

# AMPLIFY YOUTH



**MULBERRY**

December 2018 - July 2019

Mulberry  
Academy Shoreditch



THE  
YOUNG  
FOUNDATION

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# PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

**Amplify Youth is a two-year programme funded by Credit Suisse and delivered by The Young Foundation with young people in East London, Dublin and Belfast. The programme is designed to enable young people to deepen their understanding of their local communities and develop ideas and initiatives with potential to make a tangible difference to tackling the inequalities in their neighbourhoods.**

Since December 2018, we have been working with 16 inspiring young people aged 16-17 at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch in Tower Hamlets, East London. Over the course of ten sessions we learnt about and undertook community research, developed ideas for social action in response to the issues raised by the local community through this research, and built up the skills needed to thrive as young change-makers.

This included learning how to work together as a team; improving confidence, resilience and public speaking; developing a critical mindset which encourages us to question society and think about things from a positive, solutions-focused perspective; tapping into the power and capability of young people to make change; taking inspiration from other young activists and innovators across the world, learning about and practicing the art of story-telling for social change; and using social innovation tools - such as prototypes and participant personas - to develop ideas and solutions. The Amplify Youth Mulberry participants joined forces with a European innovation project, youth empowerment start-up charity 2-3 Degrees, local community activists, teachers at the school, the Ventures team at The Young Foundation and one another in their journey to improve the local community for everyone.

From the research, the Amplify Youth Mulberry participants heard from local people they've never had the chance to speak to before - from all different backgrounds and age ranges. They found out people's views about the local area - what makes it great and what could make it even better; views on young people; how people felt society perceived them and whether they had ever had a chance to tell their own story. From these insights, they worked in four groups to develop the following social action projects:

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## **A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTION TO FOOD POVERTY**

Zaynab, Aida, Jonathanne, Somaiya and Nadiya found the community views expressed around homelessness in Shoreditch particularly interesting. They then thought more broadly about how homeless people and people on low incomes can have guaranteed access to healthy food, at points accessible to them locally.

Their idea is to team up with local stakeholders, residents and businesses to create a weekly pop-up stall in Shoreditch which provides food in durable and reusable bags - which can be returned and refilled. They want to team up with the local supermarket to supply the food, and the local community centre to support them with volunteer recruitment and having access to an indoor space. They want their project branding to be positive, colourful and aimed at promoting a community-spirit of coming together and sharing. They have been working to develop their project idea to be pitch-ready since June 2019.

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## **A RESIDENTIAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO COME TOGETHER FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND CHALLENGE RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION**

Afis and JP used the Amplify Youth social action project planning tools to develop an idea for a residential led for and by young people to enable young people from different schools and colleges to spend time together away from their immediate neighbourhood.

They were particularly inspired by the research theme 'society sees me as...!', and came up with the residential idea as a way of bringing people from different backgrounds together to create an open space for learning and challenging racism and discrimination.

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## **A YOUTH-LED WEBSITE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER**

Thamires and Mahida were interested in the responses from the community about how young people were perceived, and this led them to realise that they have a responsibility to support one another.

Their idea was to create an online platform where young people could share their experiences across a range of topics, and encourage peer-led solutions to the challenges faced by young people.

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## **A YOUTH-LED CAMPAIGN TO OPEN UP YOUTH CENTRES BY TALKING TO PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Initially, Nadim, Yasir, Fahmida, Muntasir and Safi wanted to create a youtube channel in response to the negative perceptions of young people they encountered through the community research.

However, they later refined their idea and decided to create a place-based solution which made the most of the local youth centres, which many of their peers are not able to access, again because of negative perceptions.

They decided this could be best achieved by working with the stakeholders themselves, and talking with parents to help show them that these are safe and creative spaces that their children should be encouraged to access. They want to start off by fundraising for their local youth centre.

The purpose of Amplify Youth is to support young people to use the insights gathered from community research to develop initiatives that address key challenges. The programme builds young people's capacity to explore solutions. In most cases, the focus is on the idea generation process, rather than development and delivery. The Amplify Youth delivery team have watched the development of these ideas and the individuals behind them with great admiration over the past 7 months. This report showcases the journey of the Amplify Youth participants at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, alongside the programme goals.

