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Young people's involvement in Hub67: A case study of the development and practice of open access youth work in the context of the urban regeneration of East London.

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Abstract

Youth and Community work is a contested profession which, over several decades, has been reduced, challenged and required to adapt to address social and political priorities and emerging concerns around young people. Open Access Youth work, widely valued as 'traditional' youth work by many practitioners has faced most criticism and change in favour of target driven, results-based methods. Left thus in professional crisis, questions arise as to whether open access youth work can be meaningfully applied in a contemporary context.

This thesis aims to investigate the practice of open access youth work and identify what the contribution of youth and community work is to the improvement of young people's lives in contemporary urban settings. To determine how youth and community work practices aim to explore the difficulties and challenges experienced by young people, how young people potentially benefit from youth and community work, and how can these benefits be characterised and conceptualised. It explores and assesses how youth and community work contributes to improving the lived experiences of young people in those settings, and how these contributions can be identified.

The study is a single case study; Hub67 in Hackney Wick, East London, focussed on the development and delivery of a unique youth and community space, generated as a result of the 2012 Olympic legacy to respond to community needs and concerns for young people during this period. It records, assesses, and critically evaluates the development of Hub67 in three phases; the period leading up to the Games in 2012, immediately following the event and the period in which neighbourhood structures and opportunities were reformed. Thus, it takes a chronological approach to understand the developments and challenges for youth workers, local and national supporting organisations, decision makers and young people. The author has a key role in developing the provision of Hub67, and therefore is both practitioner and researcher. The insider positioning is reflected in the methods, which applies an ethnographic approach bounded within a case study protocol. Multiple data sources were used;

ethnographic fieldnotes, interviews, focus groups and minutes of meeting (in and about Hub67). The data was analysed using thematic analysis.

The study identified two key themes; Civic engagement and Self-awareness, over the three time periods; and applies Bourdieu's Concept of habitus, field, capital and doxa to inform how young people perceive and experience social geography, agency and interaction throughout the case study. Social capital, as perceived by Bourdieu, is central to this study which aims to identify the multi-faceted characteristics and qualities of open access youth work and how young people's lived experiences are impacted by its interventions.

The study contributes to the current and historical debates about open access youth work and its place and purpose in urban environments and beyond. The data provides enriching and frustrating questions about youth and community work and raises challenges to new and established youth and community workers in locating themselves and their work in a professional and relevant context as well as to funders, communities and decision makers as to the potential role which open access youth work can play in social and environmental dynamics and tensions. The study identifies the significance of 'community' in the foundations of youth work and demonstrates the therapeutic and developmental benefits offered to young people through this.

Declaration

This work has not previously been submitted for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree. This thesis is the result of my own research and other sources are explicitly acknowledged.

Tracie Trimmer-Platman

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The word count excluding abstract and references is 80,944 words.

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Figure 1 - Where the Hell is Hackney Wick - postcard from the Wick

Local artists created the image 'a postcard from Hackney Wick' in the first phase of the Olympic Games development in 2010. It depicts the juxtaposition between rubbish and hope by showing a palm tree growing ceremoniously out of a waste pile. In a sense, only those who appreciate the full and rich environment that is Hackney Wick, might understand the notions and intentions behind the question; 'Where the hell is Hackney Wick'.

From its historical beginnings, an area that has been neglected and left to its own devises, low rise housing, mostly social, has provided homes to generations of families, low-waged, undereducated, and content living in an area with little resources or opportunity. It is these families whom this research is primarily concerned with, made up of generations with no choice but to live in the ward.

Until the late eighteenth century, Hackney Wick was a quiet hamlet; hard to reach, in the corner of the city of London. Industrialisation began thanks to its location along the

Lea Navigation Canal providing transport options for an array of different materials leading to rapid change and development of multi-story factories and living spaces in grid-like patterns across the ward. By 1879 residents lived in cramped, dirty and noxious housing as a population of 6,000. Booth investigated poverty and unsanitary conditions and described the residents of Hackney Wick as "Lowest class, vicious and semi-criminal" (Booth 1899) which prompted Eton College to establish "The Mission" outreach project to help and support those living in the worst of conditions.

Following the blitz much of the industry was lost and replaced by warehouses. It was not until 1970 that the Trowbridge Estate was built consisting of bungalows and seven tower blocks. Although the low-rise buildings still exist, the blocks were demolished in 1985 as they had become nothing more than slums.

A certain revival began in the 1980's with the arrival of artists and micro businesses, a grocery store and a greasy spoon café. It was not until the Olympic Games was awarded to East London, in July 2005 that Hackney Wick was kick started into a period of transformation. The waterways, formally used for trade, were established as a Creative Enterprise Zone in 2018 with recreational hot spots with bars, cafes, restaurants (one claiming a Michelin star), gyms and fitness venues, theatres, entertainment spots, high-profile fashion, homeware, and jewellery making studios.

One journalist suggested that stepping into the Wick is like falling into multiple artists' sketchbooks. Some of the graffiti is wild and loud, running across buildings, onto railings and walls of the industrial yards' (Balla, 2020; p.2). Others have written about the differences and tensions between graffiti and street art, which they reassure are in fact two very different art forms. Hackney Wick has become the land of digital marketers, graphic designers and creatives; a tourist destination where regeneration has swopped dilapidated buildings with the development of high tech, high security new homes which have been described as the 'finest developments in London' (Spittles, 2020, p1).

Flint tells readers 'there's a layer of cool that comes with saying you are living in Hackney. From an edgy, rough area to a creative hub big on community, Hackney is fast becoming one of London's most sought-after postcodes. Living in Hackney Wick

promises to offer plenty, whether you're an aspiring artist or simply want a fun place to live' (Flint, 2020; p.4).

What is significant about these statements and observations is that they are reaching out to potential residents who aspire to join the Hackney Wick community and benefit from its quirky and developing environment and soon to be open, Sainsbury's and show little concern for the socially housed residents who exist amongst the new and luxurious buildings and who have done so since the Olympic Games was announced.

1.1. Aims and Research Questions

The research aims to demonstrate the value and characteristics of open access youth provision in the context of an urban setting in East London, Hackney Wick. It was important to consider the extent to which the regenerational context of the research was typical or atypical of deprived areas and in particular, young people, undergoing neighbourhood change. In addition, challenges and barriers were considered, particularly in a policy environment that does not currently support this kind of provision. It was also necessary to review and understand theory which underpins youth and community work practice in the current contexts while navigating and attempting to explain youth work approaches.

Therefore, the overarching aim of this study was to investigate the practice of open access youth work in one setting: an urban regeneration site in East London. The study focuses on the exploration and assessment of how youth and community work contribute to improving the lived experiences of young people in contemporary urban settings. This involved interrogating the characteristics of youth and community work practice in an urban setting and the relationships which developed within Hackney Wick and the Olympic delivery regeneration process. An exploration of the impact of urban regeneration on young people and youth and community work practices and their facilitated capacity to develop social capital was also explored. This research assesses whether open access youth work enables a stronger sense of community and belonging for young people and explores the impact of regeneration in a socially

excluded yet rapidly advancing neighbourhood, by interrogating the experiences, challenges and aspirations of young people who access youth and community work.

The research questions therefore are:

What is the contribution of youth and community work to the improvement of young people's lived experiences in contemporary urban settings?

Two sub questions exist within this as:

1. How do youth and community work practices aim to address the difficulties and challenges experienced by young people?

2. How do young people potentially benefit from youth and community work, and how can these benefits be characterised and conceptualised?

1.2. Youth and Community Work

Youth and community work practice (or youth work) have been challenged by a constantly changing policy environment over the last three decades where open access services for young people have been cut back in most London boroughs and across the UK, and in England particularly, have been completely dismantled (Davies, 2009). Despite this, young people continue to live in deprivation, poverty and in growing moral panic (Cohen, 1972), as a result of fear of and from gang culture and related crime and violence, among other issues, including mental ill health, poverty, poor educational attainment and employment potential. The lack of open access youth and community provision has led many young people bereft of spaces to 'call their own' and to be sociable.

In the current political climate, youth work has lost its way (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome and Ferrari, 2003; Davies, 2018). The constantly changing policy environment is adding pressure to youth services without generating the kind of

change that is needed (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome and Ferrari 2003; Davies, 2018). Youth work provision is limited with very few open access projects across the country as opposed to youth work in the 60s to 80s where 'youth clubs' were a key aspect of social provision (Robertson, 2005; Jeffs and Smith, 2013). Young people are bored, marginalised, isolated, and fearful (Batsleer, 2011). Youth work is now focussed on problems-based solutions and is highly target-driven, especially in violence and crime diversion, however, it is questionable whether this is producing good outcomes (Bradford, 2007; Batsleer, 2013). I argue that the current environment in terms of policy and practice is actually blocking practitioners from understanding young people's real needs. In the context of growing moral panics about young people, gangs, violence, and lack of opportunity (Shain, 2011; Cohen, 2012), finding solutions based on the lived realities of young people is essential. Using Hub67 as a case study, it is possible to identify these lived experiences and to explore the model of open access youth work to identify its capacity for motivating change. It is also necessary to highlight how government initiatives, such as the National Citizens Service (NCS) has contextualised an understanding of youth work, and in particular, open access in England.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

To make sense of the theoretical context of youth work practice, I consider the usefulness of Bourdieu's theoretical framework in understanding how adolescence is shaped and contributes to the remodelling of powerful social structures. This study starts with the sociological assumption that institutional and ideological structures influence childhoods and child-adult relationships. Moreover, long-established traditions, policies and beliefs set structures for how lives are understood and lived in specific societal contexts.

Bourdieu (1990) considers how traditions, policies and beliefs are absorbed into people's understanding of their characteristics and status in different social groups (*Habitus*), and how people and social groups, in turn, bring to their settings these

acquired social, cultural and economic capitals. Childhood and youth differ according to time and space on one hand, and on the other, permanent social structures influence how society works and thus how young people contribute to social relations both within and across generations.

The concept of field, (*le champ*), is central to Bourdieu's theory in that he identifies the home as not necessarily a place where loving, harmonious relationships endure, but one where negotiations and sometimes battles for power exist and characteristics are ascribed (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.95) and where status is accepted by players. Where players are struggling for scarce provision and resources, they tend to challenge their social status, yet they bring with them varying forms of capital to help with intersections of agency and structure.

Interlinked concepts of field and habitus involve understanding that these can change in character and that interrelated change in one will mean change in the other. The political and social world of youth and community work undergoes frequent changes in ethos and practice and lead us to understand negotiations between young people and parents while appreciating how the changes in the field impact these negotiations. It is, therefore, necessary to consider that the field of education and social justice will have changed since the parents of these young people absorbed their understandings of what was needed and relevant in their social and environmental constructs.

Bourdieu created the concept of '*Hysteresis*' referring to a 'structural lag' (Bourdieu, 1986) to describe the ways people may either miss or delay grasping opportunities in their field. Both field and habitus are subject to change, since individual histories are ongoing, as young people develop at different stages and in different ways. Indeed, as social conventions change, in turn the socialisation of young people takes longer (Elias, 1978; Hendrick, 2003).

The participants in this study are embedded in an impoverished and under-resourced community, where intergenerational, social, economic and political inequalities are prevalent. Social conventions, aspirations and assumptions are changing rapidly to

meet new technologies, gender references, media, financial opportunities, mental health awareness and expectations among young people. For example, how young people identify themselves, their sexuality, their gender and the ways in which they communicate through technology differ from those used in previous decades. Young people are required to be more technologically articulate than ever before, contending with a myriad of national and global social shifts in markets, attitudes, values and expectations. Therefore, Bourdieu's conceptual theories can be applied since the conservation of social order rests on people's acceptance of their social position and their status within the social group to which they associate.

Modifications to social order are resultant when individuals or groups successfully challenge their assigned social status. This study is particularly interested in how young people challenge their social status via the acquisition of social capital. Therefore, the study focuses on whether the impacts of deeply held beliefs when modified in habitus can encourage young people to act as agents of change both within their communities and in their own lived experience. In other words, this study establishes whether their involvement in open access youth and community work can enhance their community engagement and experiences.

Therefore, in the contested and challenged professional environment currently inhabited by youth and community work (Davies, 2018), it is timely to offer and justify appropriate ways of theorizing the benefits to young people and communities of practice, and participation in open access youth provision.

1.4. The Study in Context

In the context of regeneration, the Olympic Games of 2012 presented the opportunity to spotlight Hackney Wick in all its energy, resources, political interests and ambiguity. The games enabled the opportunity to offer solutions to some of the entrenched problems, such as poverty and underachievement. This context is unique, but the need for provision of this kind is not unique to Hackney.

There is a gap in provision for young people, which once meant youth clubs and centres existed in all boroughs, without question (Fox and Sharma 2017). Young people now are demonised for using public space, such as parks or streets as meeting places, moved on and monitored by local police, security and neighbours (Crane and Dee, 2001; Jupp, 2007). The focus on addressing specific problems with young people has become a barrier to engaging with them and understanding their needs, (Batsleer, 2011) and imposes time restricted opportunities to develop meaningful professional relationships with them.

Therefore, this research offers a case study of the emergence of an open access youth project – 'Hub67' – in Hackney Wick in the context of the 2012 Olympics. The research demonstrates how open access provision can fundamentally transform the focus and outcomes of youth and community work for the better. The unique opportunity of the Olympics serves as a backdrop that made this project possible and shone a spotlight on the issues experienced by the neighbourhood. This project gives insight into the lived realities of young people while responding to deprivation and exploring the potential to generate social capital. These realities are all transferable to other contexts that may not so far have been in the spotlight the same way as Hackney Wick.

Between 2005 and 2015 the residents of Hackney Wick - a small and often forgotten ward within the wider Hackney borough - found themselves located amongst the unfolding challenges and opportunities championed by the 2012 London Olympic Games. An impoverished yet creative drenched neighbourhood was thrust into the limelight and into the dark at the same time when the area became the site of the Olympic Games. Social and political attention was directed at regenerating the area because of the expected huge numbers of visitors the event would and indeed did attract. The government aimed at ensuring that the Games offered a lasting legacy of value, which would change the space and architecture in the area by raising its profile and potential.

'it is the material and redistributive circulation of the Olympic asset – through the properly appointed materiality of the legacy asset – that will assure this accumulation of positive affect around the Olympic Games. It is upon such 'accumulation (amongst a number of other things) that a lasting legacy depends'. (Macrury and Poynter 2008, p.26)

However, many of the residents were largely excluded from decision-making and discussion regarding this legacy, as they were not included in meetings or consultations. Nevertheless, the context of regeneration – and in particular the funding that was made available to community organisations – meant that new projects could emerge to address some of the entrenched community issues including isolation and deprivation. One issue in the area was that young people lived in deprivation, marginalised from society. As an example of one young resident explains.

'*When I was young growing up in Hackney, I was aware of the inequality in the area. Now I can see that through gentrification the gap between rich and poor is becoming even bigger. There is a changing demographic of people moving in and a lot of new things are popping up but mostly for new wealthy residents. Young people feel they are too often stereotyped, particularly as troublemakers or as 'bad'*'. (Billingham, 2018)

Social commentator and author Ian Sinclair describes, below, in his unique style, Hackney Wick as a wasteland made colourful by daring ventures into dilapidated buildings and unwanted trash. Sinclair implies a sense of silent activity, and presents the area as a place with few humans, but those who exist in this dystopian world as youthful wrong doers with time on their hands. Perhaps unintentionally, the author aptly describes the way in which young people in Hackney Wick have spent their time – with a lack of youth provision and local facilities, which has led to boredom and isolation:

'But the major artworks, self-sponsored galleries of opposition, occur at the back of the fence, on the unexposed panels of giant off-highway hoardings. Two artists in particular, white boys emerging from the Hackney Wick squatting and warehouse-occupying nexus, have undertaken projects of revised topography: mile after mile of two-headed crocodiles, grinning gum-pink skulls, Mayan serpents, clenched Philip Guston fists. A punk codex using industrial quantities of emulsion. Railway bridges. Condemned factories. They have been there: Sweet Toof and Cyclops. Fun-house mouths eating the rubble of development, the melancholy of this black propaganda limbo. The exhibition, behind the hoardings on Chapman Road in Hackney Wick, is worth crossing London to see. Rubbish mounds, brick heaps, trashed containers all contribute to this dynamic set: the separate panels become a graphic novel, energetic as Robert Crumb. Gestural, ecstatic. The single eyes on the walls of the Lord Napier pub are melting, in an acid attack, but they are alive, noisy, full of themselves. The perfect antidote to the liquid cosh of blue-fence thinking.' (Sinclair, 2008)

As a result of the newfound energy surrounding the Olympics, residents began to take action, via local committees and focus groups, with Hub67 eventually emerging and successfully helping to generate 'social capital' and other positive outcomes for young people, as demonstrated in this research. However, this is by no means unique to Hackney Wick and there is enormous potential in reproducing the Hub67 model elsewhere. Not only does this contribute to our understanding of young people and social change, but it also offers insight into youth work theory, returning to the traditional notion of open access youth provision as opposed to problem-based services. Hub67 created a platform for young people to contribute, interrogate and participate in the challenges and opportunities presented to them by the neighbourhood movement and regeneration. Although finding this voice was driven by the need to respond to the impacts of the Olympics, the possibilities for young people to find their voice were not limited to this event.

1.5. Background to My Role as Researcher

I acknowledged that my role had several interlinking dimensions. As a practitioner and researcher, I would potentially be researching my own practice and as a resident, my community. A resident of Hackney Wick for 21 years, a community activist as well as a career youth and community worker, I was intrigued to discover how, and in what ways, the Olympic event and development would benefit or impact young people. I wanted to know if their voice would be heard and whether, the deficits in provision and support for them in their neighbourhood would be considered in the emerging regeneration.

Macrury and Poynter (2008), in their report "The Olympics: East London's Renewal and Legacy", suggest that there is potential in the Olympic legacy, which dominates Hackney Wick and surrounding boroughs, but that this potential can only be truly useful if the design and delivery is managed appropriately and effectively. In other words, at the time, they were raising questions about what the legacy would be for the Olympic neighbourhoods and what it would look like. As Billingham (2018) explains, young people are aware of the inequalities in the neighbourhood and how they are perceived. The author acknowledges that the redevelopment and gentrification he has witnessed is 'not for him' but for others new to the area, those for whom the new opportunities have been created. One intention for this research is to ensure that the legacy is focused on the needs of the area and to ensure that it stretches beyond Hackney Wick into other areas of deprivation.

The research questions called for an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of an open access approach, the strengths and context for the success of Hub67 and the gap between the realities of young people's lives and current youth work policies and practice. The research questions call for an explicit consideration of how to formulate youth policy that has a positive impact and better meets the needs of young people. In light of this, the study aim can be summarised as:

Using Hub67 as a case study, this research critically assesses the lived experiences of young people in Hackney Wick, amidst regeneration and gentrification and a lack of youth and community work provision. The study focuses on the introduction of an open access provision and its potential for improving how young people experience their community.

The research questions derive from my own experience as a youth and community work practitioner. My experience is significant in relation to this research as it provides a 'relational interface between institutions and the field' (Froggett and Briggs, 2012, p. 2) drawing on Kohut's notion of 'experience near' (Kohut, 1978) and Geertz's concept of 'practice nearness' (Geertz, 1974), linking to notions and practices of the reflective practitioner (Schon, 1983) and ethnographic applications to research. In a sense, I will be researching my own practice and working philosophy.

As a newly qualified teacher in the 1980's, I transitioned from Head of Department in a Church of England School in South London to a full-time Youth and Community Worker in West London – almost overnight. As much as I enjoyed teaching Art, Textiles and Home Economics to secondary age pupils, I had discovered youth work as a result of needing extra cash to subsidise my salary. Told that vacant 'needlework' sessions were available at the attached youth club, for two nights a week I sat with young people who came to the classes, soon realising that they had not come for the 'needlework', but for the space, the camaraderie, the time and opportunity to 'be'. I learnt so much about these young people – far more than I could ever have done in a formal educational context. I learnt about their lives, in all their diversity, troubles, motivations, aspirations, stresses and much more. Over the weeks, their narratives became richer and my concern equalled my admiration for them. I encountered young people who were considered 'troublesome', 'disruptive' and 'difficult'. I even met pupils who had never attended my lessons in school as they were permanently referred to alternative provision.

While teaching in my classroom, I created an informal ambiance for workshop sessions meaning whilst practical work was being done, the radio would play to

encourage a relaxed atmosphere. I decorated the walls and shelves with inspirational and youth orientated images and examples of youth culture and aspiration. I did this without thinking too much but realised that the pupils felt comfortable in the space. They also respected the times when the radio was turned off, for instruction, demonstration and sharing of important information. Creativity flourished and they made everything from shoes to wall hangings. In fact, my classroom became a referral space for those excluded from other lessons and I had to open an adjoining classroom to accommodate the extra bodies. I enjoyed seeing them thrive, interact, invent and assert themselves. What became obvious to me was that most of these young people needed space where they were not judged, monitored by paperwork or forced into academic achievement for which they felt unready. I had discovered my strengths and encountered youth work for the first time. I recognised that I was able to engage with young people, listen to and hear them, motivate and empathise but also, that I could work with individuals to identify their strengths and weaknesses, aspirations and opportunities.

I applied, for a full-time youth work post in West London at a huge community school with a purpose-built youth centre attached – I was appointed Assistant Head of Centre where on my first day found the Head of Centre, my manager, unloading his car. He had taken phones, photocopiers, cash boxes and an array of sports equipment home with him over the weekend. He explained that he could not trust anyone to leave it in situ over the weekend – too much had gone missing. '*Are the kids that bad?*' I heard myself saying. He insisted that the 'kids' were fine, but that it was the staff who were the problem. By the end of that week he had resigned, and I was left, Acting Head of Centre.

The challenges I faced over the following eighteen months were enormous. Staff who had previously spent their evenings drinking Guinness and playing cards had moved on, so too had the secretary who had developed creative ways of dealing with petty cash. A new and invigorated youth and community work team had been recruited who had an interest in young people, shared the same ethos and values; embedded in empowerment and respect. The young people were designing new graffiti for the gym

and enjoying a host of activities and projects of their own invention. The centre had young people at the heart and offered them the space to explore, question, challenge and reinforce their place in the world. They were free to be 'young people' in a non-judgemental environment which challenged behaviour, attitudes and values in ways which encouraged reflection, consequence and growth. They became tolerant of others, assertive, interactive and creative. They had a stake in the centre, owning and embracing it. They were proud of the centre, saw it as a key part of their community as did parents, social workers, teachers and neighbours.

Over the years, partner organisations and teams worked with us to provide holistic services to young people including health and social care, sexual health teams, employers and careers services. The local Police and youth justice teams were regular visitors and often engaged in activities with young people, for fun. Sponsors supported various projects and faith groups trusted us enough to offer sessions to their youngsters. The venue was fully accessible, and we opened the very first lesbian, gay and bisexual sessions for young people in Westminster. Our Cultural Awareness programmes proved controversial, as they had not previously been offered, and some members of the community felt they were unnecessary, but they were well attended and vibrant. Our crime diversion projects took young 'offenders' away for intense and radical residential soul searching. The centre had been renamed as a resource centre and it certainly had become one.

I recount this to demonstrate how I became a youth and community worker, albeit surreptitiously, and how my personal and professional ideologies and philosophies were formed. Although I had studied for a degree in teacher education, I had not had any training and very little experience of youth and community work. I was technically naïve and unfamiliar with policies and procedures, but what had encouraged me to make this move was my underlying belief in young people's capacity for change, their energy for experience and the way in which they so often lacked a voice or place in their communities. It also strengthened my resolve in the resource that open access youth work can provide to young people and neighbourhoods and how, over time this has been lost across the UK. My early experience demonstrated robustly the impact

that an open access youth centre could contribute to the lives of young people and communities and I was interested to know whether this could be achieved in Hackney Wick.

Over the next twenty-five years, I worked in a variety of roles both in the statutory and voluntary sectors, witnessing the nature of youth work change significantly. Resources and priorities altered as roles, responsibilities and landscapes shifted - a continued and consistent deconstruction of traditional youth work, particularly in the statutory sector ensued, where funding was withdrawn and grants in the voluntary sector were allocated to match specialisms and time limited projects. The changing tides encouraged uncertainty and instability in all areas of service delivery to young people (Robertson, 2005).

It was not until the late 1990's that I undertook an MA in Youth and Community Work and begun to fully understand the values, history and intentions behind the work. I had successfully managed to carry out effective projects with young people, youth workers and communities for many years, my practice had developed, drawing on positive and negative experiences with mentors, managers, staff, funders, supporters, naysayers and young people alike amid fluctuating temperatures in which youth work was popular, unpopular, well-funded and ignored.

Youth work was sliding into a complex stream of delivery expectations largely focussed on young people's employability and participation. Expectations were widened in terms of youth work practice, professional relationships and remits to which funders responded and followed suit (Bradford 2013; Davies, 2019). Reported failures in achievement in formal education (Belton, 2009; Jeffs and Smith, 2010; Batsleer, 2012) and the workforce was implicated in what seemed to seize the moment and attempt to accredit a professional status to youth work. This extended school hours to include services and activities outside of general leisure activities and were able to be flexible in working to a developmental and responsive curriculum (Robertson, 2005; Young, 2006; Ord, 2007).

Youth workers were forced from the late 80's into delivering targeted 'products' rather than considering the 'process' of youth participation in services – focussing on social, economic and individual exclusion (Milburn, et al 1995). A more business-like approach was requested (Smith, 2002) and the process that was youth work (reflection, empathy and relationships) was being undermined (Smith and Jeffs, 2010; Davies, 2012, 2019).

The key debates around youth work began to focus, not around the needs of young people, but how they should be worked with (Ord, 2002, Bradford, 2010; Batsleer, 2012; Davies, 2019, 2012). Targeted provision was considered more cost effective and measurable while open access youth work became diluted. Academics encouraged theoretical thinking around practice and offered meaning to the process of youth work. Whether youth work was radical, critical or liberal, it was interrogated and challenged across the sector. This thesis demonstrates open access youth and community work as well as associational education as central to work with young people in Hackney Wick to analyse the benefits and challenges inherent in practice.

With the arrival of the Olympic potential, I saw an opportunity in Hackney Wick to revitalise community support for young people and to establish opportunities for youth and community work intervention, which was not constrained by social, economic or political policies and expectations. This potential could operate within a traditional methodology and ideology that allows for voluntary participation of young people in positive and constructive social relationships. This opportunity would not simply enable social development among young people and the community but also offer a challenge to notions of targeted youth and community provision and the future direction of practice.

1.6. Youth and Community Work, Services and Practice

Youth services are organisations and departments who work and engage with young people in different ways offering choice and opportunity in a variety of settings using

a range of processes. This often proves confusing to non-practitioners giving credence to the notion that an operational definition of youth work, which is often sought by policy makers, the public and novice youth workers (Cooper, 2019; McKee, Oldfield and Poultney, 2010, Butters and Newell, 1978) would be helpful. A definition that offers clarification of the institutional and contextual role and offers better understanding of the processes and practices in this kind of work with young people may be welcome.

Workers and services make a commitment to the rights of young people and endeavour to uphold these throughout their work while addressing the multiplicity of needs encountered (Bauman, 2003; Bunyan, 2009; Furlong, 2009). For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to clarify what is intended and described about youth work and young people. Youth work practice, services and practitioners, internationally, have several fundamental elements in common. These include putting young people at the centre, as individuals rather than problems in inclusive, preventative and anti-discriminatory ways, ensuring that they have access to advice and support when needed (Williamson, 2015; Nicolls, 2011). Historically, these same values and principles have been documented however, the language and terminology have differed and developed over time (Cooper, 2013; Gilchrist, 2013; Spence, 2010).

Establishing terms and references about youth work and practices used in the thesis is essential. In this study, young people are identified as those between the ages of 10 and 19, of all genders, sexual orientation, religions and ethnicities. The NYA determine that youth work should take place with young people aged between 13-19 years of age, and up to 25 with those who have additional needs (NYA, 2012). Since the project in Hackney Wick was a community-based endeavour, including younger children was important as the numbers in this age range were significant. In addition, a large number had caretaking responsibility for their younger siblings and would have been excluded from provision if the age range was higher.

Only where it is relevant to the research findings, will specific characteristics be noted in relation to the young people who participated in this research. It is my firm belief that youth work cannot successfully take place without strong and effective

relationships with the community within which it operates. As a result, all mention of youth work should indeed also be understood as 'youth and community work' and will apply to work undertaken specifically, with the young people. Youth and community work services are those which are either funded, directed or dedicated to working with young people and in using the term 'services' and 'practitioners,' I am referring to these groups and individuals particularly.

1.7. Research in the Context of Hackney Wick

Hackney Wick is not served well by youth and community provision. Activities are focussed on centres and sports venues outside of the Wick Ward – either in the Hackney Marshes, or around housing estates, designed to meet the needs of resident communities. Hackney Quest (2016) compiled a report on young people in Hackney Wick; Young Eyes, in which they noted young people and indeed their parents were fearful of either perceived or known gang activity in the area and convincingly recoil from participation in opportunities on 'other estates' due to potential fighting and tensions. Parents strongly express their views about the safety of their children (Hackney Quest, 2016). The study also found that many young children (primary school age) refer to gangs and teenagers interchangeably but are unable to articulate what a gang actually means. Numbers of young people engaged in the youth justice system in Hackney is around 1%, suggesting that fewer than perceived may be associated with gang activity (Hackney Quest, 2016). Young people enjoy the abundance of green space in Hackney and recognise a sense of community but are aware of the inequality in the area and can clearly see the gap between rich and poor and the ongoing gentrification and regeneration. Young people were positive about the '*Creatives'* in the area but suggest that they are perceived negatively by the these '*Creatives'*, and that the divisions between social background and lifestyle are pertinent (Hackney CVS, 2015). Seizing on the opportunity to respond to the Olympic threats and opportunities and recognising the void between school and home for young people in the Wick, it was important to address these inequalities, to attempt to engage with the community, particularly young people, to understand and advocate for changes in the local landscape from which they could benefit and thrive.

I am particularly drawn to the notion of 'living research' (McNiff, 2008), as it resonates with my own particular position in this research project. The case study provided a platform from which to demonstrate how learning through a 'lens of culture' (McNiff, 2008, p. 34) is possible. In addition, it offered 'an artistic and analytic demonstration of how we come to know, name and interpret personal and cultural experience' (Adams, Jones and Ellis 2015 p.1). This study is useful not only to the research community but also to practitioners who are interested in applying theory and research to enrich and inform their work. As previously noted, as a practitioner/researcher the gathering of data was done from a practice-near perspective. Although the research is rooted in youth and community work practice, many of the themes are likely to resonate in broader practice where young people are involved. Many practitioners work in areas which are affected by poverty and conditions outside of their control and this research draws on a particular world of practice to provide theoretical and empirical resources for inspiration, reflection, creativity, and discussion in an underrepresented scholarly environment. Given the necessity for more consensus about what youth work is and what it does, (Ord, 2002; Davies, 2003; Batsleer, 2010; de St Croix, 2016; Davies, 2019) there is a need for more research and development in the field.

1.8. The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis provides a chronological case study which articulates the development of Hub67 as well as the relationships between residents, young people, professionals, corporate agencies and the community within and around the Olympic project.

