



ARE YOUNG PEOPLE HEARD?

OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE
AND POLITICS



TOYNBEE
HALL 
For a future without poverty



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The researchers who undertook this research are a group of 12 young ladies

We conducted a peer to peer research project

We wanted to gain the opinions of young people

Used focus groups and surveys to achieve data

6 KEY FINDINGS:

1

Our participants said speaking and being heard are very different things.

2

Different “spaces” allowed young people to speak but very few listened to them. For example, we thought we couldn’t speak or be heard in Parliament, local councils or youth clubs, but we could speak but not be heard in social media and schools but we were heard and could speak in families.

3

Traditional politics – both speaking and being heard – was not seen as for young people like us.

4

But we know a lot about traditional politics, even if we don’t feel it’s for us.

5

The politics that we were interested in affected us, like education.

6

For some of us, the politics of countries of our parents interested us more.

We concluded:

The young people are not to blame for not being interested, the institutions are because they are not really appealing to youth.

In order to tackle this problem, you need to:

Present greater opportunities which allow young people to be heard and effectively take part.

Allow all young people to participate, and not take in factors such as grades.

Let projects be youth led.

Focus on improving institutions rather than blaming the youth for being uninterested and lazy.

Have reasonable funds available so the youths can actually make a difference with their projects.

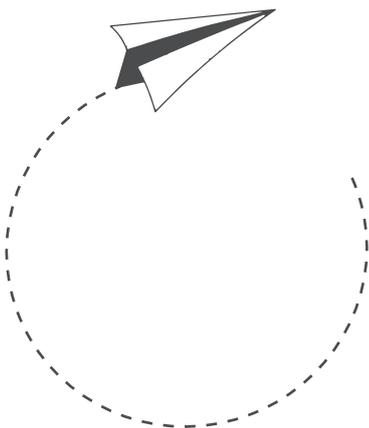
Our Reflections

We loved it!



CONTENTS

Who are we?	4
What are we doing?	5
Why did we do it?	6
Methods	7
Findings	8
Different Spaces and Our Political Voice	9
Survey Findings	10
Findings of Interest	11
Conclusions	12
Recommendations	13





WHO ARE WE?

We are a group of 12 young ladies from East London (in and around Hackney and Tower Hamlets).

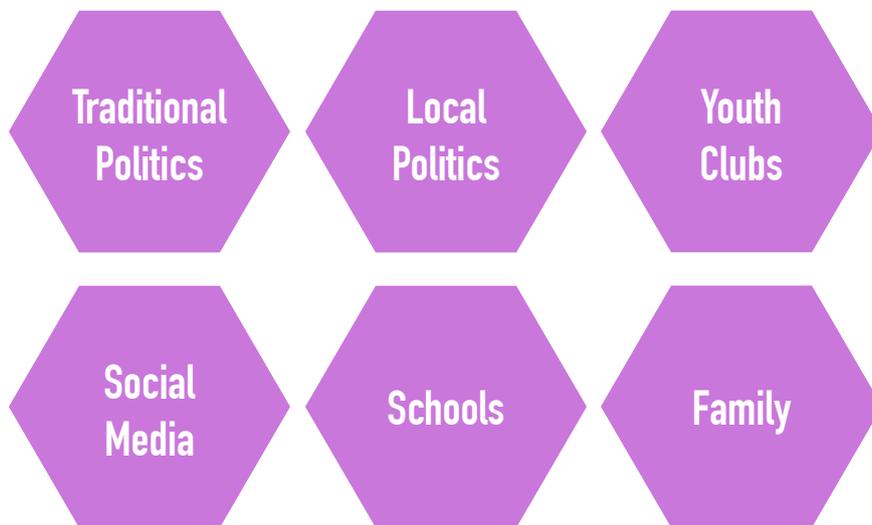


Shazia | Humaira | Shakila | Dilan | Mehria
Jahanara | Thamanna | Sazia | Rany
Zeynep | Sharmin | Farhana



WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The Rebel Researchers have been working with Toynbee Hall and the University of Oxford to conduct a peer to peer research about young people and the 'spaces' available for youth politics in Tower Hamlets and Hackney:



Indicators	Hackney	Tower Hamlets	Average
Child poverty ¹	30%	42%	20.2%
5*A-C GCSE ²	61.2%	64.7%	60.8%
Unemployment ³	10.7%	11.6%	7.2%

¹ UK data: <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/why-end-child-poverty/poverty-in-your-area>