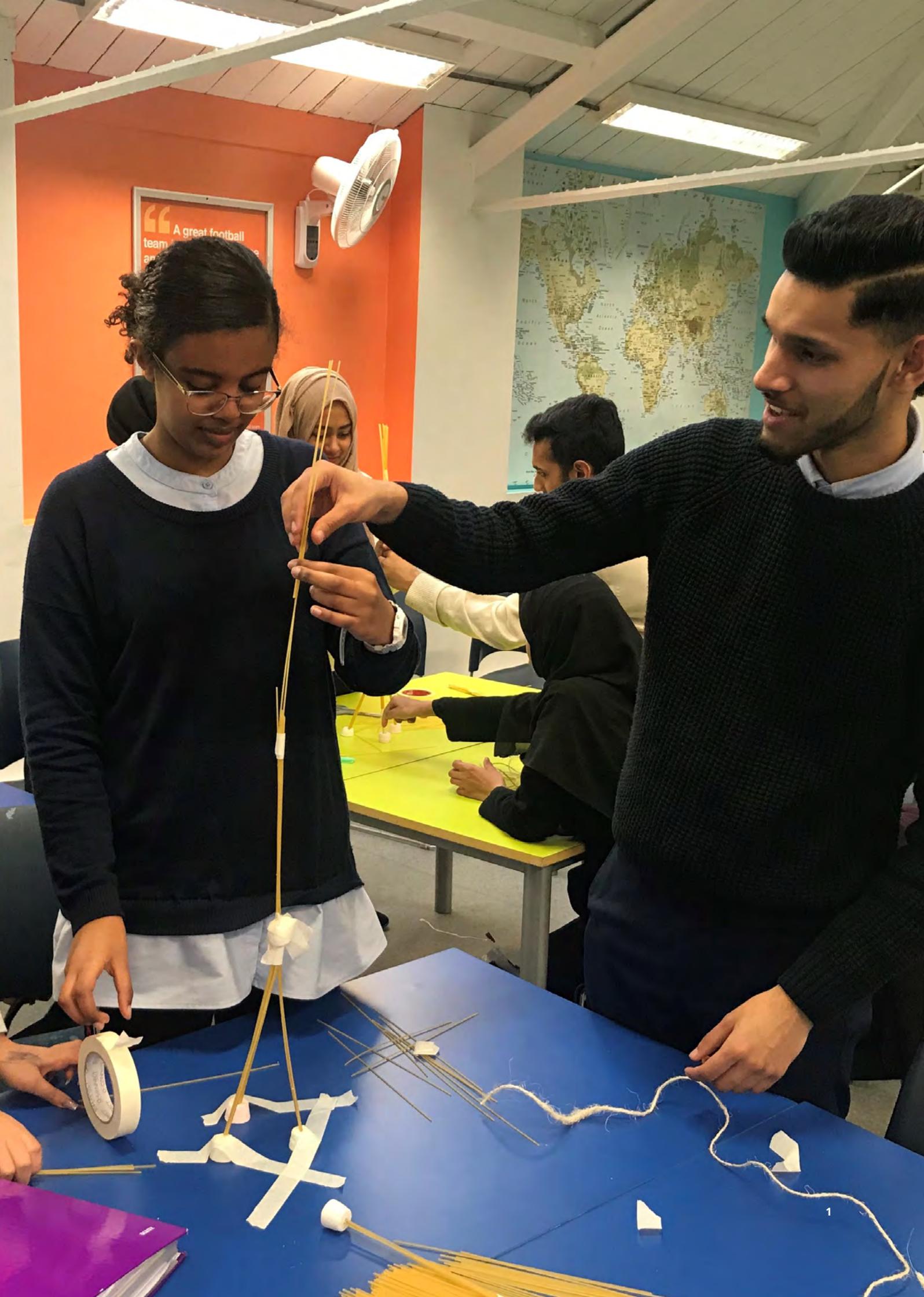
We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate those involved, and to wish them every success going forward in their lives as young change-makers in London and beyond.



