estate</p> <p><u>Nabil</u>: What do you think of the <i>gangs</i>?</p> <p><u>Mohammed</u>: The <i>gangs</i>, to be honest I don't like them. They cause too many problems, just useless.</p> <p><u>Nabil</u>: What problems are those?</p> <p><u>Mohammed</u>: They make a lot of noise, late at night when people are trying to sleep, they have motorbike, peds and they race along the street. At one point at night they have wars, they fight. It's just dangerous and silly. It's just those problems, silly problems</p> <p><u>Nabil</u>: How could they be stopped? Or what can they do instead of being troubled?</p> <p><u>Mohammed</u>: They should set up a programme of something to keep the <i>gangs</i> like teenagers sixteen plus so they could do something like DJ projects and stuff like that, something that they would be into, stuff like that. If it comes going well they will probably stop</p> <p>Source: Westminster AV composition ('Hitting the Ball')</p>
<p><u>Interviewer</u>: Give me a bad thing about Whitley.</p> <p><u>Respondent</u>: The <i>gangs</i>...</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: How many <i>gangs</i>?</p> <p><u>Respondent</u>: Lots, there's about 20 in the <i>gang</i> waiting around the corners and then they are up till about two or three o'clock in the morning shouting and screaming.</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: Is there lots of arguments?</p> <p><u>Respondent</u>: Yeah. Fights on the corners, bottles, people get stabbed up and everything.</p> <p>Source: Reading AV composition ('Whitley')</p>

The section so far has concentrated on describing key community stressors. Exploring community stressors from the point of view of young people provides us with an in-depth understanding of the meaning of 'deprivation', 'marginalisation' and 'risk' as this is experienced by young people. We find that young people's understanding and experience is far more nuanced than policy language suggests. We also find that, for the most part, these stressors form structural constraints for the young people and work in positioning young people in their communities and society at large, as sometimes deviant, other times as victims. Community stressors reveal a complex network of interrelated social problems in the contexts where the Positive Futures programme operates and understanding these networks is pivotal for the meaningful design and intervention of community-level strategies.

3.2 Community building blocks: Activities for young people to do

The young people we worked with consistently and repeatedly spoke about "the need for more activities to do". Young people often referred to their communities as unexciting, with "nothing to do" or very little on offer. "Nothing to do" can, in policy language, be loosely translated as a *lack of youth provision*. Below are some characteristic comments made by young people in relation to this lack of youth provision:

The Need of More Activities to do

Dan: Like on the estate, like there are two parks. It's a massive estate, *nothing really to do*. There is loads of space, like there is nothing there, just have concrete or grass

Michael: Yeah, like a tree. Tell him. Is there a football pitch a cricket pitch or whatever

Dan: Yeah

Source: Westminster AV composition ('Hitting the Ball')

Jasmine: Do you think they can like...the community can do anything to improve it? Like build more leisure centres and places that they can hang around, so they stay off the streets dealing drugs and stuff?

Boy: Yeah, I think it's better to go out the leisure centre, than if you go there, *it's boring*.

The only day there's something to do is on a Sunday.

Source: Reading AV composition ('Whitley')

Respondent: but *Positive Futures is good because it's getting a lot of kids off the streets and off the corners*, and Whitley is just a shit hole, *there is not enough things for teenagers and young people, things for them to do, basically (silence)*.

Source: Reading AV composition ('Whitley')

Lack of youth provision can of course also be treated as a community stressor and attributed to structural problems such as the decline in youth services and youth work funding. However, unlike some of the community stressors identified by young people, and detailed in the previous section, the lack of youth provision, or 'nothing to do', can be more productively understood as a community building block. The ability to reverse 'nothing to do' into 'something to do', or 'more activities to do' provides an actionable building block, a starting point, from which Positive Futures can and does capitalize on.

3.3 Enabling change: the views of young people

Young people, through their documentaries, provided us with insights on the existing conditions of their areas. They also suggested constructive ways in which local conditions could be improved, obstacles could be overcome and community stressors alleviated. These suggestions were formulated around the key community building block of 'more activities to do' and typically consisted of the following three dimensions:

- more sporting activities and facilities;
- more community centres, and
- more interesting projects for young people (e.g. DJ-ing, youth clubs).

Pathways to value

Neil: In our community what we need to help the youngsters is a thing like, *more youth projects maybe a little football team like something that keep the youths off the street*, cause the streets here are very corrupted.

Source: Lambeth AV composition ('South Siderz')

Nabil: How could they be stopped? Or what can they do instead of being troubled? (*referring to the gangs*)

Mohammed: *They should set up a programme of something to keep the gangs like teenagers sixteen plus so they could do something like DJ projects and stuff like that, something that they would be into, stuff like that. If it comes going well they will probably stop*

Nabil: Thanks Mohammed for the interview we hope you have a great summer.

Source: Westminster AV composition ('Hitting the Ball')

Interviewer: What sort of things you think they want to do?

Respondent: *I think they should make up more clubs, like places to go, places just to chill out, so they are not on the corners and more sports things to do, because there are a lot of sporty young teenagers and there is no...and if they wanna like become someone, be someone like athletics and stuff, there is no way that they are gonna do it, because there is no one around here that can help. If there is um anything to do, it normally like big people go and it normally like costs a lot of money.*

Source: Reading AV composition ('Whitley')

Jasmine: Here, as you can see, kids come here to come around, play by the bikes

Girlfriend: Because *they don't have a community centre*

Jasmine: Yeah, hello, because they do not have a community centre. *I reckon, yeah, because people say Whitley is a bad place and everything, if they had a community centre where people could go, and children you know, spend their time in, kids would be there playing and there would be less crimes, isn't that right?*

Girlfriend: Yeah!

Source: Reading AV composition ('Whitley')

The Positive Futures programme draws on community building blocks and both directly and indirectly follows young people's views for enabling change. Our research allowed us to explore young people's 'lifeworlds' in great detail. In doing so we are able to report on some of the ways that the Positive Futures programme resonated with young people's experiences, as well as how young people experienced the Positive Futures programme. In the following section we briefly describe the Positive Futures design and how this was interpreted by the local coordinators – the practitioners and direct points of contact between young people and the Positive Futures programme. In subsequent section, section five, we will then be returning to the young peoples' perspectives on the programme.

4. THE DESIGN AND INTERPRETION OF POSITIVE FUTURES

The young people taking part in the Positive Futures programme experience the aims and objectives of the programme's strategy through their relationships with local coordinators. As such, local coordinators are key in understanding how the programme is mediated and realised in local communities. During our research we worked closely with local coordinators and came to understand the programme from their different perspectives. The aim of the following section is to share these perspectives and provide the reader with a picture of how the Positive Futures programme's strategy was played out in practice.

4.1 *The Design of Positive Futures*

The Positive Futures strategy may be summarised using the following set of six statements. The statements are taken from the document 'The State of Play' though their content is also reflected in the earlier document, laying out the Positive Futures strategy, 'Cul-de-Sacs and Gateways'.

The statements encompass the Positive Futures aims and objectives.

1. Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities to achieve realisable goals for individuals and groups of young people who might otherwise be marginalised
2. Be able to engage with young people through helping them learn something they think is worthwhile
3. Sports as a catalyst for bringing people with similar experiences and a shared interest together while maintaining a common bond, duty and sense of responsibility among its participants
4. Build up trust and mutual respect between project staff and young people
5. Introduce a broader range of activities within a supportive and secure environment where participants are encouraged to make decisions for themselves
6. Non-judgmental and culturally appropriate local opportunities for personal development emerge on the basis of *what engages effectively*

In this section we briefly look at how those responsible for delivering the strategy interpreted the aims and objectives. During our fieldwork we asked local project coordinators for their views on the strategy and potential of the programme, as well as examples of how the programme worked on a day-to-day basis. Their testimonies provides us with a 'baseline' of how the national strategy was interpreted locally.

4.2 The interpretation of Positive Futures by practitioners

4.2.1 Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities

“Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities to achieve realisable goals for individuals and groups of young people who might otherwise be marginalised”

The above statement can be summarised in terms of the coordinator’s role in providing access to and making visible life opportunities. Local coordinators told us that through the projects young people were able to familiarise themselves with what activities were available locally and what it was possible to participate in.

Widening horizons interpreted
“After a few months you get to see the confidence levels building up, the more eye contacts, the way they talk to adults improves. Also the circle of friends widens and you can see them gain a few more friends and just... they get to know more of what’s going off and around in Keighley, the clubs where they can go to on an evening, what they can do in the day and so it just broadens the mind and broadens what they’ve got available to them in the day.” Source: Local coordinator testimony, Keighley

As such, at the community level we can assume that Positive Futures does not only try to provide new activities, but also makes existing opportunities more visible. In this respect, the programme creates the necessary knowledge that can lead to ‘widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities’.

4.2.2 Engaging, learning, and value

“Be able to engage with young people through helping them learn something they think is worthwhile”

There are three aspects to the above statement. The first involves coordinators being able to ‘engage with young people’; the second aspect relates to coordinators helping young people learn something; and the third and final aspect, states that what is being learnt is consider to be ‘worthwhile’ by the young people. In this respect, coordinators spoke about all three dimensions.

In the first instance, coordinators emphasised that ‘engagement’ and more specifically building relationships with young people is vital for a successful outcome. Furthermore, the responsibility for successfully relating to the young people falls in the hands of the individual youth worker.

Engaging young people interpreted
“I think it makes a big difference if you can relate to the kids and I am sure I won’t be doing this job if I couldn’t just like most youth workers, I hope. They do the job because they are good at it and they can relate to the kids. So I think the lads I work with at the

moment, the changes we have seen are more to do with the relationship that myself and the sessional workers have built up with them, you know and the time we have invested in them [...] It's about relationships. Kids build that relationship with their youth worker or a Positive Futures worker or a sessional worker or whoever and they got to start listening and responding to what they say you know."

Source: Local coordinator testimony, Liverpool

With regards to learning something considered worthwhile by the young people, the examples provided by local project coordinators varied from the learning of basic hygiene skills to more complex individual and group development. Such learning and development often has much broader implications for young people's futures and their relationships with their environment.

Learning something worthwhile interpreted

"I have seen a lot of changes in a lot of young people. I have couple of examples the first example a guy we call him Ben for the sake of the video. He started to attend the sessions in October 2002 when we first started the programme. At that time he was involved in hot wiring mopeds driving around in the local area causing anti-social behaviour but since then ...since he has been coming to the session he really took to cricket as a sport and he started to attend the lessons more regularly then further discussions he started to come away from that. Last week he had a match and he scored 46 runs and he is getting involved in competitive cricket. This is something that really shows the power of the Positive Futures programme you can get people moving them away from anti-social behaviour and pushing them to a different way of life. So I think that's one really good clear example of the programme."

Source: Local coordinator testimony, Westminster

In terms of 'worthwhile' activities, coordinators spoke about the desires of young people to get involved in different projects and the way in which these drives were facilitated by the Positive Futures teams.

Worthwhile activities interpreted

"Let me think. There's been...there's one case of a young person who was desperate to get involved in...do things on motor vehicles and cars and things and we introduced him to the motor projects and he regularly goes down there now twice a week in the evening and it has just changed his life I suppose and he has got something to look forward to every week and he gets involved and is involved in all the sessions and he enjoys that."

Source: Local coordinator testimony, Keighley

4.2.3 Sports as a catalyst

“Sports as a catalyst for bringing people with similar experiences and a shared interest together while maintaining a common bond, duty and sense of responsibility among its participants”

The third statement expresses a further two aspects of the Positive Futures aims and objectives, namely ‘sport as a catalyst’ and the installation of new values amongst young people.

To this effect coordinators gave examples of how ‘sport as a catalyst’ was interpreted and used locally, in order to instil new ways of thinking and being in young people. The following example was picked for the clear illustration of the strategy in action. The example highlights how the coordinator worked with the young person through the medium of sport, to change an unreflective reaction – in the form of anger – to thoughtful action. The transformation in behaviour is then extended to other contexts in the young person’s life. The quote is lengthy but we leave it in its original format as we find it to be a powerful illustration of both an interpretation of one of the main tenets of the Positive Futures strategy as well as a valuable ‘story of change’:

Sports as a catalyst interpreted

“One example I can give - there is this lad I work with and the first time I met him I was down on the estate and this estate we just started work on and I didn't really know many of the kids, I knew maybe like two of kids. So I come on and I was just walking around really getting a feel for it. I mean it's rough, right. I was down there, and little, this lad came shooting out on one of my electric scooters and he came over and he was like 'what the effing 'ell are you doing on our estate' and all this gobbing off. I just said to him, I said 'listen mate d'you like football?' He was like 'yeah'. I said 'look the only reason I'm down here is cause I'm thinking of doing some football training two nights a week'. I said 'I'd like you to come along'. So I asked his name, told him my name, and he was like 'alright I'll come down'. So first week he came down, good footballer, said to him 'you playing for a team?' and he said 'no, I'm banned from all the teams in Liverpool'. I said 'what for?' and he's like 'fighting'. Every match he plays in has a fire up, really bad anger problem. So I spent about four months, working with him and training him about how to control your temper and walking away from situations and how to respond...Long story short, we went to Wales at the beginning of the summer holidays took my group away for a week to this international tournament in Wales. First time they played together and they got through to semi-finals and in the semi-finals we played this team from Scotland. They were dirty like really really really dirty. So, this lad he gets kicked like two or three times in the first half. He comes off at half time and says 'I am going to kill him, I am going to kill that lad', you know. I said 'relax remember what we said'. And by the end of the game - one all - get into extra time they win 3-1 with that five minutes, a minute to go actually one of our players just totally takes his lad out and gets sent off and loads of fighting and pushing starts and this lad right whose been suspended from all teams in Liverpool, runs over and I am thinking 'oh no he's going to head butt someone', breaks it up, pulls our players away, end of the game, goes over, shakes hands with everyone all their team and their manager and the referee, comes over and he is swearing about them, he's complaining about them and one of the lad goes 'if you're so annoyed with him why did you shake hands? Why didn't you smack him?' He says 'because that is not what you do in football', you know. And I just thought that lad, he's still in Liverpool can't play in any team but over the last three to six months his whole attitude of how to be on a pitch changed. Now what I've done is implemented that into his school life, when you're in a classroom and a teacher has a go at you if you explode you are out of that classroom. If you can learn to control your response you can have a more positive outcome, so for me that's like, that's awesome. You know, the kid has taken stuff onboard and through the sport he's learnt how to control himself and we can now relate that to other situations his home life, his life on the street. You know the times he's in school...”