1.8.1. Chapter Two – Youth and Community Work in Contemporary Urban Settings

This chapter presents an extensive review of literature, which draws upon conceptual and theoretical frameworks for youth and community work, the context of regeneration and whether this is essential to the success of the Hub67 model. This chapter also explores the agency of individuals and communities in the operation of individual and community social structures. The review considers the social phenomena that impact young people in youth and community work by exploring social capital and positive impacts that professional associational relationships with young people can have on individual, community and social development.

This chapter discusses how models of youth and community work are contested and challenged in the current practitioner climate while considering the issues which young people face in social, economic, and political debates. A discussion on Bourdieu's concepts of social capital and its relevance to youth and community work and Hackney Wick regeneration is considered, as is the notion of urban regime theory in mobilising and motivating local community change and political intervention. Literature is drawn from youth and community work scholars in the field of psychology, adolescence, sociology and social commentary.

1.8.2. Chapter Three – Research Methodology

This chapter introduces the research design and methods. A case study methodology was undertaken adopting a critical realist ontological position and a realist epistemology. The research explored the lived experiences of a community caught between poverty, deprivation and emerging promises of regeneration and change in an urban London neighbourhood. The research was undertaken over a period of six years (between 2010 and 2016) and uses a variety of data, comprising fieldwork notes, minutes of meetings, interviews and focus groups. Using a thematic analysis, the developments, challenges and opportunities navigated by residents of Hackney Wick were documented. A thematic analysis was applied to the data collected to identify themes and patterns.

1.8.3. Chapter Four – Preparing for the Games and Hub67

This chapter explores the foundations of Hub67 to identify the driving factors that facilitated its creation. The chapter outlines the experiences of volunteers, decision makers and young people in the period before the Olympic Games events in 2012 (between 2010 and 2012). This chapter describes the experiences of young people and the community amidst rapid urban development in Hackney Wick and the oppositions to unique spaces being made available to young people, particularly, identifying the feelings and perceptions of residents in the neighbourhood.

This chapter demonstrates the social, political and emotional journey experienced by residents including those who belong to the creative community in Hackney Wick and identifies how their social capital impacted decisions and opportunities for young people and residents across the Ward.

1.8.4. Chapter Five – The Creation of Hub67

This chapter outlines the factors, challenges and opportunities encountered as the project developed to interrogate the conditions that formalised the creation of an open access platform for young people. This chapter describes the period between 2012 and 2015, following the dismantling and redirection of the Olympic site, whereby Hub67 came into being.

This chapter identifies the ways in which young people were understood by the wider community and how this understanding impacted decisions and opportunities. Examples demonstrate how young people experienced this and how their parents and guardians responded. Interventions and support from the local community as well as opposition and tensions are discussed in detail. This chapter draws on my research fieldwork journal and on the minutes of meetings from a variety of groups involved in the process.

1.8.5. Chapter Six – The Hub67 Model

This chapter explicitly details youth and community work practice and ethos engendered in the establishment, process, and perceptions of Hub67. This section explains how young people and the community experience their involvement in the process. This chapter discusses the data gathered specifically from interviews and focus groups conducted with young people, parents, guardians and youth and community workers over a six-month period in 2015-2016. The chapter outlines how Hub67 was able to realise a community space where the community, and young people participated. The methods of delivery of youth and community work are also presented.

1.8.6. Chapter Seven – The Impact of Hub67

Using thematic analysis, this chapter explores the impact of Hub67, addressing the research aims to establish whether, and why, the Hub67 model was effective in producing change in Hackney Wick. The chapter shows that open access youth and community work can positively affect young people's lives, emotional and

developmental capacities as well as reduce concerns of personal safety amongst residents. It demonstrates the capacity for young people's personal and social development in the Hub67 model and the ways in which social capital can encourage enhanced community voice and engagement. This chapter draws together all learning and analysis from this research study, offers recommendations for practice and community development and makes a unique contribution to the area of scholarship of young people, youth and community work and urban change.

1.8.7. Chapter Eight - Discussion of Findings

This Chapter identifies the primary concerns to be explored. The research aims are clearly articulated and outlined in relation to the location and context of the research topic. All chapters seek to respond to the research aims critically and extensively. Drawing on the data findings from this research, this chapter will offer discussion and analysis of the key themes and areas of discovery, gaps in understanding and opportunities for young people and practitioners in urban contexts.

CHAPTER TWO – Youth and community work in the context of urban settings.

2.1. Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of literature on youth work theories, practice and young people. It aims to emphasise, interpret and challenge some of the thinking about the role that regeneration plays in the lived experiences of young people and communities in an urban context. Most youth and community work, although not solely, takes place in urban environments and the aim is to identify key issues around young people's participation and experience within this contextual landscape.

This chapter will discuss literature relating to four key areas. Firstly, it will discuss how current youth work has developed over time, with particular emphasis on how open access youth work has been challenged and compromised in recent years by target-driven provision and concepts. The literature will identify the key issues, dilemmas and challenges encountered by youth work professionals in addressing the changing landscape and how these have been politically and socially influenced. Secondly, it will explore the range of theories underpinning youth work practice and how these might influence the aims and values of practice. This leads into discussion of the context for contemporary youth work with a focus on urban regeneration. Drawing on Bourdieu's theories and the concept of social capital, the potential for a different approach to make sense of youth and community work in these current urban settings will lead to the identification of research questions.

2.2. Understanding Youth Work

Youth and community work is a contested ideological and pedagogical arena. Yet, youth and community work is also a key method of practice by which young people are often represented and engaged in neighbourhood regeneration and development. It is necessary to identify the parameters of youth and community work to appreciate the boundaries, opportunities and limitations within which it operates. Youth and

community work functions in different ways for practitioners and advocates often providing complex and conflicting paradigms causing tension and confusion. Therefore, it is important to identify and critically discuss these tensions to effectively engage young people in their communities. To do this, this study considers trends in youth work which have developed over many years.

Understanding youth and community work has historically been a subject of fierce debate among practitioners. Having been involved with those who work with young people for three decades, there have always been misunderstandings around its purpose and potential, and this provides a partial rationale for this study. In my lifetime, youth and community work has been known, among other things, as social and personal education, youth leadership, informal education, youth participation, youth empowerment and youth action. With each shift in government, the labels and social concerns around young people have influenced the funding and appreciation of youth and community work (Davies, 2012; Batsleer, 2011).

Historically associated with volunteering, (Smiths and Jeffs, 2009; Davies, 2007) assumptions are often made about the nature of youth work as a profession because of this reputation (Wylie, 2017). Frameworks of voluntary and informal approaches to youth clubs and organisations were founded primarily in concern for the welfare of the needy in impoverished societies (Batsleer and Davies, 2010; Batsleer, 2009). National policy in 2010 declared that all workers should be degree qualified in the UK, and it has since continued to favour undergraduates and postgraduates, particularly in full time and management positions shifting the emphasis from a volunteer to a professionalised culture (Batsleer, 2010; Ord, 2010).

Driven by social concerns for young people or concerns about how their actions might impact communities, youth work has responded with immediate and long-term problem-solving interventions. Some practitioners suggest that youth and community workers *'provide information'* (Sapin, 2009 p.11) and

'support to effect changes in attitudes and practice within young people, services, communities and society as a whole in order to enable young people to have a say in the issues that affect them' and *'support young people to become responsible adults'* (Sapin, p.11).

Failure to adequately justify the effectiveness of the work or validate what young people achieve through it leads to ambiguity (Batsleer, 2010; Jeffs 2011, Davies, 2012, Wiley, 2012). Changing social and economic climates encourage and motivate the need for continued development, evolution and review (Edginton et al, 2005; Coussee, 2008; Davies, 2010; Jeffs and Smith, 2010) of what is appropriate and available for young people.

Youth work in the UK is based on a robust set of principles, including encompassing young people's voluntary participation, embracing their world view, treating them with respect and encouraging the development of skills, attitudes and values whilst appreciating difference. Key to this ethos is reducing notions of problematic youth and encouraging their voices to be heard (Alldred, Cullen, Edwards and Fusco, 2017). Practitioners assert theories that the work is relational (Davies, 2012; Wiley, 2012; Jeffs and Smith, 2010; Batsleer, 2010).

There is agreement that traditional youth work is based on a voluntary relationship (association) in which young people choose to engage (Wood & Hine, 2001; Robertson, 2005; Richardson and Wolfe, 2009; Sapin, 2009; Batsleer and Davies, 2010; Bradford, 2012; Seal and Frost, 2014). When young people invest, they are more likely to do so with positive, developmental results since they are personally interested in the outcomes, and as in most relational dynamics, when someone is 'getting something out of it', they will continue to engage. Therefore, the youth and community worker somehow deviates from being 'part of the establishment' attesting to redress their behaviour and likely, another adult with whom they would prefer not to interact (Richardson and Wolfe, 2009; Sapin, 2009).

Boundaries between youth work and other types of work with young people would help to understand political, public and professional arenas and remove youth work from the 'dubious practice' (Butters and Newell 1978 p.17; McKee, Oldfield and Poultney 2010; Williamson 2015). Unlike other educators, such as teachers, youth workers do not have the same contextual or institutional coherence. Irrespective of their individual effectiveness and approach, the role of a teacher is universally understood. They are generally located in schools, colleges, and institutions recognised as places of learning, unlike youth work which can be delivered in a variety of settings and most adults have little, if any experience in the field. Youth work can be found wherever young people are although practice contexts are diverse (Batsleer, 2010). Youth workers are found in clubs or centres, on the streets, in parks and other public spaces where young people gravitate. Unlike teaching, youth work cannot easily be defined by location or how it is funded. Formal education has a recognised structural framework used to monitor and measure efficiency and effectiveness whereas there is no comparable structure for youth work.

Faced with reductions in budgets, local authority cuts (Hughes et al, 2014) and a reputation, which is frequently undermined and ill defined, (Jeffs, 1999; Davies, 2010; Ord, 2012) youth work is a product of both pre-war and post-war crises and as a product of a need to manage young people through adverse times. The youth service is currently suffering from a continual process of rapid decline (Batsleer and Davies, 2014; Bradford and Cullen, 2014; Bradford and Cullen, 2014; Jeffs and Smith, 2015). Falling public and governmental support has been shown to be demotivating and challenging for those in the field (Jeffs 2011; Bradford and Batsleer, 2012; Cullen, 2014) and this is likely to continue well into the 2020's.

The argument that youth work was born out of, and indeed remains firmly part of civil society, being 'wrapped up in associational life, community groups and voluntary organisations' is rarely contested (Jeffs and Smith 2010 p. 16). Associational life refers to the capacity to associate or socialise with others productively and historically resonates with civic interests in providing welfare for those in greatest need and less fortunate in society (Davies,1998; Robertson, 2009; Jeffs and Smith, 2010). Examples

of this include the Victorian 'deserving poor' which led to the creation of Ragged and Sunday schools, the 1950's provided welfare as part of state services and 'association', working with poor and underprivileged communities following wartime fallout. By the 1980's privatisation stimulated the development of the voluntary sector when most local authorities contracted out youth work services (Anheier 2005; Batsleer, 2010; Davies, 2019), and youth clubs were a common feature of local communities.

With the rise of local authority youth services and the decline of the third sector, the relationship between non-profit organisations and the government proved complicated and contractual provision emerged supplementing government activities (Salamon, 2002), presenting competition or adversity (Anheier, 2005) or substitutions for what was already on offer (Weisbrod 1988). This resulted in reduced recognition of the contribution of the third sector including youth and community work.

Traditionally, youth and community work has been located in clubs and centres with a focus on informal relationship-based engagement in which youth and community workers interact with young people, encouraging social and personal development by addressing young people's attitudes, values and aspirations. Since 2000, policies and practice directives have led youth work in work with particular groups of young people, who are socially or politically perceived as being most 'in need' (Davies, 2019; Batsleer, 2011, Ord 2011). 'Need' has been determined by social problems, such as those at risk of failing in school, those engaging in gangs, criminal activity, anti-social or deviant behaviour. As a result, tensions in practice exist about how young people are 'labelled' and how those who are not, are worked with which contributes to discussion around whether traditional (open access) practice is diluted in favour of targeted provision.

Youth and community work has endured some complex and contradictory criticisms, as it strives to identify itself credibly within this professional context. It remains, unlike other youth-centred practices, difficult to articulate. The notion that young people participate voluntarily in youth work relationships is one of the most prominent values

and definitions used to justify and explain the uniqueness of the work (Batsleer, 1998; Davies, 2001; Smith, 2012; Jeffs, 2013). Conversely, in the last twenty years, particularly, a significant increase in the delivery of youth projects engaging, empowering and skilling young people for life, funded by authorities or trusts requiring evidential and accredited 'proof of purchase' targets has forced a shift in the relevance of associational relationships (Bradford, 2012; Ord, 2012; Bradford and Cullen, 2014). Youth workers have been tasked with solving social issues with short term projects addressing the prevalence of anti-social behaviour, absence from school, poor educational achievement, sexual and risky behaviour with target driven desired outcomes – usually based on target driven financial reward (to the youth services). Such projects render 'association' and voluntary relationships redundant when young people are required to take part (Bradford, 2004; Ord, 2009; Smith, 2012; Bradford and Cullen, 2014). Youth workers have been forced to disengage from their rich history and philosophy founded in the ideology that young people who participate willingly have more to gain (Spence, 2004; Davies 2013; Bradford and Cullen, 2014), in favour of target driven agendas and approaches.

Rogerian principles have often underpinned youth work theory and practice in applying notions of 'unconditional positive regard' and person-centred participation (Rogers, 1961). This is compromised when the aim of the work is to achieve goals which may not involve relational intervention. Traditional open access youth work embraces Rogerian theory making a distinction between the individual and their behaviour. In targeted work, it is their actions which become the core focus - there will be a desire for this to change and most likely by a particular deadline. Therefore, although the desired outcomes remain the same, the relational, trust-based approach is likely to work at a deeper and lasting level because it is the young person who is of interest and not the achievement of getting through a programme (Davies, 2011; Ord, 2013).

The application of unconditional positive regard allows the practitioner to separate actions from the individual, reducing tensions, judgements, or assumptions. This regard focuses on working directly on the immediate needs of the young person, as opposed to their perceived needs. Opposition from some authors, Bradford, Smith and

Davies for example, maintain that actions deserve punishment without question and that poor behaviour cannot be changed (Bradford, 2007; Smith; 2009; Davies, 2011). These authors support that youth and community workers largely agree that positive, non-judgemental relationships can be fundamental in identifying young people's troubles, stresses, mental health awareness as well as encouraging them to make significant changes to attitudes and values. When a young person does not feel trusted or respected by their youth and community worker, change is unlikely (de St Croix, 2018). The tensions between open access and target driven ways of working with young people become fundamental characteristics in the task of understanding and utilising youth work as a method for practice.

2.2. Dilemmas in practice – identity crisis

Target-driven approaches require a directive and predictive method of practice driven by project requirements, and young people rarely have any input into how to achieve this. Research into the nature and purpose of youth and community work, compared to other academic themes, is relatively sparse, not least because of the difficulty in securing a youth work definition (Ord, 2012; Bradford and Cullen, 2014). Bright describes youth work as *'a somewhat polymorphous activity, which has taken, and continues to take on various shapes and expressions'* (Bright, 2015, p 3). Therefore, sustaining the confusion around how it is recognised and how practitioners themselves perceive what they do. Davies and Merton explain this; *'anecdotal evidence over many years has suggested that many youth workers and their managers live permanently with a professional identity crisis'* (Davies and Merton, 2009, p.42).

Given this fluidity, it is unsurprising that practitioners feel insecure and conflicted – and are beginning to question whether what they are engaged in is youth work at all (Bradford, 2011). Directing young people to attend youth projects prompts compulsion (Ord, 2009; Davies, 2012; Bradford and Cullen, 2014) and becomes a concern for youth worker motivation and the ability to support such programmes within the given constraints. The identity crisis, which Davies and Merton refer to, has encouraged significant debates in the field, contradictory roles between expectations and intended

in practice. Responding to this, the *In Defence of Youth Work Campaign* born in 2009, aims to '*defend and extend youth work as a distinctive educational practice founded on a voluntary relationship with young people and shaped by their agendas'* (IDYW). Youth work as a democratic process includes the importance of the voluntary relationship, harnessing a young person's autonomy, agency, uniqueness, and ability to make choices. Practitioners supporting '*cornerstones of practice as the primacy of the voluntary relationship'* (Taylor 2016 p. 32) agree that '*voluntary participation is perhaps one of the most controversial issues in contemporary youth work. Workers are increasingly requested to work in situations where the young people have not accessed the provision voluntarily'* (Ord, 2009, p.45).

Some scholars propose undertaking good youth work without voluntary participation. Still, there are concerns that within a closed environment (such as a school), youth work could be a tool for solving school problems, such as improving GCSE grades (Spence, 2004; Jeffs, 2007; Davies, 2011). Young people do not always choose these interventions, and this alters the purpose of the professional relationship, making the work about problem-solving than mutual trust and respect.

Target driven outcomes and interventions in youth and community work practice imply the undermining of the philosophical fabric of traditional youth work approaches and ethos, by diluting the intensity and potential of the trusting and respectful relationships enabled by young people's voluntary and active participation in the process. In a profession that struggles to position itself, it remains frustrating that the foundations and principles, albeit updated to respond to current trends and needs, are only applied in relatively small areas, where youth and community work is understood and appreciated in its reach and potential. Some debates about young people suggest that *'out of ethical necessity should raise serious questions about educators' social and political responsibility in addressing the plight of young people today* (Giroux, 2009, p.2). Claims that the neo-liberal 'moral collapse' (Giroux, 2009, p.1) and shifts in cultural attitudes and institutional mismanagement have redefined policy and practice, which appears to have reimagined the meaning of youth, abandoning them to the 'disposable' society (Williamson, 2012; Smith, 2016). Therefore, there are

considerable practitioner concerns around the focus of targeted youth work and around those young people who fall outside of the proverbial net.

The importance of community in youth work is fundamental because young people are members of their communities (Marsiglio, 2008; Coburn and Wallace, 2011; Coburn and Gormally, 2017). To redress the concerns and problems that young people manifest in neighbourhoods, youth workers must engage cooperatively and consultatively with communities to ensure integration and investment of young people (Marsiglio, 2008). With this in mind, the dilution of the local youth club or centre keenly undermines its role and necessity as a community resource.

Neoliberalist attitudes towards youth work are mainly based in economic terms, seeking a compliant future workforce by normalising entrepreneurial values and outsourcing services and education, measuring outcomes on targets driven by non-profit contracts and services (Hookway, 2013; de St. Croix, 2016, Taylor, Connaughton, de St Croix, Davies, Grace, 2018). These attitudes distort the image of practitioners across education and welfare sectors (Lowe, 2013, Cooper, 2015). Youth work practitioners claim that neo-liberalism has influenced youth work by offering it as an *'exemplar par excellence of the corrosive influence exerted by this latest manifestation of capitalist ideology upon an emancipatory and democratic youth work practice'* (IDYW, p 3).

The National Citizens Service (NCS), a national social action programme initiative for young people established in 2011, has effectively led youth and community work into privatisation; a radical consequence of the neo-liberalist agenda. Battling for funding to deliver targeted and constrained projects and activities rarely designed to incorporate ideas and aspirations of young people (de St Croix, 2017; Davies, 2019) has become commonplace in the youth work sector. Focussed on the desire for a volunteering nation and a sense of community, the NCS has directed youth work away from individual values-based frameworks at its traditional core and thrust third sector youth providers into a competitive and results driven environment (Davies, 2015; Taylor, 2017). The NCS scheme aims to create young civil activists - engaged and

invested in their communities who are notionally more likely to become and remain interested in community action and mobilisation into adulthood.

The NCS demonstrates the social and personal benefits of volunteering and civic responsibility, advancing the message that young people have civil obligations. Indeed, around sixty percent of those who participate in the scheme volunteer further (NCS, 2013). However, youth workers argue that young people who are independently motivated to engage civically would probably volunteer anyway, leaving those who do not participate in deficit of youth provision. The non-participants would endure austerity and closures of most local provisions without alternative opportunities to develop their personal and social skills (Chapman, 2015; Davies, 2015; Dean, 2015). For the Centre for Youth Social Action (CYSA), youth social action is '*young people taking practical action in the service of others to create positive social change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young people themselves"* (CYSA 2013, p.8). Deemed as the answer to all youth problems in the twenty first century, performance measures, accredited outcomes, early intervention have become synonymous with professional youth work practice (Booth et al, 2015; Cabinet Office, 2015; Kirkman et al, 2016). To fund the NCS, cuts to local authority youth services caused the loss of 139,000 youth service places between 2012 and 2016 (Unison, 2016). In addition, those young people who participated in the NCS amounted to less than half of those previously engaged in youth services. When completed the four-week programmes, participants no longer had provisions (Unison, 2016).

The NCS scheme has received considerable attention and funding (£1.5 billion thus far) to create a volunteering generation. This attention is significant in the long term, but the shift is predominantly towards a service appealing to young people from middle class and better resourced heritages, leaving other young people bereft of any particular youth and community work experience at all.

Therefore, the favouring of middle-class youth by schemes such as the NCS creates the need to reconsider how youth work reaches the more vulnerable (excluded/disadvantaged) young people. Approaches to youth work internationally

provide a comparison that highlights some of the issues and will be discussed later in this chapter. In a changing social environment, it would be helpful for an educational understanding of youth and community work if practitioners could universally articulate and critically evaluate shared values and a practice framework with working theories. This understanding would lead to better appreciation of the work and avoid practitioner confusion. Described as a 'Trojan horse' designed to roll back the state (Kennedy, 2014 p.1) and a 'political programme which creates a state which has no involvement in the economy or provision of opportunities' (Held, 1990 p. 23), the schemes began to de-professionalise the youth service by providing volunteers with no ethical or professional value base. Therefore, the rationale behind professionalising the service becomes again diluted and controversial.

Reduced state support for the most vulnerable young people provides a social template for regressive youth provision and reverts to historical models designed to 'appease middle England' (Kennedy, 2014 p. 3). These models protect people from the young people they fear by preparing them for the workplace. However, some believe youth workers are best placed to help transform young people as they critically face and change their world (Batsleer, 2011; Kennedy, 2014; Sheridan, 2018). Youth work has the potential, without targeted restrictions, to provide the critical understanding and reflection that young people require to begin such a process. However, Freire cautions that '*mere perception of reality by critical intervention will not lead to transformation of the objective reality'* (Freire 1972 p.34). It may well be, however, that *'the last thing they want is people realising they can change things'* (Kennedy, 2014 p.5):

'relevant models of Youth Work can help Youth Workers to develop clear answers to all of the questions [asked of them by policy makers], but presently, Youth Workers do not have such models that will perform these functions' (Cooper 2012 p. 40)

Conflicts exist between the ideology of tangible outcomes and accountability agendas guided by government and the economy. Youth work has had little choice but to align itself with the business and industrial sectors who in turn determine how financial

support is allocated, leading it into more corporate and industrialist modes of operation (Bradford, 2014; Taylor et al, 2017). These operations force youth work to sell and market itself as a commodity that other businesses understand (Moustakim 2012; Williamson, 2015; Taylor et al, 2017). Models of youth and community work exist (Forrest, 2010) and change over time, often responding to social and political movements in expectation. It is necessary to understand how political and sociological models are consistent in developing and delivering provision to young people.

The promotion of social action programmes by the Coalition Government (2010-2015) claimed to encourage the development of connections among individuals and groups; harbouring trust and reciprocity, healing exclusion and community decline (Putnam, 2000; Packham, 2008) and uniting dissimilar people (Tyler et al, 2009). Scholars argue that the greater number of projects, the higher the levels of social capital in communities (Putnam, 2000; Tyler et al, 2019) because projects address a range of complex factors affecting lived social environments. However, these projects rarely targeted young people. Previously, the Department of Health maintained:

'Neighbourhoods where people know each other and trust each other and where they have a say in the way the community is run can be a powerful support in coping with the day-to-day stresses of life…. And having a stake in the local community gives people self-respect and makes them feel better' (Dept. of Health, 1998, p.11).

Scholars question whether projects to critically engage young people with community issues can help tackle some of the most critical social ills (Brewis, 2014; Birdwell, 2015). However, other scholars argue social action is heavily reliant on social class, rooted in the committed middle class who support social causes since socio-economic status is likely the key to predicting young people's involvement (Pye et al, 2009; Chapman, 2015; Dean, 2015). Indeed, choices to volunteer can be predicted if the parents of the child were professionals (Dean, 2015).

Youth and community workers across the world have attempted to show how diverse youth work practices are. Using schemas that inform different values to understand

youth work on an international level has proved challenging (Batsleer, 2012; Cooper, 2012; Davies, 2015). Youth work has further been complicated internationally by differing clientele, rationales, methods, forms, age ranges, purposes, and working titles such as *animateur* (in France) and *social pedagogue* (across Europe), omitting 'youth' as being within remit (Cooper, 2012; Hamlainen, 2015; Williamson, 2015).

In Australia, the state funds multi services for young people, including youth justice, civic inclusion, sport and recreation, employment, child protection, education, homelessness, and cultural diversity programmes (Williamson, 2010; Cooper, 2017). International youth work invariably aims to respond to local issues as emphasised by the Council for Europe who recommends sharing theory to make sense of the importance and diversity of youth work and informing context and practice (Williamson, 2015).

In the USA, youth work is an umbrella term to most work with young people in all settings, including residential care, after school clubs, outreach work, advice, advocacy, and mentoring. Moreover, youth work in the USA usually belongs to the Social Work sector of state authorities (Cooper, 2017). The American style was once mirrored in the UK, although privatisation and commissioning in recent years have disintegrated any similarities (Belton, 2017; Foley et al, 2017).

Youth work in New Zealand and the USA focuses on deviance (from) and deficiencies (of) aimed at 'at risk' young people. Underpinning this work is developing supportive peer relationships, positive and developmental encouragement (Martin, 2002; Te Riele, 2006; Te Riele and Gour; 2015). Similar deficit theories are encountered in South Africa where youth workers endeavour to work on a framework that maintains positive social ecology by supporting young people to overcome trauma and flourish as humans (Te Reile and Gour, 2015). Indeed, in the UK, the shifts away from traditional youth work and into more targeted agendas have increased attention on intervention as a strategy for working with young people at risk.

Flexible intervention is more difficult to predict, accredit and justify (Coburn, 2012; de St. Croix, 2016). Notions of belonging, engaging and forming non formal yet social and educational relationships with trusted and professional adults is left rather vaguely to open access theory, which more or less offers an 'open door' policy to young people. Defined by age (for example 13-19 years old, as defined by the NYA), the venue is open to all young people within that age range. There may be particular group sessions, perhaps young women groups, or a young additional needs group timetabled, but within reason, the venues will be open to any young person. Young people choose how to engage in the sessions without expectation or sanction.

Open access youth work tends to appeal to young people who would otherwise not experience a sense of community, supportive and non-judgemental adults, social relationships, and across the political landscape. However, these services are most at risk. It is the most disadvantaged young people, predominantly those who are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, who have benefitted from this way of working (Pidd, 2013; Unison, 2014; de St. Croix, 2016) in the past, and therefore, those who are most in deficit of provision as a result.

2.3. Youth work in theory: theoretical underpinning of youth work models/approaches

Approaches to youth work are political and social and inevitably reflect the notions, tensions and challenges of the time whether these be socially or politically driven (Brent and Taylor, 2014). Over the last three decades, youth work has responded to significant change, capitalist ideology and individualism at the expense of the common good (Brent and Taylor, 2014, Davies, 2017). Ultimately, this has put youth work in a difficult position having to consider the interests and motivations for social change and how their work should be situated. Taylor suggests that some workers may feel that they are the '*good cop that enables the bad cops to get on with their work'* (Taylor, 2014, p.1) which is demotivating for most; Taylor suggests. The professional location of youth and community work has been robustly considered by academics and practitioners, who largely feel that the traditional roots of the service have been compromised in favour of supporting and delivering political targets. It is therefore, important to discuss some of the theories which underpin youth and community work discourse.

Whether youth work is 'for all young people or just young people at risk' (Williamson, 2011, p. 202) is a key question for contemporary youth work. Strong theory would help underpin practice in the sector (Bradford and Cullen, 2014; Davies, 2013, 2011; Wylie, 2010) but must go beyond thoughts and must be evidenced and measured by rigorous research. However, there is more emphasis on less formal approaches to theory, likening it to a 'continuum which explains varying degrees of response to situations and relationships' (Buchroth and Parkin, 2010, p.4). Theory itself is not 'good, bad, true or false, but often just more useful for one application or another' (Mintzberg, 2005, p.356).

Theories have emerged according to shifts in social and political trends and requirements and theories are often applied to practice (Davies, 2011). Some consider youth work to operate against the status quo since it creates access to resources and opportunities not readily available in the young person's social circle, particularly applying to those most marginalised (Bernard, 2005; Sercombe, 2010; IDYW, 2011;

Ord, 2012, 2005; Davies, 2015). However, notions that youth workers best act as agents of social change appreciate the dual role that makes access to resources and as well as encouraging the development of coping strategies to empower and democratise society (Butters and Newell, 1978. McKee, Oldfield and Poultney, 2010; Cooper, 2018).

Academics and critics attempt to define youth work theory however, there is little evidence to support these studies (Batsleer and Davies, 2010, Bessant, 2004; Bowie, 2004; Corney, 2006; Jeffs and Smith, 2005; Martin, 2002; Sercombe, 2007; Smith, 2005; Cooper, 2012).

> *"Youth workers have always been keen to communicate the distinct benefits of their professional interventions for young people. They have done so in formal and informal settings and beyond their professional boundaries. Yet they seem generally unconvinced that their work is fully understood by policy makers, fellow professionals or the public at large.*
>
> *Whether or not their perceptions are accurate, the anxiety of workers is evident in their need to constantly explain and justify their practice. This betrays a defensiveness which implies that despite their verbal dexterity the problem of communication in the public sphere is real enough for them." (Spence, 2008, p. 3)*

Some models draw upon the sociology of education which positions youth work as a 'force against the reproduction of social inequalities which the mainstream education system magnifies' (Cooper, 2017 p.5). Five approaches comprise work with young people: character building, work with cultural adjustment, institutional reform, community development and self-emancipation. Academics and practitioners who favour this approach are informed by radical social work and Marxist ideologies (Jeffs and Smith, 2011; Belton, 2013), and have successfully influenced, albeit sometimes with challenges, youth work terminology and practice (Smith, 1988; Cooper, 2012).

The Netherlands and Germany have strong traditions in social pedagogy and have distinct youth policies which address and advocate for this.

Critical youth work theory has a dual focus; individual psychosocial development on the one hand and collective critical consciousness promoting social justice on the other; offering a 'psychological process that leads to and supports political and social action' (Watts and Flanagan, 2007, p.256). Ta Reile (2006) challenges critical youth work as not recognising the complexity of inequality in the lives of young people. Indeed, if critical youth work enables young people to navigate 'the system' this can be socially enhancing but politically challenging (Johnston et al, 2000; Jeffs and Smith, 2002. Crimmens et al, 2004; Coussee, 2008; Zeldin, Christen and Powers, 2012; Lavie-Ajayi and Krumer-Nero, 2013; de St Croix, 2018).