**IT HAS BEEN GREAT TO SEE  
OUR STUDENTS SO ENGAGED AND EXCITED  
WEEK ON WEEK. THE ACTIVITIES, STARTERS  
AND DISCUSSIONS  
HAVE BEEN VERY INTERACTIVE**

**Duygu Gumus, Deputy Director of Sixth Form,  
Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, Tower Hamlets**





A great football  
team  
and

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# PROGRAMME GOALS

**One of the main aims of Amplify Youth is to amplify the evolving and living narratives of a place.**

We recognise that local people are the experts in their own lives, and that they exist within a changing social context. The ways in which they experience their local community - as individuals and as a collective - is always more nuanced than the dominant narratives we hear.

**“AMPLIFY YOUTH HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE PUT THEIR VOICE IN SOCIETY AND CHANGE IT ... IN AMERICA THERE WERE PROTESTS ABOUT GUN LAWS AND HERE WE SHOULD DO ONE ABOUT KNIFE CRIME”**

**- Mahidha**

**“WE TALKED A LOT ABOUT THE HOUSING CRISIS - I DIDN'T THINK OF IT SO MUCH BEFORE THE PROGRAM AND I'VE NOW REALISED WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT”**

**- Somaiya**

Our work with the young people on community research and storytelling, supported them to uncover these narratives of people and place and to understand these within some of society's greatest challenges; from the current housing crisis to knife crime.

**Another central aim of Amplify Youth is to grow a diverse movement of young people, owned and led by people with direct lived experience of inequality.** This was achieved by encouraging the young people to work together, to hear one another's stories, and to then uncover the everyday experiences and challenges of people living in one of the most diverse and unequal parts of London. Most importantly, it was about encouraging them to see themselves as leaders for change towards a more equal society.

**“I WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT OF [MY PROJECT] BEFORE THE PROGRAM – AY MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE A CHANGE”**

**- Aida**

**“I ALWAYS THOUGHT SOCIAL ACTION WAS IMPORTANT BUT DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO GO ABOUT IT BEFORE”**

