



TIWIL Phase Two

Listening to and Hearing from Young People 2004/5

In 2003, Runnymede embarked on a ground-breaking arts project designed to give young people a voice. This is *Where I Live: The Past, Present and Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* has engaged a diverse range of young people, through the arts, in a countrywide debate about heritage, identity, nation and citizenship. Phase one involved intensive focus group activity. Phase two will take the young people and the debate to a wider audience.

Phase one (2003/4)

In spring 2003, Runnymede put out a call to young people's groups (formal and informal) to invite their participation in *This is Where I Live*. The aim was to identify groups of young people, aged anywhere between 11 and 25, who would be interested in using the arts to talk about citizenship and how this relates to where they live. Some groups

were already running activities that could incorporate this theme; others were excited by the challenge and designed a project from scratch. Twenty-seven groups expressed an interest and 14 groups, involving 150 young people, also took part in focus groups.

They mixed independent artistic activity with structured discussion groups, conducted with

the support of Runnymede's Youth and Arts Coordinator, appointed for this role. These discussion groups have enabled us to compare the experiences, ideas and beliefs of young people across the country. Early analysis of the findings suggests that young people are developing complex multiple identities, negotiating an imaginative pathway through the myriad influences to which they are exposed in today's interactive world. They are adopting personal identities which challenge accepted views of ethnicity, selfhood and community, and though highly susceptible to the effects of changing policy, they remain disengaged from the processes that influence it. The differences in views are as illuminating as the similarities, with young people of different socio-economic status, ethnic group or geographical location expressing widely divergent visions of community, participation, inclusion and citizenship.

Voices from Focus Group Interviews in This is Where I Live Phase One

- The identity thing shapes the way you are and the way you feel, you can't escape your roots. But still I think it is really important that you address those things that are wrong.
- Like, I don't know where I come from. I say I come from London but London doesn't seem like home to me at all. I go there and I just see a complete mixture of cultures and I don't know which one I fit into.
- It's your home. It's not just one place that's your home. Everywhere is your home. You belong to the land. The land doesn't belong to you.
- It's about giving and receiving. Belonging is about being an active and generous and creative part of the community and also in return for that you will receive love and care and guidance.
- You would feel part of the community if you were accepted and that, and make lots of friends – this would make you part of the community.
- I think it also depends on the area you live in. I know that a lot of areas in Liverpool are a lot more community based like than others and it's because of poverty. . . the more working class areas I think they are more community based, and I know that from experience. I was bought up in quite a poverty-stricken area but moved on to an area that's not so much like that. I don't know the person next door or one, two, or three. Now I don't know a person to say hello to in my estate, but when I lived in an area that was poverty-stricken we were really, really close and I miss that.



Phase two (summer 2004 to late spring 2005)

This is Where I Live, phase two, is the means by which the project will bring the voices and personalities of these young



people to a wider audience, including policymakers, through regional events, a national conference, a touring exhibition and two core publications. These activities afford opportunities for a wide variety of people to share in the ongoing debate about building a successful multi-ethnic society, whilst at the same time providing inspiration, support and

resources for policymakers and opinion leaders. Our overall objective is to encourage greater understanding and better policymaking for improved racial equality and community cohesion.

Who better to ask about the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain than the young people who will populate it? The first phase of the project has shown us how

important young people's views are in considering the crucial issues which confront us all. Phase two will help us to amplify these voices and encourage others to engage with young people in policymaking and debate about our common future. □



This is Where I Live (TIWIL) activities planned for Phase Two over 2004/5 include:

Policy Publication and Regional Roundtables

The findings from phase one will be published in a report and shared through a series of three roundtables and a conference. The three roundtables over the remainder of 2004 will gather young people, teachers and youth workers, and academics and researchers, respectively, to consider what young people have to say about citizenship, heritage and identity, and to reflect on the best ways in which to respond to their expressed needs.

National Conference

A National *This is Where I Live (TIWIL)* Conference will bring together young people, policymakers and participants from all three seminars. A shared platform for policymakers (including government ministers) and young people will be the key structure underlying the day's events, which will highlight the importance of young people's voices, emphasise the responsibility of policymakers to listen to them, and demonstrate the dynamism of young people in their consideration of complex concepts about the current state and future of the nation.

Exhibitions

The conference will serve as a showcase for the visual and performing arts. A significant proportion of the creative projects have produced work that lends itself to an exhibition format, including photography, video/film, multi-media arts and writing. The conference exhibition will provide a space in which to demonstrate the diversity of young people's ideas around the themes of heritage, identity, nation and citizenship, and allow for a wider number of people to engage with, learn from and be inspired by the project. The exhibition will be designed in a touring format, and, after its London-based launch at the National TIWIL Conference, will be loaned to organisations with a suitable space to display it.

Arts-focused Publication

To complement the first (policy) publication, a book will be produced, in a large-format style, to profile the creative work produced by the young people in phase one. This will include their photography, stills of performances and other art forms (i.e. textiles and fashion), screen grabs from video clips, as well as their creative writing and poetry. The work will be contextualised through the medium of a connecting narrative, using the young people's own words from the focus group interviews of phase one, and the book itself will be officially launched at the National TIWIL Conference.

Groups who have been working in partnership with the TIWIL project, to produce images of their families, homes and neighbourhoods, are represented here by photos (L-R) from Croydon's Create team member Ibrahim Momoh, the NDC Seven Sisters project's Gurson Ferreira, Shehzad Chishty of Fitzrovia Youth in Action, and Leigh Wallace of NDC Seven Sisters.