Source: Local coordinator testimony, Liverpool

4.2.4 Trust and mutual respect

“Build up trust and mutual respect between project staff and young people”

The notion of building trust and mutual respect between the coordinators and participants was recognised by the local coordinators as central to the success of this endeavour. Coordinators explained how the programme’s aim and objective of building trust and mutual respect amongst themselves and young people materialised. Coordinators described how young people would slowly “relax” and “break barriers”. Building trust and mutual respect was a time-consuming, though highly necessary, process in advancing the coordinators’ aim of moving from what coordinators described as inconsiderate and selfish behaviour to a more respectful way of engaging with others. Moving forward without this process was deemed difficult.

Trust and mutual respect interpreted
<p>“I think the main change that I have probably observed... this is probably a general change, is probably about the actual level of trust and I think, feel that... what we often see is young people turn up at the various projects particularly the new projects, particularly if the young person.... or even it is an older project but a young person is new to the project, quite often there is a... what is the word for it, I suppose if we use in its purest form the sort of words like schizophrenic and when I say that I mean I actually having sort of two different characters and I think often young people and they are actually probably three or four different characters what they do when they are actually out associating with their friends, what they may do when they actually at home with their parents, with their family even how they may conduct themselves, even within a professional kind of organisation or even within a project and often what we get when they first come is that sort of, its almost like the kind of street persona, its quite tough, its quite cold, its quite distant and what tends to happen over the couple of months over the three or four months is that they actually start to melt down and its almost as if they come in quite tense and then become... begin to actually relax and often is that you need to go through that three or four month process to actually build up that type of relationship and often when they get to the stage where they are able to relax it is actually... probably the stage where you actually can push the work and really break barriers and actually you know, look at getting some achievements from them.”</p> <p>Source: Local coordinator testimony, Lambeth</p>

4.2.5 Activities, support and decision-making

“Introduce a broader range of activities within a supportive and secure environment where participants are encouraged to make decisions for themselves”

There are three dimensions to the fifth aim and objective of the Positive Futures strategy. In the first instance, the programme aims to introduce a variety of activities; in the second instance it is aimed that these activities will take place in a ‘supportive and secure’ environment; while finally, young people are encouraged to make their own decisions. There was no direct statement of interpretation in the coordinators’

testimonies with regards to the first dimension of the above statement. However, from our interaction with the various groups participating in the evaluation and our informal conversations with coordinators we are able to report the following.

The issue of ‘diversity’ of activity provision was dealt with differently by different groups. There was only one group (Keighley) that followed a strict interpretation of the strategy of ‘introducing a broader range of activities’. The coordinator of this group often reminded us that they were not a football or sports club, but an activity centre, where young people could participate in a range of recreational activities from go-karting, to horse-riding, fitness challenges, dance and raft-building. In another group (Liverpool) ‘diversity’ was interpreted in terms of gender, young men played football and young women participated in yoga classes, dance and health and beauty sessions. In two other groups (Wandsworth), as a result of the nature of the partner organization (a football club) who was in charge of delivering the programme on the ground, the only activity available through Positive Futures was football. Finally, some groups (Lambeth and Westminster) opted out of football altogether providing different activities such as going to the gym and playing cricket, though with no diversity within those activities. Coordinators interpreted the ‘supportive and secure environment’ as the local, community provision of sport, thus making it accessible, familiar and local.

Activities, support and decision-making interpreted
<p>“I think the strategy is really good because a lot of their changes are because they were introduced to sports in their local communities, people coming out to do activities in their local areas. So a lot of the changes I would say is due to the positive futures programme.” Source: Local coordinator testimony, Westminster</p> <p>“Okay, I mean the impact at my local community has been really good. It was after we started the activity then people started to come to the session are really happy and I was doing Positive Futures coaching for 2 - 2 1/2 years. Initially when the coaching sessions started families started to support us. They were really happy we were providing activities for their children. So that's the really good sign.” Source: Local coordinator testimony, Westminster</p>

Participants were encouraged to make their own decisions in many ways. At the level of sporting activity, decision-making is an important skill, for example: “which player is in the best position for me to pass the ball to in a football game?” – “has the ball traveled far enough for me to risk a run in cricket?” – “I am prepared to be a team player” and so on. Although we do not have direct examples of coordinators encouraging such decision-making, we recorded several interactions between young people and coordinators which suggest such encouragement was taking place. Furthermore, young people’s reports of improvement in their sporting skills (see next section) that such encouragement was taking place.

4.2.6 Opportunities for personal development

“Non-judgmental and culturally appropriate local opportunities for personal development emerge on the basis of what engages effectively”

Local coordinators described what they interpret as ‘non-judgemental and culturally appropriate’ ways of facilitating young people’s personal development. These local strategies were characterised by time, patience and simplicity.

Being non-judgemental and culturally appropriate interpreted

“...rather than aim for big wholesale changes which you know i.e. easily recognised and easily recordable its actually better if you actually aim for the small changes but aim for lots of small changes and the first change that I would always aim for is a simple one but its actually quite effective and is an important one and that is actually about striking up a relationship and the easy way to strike up a relationship is to actually have some verbal communication. So the basic things is that quite often what we will do is just make sure that when young people are coming into the projects a simple good morning, good afternoon, good evening, how are you, just a simple greeting and then I sound a little bit pedantic but quite often what happens is that we get young people that coming in there faces quite tough you know, and you know sometimes just stand in front of them and look at them and they are looking at you and you can see they are sort of looking quite annoyed and so forth and you say 'have you forgotten something' and often when they realise that we're coming at such a simplistic level is something, you know that actually makes them then relax and three, four, five weeks further is that you know that greeting would be good morning and by then hopefully touch wood you actually remember their name but is only the small changes and what we get now is that where we get young people come in through the door is that because they know that we are going to expect some form of greeting and such as they will come through the door laughing or they will come through the door and want to get the greeting in before you can actually say anything to them and its those small changes then go together.”

Source: Local coordinator testimony, Lambeth

5. THE EXPERIENCE & MEANING OF POSITIVE FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The fifth section of our report focuses on young people's experiences of the Positive Futures groups and activities. On the one hand we seek to understand how the programme's policy language and intentions are brought to life, on the ground. On the other hand, we are also interested in a thematic exploration of the material gathered. The material was gathered through the use of participatory video, and young people's experiences and views were further explored in focus group discussions. The thematic analysis of the material allows us to understand the programme's significance for the young people.

5.1 *The experience of Positive Futures for young people*

5.1.1 Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities

"Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities to achieve realisable goals for individuals and groups of young people who might otherwise be marginalised"

The programme aim of widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities, or in more shorthand terms the aim of providing a 'future', was experienced in terms of the sporting activities that young people were provided with, as well as the connections that young people were able to make through the project. Such connections included accessing courses or returning to school. The other way in which the future was alluded to, in the documentaries that young people made, was in terms of future employment possibilities (e.g. opening a bike shop, a sound studio, etc). Young people explicitly recognized the importance of education as a way to increase life chances and 'staying clear' of community stressors.

Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities experienced

Neil: The youth nowadays they need little projects like football things like, little clubs where they can go and they are interested in music like, start doing music. If they are interested like on athletics or whatever start doing their own things. *Personally I wanna start my own little thing. I was going to princess trust and open up a bike shop or a bike school, cause like I am a very talented biker, put it that way. If you see my face you must see me around, if you recognise me you know what I am capable of, that all what I'm saying.*

Source: Lambeth AV composition ('South Siderz')

Bob: *I am trying to stay clear* you know and stay away from the feds who fuck you get me bro

Neil: Yeah for real for real it's live though it's live. What would you think will help the community like changing projects or whatever?

Bob: More quality schools in it for young people. People going to college do you get me?

Neil: What like people recruiting hunting like. What do you wanna do?

Bob: What I wanna do?

Neil: Yeah

Bob: Do I tell you the truth Neil? *I wanna be IT in it IT*

Neil: *So you are getting into computers and thing?*

Bob: *Yeah*

5.1.2 Engaging, learning, and value

"Be able to engage with young people through helping them learn something they think is worthwhile"

Young people used the video cameras as a way of both talking about and recognising the encouragement and support they received from their local coordinators. For example, talking about their youth worker, all the young people interviewed by our Liverpool participant, said how great the youth worker was. Other young people in London referred to their sporting sessions as providing them with the opportunity to socialize with friends, while at the same time creating individually 'tailored' adult support and attention. Young people spoke about 'enjoying' the activities provided by their coordinators. For example, in a residential trip to Arundel, the Westminster Sports Unit cricket team described their sporting activities as *very exciting*, and their residential trip to Arundel as *enjoyable* and *fun*. In another example, a young man from a Positive Futures group in Lambeth, after finishing a day long football tournament talks about his experience as having been "a nice day" and one that he would like to see repeated.

Engaging, learning and value experienced

'I think he's a great man and he's done very well for us...there is no other man in our area that would do that for us'

Source: Liverpool, AV composition ('Changes')

'they can be with their friends and work out at the same time...you have your own exercise that the man teaches you'

Source: Lambeth AV composition ('Youth Workout')

Ali: My name is Ali and right now I am watching the cricket match I really enjoy cricket and I think that it's really good that people like Jawar and Abdel are coaching us... taking their time and I feel that *I am really enjoying it and it should go on, yeah...*

Roger: *It's good...Its really good ...Its really good Jawar teaches us lots and he takes us around... fun places like this even though we are getting losed... they are still good to play... very good...Wow! shot Jamie*

Source: Westminster 1 AV composition ("Hitting the Ball")

Sultan: Oh my name is Sultan and I've just had a match on pitch and well but we have lost...*But we had a great time* and we just hope that all my team is... Westminster sports unit and... Positive Future has also helped us a lot... *and also I am looking forward to more tournaments in the future that will help us and we had really really fun today. Thank you Bye.*

Source: Westminster 1 AV composition ("Hitting the Ball")

Ryan: My name is Ryan and the most thing I like about Jawar's cricket because it's the best sport I've ever played I've learnt lots of cover drives and stuff about cricket I used to do... I didn't know anything about cricket... now I have learnt a lot so its really nice. I have made lots of new friends I have improved on my batting and bowling now I am in the Westminster team and I get to play big tournaments on proper grounds and proper grounds and ...I don't know what else to say... on proper grounds and its that...!I'll meet other people from teams, *I play other teams... its very... its very exciting* and when you lose I don't really care because its not about losing *its about having fun* and then we are having a match tomorrow its my last day tomorrow and *I've really enjoyed it at Arundel...Bye*

Source: Westminster 1 AV composition (“Hitting the Ball”)

Eric: I played in the first match yeah [inaudible] I know we can play again d'you get me?

Eric: Big man tell me what's going on out here...

Alex: We finished our last game ...its our best game

Eric: Show them what's going on,

Alex: *We're out we're out straight G done what we got to do we're out having a nice day...love the next one of these days ...you get me?*

Eric: *Straight G...straight straight*

Source: Lambeth AV composition (“Somerleyton FC - Mojo Time”)

5.1.3 Sports as a catalyst

“Sports as a catalyst for bringing people with similar experiences and a shared interest together while maintaining a common bond, duty and sense of responsibility among its participants”

In the previous section we described coordinators’ interpretations of the third dimension of the strategy. This included an example of how sport was used as a means of communicating and supporting the acquisition of new values and behaviours. How young people experienced the above strategy dimension is best captured by a look at how they described the sporting activities on offer. According to the Positive Futures programme material “sport itself is just the hook – the way to say hello, gain respect and earn trust” (Positive Futures, 2003). Young people’s audiovisual compositions provided evidence that the Positive Futures programme was providing an effective engagement strategy through sporting activities as the main catalyst. Through young people’s testimonies we can infer that the use of sport provided a social space that is entertaining and offered young people ‘something to do’.

Engaging young people through sport experienced

Frank: Hi my name is Frank. My team is Westminster and *I think is a good thing what they are around doing here, cause there's something to do.* Is usually on the Saturdays we are just riding around and it is a bit boring, but now we have got things to do on Saturday. And is a bit better for our estate and all the other kids. I live across the road over there in that estate. It's called Warwick estate and my estate is – some bits are fun. We have two parks, but one's for kids and one's for big kids. And some of the things I hate about it is that – people you hate, they take things off you – the police and all that. So I would like things to stop like that, but I can't exactly make things stop. I like the things we do over here and what Jawar does – comes over here, helps us out to play cricket and taking us to Yorkshire some of us who made the team. Bye I've got to go now.

Michael: This is were Jawar works: Westminster Sports Unit and that is what is he representing. Do you reckon this is a good idea?

Respondent: *Yes quite good actually*

Michael: *If there wasn't this what do you normally doing in a Saturday? Not a lot?*

Respondent: *Not a lot. Probably play football or something.*

Michael: *So this really takes your mind and stuff*

Respondent: Yeah

Michael: All right, thank you.

Source: Westminster AV composition (“Hitting the Ball”)

Donald: How do you like it around these places?