**- Afis**

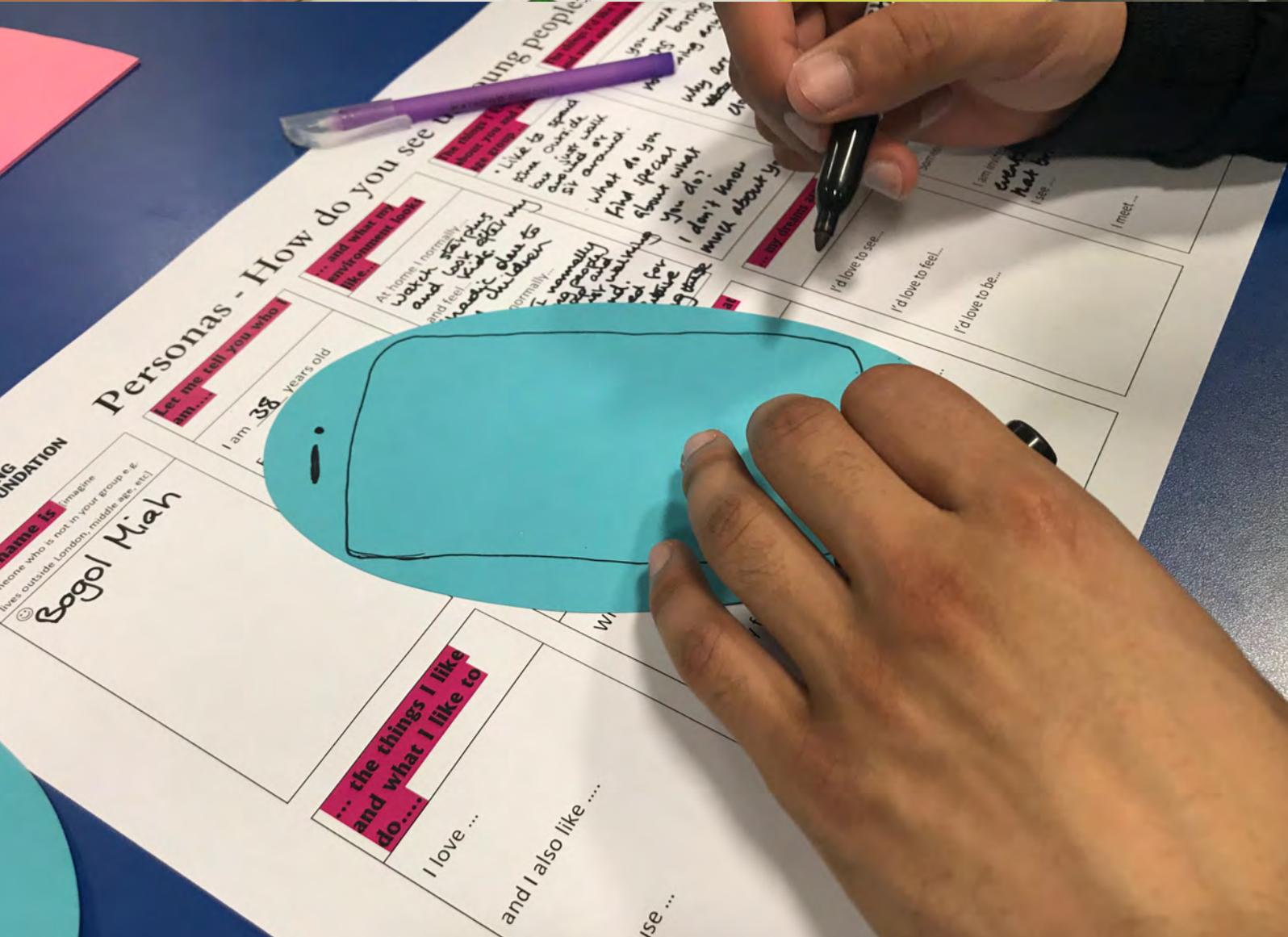
**The third goal of Amplify Youth is to support young people in their communities to accelerate ideas for social innovation.** This was achieved firstly by making 'social innovation' relevant and accessible for young people. We introduced them to key innovation tools such as creating storyboards charting how a member of the community might experience their project; prototypes to encourage them to see failure as a positive and necessary thing and to encourage them to test ideas and get feedback; and exposing them to examples of creative community-led social innovation, such as Steel Warriors which have used reclaimed knives to create an outdoor gyms across London.

**“NOTHING'S GOING TO CHANGE IF YOU DON'T THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO CHANGE AND DO SOMETHING TOWARDS IT”**

**- Mahidha**

**“THE FACT THAT THEY [AMPLIFY YOUTH] WERE EMPHASISING THAT STUDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE COULD MAKE CHANGE REALLY APPEALED TO ME – IT USUALLY FEELS LIKE IT'S JUST THE ADULTS”**

**- Nadia**



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# PROGRAMME THEMES

When reflecting on their experiences as part of Amplify Youth, four key areas of learning emerged; youth action, youth voices, capacity-building and the importance of community. Throughout each of these themes, it is clear that young people now see themselves as key actors for change, and that they are engaging with society in a different, more critical way.

## YOUTH ACTION

**“I KNOW PEOPLE WHO’VE BEEN INVOLVED IN KNIFE CRIME, NOW I’M TRYING TO THINK ABOUT WHY PEOPLE WOULD START, AND SOLUTIONS TO HOW KNIFE CRIME CAN STOP AND HOW MORE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN HELP MAKE IT STOP AND SPREAD AWARENESS”**

**- JP**

**“I ALWAYS THOUGHT ABOUT PROBLEMS BUT NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT HOW I COULD HELP BECAUSE I FELT TOO YOUNG”**

**- Jonathanne**

**“I REALISED THAT SMALL THINGS CAN ACTUALLY MAKE A BIG CHANGE AND THAT I HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE THINGS DIFFERENT – SOCIAL CHANGE IS A BIG THING SOLVING PROBLEMS IN SOCIETY AND I CAN ACTUALLY DO IT – IT’S NOT SOMETHING THAT NEEDS A MAGIC WAND”**