Critical pedagogy encourages emancipatory education in communities based on theories united by a dedication to solidarity in marginalised communities (Darder et al, 2009) underpinned by equality, empowerment and social justice (McClaren, 2003. Andrade and Morrell, 2008; Cooper, 2015). Opposition to critical pedagogy claims that this pedagogy works more closely within radical social work thinking (Freire, 1972; Blacker, 2001, Cooper, 2015), it is overly intellectualised (Smith, 1988) and is unrelated to practice (Leigh and Smart, 1985).

Radical community development work, in contrast, assumes that communities can change, challenge injustice and support emancipation via collective action and capacity building. Gilchrist and Taylor (2011) explain three main elements for community development work: community development, informal education and organisational development within a negotiated framework (Coburn, 2012). Freire's theories of 'praxis' has influenced radical educators advocating for 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire, 1974, p.36). 'Praxis' applies and involves continual reflexivity (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008). Supporters such as Jeffs, Blacker, Batsleer and Young, maintain a 'learning from doing' stance which Smith describes as 'learning in life as it is lived' (Jeffs and Smith, 2005, p.4) supporting the emancipatory and liberating essence in the lived experiences of young people.

In much earlier work, Dewey may have referred to this way of working as a 'person centred curriculum' (Dewey, 1910, p.9) resonating with Rogerian theory. Person centred models are often criticised for not enabling the engagement of the most marginalised young people (Ta Reile, 2006; Cooper, 2012) and imply that its treatment of young people identifies them as the social problem (Watts and Flanagan, 2007).

The theories on youth work have included debates on informal education that 'occurs as results of direct participation in the events of life' (Smith, 1988, p. 9) or as being a 'dynamic process, which leads to action' (Batsleer, 2014) or 'to be meaningful, learning needs to be tested in reality' (Young, 2006, p.79). However, youth work seems to 'oscillate between liberal and radical models of social action' (Bradford, 2004, p.23) largely with policy makers demonstrating a preference for the former and practitioners choosing to embrace the latter (Davies, 2005). Non-formal education, seen as inferior to formal education (Batsleer, 2013; Coffield, 2012; Davies, 2011). Formal education has been known to 'kill' the desire to learn and acquire capabilities (Coffield, 2012). Non-formal education offers 'support to the rising generation, enabling them to take up the opportunities to become creators not consumers of their society and their world' (Batsleer, 2000 p.12).

Young people from socio-economically disadvantaged environments are less likely to participate in social action opportunities and they are likely to require more help than those from wealthier backgrounds (Chapman, 2015; Dean, 2015; Wicks, 2018). Socio-economically disadvantaged groups are less likely to have access to social action programmes due to their relationships with social, cultural and economic capital. The Department of Education (2012) discern that young people who participate in social action (and more specifically, the NCS scheme) benefit emotionally, behaviourally, socially and are associated with higher levels of educational engagement and achievement. This social action provides a powerful medium for enhancing life choices and experiences (McNeil, 2012) and 'helps them become better individuals and in turn, better citizens' (NCS Annual report, 2018, p.3). The Cycle of Courage model developed by Brendtro (1990) encompasses the empowering and social educational

elements of traditional youth work. The model focuses on attachment, achievement, autonomy and altruism and adheres to values and attitudes which are consistent with youth and community work ethos (Brendtro, 1990). Basic youth work theory holds 'a generous view of human capacity and potential' (Richard and Silbereisen, 2007 p.93) and thrives on the notion that each young person is a resource in themselves owning their possibilities for self-development and societal growth.

Profound learning can take place in developmental group participation and in relationships with others (Davies, 2006; Batsleer, 2000; Eraut, 2000; Smith, 1998) yet educationalists struggle with the idea that it can take place outside of the traditional learning environment. All humans are engaged in non-formal education; as we learn from peers, families and people we encounter in everyday life, in literature, film, music and social media, yet this is an area most contested (Smith, 1998; Henze, 2000, Davies, 2006).

The concept of informality suggests particular observations in behaviour, language, discourse and clothing (Henze, 2000). Historically, communities have been troubled by youth culture, particularly in the fabled forms of mods and rockers, punks, ravers and more recently, gang members and radicalised young people. Nostalgia suggests that those once thought of as 'folk devils' (Cohen, 1972, p. 12) were, in fact simply perpetrators of their unique youth culture.

In designing a typology for non-formal learning Erault introduces experiential learning as a social process, claiming, also that expertise is domain specific (Erault, 2000). Most youth and community workers agree that their role is about supporting self-education and strengthening associational life (Davies, 2006, Batsleer, 2000; Young, 1999; Smith, 1998). More specifically they argue that "education is a moral enterprise that needs to be judged as to whether it elevates and furthers well-being" (INFED, no date).

Problematising 'fractured' youth (McDonald 2001, p.) provides intervention potential in Europe (European Commission, 2016, 2014; Council for Europe; 2015; Dunne et

al, 2014; Williamson, 2011). There is concern on youth work practice while association and sociality are dying notions (Jeffs and Smith, 2008; Smith, 2001). Scholars propose digital youth work, in the new age could be more useful (Melvin, 2015; Cohlmeyer, 2014). Emerging tensions between the delivery of gender, sexual health and sexuality present issues for traditional faith-based youth work and radicalisation poses challenges most youth workers are untrained for. The complexities and diversity of young people's personal and social challenges have probably never been greater.

Young people's learning through youth work is often underpinned on conversational relationships founded on mutual trust and respect in support of their transition from childhood to adulthood. It can do this through what can be described as

> "*conversation, as the basis of practice, links young people's personal agendas with wider social and political agendas and forms the bond between informal learning and informal support in practice*" (Batsleer, 2008, p.6) *"youth work as informal support engages with the social situation of young people, their rights and needs, and also their emotions and personal development*" (Batsleer, 2008, p12).

Using reflection influences youth and community practice as does using 'hunches' or 'gut reactions. However, it contributes to professional ambiguity and the confusion about what it is and what it aims to do (Buchroth and Parkin eds. 2010). Essentially, in the business of helping and knowing others, theory may distinguish between informal theory and that which comes from everyday life; instinct, wisdom and individual experiences, values and understanding of the world. Therefore, the complexities of understanding and identifying how youth and community can best be practiced, has to be followed by an understanding of young people and their needs in the changing and challenging environments in which they find themselves.

2.4. Young people in contemporary contexts

How young people see themselves and how they are seen is always contentious as social and generational interpretations of youth culture, and in what it means to be young differs. The socialisation of young people into social norms takes and lasts longer than ever (Elias, 1978, Bradford, 2016). However, in western societies there is consistency in 'youth' being a socio-cultural period between childhood and adulthood (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013; Marshall and Bottomore, 1997). Indicators are determined by socio-economic status, gender, race and education, with determinants becoming less and less accessible to young people making the achievement of adult independence is further away than ever (Woodman and Wyn, 2015).

Young people are generally physically healthier, better educated with better mobility and cultural options than their parents were at the same age. Improved opportunities for LGBTI young people and other minorities are emerging in many places and more opportunities exist for young people than those afforded to older generations (Woodman and Wyn, 2015). This seems positive, yet as opportunities have changed, so too has society; how we communicate, with whom, what we have access to, how we apply this and what we want to achieve, socially, emotionally, educationally, financially impact young people's decision making.

Young people encounter developed technologies, fashion, music, travel, environment, gender, relationships, politics, faith, education, employment, housing, benefits, racism, food banks, terrorism, safeguarding, mental health, bullying, feminism and suicide in open wide education and social media. These issues were unlikely to be so readily discussed in previous decades (Bradford, 2014; Batsleer, 2014, 2012).

Young people's culture, attitudes and actions over the last fifty years have often led to moral panic resulting in the state intervening in education, leisure time and training of young people. Referring to the youth knife and gang crime issue some politicians and high-ranking officials have openly condemned moral panic around young people and crime, claiming it is unhelpful and unnecessary and that the majority of those who enter the justice system are vulnerable and have serious problems (Ord, 2012; McAra and McVie, 2013). Turton, McAra and McVie reference this by saying.

'history reveals that moral panics about hooligans, gangs and uncontrolled youth focussed attention on young people and crime long before the invention of the teenager.' Turton (2014).

'But while we continue to create folk devils of our children and young people, seeing them as a threat to the moral fabric of civilised society, we are also consumed with protecting their innocence. Thus, we produce an ongoing catalogue of moral panics depicting youth as dangerous or youth in danger' (McAra and McVie,2013, p.27)*.*

Young people navigate a very different landscape today, spending longer in education, gaining higher qualifications, although many, and most view future prospects negatively (Green 2017*),* particularly around employment. *'Unemployment rates for young people are being more sensitive to the ups and downs of the economic cycle than those for other age groups'* (Green, 2017, p. 45).

Unemployment rates for young people have been more sensitive to the economic roller coaster than those of other age ranges. Decent homes at affordable prices are few and far between which, according to some commentators, this 'housing disaster' is the symbol of barriers to life choices and intergenerational decline (Allen and Ainley, 2010, p.201, Davies, 2019). Increasing intergenerational inequalities are contested. In fact, opportunities for school leavers seem improved compared to older generations, while lifestyle and career advances seem more limited (Green, 2017; Brown, Kirpal and Rauner, 2007).

Youth transitions are key to sociological perceptions of development. Transition to adulthood is considered as a marker in time, establishing the young person as an achiever, emerging as an individual with responsibility and maturity. Transitions to work for young people have been a concern for decades (Quinlan, 2012), and unemployment rates globally signify that only half of the youth population is in work.

(ILO, 2016; Campbell and Price, 2016; OECD, 2016), despite increased levels of secondary and tertiary education (Brown et al, 2011).

It was once thought that transition from school to work "*involves inevitable stresses and strains [it] does not normally create problems" (*Ashton and Field, 1976 p.34) yet we know now that youth unemployment has reached a new point of crisis (Quinlan, 2012; Denny and Churchill, 2016) and is delaying young people's ability to transition to adulthood. However, these interruptions for today's young people should also consider their significance in relation to the need for societal change (Blatterer, 2007; Andres and Wyn, 2010; Cuervo and Wyn, 2014).

Youth is a period of biological, social and physiological changes and transitions in preparation for adulthood while developing independence and socialisation. Young people are involved in social interaction of various kinds such as groups, networks and socio-cultural worlds that may include family, groups, school, community and other institutional organisations and support services. Generally, it is expected that socialisation will include learning to navigate, negotiate and participate in a variety of different identities and systems with shared or contested values, beliefs, aspirations, perceptions and motives.

Working class and minority young people often frequent worlds which are culturally differentiated, each embodying distinct discourse and ways of existing in the world (Bourdieu and Passeson, 1977; Salazar, 2011). They pursue this by learning 'on the job' via 'social practices and scaffolding supported by people who have already mastered the discourse (Gee, 1989, p.42). Therefore, young people learn from what they know and how they experience the world. Those locked in under resourced communities learn what it is to be restricted in opportunities and choices.

Social structure, historical change and individual experiences suggest that life is not lived cyclically but that newness emerges out of what is no longer appropriate, possible or acceptable (Wright and Mills, 2000; Mannheim, 1952). This notion of sociological imagination maintains 'generational units' in which groups live with opposing views

and differing experiences (Mannheim, 1952, p. 45). Despite living unequal lives, determined by a distinct set of political, economic and cultural struggles to which they have little choice but to orientate, experiences in youth and young adulthood manifest a distinct set of dispositions and ways of being which can be built on and changed over time (Woodman and Wyn, 2015).

Accruing financial burdens, joining precarious work opportunities and fewer full-time employment opportunities have encouraged young people to develop resilience (Blatterer, 2007; Silva, 2012; Croft et al, 2015). These experiences adjust their expectations, reducing investment in many aspects of adult life, even, in some circumstances, their relationships (Howie and Campbell, 2016) within the global generation (Edmunds and Turner, 2005). Young people, who begin from a place which is under-resourced or have parents who were unsupportive educationally or are unemployed or unwaged, are most likely to be excluded from provision (Lamb, Jackson, Walstab and Huo, 2015; Woodman and Wyn, 2018).

However critical these acknowledgements may be, it is important to recognise that transitions are extended or delayed for all, with boundaries becoming blurred and securities diluted. Longer transitions impact disproportionately on more disadvantaged young people (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). Structural barriers which exist and prevent young people from making successful transitions to adulthood require young people's abilities to reimagine and mitigate adverse effects with agency and social identity (Aries and Sieder, 2007; Côté, 2014). Youth workers have an important role in attempting to facilitate transitions, through supporting and encouraging agency (Côté 2014). Therefore, in contemporary contexts, which frequently involve the impacts of urban regeneration, it is important to research how young people navigate trajectories into adulthood, or how they are excluded. This can be further examined by examining literature relating to young people in the context of urban regeneration.

2.5. Young people in the context of regeneration

Most societal notions of youth work suggest that young people are either at risk or a risk to society (Bradford, 2014; Davies, 2011; Pitts, 2011; Clarke, 2008; Te Riele, 2006) are deficient (Pitts, 2012; Muncie, 2009; Kemshall, 2010; Clarke, 2008) and more vulnerable than any other generational group. More recent studies have focussed on young men, especially in light of concerns about gang association and tensions, rising incidence of youth suicide and mental ill health which has engendered fear and distrust of young people, but young men in particular (Bradford and Cullen, 2017; Clark, 2014, 2008; Nicholls, 2012). Where young people have been seen to be deviant or 'at risk', youth work has been expected to work as a treatment or remedy for this; acting to reduce the risks (Bradford, 1998). At other times, it aims to raise consciousness, anti-oppression and to advocate for and empower young people (Batsleer and Davies 2010; Robertson, 2008).

Youth and community work, is rarely precisely understood by all people, creating some ambiguity and confusion about its role and purpose. Academics have claimed that *'the result is a distinctive way of approaching and responding to young people and of prompting them to reach for more than they might otherwise have considered or even thought possible for themselves'* (Batsleer and Davies, 2010, p. 23), and as *'having some of the same contradictory qualities as great jazz. It is well prepared and highly disciplined yet improvised'* (Batsleer and Davies, 2010, p. 29).

In regeneration policies, young people and their parents are welcome new inhabitants and conversely, urban problems and undesirable social concerns are not. Such double standards create tension (Lee et al, 2008; van den Berg, 2013). Seen as 'illegitimate subjects' (Watt, 2006 p.777) in designer's images of 'instant gentrification' (Rose, 2004, p.200) young urbanites are the causes of urban decay where middle class, nuclear families with 'potential' are drawn into panoramas of prosperous and vibrant upgraded cities (Rose, 2004; van den Berg, 2013; Schinkel, 2019).

Areas in East London such a Hackney, had been abandoned socially, politically and economically throughout the twentieth century, (Hsieh and Puch, 1993, Daly and Wilson, 2001, Elgar and Aitken, 2010; Schilchtman, Patch and Hill, 2017) yet proposed

regeneration heralded a shift in demographic with gentrification welcoming wealthier residents. The displacement of poor and working-class families has political, racial and economic consequences for families, young people and neighbourhoods. Shifts in space, place, mobility and wealth are negotiated by 'desirables' (Patillo, 2017) who demand improved services and amenities, indicating previous residents as unworthy.

When visible in local communities, young people in urban settings are very often 'managed out' of site, moved on from new and expensive developments, deemed unwelcome and problematic (Coleman, 2005, de St Croix 2018). New urban spaces are advertised by images which present idealistic spaces, usually featuring exclusively white faces and nuclear families (Coleman, 2005; Lipman, 2013). In Hackney Wick, these images appeared to remove all trace of the rich and diverse communities already living there (Bishop, 2013) with no visualised youth orientated spaces. It is unsurprising that young people would feel excluded.

Youth workers encourage the use of communal space to encounter and work creatively with young people (Batsleer and Hughes, 2013) yet many adults identify young people, particularly in open spaces 'hanging out' as undesirable (de St Croix, 2018). *'These places can provide opportunities for social interaction, social mixing and social inclusion, and facilitate the development of community ties'* (Worpole and Knox, 2007 p. 5). Often, however, adult communities do not appreciate the 'hanging out'.

Gentrification is a metaphor for inner city upgrading (Hamnet, 2008; Buller and Lees, 2009) encompassing middle class socio-spatial habitus, where 35 years ago assumptions about 'positive gentrification' (Lees, 2007, p.34) and the potential for benefits to trickle down to the lower classes (Altshuler, 1969; Lowry, 1960; Smith, 1970) were upheld despite the "uneasy cohabitation" (Rose, 2004, p.280) between gentrification and social mix. Playing a key role in cities in the context of neoliberal economic restructuring, (Hackworth and Smith, 2001Smith, 2002; Newman and Ashton, 2004) regeneration has gained traction particularly as a process which sits often with residents between feeling 'stuck in place' (Katz, 2002) or 'in the flow'

(Sassen, 1998; Cox,1997; Castells, 1989) whilst being 'constructed as a threat of social and spatial exclusion' (Cahill, 2007, p.208).

However, providing services for new residents is perceived as neglect of previous residents (Baldridge, 2019). Community ties are lost and connection to place is shifted from one to another. Many areas having undergone radical landscape redesign lose the cultural vibranc and become areas of suffering for poor residents and spaces of wealth and opportunity for those who have the means to live there (Patillo, 2017; Baldridge, 2019).

The impact of gentrification and the production or urban space from a cultural perspective is highlighted by the desires of middle-class people to experience 'authentic' urbanist design, public space and transport on one hand (Zukin, 2010; Ocejo,2011). Yet, on the other hand, the displacement of the lower classes, in particular people of colour, devastates and segregates neighbourhoods (Lees et al., 2007; Shaw, 2007). Gentrification capitalises on racism, where displacement and violence become core features. Low-income communities are increasingly subject to Police scrutiny at the behest of new residents, promoting unsettled communities (Ospina, 2015; Shaw 2015; Newman and Wyly, 2006; Slater, 2006). Neighbourhood resources and retailers serving vulnerable groups often follow not far behind (Sullivan and Shaw, 2011). Therefore, for young people in particular, their communities become both alien and alienating. It is necessary to consider the benefits of social capital for young people, especially where they live in environments in which they feel isolated.

2.6. Young people and social capital

In enquiring whether young people acquire social capital, Wooley and Bowen carried out a study in 2007, of 8,000 middle school pupils who claimed that their social capital came from the encouragement of significant supportive adults, with whom they identified strong relationships, the majority of which were non-teachers (Woolley and Bowen, 2007). Further research claims that young people who report having a supportive, significant adult in their lives also claim better psychological well-being,

academic success, employment opportunities, school completion and fewer problems with peers (Salazar, 2011; Brewis, 2014; Dean, 2015; Kirkman, 2015). The notion of 'institutional agents' (Salazar, 2011, p.10) helping young people to find their way through socialisation and personal development fits well with youth work ideology. Youth workers naturally become the necessary agent, able to guide young people to manage and understand the social structures and systems they encounter. An institutional agent mobilises, provides resources and support within an environment over which they have some control (Quintanar, 2007, Dean 2015).

Marshall studied young people and social capital globally and found that vulnerable, urban groups of young people claim social capital variables include the existence of a caring adult at home, a caring teacher or adult at school, or one caring friend (Marshall et al, 2014). Two parents living in the same home were significant indicators that young people were more likely to engage socially than those living in single or blended families. Significant in all cities of the study was that all young people considered their 'self-reported health' improved as a result of gathering social capital (Marshall et al, 2014, p.S29). Socio-economic factors impact on young people's access to social capital opportunities, and studies have found there is agreement that the mainstream global economy impacts social resources affecting young people's resilience to poverty (Campbell, 2011, Cooper, 2011; Marshall et al, 2014). Marshall explains:

> *'surprisingly similar levels of social capital across sites [Baltimore, Delhi, Shanghai, Ibadan and Johannesburg] underscores how the structural constraints of urban poverty and exclusion impact social resources which effect young people's resilience across a diverse set of vulnerable environments* (Marshall et al, 2014, p S27-28).

Outreach methods enable physical and political statements, positioned to intervene and act (Krumer-Nero and Lavie-Ajayi, 2013) and redress power positions upheld by adults as young people begin to learn the 'grammar of exploitation' (Johnson and Lawler, 2005). Young people using public space is often discussed by adults in criminalising language and in the context of oppression and inequality causes

psychological damage to the sense of worth, dignity, respect, and appreciation of young people's place in the world (Prilleltensky et al 2008; Case and Hunter, 2012; Krumer-Nero and Lavie-Ajayi, 2013). Freire, however, offers a counter narrative which suggests that such experience can encourage young people to take positive action against the status quo (Freire 1993). Therefore, youth work intervention could be seen as a vehicle by which young people might push against or challenge the system.

Bourdieu would argue that there is always potential to challenge the status quo for marginalised young people through the reform of institutions (Bourdieu, 1986; 1990). Bourdieu's conceptualisation of social capital is based on the recognition that capital is not only economic and that social exchanges are not purely self-interested and need to encompass 'capital and profit in all their forms' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241). Grounded in social reproduction and symbolic power theories, Bourdieu emphasises structural constraints and unequal access to resources based primarily on race, gender and class.

Bourdieu described social capital as the property of an individual rather than any given group which enables them to exert power over those who mobilise resources. With significance in youth and community work, Bourdieu saw social capital, not uniformly available to members of a group but available to those who make efforts to acquire it by achieving positions of power and by developing goodwill (Bourdieu 1986). Irreducibly attached to class and other forms of status, Bourdieu framed social capital as accrued resources acquired by individuals or groups through the possession of "more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). Therefore, social capital resides in the individual as the result of their personal investment. In youth and community work, social capital can also refer to effective relationships with adults with whom to challenge social norms.

The social and educational world frequently undergoes changes in practice and ethos and needs to understand the negotiations and relationships which exist between adults and young people as a result of cultural, social and political directional shifts.

Bourdieu (1973) and Goffman (1978) share some notions about how young people are understood and that by social convention, adults constitute, embed, and reinforce negative images that young people are not fit, or ready to join the adult world. We do this through our education systems, for example, by insisting young people remain in formal education until a specified age.

Bourdieu's approach is based on his wider sociological theories of habitus and field practice (Bourdieu 1984) in which the fluidity and specificity of objects of study are emphasised, meaning that social capital is reliant on the context of a particular social space. Therefore, I will discuss these theoretical positions next. Using a triad of concepts, habitus, field and capital, Bourdieu introduced ways of understanding the dynamics of social inequality using notions of social, cultural and capital as tools for recognising the complexities of social neighbourhoods and their ability to create vastly different social and economic capacities.

A 'system of dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1980) refers to the ways in which individuals tend to approach their lived experiences via habitus. This also disposes young people to actively invest in their success, or not, depending on the early impressions and assessments experienced as a result of adult negotiations and judgements. Bourdieu maintains that the cultural capital acquired at birth and reflective of an individual's, class, gender and race, is incubated into the habitus and invested into social institutions outside of the home. Habitus reveals how human capacity might be embodied, corresponding directly to social worlds via 'multiple correspondence analysis' (Bourdieu, 1984) which makes dispositions such as class and status legible to others.

The notion of correspondence may be used to assess the relationship between habitus and field as understood by young people (Savage, 2005; Alanen, 2011). Correspondence can be assessed by examining young people in the context of their school, family and social lives and their sense of belonging in each. Most young people in urban neighbourhoods make social networks and friendships with others who live and study in the same location (Weller and Bruegel, 2006) making the 'fit' between

habitus and field feasible creating opportunities to have increased self-awareness (Bourdieu, 1990).

Young people, comfortable in their field and habitus are less likely to identify social divisions and exclusions in the form of a habitus field clash (Bourdieu, 1993) whilst those who perhaps travel outside of their neighbourhood to school do display a clash (Maton, 2008; Sweetman, 2009; Alanen, 2011). This means clashes may encourage individuals to change or address behaviour using multiple correspondence analysis, to aspire to or seek to interact socially with those whose habitus and field offers more opportunity for social and cultural capital, thus challenging their positions in social space.

Drawing on Bourdieu's theories could suggest that youth workers are agents of social change in strengthening critical youth work from one perspective agents of social change (Stanton-Salazar, 2011; Zeldin, Christen and Powers, 2012; Lavie-Ajayi and Krumer-Nero, 2013) or 'institutional agents' (Stanton-Salazar, 2011, p 1092). Williamson (2015) in more recent discussion, claimed that key to understanding youth work is in ensuring clarity about how theory relates to practices. Davies (2006) suggests that scepticism and doubt hold positive roles in the development of youth work theory and practice, raising practice awareness and resilience (Sterman, 1991; Davies, 2006). Recently, St de Croix applied feminist and Marxist theories to support the notion that resistance, exists in 'the opposition to or subversion of the status quo' (St de Croix, 2016, p.16) arguing that youth workers are engaged in compliance and resistance simultaneously.

As capital influences attitudes, Bourdieu (2004) maintained that capital removes the element of chance from the paths chosen and that those not taken, rather than travelled, are already decided. Childhood receives little devotion in his empirical studies, as Bourdieu seems to imply that the younger the child the more embedded their social world is in the potential for determining their future social trajectory (Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, this suggests that during youth, there is decidedly more potential to modify or change social expectations. There is a strong inter-dependency

between habitus and situation '*according to the stimuli and the structure of the field, the same habitus can generate different, and even opposite practices*' (Bourdieu, 1997, p.109).

Notions of field, habitus and capital cannot be defined in isolation since *'what is true of concepts is true of relations, which acquire their meaning only within a system of relations …to think in terms of field is to think relationally.'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p 96). Thinking *relationally*, encourages us to view the social world, relations and systems in ways that identify influences that structures have on us as individuals and how to transform or reproduce these structures.

Bourdieu's theories of habitus, field and capital and the relational approach to social analysis has enabled me to draw on two key elements in sociological thinking. Firstly, I draw on the generational context in which adults and young people are intrinsically interconnected and influenced and secondly, I draw on the strong connection between agency and structure and how these influence trajectories in young people's choices and operations.

Bourdieu examines the dynamics between the individual and the cultural institution and how we are able to trade on status, maintain advantage or improve opportunities for ourselves through the concept of accrued capital. Capital, he asserts, is shaped by family and social circumstances which can be either mobilised or paralysed by the amount of weight relative capital carries. Using the concept of accrued capital, iInequality can be explained if people move from one social status to another.

I have highlighted some of the divides and concerns in existing models of youth and community work. Bourdieu's thinking has potential for theorising young people's lived experiences in contemporary contexts around youth work and may be helpful in providing additional theoretical considerations. Presenting a different approach to youth work, drawing on Bourdieu, in urban contexts gives rise to queries and challenges worthy of consideration.

2.7. Summary

This review of literature has identified youth and community work as a profession and method of working with young people which is contested. Theories and methods range from addressing social issues and responding to political demands, where marginalised young people are seen as under-resourced and poorly supported. The role of youth workers is conflicted as to where is locates itself politically and socially and as to how it receives funding and recognition. Different approaches are driven by tendencies towards critical pedagogy, radical community action and person-centred approaches. There is no professional institutional oversight of the work, which leads to differing values in response to social and economic changes and in problematising youth. Debates around the value of target driven work as opposed to open access provision continue presenting a need for a study which is able to assess and interrogate open access youth work in current contexts, particularly in regeneration. Such a study would enable informative links to the theories and how these theories should be considered.

Contemporary and youth community work often takes place in regenerational context since these young people are likely to be under-resourced, socio-economically deprived and struggling for self-identity. In identifying opportunities to implement open access youth provision, embedded in the traditional and ethical practice of youth work, social capital has been identified as an important concept that can underpin current youth work theory and practice. This led to discussion of Bourdieu's theories, including his key concepts, habitus and field, and this framework may contribute to making sense of contemporary youth work practice. Therefore, the question that arises is whether and how, using this approach, youth work, in its traditional sense of including

open access and voluntary association, makes an important contribution to young people's development and well-being, and has the capacity to deal with disadvantages. Therefore, this study will address the following research question:

<u>What is the contribution of youth and community work to the improvement of young people's lived experiences in contemporary urban settings?</u>

Within this, there are three sub questions:

<u>How do youth and community work practices aim to address the difficulties and challenges experienced by young people?</u>

<u>How do young people potentially benefit from youth and community work, and how can these benefits be characterised and conceptualised?</u>

Having established the important questions to address, I will next turn to discuss the methodology.

CHAPTER THREE – Research Methodology

3. Introduction

Chapter one identified the research questions and established the context of the study. This chapter explains and justifies the research design, approach and the process journey. In an environment which offers a range of competing research paradigms, this chapter gives a clear account of the choices made and the research methodology ensuring the findings are sound and credible.

This chapter discusses the research methodology, epistemology and ontology and how these influenced the research design. The epistemology describes how reflexivity and positionality were developed as important elements of this study. The methodology explains the design, methods of data collection and how this led to the presentation of findings, which became three chronological chapters of work towards the creation of Hub67. This section also presents practice, processes and decisions made from the initial stages through to data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This chapter also discusses ethical considerations and researcher positionality and reflexivity which will be central to my approach and how my own personal history and values have influenced the research process.

This is a case study which as Stake (2005) would describe maintains 'boundedness and specificity' (p.444) and is 'interested in the individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used' (Skate, 2005; p.443). As most qualitative researchers, I was encouraged to regard the relationship between my subjects and myself as researcher as mutually interdependent and to consider specifically who my writing is for and how best to illuminate the reader about the phenomenon I am studying (Willis, 2007).

A case study methodology was chosen for this research since it is about real people and real situations. To gather rich and detailed data in authentic and real time settings, a case study is ideal. The case study also enabled me to develop a holistic approach

to support the ideas and behaviour I encountered as lived experiences in social contexts which could be carried out without predetermined hypothesis or goals. (Willis, 2007; Stake, 2005).

Case study and ethnographic research are more similar than dissimilar and are common in anthropological and social scientific research (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 2000). However, anthropology is often selected as appropriate to explore a range of variables within the study whilst on the basis of theory or prior knowledge provide examples of a lived experience (Willis, 2007; Abercrombie et al, 2000). In this research, the observation of young people as key participants was made more specific and less complex by using case study techniques as opposed to anthropological participation.

In essence, my research focus was my presence as the researcher in the field, and the contextual nature which was heightened by the capacity to understand the contemporary lived experiences of the research phenomena (Meyer, 2001; Stake, 2005). Thus, this study uses Stake's concept of a case study as 'defined by interest in the individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used" (2005, p.443) and also acknowledges that ethnography is an 'umbrella term for fieldwork, interviewing and other means of gathering data in authentic environments' (Willis, 2007 p.237).

Qualitative research requires 'empathic neutrality' (Patton, 2002, p.50) although at the same time, I recognise that my background, experiences and preferences influence my research, which will be discussed as part of my approach to reflexivity. Batsleer suggests:

'the concept of practitioner ethnography suggests a process of making the familiar strange through and explicit and systematic process of writing and reflection, whilst standing in contention with the claim that only an outsider can be an ethnographer' (Batsleer, 2016, p.3)

To ensure that, as the researcher, I am deeply embedded in the analysis, appropriate methods were used to ensure youth and community work remained central to this thesis. It was also important to understand the key notions around the development Hub67 and practise. The principles of youth and community work were adopted as a means of ensuring structure yet flexibility in practice. These principles, whilst securing the voluntary participation of young people, include:

- Building young people's self-esteem and self-confidence and respect.
- Developing young people's ability to manage personal and social relationships.
- Creating learning opportunities for young people to develop new skills.
- Encouraging positive group atmospheres.
- Building the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- Helping young people to develop a 'world view' which widens horizons and invites social commitment.