Nabil: *Like lots of stuff has been happening in the park and lots of summer activities are happening and they take you on lots of trips and in the park they did new things like a*

football pitch, playing place and a basketball court.
Source: Westminster AV composition ('Hitting the Ball')

More importantly young people recognised the fact that sporting activities were a catalyst for their social relationships. As such engaging through sport with others was experienced as *friendship* and *socialising*. The programme provided young people opportunities to make friends and open up prospects to socialise with a wider range of young people. Furthermore, the combination of socialising with friends while 'working out' appears to be a particularly important aspect of the experience of the Positive Futures strategy: 'what people like about coming to the gym is that they can be with their friends and work out at the same time' (source: Lambeth AV composition, 'Youth Workout!').

Engaging young people through sport experienced
<p>'gym is a place that you can come, young people can come on Sat it's for cheap it's not expensive so a lot of people can come and just work out and get fit in a fun way 'cause all your friends can come and you can work out together' Source: Lambeth AV composition ("Youth Workout")</p>
<p>'to me yeah it's like a social place, you come here, you see you brethren, you train, you joke about, talk about what's happening in school and that, you get me like? It's just like a social thing, innit? As well as that you're training and getting fit and that, so all in all it's good, innit?' Source: Lambeth AV composition ("Youth Workout")</p>
<p><u>Dwain</u>: That is why always (youth club name) is a really hotspot...everyone goes... <u>Nicole</u>: Everyone comes.... <u>Dwain</u>: Everyone goes there. That's why so big, that is the only one standing for so long. <u>Nicole</u>: And they do sports day in summer, run activities for the youths. <u>Dwain</u>: Got indoor football pitch, pool, table tennis, anything, you really want is in it. Youth club is basically for us to all chill and reunite ... you get me? All of us meet...go basically Source: Wandsworth Youth Centre AV composition ("Itz Real")</p>

5.1.4 Trust and mutual respect

"Build up trust and mutual respect between project staff and young people"

The Positive Future strategy aim of building trust and mutual respect took form in young people's use of the 'family' metaphor for describing their Positive Futures groups. For example, the young people in Southwark (Kickstart), talked about being and feeling part of an *extended family* through their activities with Kickstart. They described how the newly appointed Positive Futures local coordinator had to pass the "test" and meet the expectations of the group, after a former popular and charismatic coordinator left the group. Subsequently once trust and mutual respect were established young people could refer to the coordinator as *"he's our family now"*.

Trust and mutual respect are further illustrated through the first North Liverpool video ('Changes'). One activity run by the Liverpool group, called 'Sweepers Zone', involved young people sweeping/clearing the football grounds prior to matches in exchange for free entrance to the match. The clip of the two young men doing

‘Sweepers Zone’, on the one hand demonstrates the activity and the enjoyment derived from it – the two young men clearing the area and having a laugh doing it. Conversely, the clip provides a good illustration of the young people’s respectful and trusting relationship with the main youth worker. The young people heed the coordinators advice and suggestions while at the same time joking with him. During the time we spent working with the North Liverpool group we repeatedly witnessed these elements of the relationship between the young men and the coordinator. The constructive relationship is further demonstrated in the two young men’s second video (‘Friends’). Here almost all of the 12 young people interviewed for the video have something good to say about the youth worker that spends time with them. They describe the youth worker as: ‘he’s boss, he’s sound’; ‘no else would have done this for us’ or ‘you can get along with him very well’.

Trust and respect was closely linked to the theme of improved relationships with adults, as well as between young people. In the young people’s audiovisual compositions such improvements were discussed in terms of having more positive interactions with adults:

Trust and mutual respect interpreted
<p><u>Derek</u>: Alright what does that mean for you? <u>George</u>: What about you... one second <u>Andy</u>: Say if you say if you want to talk to a staff about something yeah so you know that you can trust him so when you are talking to them yeah and we tend, you'll be talking you'd be like Tracy yeah and then you say something bad she'll tell you that, that it is not good do that or it is not good to steal or do drugs. Source: Southwark AV composition ('Under 12's Testimonies')</p> <p><u>Sam</u>: My area is cool... you get to play a lot of football and this is sort of like Kickstart but Kickstart is much better...at Kickstart you get to play matches they treat you like <i>you are part of the family right its kind of, it's real nice.</i> Source: Southwark AV composition ("Under 12's Testimonies")</p> <p><u>Interviewer</u>: So tell me I believe that its very interesting in the relationship that you have with Richard as a senior worker here I don't know if you could tell me sort of what's the relationship how do you feel how important are these workers? <u>Participant 1</u>: I think Richard came into our life...improved as you an see <u>Interviewer</u>: How is he important to you? <u>Participant 2</u>: He came here... he's our family now, we been together since we was about, what, 10? ...all of us been together before secondary school like. And Garry was like...the big part of it followed by Ashley and Richard came into we are not like other groups where someone new comes in ...we bring them in and give them a chance and that's probably how it works...it works out easier than that sort of giving them a hard time. <u>Participant 3</u>: It was weird there because when Richard came before that...because Garry has done a lot for us 3-4 years and we thought that no one could replace Garry and everything so the expectations were high but I think he done well we used him just that getting on a bit just like the same person ...its like Garry never left Source: Southwark Focus Group</p> <p>“...I suppose get more youth activities out there, get more younger people to interact with these younger people, people like not their age but who understand what they are going through and you know motivate them to do things in their life, go to college, getting a job things like that” Source: Lambeth AV composition ('Youth Workout!')</p> <p>“[about the local youth centre] 'that's a main one where everyone goes to especially on Thursday night to link up, that's been going on for years, I'm 18 now, and that's been going on since I was born, before I was even born, since my mum was born and she's even getting a bit old right now, it's really good, a mix of all cultures, despite their ages they are all big men like 30 old some used to go to [youth club's name] themselves as kids, but they all relate to the kids, we're all on a level, there's obviously a boundary of</p>

ages but we're all talk on a level where we can understand each other, so it's nice, you haven't got this overpowering feeling, everyone is uniting as a family basically."
Source: Wandsworth Youth Centre AV composition ('Itz Real')

5.1.5 Activities, support and decision-making

"Introduce a broader range of activities within a supportive and secure environment where participants are encouraged to make decisions for themselves"

Young people did not directly refer to Positive Futures as a 'supportive and secure environment' but often contrasted the local projects to their neighbourhoods. Young people spoke about the need to keep out of trouble and keeping off the streets and often referred to the Positive Futures activities providing an alternative to just "hanging around in the streets".

Activities, support and decision-making experienced

Neil: In our community what we need to help the youngsters is a thing like, more youth projects, maybe a little football team like something that keeps the youths of the street, because the streets here are very corrupted. Let me tell you something about the streets here: how are they portrayed is not exactly how they are like. *I've been through that life of what most youngsters what they are doing now yeah and if they only knew like what I know now. They will not be what they are doing like yeah they wouldn't be doing basically like, they are still young, but the mentality and they've not been taught the right way.*
Source: Lambeth AV composition ('South Siderz')

Tara: (*laugh*) So, Marco, so how do you feel about living around this area?

Marco: I like living around this area, yeah, because like all us young people we stick together, that's why I like it, but then I don't like it for people that just want to cause trouble and police.

Tara: So, what about Kick Start? Do they play a positive role in your life? (*Kick Start is an initiative funded by Positive Futures*)

Frank: Or they're rubbish, man?

Marco: *No, no, without Kick Start -- Yeah, seriously, without Kick Start, I'd be joining people like that yeah (indicating trouble-makers). I'd be joining them, committing crimes. But right now I'm with Kick Start, that's why we're keeping over on the good side.*

Tara: And Marco is one of the, um, volunteers and workers for Kick Start. And so is Frank.

Frank: Thank you.

Source: Southwark AV composition ('Soul Sistaz')

Young people recognised the importance of youth activity provisions in their local area as a strategy to alleviate the social problems identified in their community. Generally young people said that things would improve if 'more' activities were available to them both in terms of having more of what was already available, but more importantly 'more' in terms of variety – to have the opportunity to do "whatever sport you're into" (Lambeth AV composition, 'Youth Workout!'). Discussions around provision of activities predominantly focused on having more youth centres: "Places where they can go...have fun and learn and get off the street" (Lambeth AV composition, 'Youth Workout!'). One young woman made a link between having youth clubs and getting people off the street, while another young

woman elaborated on the links between being on the street, being bored and turning to crime:

Activities, support and decision-making experienced
<p>"If I had power to change something about my area, the things I would change would probably be change would be to make some centre, youth centre where everyone knows about it, where it's well-known, not just certain people, where young people can come at different time and do different activities, so like everyone would feel welcome and do different, different activities, bring people off the street like young people off the street so they don't feel like they have to do crime to feel better about themselves."S "If I could I would make a lot more things for us teenagers to do so we don't get bored and some people might go into crime and steal and this..." Source: Lambeth AV composition ("Youth Workout!")</p>

Young people spoke about making the area safer for the younger kids – usually referring to people younger than themselves. While in the case of the school group we worked with, activity provision – and therefore improvements to the school - was already taking place and so the group in their video described what those improvements were. Some of these improvement included having a girls' netball team, having more after-school training and more fixtures – competitive games.. Having more fixtures allows the school to become more visible, to shed its image of a failing school that takes the worst students, and start to build relationships with other schools, to play games, etc., which eventually allow the students to improve their skills, win games, and thus restore the school's reputation.

Activities, support and decision-making experienced
<p><i>'Yeah use youth centres, youth project, like trips and stuff place where you can go and have fun off, off the street, like little football tournaments, youth centres things like that. Its just the basic around the street we can go in both, where you can go places where we can go and learn something as well. You get me. Have fun, to get them off the street'</i> Source: Lambeth AV composition ("Youth Workout!")</p> <p><i>'I have the power to change the bad things I think I would change the crime rate its how, I don't know how I will do that but I do I suppose get more youth activities out there, get more, more younger people to interact with these younger people, people and that kind of like not their age but understandably grown and more of involve them to do things in their life like going to college or you know taking, getting the job or things like that'</i> Source: Lambeth AV composition ("Youth Workout!")</p> <p><i>'First of all kids on the streets it's no good man... stuff there coming home from school they are still out in their in uniform till 6 o'clock and there is the home and get a change of something to come that's right and change that ...resolve the problem I would make more activities around the area and stuff so they can go to that and that stuff that up and some of them to do because there is lacking of activity.'</i> Source: Wandsworth Youth Centre AV composition ("Itz Real")</p> <p><i>'You need entertainment things like for young people...'</i> Source: Wandsworth School Focus group</p>

However, not all young people perceived the level of support in their communities as being high. In a couple of the groups the young person/interviewer asked his peers who, in the community, they felt helped young people. One young man gave a positive response saying that people (friends, teachers and parents) were helping him.

But others also indicated a lack of support. At the same time, in another group, one young man expressed his feeling that the community wasn't doing anything for him and his friends.

Activities, support and decision-making experienced
'yeah, a lot of people...like teachers, my parents, my mates...my mates are helping me revise and my mum is giving me encouragement, pushing me that little bit extra' Source: Keighley AV composition ('Keighley Crew!')
'activities are rubbish and no one's helping me really, it's all crap' Source: Keighley AV composition ('Keighley Crew!')
'what is the community doing for us? Nothing! I'll tell you that from now, they're not doing nothing. You know what they need to do? They need to open these little clubs [names] what they need to do yeah, is bring the little ones and do something constructive, like boxing, you'll find enough little kids on the endz want to do boxing, cause they're frustrated innit, so let them punch a punching bag...that's what I think the community should do for us, they're not doing it' Source: Wandsworth Youth Centre AV composition ('Itz Real!')

There were several examples of interactions between young people and coordinators, where coordinators tried to instil ideas of taking ownership over space and decision-making to encourage young people to make their own decisions. A good example of this was captured during one of our focus group discussions where the local coordinator and youth worker spent almost the entire discussion trying to explain the concept of 'ownership' to the group of young people. During this discussion the coordinator and the youth worker also encouraged young people to talk about the sort of decisions they would need to make in order to protect and enjoy what was theirs:

Activities, support and decision-making experienced
<p><u>Local coordinator</u>: if I just say I'm going to build a pitch there it might get wrecked, if Lex and his, Mitch and all his mates and people, and families, whose row of houses are around there, if we get them to take some ownership for the pitch, if they want it to happen and they see this thing right then they're not going to wreck what's theirs.</p> <p><u>Youth worker</u>: Because if you dug your own front garden and [inaudible] would you then go and wreck it yourself? No, because you put loads of 'ard work in it. That's the thing yeah.</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>Local coordinator</u>: If I built a fair, Kelly, if I built a fair in your garden, Kelly if I built a fair in your garden, near where you live, then would you wreck it?</p> <p><u>Kelly</u>: No.</p> <p><u>Local Coordinator</u>: Because you like it and you want it to be there. And if you wreck it it's no longer going to be there. So it's about ownership, it's about people taking responsibility for their own.</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>Youth Worker</u>: But we want you to understand, but we're just trying to get you to realise that if you get the people in the area involved [everyone talking at the same time] if you get the people in the area involved it helps, it helps to keep it better, than if it was someone from outside, come and fix it up and then people think 'we don't know what to do with that, so it doesn't matter if we wreck it or not'</p> <p><u>Lex</u>: What about CCTV?</p> <p>Source: Focus Group North Liverpool</p>

5.1.6 Opportunities for personal development

“Non-judgmental and culturally appropriate local opportunities for personal development emerge on the basis of what engages effectively”

In the audiovisual compositions young people spoke about the benefits of sporting activities in terms of personal development across three levels: psychological, social and health benefits. In their videos young people recognised that some of the benefits of sports are: *self-esteem, self-worth, confidence building and relaxation*. Some of the psychological benefits of going to the gym, for example, were cited as, ‘makes me feel better about myself, more confident’ (Lambeth AV composition, ‘Youth Workout!’). Going to the gym was also ‘fun’; activities came across as being enjoyable which is key in sustaining participation.