**- Safi**



## YOUTH VOICES

**“SOMETHING THAT’S IMPORTANT IS THAT WE COMMUNICATE A LOT OF THINGS IN THE PROGRAM THAT YOU DON’T USUALLY THINK YOU CAN – ESPECIALLY AT OUR AGE THERE AREN’T OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS OUR COMMUNITY”**

**- Aida**

**“[AMPLIFY YOUTH] HELPED ME TO SEE HOW YOUNG PEOPLE FACE SIMILAR THINGS BUT PEOPLE DON’T ALWAYS LISTEN TO THEM OR UNDERSTAND THEM”**

**- Thamires**

**“I WANTED TO DO THE PROGRAM BECAUSE WHEN I HEARD ABOUT IT I THOUGHT IT WOULD GIVE ME SPACE TO SAY WHAT I THINK ABOUT SOCIETY WITHOUT PEOPLE JUDGING ME OR THINKING I’M JUST A KID”**

**- Jonathanne**

## CAPACITY-BUILDING

**“[I] LEARNT A LOT HERE – ABOUT HOW TO DO SOCIAL ACTION – FUNDING, PROTOTYPES, ALL THE LEVELS NECESSARY – IT REALLY HELPED ME THINK ABOUT HOW TO DO A PROJECT”**

**- Afis**

**“I LIKED BUILDING THE TOWER WITH SPAGHETTI – WE FAILED ABOUT TWO TIMES BUT THEN WE LEARNED THAT WE SHOULD LISTEN TO IDEAS AND COMBINE THEM AND WE GOT THE BEST IDEA”**

**- Mahidha**

**“AN IMPORTANT THING I GOT FROM AMPLIFY YOUTH IS BEING ABLE TO BE PUT ON THE SPOT AND TAKE MYSELF OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE INSTEAD OF BEING SHY AND NOT SAYING ANYTHING”**

**- JP**

**“FIRST I LEARNED SO MUCH MORE CONFIDENCE, I DIDN’T USED TO WANT TO SPEAK BUT THE CONFIDENCE WORKSHOP REALLY HELPED AND MADE ME MORE ABLE TO MAKE MY OWN CHOICES AND THINK ABOUT WHY I WANTED TO DO THEM”**

**- Jonathanne**

**“FOR ME, IN THE FUTURE I WANT TO STUDY MEDICINE SO AMPLIFY YOUTH SEEMED LIKE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THE SKILLS NEEDED – EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION, TEAM WORK, BUILDING CONFIDENCE, HOW TO WORK TOGETHER”**

**- Aida**

**“I’VE BECOME BETTER AT SPEAKING – AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS – I WOULDN’T HAVE WANTED TO DO [AN INTERVIEW] AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM”**

**- Fahmida**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

**“[I] CAME INTO IT THINKING WE’RE OBVIOUSLY GOING TO DO SOMETHING WITH SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY – I KNEW THERE WERE HOMELESS PEOPLE HERE ... WHAT’S CHANGED IS HOW I CAN INTERACT WITH IT”**

**- JP**

**“I THINK IT’S MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAT YOU LOOK AFTER YOUR COMMUNITY”**

**- Fahmida**

**“WORKING ON YOUR OWN YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF BUT AS A GROUP YOU HAVE TO TAKE OTHER PEOPLE INTO CONSIDERATION – IT’S A GROUP THAT CAN REACH A GOAL”**

**- Nadia**

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# PARTICIPANT STORIES

Here are three examples showcasing the journeys of the young people who have participated in Amplify Youth at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch. Read on to hear about Jonathanne, Thamires and JP's experiences as part of the programme.

## Jonathanne - **BUILDING CONFIDENCE**

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Jonathanne joined Amplify Youth because she felt there wasn't a space where young people could share the problems they were confronting in their day-to-day lives: "I wanted to do the program because when I heard about it I thought it would give me space to say what I think about society without people judging me or thinking I'm just a kid". This space became very important to Jonathanne because it allowed her to share her experiences in her community. From this, she worked with the other young people to begin identifying problems, and finding ways they could start combatting them.