This chapter, in summary includes the research questions, research approach, research design and the methods for data collection. This section also explains the ways in which fieldwork was undertaken and the research was managed.

3.1. Research Question, Approach and Epistemological Position

As introduced in Chapter one, the research design takes the form of a case study of community in Hackney Wick. The aims of the study are to address, explore and evaluate questions relating to how young people, within this community experience,

perceive and respond to the changes and challenges presented largely through the impact of the Olympic development and legacy 2012. Therefore, this study demonstrates the characteristics of open access youth provision in Hackney Wick and to consider how young people experience neighbourhood change, as a result of regeneration. The research investigates the practice of open access youth work in the one site in East London, how youth and community work contributes to the improved lived experiences of young people which involved an interrogation of the characteristics of youth and community work practice in these settings. Relationships developed between young people and peers, adults and the wider community were also explored. It was also important to identify the impact of urban regeneration on young people's potential development of social capital alongside a stronger sense of community and belonging.

The most effective research design answers the research questions explicitly (Bryman, 2012). There is a strong link between constructivism and realism which has been noted by Young, who discusses this especially in relation to educational research (Young, 2008). I have taken into account in this study, in the belief that these two can coexist. I will therefore begin by examining the research questions and subsequent choice of research approach, design, methods and data analysis. I intend to present this by focussing on how the research questions match my epistemological position.

This thesis examines the impact of open access youth and community work on young people's agency and capital in a particular location and the study is organised by the key research questions and sub questions.

To ensure that the methodology and research methods are consistent, the epistemological position should be clear (Creswell, 2014). Identifying my epistemological position involves outlining my underlying assumptions about the nature and knowledge of the social world and understanding where I, as the researcher may be coming from in claiming knowledge. An alternative epistemology which is 'constructed and interpreted by people' (Denscombe, 2010, p.121) proved important to me in this study.

In social science research, traditional debates about epistemology have been between interpretivism and positivism (Sarantakos, 2005). Interpretive approaches have provided the central epistemological position to qualitative research methods whilst quantitative research has positivist epistemology at its core. Positivism, following Comte, claims a heritage in natural sciences (Archer et al, 1998; Giddens, 1993) while being influential in social science research, (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). A positivist stance enables the researcher to undertake their role as an objective observer, inferring laws which explain relationships between the observed phenomena.

I have considered, in this study how my ontological position adopts a realist perspective and argues that there is an external reality, mediated by our social structures and is knowable via our descriptions (Bhaskar, 1975). Providing an alternative to positivism, realism argues that reality is constituted by experiences, but also structures, powers and tendencies (Archer et al., 1998). Realism acknowledges our understanding of the world is provisional but believes that nevertheless we are able to make statements about human experience within the social world. (Finlay and Ballinger, 2006). This epistemological stance realist is compatible with my study, which aims to examine young people's experiences and perceptions of their neighbourhood undergoing regeneration. This research focuses on problems about young people, and how these might be conceptualised, as they are generally defined by conditions and conduct deemed troublesome; meaning that the problems of 'young people' are socially constructed, both in terms of the acts and interaction that they pursue, mediated by social structures and processes (Schneider, 1985).

3.2. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is central to social science research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In chapter 1, I have described my motivation and interest in the research topic as having emerged from my experience as a youth and community worker and a resident of

Hackney Wick. I described how my study has been a research journey in addressing some of the interests and concerns I have had as a young people's practitioner for many years. It is helpful to discuss how my study developed and to explore how my personal and professional narrative, beliefs and values have influenced the process, and how I managed reflexivity within this. Central to youth and community work development is the application and belief in reflection as an educational tool, which when utilised can encourage enhanced understanding of the world and those who live in it but can also help understand ourselves as players on both personal and professional levels. I have, over my years of practice endeavoured to create as a fundamental pillar to my thinking, the nature and necessity of reflection. In relation to the study of Hackney Wick, communities have a 'tendency to fight to remain the same' (Schon, 1973, p.30) but with reflective learning systems, we are able to recognise that 'to permit change of state without intolerable threat to the essential functions the system fulfils for the self. Our systems need to maintain their identity and their ability to support the self-identity of those who belong to them, but they must at the same time, be capable of transforming themselves' (Schon, 1973, p.57).

In over 30 years of working with young people and practitioners in various ways, I have maintained an interest in people's emotions and intentions and what drives them to create meaningful lives and how they learn to cope with the tensions and problems of living. In this regard, I have worked in ways which explore emotional and relational life and how young people relate to adults, parents and peers and in the sharing of human storytelling.

This study uses research methods located in the realm of the practitioner and tied closely with self-reflection, where practitioners:

> *'marshal evidence or data to expose unjust practices or environmental dangers and recommend actions for change. In many respects, it is linked into traditions of citizen's action and community organising. The practitioner is actively involved in the cause for which the research is conducted. For others, it is such*

commitment is a necessary part of being a practitioner or member of a community of practice'. (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 223)

Throughout my career, it has been my concern that youth and community work, has been poorly understood, contested, undermined as an educational tool. I have been concerned that youth and community work suffered severe funding cuts and has been driven by social and political agendas which openly exclude young people's needs and voice. As a resident of Hackney Wick, the absence of youth and community work, demonstrating deficit resources to young people, was apparent yet unchallenged.

With the arrival of the Olympic Games in 2012, it became apparent to me and many members of the community, that the disruption and diversions which were about to begin might offer opportunities to redress this inequality. Utilising my research stance using reflexive realism, I focussed on young people's non-formal education and development, under the umbrella of regeneration and change, focusing on what was learnt outside of formal education as well as familial relationships and experiences (Combs, Posser and Ahmed, 1973).

My research intentions have remained relatively unchanged, although my research questions have been redesigned over time, due mainly to the opportunity which emerged as a result of this process in the form of Hub67, a youth and community centre gifted to Hackney Wick by the Olympic Delivery Company with support from The Big Lottery. This facility was provided as a result of the research process described in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and responds directly to the first research question.

As the research developed, so too, did the number of groups and individuals who had something to contribute to the study. Committees, forums and networks were created by interested parties in the mobilisation and development of Hackney Wick.

Although these were included in my fieldnotes and minutes of meetings, they were not involved in the interviews or focus groups. At the beginning of the study, my role was

singular, in that I was a resident primarily concerned with the affairs of my immediate neighbourhood, yet by the end of the study, I had played many different roles, manager, youth and community worker, trustee, trainer, consultant, volunteer and researcher. As I have discussed in chapter six, it became necessary for me to stand down from some of these roles, because I was 'spreading myself too thinly,' my participation in all roles became diluted and because there were emerging conflicts of interest which were professionally inappropriate.

Quantitative research has traditionally focussed upon issues of bias in order to separate the influence of the researcher from the research. By contrast, qualitative research argues that this is neither possible nor necessarily desirable (Fook, 2001). From a traditional positivist perspective, bringing my identity and background to the fore, is deemed a source of bias, and not a valuable component of the research. This is addressed in qualitative research through the medium of reflexivity, acknowledging that our thoughts, values, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, upbringing, and education are not subjectively unproblematic (Kirby and McKenna, 1989; Fook, 2001).

It is impossible to be part of the social world and escape from the world for the purposes of research. Relying on 'common sense' knowledge and affecting the phenomena researched is a challenge to be embraced (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Rather than viewing reactivity as bias source, it can be exploited as a data form in noting how people react to my presence as an observer and how they respond to other situations can be informative (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

As performers in life, we host different characters as our personal, professional and social selves (Goffman, 1959). In this descriptive case study, it was necessary to make a 'set of intellectual assumptions and constitutive interests' (Strive, 1993, p.110) while remaining impartial to how these may be received. Managing my reflexivity involved examining the aspects of myself that relate to undertaking this research and how my previous experience as a youth and community worker influenced how I approached my fieldwork and how I moved from an 'insider' researcher. Considering my previous

experience, I became intensely aware of how this role played in the development of my attitudes and values and that being part of the youth and community 'world' may have made it harder for me to observe or understand the institution (Mosse, 1994). It was, initially difficult to develop an outsider perspective as my professional ideologies and philosophies made it easy to identify with the participants viewpoint without maintaining a critical distance. I am aware that during my diverse experience of practice with young people and youth and community workers I have inevitably championed and invested in some strong theories and beliefs about both young people and youth and community work, and I remained mindful of these throughout the study using reflection to robustly ensure the research was uncoloured by these philosophies and notions.

For most part of this study, as I have said, I occupied multiple roles and I was aware that I needed to remain clear about my role as a researcher and that it was sometimes difficult to separate the roles adequately. I describe this in more detail in Chapter six, when I took decisive action to make substantial changes to my roles in the community and ultimately, as a researcher. Holding these multiple roles throughout the research, I was careful to ensure that, despite my perceived commonalities with many participants, that I was not received as colluding with their perspectives and experiences and that these were challenged and examined without remaining 'common-sensical' (Chew-Graham et al., 2002).

I undertook to develop my reflexivity in several ways. Primarily, I kept a fieldwork journal which I reviewed on a weekly basis, noted my challenges, assumptions and concerns. I was able, in this journal to be congruent and self-critical with my practitioner-self and reflexively examine my attitudes, values and beliefs. I was also able to use supervision to help me to see aspects of my observations that may have gone unnoticed.

I was able to use as a resource my extensive network of practitioners and scholars, who were able to interrogate my data and observations and challenge and articulate perceptions in different ways. I was also, over the period of the study able to present

my research to University students, conferences and to present papers to a variety of practitioners and scholars. Feedback was always helpful in assessing and reassessing my relationship with the research.

Key to this research is a reflexive approach based in reflective practice (Schon, 1983) and 'experience nearness' (Geertz,1974) as developed and explored by researchers who are also practitioners where practice-based sense making can exist amongst knowledge, tensions, human interaction and learning. I apply reflection in and on action (Schon, 1983) throughout this practice-near inquiry which is defined as *'the use of experience – near methods for practice or practice-based or practice- relevant research'* (Froggett and Briggs, 2012, p.3).

3.3. Research design and methods

The research intention was to use a qualitative method with a case study approach. Case studies have a credible and critiqued place in social science history and provide an in-depth exploration of a particular project based in 'real life' and with an 'emphasis on staying close to reality' (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.132). A case study enables research to be conducted by looking at a topic from many different angles (Foucault, 1967) and provides a 'form of inquiry that elevates a view of life in its complexity' (Thomas, 2015, p.47). Utilising the case study methods is particularly relevant in this study, which aims to explore, reflect upon and assess the experiences of a youth work project over several years and hence interrogate the lived experiences young people and their communities. Stake describes 'a case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances' (Skate,1995, p.xi) This resonates with the topic of study and for this reason the case study was the chosen approach.

What follows discusses the tensions and strengths, challenges and theories which have dominated the developmental process and ultimately led to the creation of this descriptive case study.

3.3.1. Realism

By applying a realist epistemology to ensure independent reality in research, this section will describe how this was proposed and how this was relevant to this study and how decisions were made to ensure strong, situational and lived experiences.

Renowned as a highly credible (and sometimes highly critiqued) tool for evaluation, the case study used in a youth and community work context provides '*a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out*' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986 p.162). In other words, this relates to the ethnographic nature of this case study as it relates to my role as resident, researcher and volunteer in place and time with the study as it progressed.

To grasp all the complexities, unpredictabilities and social consequences of the case study, it was essential to demonstrate the importance of it being placed in the 'here and now' and with focussed interest in the 'situational' (Harraway, 1988; Lucy and Wakefield, 2012). This case study charts and discusses the developments which effected Hackney, in real time, during the research period.

It is important that researchers explicitly address their position in order to ensure that their epistemology, methodology and research methods are consistent (Creswell, 2014) underlying assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the social world. Realism emphasises the importance of the role of culture and context in understanding and interpreting what occurs in society and aids in constructing knowledge based on this understanding (McMahon, 1997; Derry, 1999). Closely associated with many contemporary theories (Vygotsky, 1997; Shunk, 2000; Bruner, 2004) this perspective offers a way of defining, understanding and studying social problems in a distinct way which has historic relevance (Waller, 1936; Fuller and Myers, 1941) and is appropriate for this case study.

Social problems have been described as 'products of a process of collective definition' (Blumer, 1971, p.298) and scholars 'ought to study the process by which society comes to recognise its social problems' (Blumer, 1971, p.300). Social problems, their nature and the ways in which they are understood, can be mismanaged in policy and project development, where objective conditions prove harmful to society. In relation to the ways in which young people are perceived and 'dealt with,' this resonates as misunderstandings which can lead to poor neighbourhood interpretations and interventions.

Realists see the social and natural world as existing independently of our perceptions (Denscombe, 2010) which enables the researcher to consider the contingent relationships between the dynamics of social life (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). Action is central to focussing on the events taking place in social structures and the researcher's perspectives, practices, position and research situation were key to determining the most appropriate but reflexive methods to apply to this case study.

Therefore, I was mindful to emphasise an abstract understanding of the empirical phenomenon and contend that this understanding was to be located in the specific circumstances of the research process and considered the notion that the researcher is cast almost as a detective who attempts to uncover the governing social rules or psychological processes in communities (Willig, 2012).

My approach makes the assumption that, reality is constructed under particular conditions, which may be multiple and processual. The research processes emerged from interaction in the research site, taking account of my positionality as well as that of the research participants. The research participants were not merely observed objects in the process, but the data was co-constructed. I remained aware of my position and privileges in the research situation as well as how my interactions and perspectives might affect it (Charmaz, 2000; 2006; Clarke, 2005; 2006, Young 2008).

In realist approaches, researchers commonly reflect value positions, the problem arises in identifying these positions and weighing their effect on the research practice

rather than denying them. Using reflection and a fieldwork journal encouraged this to happen appropriately, also acknowledging the prior knowledge and experience I bring uniquely to this case study. Studying phenomena that occurs naturally in qualitative research, helps to define how interaction ensues and the meanings they hold (Silverman, 2005). Realism resists the tendency in objectivist methods, to oversimplify, erase differences, overlook variation and assume neutrality, but offers qualified explanations and analysis; particularly relevant in social and educational research (Clarke, 2006: Young 2008).

3.3.2. Case study

Social problems are *'the activities of groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some punitive conditions'* (Kitsuse and Spector, 1973, p.415) and so defined includes *'demanding services, lodging complaints, writing letters of protest, passing resolutions, supporting or opposing some governmental practice or policy, setting up picket lines or boycotts….'* (Spector and Kitsuse, 1997, p.79). To study the causes of social problems, the examination of how these come about and how they are sustained or remedied is important. These notions proved particularly relevant to this case study and therefore social constructivism was adopted as the underpinning view and approach to this study.

Case study research allows for tools used in studies of complex phenomenon and when applied correctly a valuable method for developing theory, evaluating programmes and interventions (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Qualitative case studies offer an approach to research which facilitates the exploration of phenomenon using a variety of data sources, ensuring that the issue is explored through a variety of lenses allowing for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. This case study is an exploratory study with ethnographic elements, due to the multiple roles I have played during the extended period of time data was collected. These roles have been discussed throughout the thesis, but included being a resident, a manager, a volunteer and a researcher in the same study. This study features a 'life cycle of innovation' (Yin, 2018, p.67), designed to explore whether unique findings could be

described, explained and evaluated credibly to contribute to observations and discussion around young people's lived experiences and the contribution that open access youth work might make to them.

Two key approaches to case study methodology dominate the field Stake (1995) and Yin (2003, 2006). Both aim to ensure the topic is well explored, revealing the essence of the phenomenon but the methods that they each employ are different and worthy of discussion. Both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) base their approaches to case study on constructivist paradigms which claim that truth is relative and is dependent on one's perspective. *This recognises the 'importance of the subjective human creation of meaning but doesn't reject outright some notion of objectivity. Pluralism, not relativism, is stressed with focus on the circular dynamic tension of subject and object'* (Crabtree and Miller 1999, p. 10).

Realism relies on the premise of a social construction of reality (Searle, 1995). An advantage of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participants, enabling them to tell their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Their stories would describe their views of reality and enables the researcher to better understand the participants' actions (Lather, 1992; Robottom & Hart, 1993).

Yin's (2003) assessment of case study design resonated with this study since the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions, the behaviour of the participants cannot be manipulated, and I wanted to cover contextual conditions because of my belief in the relevance to the phenomenon to be studied. Determining what the unit of analysis (case study) was defined by '*a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context'* (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.25). The unit of analysis was identified as Hub67 in Hackney Wick.

It was also important to consider what the case study would not be, since a common pitfall associated with case study is the tendency to attempt to answer a question that is too broad or a topic that has too many objectives. Avoiding this can be achieved by setting boundaries on the case (Stake, 1995, Yin, 2003), binding it by time and place

(Creswell, 2003), and by definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Applying these, enabled clarity around the case and what was realistic.

3.4. Hackney Wick

As with all elements of my methodology, my sampling strategy and my research sites were chosen to best respond to my research questions. As outlined at the beginning of this chapter my research to investigate the research questions through the case study, which is Hub67 in Hackney Wick.

In situational research which utilises 'basic social process' (Clarke, 2008, p.55) and where 'the situation becomes the ultimate unit of analysis' (Clarke, 2008, p.55) it is necessary to be close enough to the social life or culture of the research group to demonstrate accurate accounts of the real world; in this case, the world in which young people, youth workers and community meet and the research site; Hub67 in Hackney Wick. As a resident, practitioner and researcher, these roles, although challenging and sometimes contradictory, provided a 'close enough' position from which to document and experience the study. The research questions provide a strong situational conversation which involves the traditional focus of a case study, with me as the researcher adding a pivotal 'self' demonstrating 'truth' within the Hackney Wick culture and community.

Inevitable qualitative tensions between relevance and importance emerged since the points of reference were personally experienced and unique to me. Aiming to practice critical reflexivity, I remained mindful of researcher "situatedness" (Spry, 2001, p.89). Certainly, I have found myself to be self-critical in my analysis of practice, beliefs and understandings in a way which I am clear would not have been possible had I have not undertaken this process – leading me to appreciate fully this methodology and its capacity for observation, change and education.

To understand the research site, it is necessary to describe some of the characteristics of Hackney Wick, an area with a rich industrial history which over the last thirty years

has been one of Hackney's most deprived and unhealthy boroughs, as discussed in Chapter one. Despite its location along the Lea Navigation Canal and the lush wetlands and marshes which surround it, it has been socially, economically and politically neglected for several decades.

3.5. Hub67

Hub67 is a newly built, youth and community space which was opened in 2015. Having been donated to the community by London legacy Development Company and with substantial funding from the Big Lottery, it was built and designed by eco-interested architects from materials recycled from the Olympic site. The design and build created in consultation with young people in the area included many features as a result. I describe this in more depth in Chapter 6. Hub67 is the venue at which youth and community work took place, as well as providing a meeting space for community groups and activities. It is central to this study and is where all interviews and focus groups took place.

3.5.1. Hackney Wick and Fish Island Cultural Interest Group (CIG)

Minutes from the CIG meetings were collected over the period of the research. Minutes were recorded at monthly meetings of the group collectively known as Hackney Wick and Fish Island Cultural Interest Group (CIG) made up of local artists, businesses, Olympic delivery personnel, local authority personnel and intermittently by people with creative, developmental, or social interests in the group or its activities and agendas. The group was constituted and facilitated by a chair and trustees. For most part of the research, I was the Vice Chair of this group with a focus on youth and community.

3.5.2 Leabank Square Community Association (LSCA)

The LSCA is a local resident association made up of individuals who reside in Leabank Square in Hackney Wick. Meetings were usually held quarterly, unless there was a need to meet between times and all members of the Leabank Square community were invited to attend. This group was constituted and held a bank account and was actively

involved in dialogue with the ODC to make improvements to the area and communal spaces in Hackney Wick.

3.5.3 Hackney Wick Festival

The Hackney Wick Festival was constituted held a bank account and was concerned with the delivery of community festivals and events in Hackney Wick. The members of this group were representatives of all estates and neighbourhood groups in Hackney Wick to ensure inclusion and equity across the area. The group met usually in the summer months, from May to September, since this is when the festivals and events took place, although later in the research period (from 2014 onwards) the group met more regularly to convene as the preliminary stages of the Wick Award committee.

3.5.4 Wick Award

This committee was established in 2014 following the donation of 1 million pounds from the Big Lottery to Hackney Wick communities. In the first instance Hackney Wick Festival committee was championed as a group demonstrating good practice and community inclusion and innovation and operated as the first committee group in this journey. However, later in 2014 it was realised that a unique set of community representatives needed to be recruited to ensure no conflict of interest and fairness. During the period of 2014 and 2016 the Wick Award carried out outreach and low-level research in order to identify community needs and concerns. During this time, the group also identified a method of grant giving, application and monitoring processes for the monies donated by the National Lottery.

3.6. Access and research ethics

Reflection was at the heart of my practice when I chose to study this case. I was able to gather data from the site I had chosen and had access to by recording and noting, minutes and fieldnotes, the various discussions, meetings and interactions that I experienced, through my activities and roles within the community. Access is an essential part of research design, particularly in case study research (Yin, 2006), and

having already established a key role in community events and development, it was an opportunity to utilise this unique position to undertake this study as a valuable contribution to research.

In order to appraise and gain approval from all of the research sites, I presented a proposal initially to the board members of the groups concerned, setting out their perimeters of the case study as well as potential risks and ethical concerns. Of concern was the potential disclosure by participants of anything which sat outside of the research remit, which may include issues of safety or severe deprivation. As an active community-member, I considered these issues and recognised that appropriate signposting where necessary was possible to services and provisions in the borough. Once I have received approval from the board members, I was invited to meetings of the groups to present my proposals to community members. These included young people who I accessed via their parents and family members. I was encouraged that there were no challenges to my proposal, and it was welcomed overall. There was one concern which was raised, and this was about how I was to be paid to carry out this research, which I explained was not a paid position. Reflexively, although this demonstrated a lack of understanding of my role of a researcher, it also indicated to me that the people raising this saw considerable value in the study, since they perceived it might be paid for. It was agreed that I would be given access to all minutes of meetings, unless, at any time they contained confidential, personnel information, and that if at any time individuals wanted comments redacted from them, they would raise this with me immediately.

Much of my fieldnote journal would contain conversations and observations as and when I encountered them around Hackney Wick, and this meant that ethical considerations needed to be precise and dedicated to the protection and privacy of all participants. I created a dedicated consent statement which I carried with me at all times (see appendix 6) and handed this to anyone I spoke to for the first time. This explained that the material would be completely anonymous, and that should they want to be removed from the study at any time I created a unique and confidential email address to which they could send their instructions. I only ever received one

email after speaking to people, and this was to add to what they had already contributed to in the conversation.

For interviews and focus groups I again, sought consent from participants to the use of their responses. For young people under the age of 18 I also asked for parental or guardian consent and any young person who could not present this were not included in the data.

There was a possibility that the interviews or focus groups, particularly with young people, could lead to discloser of vulnerability, personal safety or the safety of others. In anticipation of this, all young people were advised that should any responses contain such information, this would be shared with the responsible authority. Field access can fall into two phases: getting in (physical access) and getting on (achieving social access) (Cassell, 1988). In this case I feel that I had an advantage, as in most sites I had already gained social access and was well known in the area. What I needed to be aware of, however, at least in the first few months, was that I was a participant researcher and remind individuals and groups of my role consistently. On reflection, there was a sense that they saw me as being an 'insider' which appeared implicitly reassuring to them that I was not researching from the outside.

I was heartened by the willingness of participants to take part and that they did so with enthusiasm. I considered that my identity as a resident of Hackney Wick was met with welcome and that those who shared their stories did so because they had something to say about issues, we both cared about.

3.7. Research methods

In qualitative case study research, it is traditionally acceptable to use multiple research methods to increase the depth and range of the data and to reduce any risk that the findings are method-dependent (Hammersley and Atkinson; Madden, 2010). The research methods used in this study were a combination of fieldwork notes, interviews,

focus groups and minutes of various community, resident, planning and development meetings. Similar combinations have been used in previous social science research (Dingwall et al, 1983; Pithouse, 1984; Scourfield, 1999; Yin, 2002). I was aware that the minutes of meeting would be crucial and decided to include these from four different groups, all of which had interests in the developments in the neighbourhood and held complimentary roles in the community. This study also included qualitative and semi structured interviews and focus groups with young people, youth and community workers and parents/guardians.

3.7.1. Fieldwork undertaken

The following data were collected during the period of the case study over the different sites (see figure 1) The rationale for each data collection method will be discussed in the following sections. All data was gathered with the knowledge and acceptance of the participants involved in the group meetings, participant agreements were collated, and confidentiality was maintained at all times. Names of participants were not recorded and do not represent the real names of the participants throughout the study. Notes of public meetings were not changed as these are shared generally in any case. All interviews focus groups and transcripts from outreach and fieldwork have been changed and do not relate to the identities of the participants.

Table 1 - Summary of data collection from research sites

Data Set	Dates from/to	Number	Purpose
1.Minutes from Hackney wick and Fish Island Cultural Interest Group (CIG)meetings	2010-2016	60 sets of minutes	Artist lead forum for discussion and in support of a sustainable creative community in Hackney Wick
2.Minutes of Leabank Square Community Association (LSCA)	2010-2016	24 sets of minutes	Resident lead forum for discussion and intervention in local social issues and opportunities
3.Minutes of Hackney Wick Festival (HWF) meetings	2011-2016	26 sets of minutes	Resident lead events and activities forum to sustain community cohesion and interaction and fundraising. For confidentiality, relevant notes are recorded in researcher fieldnotes and can be viewed in Appendices
4.Minutes of Wick Award meetings (WA)	2012-2014	10 sets of minutes	Big Local Fund and resident co-leadership of funding package to disseminate 1 million pounds across a period of ten years. For confidentiality, significant notes are recorded in the researcher fieldnotes. Examples in Appendices

5.Interviews	2015-16	18 interviews with young people	Face to face interviews with young people over a period of six months participating in Hub67. Transcripts can be viewed in the Appendices
6. Focus Groups	2015-16	10 focus groups with young people 4 focus groups with parents/guardians 1 focus group with youth and community workers	Focussed discussions with young people, parents and youth workers connected to Hub67 after a six-month period of operation. Transcripts of the focus groups are in Appendices
7. Researcher Fieldnotes	2010 – 2016	A journal of reflective fieldnotes – 80 pieces	Reflective and experience lead, chronological diary entries which records interaction with residents, artists, officials, young people and decision-makers and conversations, obstacles and opportunities throughout the study. The notes are taken from outreach events, attending resident meetings and other local events. See Appendices

Examples of minutes, focus group meetings, interviews and extracts from my fieldwork notes can be found in the Appendices.

3.7.2. Critical Friends

It was important for me to identify people as critical friends (who will remain anonymous) with whom I could make my learning 'public' and open to provocative questions to realistically reflect and make sound decisions about my analysis and critique (Costa and Kallick, 1993; Loughton and Northfield, 1998. Critical friends enabled me to 'step outside' (Loughton and Northfield, 1998; p.14) of myself and develop new insights and perspectives to challenge and strengthen my theories and writing.

My 'trusted people' (Costa and Kallick, 1993; p.50) were the Vice Chair of the Hackney Wick Festival Committee, and of the Wick Award, the treasurer of both of these committees and two other long-term members of these committees (Secretary and board member). In addition, two youth workers were constantly able to help me to examine my learning through different lenses, offer critique and encourage me to strengthen my understanding and conclusions.

Regular supervision provided me a space which became essential for me to seek different views of my data and in particular to reflect on this throughout the study. My ability to reflect was enhanced by the opportunity to discuss ongoing and emerging issues and was especially helpful in aiding me to discuss and develop theories and techniques around reflective practice and practice-near research, to understand and apply these notions to my practice as well as to my analysis of the research overall.

3.7.3. Semi-structured interviews

Semi structured interviews are one of the most important form of interviewing in case study research (Gillman, 2000) and therefore, it was important that these were done well, to ensure a rich source of data. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with young people participating in Hub67 at two stages of the centre's development: after one month of opening and again six months later. The rationale for using a semi-structured style was to encourage the participants to feel as relaxed as possible for

them to share as much about how they experienced Hub67. I wanted to encourage a sense of the interviews being naturally occurring conversations, so that I could not necessarily lead the dialogue, but prepare to include elements when topics were left out (Gillman, 2000).

I ensured that any questions asked were 'open' and required an extended response to which I could add prompts and probes to ascertain clarity when necessary. Using this style of interviews, I needed to be certain of the key issues relevant to the research study as well what would best be answered in face-to-face interviews. My role in a semi-structured interview was to facilitate and guide, rather than dictate exactly what would happen during the encounter. I had considered and memorised what was necessary as a schedule for the interviews in advance and was able to concentrate on what the young person was saying, and occasionally monitor the coverage of the scheduled topics (Larkin, 2015). Thus, I was able to use the schedule to indicate the general area of interest and to provide prompts or cues when the young person has difficulties.

I allocated an hour for each interview, whilst being aware that young people might find this too long a period during which to focussed or interested in the conversation and fully expecting some to take less time than this. I framed my questions in order to ensure that the key topics were covered, ensuring that they were open and using prompts in situations where the young person may need reminding what the question was, and probes in cases when it was helpful to find out more. Probes were also useful to exemplify a point, when necessary. It was also important to consider how to 'keep things moving' if there were gaps or moments when the young person was not forthcoming. I was able to utilise my skills as a person-centred counsellor in this regard and be observant of sensitivities, silences, body language and unspoken messages.

The semi-structured interviews were all individual and personal yet, they covered similar ground. I was able to be flexible and responsive to my participants and decided that recording them was the most effective way of ensuring that all of the content was stored and there was an opportunity to discern more at a later time.

I invited young people to interview individually or in small groups. I found that most of them elected to be interviewed with friends or siblings, and in all cases, all of the young people participated in and contributed to the interview process.

3.7.4. Focus Groups

Focus groups are a popular and widely used method in qualitative research across the social sciences and although at first sight, deceptively simple it is a way of collecting qualitative data, which involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion (or discussions) focused on a particular topic or set of issues (Williamson, 2015). There is a common misconception that people are inhibited in revealing intimate details in the context of a group discussion, but my past experience with young people and communities has led me to challenge this. Focus groups are well suited to exploring 'sensitive' topics, and the group context can sometimes actually facilitate personal disclosures (Farquhar, with Das, 1999; Frith, 2000).

I was careful to ensure that the discussion that took place in the focus groups were based around a series of questions (the focus group 'schedule') in which I acted as a 'moderator' for the group, posing the questions, keeping the discussion flowing, and encouraging people to participate fully. Sometimes referred to as 'group interviews' it was not my intention to ask questions of each focus group participant in turn, but rather facilitate a group discussion, actively encouraging the group members to interact with each other. This interaction was a key feature of the focus group research, and the one which most clearly distinguished it from one-to-one interviews (Morgan, 1997; Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2013). Compared with interviews, the focus groups were much more 'naturalistic' (closer to everyday conversation), in that they typically included a range of communicative processes – such as storytelling, joking, arguing, boasting and teasing.