For example, a young woman in Lambeth said that sporting activities made her “feel better about herself”. Furthermore, another young woman reported that sporting activities were a relaxing experience that provided her with relief from daily stresses. The following testimonies illustrate some of the psychological benefits.

Opportunities for personal development experienced
<p>‘I am coming to gym because it gives me something to do like gets me off the streets and makes me feel better about myself, more confident and its fun as well because you get to meet some new people so you are socialising and working out at same time.’</p> <p>‘About my area is the gym because gym is the <i>place you can calm...</i>’ Source: Lambeth AV Composition (“Youth Workout!”)</p>

Learning and the development of a range of social skills was also recognised, by some of the young people, as a major benefit to be gained from participating in sporting activities. The following examples come from testimonies collected with young people in Southwark, in regard to skills of teamwork, communication and concentration.

- *Teamwork*: Young people conveyed the importance of working cooperatively as a unit in their groups (e.g. teams)
- *Communication*: Young people implied the importance of being effective listeners with their peers and respect for other person’s viewpoint.
- *Concentration*: Young people express the importance of concentration by articulating that they should be more focused and determined towards achieving goals or tasks. (e.g. concentrate more and thus gain better results in the football local league).

Finally, young people identified positive health benefits of sports, by stating that the activities were helping them to get fit, to reduce “bad habits” such as smoking and promote healthy behaviours, and improve self-image, by improving their bodies in time for the summer. The psychological, social and health benefits identified and experienced by the young people also have indirect (positive) consequences, as they themselves report: obviating involvement in less socially desirable pastimes such as anti-social behaviour, crime, and drugs.

Opportunities for personal development experienced
<p><u>Andy</u>: Right take your time it doesn't matter. Do you want to just stop there. <i>You just work as a team</i> yeah.</p> <p><u>Ron</u>: <i>There is one more word that begins with a C... Communication</i></p> <p><u>Andy</u>: <i>Communication yeah that's the word.</i> You play out front there as striker yeah?</p> <p><u>Ron</u>: Yeah</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>Ron</u>: Play yeah and like when you are older as you are growing up yeah, you can get better, like playing. And then like, I like playing football a lot, its like one of my favourite hobbies. and I play because <i>I want to like, you know when you play we can work as a team</i> and</p> <p>....</p> <p><u>Andy</u>: You don't know yet, alright that's okay...how do you think under 12's are doing so far. In the league, do you think they can be playing any better?</p> <p><u>Jamie</u>: I think we can play better....</p> <p><u>Dean</u>: <i>I think we can concentrate a bit more.</i></p> <p>Source: Soutwark AV Composition ("Under 12's Testimonies - Kickstart")</p> <p><u>Tamara</u>: Why do you come to the gym, what is the purpose of you coming to the gym today?</p> <p><u>Young man 1</u>: To get fit.</p> <p><u>Young man 2</u>: For summer like.</p> <p>....</p> <p><u>Tamara</u>: Why do you come to the gym? What is the purpose of you come to the gym today?</p> <p><u>Young man</u>: <i>To get fit.</i></p> <p>Source: Lambeth AV Composition ("Youth Workout!")</p>

At a more abstract thematic level, the experience of the Positive Futures strategy aim of 'building up trust and mutual respect among project staff and participants', can be described through the themes of 'links and relationships'. Young people are not only the recipients of programme benefits, they also become vital links in a chain of involving others. For example, the youth worker from Lambeth comments on how the audiovisual work undertaken by Neil reaches into areas of the community, which he is usually kept out of:

Opportunities for personal development experienced
<p>"It was interesting to me when I saw the cut that Neil had come back with because there was two or three of the young men who were involved in that who I tried to approach myself...because we were working in different parts of the project...and I'd tried to approach them to get them to actually kind of be involved in making the video, and that had been a non-starter, they'd really not kind of bought into it coming from me. I think um Neil maybe has got enough um presence in the community to be able to get into places that I definitely couldn't go and couldn't sort of like...kind of get people to open up a little bit, so it's amazing some of the stuff you saw that you know probably wouldn't be easy to capture and that some of the guys that I wanted to contribute did contribute, but maybe just in a kind of roundabout route."</p> <p>Source: Plenary workshop; Lambeth coordinator</p>

5.2 The meaning of Positive Futures for young people

In this section we are interested in a thematic exploration of the material gathered. Looking at the themes which emerge out of the synthesis and analysis of the material gathered will enable us to say something about the meanings that Positive Futures held for young people.

5.2.1 Creation of alternative spaces

The theme of an *alternative space* has a twofold significance. On the one hand it refers to the physical space provided by the local projects and the activities. Conversely, the theme refers to the symbolic spaces that are created and extended through the emergence of the social relationships initiated and created in the physical spaces. It is this dual nature of this alternative space that distinguishes the Positive Futures programme, for example, in for the provision of leisure facilities. Leisure facilities may operate in a physical space, but do not necessarily provide *systematic, organised* opportunities for the creation of social relationships and symbolic spaces, such as friendships (or if they do, the creation of such relationships is left to chance). In some cases, a space may already exist, as in the cases of Lambeth or the Wandsworth Youth Centre, where both youth centres – the place out of which the Positive Futures activities are run – predate the Positive Futures programme and are already providing a place ‘where everyone can link up, get together, you know, just take it easy’ (Lambeth AV composition, ‘South Siderz’). In other cases, like that of Liverpool, Westminster or Brighton, Positive Futures created a new space through the cricket training and dance.

Positive Futures creates a space other than the space provided by the ‘streets’. For example, one young woman interviewed for the Reading documentary, elaborates on the relationship of drugs and crime and the difference Positive Futures is making.

Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities experienced

“Positive Futures is good because it’s getting a lot of kids off the streets and off the corners, and Whitley is just a shit hole, there is not enough things for teenagers and young people, things for them to do, basically (*silence*).

What sort of things you think they want to do?

I think they should make up more clubs, like places to go, places just to chill out, so they are not on the corners and more sports things to do, because there are a lot of sporty young teenagers and there is no...and if they wanna like become someone, be someone like athletics and stuff, there is no way that they are gonna do it, because there is no one around here that can help. If there is um anything to do, it normally like big people go and it normally like costs a lot of money.”

Source: Reading AV composition (‘Whitley’)

The spatial metaphor can be found in comments made from a young woman from Brighton. The dance activities she is involved in provide a space to ‘keep out of trouble’. And in the inner city, where physical space is a commodity, it becomes particularly important to be able to have alternative spaces to escape to.

Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities experienced

“Just, I don’t know, it’s just something to do and when there are shows, I don’t know, just to show people that it ain’t that bad in Moulsecomb like what we can do and to keep out of trouble.”

Source: Brighton AV composition (‘We can do it!’)

“What do people say is something that (*unclear*) that eventually could look different? (*Unclear*) Alleyways, there’s quiet areas. A lot of concrete jungle. Concrete jungle that you can escape and hide in places. A lot of crack houses hidden on estates and you wouldn’t even know they’re there. When you’ve got houses spaced out in the countryside, I don’t know, there’s less places to hide. It’s more of a loose knit community. And more inner city, in the raw, in the proper um, in the proper urban where you come in and it’s all squashed together and your neighbours are right next door, so it’s like yeah, and then your next neighbour’s next door, so tight and so close. When you cram like a hundred young people in one estate, the word of mouth’s gonna get round very quickly.”

Source: Southwark AV composition (‘South Siderz’)

“Soul sistaz just really represents an environment where you can talk about girls issues, but we’re not like socially exclusively for girls.”

Source: Southwark AV composition (‘South Siderz’)

The space enabled by Positive Futures is also a space where young people can escape boredom. The following dialogue, recorded on camera during a cricket game in Arundel, is a good example demonstrating the value of this space for young people. It is an enjoyable space, a space where ‘fun’ can be had.

Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities experienced

Young person 1: Jack has come off and Cameron played alright he played some nice shots the before coming off, and Jason’s gonna go on... alright we are just hoping the weather changes everything get back out there to the middle and score some runs and win the game. The white specks you can see on the ground these are in fact hailstones as you can see it’s a dot of white around the pitch the match has been cancelled.

Young person 2: Has it?

Young person 3: Too good

Young person 1: It has... how do you guys feel?

Young person 4: We are devastated

Young person 5: Sad...sad..sad

Young person 6: and soaked

Young person 4: It’s a pity we are going to do nothing

Young person 6: If it dries do we have a chance to play?

Young person 1: We will see lets have a look.. if the pitch is dry if it’s going to dry out

Source: Westminster AV composition (‘Cricketmania’)

“Oh my name is Sultan and I’ve just had a match on pitch and well but we have lost...but we had a great time and we just hope that all my team is... Westminster sports unit and... and Positive Future has also helped us a lot...and also I am looking forward to more tournaments in the future that will help us and we had really really fun today. Thank you Bye.”

Source: Westminster AV composition (‘Cricketmania’)

Through the documentaries we also become privy to how these spaces created and/or developed through Positive Futures funding are organized and supported by the youth workers and local coordinators. The role of the coach is not only one of role model, but also one of organizer and motivator. In the case of Lambeth, for example, we see

some of the ‘strategies’ used by the coach in order to introduce forward planning and teamwork with the group.

Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities experienced

“Ian lied to everyone and told them that we had to be there for 9.30 but really is 10 o’clock, actually you got to do to pre-plan better these days,”

Local coordinator: Right listen up... listen up I it ain’t a popular thing we are four nil down we are four nil down with that so its not a popular thing but teams have to... you have to go through these kind of results actually... to actually progress alright,

Young person: You get me I am really important

Local coordinator: If we can do little things like for instance, Mogs... right, has done a lot of... made a lot of tackles... made a lot of blocks we can get a little bit of support, Drags you have done a lot of stuff individually if we can work together a little bit then we get a better effect...just having to play a lil closer together, alright just supporting each other ...its li’l things out there

Source: Lambeth AV composition (‘Somerleyton FC - Mojo Time’)

In summary the evidence gained from our analysis of the young peoples views, confirms that Positive Future’s modus operandi and strategy, based in opening conceptual and physical spaces, mediated by a supportive climate of trust for developing relationships, offers an adequate strategic framework for understanding, engaging and enabling change in young people. However, through our interactions with the groups we also found that Positive Futures projects often had to cater for young people in adjacent areas. This meant that some young people had to travel quite a distance in order to benefit from the programme, therefore rendering the programme non-local. While at the same time resulting in local projects were staff found themselves overstretched (e.g.: Lambeth and Liverpool). We find this to be a limitation of the targeted approach chosen by the Positive Futures programme. Young people might benefit more if the programme’s philosophy, which clearly receives a positive evaluation from the perspective of the young people, was uncoupled from the ‘drugs, crime and risk’ agenda, and therefore making it more widely accessible.

5.2.2 Building on what is already there

As discussed in section three, one of the issues surfaced through young people’s audiovisual compositions was the absence of things to do. Young people repeatedly talked about having ‘nothing to do’. Taken at face-value the ‘nothing to do’ narrative appears quite seamless and straight-forward. However, there is a contradiction in this narrative which can provides us with further insight into the relationship between PF programme and the young people. The contradiction in the ‘nothing to do’ narrative emerges from one of the documentaries (Westminster 1) and suggests that where there is nothing there is also something and Positive Futures, as a programme, looks to build on what is already there. One young man from an estate in London’s Borough of Westminster, talking to the camera, tells us that despite there being ‘nothing to do’ people get together and find things to do. One of these ‘things to do’ is to play sport. Through the narrative that unfolds in Michael’s testimony, it becomes clear that the Positive Futures programme adds something to the existing ability to ‘use their minds and think of things to do’. The additional dimension added by Positive Futures is

‘support’ which often appears in young people’s accounts in the form of the ‘coach’. It seems that Jawar as a coach provides the young people with support, something that was unlikely to have been in place when young people are improvising on their own. This is important to consider in light of how the Positive Futures approach operates ‘on the ground’. The contradiction in the narrative suggests that the Positive Futures programme works by building on what’s available and already there, as opposed to re-inventing the wheel or imposing itself on young people.

Building on what is already there
<p>‘this estate really is not much to do but the people that they are here use their minds and think of things to do and even though there not a lot to do, but we just jet around and do stuff’.</p> <p>Source: Westminster AV composition (‘Hitting the Ball’)</p>

5.2.3 Exploration of own potential

Audiovisual methods provide opportunities for young people to demonstrate their abilities and nowhere was this more clear than on what young people chose to record using the video cameras. The value of exploring one’s own potential is succinctly captured in the following quotation from Neil, who made the Lambeth documentaries: *‘A couple more matches like this – so we can go and show our expertise...’* (Lambeth 2). Here we look at ‘ability’ itself and its relationship to Positive Futures.

In the Lambeth (1) documentary, Neil, our narrator, chooses to show his own and his friends’ biking abilities – this is how the video starts. These are abilities that he has been able to develop while participating in Positive Futures. Furthermore, it is these present abilities that he would like to invest in for the future. The Westminster (1 & 2) documentaries contain scenes of demonstrating ability and potential through playing cricket. There are scenes of ‘skill demonstration’, for example putting on pads, bowling, and the medium also offers the chance to talk about the sports knowledge gained while participating in Positive Futures, as well as what has been achieved. The two groups of young people we worked with in Wandsworth, London were also keen to demonstrate their skills and abilities on camera. Young people often spoke about ‘talent’ and showed off these skills in front of the camera. In the school in Wandsworth young people insisted on capturing their ball skills on camera. While young people from the Wandsworth youth centre used the demonstration of talents on camera, such as ‘urban music’, ‘dance’ and basketball skills, as a way of resisting and countering negative representations of their areas.