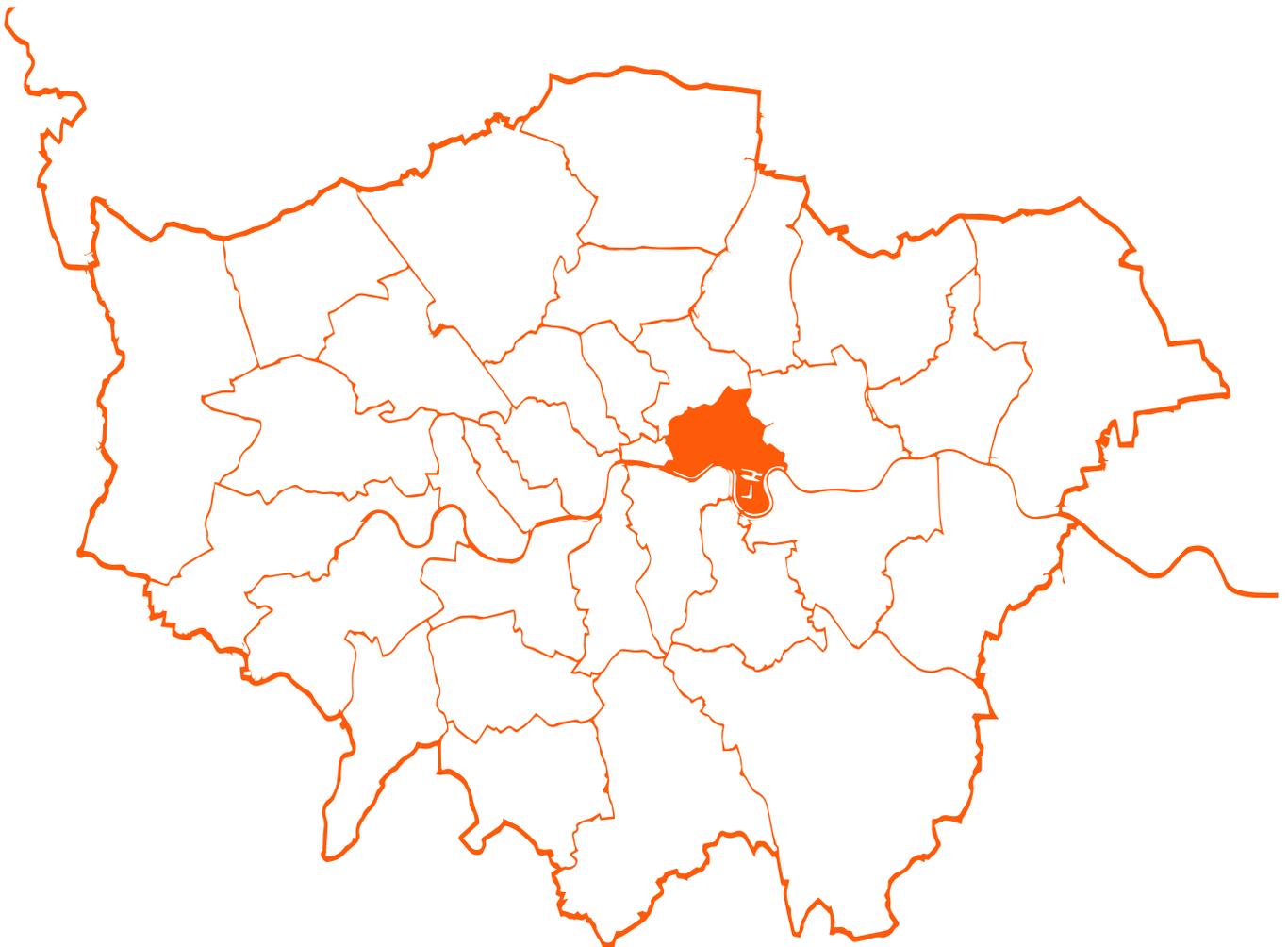
² 2012/13 England data: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013>

³ 2013/14 Great Britain <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/contents.aspx>



WHY DID WE DO IT?

We conducted this research in order to gain the thoughts and opinions of youths in deprived areas in regards to if they can speak and if they are heard especially within political spheres for example; youth clubs, schools, local council, traditional politics, families and social media.