3.7.5. Minutes

I included minutes from a number of meetings which took place regularly over the period of the study. These meetings were those which were regularly held for residents and tenant's groups, housing groups and creative organisations as well as those concerned with community initiatives and events which I attended, chaired or observed. Meetings were also created specifically around the Olympic event and development and eventually around funding and support. The minutes, which were important as recordings of community concerns, achievements, obstacles, tensions and aspirations for their respective group remits. Each group included residents of Hackney Wick and groups and individuals with an interest in the neighbourhood.

The minutes provided a consistent source of rich, localised data which in most cases was characteristic of the Olympic development and legacy in 'real time' as and when things happened. The number of groups increased as the process of regeneration infiltrated the community, as some of the groups came into existence directly as a result. Most meetings took place on a monthly basis except when extraordinary meetings were required.

3.7.6. Fieldwork Journal

Maintaining a fieldwork journal is something which most youth and community workers are familiar with, as are qualitative ethnographic researchers, as it enables improved practice through interpretation, knowledge production and reflexivity. In research it has been argued that this is rather like 'navel-gazing' and self-indulgent (Kobayashi, 2003; Sultana, 2007) however, it can add to the richness of relationships between participants and what can or cannot be utilised in the context of institutional, social and political realities which is integral to conducting ethical research. Journal writing is recognised as an important aspect of qualitative research (Etherington, 2004). As such, it is integral to conducting ethical research (Peake and Trotz, 2000). My fieldwork journal enabled me to focus on my internal responses to operating as a researcher and encouraged me to capture changing and developing understanding of the research method and content.

I was able to reflect on my role, the impact of the research upon my personal and professional life, my relationships with participants and my perceptions of how the research was impacting others. By creating a private 'space' to process my thoughts and feelings, I was able to consider and reconsider areas in which I may have become stuck or blocked. The journal was integral to my being able to notice and critique my biases and weaknesses (Ely et al, 1997). Such biases were interrogated in my journal as 'enabling biases' (Bernstein, 1983, p. 65) as opposed to blinding biases.

The development of the journal became crucial as Nagar et al. (2002) note, where local analysis was embedded within broader processes of how issues of social justice, equity and democracy are implicated in the development processes. Being reflexive was important in situating the research and knowledge production. The journal was recoded over the entire period of the study monthly and at times in addition to this when I had concerns or challenges that needed intense reflection. These methods were chosen to ensure that the research questions were answered in this case study.

3.8. Data Analysis

3.8.1. Choosing a method of data analysis

Data analysis is an essential stage in the research process and the quality of a study is highly dependent on the rigour of the data analysis. Thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was the chosen method as it provides a framework and process compatible with my research. Thematic analysis has been defined as a method of identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and is one of the most commonly used methods for analysing qualitative data (Davies, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Bryman, 2012).

Thematic analysis, like any data analysis method, has weaknesses and limitations. It has been criticised for having a less theoretical approach than other methods such as interpretative phenomenological analysis or grounded theory (Bryman, 2012), leading to analyses that is too descriptive and intense. Thematic analysis enables the researcher to organise and describe data sets in rich detail by applying a method for

the identification, analysis and reporting of themes which emerge, yet it can also enable the identification of further interpretations of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). It could be argued that most research aims to identify recurring themes or patterns (Braun and Wilkinson, 2003), however, without understanding how the data was analysed, or how assumptions were formed it is difficult to evaluate the rigour or the findings. Therefore, thematic analysis was chosen for this study to ensure vital clarity around practice and process in data analysis.

It is not uncommon for researchers to report having identified themes using other forms of data analysis which are passive accounts of the process (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). Scholars suggest that these themes 'reside' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.8) in the data as opposed to in the heads of the researchers themselves as they think about and seek to understand the data they have gathered (Ely, Vinz, Downing and Azul, 1997).

It was necessary to consider themes before beginning the analysis of data, not least to provide clarity around what constitutes a theme, and also to ensure that these would have a strong relationship between patterned responses and the research questions. Prevalence in terms of space within each data set and across the entire set was also considered since ideally there would be a number of incidences of themes across the sets. However, careful consideration was given to the relevance of recurring themes to ensure they were pertinent to the research study aims and questions. For example, if in one data set (minutes), road safety came up as a neighbourhood concern regularly, although this might be interesting generally, it would not be important as part of the study. Key to the identification of themes is what they captured about the data gathered and how this related to the overall research query.

3.8.2. Undertaking the analysis

It was important to determine the type of analysis I wanted to undertake and the claims that I wanted to make in relation to the data sets. I wanted to provide a rich thematic description of the entire data set, as this would encompass the research journey as a

whole. It was important to me that the research analysis provided a good sense of the predominant and important themes as an accurate reflection of the issues and discourse as it was experienced. This, I determined was also helpful since youth and community work is an under-researched area and providing this method will offer a robust interrogation of findings.

Themes in thematic analysis can be identified in two ways; as inductive, 'bottom up' ways (Frith and Gleeson, 2004) or in a theoretical, 'top down' way (Hayes, 1997; Boyatzis, 1998). Patton (1990) describes inductive approaches as being the themes strongly linked to the data themselves, where data is gathered specifically for the research itself, via interviews or focus groups. An inductive approach meant that I needed to code the data without having to navigate a preconceived framework, making it data rather than theory driven.

My data sets also include minutes and notes from meetings and these were analysed with inductive and deductive thematic analysis, driven by my analytic interest in the data. My aim is that this will provide a rich description of the data which compliments the data gathered from interviews and focus groups. Therefore, in terms of the data analysis and according to Braun and Clarke (2006, p.8) I utilised both 'bottom up' and 'top down' research strategies in reading and interpreting my data. Using both deductive and inductive methods in determining how best to utilise Bourdieuan theory, for example, provides a way of achieving a degree of generalisation.

The data collected from 18 interviews, 15 focus groups, 80 fieldwork journal entries and 120 sets of minutes amounted to a daunting amount of data to analyse. In the first stage I was involved in reading through the data set as a whole several times to familiarise myself with the content. Overall, the data makes up 250 A4 pages. I adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) six-stage model of thematic analysis, the first stage of which was to read through the data several times aiming to know the data in considerable detail. In aiming to identify themes, it was necessary to code responses and comments as they came up in written documents and transcripts and all my gathered data. This involved listening to audio tapes of focus groups and

interviews and reading and re-reading fieldnotes and minutes several times and checking these alongside the respective transcripts and texts. This was useful in gaining a wider context of comments when coding a specific transcript and in noticing potential themes. I was able to highlight sections or words in the texts and apply a code to them. Matching codes to same or similar words and comments, made up the second stage of the model. In the first instance I coded generously so as to ensure that nothing was missed in this stage of the analysis, mindful that these may be condensed further in later stages.

The third stage of the process involved searching for themes by grouping codes together, where the construction of how codes might fit together to create a 'level of patterned responses or meaning' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82) in and within the data. It began to emerge that there were themes which were central to my research questions and others which appeared peripheral. Some codes were identified as not fitting in the themes I had noted, and these were set aside for the time being, whilst I concentrated on the key thematic identities. This stage was one in which the difference between inductive analysis and those based on theoretical concepts discussed in my literature review became apparent. This third stage led to my identifying a set of key initial themes and sub themes.

I needed to test and refine the themes at the fourth stage which took place on two levels. I was checking that my themes were consistent across the data and that it was sufficient. This sometimes meant that I grouped themes together or separated them. For example, there were some themes which could have been identified singularly, however on further analysing them, they indeed were worthy of being distinct in their own right. In other cases, it was preferred to combine them, when attempts to combine them were too tenuous. At the end of this stage, I had generated a thematic map which was consistent across the data, creating relationships between the coding and the

themes. It was too early to make any conclusive decisions but there was a sense that this was in sight.

The fifth stage was central in asserting and naming the themes, defining the essence of what each theme was about. This involved going back to the data and considering each theme individually as well as with an overview of the entire analysis. This enabled me to clearly identify themes and summarise them, providing titles which captured what the theme meant.

At the sixth stage I wrote up the final analysis in a form which began to tell the overall story of the data in a coherent and logical way, using an analytic narrative to illustrate the account. Extracts from the transcripts were used to evidence and validate my analysis. It was challenging to avoid being anecdotal in presenting my analysis, particularly where there were interesting or unusual aspects included (Silverman, 2013). However, I endeavoured not to do this by referring back to the research questions and aims.

The findings are presented chronologically across the six years of the study. In four chapters the phases of each are captured, allowing for the sequencing of events that successively occurred in date, time and place. In Chapter four, the period leading up to the Olympic event is discussed. Chapter five provides details of the period after and up unto 2014 in the developmental phase of six details the final stage of setting up Hub67 and Chapter seven involves the impact that the new provision had on young

people and the community. The data from all sources is synthesised in all these chapters.

3.9. Strategies for promoting rigour

There is some criticism of cases study research as a less desirable method of qualitative research due mainly to the presumption that these have less rigour than other research strategies. However, this is mainly due to the researcher not having followed systematic procedures or allowed equivocal evidence to influence the direction of findings (Yin, 2018). There is also some confusion around the issue of '*non*-research' (Yin, 2018, p. 19) as case studies are used as teaching or training aids, as *'popular case studies'* in the media and as '*case records'* for practitioners (Yin, 2018, p.19).

To ensure that this case study research should not be misinterpreted by these confusions, I have presented my methodic procedures and all evidence fairly, have remained transparent and explicit about limiting or eliminating biases, as rigorously as with any research methodology, avoiding what Rosenthal (1966) calls the experimenter effect and in designing unbiased interview and focus group questions (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982). The challenges of case study research have not differed from that of any other research methodology but has required me pay greater attention to my purpose, procedures and interpretations.

I have based my research on an area with which I have expertise as a practitioner and an academic. Having chosen my research design, tools and methods to best respond to the research questions and aims, I have shared these with academic supervisors. I have used a tried and trusted research approach and referred consistently to expertise in this field. I developed credibility and rapport with the data sites and participants and maintained a fieldwork journal regularly and intensely. I have used researcher reflexivity throughout this process to develop and increased understanding of how the research is being impacted and its impact on others. I have used a credible and robust data analysis procedure and scrutinised the data with integrity and concern. I have

created this study for practitioners, academics and decision makers around practice and to ensure that the contribution to knowledge is transferable and beneficial in the delivery of youth and community work in urban settings.

3.10. Summary

The research design, methods and assumptions, based in realism, have enabled a robust and critical interrogation of the lived experiences of young people in the urban context of Hackney Wick amidst rapid regeneration and change. The findings from the study are presented in the next three chapters. The research structure and analysis has enabled me to articulate and critically assess the role of youth and community work in this urban regenerative setting, and to consider how far these findings can have validity for other such settings, in order to therefore make observations and recommendations for future practice with young people and communities.

CHAPTER FOUR – The origins of Hub67 in the context of the Olympics

4. Introduction

This case study aims to focus on the development of Hub 67, a youth and community space dedicated to the residents of Hackney Wick, in East London. This chapter will discuss the opportunities and obstacles which were experienced in a youth and community context, between the period before the Olympic Games event in 2010 and afterwards up until 2016, recording a series of local and national forums and networks, documenting in the form of a case study the development of Hub67, a youth and community space formed in the context of the Olympic games and subsequent regeneration in the area.

In this chapter, the central focus will be on how young people and the resident community in Hackney Wick responded and perceived the ongoing changes and developments in the area because of the forthcoming Olympic Games. It will specifically emphasise how Hub67 (an open access youth provision) located itself in Hackney Wick and began to address the research focus, in the development of social capital, amidst urban regeneration as it relates to local residents and in particular, how young people experienced this.

This chapter will recount the period between the winning of the Olympic bid and the Games itself. The investigation is carried out predominantly with the hosting community in mind, that is, the residents of the borough of Hackney, (Hackney Wick) and to provide a 'before, during and after' study of their experiences. The study will discuss the rhetoric and the reality of the process as it was experienced by those most affected geographically and environmentally in Hackney Wick due to spatial change and dominance in and around the Olympic park and environs. Those most affected include those for whom regeneration is central as well as those who experience it without choice.

4.1. Hackney 'Wicked' and the Olympic promise

At the time London won the bid for the Olympic Games in 2005, Hackney Wick remained a relatively segregated and largely unexplored area of the East End of London. A ward within the borough of Hackney; one of 5 chosen Olympic boroughs which included Newham, Tower Hamlets, Barking and Dagenham and Greenwich. A post-industrial, low rise community, housing a thriving creative community in old factory buildings and warehouses in huge numbers as artworks and graffiti became commonplace on walls and in doorways across the ward. At bus stops in the area or at the over ground train station, two distinct groups of commuters could be seen; those with alternative approaches to fashion and self-expression, and those who were more conventional. In an area where travelling to the shops or work was necessary- as a resident, it was generally straightforward to see who was who.

A creative network had been established, over the years to platform and celebrate the artist's working in Hackney Wick (The Wick) and was becoming something of relevance in the Creative world and it was featured in blogs, journals and magazines. "Hackney Wicked" (a three-day festival of the arts) was becoming credited as a highlight in the European creative diary and was generating traction in the consciousness of local politicians, businesses and invested parties.

The Summer festival was enjoyed by musicians, artists, performers, fashion entrepreneurs and creators of all kinds nationally and took over Hackney Wick's small and large spaces, corners, buildings and streets. Restaurants popped up in living rooms, left open to the public while yards and balconies became backdrops for sculpture and all of the industrial spaces offered music, stalls, activities, demonstrations and performance stages. A 'Hollywood' style set of five feet tall white letters dominated the exit from the station and announced Hackney Wick's 'arrival'.

As a resident of Hackney Wick, I embraced the festival enthusiastically despite my neighbours general lack of interest in taking part or learning more about it. As a community leader and participant in several forums in the area I was fascinated by

residents who refused to engage with the festival, on any level. Being experienced in community development and action, I recognised the potential that the festival could have on the area as well as how strategic links with the festival and the Olympic proposals might impact the community infrastructure and opportunities. When asking residents what they thought about the event, their perceptions were instructive. My fieldnotes extensively quoted what some residents said following the festival.

One resident, Sheila said:

> *'all a bit wack, you know. They are all a bit weird and a bit druggy. I don't want my kids getting anywhere near them to be honest. I'm glad it's over'.*

In asking her to clarify what she meant by 'wack' and 'druggy' she explained that she felt all artists were drug addicts and that 'wack' referred to being stoned. I wanted to know whether she had 'witnessed' any such behavior and she admitted that she had not, but that she did not need to confirm what she already knew. Her friend and neighbour Dellaley, agreed with her and added: *'you've only got to look at the way they dress themselves and how they all hang about doing graffiti and all that - they're just wasters really, but probably have rich Mums and Dads, don't you know'.* Adding an upper-class accent to the last part of her statement. I asked why she thought they had wealthy parents. There was a sense that she was expecting me to collude with her sentiments and she added:

> *'you can tell, they don't wear Primark love, they have nice cars and buy lunch in the cafes and all that. I don't have a car and I can't afford a coffee in those places, never mind a lunch'.*

This comment was significant, in that I had suspected that the cost of food and beverages locally were too much for local residents and that there may be a sense of resentment about this. Dellaley and Sheila were indicating by their comments that they saw a distinct, class difference between themselves and those they referred to as

'hipsters'. They identified them as different to themselves and perceived them as having more disposable income than they did. It seemed that they had done this by recognising several elements of the hipster behaviour which was beyond their personal reach; their choice of clothing, what they did with their time and how they spent their money. As working Mums, it is likely that they envisage their time as being busy raising children, working and looking after the home, and so seeing adults 'wasting their time' doing graffiti and drinking expensive coffee tends to induce frustration, and possibly, judgment on their part.

Since the assumptions made by these young people and adults seemed to be around the way the creatives looked, I wanted to understand more about this. I considered that 'fashion' may be an indicator of how this happened. Massey (1993, p.31) talks about fashion as having 'power geometry' in which multidimensional power is interpreted by the fashions that we wear and helps us to understand the individual. Fashion is also perceived by advocates and critics as a social process, one which identifies a way of deciphering and expressing a certain time and place through ideas and navigating power positions, such as gender and class (Godart, 2012). This encouraged me to see a different dimension in how residents responded, and to consider how the power relationships within the community might be perceived.

At the meeting of the LSCA, in September of that year, most people were unaware of negativity around the festival itself and had not noticed anything out of the ordinary around that time. At the same meeting there was a discussion about the forthcoming Olympic event and the potential issues which parking, and litter may have on the area with expressions of concern about the numbers of visitors expected. Concerns for security, particularly around access to the communal spaces in the area was recorded and a heated discussion about the benefits of the event was had by a small number of participants, who felt that they were, "as usual" being 'sidelined' into something that would have no positive impact on them and their families. They indicated that the promises of work and better facilities would come to nothing as jobs would go to 'foreigners' and the benefits would be for 'hipsters'. Some more optimistic members felt that there could be benefits yet to be discovered. There was acknowledgement

that there might be opportunity to 'tap into' funding available to support residential developments and improvements and that committee members should be certain to keep abreast of anything of the like. Young people during outreach sessions were more aware of the event and less critical of it.

The skateboarders recorded in fieldnotes said.

Gel: *'it's just folks having a party inn it? I mean they just did it big time - noise and a lot of 'em seemed to be freaking out and that but who really cares.*

Rick: *'yeah, you know it was just a jam, it's coz it's mostly white people they get more attention, well not attention but publicity, like, it made the paper and all that but in a good way'.*

Jay: '*I s'pose people were complaining about it and I was told there was a load of rubbish, but there were loads of food and wack too'.*

Mac: *'I thought they were all famous people, like, musicians and models so that's why it was in the news and that'.*

Asked how they felt about this taking place in their neighbourhood they seemed rather unconcerned.

Gel: *'it's not a problem, is it. They don't do any harm. Maybe it makes the Wick a better place, I dunno'*

Jay: '*No, it doesn't really matter much, they not bothering anyone'.*

Mac: '*I dunno, my Mum hates it, she says it's trouble making and will lead to bad things. She thinks they are like hippies, like you know drugged up and sleeping around and all that. I dunno if she's right but they don't trouble me none'.*

Rick: *"I didn't even know it was happening to be fair'.*

On several occasions young people had expressed the concerns of their parents in this regard, when asked about the creative community, as if they needed to share their views, even if they did not agree with them. On the other hand, they may have perceived this to be a way of responding 'as adults' or in a mature way (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013; Marshall and Bottomore, 1997). It was, however the first time the creative community had been identified as 'white people', which was significant. The

creative community was, in fact deeply eclectic and multi-ethnic. Again, however, the young people had identified the 'hipsters' as distinctly different from themselves, by thinking they were famous people. In this they were making some assumptions based on the way they dressed, lived and presented themselves. As with the mothers quoted earlier, all seemed to be basing their decisions on how people looked and what they were doing, without having engaged in dialogue or interaction in any way.

The Olympic Games would inevitably bring some attention to Hackney and the other surrounding boroughs and it was becoming clear that the creative community were keen to engage with the potential financial, publicity and environmental 'fame' that was possible as a result of the ensuing regeneration in an area which had previously been "abandoned entirely to the working class" (Sanders, 1989, p.91). Whereas the resident community were less interested in the promotional element of the Games and more inclined to consider how it might benefit the community in the immediate and long term, and to what extent their lives would be disrupted as a result of the event.

Increasingly references to young people and the lack of after and out of school activities were becoming central to most conversations in the area and the rising concerns around youth knife crime and gang activity were cited frequently as of major influence on how parents and young people felt about living in the area. There had been no recorded evidence of young people being killed in Hackney Wick at this time. Hackney featured frequently in news reports and headlines as being significant geographically as a high-risk area for youth crime.

It is significant that the proportion of young people claiming to know someone in their age group to carry a knife has increased since 2011, as have knife related crime reports, hospital admissions and pro-active policing, yet the theoretical drivers behind such violent behavior have been ambiguous (Fajznylber et al, 2002; Sethi, et al, 2010). Empirical research suggests that young people are indeed responsible for the majority of knife crime (Sethi et al, 2010; HM Government, 2018) in the UK (and in Canada and the US) and significantly, in the case of Hackney Wick, perhaps, is the correlation

between income inequality and this type of violence being at 97% (Hsieh and Puch, 1993; Daly and Wilson, 2001; Elgar and Aitken, 2010).

Hackney has derived a negative, crime related press image, regularly featured in reports relating to youth crime, either through the media, youth music, popular film and television, indeed, Turton implies, this has been the case for all decades of teenagers universally (Turton, 2014). Neighbourhoods across the UK in 2011 had experienced four nights of 'mindless violence' at the hands of what many had come to believe were what Cohen (2004) described as 'folk devils' some years before but where gangster culture had become 'fashion' O'Carroll (2011; p.7) thanks to clothing and record brands aligning themselves with it (Neate et al., 2011) and rap music advocating for it (Hancox, 2011). Media reports on twenty-four-hour coverage showed hooded young people burning buildings and looting in 'an explosion of hedonism and nihilism' (Lammy, 2011, p.17). Some evidence shows that these disturbances had a materialistic element to them (Children's Society, 2011; British Youth Council, 2011) yet others argued a broken society failing in adequate parenting, poor role models and ill-discipline (Matthew, 2011; p.7) had presented the riots as an opportunity to address wider social inequality, decades of neoliberal social restructuring and cuts to community services. Closure of youth services, increased tuition fees and cuts to educational maintenance grants (The Children's Society, 2011; British Youth Council, 2011) were cited by young people themselves to be the cause of their 'authentic rage' (Zizek, 2011; p.5) and the lack of opportunity for 'self-definition and political interaction and representational status as active citizens' (Giroux, 2012; p 112). Recorded as including 20% of the most deprived young people in the country and escalating problematic and discriminatory relationships with the Police (Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Open Society Foundations 2012), young people had been opportunistic in their attempts to be heard and in doing so had socially and emotionally moved their communities creating a sense of fear.

It was unclear whether the concerns expressed by parents and young people were due to actual events, 'moral panic' (McAra and McVie, 2013) or perceptions about the prevalence of violence in the area but an emerging theme from meeting notes and

conversations indicated a pronounced fear for the safety of young people and that a youth-orientated space or provision was required. The creative community, at least, were keen to 'work with' the residents and young people in the area - either by offering activities or opportunities to engage in creative skills and fun activities.

The transparency that parents and young people were expressing their fears lead to the realisation of the lack of inclusion of residents in social housing, and presumably on lower income levels on committees and forums which already existed, and I was mindful to include them in forthcoming discussion. Challenged by some fierce opposition to such inclusion of residents from homeowners, it became essential to me to include them in ways other than by representatives of their various housing associations.

Encouraging and motivating residents to become involved was a further challenge; responses to posters, leaflets, Facebook pages, twitter, newsletters, emails and door-to-door canvassing was almost fruitless. Very few residents responded and even those who did seemed to withdraw rapidly and become disinterested quickly. Language barriers may be an issue in people's participation and so news bulletins were printed and distributed in Turkish and Urdu as well as French and Gujarati. Young people were encouraged to engage their families as it would benefit them but even this proved ineffective. I recognised that there was a significant number of families who were residents following violent or distressing experiences, seeking asylum or refuge and that perhaps they wanted to live with privacy and seclusion. I also recognised that a large number of the residents were blended households on low or supported income.

In these cases, I considered whether any cost, however minimal, might be a barrier to involvement. It seemed that whatever the reasons, we were unable to encourage residents to engage in discussions about the future of Hackney Wick, the Olympic games or how to improve their children's experiences. Notions of culture often refer to traditional and functional structures. Bourdieu, in particular illustrated this understanding by describing the functional tradition as being formed from human

knowledge and social infrastructure and structuralists as being interested in culture as an instrument of communication (Bourdieu, 1968). Contemporary society comprises a decoupling of society, a separation between community and space, (Bourdieu, 1968; Castell, 1991) and when *hysteresis* is understood, the mismatch between habitus and field, the differential responses of individuals and organisations may lead to the disruption and dislocation of habitas. Thus, it seemed a dichotomy emerged between the perceptions of local residents and the way in which the Olympic event (and indeed, Hackney Wicked) appealed to them. It was widely reported that the communities of East London were overwhelmingly supportive of the bid, indeed, it became part of the promotion of 'the illusion of unequivocal support" (Lenskyj, 2004 p.152) surrounding host cities and communities. However, the Olympic philosophy was not resonating with the local people who saw the event as not for them and, if they felt anything it was indifference towards the Games. This could be deduced from their not showing up to resident meetings and consultations generally.

4.2. Motivating the community

With these tensions in mind, I decided to encourage events and opportunities for the residents which had no financial cost or ongoing commitments attached. I fundraised from housing associations and the local authority, local businesses and trusts, managing to curate a whole day of activities in the 'village' green of the Wick for children and young people. A climbing wall, circus skills and local baked offerings was well attended and appreciated. Canvassing for members to join in the community association was a more challenging task. Those who showed any interest were crushed by commitment issues, a lack of confidence and questions about how and what they could contribute - excuses or reasons why they could not commit were endless.

The boundaries which appeared to hinder residents from participating in any further activities included no available time, having to work, having to look after family members, not knowing what they could contribute, not being good at such things and

so on. We did, however, recruit a few new members to the community association and pledged to continue to offer community orientated activities and events. Quite separate from 'Wicked', the Hackney Wick Festival had been an annual community event for several years. Family orientated, and focused on community fun and celebration, it seemed to offer an opportunity for development in light of the emerging developments. As organisers, we set about canvassing for financial support to host the Summer Festival on a larger than usual scale. Housing associations, local businesses and LOCOG were supportive and the event was, on an organisational and social level, very well attended and received. Residents from across Hackney took part and there was a strong link between the creative and resident community in workshops, demonstrations, activities and performances. An eclectic mix of families and groups enjoyed street food and treats of all kinds as well as music, dance and performances. However, in terms of recruiting or encouraging more residents to join the committee, this was less of a success. Once again, messages of incapacity and lack of interest were received and most who agreed to a follow-up contact, found themselves too busy to take part on a regular basis.

4.3. The Wick

At the same time, development work had begun in the area, relocating wildlife (and feral cats) from the Hackney Marshes, closing off the canal paths and erecting high security fences along the perimeters of the site. Security guards were posted in sentry boxes along various spots on the canal-side and the usual view across the canal and marshes was masked by hoardings and fences. For residents who had enjoyed views across the green landscape, their outlook became unrecognisable and those who cycled or walked along the canal were being monitored or observed via the CCTV cameras or guards dressed in high-vis garments.

There was a developing sense of movement but also secrecy and seclusion which triggered an interest in recording and reviewing this newfound environmental challenge. One artist; Hilary Powell (2007) filmed what she described as the

disappearance of space associated with the Olympics focusing on a "geography of difference" with a film which travelled through places which no longer existed. Space Studios commissioned 'The Cut'; a project which combined social science with artistic approaches to social histories, featuring oral, archival, participatory and creative 'research' into social histories of residents along the canal. The "Wick Curiosity Shop", located in a wheelable cabin began to offer a mobile curation of the lives and histories of people who had lived in the Wick all their lives, documenting transitions of all kinds with photography, spoken word and archival materials.

Photographer, Chris Dorely-Brown, recorded before and after diptychs of the park in development and "Games Monitor" noted the impact of the changes on animals, plants and displaced residents. In official documents and presentations, the Lower Lea Valley and environs had been described as 'contaminated wastelands in desperate need of cleansing and regeneration' (Marrero- Guillamon, 2014, p. 369). Artists began to widely interrogate the invasion of the Olympic development and in particular, Space Studios (2005-2012) and Hilary Powell, (Salon de Refuse Olympique, 2005-2011) created long term platforms for the discussion of the Olympic-led transformation of East London which began to attract activists, academics and residents.

Marrero-Guillamon (2014) describes this emergence of artistic narratives around the development as a 'collective and political dimension' which provided 'occasion to talk and hear about increased surveillance and policing, the effacement of local history, the displacement of local people, the disruption of the area's eco-system etc.', (Marrero- Guillamon, 2014, p.13). Amongst fears that this created a 'far from unified counter-narrative of the transformation' (Powell, p.23) in which 'an assemblage of voices and concerns entered the public realm in defiance of the Olympic consensus' (Powell, p.14).

Inevitably the tensions between the highly localised permanency and temporary element of the architecture and design of the area became apparent and the designated boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Greenwich and

Newham were overwhelmed by contentious planning powers divided by local authorities, the national platform of global visibility, and regeneration masterplans.

The 'urban quarterisation' (Evans, 2014 p.353) and the promise of 'scalar narratives' (Gonzales, 2006, p 83) meant that the essential need for spatial resolution and socially constructed regeneration was in stark contrast, and discussions and debates began to take place across and within the boroughs. Promises of employment and industry, new housing stock, recreation and better transport enthused many local residents who claimed they would hope to benefit from the employment opportunities promised. In tenant's and resident's meetings councilors were often asked for updates on this, despite them having little knowledge or influence. While the specific requirements and facilities needed for the Olympic event were priority and declarations from the EDAW promised 'a new standard of urban design in the UK.' With the Urban Design Group (UDG) claiming that the masterplan should 'not alienate people, responding to urban environments as organisms in continual evolution [with] the power to foster potentials, and a better sense of ownership, along with a new resilience in the faces of multiple challenges' (2014 p.1). Resident communities, unsurprisingly, lived with differing views of the developments and potential opportunities (Wright and Mills, 2000) and many felt there were double standards in notions of positive regeneration (Lee et al 2008; van den Berg 2013) and how this would reach the lower classes. Stratford and Westfield shopping centre dominating multi-million pounds spends were supported by locals in the light of the fact that Hackney Wick was situated one over ground stop away, new retail opportunities were available for many residents who were seeking employment and held out hopes for this to be available to them following the build. However, this provided tensions in opinions of it being a place which locals needed the means to enjoy and those who could benefit though work (Patillo 2017; Baldridge, 2019). Training and employment vacancies were circulated via local news bulletins and in meetings and many locals showed interest in these.

Identified as a major catalyst for regeneration and change in East London, particularly around the Lea Valley, the legacy promised investment and value for future generations (Evans, 2014; Lindsay, 2014). In regard to the multiple CGI and aerial

images emerging it was claimed that they presented 'a utopian vision in response to what is a somewhat dystopian narrative of a helplessly deprived, fragmented and semi-derelict sub-region of London' (Evans 2014, p 358). National newspapers supported this image with headlines which included 'The Olympic site was created in a poor and desolate part of London' (Alter, 2014) and further, 'from wasteland to outstanding winner' (Metro,11 July 2014, p.56).

The description and term 'wasteland' became synonymous with Hackney Wick in the reportage which followed and largely referred, it is believed, to the Hackney Marshes and vast protected nature conservation including the Lea Valley waterways. However, for those who lived along them and enjoyed the space, the suggestion that these were 'wasted' was abhorrent - they were, indeed, lush, green, peaceful and much-loved walks and picnic haunts for local people; miles and miles of unspoilt, wildlife and fresh air. In resident meetings the topic was often discussed, and the perceived destruction of these spaces was seen as both unnecessary and unwanted. They were spaces where nesting cranes and militant swans could be seen and where children, with or without dogs ran happily through woods and ponds. Although there may be some romantic attachment to the notion of a wasteland, thanks to T.S. Eliot, there was a sense, in the case of Hackney Wick, that being described as a 'wasted land' justified its destruction.