Widening horizons, raising aspirations and providing opportunities experienced
<p>“I have learnt lots over the last couple of months really, I have learnt lots of different shots that I can play I have learnt to play more shots than just to lash out at the ball I have learnt to bowl straighter like I have to run up bend my arms and also I have learnt.. I have learnt a lot about wicket keeping because I have always liked wicket keeping but I have never done it with hard ball before and hardly just managed to get into the Westminster wicket keeper and its quite its quite fun because you are involved in nearly every ball and so you always have something to do there is fast bowlers which we have to be back alright away far back if you are... depending on their bounce if they have got high bounce you need to be back anyway if they have a</p>

low bounce you wanna be close which can be scary sometimes specially against fast bowlers because of the speed they hit they can come into your hands. Well I've learnt lots over the last couple of hours and I have done I think I have done really well I have found it really fun in the Westminster side and that's really it..."

Source: Westminster AV composition ('Cricketmania')

The strength of the chosen, audiovisual methodology, also becomes clear in the theme of demonstrating ability. Much of what the young people were able to *show* on camera would of course have been lost in purely oral communication. The example of the Brighton documentary, illustrates this clearly. This audio-visual composition is probably the least interesting in terms of action and dialogue but strongly carries the theme of exploring ability. Most of the documentary consists of the young women rehearsing their dance routine. There is very little dialogue, aside for the last section, and the soundtrack is the same song used by the young women for their dance routine, which keeps repeating 'you can do, put your ass into it'. Interestingly the title of the song is reflected in both the title of the young women's documentary ('We can do it'), as well as in the repetition of the images of their rehearsal. Taken together, as an audiovisual composition, we could say that what this group is trying to show us is that they are not only capable of getting the dance routine together but that they can also learn and achieve things. The repetition of the dance routine, demonstrates achievement as it is taking place. Taken together, as an audiovisual composition, we could say that what this group is trying to show us is that they are not only capable of getting the dance routine together but that they can also learn and achieve things. The repetition of the dance routine, demonstrates achievement as it is taking place.

The possibility offered to young people to demonstrate and communicate their abilities and skills to a broader audience is an inherent characteristic of their work with participatory multimedia and the resulting audiovisual compositions. There are three implications connected with 'showing'. First, by capturing their sports abilities on camera, young people are able to show others what they are capable of. In one sense they are able to *prove* that which may be more easily dismissed by an outsider if, restricted to a purely oral account. Secondly, capturing their abilities at physical activities on camera allows them to use and develop the skills involved in using different language forms, for examples those associated with asking questions, presenting, discussing, being critical and describing. The activity of presenting their abilities in this way raises their own and others' awareness about their possession of both their abilities and skills at particular physical activities and their skills at working in an audiovisual language – making and communicating documentaries about such activities. Finally, the third implication connected with showing has theoretical salience for the use of participatory multimedia research. One of the theoretical principles underpinning the audiovisual work was echoed by one of the participants who found it a good thing that she had been able to both *show* and *tell* about *what is* and *what could be* See Humphreys, Lorac and Ramella, 2001)

Demonstrating abilities

"The activities were really good, when we watched our films and then we had the chance to discuss them and tell them what we thought of them, I think that was good the way we done that.

Source: Group workshop 1, Southwark participant

5.2.4 Role models

Another theme emerging from young people’s audiovisual compositions about their involvement in Positive Futures, is a special type of relationship captured by the concept of ‘role model’. In the audiovisual compositions both local coordinators and young people talk about existing role models and explain the effects these role models have on young people’s lives: Positive Futures tries to show young people ‘something better’. There are various strategies that can be used to show ‘something better’. For example, it could be pointed out to young people that wanting to make money from selling drugs is ‘bad’. This would be a strategy based on ‘forbidding’ action. Instead, the strategies the programme appears to be following are based more on providing ‘alternatives’. Coordinators try to provide alternatives to current role models and expand the concept and understanding of ‘role models’ beyond that which is already known.

Links and relationships
<p>“I think there is a certain amount of crime from youths because they don’t have nothing to do basically they need more stuff to do and they don’t have people to follow, so it’s like we are following, so they are following friends who like get them into trouble basically”</p> <p>Source: Soutwark AV composition (‘Soul Sistaz’); view of local resident interviewed in the video</p>
<p>“We work with a young man and we ask him what he wants to do and he wants to be a drug dealer because that’s what his dad is and his dad hasn’t been caught and as far as he can see his dad makes loads of money and has an easy life, so that’s his role model.</p> <p>Source: Plenary workshop video, Positive Futures Coordinator</p>
<p>“If you see something constantly, or you think like that’s a good thing, you know, if you don’t see anything else, like for example this boy, he just saw that and that’s the only road he knows, and he hasn’t been caught, he’s making money, why not? You know, if you’ve never been shown anything better.</p> <p>Source: Plenary workshop video, Kickstart member talking</p>

The Positive Futures programme provides the opportunity for young people to develop relationships of asymmetry and hierarchy with the support staff (meaning the youth workers and the Positive Futures coordinators) through sporting activities. However, these relationships are not based on the principle of authority – as some hierarchical and asymmetrical relationships can be – instead they are based on principles of inspiration and support. Role models, usually youth worker and Positive Futures coordinators, are people whose job it is to open up possibilities for young people and guide them through initial stages.

These role model relationships, based on principles of inspiration and support, are captured in the language used by young people to talk about sports coaches and coordinators. For example, in the Westminster (2) documentary when young people talk about their cricket coach the language used is language of praise and admiration (‘he can coach professionally’), while at the same time qualifying their relationship with him (‘he helps people that are not so good and helps people who are good’):

Links and relationships
<p>'he is heavy, yeah. I think he can coach professionally. He helps people that are not so good and helps people who are good'</p> <p>Source: Westminster, AV composition ('Hitting the Ball')</p>

As such, playing cricket becomes directly linked with the coach (Jawar) to the point that cricket is no longer just cricket but 'Jawar's cricket'. As an activity, cricket becomes a vehicle for learning new skills, values and behaviours:

Links and relationships
<p>"My name is Ryan and the most thing I like about Jawar's cricket because it's the best sport I've ever played I've learnt lots of cover drives and stuff about cricket I used to do..."</p> <p>"I can't go to Arundel because Jawar told me I have to work on my behaviour game and Arundel is a good place for children playing cricket"</p> <p>"It's good...Its really good ...Its really good Jawar teaches us lots and he takes us around... fun places like this even though we are getting losed... they are still good to play... very good"</p> <p>Source: Westminster, AV composition ('Cricketmania')</p>

Similar examples can be found in the audiovisual compositions with sport as their main theme. For example, in the Lambeth (2) documentary there are many examples of 'respecting the coach', as well as comments of the relationship built up between the coach and the Positive Futures participants:

Links and relationships
<p>"here everyone is in the changing room, all hyped up, excited about the day and not too sure what it might bring... like a great day... great thanks to Ian [PF Coordinator] for putting it on and bringing us here and now we owe it to him..."</p> <p><u>Neil</u>: The organiser and chief (local coordinator's name), he got ...he is there chillin' ...great skies..."</p> <p>Source: Lambeth, AV composition ('Sommertown FC – Mojo Time')</p>

At Kickstart, on the other hand, we find that the relationships with support staff create a, positive family atmosphere:

Links and relationships
<p><u>Andy</u>: We are here with Ron who has just recently signed for under 12's at Kickstart [Positive Futures partner in Southwark]. Ron say some of the things that you like about your area?</p> <p><u>Ron</u>: My area is cool... <i>you get to play a lot of football and this is sort of like Kickstart</i></p>

but Kickstart is much better...at Kickstart you get to play matches they treat you like you are part of the family right its kind of, it's real nice.
Source: Soutwark, AV composition ('Under 12s - Testimonies')

5.2.5 Links and relationships

Young people, when referring to their involvement in the Positive Futures programme and its related activities, often made references, both implicitly and explicitly, to how the programme had helped them create links and build relationships with others. On the one hand, these links and relationships, in the words of the young people, take the shape of friendships and acquaintances. On the other hand, the development of these links and relationships play a part in the life and sustainability of the local Positive Futures programmes. In this section we look at both of these aspects of links and relationships.

The audiovisual composition put together by the group of young women from Brighton provides us with an initial instance for understanding links and relationships. In the final section of the documentary the young women stand in front of the camera, in pairs, talking about each other and describing their relationships. These relationships are described as being supportive 'she's always there' or 'she's always like someone to talk to' and highlight the effect each young woman has on the other 'she is kind, generous' or 'she makes me laugh' (Brighton). The friendships shown in the Brighton documentary could arguably be existing friendships. Nonetheless, the space (see section 3.1.6 ('Creation of alternative spaces', below) in this section) and activities provided by Positive Futures can be said to contribute to maintaining and developing these relationships.

Another relevant example is found in the Westminster group's audiovisual composition. The quotation from one of the young men demonstrates that learning, in a group, gave him the opportunity to meet people and make friends. In making these links, however transient or intransient they may be, young people are extending their social networks, both in their local areas and elsewhere, and thus broadening their experiences:

Links and relationships

"My name is Ryan and the most thing I like about Jawar's cricket because it's the best sport I've ever played I've learnt lots of cover drives and stuff about cricket I used to do... I didn't know anything about cricket... now I have learnt a lot so its really nice. I have made lots of new friends I have improved on my batting and bowling now I am in the Westminster team and I get to play big tournaments on proper grounds and proper grounds andI don't know what else to say... on proper grounds and its that....I'll meet other people from teams, I play other teams... its very... its very exciting and when you lose I don't really care because its not about losing its about having fun and then we are having a match tomorrow its my last day tomorrow and I've really enjoyed it at Arundel...Bye"
Source: Westminster AV composition ('Cricketmania')

Within the context of Positive Futures, the social network is strengthened through the introduction of the values of teamwork. The value of teamwork is exemplified in the Lambeth (2) documentary when Neil, the young man who participated in the YPV project, comments on the ‘solidness’ of the team despite the ‘un-solid’ tournament result (they did not do as well as they had hoped). Teamwork is the next step in developing links and relationships; it can be said to represent the form of group coordination that comes with nurturing links and relationships:

Links and relationships
<p>“Neil: Yeah oh do you know what you know I am not even going to lie bruv ... everyone was solid there the whole team was solid really, the man smacked it ...the team was solid.... The team was solid G, don’t even watch that yeah man ... team was solid ...Bad at last hour is it ..Team was solid G...he made a nice shoot, few attempts to get me everything was solid...”</p> <p>Source: Lambeth AV composition (‘South Siderz’)</p>

A further aspect of nurturing links and relationships amongst young people is demonstrated in the Southwark documentary. A young man from Kickstart – the local community youth project which receives part of its funding from Positive Futures – tells the camera that ‘us young people stick together’. ‘Sticking together’ is the alternative to the ‘dark side’ and the other young people who like to cause trouble. The role of Kickstart according to this young man, is precisely to facilitate this ‘sticking’ process, it keeps young people together and out of trouble. In this respect projects like Kickstart become the facilitators of social relations, transforming spaces of ‘nothing to do’ into spaces of ‘something to do’:

Links and relationships
<p>“No, no, without Kickstart yeah, seriously, without Kickstart, I’d be joining people like that yeah (<i>indicating trouble-makers</i>). I’d be joining them, committing crimes. But right now I’m with Kickstart, that’s why we’re keeping over in the good side.”</p> <p>Source: Southwark AV composition (‘Soul Sistaz’)</p>

One final aspect of the ‘links and relationships’ theme that emerges from the discussions in one of our plenary workshop, concerns the role played by these relationships in furthering the reach of programmes like Positive Futures. Young people are not only the recipients of programme benefits, they also become vital links in a chain of involving others. For example, the youth worker from Lambeth comments on how the audiovisual work undertaken by Neil reaches into areas of the community which he is usually kept out of:

Links and relationships
<p>“It was interesting to me when I saw the cut that Neil had come back with because there was two or three of the young men who were involved in that who I tried to approach myself...because we were working in different parts of the project...and I’d tried to approach them to get them to actually kind of be involved in making the video, and that had been a non-starter, they’d really not kind of bought into it coming from me. I think um Neil maybe has got enough um presence in the community to be able to get into places that I definitely couldn’t go and couldn’t sort of like...kind</p>

of get people to open up a little bit, so it's amazing some of the stuff you saw that you know probably wouldn't be easy to capture and that some of the guys that I wanted to contribute did contribute, but maybe just in a kind of roundabout route."
Source: Local coordinator testimony, Lambeth

5.2.6 Introducing different values

One of the aspects of everyday life explored in the audiovisual compositions is crime and street life. Neil, for example, talks about 'keeping the youth off the street' and shares his philosophy about why crimes are committed. The view is echoed by another project participant from Southwark who explains the relationship between money and short-term gains:

Introducing different values

Local coordinator: if I just say I'm going to build a pitch there it might get wrecked, if Lex and his, Mitch and all his mates and people, and families, whose row of houses are around there, if we get them to take some ownership for the pitch, if they want it to happen and they see this thing right then they're not going to wreck what's theirs.
Youth worker: Because if you dug your own front garden and [inaudible] would you then go and wreck it yourself? No, because you put loads of 'ard work in it. That's the thing yeah.
...
Local coordinator: If I built a fair, Kelly, if I built a fair in your garden, Kelly if I built a fair in your garden, near where you live, then would you wreck it?
Kelly: No.
Local Coordinator: Because you like it and you want it to be there. And if you wreck it it's no longer going to be there. So it's about ownership, it's about people taking responsibility for their own.
...
Youth Worker: But we want you to understand, but we're just trying to get you to realise that if you get the people in the area involved [everyone talking at the same time] if you get the people in the area involved it helps, it helps to keep it better, than if it was someone from outside, come and fix it up and then people think 'we don't know what to do with that, so it doesn't matter if we wreck it or not'
Lex: What about CCTV?
Source: Focus Group North Liverpool

According to this explanation, money, and in particular 'quick' money, can be described as a value, a guiding logic, of committing crime and getting involved in drugs. However, what is interesting is that when Neil interviews his friends their comments seem to suggest that the role of some of the activities on the estate have been to introduce different values. In particular, values associated with more long-term investment as opposed to quick gains. The group of young people interviewed by Neil, talk about the importance of getting an education and of doing something with one's life. Similarly, an example from Westminster (2) demonstrates the strategies used by the coach to introduce new values and behaviours: "*I can't go to Arundel because Jawar told me I have to work on my behaviour game and Arundel is a good place for children playing cricket*" (Westminster)

Introducing different values

"What is all about? Right. Youth needs manners first of all yeah and then they need some were they can get a good education like. Because if they don't start at home yeah is not gonna work how carry it on to the streets like."