A key aspect of this program was that the young people not only identified issues, but also spent many sessions developing the skills they needed to take action. In the first few sessions of the programme, the young people engaged in several workshops centred around confidence-building and teamwork. This aspect of the programme was particularly important in Jonathanne's experience: "I learned so much more confidence, I didn't used to want to speak but the confidence workshop really helped and made me more able to make my own choices and think about why I wanted to do them".

Building on these skills, they spent an afternoon talking to people in the street to hear what they thought so that they could learn from them as they thought about ways to find solutions. Jonathanne explained that when they did the field trip, "we got to hear all of the [people's] opinions, and I thought I would hear that people didn't like the area but I heard the opposite". Hearing this led her to think about ways to incorporate people who wanted to help, like she did, in thinking about a project to help in the community.

Jonathanne, along with Zaynab, Aida, Somaiya and Nadiya, started developing a project-plan for a community-led food programme for people in the area living in food poverty. They are planning to connect with local shops for donations, and community centres for support, and host a series of pop-up food-sharing events in which they will give bags packed with healthy meals to anyone who needs. They hope this will help with hunger, as well as help break down the barriers between people as it would create a space for interaction, just as the community-based research in the streets had broken down barriers for them.

Overall, Jonathanne feels that her experience in Amplify Youth has shifted how she thinks she can interact with issues in the area, and equipped her with the skills to take action: "I always thought about problems but never thought about how I could help because I felt too young".

## Thamires - SUPPORTING HER PEERS

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Thamires was first drawn to Amplify Youth because she wanted to talk about her community and share her ideas. She felt that going to do community research in the area was the most impactful part as it gave her the opportunity to do this in a concrete way with people she usually doesn't have a chance to speak with.

Thamires explained that when they went to talk to people in the streets, each student had a question to ask - hers was 'young people + happiness = ?'. For her, the difference in the responses of young people and older people was surprising. She said the perspectives of the older people in the community made her rethink her own response to the question: "hearing what [the older people] expect of you adds responsibility so you don't want to disappoint them".

Her experience also led her to think about more about the challenges youth face, and how similar they often are. From this basis, she has thought more about people's stories and "their similarities to you, which allow you to relate to someone else which helps to get closer".

She found that this sort of connection was particularly important for youth, especially when thinking about the challenges they collectively face, but not always easily accessible.

As she was thinking about this issue, Thamires, along with Mahida, came up with the idea of creating a website for young people to share their experiences and offer support to one another. On the website there would be a separate chat for people between 15 and 17 and 18 to 20, and in each chat they can share stories or experiences about anything they want to. Through this, Thamires and Mahida hope that young people will be able to help each other, communicate, and ask for support from young people who have gone through problems they're currently struggling with.

Thamires feels that by creating more opportunities for youth to work together, they will be able to work towards solving many of the problems they face: "Amplify Youth showed me that understanding how to support young people actually will improve the community".

## JP - RETHINKING ISSUES

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For JP, Amplify Youth taught him new ways of thinking about the issues that he has been familiar with for a long time: "[There's] a lot that needs to be fixed - I used to just walk past homeless people but now I think about what can be done about it". It also helped him to feel more able to take initiative, and put himself outside of his comfort zone. As well, he explained that "the chance to gain confidence made me want to participate - and it has definitely happened".

Over the sessions, he found himself re-examining many of the issue in his community because "a lot of [the] activities really made me think about what I would do in certain situations and why people react a certain way".

He felt that knife crime inside the area was particularly important - especially because it's such a big topic: "I know people who've been involved in knife crime, now I'm trying to think about why people would start, and solutions to how knife crime can stop and how more young people can help make it stop and spread awareness".

After the programme, JP explained that a key lesson is the importance of being aware so that you can see things happen. With Afis, he wants to lead a residential programme for with young people from different backgrounds to come together to tackle racism and discrimination. He thinks that the programme made "a lot of people think a lot" and that this will stick with them.