Residents were generally offended by any suggestion that these areas were in need of improvement, and many saw their way to attempting to stand up for it. There was much discussion around the potential carbon footprint which inevitably derived from the Olympic Games and all it promised versus the proposed 'blueprint for sustainable living' (OLSG, 2010) which the designers and master-planners advertised. During outreach sessions, some residents were resentful of the developmental plans and indicated that the park and everything that went with it, were not for them or was unlikely to benefit them and some even wondered why the immediate and existing environment could not be improved. A perception, widely held, was that this development could mean the loss of the 'real' or 'traditional' East End to the

transformation of the former wasteland and the oasis of urban regeneration might be inaccessible for many.

Figure 2 - Everybody here hates the Olympics - Hackney Wick

4.4. Hackney Wick and Fish Island CIG

As concern, excitement and a desire for 'a piece of the action' grew, one interested group of Hackney Wick residents came together to form Hackney Wick and Fish Island Cultural Interest Group (CIG). Meeting once a month, and closely linked to Hackney Wicked, in varying local venues discussions were held about what members had heard, read, experienced and thought about what was going on. Over breakfast and coffee and largely in groups of people who already knew each other, many conversations revolved around how we could benefit, how we could be involved, and mostly, how Hackney Wick could receive some of the benefits offered by the regenerative and multi-million-pound developments taking place all around us. There were also serious concerns about the potential relocation of the large number of studios, workshops and living spaces occupied by the creative community.

After a few months of meetings, the CIG had attracted large numbers of local artists, businesses, councilors and investors. Those who intended to invest in the area, apart from the LODC, were those with entrepreneurial proposals for social and business opportunities, mostly revolving around food, drink, entertainment, art and fashion. It became necessary to constitute the group and procure a common purpose and theme. Minutes from early meetings show the groups and individuals who were becoming prominent at these meetings, giving rise to consideration of the notions associated with regime theory (Stoker, 1995; John and Cole, 1995; Macdonald, 1998; Levitsky and Way, 2002; Geddes, 2003; Brownlee, 2009; Izrabal, 2009;) where in pluralist terms multiple stakeholders might provide a power shift in decision making, where small, even minority special interest groups are able to influence outcomes and resource distribution.

Supporters of this theory could apply the notion that regime competitiveness provides for breakdown and democratisation, and that the master-planners, LOCOG and the like become the 'authoritarian elite' (Geddes cited in Brownlee, 2009, p.213) whilst the CIG was about to enjoy 'a meaningful level of contestation' (Levitsky and Way, 2002, p 54). It was, at this point impossible to consider how, ultimately influential the CIG would become, and how this influence would be utilised. Simply by noting the attendees and contributors in minutes of meetings, it was clear that this group was not only a networking 'dream' for decision makers, but also a considerable threat at times.

In international relations, and more recently in UK urban environments, regime theory applies to cooperation among regions focusing on mitigating and overcoming anarchy and politically unwelcome collective action (Bradford, 2007). Local dependence and local autonomy, although not always corresponding, provided a vehicle for the role that CIG was taking, representing the 'ambitions and actions of local actors' (Bradford, 2007 p. 9) who aimed to influence the form and agenda of governmental and Olympic development aspirations. This will be further discussed in Chapter five.

Proposals for the Olympic development claimed to be considering and improving the lives of residents already in place. Yet, there was some conflict in the way in which

this was developed largely via branding and advertising to ensure a 'visitor destination for all Londoners' (Kavaratzis et al, 2014) and, at the same time regenerating 'an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone who lives there' LLDC, (2014, V4, p.18). Arguments both public and in the media ensued around the potential housing stock availability and affordability, while the planned number of new build homes had already been reduced before the Games commenced (from 1000 to 700), (Evans, 2015). Hackney Wick's low-density housing had limited amenities for locals, in terms of shops and community facilities, further disadvantaging the community, particularly young people and the elderly. (Stitching the Wick, 2010). In 2014, Evans wrote, for the Architecture Research Quarterly of the London 2012, the Generation Games.

> *'Here and in the new blocks of Stratford City, how far neighbourhood level facilities can be supported and financed is not yet clear, but without the range of community amenities required for everyday existence and social exchange, these developments will otherwise emulate the sterile Docklands and failed mixed use schemes with vacant/undeveloped ground floors, which were prevalent in the 2000's housing boom. Hackney, of all boroughs, suffered most from this combination of market and public (planning) failure.'*

What followed was described as *'a laboratory, a site of social experiments in community development that incorporates a mix of wealth and poverty, high and low rise and social inclusion and exclusion'* (Poynter, 2009, p.132). A belief that the London bid was won on the premise of the potential regeneration of a culturally diverse and socially deprived area was advocated by academics such as Poynter (2009) and Armstrong, Hobbs and Lindsay, (2011) when described as East London's "gash" by the Chair of the OPLC; Andrew Altman, which would be healed by the games. Descriptions such as these were not unfamiliar in the lead up to the Games, or indeed afterwards, but they spurred dialogue and a further sense of 'closing in', of protecting what locals felt was theirs and in promoting its heritage and uniqueness.

Figure 3 - This ship is sinking - Hackney Wick graffiti

4.5. The Notion of Community.

Progressively, the notion of community became central to conversations, design briefs and focus groups. Community was used to describe tenants and residents' groups, the artists, the residents, the Olympic participants and the envisaged development legacy. However, identifying the community to which these all referred was more complex. In reality, a conceptual vagueness exists about the term 'community' since it's use is so vast and manifests in individuals their own conceptual identity and memberships. Concerns about how the term is used have been challenged (Stacey, 1969; Seabrook, 1984; Hill, 1994; Butler and Watt; 2007; Blackshaw, 2010) with suggestions that 'community matters to neoliberals because, it sells' (Blackshaw, 2010, p. 204).

The sense of 'goodness' (Coburn and Gormally, 2017) evoked by regeneration meets a cultural narrative of cohesion and belonging. Social relationships, bonding and solidarity implies that community should be nurtured and treasured, although this can also be over-stated (Blackshaw, 2010). Others were more careful to describe the recipients of regeneration as 'local residents' or 'stakeholders.'

It is rarely contested that *'people are more likely to become involved if they are less alienated from decision-making structures'* (Gunn, 2006, p.26). This certainly resonated with the members of the CIG, who themselves had begun to create a sense of their own 'community' and a participatory strength and wisdom. The meetings were welcoming and informal with open agendas - often lasting several hours, and each time saw new members and contributors. Thus, developed a process of counter-hegemony where equality and social justice was challenged in light of moral and ethical constructs of life and opportunity in Hackney Wick, in which conversations (See CIG minutes 18) involved artists and small business owners challenging the foundations of the ODC plans and intentions against the fabric of what they have come to consider their work-live environments, mainly in the warehouse buildings which were soon to be demolished and redeveloped. At this stage the CIG did not have specific rules or remits, it was finding itself and seeking a place within the plethora of groups vying for ownership of decisions and directions around what happened next to Hackney Wick. The key players were the developers, ODC, architects and planners, local authority representatives plus the CIG members. All attendees and/or members (members being those who attended regularly) did so voluntarily and each agreed to 'spread the word' to others who were interested in getting involved.

Since, at this stage, in 2010 I was the only resident who was not also an artist or business I agreed to canvass local residents. This entailed talking to people as I came across them, telling them about the discussions we were having and inviting them to the meetings. I attended as many tenants and resident's meetings as I could and visited coffee mornings and school groups as and when they took place. I asked how they felt about the Olympic development and how it might affect them, I also asked whether they saw any opportunities and if they felt like reaching for them. The general response was mainly apathetic. Interest was minimal, unrelated to everyday life and people I spoke to seemed to wonder why I was asking. I decided to make my informal 'research' wider and more significant by stretching across the area and talking to groups I did not know. It was noted that a closer link with the local residents was needed and some members came forward as wanting their work to be more closely linked to the 'other' elements of the community.

The CIG nominated people to lead on specific areas (See CIG minutes 23) defined as; Artists, Studios, Theatre/Performance, Cafes/Restaurants, Communications/Local business, Venues, Waterways and Community. Having been tasked with creating closer links to the community I agreed to do this with a particular interest in young people but also in other local groups and was supported in developing an informal and anonymous account of what I discovered speaking with them. It seemed that many of the older members of the community (60 plus) who mostly resided in purpose built, low rise accommodation on one estate in the Wick were 'consulted out', being tired and slightly annoyed by what one elder woman, Bid, described as *'years of questions and consultations that never end up anywhere we've been asked time and time again about this and that and you never see anything come of it. They include us cos we're old and they have to but to be honest, it's all a waste of time'.*

Compulsory purchase orders on business addresses and residential properties were becoming more prevalent in the areas surrounding the Olympic park, buildings were demolished, and some businesses relocate.

Figure 4: Meanwhile…. back in the Wick – Hackney Wick Graffiti

4.6. Young people in the Wick

Young people in Hackney Wick were under-resourced, in terms of places and opportunities for leisure, despite the large green open spaces, in short, the availability of youth support and activity-based services were limited. Youth centres in Hackney were outside of the Wick and budgets for youth services had been consistently cut year on year (In Defense of Youth Work, 2011). Although the marshes offered opportunities for young people to join football clubs and training, there was little else. Smaller groups operated in the area such as a Guides and Brownies group for girls and young women in the local church and a weekly karate club for young men ran above it.

There was nowhere for young people to be able to drop in, meet up or engage with other young people in a non-committal but social manner. The local authority in Hackney, one of the most well-resourced for young people in the UK maintains a commitment to services for young people but was unable to justify a unique project for Hackney Wick prior to the Olympic Games. Young people in Hackney have often received 'negative press' in perceptions about the borough and in particular around young people and the large-scale regeneration projects set to change the area dramatically with rising rental and property prices, incoming young professionals and creatives provide a strong juxtaposition to urban inequalities. Hackney remained one of the most deprived local authorities in England (LBH 2013).

Whilst the process of urban development, gentrification and regeneration is well documented in academic studies, as discussed in Chapter 2, there was a need to include young people in the changes in and around Hackney Wick and to understand how they might impact social cohesion. Most research on this topic concentrates on adult perceptions of young people and documents them as being the largest users of public space in cities (Butcher and Dickens, 2015). It was important that young people were able to contribute toward the decisions being made about their community and that they were fairly represented in discussions. Since my professional role has always

been to attempt to ensure young people are considered in all elements of community action, it felt natural to consider young people in this research.

The Young people I spoke to were less irritated but more ambiguous about the developments in the area and indeed, in the forthcoming Olympic event. They were rather non-committal in their concerns about it and even less articulate in what they thought might be the benefits. Some of them said.

Dean: *'I just want a job and there's nothing around here - if the Olympics can get me one, I'm in'*

Jules: '*they keep promising there will be jobs for local people so let's hope it's true*'.

Gip: '*Yeah, I just wanna get a job from it'*

Jo: *'I've got some good friends here, and that, but I ain't gonna live here all my life so I don't care what they do with it. I ain't gonna take part in the Olympics so it's not gonna mean anything to me, I wouldn't mind a job though'.*

Other comments displayed disdain and frustration, including a group of parents who I met outside of the school gates.

Delia: '*it's all a waste of time, once it's over they will leave it to rot and all*

that bloody money will have gone to waste - I am not supporting it and I don't care if that makes me ignorant.

Derek: *'They're are telling us that it's for jobs and houses and all that but to be honest, who wants to work on a building site and who wants to live in a hut? It's* typical, all that government money going to something that will last a few weeks and *we could do with some real stuff around here - there's hardly anything for our kids to do and they wonder why they are getting into gangs and all that - well let them come and see for themselves - bleeding cheek of it all.'*

These accounts were not encouraging but did highlight some of the attitudes that locals held towards the Games and beyond. In some sense, the narratives of residents

reflected and supported what Bourdieu referred to as 'affinities of habitas' (Bourdieu, 2007, p.58) providing an intimate representation of life in working class and under resourced communities in Hackney Wick.

Residents refer to 'they' as the symbolic power in this relationship; being those who make the decisions, the 'state' as it were, who maintain a position of 'collective fiction, as a well-founded illusion…the name that we give to the hidden, invisible principles …of social order' (Bourdieu, 2014, p.311).

Young people seemed to show little aspiration, other than to achieve employment with no particular interest in what it might be. Their awareness that the Olympic development might provide opportunity, as in jobs or training, was apparent, yet their motivations appeared diluted. Young people are expected to be 'the architects of their own destinies' (Cote and Allahar, 2006, p.78) yet there was a disconnect between the opportunity (jobs) and the vehicle (aspiration and direction) by which to achieve their desired outcomes. Young people spoke as though, if the jobs were 'handed to them', they would happily take then but that any effort at this stage to pursue work was not considered; 'the avenues do not exist to turn their expectations into reality' (Cote and Allahar, 2006, p.78).

Elders (60 plus) were uninterested; unlikely to engage in further consultative efforts and families were frustrated. Although, it was unpredictable at this stage whether employment opportunities would materialise for these young people, their responses resonated with research discourse around under-resourced communities in the UK (MacDonald and Coffield, 1991; Johnson, et al., 2001; Butler and Watt, 2007). Research carried out in large numbers, particularly in the North of England has emphasised increasingly hazardous school-to-work transitions for young people, greater risk of unemployment and shifts between low-skilled jobs and benefits (Coffield et al., 1986; MacDonald and Coffield, 1991; Johnson et al., 2001; MacDonald et al., 2001; Butler and Watt, 2007). Findings from these reports concluded, among other things, that encounters with sympathetic and supportive professionals could make a significant difference in a young person's ability to transition successfully to adulthood.

In previous discussions (in Chapter 2) youth work ideology advocates for effective associations between young people and professional adults and is key to current and historic discourse. It struck me that very few were possible in Hackney Wick, given the lack of access to youth and community work professionals, over-worked teaching staff and overstretched families.

Professionally validated by the National Youth Agency (NYA) and the Endorsement and Quality Standards Board for Community Development Learning (ESB), youth and community work programmes and community development is routinely aligned in recognition that the youth work landscape is shifting and not always conducted in open access, specifically designed-centres but rather in a variety of settings and guises asserting that young people are uniquely affected by social and environmental change. There was an obvious 'void' in the pre-Olympic and Games thrust which dramatically omitted to provide a focus on young people.

My main focus, as a resident and researcher, following these conversations and realisations was to concentrate on young people in Hackney Wick, in ensuring that they had a voice in the regenerative arena and that they were not to be left out of opportunity or access to provision. This translated into me being, at least in the first instance, the 'person who can tell us about young people', the lone voice on the panel or at the board meeting who was 'in the know' about young people. Whilst this resonated positively, and indeed, having spent my career working with or for young people may be seen as qualification in itself, it also felt disingenuous since I was not a young person and needed to be certain that I was, in fact speaking about what young people had genuinely said and wanted and not what I might perceive these things to be. Reflecting on this, I decided to consciously consider this throughout the research. Indeed, young people, in my view were those members of the community who had not made lifestyle choices to live in Hackney Wick, but, in fact, had no choice but to live there.

At the same time, the LSCA and HWF committees continued to meet to discuss the annual festival but also, the inconvenience that the Olympic games would bring to the

area and how they could best avoid or prepare for this. Residents were concerned about the number of people who would be able to access canal-side properties, walkways and gardens and where visitors to the Games would park. Others, looking to invest in the area were enthusiastic about designing and opening eateries, bars and galleries which would attract the additional footfall from visitors to the Games.

Concerns also included the amount of disruption and noise which was been generated by the development of the park and queries were raised about the noise volumes during the Games themselves. Road closures and bus redirection routes had already proved inconvenient and there was continuing discussion about school runs and access to amenities. Residents who lived close to the canal were suffering from dust coming from the Olympic site and into their homes. Several families complained that lights from the site shone into homes, particularly at night. It was necessary to discuss these issues with LOCOG and the developers, so we began to invite them to meetings.

In my first efforts at engaging young people in the developments around the Wick, I began with the young people I knew - those who I met through their parents, or whom I had engaged with on the streets. I approached two young women; Emma, 19, and Carla, 21, who I knew had been looking for work. I explained that although at this stage I was unable to offer any monetary reward, I could offer them volunteering experience locally. Both agreed to a trial which began with Carla taking minutes at the CIG meetings and circulating papers and with Emma attending meetings with me around the area and recording what people were saying about the Olympic development issues. Carla took to this well and was embraced enthusiastically by the group. She quickly managed to get paid work, managing a small gallery in the Wick on a part time basis and rapidly became an articulate and active member of both the CIG and the Hackney Wick Festival Committee. Emma, equally enthusiastic on her first outing with me disclosed as we walked one hundred yards past the station into Main Yard, that she had never ventured so far before, in all her 19 years of living in the Wick. Emma was quite overwhelmed to discover the bars and cafes along this strip, was amazed by the arrival of the Yard Theatre which was a bright and innovative building tucked in between two food factories and 'screaming' youth, vibrancy and creativity, as we

climbed the stairs of 'The White Building' which housed studios, a pizza restaurant and bar overlooking a beautiful stretch of the canal she asked, *"are we allowed in here?"*. Emma provided a 'breath of fresh air' at the meetings she attended, her youth, vibrancy and enthusiasm to speak was encouraged and enjoyed participating. Her skills in note taking and admin were in need of some support and she relished the opportunity to undertake a short course in administration skills at Hackney College; something which we were able to arrange gratis via one of the CIG members. However, over a short period of time, Emma became disengaged. Early meetings were not possible as she had to sleep in, and *'it wasn't getting me into retail which is really what I want to do'*. I arranged to take her to meet a new group of fashion designers who had opened a shop selling recycled clothing and accessories in Main Yard who were pleased to offer Emma a position on reception for a few days per week. Declaring *'this is my dream come true'* Emma went to work and seemed to be very happy about it, although two months later she had been asked to leave due to her lateness and constant visits from 'rowdy young men'. Emma had expressed a desire to work in Primark, for the discount, and I am not sure that this went down too well either.

Purely coincidentally, Emma's mother; Jane, had asked me whether I knew of any cleaning jobs in the area and I had been chatting to the owner of The Hackney Pearl, restaurant, who had asked me if I knew of anyone who would want a cleaning job. I was pleased to make the link and assured Jane that I would let James; the owner know that she would call on him in the next day or so and that he would be expecting her. A few days later I asked Jane how it had gone. She shook her head. I asked if she has gone along to meet James. She said, *'I did go round there, but it's too posh for me, I didn't go in'*. I offered to go along with her, and in desperation see if I could get James to come to her, but there was no convincing her. Jane had made her mind up that The Hackney Pearl was not her style and that she was not going to work there.

The new SEE gallery had opened up next to The Pearl and offered bizarre and colourful creations to be seen from the large windows onto the street. It had arrived in the space where young people had previously gathered, cycled and skateboarded on

convenient pavement ramps. It seemed that the gallery had not put them off and that they were continuing to meet in numbers of up to ten around the space. Darren, the owner of SEE Gallery had heard that I was the 'community link' and asked me to meet him. Experience told me that this may well be a complaint, a cry for help but I went along anyway. Darren had found the interest that the young people had shown in the gallery encouraging and he was not at all concerned about them 'hanging out' nor was he worried that they might put people off coming in because 'that's their problem', he said. What he wanted was a way of engaging with the young people and gaining their interest in the gallery and the artwork.

This was an interesting opportunity and we agreed to an open evening especially for young people and we would offer free pizza, invite the artists to speak and offer an open door as a no strings attached event. Through outreach, we invited as many young people as we could, and they did come along, albeit a lot later than expected and asking what kind of pizza we had. They wandered around the gallery, chatted to Darren, who most of them already knew and enjoyed the food, snacks and drinks. They were especially interested in a set of Ariel photographs which had been taken of the Olympic park and chatted to the artist about how and why he took them. They mulled over the other pieces of art, frustrated by not being able to touch them. Part of the event offered one-off 'selfies' for the 25 young people that came, taken by the artist and a Photobooth had been set up for this. The young people posed enthusiastically in groups or as individuals and were eager to know when they could see the end results, many fearing they could not wait for a week to see how they looked. We agreed that they could come along and collect them the following week and were planning ways of engaging them in activities when they arrived. One young man cycled home to get his Mum who returned with four more children and a hairbrush asking for a family photo - of course we obliged.

Our aim now, was to engage further with the young people so that they felt able to use and understand the gallery and perhaps participate in more opportunities in the area and the Olympic Park. A series of activities were arranged and for a few weeks the young people participated happily, in a trip to the Park to take photographs, visit artist

studios, the Yard Theatre and a film viewing on a floating canal boat cinema. It seemed that the young people genuinely enjoyed learning more about the area and a historical walking tour was over-subscribed, albeit rather rowdy. I identified a time to meet with the young people to evaluate how this had all gone. All of the young people said they had found learning about the history of the area interesting, and that they had found out more about their area than they knew before. One had used the information for a school project and several others had shared what they learnt with their parents and grandparents who in turn had shared memories and details of their own younger years. They expressed appreciation for Darren and the artists, and I recorded in my fieldwork journal that they were all *'good guys'* and that *'you think they different but they not really.'*

Other comments included:

Gel: *'they dress funny and look weird though'*

Jake: *'I think all of em as dopeheads to be fair'* ... *'and they live in weird places, but they're ok though'*

Nik: *'My Mum's scared of em'. 'My sister fancies Darren, she's twenty-one inn it'.*

On the Olympic park their views were less enthusiastic. They only saw the space as being useful if they were into a particular sport and picnics.

Jake: *'Well if I liked basketball it would be good, or swimming and that, but I don't'.*

Bif: *'if the cycle track was still there, is would be ream, but they moved it to Newham for crap sake'*

Harry: *'I think it's jus for visitors you know, not really for any of us'.*

Bif: *'you can walk to Stratford though, that's a good thing'*

Jay: *'you can walk to Stratford anyways'*

Harry: *'yeah but not as quickly'.*

Ben: *'I am gonna wait and see what they do, you know when the Games have finished. You never know it might be different and there might be good stuff to do'.*

About the changes in the Wick, they were less than enthusiastic. Many of them did not have any words to describe what they thought of things like the Yard theatre, the galleries and the restaurants. They shrugged and shook their heads.

Jay: *'They don't really affect us, do they? They are not here for us; they are for visitors and stuff. I ain't gonna go to the theatre am I'.*

Bif: *'you might, you know, with the school or summit',*

Harry: *'oh yeah you never know',*

Tel: *'I like the cheap pizza-place, but the others are too, you know, classy, or super cool, like. I might go there when I'm older'.*

Jay: *'I don't know why people want to go out and eat here anyways, it's not like it's Las Vegas'.*

On being asked how they would like to see the Park, or the Wick developed, overwhelmingly all of them said they wanted to see space and activities for them and other young people to take part in, somewhere they are not 'harassed for being on the streets' or 'where we can just hang out'. There was some difficulty in articulating what 'hanging out' meant, other than it being an opportunity to be together and share time and space. Maier (1996) maintains that hanging out occurs in common places where young people are and enables them to experience each other in different contexts and provides a 'vital moment for nourishing human connection' (Maier 1987, p.121) enabling the formation of bonds, close attachment and involvement in each other. Hanging out can help young people to develop their communication skills, share experiences, further experience themselves and provide different views of the world (Maier, 1987; Durrant, 1993).

Locating this potential or desired space resonates with the notion of the theoretical 'field' in that it might be defined as:

> *'a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions…In highly differentiated societies, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms, that is, spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are specific and irreducible to those that regulate their fields'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 97)

Bourdieu's theoretical interpretation can be applied both to the young people in the Wick as well as the creative community, as both seemed to be vying to protect and/or secure a unique and autonomous microcosm in which to survive or exist. It was emerging that Hackney Wick was composed of multiple domains (fields) distinct from each other but potentially defined by what Bourdieu describes as their *'habitus'*. Working class children and young people being bound by a set of social actions, internalised by their familial and cultural dispositions and objective structures. It seemed, even having introduced them to new opportunities and people, they remained firmly Hackney Wick locals for whom the developments made no difference.

Bourdieu (1974) might suggest that this is due to their subjective aspirations in contrast to their objective 'destiny' attached to their class position and in their class specific 'cultural heritage', heavily dependent on the socialisation values of their heritage. In other words, this disposition is not unique but inherent in the 'pathologies' of residents of Hackney Wick.

Figure 4 - Shithouse to Penthouse – Hackney Wick graffiti

4.7. Wick Award

Towards the end of 2010, Hackney Wick residents were invited by the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) to take part in a national scheme to support local improvement. The BLF, as part of a ten-year programme proffered 'putting 150 communities in the driving seat to achieve lasting change in local areas across England' (Big Lottery, 2010). Hackney Wick had been chosen as one of the recipients of up to one million pounds for a mixture of grants, social investments, micro-finance and support. Key to this was the identification of a local group or committee who were able to undertake the initial phase of the programme. The Hackney Wick Festival Committee (HWFC) were championed by residents, councilors and local businesses, who were required to provide references and recommendations. This meant that HWFC, being properly constituted and holding a bank account, were entrusted with ten thousand pounds and the opportunity to generate ideas and actions for future use of the funds. An enormous undertaking, which took some persuasion and influence to build confidence in the committee, made up of local residents, for them to agree to take this on.

Initially, we agreed to start with what we knew, with the groups and activities in the area with which we were familiar and knew how to access. We designed a plan of action which involved talking to as many, already 'established' groups as we could, including residents and tenants' groups, plus local police area meetings, schools, nurseries, churches and faith groups, sports associations and special interest groups. This general fact-finding mission identified some key and consistent issues. In almost all groups, concerns about young people proved comment worthy.

Parents, elders and young people themselves shared their worries about young people not having anything to do, about the trends and rumours about gang crime and the lack of local youth provision. There was a sense of injustice which emanated from residents, especially parents who were concerned about what their offspring were doing whilst not at home. As in previous consultations, parents were often working late, had other children or family members to take care of and felt unable to monitor

their children's behaviour from afar. They spoke as if 'we' should know what it is like and often when asking questions about this, there was a strong sense of expectation and entitlement in how the parents spoke about their needs. This led me to consider Bourdieu's notions of 'normal habitus' and the ease with which those who are comfortable and well-fitted in their habitus adopt a sociological gaze and that these parents likely assumed I would share this with them (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

One parent, Pam, who disclosed her two sons had been cautioned by the Police for anti-social behavior told us: '*I can't be expected to know where my kids are all the time, I have to work and then look after my Mum and then look after them. No sod looks after me but the minute my kids put one foot wrong, they [the neighbours] set about me…. it's really not fair, there's nothing for my kids to do after school or at weekends and I'm not letting 'em go to that gang infested place on Kingsmead – not if you paid me'.*

Jade: a mother of five said *'it's a joke, they cut our benefits, cut our working hours and then expect us to sit around and watch the kids playing. Who has the time to do that? I just about have the time to get them to school, never mind anything else. I'm wrecked most of the time and why don't the school have a after school youth club? That's what we used to 'ave and I never got into trouble – we loved it'*

Hamill: a father of three who identifies as a 'stay at home Dad' told us *'you know, it's not really our fault that our kids are bored. When I was a kid I went to football and cricket and was always swimming and that. I went to football in boots that were two sizes too big for me when I was a kid cos my Mum couldn't afford new ones, but I wasn't bothered, I just enjoyed it, and everyone was in the same boat and no one even bothered about it. Now, you see, everyone is so judgmental and label conscious and if my kids don't have the right kit or the right this and that, they get bullied or teased and it ain't right. I can't afford all the new stuff and so they won't get involved in things cos they don't want to be beaten up or made to feel like fools. What we s'posed to do about that?'*

A marginally different view was given from two parents on Leabank Square.

Pauline: *'our kids at this age are lucky really cos they have all grown up together here, you know, like a lot of them are the same age and they play and meet up together and have grown up together. There's a bit of rivalry, you know, like with all kids, but they all know where they have come from and who their parents are – I don't think there is anything nasty that goes on because everything is like, on site, you know. But the minute they step out of the Square, they ain't got that cushion, you know, that protection.'*

Sandra: *'yeah and now they are grown, they want different things you know, they want to go out and about and see new things and do new stuff, but we are nervous about it, I sit up all night until my 17-year-old comes home in case he gets stabbed or that, it's terrible. You just don't know. If they had somewhere round here to go it would solve a lot of issues.'*

There were concerns and issues which related to the young people's freedom within the borough and concerns among them and their parents about crime and safety. In conversations about boredom, neither young people nor adults were adequately able to describe what a 'lack of boredom' might look like, how boredom materialised. Indeed, young people themselves spoke about being bored and things being boring but were unable to articulate what encouraged or caused this. The notion of having a space in which to 'hang out' seemed not to provide answers to how the boredom would be remedied, since perceptions of 'hanging out' seemed to lack a definition in itself.

Elders discussed the fact that they felt sidelined in all decisions being made because they were 'old and they did not matter'. Sentiments such as these are supported by Bourdieu's suggestion that young people are more likely to adapt to new conditions in their field, while elders might be less likely to change or want to change their habitus (Bourdieu, 1999). On Gascoyne Estate, there was concern for some of the single elders who lived in high-rise apartments, as they were known to leave their homes early morning to get essential provisions, return and not venture out again for fear of violence. Potentially leading to isolation and loneliness it was important to provide

opportunities to combat this concern. Residents felt strongly that elders were part of the community and should be helped.

Most of the narrative around youth violence and crime in general, seemed to originate from what people had read in the media. It appeared that elders were influenced predominantly by this. In addition, a small number of LGBT elders felt that there was a need for an opportunity for them to meet together and socialise. The first part of the grant process complete, we developed some initial ideas for projects which could make a start towards addressing some of these issues and to interrogate them further. The finances approved, we were given a further balance of thirty thousand pounds and tasked with identifying a unique scheme for Wick residents, which we named and marketed as 'the Wick Award', and paid a local IT business to design logos, stationery and merchandise. A straightforward application form was devised, and individuals headed up Disabled and additional needs, Young People, Elders, Sports, Families and Arts we carried out further, low level research. The small grant 'pot' was attractive to many of the groups we had already encountered and projects such as the one for elders on Gascoyne Estate became proposals which we funded. Training for the committee, advice and guidance was part of the package which was undertaken in preparation for the Wick Award proper post-Olympic Games.

Once the Games were over, the one million pounds would be in sight and accessible to the residents of Hackney Wick. The Wick Award continued to be a functional grant-giving scheme throughout this project (which will be further discussed in the following chapter). With funding from this grant and help from LOCOG the community was able to erect parking barriers in two concerned areas to prevent unwanted traffic and parking, as well as revamping their canal-side communal spaces with new seating, planters and barbeques. We were made aware that this part of the development was to ensure that visitors to the Park were not offended by the view across the canal.