Bob: I am trying to stay clear you know and stay away from the feds who fuck you get me bro

Neil: Yeah for real, for real, it's live though it's live. What would you think will help the community like changing projects or whatever?

Bob: More quality schools in it for young people. People going to college do you get me?

Neil: What like people recruiting hunting like. What do you wanna do?

Bob: What I wanna do?

Neil: Yeah

Bob: Do I tell you the truth Neil? I wanna be IT in it IT

Neil: So you are getting into computers and thing?

Bob: Yeah

Mat: [to the camera, winding his mates up] This guy here is a fuck, don't believe what is he saying.

--

Neil: Music and Football is the way up? So how are you going to help young brothers that this yeah that can't really MC yeah and they've got two left feet? What is gonna happened?

Bill: No way I am going to college to get education pal? You sit in your ass and you are going to be fucked all your life. You know what I am saying bro, that's the truth

Neil: But straight man college is helping yeah? Is not the greatest, some people yeah they cannot be bothered to wait the length of the time yeah that college take to start making the pipi you get me? So like what do we do?"

Source: Lambeth AV composition ('South Siderz')

6. MULTIMEDIA AS ACTIVITY AND EVALUATION

The introduction and use of audio-visual technologies for qualitative research within, the Positive Futures Young People's Views projects, was grounded and conceived as a tool to facilitate self-expression amongst young people. The key assumption was that young people would prefer to tell stories about their communities rather than respond to lengthy questionnaires. As a result, the Young People's View project places oral and visual culture at the centre of its methodology. The use of audio-visual technologies enabled the creation of new forms of expression, providing young people with many different ways of constructing and sharing their experiences (Olmos, 1999, Humphreys and Brezillon, 2002). At the same time, the methodology is grounded in forms of data collection that generate a rich understanding to the symbolic world of participants (Flick, 1998).

In order to find out what young people thought about the multimedia activities, we asked them, in the context of focus group discussions, about the Positive Futures programme and the multimedia evaluation. The discussion questions in the second part of the focus group were aimed at reflecting on the research process. The aim of the questions was to elicit discussions around the experience of taking part in the audiovisual activities. We also spoke with local coordinators, who undoubtedly knew the young people far better than ourselves, and were in a position to complement young people's opinions of the audiovisual activities.

6.1 What young people thought of the Audio-Visual research

We asked the young people to describe our research to us as though they were telling one of their friends about it. We were interested in finding out how young people had made sense of the research activities. The majority of the young people we worked with had enjoyed the research process. Young people spoke about having enjoyed interviewing people with the cameras and finding out about their friend's aspirations and opinions. Some young people found the research initially challenging – they spoke about being camera shy. However, this initial challenge was overcome once they started discovering new things about their area.

Young people were familiar with the video medium though we did find that sometimes they thought about video in slightly different ways to us. As such young people sometimes held different expectations of what the research would involve. For example, in Liverpool some of the group thought we would be doing a costume drama, while in Keighley the young people thought they would be involved in making video diaries.

Finally, for one group of young people the research activities were a poor substitute for their usual Positive Futures activities - another testament to the popularity of Positive Futures activities amongst the young people. Whereas most of the young people we worked with, found the research enjoyable and fun, the experience with the one group reminds us that local conditions differ vastly and sensitivity to these conditions makes for better working relationships.

Young people describe the AV research

Melissa: I just want to ask you a bit more directly about being involved in the process of making the film because that is quite helpful for us to make the process better. Could you tell me what you thought about it, good and bad, yeah?

Nicole: I thought it was alright, I quite liked it actually

Melissa: What? Anything in particular?

Nicole: I liked the whole thing, actually, like, the whole thing, points that were made, bad and good, definitely.

Melissa: How about you Nick?

Nick: Very interesting.

Melissa: Was there something would you like to be involved in again.

Sandra: Oh, yeah most definitely.

Source: Focus Group Wandsworth Youth Centre

Mitch: We were allowed to use the cameras like. Do a lot of laughing like

Lex: Interesting.

Melissa: In what way?

Mitch: Got to know like what people want to do when they are older.

Source: Focus Group North Liverpool

Melissa: ...I want to ask you like for example if were going to work with a group of friends of yours to do the same videos, but instead of us training them you have to train them what would you tell them that they needed to know like from what you have learnt from working with like video and cameras and stuff like that.

Martin: I'll tell them that we would have to know is how the government works in the area and

Anthony: And make sure that they are not shy on camera, otherwise they will not be able to do it...

Martin and Leo: Yeah

Melissa: Did you feel bit shy to begin with?

Anthony: At first of the program a bit, then in the end it was alright

Gonzalo: Did you have fun for example? Like shooting.

All: Yeah.

Gonzalo: Making interviews?

Melissa: Well, was it...?

Gonzalo: Sorry?

Anthony: Once we were really involved in that [28:05].

Melissa: Well what is your favourite part of like doing this work that you have been doing?

Leo: Yeah, interviewing the.

Anthony: Yeah probably the interviews

Source: Focus Group, Wandsworth School

Melissa: What did you sort of, like when we first got here what did you imagine that we would be doing? How did you imagine that it would be different?

David: I thought we would be doing like home (?) movies and stuff like that, keeping a weekly record, stuff like that.

Melissa: Sorry, keeping a??

David: A weekly record.

Melissa: Okay, so more like a video diary? Cause if you wanted to do that when we leave the camera, that would be great.

Source: Focus Group, Keighley

Gonzalo: ...Okay we will build a case, let's imagine you need to repeat the whole activity again. What would you tell a friend or a mate, how would you explain what we have been doing with you guys?

John: [slowly] we made a video about crime in Keighley for Positive Futures. There, done finished.

Melissa: And how did you do that?

John: with a video camera

David: We asked some questions on a camera and we stuck it on a DVD or video whatever you're going to stick it on.

Gonzalo: Have you been enjoying the whole activity the whole process, I mean...

David: [inaudible]

Gonzalo: Well, can you sort of explain us a bit more?

John: Yeah, it's been good.
Gonzalo: Why?
John: Except for us being cramped up in an office and Steve not spent any money on us for the last six weeks.
Gonzalo: Okay so you didn't like the fact that we were perhaps stuck in an office.
David: ...in to London. You could have stayed in London and we come to London.
John: Yeah, that might have been better. It might have took us about 9 hours in Steve's car to get half way.
Bob: you can get there tomorrow.
Source: Focus Group, Keighley

6.2 How young people would improve the Audio-Visual research

During the focus groups with young people we asked them to make suggestions for improving future audio-visual research. Young people came up with a variety of suggestions for improving the methodology. For example, young people from the Youth Centre in Wandsworth suggested that in future we provide groups with a 'broader brief'. The group explained that there were things that they would have liked to include in their film but felt they could not because we had asked them to concentrate on their own area. As it happened, this group went on to make a second video where they created their own brief. The young people from the group in North Liverpool suggested that the research would have benefited from having a 'residential' where young people could film their activities. 'Residentials' were a big part of the local Positive Futures strategy. The suggestion of using the Positive Futures 'model' of doing things is again a testament to the popularity and strength of the approach. For the group in Keighley, for whom the research had been a substitute for their regular Positive Futures activities, the suggestion was to stagger the research – a sort of one week on, one week off model – that would have given them the opportunity to both participate in their regular activities, as well as take part in the research.

Young people on improving the AV research

Melissa: No? OK so if we did it again what sort of things would you change?
Nicole: I'd have more people in and more areas, it was more about the area [inaudible] I would have like to interview people that don't come here.
Melissa: How about you Nick?
Nick: Same, definitely.
 ...
Melissa: I guess one of my main concerns is that maybe we missed something because we were doing a particular type of research, so I'm wondering if someone gave you this to do again how would you do it differently? D'you see what I mean?
Nicole: What d' you mean do it differently?
Melissa: OK - like for example, okay let me ask this in a different way what would be, what is the most important things for you at the moment, like in your life?
Nicole: School, friends, things like that. Everything really, innit?
Melissa: OK so maybe would you, if we had given a broader kind of brief would you have taken it to school or...
Nicole: Yeah!
Nick: That's why I didn't do it because it was like about our area
Nicole: ...Wandsworth innit...
Nick: ...I can't take it to Balham...
Melissa: OK...
Nicole: ...I had a few people that I wanted to be in from different boroughs but just Wandsworth so they ain't gonna be in it...

Source: Focus Group Wandsworth Youth Centre

Lex: Go on a residential.

Melissa: So you have liked to have gone on a residential?

Lex: Yeah, something like

Source: Focus Group North Liverpool

Gonzalo: so what would you suggest to improve the whole activity? Because some days it got a bit boring I suppose.

David: Yeah, make it more interesting.

Gonzalo: More interesting, like what? If you tell us how we can do it more interesting perhaps we would be able to...

David: get a bigger and better camera and use a laptop each so we can make his own film

John: No, one week on, one week no, one week come, next week don't, come, don't, come, don't

Melissa: So it's more varied?

John: yeah, instead of being cramped in an office every week and Steve...

David: ...and get a bigger office and spend money on us.

Source: Focus Group, Keighley

6.3 Learning

The most frequently made comment about participating in the project related to having learnt something from the process. Young people reported that they had learnt to use the technology and also learnt about their own areas and other people's experiences. The issue of discovering different views and perspectives was salient in young people's descriptions of what had been learnt and was directly attributed to the audiovisual approach. In the group from the school in Wandsworth young people told us that their involvement in the project had made them think about their area in a different way.

Learning from the research

Martin: And you made us think like what's happening in our environment cause if this never happened, then I wouldn't been thinking about where I have to go to get leisure centres and stuff like that.

Melissa: Okay. Do you agree with that?

Anthony: Yeah, yeah.

....

Martin: It helps us to realise because if we never done this project I don't think we would have thought about how the government works in our area.

Gonzalo: So these sort of activity help you to start thinking about issues or...?

All: Yeah.

Gonzalo: Great.

Source: Focus Group Wandsworth School

Melissa: ... would you say that you learnt anything from this process?

Nicole: Mmm, I don't know, I learnt more about people and about the area and its problems and I learnt how to use more the technology, yeah.

Melissa: Nick?

Nick: What's the question?

Melissa: Would you say that you learnt anything for doing the video?

Nick: [inaudible - he says something about learning that people had views that he didn't think they would have] that I didn't think they would have.

Melissa: Is it just finding out the differences of opinion?

Nick: [nods]

...

Melissa: Yeah? OK. And how is it different to other things that you do or are involved in?

Nicole: [inaudible] camera. The thing about going around and interviewing people

personally we don't get to know about...
 Sandra: ...people's views...
 Nicole: ...yeah, people's views.
 Sandra: ...you get to see what they say...
Source: Focus Group Wandsworth Youth Centre

As part of our methodological approach we also held group workshops where young people were able to screen their audiovisual compositions within their groups, amongst their peers and other groups participating in the research. These group workshops were powerful in further widening young people's perspectives. Specifically, what young people learnt from viewing each other's videos in the these sessions was that their own experiences and areas were not so different to those of others. In this respect it can be said that the project had helped with the 'realisation' that groups were not alone in their experiences and that other young people existed who had similar experiences and views. However, it was not only young people who were learning but also those who were involved in supporting them. One coordinator commented on her own learning with respect to the support that goes into facilitating young people in making audiovisual compositions: *"It's been a learning day for me, how much responsibility you give young people, in some cases it isn't just give them a camera and let them go away with it, you need lot more structure, lot more help."* (Local coordinator, Reading).

Learning from the research

"It was interesting to me when I saw the cut that Neil had come back with because there was two or three of the young men who were involved in that who I tried to approach myself...because we were working in different parts of the project...and I'd tried to approach them to get them to actually kind of be involved in making the video, and that had been a non-starter, they'd really not kind of bought into it coming from me. I think um Neil maybe has got enough um presence in the community to be able to get into places that I definitely couldn't go and couldn't sort of like...kind of get people to open up a little bit, so it's amazing some of the stuff you saw that you know probably wouldn't be easy to capture and that some of the guys that I wanted to contribute did contribute, but maybe just in a kind of roundabout route."

Source: Group workshop 1, Local Coordinator Lambeth

"I think this programme's really good because you learn lots of things about other people's areas, other people's lives, and you see what they're doing in their community and compare it with yours."

...

"I think the whole project, the whole idea was a brilliant idea. It helped other young people from different areas, in and outside of London to realise how their lifestyles and how they live are quite similar in terms of problems or issues they're all pretty much the same."

Source: Group workshop 1, Youth worker Southwark

"I've learnt quite a bit today. I didn't realise that _____, Brixton and that like, all suffer the same problems on the estate like we do. And, well I know now anyway."

Source: Group workshop 1, Young Person Brighton

"I think more events like this are good because it makes them realise that there is a lot of time and energy for them and a lot of support with what they're doing."

...

"Because they don't out and they don't do things...today has been an experience and it's an education trip for them."

Source: Group workshop 1, Youth Worker Brighton

6.4 Group workshops

During our research we conducted an inter-group and three intra-group workshops. The inter-group workshop was conducted with three London-based groups and a coordinator representing the Reading group. The workshop took place at the London School of Economics and each screening was followed by a discussion. The three intra-group workshops were also organised around screenings and discussing the group's work. Two of these screenings

took place in London at the youth centres which supported the Positive Futures activities and were attended by the group who made the film as well as other young people from the two youth centres. The third intra-group workshop took place in Liverpool, involving the group who made the video and the manager of the local Positive Futures project, invited especially. In this section we concentrate on the comments made during the inter-group workshop which best highlight the experience of taking part in such a workshop.