METHODS

- Came up with a set of questions that we all agreed upon
- Recruited participants for the focus groups
- Arranged a set location which happened to be Nandos
- Fixed a time and date
- We ran five focus groups and three surveys
- Ate alot of chicken and fries
- Recorded the data / transcripts
- Coded the data
- Finally produced the findings



SURVEYS

42 young people took part
They came from one school and two youth groups
200 hours of survey questions in total



FOCUS GROUPS

We spoke to 27 young people, male and female
We spent 10 hours on focus groups
12 Whole chicken were eaten at nandos (plus sides)



FINDINGS

6 KEY THEMES

'I think hardly anyone is (interested in politics) unless they are involved in something that makes a change'.

Speaking and being heard are very different things.

'So you get to express your views (in class), but you're not heard, you feel like what's the point 'cause no one is seeing it'.

Different spaces allowed them to speak, but very few listened.

'That's what (politics) means. Rich guys own the country'.

Politics (both speaking and especially being heard) was not seen as for people like them, as part of their worlds.

'None of the political parties are really that good'.

There are really nuanced and knowledgeable discussion of party politics.

'I think for me, I think it would start affecting me and I would start caring about it more once I really get involved into it'.

The politics that interested participants was affecting, especially education reforms.

'...yeah we get really excited and everything, but here I don't even care who the president is'

For some young people, there was a more passionate interest in the politics of "homelands".



DIFFERENT SPACES AND OUR POLITICAL VOICE

Space	Can we speak about issues that are important to us?	Are we heard about these issues?
Traditional political spaces like parliament.	No	No
Local political spaces, like our council	No	No
Youth clubs	No	No
Social Media	Yes	No
Schools	Yes	Mixed, mostly yes
Family	Mixed, mostly yes	Yes



SURVEY FINDINGS

Some of our survey participant's thoughts about:



Being heard by politicians:

Do they actually listen to what the youths think? They probably think that we are not sufficiently aware of political issues



Being heard on social media:

Unless it's controversial, it's very easy to be overlooked on social media because everyone is on social media



Speaking in schools:

Unless you are doing Government & Politics A-levels, then no (you can't talk about issues in schools)



Being heard in youth clubs:

Do we have the opportunity to make changes about issues we care about in youth clubs? Nope



Speaking with your family:

Yes, my family are able to talk about every issue that occurs and we usually have a solution for these. That's what families are for!



Speaking in general:

It's quite difficult because teenagers are looked down upon and pushed aside for other issues





FINDINGS OF INTEREST

Politics (both speaking and especially being heard) was not seen as for people like our participants, or as part of their worlds.

Participants believed that politics was not for them, but it was for “other people”

“Other people” were considered to be the rich and upper class.

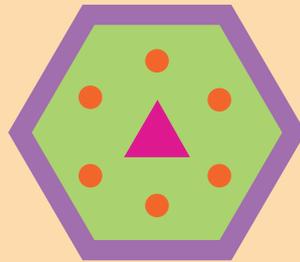
These are the criteria they defined as restricting their participation in politics ;

- 1 **Age** – ‘you have to be more than 50 to get in to politics’. Few participants thought that opportunities were given based on ones age.
- 2 **Class/Income** – Discussions about political issues was thought to be more for higher class people.
- 3 **Gender** – As they’ve seen that majority of the members of parliament are males.
- 4 **Area** – Believed the area affects the way government treats people for e.g. in Hackney compared to Chelsea.
- 5 **Grades** – ‘...because if they’re (the smart kids) are constantly being told “oh yeah, you need to learn more about politics, you can be the next this, that, this that” then obviously that’s going to influence them and want them to go more towards politics”. Participants also believed better opportunities were given depending on grades for e.g. trips to the parliament.
- 6 **Ethnicity and culture** – Considered it as a reason but came up very less.

- = This led them to be further disinterested in politics
- = They also often stated that they didn’t understand despite having coherent conversations about political issues.



CONCLUSION



— — —

Young people feel voiceless and unable to make change.

— — —

It's not the young people who need to 'change' to become more interested in politics, but the institutions so they're more focussed on helping young people do serious stuff, seriously!

— — —

Work together to achieve a voice for young people.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Have institutions presenting greater opportunities which allow young people to be heard and effectively take part, such as peer to peer research projects.

Allow all young people to participate, and not take in factors such as grades but base it on interest and enthusiasm.

Let projects be youth led therefore allowing young people to develop their skills such as team-work. Have youth workers who build relationships with participants, and make it fun without being childish. Treat us like adults (like our supporters!)

Focus on improving institutions so that young people can be heard by them, rather than blaming the youth for being uninterested in politics and lazy.

Have reasonable funds available so the youths can actually make a difference with their projects / opportunities for e.g. residential trips.