Figure 5 - Wick Award Logo

4.8. Accruing capital

Whilst coordinating and facilitating the activities and events detailed above proved exhausting and often times challenging, I was party to a great deal of interesting events and opportunities. Invited to every private view, opening and launch. I had visited, at various stages of development, all the main Olympic sites, seen Tom Daley make his first dive into the Olympic pool, met the architect; Zaha Hadid, had champagne at the top of Anish Kapoor's ArcelorMittal Orbit, and been personally introduced to The Queen, who asked me what it was like living so close to the Olympic site, following her planting the first tree on the park. On occasion I was able to invite small numbers of 'community groups' to events and, had done so. It was not until the week before the Olympic Games began and representatives from LOCOG and Transport for London (TFL) attended the CIG meeting to announce that Hackney Wick station would be closed for the duration, I realised how divisive the process had been.

The creative and business community had spent several years preparing for the event and hoping to benefit from the opportunities that visitors to the area, via the Olympics, would offer, yet no-one from LOCOG or TFL had ever mooted the fact that the Wick would be 'closed off' from the public. The train station was to be closed going into Stratford and a bus replacement would take passengers away from the park. It felt as though we had been 'duped'. Promises of jobs and training for local people had not materialised, no one other than those on carefully drawn up guest lists had attended events on the park or had been invited to the Games itself.

Hackney Wick was officially declared off the grid, not good enough for visitors to see and indeed, perhaps still the 'gash' which undermined the aerial landscape. The CIG community were devastated, cafes and galleries which had been opened to respond to the number of potential visitors were left empty or closed down. Most local residents were undisturbed, apart from the transport disruption, for them, it made no difference, felt that it might be safer and quieter without any intrusion and were only concerned with their own transport access in and out of the Wick.

On careful reflection, it was an uncomfortable truth that myself and others who were involved in the networks described benefitted most from the opportunities extended by the Olympic Development. A few of us had accrued increased social credibility and mobility. The relationship between social class and social capital became relationally and dynamically theorised by my social acceptability rather than my desire to share and utilised resources with and between other people.

 My personal narrative became my 'vehicle' rather than simply because I represented others, lesser equipped (Bourdieu, 1984). Although capital may vary according to circumstances, relationships and networks developed in the Wick; shared interests, created or established powerful status described as 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1987, p.4) represented by what had come to be perceived and recognised as 'legitimate' (Bourdieu, 1987, p.4). The conceptualisation of habitus and its relevance and usefulness in discussions around this community, a structured set of values or way of thinking had provided a link between different members of the community, I began to

fear that rather than encourage local residents to participate in this, we had, unconsciously discouraged them. Social conditioning and embodiment of the 'social game' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.63) had been perpetuated by residents withdrawing from and remaining ambiguous about the developing landscape. Groups, we imagine, use cultural symbols and preconceived expectations to represent and mark their positions in society and within social structures (Coleman, 1988; Bourdieu, 1991; Putnam, 2000; Butler and Watt, 2007; Coburn and Gormally; 2017) almost as if providing evidence of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Reflecting on my experiences with Emma, Jane and Carla, it was necessary to consider habitus in regard to how we perceive, act and make judgments in our worlds, and how individual, learnt dispositions derived from attitudes and feelings are played out. I doubt that it is by chance that Carla, who, as described, became engaged and participatory in the networks, was a migrant from Romania, had a history of travelling and living in diverse communities. She adapted to the existing and emerging culture of the Wick and quickly became part of the collective learning and transitional process. Emma, on the other hand had lived in the area all of her life, having been located there with her Mother; Jane, who was escaping domestic violence.

Assumptions about working class families never being free of judgments and suffering from a lack of cultural and economic capitale taken for granted by middle classes (Jenkins, 1992; Skeggs, 1997; Devine, 2004; Warde, 2009; Jones, 2011; Savage, 2015). It may be that their life in the Wick is purely practical, they live there, although their investment and commitment is based on underlying unique cultural narratives.

Applying notions of bonding (Putnam, 2000) and bridging (Woolcock, 1998) capital is convenient in this instance. Bonding capital implies an exclusive consequence, which could be seen as precisely what happened with CIG members and external networks, in that a like-minded and driven group of individuals in camaraderie, determination and passion rallied for a common goal which inadvertently became exclusive to the group although fully intending to have applied bridging capital to access social divides. Considering the need for shared values, as well as shared living space, it reveals that these should be essential vehicles for the accumulation of cultural memories and local

knowledge (Gilchrist and Taylor, 2001; Delantry 2005; Shaw, 2013; Coburn and Gormally, 2017). Bourdieu is clear in his writing that shared habitus generates practices, beliefs, perceptions and feelings (Bourdieu, 1993) and it was becoming evident that there were shared attitudes and values amongst the resident community and that these were seemingly part of an accepted 'way of being'.

4.9. Summary

Efforts and intentions in the first phase of this case study were to include, engage and benefit Hackney Wick's community - in all its guises and with all of its attitudes and values, and on certain levels, perhaps in the assessment of what community means to people who live there, it had derived some definitions but also some tensions. People have individual variants, but those who share similar attitudes and values are more comfortable with those they resemble. Influenced by patterned social directions and expectations, despite my working-class history, my current middle class 'status', whether perceived or deserved, may have influenced how well I was able to engage with my community. It may have opened up key questions for me in regard to what the community I felt I belonged to was and whether, indeed, who else belonged to it.

Tensions may also exist here since boundaries between classes are less static and more mobile these days (Jenkins, 1992; Calhoun, 1993; Bridge, 1995; Rupp, 1997). Creative and artistic people (as in the members of the CIG) are set high on the cultural capital scale (Bourdieu, 1990; Ley, 2003) and as a result, their influence in the developmental climate is greater than most.

What is clear from the first stage of the case study is that greater and more concerned effort was required to seriously engage residents, particularly young people, in the developments and opportunities to come, and that deeper understanding and dialogue was essential to include them in the forthcoming journey and ensure that they were able to lead the path.

CHAPTER FIVE – The search for Hub67 space after the Olympics

5. Introduction

In this chapter, I will continue to present the case study chronologically and record how residents and in particular young people experienced the developing landscape following the initial excitement, opportunities and disappointment derived from the Olympic Games event, and how the deconstruction and relocation of amenities and funding impacted them.

5.1. The Search

Traffic in and out of Hackney Wick was negligible following the closure of the train station, rendering the various new parking projects, shopping and eating opportunities for visitors redundant. The Olympic opening ceremony in 2012 was a major event. Residents of Hackney Wick watched what they could from various vantage points along the canal, and riverbank pop up barbeques. The atmosphere was jovial and celebratory, with the sharing of food and drink and conversation. Residents brought various home cooked offerings, balloons and whistles whilst the Creatives grouped themselves around sound systems, oversized paella pans and woks for sharing. Most residents watched the opening ceremony at home on the television and young people remained conspicuous by their absence.

As the Games took place, it was incongruous not to consider the hours and hours of meetings, discussions, reading and influencing that had taken place over the previous years – what they had all meant and what they had achieved. It was clear that for some, mainly the creative community, the entrepreneurs and investors, that there had been significant gain save for the resident community, and in particular, for young people there seemed no evidence of any significance. The realisation that 'otherness' (Freire, 1996; Davies, 2005; Young, 2007; Healey and O'Prey, 2008) and power relations between 'us' and those 'across the canal' had been utilised negatively,

creating an exclusive identity, extending more strongly than ever; difference. The CIG had played the role of gatekeeper in this experimental, though manipulative game and as a result had gathered its own social capital, only visible and useful to themselves, leaving behind the community members who had less influence and fewer pieces of the proverbial pie.

Also possible was that the gatekeeper, the Olympic Delivery Company and LOCOG, who ultimately held the power, spending time with us, getting to know us, becoming an effective contributor and member, 'grooming' us, navigating their way through those elements of the community productive to them and deconstructing those which were not. Hackney Wick had been insignificant in the Opening ceremony, proving to be one small part of the space which is London itself – 32 boroughs, all for whom the event made the same claim that London has something to show on the global platform.

Asking residents, in the days after the event what they felt about it and what they had experienced demonstrated that some were more enthusiastic than others. Nelly, a 67-year-old resident of Hackney Wick for 40 years, said: '*well, it's like anything really, isn't it? You know they been and done their thing and now they will up and go like the circus – I'm not surprised, I was expecting it – we got to tidy up the mess now ain't we?*'

Brad, a 32-year-old father of four said:

> '*I thought it was gonna make this place better, I thought it would bring in some jobs but there was none of that, they just wanted the land and the cred and now they're gonna take it all away again like they was never here.*'

Jade, a 35-year-old life-long resident explained:

> '*You know, I was open minded, I was pleased that Hackney was on the map in a positive way, and not for gangs and crime and poverty for a change, but you know, I can't tell you how disappointed I am that nothing has happened*

for us, as residents, for our children, for the older people, there has been nothing for the community. Ok so they've given bits of money here and there for improvements on the streets but that's all for show – so that we don't look like a ghetto, it's all a big fake. You know, it's all a big fake'.

Young people felt that there may be more to attract them on the Olympic Park and how it might improve their lives. Many of them appreciated the fact that it would mean wider open spaces and good access to exercise, although they also had concerns about how they would be perceived on the Park.

Jack: *it'll be good but if we keep getting kicked out or moved on it will just get annoying'*
Hamil; 'well, I will go over there but I can't afford the gym and that so it will just be to hang'
Joe: *'I'll go there and take my sisters; they love running about and love the grass and all that. I don't know what else is there, I know there's a pool, but I think it's dear to get in'*
Mac: *I wouldn't mind seeing what the potential is, you know for graffiti and skating, but I can't see me using it all that much to be fair'.*

The CIG meetings which took place after the games in September and October demonstrated a low-energy meeting agenda, yet there remained a desire from those involved to 'keep the sense of community together' by offering further opportunities to enjoy and participate in the area, canal boats, local loyalty cards for residents and from LLDC the erection of a map of the area (presumably for visitors to the Wick). During the meeting in October, I asked what resources might be available from the destruction of the Olympic Village, for the residents to utilise. At this stage I was not certain what I meant by this exactly but felt that there must be some benefit could be derived from everything that was being removed.

Indeed, over the next few months, recycled wood planters, plants and trees became available to residents as did the newly structured but temporary canal side garden. A

low-rise orchard emerged along some of the pathways through the Wick in brick planters and a thirty-foot, decorated Christmas tree was placed outside the Pearl restaurant, in front of the SEE Gallery. New shops opened including a bicycle shop, a curios market and a vinyl record and café emporium, all unlikely to appeal to the locals. At the same time the Old Baths, a substantial building which once housed the local baths began undergoing refurbishment, having been taken over by a creative group of African Caribbean brothers and entrepreneurs who claimed to want to offer a centre for the community - presenting an exciting opening for community work.

5.2. Hanging out and anti-social behaviour

The Wick Award had been advancing with enthusiasm and small grants were being offered to local groups, particularly to those who presented community ideas and improvements for local families and elders. As local outreach continued, feedback had determined that for most, young people were a key concern. They were aware that there was nothing for them to do outside of school hours and that they were either left to cause problems on the streets and estates or suffered boredom. Unsurprisingly, most people voiced their concerns about young people 'hanging out' in the area – although there was little evidence that they were engaged in anti-social behaviour, the fact that they tended to gather in larger than average groups and made noise, seemed to unnerve people.

Mo, a senior resident of 73 said:

> *'if I see them all on the corner I just don't go out, even if I need milk or something, I wait until they are gone. I get too nervous about walking past them'*

She explained that she lived on her own and was worried about being followed home. She also said that she had no experience of any anti-social behaviour but that she *'reads the papers and knows what goes on'.*

Her neighbour, also in her seventies, added '*I don't go out on my own, I always go with my brother or my friend – I think if you are on your own you are a target*'

In multicultural cities, young people are 'a generation of suspects' (Giroux, 2003, p.54) particularly those located in socially, ethnically, economically polarised communities. Public spaces are built with adults and children in mind, yet young people are rarely perceived as being entitled to use public space as much as others, contributing to stigma, frequency of perceived loitering or threatening behaviour, when gathered in groups. Despite their status as future residents, young people's resourcefulness in utilising space in the Wick was viewed with negativity. Marginalised young people challenge the acceptable (Lefebvre, 1991, Amin and Thrift, 2002; Harvey, 2003; Massey, 2005; McFarlane, 2011; Bergere, 2014) with ambiguous attitudes towards public spaces; which can be empowering and demystifying around boundaries and territory although perhaps prompting a 'mutual lack of understanding' (Pain, 2000, pp 910-911) around social and communal spaces. Young people often test the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as part of their search for self (Goffman, 1963) yet in doing so in public spaces, they are viewed unfairly, aiming to cause disquiet or social harm. Testing spaces is part of the process of change in everyday experiences which relate directly to the consequences of inequality and urban change (Lefebvre, 1991; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Harvey, 2003; Massey, 2005; McFarlane, 2011; Bergere, 2014).

Young people's geography determines theories of urban space and the daily experiences of young people in urban cities undergoing change, and the emergent process of spaces (Valentine, 1997; Matthews et al, 2000; O'Brien et al, 2000; De Coninck-Smith and Giltman 2004). Like everyone else in the Wick, young people were experiencing a disconnect between what outwardly appeared to be celebration of change, but intrinsically continued to challenge their status as community members. Tensions between hanging out on the streets and being moved on by residents not only irritated young people but caused parents and carers concern. Power dynamics between adults and young people were played out in the dialogue around moving on and acceptable behaviour perpetuating the notion that young people have no space

of their own, and certainly no venue in which to conclude or formulate their cultural identity.

Rather controversially, in 2013 The Guardian Newspaper, reported an article by The Chief Inspector of Cleveland Police Jacqui Cheer, who claimed that adults were becoming 'quite intolerant' of young people in public spaces and that to her what seemed looked like growing up was too quickly labelled as anti-social behaviour. She said the police and public needed to understand that anti-social behaviour *'is not just being annoying or being in the wrong place at the wrong time or there's more than three of you'* (Guardian Newspaper, 2015).

She feared that we were beginning to treat 'childhood behaviour' as anti-social. Speaking further, she said '*what's anti-social to one person is just what I did and what many young people do'......'we've closed down a lot of places that people are allowed to go. We've fenced off school grounds, I get it, but where do people collect? When you're in a crowd of three or four it can get a bit noisy, is that anti-social? When you're walking down the street and might be having a bit of a laugh and a joke, is that anti-social?'* Hilary Emery: chief executive of the National Children's Bureau at the time, in the same article said that the new anti-social behaviour bill had perverse and harmful consequences. She went on to explain that she was concerned that young people would be getting into trouble, unlawfully as a result of *'being annoying'* and that to penalise them for doing what is part of growing up; playing on the street, kicking a ball around in a public space and hanging out with friends, was in threat of further increasing the divide between generations and alienation young people.

Young people seemed to be aware that some residents viewed them as 'anti-social' and whilst some appeared unperturbed by it, others expressed this with some sense of amusement during outreach sessions:

Jam: *'we always getting moved on, man. It's how it goes, ya' know. The folks don't like us hanging and they can't handle it so we gotta move'.*
Jah: *'yeah man, we always getting shouted at and told to go away – life innit'*

Sash: *'it's not fair man, we ain't going bed things, we just get moaned at the whole time, it's like we are stereotyped y'know, they just expect us to be bad'*

Acknowledging that they are seen as anti- social, young people in the Wick talked about their concerns around gang and knife crime – either with specific information about gangs and activities or with assumption based on rumour. They expressed fear about gangs in the area. Indeed, throughout the period of this case study media attention on young people as perpetrators and victims of knife and gang crime had become commonplace, with many being affected directly by incidents. Fifty per cent of young people London wide identified safety and policing as the most worrying thing about living in London (London Youth, 2019). Young people in Hackney Wick were harsh about perpetrators of crime and also showed deep concern for their own safety:

Janet: 12 years old '*they should all be locked up if they do stuff like that'*

Siara; *15 years old 'it makes you, you know, scared to go out and all that. My Mum is always going on about it, you know, like she's tense, the whole time'*

Gemma*: 17 years 'you have to be careful and think about what you are doing before you do it. Like, I never go anywhere on my own at night. I'm not causing any trouble, but you can't rely on that no more, it's the other guys you have to be careful of, it's not a lot of fun, to be honest. It must be worse for the younger ones as they are not as savvy as us, you kinda know more and get used to avoiding bad stuff'*

Trev*: 17 years 'being young is difficult man, you just never know what you are getting into, ya know, it's like a mystery, and some of the time you feel out of control, the gangs are mean, man and they not gonna care about you if they want something.*

5.3. Frontside Gardens

Given the existing tensions around young people, a lack of space of their own and the unknown dynamics which existed among the gang communities, a derelict space in the industrial area of the Wick became available as a Skate park; Frontside Gardens. A successful bid made by a skating entrepreneur and renowned skate competitor, Andrew Willis, was approved by the LLDC and immediate work commenced to clear and make safe the site, once occupied by an Asian TV network. Young people watched intently as the space was flattened, and an intense, rustic oasis emerged, made from recycled and sustainable materials, ramps, runners and movable furniture. Equipment and ambient robust make-and-mend with an urban yet garden feel; piles of tyres housing green and luscious plants, benches constructed from railway sleepers and tables from cable housing.

When it opened, it offered an impressive and creative space which was welcoming and strangely comfortable. Young people flocked to the space with their skateboards, cycles and helmets and even brought plants along to fill the makeshift planters. Artists had created colourful graffiti on the walls and painted the recycled furniture with unique designs. Alternative kinds of storage units were assembled and decorated by local artists, and there was a general sense of fun and creativity.

Funding for the project was limited and opening hours organised around volunteer availability. Young people, in claiming the space took this on themselves, meeting in small groups, climbing over the fences whenever they could. This was of concern for several reasons, but mostly around safety and insurance purposes. If the space was not being overseen, it was thought that the young people were not only in danger but also in breach of the contractual agreement. More volunteers were sought and threats from the LLDC to close it down were strong. Young people were frustrated and became more determined to use the park as often as possible. Volunteers were not forthcoming and gradually, security from the Olympic Park frequented the site to move them on. Very few young women attended the park.

Over a period of two months, young people disappeared from the Skate park as it became overcrowded by adults, well established in the sport, aggressively using the ramps and runways to show off their skills, drink beer and smoke, in an environment which parents felt unsuitable for their children. The limitations of the contractual agreement and the necessity within it for the space to be well used meant that little could be done to reverse this, and the space became less accessible to young people and regularly utilised by adult boarders. Without doubt, the community were disappointed by this and encouraged more advocacy for a space uniquely for young people.

Figure 6 - Frontside Gardens' skatepark

5.4. Finding space

The Wick Award allocated funds to support a young people's project and the search began to identify the best location. I recruited a volunteer group of youth and community workers and started developmental training in preparation for outreach and detached work. Create Lifestyle Centre (the Old Baths); now redeveloped into an impressive, vast open space was approached having declared in CIG meetings that they wanted to work with young people. Meetings to plan how sessions for young people might work, where they would be and how the youth and community workers would take this forward ensued. We discussed in depth, our working ethos, work in

practice and how young people would benefit from the sessions. The centre was tasked with a self-sufficient funding programme, which would generate income and secure minimal costs in operation. The first hurdle was to ensure that any running costs were covered and that inconvenience to the centre staff and structure were minimalised. However, the Directors of the centre had concerns about young people being in the space and wanted us to explain how security would be employed on the evenings we were engaged. By security they envisaged an operative on the door who would monitor and search, young people as they entered and left, firstly to ensure that nothing was being removed from the centre but also to prevent any 'gang members' from joining in the sessions, as well as searching for weapons. The idea of searching young people was against our working ethos and went against any relational trust and respect that we planned as the basis of our associations with young people and would prevent the trusting and open relationship we advocated. Since this one element of using the Create space that we were unable to negotiate any movement in, we moved away from using the centre for youth activities.

The Senior Citizens centre on the Trowbridge Estate, used twice weekly exclusively by resident elders for Bingo and dances, the centre offered a large internal and external space, plus fully equipped kitchen and large open space. Meeting with the committee it became rapidly clear that they were unable to offer the centre to young people, who would likely destroy and vandalise their already shabby equipment and resources. A sense of discomfort in these meetings about young people 'taking over' and assumptions about young people being 'loud', 'rowdy', 'ungrateful' and 'disrespectful' grew over the weeks. Some of the group highlighted examples of personal experiences with young people on their estate which coloured their view of them overall.

Mary: *'they keep winding my dog up, every time they go past, they make him bark and go crazy, they think it's funny, but it is not'*
Derek: *'they don't have any respect for the area, or themselves, they spit on the road, leave their chicken buckets everywhere and swear like troopers'*

Don: *'I agree they need to be kept occupied but why can't the school do it – that school is huge, and they could have a youth club in their surely. They will run amuck in here; they won't keep it tidy and we take a pride in our centre. We don't allow graffiti on the outside and we keep it locked up all the time. If we opened it to other groups, it would be open to the public and then it just becomes a free for all'.*

Mel: *'Look, we have worked hard to keep this space for the senior citizens, we don't have anything else to call our own and wouldn't get anything again. All of these bloody Olympic doings is just temporary, it won't last. We get forgotten in all of these shenanigans and we don't want to give up, we are not dead, yet you know.'*

There was something territorial about the way they discussed the space and the attitudes they held about it, which resonated with the research we had undertaken in the initial Wick Award stages, there was a sense of admiration for their determination to maintain their right to space. It felt, despite our advocacy for young people's opportunities, that the community's elder people also needed advocacy and space. As a team we could reasonably envisage the possibility of sharing the space and in the benefits of intergenerational dialogue and learning, but at the same time, understood the rationale behind the committee's hesitance to give up their space. It seemed that their desire to maintain the centre as uniquely 'theirs' was, in fact, greater than their dislike or distrust of young people.

Conversations about intergenerational conflict over space encouraged us to consider potential in exploring this further. Evident that it was not unusual for this to occur, in fact, one study of East London, in 2009 young people's claim to public space was ranked the highest factor effecting local liveability (Zako, 2009). Others have found that tensions and conflicts over public space have generally intensified once motivations to regenerate is shared in localised areas and the dynamics of power are interplayed between the generations, (Zukin, 1995; Lees, 2003; Bergere, 2014). Further strengthening the disconnect between the generations and perpetuating the prejudice that elders have of their younger neighbours, '*this is not simply a smokescreen for vested interests, but also provides opportunities for expressing alternative visions of what diversity and the city itself should be'* (Lees, 2003, p. 615).

Young people have ideas about how their areas could be improved, yet barriers to this include how adults perceive them and how decisions are made about them, in the belief that adults know what is 'best for them'. Young people have a number of social and emotional challenges to navigate during their transitional phases and adding stereotypical assumptions about their place or role in community proves daunting for them. It is well recorded that young people spontaneously select and appropriate space for informal use. 'Slack space' (CABE Space and CABE Education, 2004) suggests a fine line between asserting ownership and anti-social behaviour.

As part of our outreach, we had been discussing the possibility of identifying a space for young people with the young people themselves both to establish what they thought about it but also to begin engaging them in the process, encouraging engagement participation and decision-making. We did this by locating young people in their own chosen spaces, such as at bus stops, around stairwells, outside shops and in shared green spaces. Youth and community work principles reside in the belief that connecting with young people on their terms (and in their spaces) engenders a basis for trusting and respectful relationships.

In the following months, we looked into other possibilities for a youth space across the Wick and nearby. Centres which already existed outside of the area were not suitable as parents and young people suspected there might be issues with safety amidst gang and postcode disagreements. Hackney council were unable to offer resources at all; they were already overstretched and understaffed but recognised our concerns and needs. Any other space remotely possible was far enough from the centre of the Wick for young people to turn it down. We were in a frustrating situation which needed some alternative strategies.

We continued to work as a team in order to develop further our working strategy with outreach in mind. We considered that engaging as many individuals and groups as possible in a collaborative programme of events and activities around the Wick would both serve to include young people as well as educate them about the area.

5.5. Working Ethos

Having chosen the youth and community workers myself, I had a reasonably good idea of their attitudes and values around youth work as well as in their working practice. Ethics, moral principles and values guide youth and community work internationally, and, in the UK, these are as set by the National Youth Agency as follows:

- Treat young people with respect, valuing each individual and avoiding negative discrimination.

- Respect and promote young people's rights to make their own decisions and choices, unless the welfare or legitimate interests of themselves or others are seriously threatened.

- Promote and ensure the welfare and safety of young people, while permitting them to learn through undertaking challenging educational activities.

- Contribute towards the promotion of social justice for young people and in society generally, through encouraging respect for difference and diversity and challenging discrimination. (NYA 2000).

Adhering to these guiding principles, we also wanted to ensure that young people developed feelings of trust, honesty, openness and respect in their relationships with each other, adults and their community. We aimed for a sense of community and belonging, not only as part of the activities but also in the wider context. As a team, we spent a great deal of time discussing the working principles that we agreed to adopt, and these were overwhelmingly agreed on.

- Encouraging collaborative relationships between all members of the community

- Increase young people's self-awareness about their lives, their problems and opportunities
- Increase young people's self sufficiency
- Encourage young people to live safely and securely
- Increase young people's social capital

Having agreed the working ethos and direction of intended youth work, we began a programme to discover what young people were doing in the Wick, what they wanted to do and how they felt about the options available to them. We timetabled three evenings a week in two shifts: one immediately after school and one into the evening up to 11pm. When, where and numbers of young people encountered were recorded as were their comments and concerns.

5.6. Outreach

The context of outreach work with young people is familiar in youth and community work practice and has a history in social work, thought to have originated with the Salvation Army (Svenson, 2003), as 'friendly visitors' (Andersson, 2013, p. 2). The context has a performative nature in which 'reaching out' to young people where making contact is central (Crimmens et al., 2004, p.14). Also referred to as 'street-based', 'preventative' or 'detached' work it presents a unique way of connecting with young people where they are, rather than inviting them to a venue.

There are contextual and safeguarding issues related to this way of working, which needed to be explored and managed before outreach was undertaken. First, in order to understand what it entails, it was key to recognise that outreach is a highly reflective activity which gives prominence to flexible interventions and personal engagement. Youth workers engaged in outreach are required to 'think out of the box' and respond to individuals or groups in extraordinary situations and locations. Indeed, 'engagement is key in outreach' (Erickson and Page, 1998, p.1) and the process of outreach and engagement *is an art, best described as a dance'* (Erickson and Page, 1998, p.1), during which the outreach worker needs to *'become artists of sorts'* (Erickson and

Page, 1998, p.264). In a sense, outreach is rather more about an attitudinal style of working rather than a method of working. In fact, some claim (Henningsen, 1997) that their impression is that youth workers tend to place strong emphasis, in a romantic way, on informality and moral commitments as the defining elements of the role (Erickson and Page, 2010, p 2). Nevertheless, outreach was a necessity and potential opportunity to develop strong, street-based relationships with young people (Krumer-Nero and Lavie-Ajayi, 2013).

In the outreach undertaken, the aim was to make contact with young people, having determined where they were most likely to be, identify their needs in relation to what they would be interested in taking part in, what they would want from a youth orientated provision and to discover any issues or concerns that might arise from the interactions, such as gang-related activity, drug misuse, homelessness or other risky behaviours. Not having a venue to refer young people to in these circumstances, there was a need to be aware of all of the relevant referral provisions in the area in order to signpost young people if necessary.

Details of services, charities and therapeutic services were carried with the team at all times. The local Police were informed on each occasion the team outreached and they carried mobile phones for emergencies. The fundamental notion of outreach is to begin a process of social interaction between the youth workers and young people and is usually associated with those who are deemed *'hard to reach'* (Mikkonen et al., 2007, p. 21), although at this time it was impossible to make the assumption that the young people, we would meet would be difficult to engage. The purpose of the outreach was predominantly to identify young people in the area and find out whether they were interested in a youth provision in Hackney Wick.

The team engaged over a period of four months with around eighty young people, most of them at least twice. A small percentage of these were 'visitors' to the area and were not residents of Hackney Wick, but the remainder were locals aged between 10 and 19 years. 75% of them were male. Initial interactions were positive, and the idea of a youth-focussed resource was welcomed. However, at the same time we were

having difficulties finding a suitable space for this to happen. As with previous enquiries, young people in community venues was not a natural fit in Hackney Wick. Spaces which were available had concerns about how young people would use the space, with suspicions about the activities they would enter into. Even the local church was concerned about them being in a large empty space as *'they might be drug dealing or even having a sneaky fag round the back – or even having sex, you can't leave them alone really. This building has so many nooks and crannies, you would need a football team of staff to keep an eye on all of them'* .

The church already ran Brownies and Guides for girls and young women but did not offer Cubs and Scouts '*as boys are too unreliable and have caused us all sorts of problems – we decided to put a lid on it'*. A disappointing and discriminatory view of young men was, becoming something of a regular response from managers of spaces around the neighbourhood, and those who were open to allow young people into their venues wanted enormous financial deposits to safeguard property, which we could not afford.

We had been invited by two new venues to use some of their space, which proved initially to be exciting options. Both developments were in reconditioned warehouse spaces, one was a weekend music and nightclub venue and the other was a bar, restaurant and art gallery. The nightclub venue was used during the week by a capoeira and dance group. The area was vast and colourful but cold and dark and had open, genderless toilets, making it a space we could not use.

The bar venue was also in a warehouse space, which had been developed and transformed into a warm, welcoming and vibrant space. Opening hours were from morning until late and given that large amounts of alcohol was regularly consumed, and the toilets would be shared, again this was unsuitable for under 18-year-olds to use freely.

Over this period of outreach, as I mentioned earlier, initial contact and relationship building with young people was proving productive; they were keen to see a space

opened for them and they were friendly and responsive to the youth workers they met. However, after a few months of outreach, and many discussions about potential space and updates on their suitability, young people began to lose interest. They began to feel that they had been wasting their time, and the potential promises of a space were rhetorical and relationships between them and the youth workers were becoming strained – young people were becoming frustrated and uninterested in what they had to say:

Yaz: *'yeah, yeah, man if it happens, it happens but it ain't looking like it to me'*
Jim: 'I *heard you, but we ain't that popular round here and so I ain't investing'*

There seemed to be a sense of inevitability about their responses, in that they felt that they were unlikely to get the opportunity of a youth space, and therefore it would not happen. Responses from younger people (10-13-year-olds) were more demanding and challenging in that they felt promises had been made and were not being upheld.

Mel: *'so when is the youth club opening? I am getting fed up waiting'*
Sue: '*I told my Mum, and she keeps asking me when it's opening'*
Jack: '*why are we waiting, we've been waiting too long now'*

Trust plays an important part in any relationship and conversation that occurs (Jeffs and Smith, 2005). In dialogue, we embody assumptions about people we encounter, and the primary objective in these outreach relationships was to develop young people's trust in order to achieve consultative dialogue about how they would receive and utilise a youth orientated space. In the developmental relationships which youth workers and young people experienced; it is inevitable that there will be questions to and of the youth workers themselves and in this case the young people were asking, in a way about their credibility, about how truthful and honest they were being.

They were asking, in essence, about how much they could be believed. Rogers encapsulates the consistency required in honest relationships by saying '*being*

trustworthy does not demand that I be rigidly consistent but that I be dependably real' (Rogers, 2001, p.119). The relationships required that the youth workers remained reflective, analysing and understanding of the place and context (Smith and Smith, 2008) yet they had to be mindful that young people were beginning to feel 'let down'.