The theme of trust is brought to our attention by the comments made by one of the Positive Futures Youth Workers. Her interpretation of the day provides us with valuable insight into how the participative research process unfolds. She talks about the level of trust that she had experienced during the day. The fact that young people were able to present their documentaries and talk about the issues therein, with a group of strangers, seemed to indicate to this Youth Worker that there must have been a high level of trust by young people in both the process and those facilitating this process. The comment made by one of the participants also hints at this idea of trust. An otherwise shy person manages to fully participate in a day requiring public exposure and concludes that 'I suppose it was alright':

Group workshops
<p>"how well you got with the young people and how young people today have related to you guys which is fantastic, sometimes it takes a long time to build relationships such as this, you guys have done this in three sessions. Um, trust, the amount trust young people generated today in showing their videos to strangers who they met for first time."</p> <p>Source: Group workshop 1, Local Coordinator Reading</p>
<p>"I don't know, I'm normally shy when I talk to people and I was quite shy presenting my video, but I suppose it was alright, that's it really, bye."</p> <p>Source: Group workshop 1, Young person Brighton</p>

The first group workshop also demonstrated the possibilities of such workshops for providing young people with the opportunity to 'network' with other young people from different areas. Participants and youth workers who were interviewed expressed an interest in maintaining contact with young people they had met during the day. They also expressed an interest in participating in similar future activities. As well as the activities provided by the participatory action research being viewed by young people as embedded in Positive Futures, the LSE researchers on the Young People's View Project themselves were also viewed in this way. The researchers from LSE were perceived as being integrated in the Positive Futures activities. This

‘perception’ is captured in the language used by young people to describe the researchers: they are referred to as ‘workers’, the same term used to describe the Positive Futures Coordinators and Youth Workers.

Continuing relationships initiated through research activities
<p>“it would be good to do something like this again” Source: Group workshop 1, Youth Worker Reading</p>
<p>“I’m quite proud of the girls and I’m sure they’re quite proud of themselves and it’s a lot of good sportsmanship at the end of the day and everyone’s just here to mingle, exchange details and people are looking to network in the future. So, I’m looking forward to future events, looking forward to coming in the future.” Source: Group workshop 1, Youth Worker Southwark</p>
<p>... “I think the idea to make it a better day, um a helpful thing for the future is to like, um hopefully sort of set up some sort of forum where the young people would have a view to speak on a regular basis and say what sort of ideas they think would be useful to make it better as well and sort of user friendly for other young people.” Source: Group workshop 1, Youth Worker Southwark</p>
<p>“And I think the workers, like the people from...where are you from? Where are we from here?...the LSE building, are really nice as well and they like communicate with us a lot and talk a lot as well. So, overall it’s been really good . and for the past weeks it’s been alright as well.” Source: Group workshop 1, Youth Person Southwark</p>

Embedding the multimedia activities within the Positive Futures programme has the added advantage of creating a sense of ownership for young people over their work – in this case the documentaries. Our previous research has shown that ownership is a key component necessary for participation in decision-making about the future (Humphreys and Brezillon, 2002).

6.5 Observations on the audiovisual compositions

While most of this section has concentrated on young people’s experiences of taking part in the audiovisual activities, as these were reported to us by young people and coordinators, in what follows we report on some of our own observations of the use of audiovisual composition.

6.5.1 Using specific genres

Despite having been given the same briefs for collecting footage, all documentaries demonstrate a different genre and as such different audiovisual preferences and competences depending on the message being conveyed. For example, ‘South Siderz’ the Lambeth video essentially directed by Neil, could alternatively be called ‘Neil’s philosophy of life’ – it is full of bits of his own ‘wisdom’ as he tells it ‘like it is’, from his own experience, about life on the estate. The genre of this video is ‘biographical’. Contrast this to the Westminster (1) videos, which talks more about the history and development of the estate. The genre used is one of ‘historical materialism’ in this respect, concentrating on context, people and events.

The Reading documentary is particularly interesting from the point of view of genre. It concentrates less on using the structure provided by the research group and looks more at conveying the wishes of the group who made the filming. In this case, instead of asking others what they consider to be ‘good’ things and ‘bad’ things about the area and how this can be improved, the young women involved in the shooting the footage are continuously reiterating their own message and proposed solution for the area, which is to get a youth centre. As such, the video becomes more of an ‘advocacy’ video reiterating the same message again and again.

Utilising different genres
<p><u>Biographical</u> “Let me tell you something the streets here how are they portrayed is not exactly how they are like. I’ve been through that life of what most youngsters what they are doing now yeah and if they only knew like what I know now. They will not be what they are doing like yeah they wouldn’t be doing basically like, they are still young, but the mentality and they’ve not been taught the right way like things that kids needs nowadays. Kids need a curfew!” Source: Lambeth AV composition (‘South Siderz’)</p> <p><u>Historical materialism</u> ‘As you can see this is the view of the estate from my building. They’ve done the building and everything it looks really nice, lots and lots of trees everywhere. This is one of the blocks that haven’t been decorated yet and sometime next year will be decorated so all will fit in a look very nice. The estate really looks nice now. For the past 4 years 4 – 5 years they’ve been doing each block up and it really looks nice.’ Source: Westminster AV composition (‘Hitting the Ball’)</p>

6.5.2 Discovering resources through audiovisual explorations

One observation with respect to using videos as a method of engagement and research relates to the discovery of resources. This is only a tentative finding and would need further research to substantiate it. A comment made by Brighton Positive Futures coordinator after watching the video related to the realisation that the Brighton group had ample natural resource – in the form of fields and open spaces – which was missing from the documentaries of the inner city. The realisation was one of surprise and discovery of something so taken-for-granted that its potential had, until then, gone unnoticed:

Discovering resources through audiovisual explorations
<p>“And the greenness of it. I said to (<i>name</i>) while I was watching it, you forget what a green place it is. And we’re quite lucky compared to, I think it was the boys’ film I was aware of the tight space with all buildings around and stuff. We’ve got a massive, massive park just on the edge of the estate, haven’t we? Really at the road where we can just go at any time and all the shrubs and stuff that are around and it makes it look, you know, really nice. It’s true.” Source: Group Workshop 1, Brighton local coordinator</p>

7. Conclusions

The use of research methodology founded in participatory multimedia was found to offer a very effective and practical tool to explore the views of young people. The nature of inquiry became more personal, connected to real life and immediate to the young people who participated. Making and communicating documentaries in multimedia empowered young people to talk honestly and freely about their lives and about the stressors and building blocks in their communities. They were *empowered* through discovering and communicating *new pathways to value*, both in their own lives and for their communities.

This kind of evaluation research was perceived by the young people as *an innovative activity embedded within the Positive Futures programme*, not as an external monitoring and evaluation process in which they took part. The young people expressed real satisfaction that they had a sense of ownership and accomplishment over their documentaries.

These implications will be particularly relevant when evaluating and monitoring Positive Futures in the future. Any properly grounded evaluation process must operate in a way that is sensitive to the diversity of local conditions and innovative possibilities open to the young people who are the key stakeholders in Positive Futures. Much can be achieved through implementing, within Positive Futures, an evaluation process which appreciates the tremendous advantages to be gained when the key stakeholders – the young people themselves - can develop and communicate these possibilities through participatory multimedia.

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APPENDIX 1: TRAINING PACK

APPENDIX 2: Local coordinator's brief



Positive Futures Young People's Views Project Brief

1) Purpose

The Young People's Views Project develops a model for young people to explore and assess the value of their experiences in the Positive Futures Programme. Participating young people are encouraged, through the use of audiovisual composition and multimedia communication technologies, to develop and communicate views about Positive Futures amongst themselves and the other groups taking part in the project. The project, taking place in various communities across England, runs at the group-level and uses the principle of 'collective authoring in multimedia' as a basis for research into young people's views.

To achieve this, our team is seeking support from local managers and coordinators for the development of an innovative action-research project.

2) Background

Our research design recognizes the importance of young people's own views, expressed in their own terms, in evaluating and establishing the impact of the Positive Futures Programme. Researching *with* young people we look at the impact of the Programme on the young people themselves, their relationships with each other, their coaches and significant others in their lives and with their local communities.

Our aim is to enable and support young people's capacity and creativity in expressing their views. We do so by giving young people the opportunity to work participatively in multimedia production, finding new *ways of telling, ways of sharing and ways viewing* their reality.

The Young People's Views project will provide the participating young people with the training and supporting audiovisual technology that they need for recording, editing and producing communications in multimedia.

Our participative multimedia approach to the project provides young people with rich tools for exploring their communities and Positive Futures activities while, at the same time, offering us, as researchers, a valuable source of information for understanding and appreciating what Positive Futures means to young people.

3) Research Strategy into Practice

A sample of Positive Futures groups is being selected from different geographical locations including: London, Yorkshire & Humberside, Northwest.

The groups will consist of the communities included in the Positive Futures Case Study evaluation project, as well as some of the communities who participated in the Young People's Views Pilot Project.

Young people will be given access to video cameras and provided with "hands on" training in shooting. Moreover, they will given editing support in the field. They will be asked to create and direct stories, using multimedia, about themselves, their communities, activities of Positive Futures and other developments they may be involved in.

Inter-group regional workshops will be organised, where Positive Futures Young Peoples Views groups from different geographical areas, will make audiovisual presentations and exchange stories about their communities and their participation in Positive Futures activities.

4) *The coordinator/facilitator's role*

Under the Young People's Views approach, the Positive Futures coordinator/facilitator's role focuses on creating and supporting a space in which groups are able to take initiative and ownership of the project.

The coordinator/facilitator may provide assistance, know-how or support to the group members as and when required by the group.

The coordinator/facilitator is further supported by the Young People's View LSE research team.

5) *Young People's Views LSE research team*

Prof. Patrick Humphreys: Principal Investigator; Director, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics (LSE). He has more than twenty years experience of developing projects for community support and development in the UK, Europe and Latin America, in which authoring and communicating in multimedia played a key role. His field of expertise within the Positive Futures Young Peoples Views project focuses on Community Development, Decision Making, and Multimedia Research.

Gonzalo Olmos: Research Officer, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics (LSE). His field of expertise for Positive Futures Young Peoples Views project includes: General project management; Audiovisual analysis using qualitative tools to develop impact and assessment; Audiovisual training workshops/fieldwork editing support for young people; and Web site content management for Positive Futures: Young People's Views research project.

Sevasti-Melissa Nolas: Research Officer, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics (LSE). Her field of expertise for Positive Futures Young Peoples Views project includes action research approaches to community transformation and empowerment; qualitative research approaches as applied to image and text; audiovisual training and fieldwork support for young people.

Carol Lorac: Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics (LSE). Her field of expertise for Positive Futures Young Peoples Views project includes her work on audiovisual composition and multimedia communication as a universal language and the use and impact of this communication system by which young people can express their views through showing as well as telling.

Dr Marcelo Ramella: External Consultant and Visiting Lecturer, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics (LSE) Has a wide range of experience of designing and managing community development and evaluation projects. He was previously the Positive Futures National Evaluation Manager.

Slavica Savic: Research Administrator, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics (LSE). She has extensive experience in planning and managing deliverables on research programmes.

6) Time-scale for activities

To be defined with each group in an individual basis. The Positive Futures Young Peoples Views team may, in its discretion, at any time, vary or deviate from the processes outlined in this brief in order to improve the success of the project and its outcomes. (i.e. additional Focus Groups or Interviews with Young People and Key Support Staff).

7) Web Resources

www.londonmultimedia.org

www.londonmultimedia.org/positive_futures.htm

8) Contact Details

If you would like further information, have questions or wish to make suggestions please do not hesitate to contact us.

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APPENDIX 3: Ethical Guidelines

Ethical code of practice

The London Multimedia Lab and its researchers are aware of current legislation concerning the minor privacy protection act. We hereby re-confirm that in this evaluation project our researchers will maintain, gather and deal the audio-visual material under strict confidentiality. As outlined in the Positive Futures Young People's View Project Brief, the research project outputs – of which audiovisual compositions is one – are not intended for public distribution (e.g. TV channels). On the contrary, the videos will be mainly for “internal consumption”, given the scope and purpose of evaluating the Positive Futures programme. Additionally, we have produced two forms:

- 1) Participation Release Form:** To be signed by young people's guardians/parents. Please ensure that the participant release forms are properly filled out and returned to you. Alternatively, we can offer young people the possibility of not appearing in the video, by not having them appear on camera (e.g. they can make a just a narration behind the camera), changing names or blurring their image in post-production.
- 2) Sign Out Release Forms of Audio Visual Equipment:** To be signed by the group of young people involved in the research activities as a gesture of goodwill and commitment to take care and make proper use of the audiovisual equipment.

Please do ensure that both forms are filled out and signed accordingly. Please note that the Positive Futures Young People's Views Project Research Team will not be responsible for any unforeseen events or actions arising from participation in this activity. According to the research policy supported by the London School of Economics, the London Multimedia Lab and its researchers can only take responsibility for the correct undertaking of the research project. Full details of the School's ethics policy and ethics guidance to researchers can be found at:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/researchAndProjectDevelopmentDivision/researchPolicy.htm>

Any doubts, clarifications or additional suggestions please do not hesitate to contact us.

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APPENDIX 4: Participant Release Form



Young People's Views Project Participation Release Form

Participants over the age of 18 may sign for themselves; Participants under 18 must have this release signed by their parent or guardian.