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# PARTICIPANT IMPACT



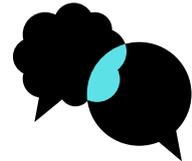
**85%**

OF PARTICIPANTS  
FEEL THEY HAVE AN  
IMPROVED  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
COMMUNITY BASED  
RESEARCH



**100%**

OF PARTICIPANTS NOW  
FEEL THEY HAVE A GOOD  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
DOING COMMUNITY BASED  
RESEARCH, COMPARED  
WITH 29% AT THE  
BEGINNING OF THE  
PROGRAMME



**77%**

OF PARTICIPANTS  
NOW FEEL CONFIDENT  
THAT THEY CAN MAKE  
A CHANGE IN THEIR  
COMMUNITY



**92%**

OF THE YOUNG  
PEOPLE NOW FEEL  
THEY HAVE STRONG  
CONNECTIONS WITH  
OTHER PEOPLE WHO  
THEY CAN LEARN  
FROM AND SHARE  
IDEAS WITH,  
DOUBLING THE  
NUMBER WHO FELT  
THEY HAD THIS  
NETWORK AT THE  
BEGINNING OF THE  
PROGRAMME



**77%**

FEEL THEY HAVE HAD  
MORE OF AN  
OPPORTUNITY TO TELL  
THEIR STORY TO PEOPLE  
IN POSITIONS OF POWER  
AND FELT LISTENED TO  
SINCE PARTICIPATING IN  
THE PROGRAMME



**85%**

OF THE YOUNG  
PEOPLE NOW HAVE A  
GOOD  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
BUSINESS, FINANCE  
AND HOW TO MAKE  
AN IDEA BECOME A  
REALITY

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# PARTICIPANT LEARNING

**Having successfully completed the Amplify Youth programme, the young people at Mulberry will move forward with new skills, experiences, and much to continue thinking about as they determine new and ongoing ways to take action.**

Through reflecting on their time with the programme, the young people said they particularly appreciated learning about how to interview the public, as through this they developed the confidence to speak to new people and ask questions about their community. While doing this, they heard many ideas from people about how to improve society, which contributed to their awareness of society and the challenges within it. They also explained that they have expanded their knowledge of the housing crisis, and gentrification in particular through the programme - topics very relevant to their lived experience as residents in Shoreditch and the surrounding areas. As a result, they now feel that they have built the aware, skills and confidence to do more for their community.

Moving forward, the young people will spend time thinking about what they each can do to improve their area. They have learned the benefits of working together and sharing strengths to support youth action on local projects. One participant explained that; “the sessions made me think about how anyone can make a change in society”, and another described the impact that youth-led action can have, giving the example of the youth march on gun control in the United States.

Throughout the programme, they also spent time hearing about what others think of young people, and thinking about the role they occupy in society. On the whole, the participants said they loved that they had the opportunity to work together and, as one participant put it; “the fact that we are trying to come up with solutions to problems in society”. Their aspirations are to continue to work together, develop their project plans, and make sure youth voices are heard.



**STAY CONNECTED**

hello@youngfoundation.org  
0208 980 6263

# THANK YOU

**Congratulations once again on completing the Credit Suisse and Young Foundation Amplify Youth programme to:**

Thamires Santos Araujo de Silva  
Nadim Shah  
Jonathanne Kengamu  
Yasir Chowdhury  
Aida Tewolde  
Zaynab Shah  
Mahida Khanom  
Somaiya Farhana Choudhury  
Safi Miah  
Muntasir Abed  
Fahmida Akther  
Nadiya Begum  
Jean Pierre Telford  
Afis Adeyemi

**And a special thank you to our programme guests and supporters:**

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Duygu Gumus – Deputy Director of Sixth Form  
The staff at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch  
Zoe Wilkins – Intern, The Young Foundation  
Monica Nagore – the GATES Play4Impact Erasmus+ project, Europe  
Carl Konadu – CEO of 2-3 Degrees, London  
Philip Green – Community activist, Shoreditch  
Councillor Tarik Khan – Weavers Ward, Bethnal Green





The Young Foundation  
18 Victoria Park Square  
London, E2 9PF  
+44 (0) 20 8980 6263  
[hello@youngfoundation.org](mailto:hello@youngfoundation.org)  
[youngfoundation.org](http://youngfoundation.org)