I am over 18 years of age. (circle one) YES NO

I hereby give voluntary consent to the participation in a video/documentary production of my child/dependent/self, which is part of the Positive Futures **Young People's Views** Project. I also consent to the use of content from this production in any research, fundraising and/or promotional material and any other lawful purposes, produced and/or published by the Positive Futures programme.

I understand that signing this release form and other any subsequent reuse of the content, I will not receive any monetary compensation.

I understand that The Positive Futures Young People's Views Project research team is not responsible for any unforeseen circumstances that may derive from this activity.

I have read this release and approve of its terms.

Participant's Name: _____

Name of Adult or Parent/Guardian (if participant is under 18):

Signature of participant **or** Signature of Adult or Parent/Guardian if participant is under 18:

Today's Date: _____

APPENDIX 5: Example Focus Group Topic Guide

Focus Group Topic Guide

Time frame: 1 – 1 ½ hour

Ask if participants mind having the session tape recorded – record consent (or not).

Explain that the discussion is part of the research and that we would like to talk about some of the issues arising from the documentary, with the group. We would also like to take the opportunity to think/reflect on the process of making the documentaries and find out how everybody felt about the process and what they think could improve the process in the future. However, before we get into all the details we would like each person to introduce themselves and tell us one thing what they would like to be doing in 5 years time.

Level 1 – Engaging with key actors in local Positive Futures programmes

Imagination – future:

This section is covered in the documentary – one thing to ask may be ‘what, if anything, do you think may stand in your way of realising your dreams and ambitions?’

Here & now:

Section 2:

“Could you describe a day in your area/community?”

Emergent themes:

Section 3a:

Some of the things that were mentioned in the documentary that form the ‘negative’ things about life in Wandsworth were:

- * **Local government - council**
- * **Housing, built environment**
- * **Gangs**
- * **Converting to other religions**
- * **Crime, drugs and being hassled by the police**

Do people have any other things to add to this? What other problems do young people face? Do people have any personal experiences that they would like to share of any of these ‘negative’ aspects of Wandsworth? Experiences that made you think ‘the council’s shit’ or ‘this area is sucks, it’s ugly’... (give an example: there was a time when I needed to call the council

to sort out my council tax payments, the telephone conversations, the frustration, this made me think that the council was shit)

Section 3b:

Some of the things that were mentioned in the documentary that form the 'positive' things about life in Wandsworth were:

- * **Clubs – Providence**
- * **'people sticking together'**
- * **Having activities**
- * **Location**

Do people have any other things to add to this? What other positive experiences have people been through? Do people have any personal experiences that they would like to share of any of these 'positive' aspects of Wandsworth? Experiences that made you think that 'Providence is cool' or 'it's fun to play football'...

Client themes (or absence of):

If, crime comes up as an issue:

Section 4:

4a

"What do you think are some of the reasons that young people get involved in crime in your area/community?"

4b

"How do you think young people can be kept out of crime?"

If, drugs come up as an issue:

Section 5:

5a

"What do you think are the reasons that young people get involved in drugs?"

5b

"What do you think can be done to tackle this problem?"

If, sports comes up as an issue:

Section 6:

“What did you do before being involved with (name of programme, e.g. Name of Youth Centre)? “

6a

General:

- How do you think the activities provided by (e.g. Name of Youth Centre) has helped you?

6b

Particular (if not covered ‘naturally’ by the respondent in the ‘general’ part above):

“How do you think the sporting activities provided by (e.g. Name of Youth Centre) have helped you?”

6c

“In what ways, do you think, that sporting activities can help in preventing the use drugs by young people? Can you give us any examples from your own or your friends’ experience?”

Section 7:

We’ve been talking a lot about ‘the community’ – what does ‘community’ mean to you? Who is ‘the community’? What is ‘the community’?

Imagination-power:

Section 8:

Some of the things that were mentioned in the documentary that people would like to change about life in Wandsworth were:

- * **People to come to Providence House more often – not just on Thursdays**
- * **To have more places like PH to hang out in**
- * **To have things for the girls to do**
- * **To stop being hassled by the police**

Do people have any other things to add to this? Do people have any personal experiences that they would like to share of any of these ‘positive’ aspects of Wandsworth? Experiences that made you think that ‘Providence is cool’ or ‘it’s fun to play football’...

Section 9:

Final question, take a moment to think about it, what has been the most memorable, the most important moment in your life so far?

Level 2 & 3 – Engaging with the research, through participatory multimedia activities and engaging with the rich language of multimedia for awareness and empowerment

Part I

“Imagine that we approach a group of your friends and ask them to take part in the research, just like you have done. Only this time, instead of us explaining the process to them and training them, we ask you to do it.

- a. How would you explain what we’ve been doing over the past few weeks to your friends?
- b. What are the things that you think they would need to know in order to carry out this activity?
- c. What suggestions would you make to them to help them out? Any hints or tips?

Part II

a. Process: Thinking back to when we first started this activity could you tell us a bit about how things developed between our meetings. For example, how did you guys arrange to shoot the footage, how did you arrange who would look after the camera, how did you arrange who would do what (shooting, interviewing etc)...

b. Participation: Why were you interested in taking part in this activity/how did you end up taking part in this activity? What did you enjoy/like about this activity?

c. Difficulties & opportunitites: What in your opinion helped you to complete this activity? What are the things that you thought did not work so well?

d. Changes & improvements: If you had the chance to do this all over again would you do anything differently? What things would you change and what things would you leave the same?

e. Learning: How is this activity different to some of the other thing you do, for example sport, school, hanging-out with your friends, being at home? What do you think you will remember about this project in the future? Has making a documentary about your area changed the way you think about your area?

f. Continuity: Would any of you be interested in doing some more audiovisual work?

APPENDIX 6: Example Topic Guide for Local Coordinators

Topic Guide for Local Coordinators Testimonies

Purpose of the Testimony

To recollect and integrate the views of local coordinators -in form of video testimonies- by contextualizing and reinforcing the view's of young people and the journeys they've made. This research activity will provide relevant evidence from a longitudinal embedded source (local coordinators), as they are in a unique position to provide a rich account of the progress made or "distances traveled".

There could be three main areas of focus:

1) Particular Impact at the Individual/Group Level:

- What changes could be observed in young people after some months in the project?
- How much of the observed changes (+ or -) can be attributed to Positive Futures strategy?
- Could you give examples/anecdotes/stories of changes in of awareness, attitudes, social skills, and/or behaviour of participants have you noticed? Have you seen any transitions or changes?

This could be contrasted if the PF activities are echoing the programme strategy: e.g. Widening Horizons and Raising Aspirations; "Keeping out of Trouble" in a Supportive Environment; Teamwork; Sport as Engagement Strategy, etc.

The coordinators will be suggested to provide examples by illustrating some individual/group cases. It is very likely that the testimonies as framed above will provide a natural argumentative thread or transition on regard to the focus of the general impact at the community level (see below)

2) General and Sustained Impact at the Community Level:

- In your view, what has been the general impact of implementing Positive Futures activities in the local community? Can you provide an example?

Longer Term Horizon "Scanning"

- What are your organisation's future plans with respect to supporting the improvements that have so far taken place (e.g. supporting participants over a longer period of time?)

3) Methodological Meta-Evaluation: Aims to provide a closure (similar to the pilot phase) by providing the opportunity in giving general feedback of the overall activities made the Young People's Views Research Team. The purpose is twofold: 1) We would like to determine and learn from any issues or unintended consequences of our research activities/design; 2) Be open and reflective about the Young People's Views Methodology, so we can determine the

extent in which our intended use to capture the views of young people was achieved adequately or not?

- What was your overall impression of our research activities with video cameras?
- In what ways would you say that the video camera approach to doing research/evaluation has been different to other research/evaluation approaches you may have been involved in?
- What changes/improvements, if any, are needed? If we ran the evaluation again what things you change and what things would you keep the same?
- How would you like or expect that this research should inform or fed into policy level?
- How would you like to see things in your area of work develop in the future at both policy and local levels? What would be the successes? What would be the failures?
- AOM

Topic Guide

Introduction

- Introduction of researcher / Gonzalo - Melissa

Confidentiality issues and protection of anonymity

Permission to video record

Approximately Timeframe

15 - 20 minutes

General Background Information/Self-Profile of Interviewee

- Name
- Responsibilities
- Length of time in post as a Positive Futures coordinator.
- Location
- Group description (e.g. PF activities, number of young people attending, etc)

1) Particular Impact at the Individual/Group Level:

- What changes could be observed in young people after some months in the project?
- How much of the observed changes (+ or -) can be attributed to Positive Futures strategy?
- Could you give examples/anecdotes/stories of changes in of awareness, attitudes, social skills, and/or behaviour of participants have you noticed?
- Have you seen any transitions or changes?

2) General and Sustained Impact at the Community Level:

- In your view, what has been the general impact of implementing Positive Futures activities in the local community? Can you provide an example?
- Longer Term Horizon "Scanning"
- What are your organisation's future plans with respect to supporting the improvements that have so far taken place (e.g. supporting participants

over a longer period of time?

3) Methodological Meta-Evaluation:

- What was your overall impression of our research activities with video cameras?
- In what ways would you say that the video camera approach to doing research/evaluation has been different to other research/evaluation approaches you may have been involved in?
- What changes/improvements, if any, are needed? If we ran the evaluation again what things you change and what things would you keep the same?
- How would you like or expect that this research should inform or feed into policy level?
- How would you like to see things in your area of work develop in the future at both policy and local levels? What would be the successes? What would be the failures?
- How does Positive Futures compare to other youth inclusion work you may have been involved in?

AOM

APPENDIX 7: Summary of Parent Testimonies

Testimonies of parents or guardians experiencing the Positive Future strategy

A small number of testimonies from parents/guardians of young people participating in Positive Futures, were obtained through audio-visual interviews. They verbalized that the activities promoted by Positive Futures were enabling positive changes in their child. They identified essentially three categories of benefits: 1) **Physiological Benefits** (energy levels, general outlook, physical ness); 2) **Psychological Benefits** (self-esteem, character building); 3) **Social Benefits** (multi-cultural and multi-ethnic awareness, communication, teamwork).

- **Physiological Benefits:** Parents/guardians express the rise of energy levels and muscular strength (physical ness) in their child.
- **Psychological Benefits:** Parents and guardians recognise that sporting activities has a real and positive impact on the general psychological well-being of their child. They assert the intrinsic developmental value of the use of sports in *character building* and the improvement of *self-esteem* of their child, by recognising an enhanced sense of confidence, assertiveness, and competitiveness.
- **Social Benefits:** Parents and guardians explain that sporting activities promoted by Positive Futures are encouraging *multi-cultural and multi-ethnic integration*, thus promoting *social diversity awareness* and *education* among young people. Furthermore, is perceived as helping the development of *teamwork* and *communication* skills in young people, in special when they possess unique, but complementary skills in performing a common task (e.g. play in a determined position in their team) and joint responsibility through negotiation and co-ordinated effort for its achievement and success (e.g. trying to winning the match).

Westminster (National Rollout): "Testimonies of Parents" (27 - 7 - 2004)

Abdul: Overall I've just seen his his both his outlook, *his personality*, his physical ness - its its really improved during the time he has been involved in the programme. Another aspect I think of the programme is that... its weird - I play cricket as well and whenever I go to play cricket and especially if we are playing out of London etc. most of the team are like mainly Caucasian with very few ethnic...*ethnic players but, when you come to a scheme like this, you see sort of you know European children, Asian children, African children children from all over the world coming together and playing and I think you know that could only be good for their future so that they understand each other better.* So I think that's another aspect of the programme, which is very very good - that at a young age it introduces lots of different cultures and nationalities.

Source Material: Westminster (National Rollout): "Testimonies of Parents" (27 - 7 - 2004) - 01'45"

Waqar: I am Waqar Qureshi. I am a Councillor at Westminster City Council. One of the team playing is from Westminster and *I came here because my grandson Adil is playing.* I am so glad I came here today. It's a beautiful beautiful afternoon - sunny, sunshine and... its... *West Sussex is completely different from Westminster particularly where these children came to play... Westminster... they come from mostly from Queens Park and Maida Vale where there is no green patch at all ...this is an excellent environment and a wonderful way of sporting activity. Now, the children are playing cricket - it is not only a sporting activity - it is a relaxation, it is a wonderful way I've spent today. In Westminster now we are experiencing violence in children, children getting into gangs and children are coming totally totally different diversity of environment...*

I think there should be more support and help for the children in, living in urban areas like Westminster

whereas the Westminster kids do not get a chance like this. I am grateful for the organisers and the people who has helped them to come over here and spend a day in beautiful circumstances and environment, this will help them to build their... sporting activity to me is an educational activity and this helps young children to form their character and activity as an educational activity

Source Material: Westminster (National Rollout): "Testimonies of Parents" (27 - 7 - 2004) - 04'19"

Leyla: I can see the difference in my child, most certainly, you know the way that he is meeting children from other schools in...in... within the Boroughs and from other Boroughs ... and you know physically the way he is.. his self-esteem and confidence as well, which I think sport does for children as well, is that its not, you know there are some children who could be very academic but in sports, its about you know playing together as a team or as an individual and I think that's quite essential for the whole confidence building, self-esteem developing and I've noticed a big difference in my child and I am sure that every other parent would say the same thing.

Source Material: Westminster (National Rollout): "Testimonies of Parents" (27 - 7 - 2004) - 07'08"

APPENDIX 8: Sign-out form

Young People's Views Project Sign in Form

Participants of the **Young People's Views Project** must sign the following form, in order to get access to the Audio-Visual Equipment property of The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The LSE lends the Video-Camera + Accessories to the following members of the Positive Futures Group based in: _____.

I understand that by signing the form I am committing myself to make appropriate use of the equipment and return it back, the agreed date to my local coordinator.

Today's Date: _____

No	Participant's Name	Signature
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

**APPENDIX 9: Paper on Participant Authored
Audiovisual Stories (Ramella and Olmos, 2005)**