The youth workers too, were feeling 'let down'. They had invested an enormous amount of energy, drive and professional integrity into this project and had 'failed' to achieve any significant movement in it. They had established and maintained relationships with young people based on mutual trust and respect and had encouraged them to believe, as they did, that a space would become available to them in the near future. Their relationships and professional stance had been undermined and they realised that in order to regain and re-establish trust among the young people was going to be harder than ever.

It was essential that the youth workers were experienced by young people as genuine otherwise they could be seen as being mocking or patronising (Goffman, 1969) and, whilst expectations were being quashed, young people began to move away from the outreach relationships, becoming detached from them. Conversations with young people prior to this were process orientated (Kane, 2003) in that they were focused on the notion of acquiring a space for them to socialise in, once this opportunity had faded due to the lack of available space, the process element had almost become redundant; there was no further purpose in the conversations as the context of the conversation had begun with the suggestion of a youth-orientated space and was concluding with no space available.

Youth workers were encouraging in their conversations and were not giving up on the idea, but, as with the young people, were frustrated and disappointed that they had not been able to achieve what was intended. In being congruent, they too expressed and shared this with young people. What had become apparent at this juncture was that relationships between young people and youth workers were becoming tense and less effective, the promise was not forthcoming and there was a need to reflect and reassess how to approach this. Therefore, at this stage the outreach work ceased,

and we regrouped to determine how best to move forward? With some funding in place, a dedicated team of youth workers and volunteers, but no venue, it was necessary, albeit hugely disappointing, to put all outreach on hold.

5.7. Summary

This period had been exhausting and frustrating, with moments of temporary highs and longer ones filled with deep disappointment. There were certainly some negative nostalgic reflections on times during my career when young people seemed to be given an unfair hand, where their chances were thwarted seemingly due to adult and community prejudices and assumptions. I recognised that there was some risk in allowing young people into a communal space, but most decisions encompass known or estimated probabilities and risk-taking always brings an element of uncertainty, judgment and skill, (Trimpop, 1984) but it seemed that no one was prepared to take any risk at all. In fact, as workers we were unprepared to compromise on safeguarding as regards the two buildings and, on reflection, this may have engendered a missed opportunity but one which we were professionally unprepared to take.

If I am honest, I was hugely disappointed when I saw my community had let young people down, but they had also let me and my team down, in some ways we had not been believed, they had not listened to us believing that space could benefit young people who would make positive use of it. The community groups which had emerged before and during the 2012 Games (HWFWCIG, LSCA, WA, HWF) were still operational and engaged in development, negotiation and improvement, and I became even more determined to continue to link with them and continue the campaign for a youth provision in the area. This led me to become further invested to further community support and I endeavoured to continue to advocate for young people, visit as many community groups as possible and voice the disadvantages that young people were experiencing in the context of regeneration in as many ways as possible over a period of eight months, which eventually led to the development of Hub67, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX – The Hub67 Model

6. Introduction

This chapter charts the final phase of setting up an open access youth provision. Hub67, and is the third of these findings' chapters. Neighbourhood experiences, obstacles, opportunities, and complexities which were encountered during the twelve-month period (from January to December 2015) are discussed. This chapter is significant as it records how Hub67 became a reality and how funding, support and resources were generated and organised. It discusses how young people's participation was achieved and how adults; residents and parents engaged in the development of the hub. The project design, realisation and launch are described in this chapter as are the perceptions and experiences of young people and residents. Themes and sub-themes are presented and discussed. This chapter aims to analyse the lived experiences of young people in Hackney Wick over this period and identify how these were influenced by the complexities of neighbourhood living and the impact of urban regeneration and a changing local environment.

6.1. March 2015 - Emotional obstacles

As discussed in chapter five, there was huge disappointment among the youth and community work team, but also among the young people in the neighbourhood when no suitable space was identified as a venue for the project. As also previously described the relationships between the young people and youth workers had been established and developed based on mutual trust and respect, advocacy and honesty, and the notion of positive 'association' as discussed in chapter two. At the beginning of Winter, there had developed an obvious tension between them, in that the 'promises' likely to have been heard by young people in the preparation and anticipation of a space of their own had been false and inevitably, the strength and premises of the relationships were damaged.

The experience of 'association' as discussed in chapter two, in professional relationships strongly support open access youth work principles, and notions of habitus and field (Savage 2005; Alanen, 2011). The fact that young people can opt in or out of the relationship without sanction, compulsion or judgement is what most youth work practitioners prize about the work (Batsleer and Davies, 2010; de St Croix, 2016; Davies, 2016). However, where young people assert their right to remove themselves, this significantly impacts the developmental opportunities and in the case of Hub67 had begun to dominate the progress of further work and potential risks. This therefore set a challenging task if the project was to be a success. In referring to professional relationships between youth workers and vulnerable young people, Nicolls claims:

> *'the nature of the relationship between youth workers and young people, unlike any other professional intervention, is purely voluntary – the young person can walk away at any time. This fact lays the basis for trust between the two. In most cases when dealing with this group the youth worker is the first professional, and possibly the first adult, that the young person will have trusted. The quality of this relationship will determine the success of the re-engagement and development that the young person then experiences'* Nicolls (2012, p.185).

This resonated robustly with the youth workers; young people were expressing feelings of being 'let down' and 'lied to' – they needed more than reassurance that there was still hope of a space and having removed themselves from usual meeting places, they were no longer available for discussion or consultation. They were disgruntled and wanted to make this clear.

One of the youth workers, Gem reported:

'I feel really awful. I have made some really great relationships with those kids and they now literally hate me. They even walked away yesterday and just kissed their teeth at me – I have never felt so shit'. Another; Fizz; claimed *'I felt complete disrespect you know, they just looked at me like I was vile and, you know, like I was dirt on the floor.*

Some were less concerned and felt that this relationship status was temporary.

'I think it will pass. You can't blame them; they have been let down, but they also know that we are on their side and so I am sure in time we will get things back on track. Listen, they are young people and where else do they get to protest and stomp about – good luck to them, after all, we all feel the same so why shouldn't they – they will come back on board, trust me.'

For most youth workers, trust, confidence and familiarity are everyday essences of their work. However, working with humans, in any forum often means emotional and attitudinal conflicts and requires significant emotional management. Emotional management theories are generally associated with organisations and their culture, although Bolton (2005) and Hochschild (2003) have both described this in relation to the individual and their potential for emotional exploitation and control in caring relationships. Indeed, youth workers are expected to manage their emotions in complex ways, consider their professional expectations and remain credible, reliable agents of information and knowledge yet be 'able to consent, comply or resist and alter the balance of power' (Bolton, 2005; p.87). It would seem incongruous to think that emotions are easily detached from work with vulnerable, challenged or troubled people, and to consider that emotion work, such as this, is not affected by multiple influences on personal, professional and global levels. Youth workers are often isolated and marginalised based purely on their commitment to work with young people, who others perceive as being troublesome or unworthy of support: for example, with those whom everyone else has given up on. In fieldnotes, youth workers

responses and reactions to the situation they found themselves in, the youth workers displayed emotions, which could be linked to the community isolation they experienced and not simply about their direct work with young people.

Goleman discusses emotional intelligence as being 'able to motivate one-self and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope' (Goleman, 1996; p.22). Given the centrality of emotions in trusting relationships, not least those between young people and youth workers, it is necessary to contextualise notions of trust in practice and levels of emotional intelligence in reflection. Nausbaum and Sen (2009) refer theoretically to notions of human 'functionings' which determine and accrue human levels of well-being, capacity for happiness and the freedom to achieve. They break these down into four categories of advantage; well-being achievement, agency achievement, well-being freedom and agency freedom. They suggest that when one of more of these are underachieved, there is substantial loss of emotional 'happiness'.

There is some evidence that youth work programmes can be measured in terms of happiness indicators and well-being indexes (McGimpsey, 2013), and that not enjoying work as a youth and community worker should involve 'finding another job' (Robertson, 2005, p.31), and that familial bonds are formed in most organisations to relieve anxiety, anger and emotion (Golman,1959; Bolton, 2005; de St Croix, 2016). Therefore, disappointment, disapproval or removal of engagement in the youth work relationships with young people can lead to high emotional and psychological feelings of guilt and underachievement.

6.2. April 2015 – Projection and Purpose

It was reflected in fieldnotes and minutes that this was a period of deep reflection and using the concept of 'victim notion' in youth work, in a bizarre way, the young people were responding to the youth workers in the same way that youth workers often

respond to 'state' intervention (Nicolls, 2012; Davies, 2019). Morale was low at this time as youth workers had given considerable voluntary hours of outreach to the project. Two of the youth workers decided that they could not continue with the project and moved on to other things, and two members of the Wick Award committee resigned.

The Wick Award Committee members were generally unhappy that nothing has materialised, and one said:

> 'I'm gobsmacked by the inaction and lack of concern in this community for youngsters. It's obvious they need something to do and they deserve it with all the ridiculous up and coming gentrification and endless investment in this area – there's no whiff of anything for them – I have given up so much of my time to get something moving I just can't do it anymore, I am gutted.'

Expressions of anger, disappointment and a lack of energy to continue to engage in the development process became common recordings in my field notes where youth workers had expressed their feelings to each other, although not to the young people. This is reflected by the following comments:

> 'You know, it's no wonder they [young people] are fed up, so are we – we just seem to be hitting brick walls. It is so disheartening and disappointing, I can't get my head round it at all, why isn't anyone supporting this?

Some workers felt that they were being ineffectual in some of the key groups and wanted to move away from them:

> 'I just don't think I can do it anymore; I just feel like they are so set in their ways and judgemental. I feel that they are judging me even.'

They felt that the attitudes and values of the residents were fixed and, without a working space for young people, there was little opportunity to change these. One said, referring to the elders' group:

'I know they have lived here all their lives and I realise that kids get a really poor press around here but there seems to be no way of getting them to think differently – it's like they just can't or won't, never mind don't want to. Every time I show up there, I really feel like I am patronised and just a pain. It's not a good feeling and I have really tried hard with them'.

Another said about the general situation:

'look, kids and youth workers are always getting the rough end of things because what we do is not popular – and generally we put up with it. We know that part of it all is keeping the peace and making everyone happy and, in this case, we have got the whole damn gentrification thing which is all about money making and how somewhere becomes 'cool'. Kids are not 'cool' and so we are stuck with being on the other side of things. Kids are a threat to people who have no empathy, you know and some ways you have to all it a day and just get on with going what you can for them – the kids.'

Kellerman explains that *'every environment is sending a subliminal message to us, indicating that we are either part of it or separated from it'* (Kellerman, 2007, p.87). At the same time other workers expressed clear desires to keep on track with the project and an intense commitment to it. One claimed, in fieldnotes:

'*this is just an annoying blip – we will get there'.* Another said, *'this is what happens…. we get knock back after knock back and they hope we will give up, but we can't as the problem still remains and these kids need their own space. They are deserving of something out of all this and we owe it to them not to give up'.*

The intensity of feeling and professional integrity invested in the project in a changing and challenging environment was often overwhelming and uncertain. De St Croix (2016) talks about grassroots youth work needing to be 'passionate' which is a strong emotion, and one which is often used to describe how workers feel about their work (Bradford, 2009; Davies, 2011; Batsleer, 2012). There is little, however written about how young people might feel passion in this situation. Work with young people can prompt strong emotions in those who work with them, stirring up anxiety, pain or stress (Mawson, 1994; Briggs, 2001). Faced with the anxieties of personal and external change, young people may 'split and project on to others' (Briggs, 2001, p.104) placing huge demands on parental figures, or in this case youth workers. Therefore, a relationship of shared anxieties and projections between all involved in the development of the project so far may have been in play.

Feeling that they wanted to proceed with new vigour and enthusiasm, the remaining youth workers honed opportunity to rejuvenate action and invigorate the purpose. Therefore, a review of the situation was made, and the remaining individuals regrouped to take stock, evaluate and begin to set some targets for the future.

6.3. May 2015 – Regaining Trust

Evaluating where further work and time were needed, it was necessary to consider the experiences of young people throughout the process particularly in relation to trust and confidence. There may be confusion between feelings of trust and familiarity, according to Luhman, in that 'trust is a solution for specific problems of risk' (Luhman, 2000; p.2). Familiarity may not always reflect trust but provides a sense of what we become used to. Trusting the youth workers would have required some emotional engagement on the part of the young people, in this case, perhaps based on the potential outcome being desirable and advantageous. Once the desired outcome was no longer an option, at least temporarily, there was nothing specific for them to continue to invest in, the associated advantages of relationships with youth workers

had become less than they had expected and, therefore, they may have come to regret their choice to trust them.

Seligman suggests similar notions by saying:

> "The emphasis in modern societies on consensus [is] based on interconnected networks of trust - among citizens, families, voluntary organizations, religious denominations, civic associations, and the like. Similarly, the very "legitimation" of modern societies is founded on the "trust" of authority and governments as generalisations" (Seligman, 1997; p14).

Young people made comments about the youth workers in different ways by using terms which separated themselves from them. One young person claimed that *'they just like feds innit'* suggesting they worked in the same way as the Police, and another asserted *'they just trying to get us to behave I reckon, they are not really gonna do anything'.* Confirming that they no longer viewed the youth workers as 'on their side' but more as members of the generalised 'authority' and related network.

Moral norms and social values may also be considered as dependent on association and representations of trust (Siisiainen, 2000; Putnam, 2001). Bourdieu, in considering theoretical assumptions associated with class, identifies dimensions which make up social capital and symbolic social capital emphasising conflicts between power and social relationships, highlighting the importance of one's ability to advance interests via social positions (Bourdieu, 1987). For the young people in the neighbourhood, trust may be seen as part of their symbolic capital, and ultimately, power, access to space and resources, while at the same time being symbolic in a reasonable exchange between them and the adults they engaged with.

In short, once the potential of a youth space was removed from the equation, young people had nothing further to invest in, the relationships alone were not offering them anything tangible.

6.3.1. Reconnecting with young people

In considering the best way to proceed there were several elements which needed to be revisited and assessed to ensure some success in future engagement with young people, but also, and possibly more specifically with the community. It was clear that relationships with young people were only likely to progress if we maintained our original working ethos and framework (as discussed in chapter four) and that the importance of the voluntary relationship remained fundamental to

practice.

Young people had expressed frustration on several occasions about not having their own space and were, as I have said beginning to articulate their views about the youth workers' effectiveness. A conversation with young people during one of the last outreach sessions makes this clear:

Emm: '*So what have you guys been doing?*'

Jo: '*Just chillin innit*'

Mem: *'Hanging and that'*

Max: '*Why you wanna know?*'

Emm: *'Oh just interested in how you've all been.'*

Max: '*Why?*'

Emm: '*Well, I've missed seeing you guys around.*'

Max: '*You been scared about what we been doing?*'

Mem: '*We ain't been doing anything man.*'

Kris: *'No not worried about what you are all doing, just how you are doing'.*

Jo: '*We just doing the same old shit.*'

Max: '*Yeah, man same shit, different day.*'

[laughs]

Mem: '*what you been doing then?*'

Emm: '*Well we've been working on getting the Hub together, you know we haven't given up on it and things are looking good for the future.*'

Kris: '*Yes, we are not giving up, we believe it will happen, we just need to get over a few hurdles first.*'

Max: '*Too many hurdles, wurdles man. You are wasting your time.*'

Kris: '*No we really think it can take off, and although it might take longer than we hoped, we have an opportunity here.*'

Max: '*yeah, yeah.*'

Mem: '*it's boring man.*'

Jo: '*Yeah it is getting boring, you know.*

There is evidence of a familial relationship between the youth workers and young people in this extract and one in which they feel they can all be honest. The young people were clear about how they felt and that they were finding the process of getting the project together "boring".

The youth workers vowed to make the space a reality and agreed that networking and advocacy needed to be focussed and significantly stronger. The youth workers and I attended all main meetings in the neighbourhood, and the groups discussed in chapter five to canvass and measure support for the project. These groups were essentially tenants and residents' groups, special interest groups, such as parent and baby groups, language specific parent's groups, such as Turkish and French speaking groups, faith groups, sports and entertainment groups such as local Runners, rowers and E9 film club. Overall and overwhelmingly, support for the project was strong and, this support was noted in all minutes.

As discussed in Chapter five, community means different things to different groups, and in this case study it has been identified by participants as being about a neighbourhood, an estate, a street, a village and by policy makers and politicians as being beyond simple interactions and rather more about territory. When discussing the changes and opportunities in the neighbourhood, in fieldnotes, residents described

their community in three ways: as a place where they live or where they are from, as a place where they share interests or goals commonly with others or as an area over which they have some ownership or claim.

6.4. Neighbourhood themes

In analysing the feedback received during the meetings attended, several themes emerged as foundations in how and if residents were encouraged or ambiguous towards proposals for a youth space. Indicative of the perceptions and observations of residents widely in the area, these themes were collated as Entitlement, Nuisance, Safety and Neglect. These will be discussed individually.

6.4.1. Young people and Nuisance

Thoughts were shared, in meetings about young people being a nuisance, causing damage, engaging in petty crime, creating noise, gathering in public space and causing general disruption. As discussed, in chapter five, adults saw young people gathering in communal space as disturbing. Assumptions were made about their intentions and the potential to cause damage or disquiet and those who thought this were not in favour of a youth orientated space. They felt that young people did not 'deserve' it, that they were likely to destroy it, and some felt that it would only lead to a no-go area for adults, where young people dominated.

In the minutes of one residents' meeting, it was recorded that:

> *'Older people don't feel safe. They can't go out when there are groups of yobs hanging about, because they don't want to get mugged or beaten up. They know what the risks are, and they would rather stay indoors and stay hungry than go out with all that noise and messing around. They are scared of them, and they shouldn't be.'*

In other minutes of resident's meetings, it was recorded that:

Resident A: 'too many youngsters are hanging about in the dark and being suspicious. They are noisy and a general nuisance.'

Resident B: 'the kids are a pain you know, they are always just hanging around, making noise and leaving rubbish everywhere, I am sick of them and don't think they deserve a space of their own. Why do they have to use the streets and bus stops and all'.

Community is described as a concept used to articulate a range of concerns, aspirations, hopes and emotions which connect us to our relationships with others who share our space and territory (Wood, Westwood and Thompson, 2015), as giving us a 'sense of belonging in an insecure world' (Delantry, 2003, p.192) and as providing a 'moral realm, which neither one of random individual choice nor government control' (Etzioni, 1993, p.254). Despite the very nature of community being restricted by mobility and resources, young people are inherently 'local' (France, 2007) and are shaped by the moral indignation expressed by residents in the previous extracts.

In youth work circles, young people are often viewed with judgement and apprehension, due largely to the media coverage and representations of youth that permeate throughout social narratives and community tensions (Pitts, 2008, Davies, 2011). In research into rural environments, with the exception of beaches and graveyards, young people are still seen to frequent parks, benches and bus shelters (Weller, 2007).

According to Pitts (2008; p.4) '*The media and 'social commentators' have been mistakenly identifying American-style, violent, youth gangs in Britain for the last 50 years at least',* suggesting that claims and perceptions around youth gang crime may be less prevalent than believed by communities. Statements about 'moral decline', (Grier and Thomas, 2004 p.32) in the UK consciousness, 'mindless yobs' and

'neighbours from hell' (Rubin et al, 2006, p.2) may be interpreted as private troubles which become public issues. Concerns about young people in the neighbourhood have become less locally explicit, but more contrived as a result of national perceptions and in new gang enterprising. Recent studies undertaken in gang activity, highlight the shift in gang operations from postcode to marketplace, where gang activity has become more economically focussed and less emotionally and territorially charged (Whittaker et al, 2018). Children and young people are being exploited into working in gang marketplaces, not least in the 'county lines' (NCA, 2017) negotiations and to tap into the night-time economy which has emerged in Hackney and other boroughs following the Olympic games (Whittaker et al, 2018). Notions of social disruption and disaffection have long been attributed to young people, based largely on their associated youth cultures and chosen music, fashion or leisure preferences. The media is often blamed for the 'effects' that they have on the identification and stereotyping of such youth cultures. Cohen, credited with theorising notions of moral panic claims that the media play a 'disingenuous game' (Cohen, 2002, p. xvii) since they know that their message will be received with multiple meanings, responding differently to the same message. He also claims that the media consistently use the 'simple minded' (Cohen, 2002, p. xvii) blaming of others to sell their stories, which often misrepresents young people, ultimately leading to national perceptions and fear for and of them.

6.4.2. Young people and Boredom

Many observations from residents recorded ideas of young people being bored and lacking provision in the area. However, it should be acknowledged that the notion of boredom has been linked to young people over many decades and is attributed to the 'storm and stress' of adolescence (Gusfield, 1963; Laing, 1999. Farnworth, 2011; Cohen, 2002) and in fact among young men, in particular it is claimed that boredom 'looms large in our culture today' (Farnworth, 2011; p.1). There was some sympathy among residents for this in recognition of the fact that there was little or nothing to occupy young people outside of school. Those who acknowledged this were in favour of providing a space for young people and were willing to support the project. Many of

these offered to help, either by running workshops, sports activities or by volunteering in other ways to support the programme with enthusiasm and positivity.

In cross Hackney research undertaken with school children there was positive attitudes towards the sporting opportunities which could be available to young people:

> *'there was a recognition that the Games were of national significance, providing a lasting legacy of sports facilities and promoting sports education. They also thought that the Games would encourage interest in local volunteering and would raise the self-esteem of local people'* (Herrington, 2015, p.141).

This was of concern, since sporting activities were already limited in the Wick and likely to be beyond the reach of the intended project.

Boredom is seen negatively, inducing feelings of pointlessness and lack of meaning associated with a number of psychological, social and physical health issues, underperformance and opting out of things (Newberry and Dunn, 2001, Eastwood et al, 2012; Van Tilburg and Igou, 2012). Youth boredom is associated with being uninterested in events and opportunities (Bryant and Zillmann, 1984; Pekrun et al, 2012; Vogel-Walcutt et al, 2012). Bourdieu (1984), as discussed in chapter two, refers to capital as being resources which might alleviate boredom or a lack of interest in activities, particularly when leisure activities are inaccessible to individuals (Wegner and Flisher, 2009; Baxter, 2011) since inevitably financial security make a broader range of options available. Research has shown that young people from families with less financial resources practice fewer leisure activities and experience their leisure time more often as unchallenging and monotonous and as 'having nothing to do' (Harris, 2000). Material deprivation and leisure time are generally matched, although not all leisure activities are expensive which suggests that other variables might contribute to boredom, including a lack of interpersonal relationships and networks, or social capital (Bourdieu, 2011). It is estimated that around 30% of time young people spend with their friends (Vodanovich and Watt, 2016).

Therefore, young people with a high degree of social capital will feel bored, less often, those who feel they have limited resources (capital) and capacity or, indeed believe they are entitled to support or opportunity, will endure more boredom than others. It is difficult to define what boredom is, according to many scholars (Goldberg et al, 2011; Malkovsky et al, 2012; Vodanovich and Watt, 2015), yet they agree that it is largely associated with dissatisfaction with one's own experiences or circumstances (Todman, 2003; Pekrun et al, 2010) and in disengagement from one's environment (Anderson, 2007; Fahlman et al, 2009; Goldberg et al, 2011). It may also relate in what individuals or groups perceive about their environment (or neighbourhood) and what the environment offering them (Mercer and Eastwood, 2010; Fahlman et al, 2013).

Vogel-Walcutt considers boredom as an emotional state which can lead to dropout and delinquent behaviour (Vodanovich, 2003; Vogel- Walcutt, 2016). Eastwood describes boredom as '*an aversive state of wanting but being unable to engage in satisfying activity'* (Eastwood et al, 2012, p.483) while Vellasco suggests it is '*an emotion that calls out for remediation and for relief – a plea for assistance'* (Vellasco, 2019, p.9) which perhaps highlights young people's need to be relieved of boredom, in waiting for something to be done. Unlimited to race, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, in research undertaken in the USA, it was found that 66% of high school students and 58% of junior school students consider themselves to be bored all of the time (Macklem, 2015). Some psychologists interpret boredom as serving a purpose in letting us know when we should stop doing what we are doing and move onto something else and that it can fuel creativity, unless there is limited access to new things or opportunities (Mann and Cadman, 2014). For the young people in Hackney Wick, boredom may well be intrinsic yet amplified by a lack of opportunity or advocacy towards creative new ideas and options and indeed, by nothing being on offer or provided to them.

6.4.3. Young people and distant parenting

A significant number of residents articulated their disapproval of parents who were disengaged from their children's education and actions. Strong statements about responsibility, neglect and poor or distant parenting were made along with demands that parents should take more time to provide activities to occupy their children.

These residents felt that young people should spend more time at home, not on the streets, and that parental responsibility was to ensure children were polite, well behaved and not a nuisance to society. These residents were not overly enthusiastic about a youth space but did seem to appreciate that having one might reduce the number of young people out and about in the area.

During one tenants and residents meeting it was recorded that some residents felt parents were not supporting their own children and parented at a distance.

Resident A: '… and they are either too busy at work or doing god knows what to know what their kids are doing'.

Resident B: '…you know we all have to work, I always worked to pay the rent and put food on the table, and I still managed to help my kids with their homework…. these parents just can't be bothered and the rest of us are supposed to feel sorry for them'.

Resident C: '…there's just too much I want, I need, and not enough rolling your sleeves up and getting on with it'.

Resident B: 'I just don't feel like they've got a clue about what having children means – they just expect the government to fund them, feed them and educate them – no responsibility or shame'.

Parental distance may be a reflection of the negative processes which economic stress, low morale and spiritual values plus the impact of associated underprivilege (Young, Lemmie and Minnis, 2011) demonstrating '*intellectual rigidity, proneness to*

conflict and the inability to communicate with people, alienation, irresponsibility and indifference to the fate of others, self-doubt' (Kostyunina and Valeeva, 2015; p.2). Such characteristics seem to be associated with how some of the residents described young people, and how they felt they responded to them although these assumptions can be seen as somewhat judgemental.

6.4.4. Young people and Entitlement

The bulk of the residents who expressed feelings of entitlement were parents. They discussed the challenges of parenting, on having to work long hours to make ends meet and not being available or able to look after their children outside of school. They presented with narratives of living in poverty, as single parents or parents with partners who were unemployed, with two or more children and varying degrees of mental or physical ill health. Many came from large or extended families across the neighbourhood and had additional responsibilities to parenting, such as caring for siblings or parents. Entitlement was articulated by expressions of frustration and the need for help with their children and their circumstances. They seemed certain that the 'authorities' should provide something for their children and the 'authorities' needed to take responsibility for the way young people were behaving.

Parents expressed their views in resident's meetings as follows:

Parent A: *'I do the best I can, but I can't do as much as other parents, I am on my own, I look after my Mum and I work part time. I can only do what I can and sometimes that means I am not at home. I have to trust my kids to behave themselves, I can't do anything else. They need a youth club or something and deserve it. At least I could stop worrying'.*

Parent B: *it ain't fair that all this building stuff is going on and there ain't nothing for the youths, nothing. If they wanna hang out then they gotta go to the park – well how is that a good idea, with all the nonces and that around. The council should be doing something about this, they just, really should.'*

Parent C: *'yeah….um… I agree with that. My kids are good kids, but they don't have much, they don't get the new stuff and all that…um… and there should be a place for them to be supervised and looked after'.*

Parent D: '*When your poor man, they don't wanna know, it's like our kids don't count, cos we don't count. Yeah, sure the council should give them somewhere to go'.*

Parent E: *'I know things are tough, but you have a responsibility to keep your kids occupied and safe, not the council. I know that, I'm poor too'.*

These extracts suggest feelings of being overwhelmed by reasonability and a sense of exhaustion. They are clear about their limitations in monitoring their children and as described in the thematic analysis, (later in this chapter) there is a clear cry for help, a demand for support in what appears to be an under-resourced and underappreciated struggle.

In times of heightened human rights and scrutiny in fairness and equality, it must be appreciated that young people are aware of their rights and entitlements, and this may concern those who feel less entitled. However, in my experience, adults are often uncomfortable when young people assert themselves and interpret this as aggression or rudeness.

6.4.5. Perceptions of local young people

These distinct perceptions of young people, which had been shared and recorded in fieldnotes over the course of the project proved helpful in various ways. In order to utilise these, it was necessary to develop themes consistent with these perceptions and consider them individually.

Table 2 - Resident perceptions about young people in the area.

Entitlement:	Nuisance:
Parental stress, pressure of home life, being less active in children's upbringing, large families, low incomes, leading to young people spending less time at home. A cry for help.	See young people as problematic. Concerns about their own safety and comfort. Want a youth space to prevent young people from meeting in communal areas. A cry for help.
Parental Distance: Poverty and parental inaction. More young people in need of support and entertainment/education. Neglect A call to action.	Boredom: Young people themselves are looking for more opportunities and activities. Do not want to 'hang out' and be accused of bad behaviour. They deserve a space in which to be young people. A call to action.

The analysis of the responses shows both a cry for help and a call to action could be fully exploited to pursue the establishment of a youth space. As youth and community practitioners, it is essential that different agendas are recognised and that community members are engaged on their own terms. Practitioners are well aware of opposition to young people and how perceptions and concerns emerge. Rather than working in defensive ways, it is preferable to work to acknowledge and navigate through the concerns, so as to create less tension, create a cooperative working partnership and recognise what Sennett describes as *'images of a classless society, a common way*

of speaking, dressing, and seeing, can also serve to hide more profound differences; there is a surface on which everyone appears on an equal plane, but breaking the surface may require a code people lack' (Sennett, 1998; p.75).

It was agreed that youth workers would network with the distinct groups in meetings and events, to ensure that relationships were maintained and that there was a sense of commitment to giving them voice within reasonable reach. Over a period of two months, group meetings and activities were attended where progress was relayed to include the CIG, LLDC planning and local authority surgeries and residents' meetings. Agendas, comments and concerns were recorded to ensure that each group was included and aware of developments and negotiations taking place.

6.5. May 2015: The London Legacy Development Company gifts and challenges

Following the convening of many meetings to interpret and contextualise the urban regeneration and development following the Olympics in 2012, representatives from the LLDC approached me with a proposition. In response to the requests for a youth space and in recognition of the outreach and consultation work that had been undertaken, they offered a piece of land in Hackney Wick, which could be developed into a community centre, managed and facilitated by local residents. The land had been previously occupied by a film company, had been demolished and partially housed the Frontside Gardens Skatepark, introduced in chapter five. The building would be designed by architects and materials would largely come from the recycling of temporary buildings and resources left on the Olympic site. This offer was received with huge excitement and appreciation, yet also came with the acknowledgement of the daunting task ahead.

The LLDC commissioned architects and tasked me with establishing a robust committee and series of consultations with young people and residents, over and above those which had already been undertaken. The space was to be a community space with dedicated times and opportunities for young people, and the designers

wanted to know how people could make best use of it. Over the following four months residents were asked about how they would use such a space, what their expectations were and what would make it useful to them. Overwhelmingly, the responses returned with clear requests for a space for young people above any other group, signifying a shift in residents regards to the project and indeed to young people. A crèche for under four-year olds also emerged as a key necessity. Older groups and those with creative interests did not seem to think that the space would be of use to them, the elders, particularly keen on retaining their exclusive centre on the village greens. There was also a wide interest in sports and fitness activities, whilst recognising that the open space in the area was vast and underutilised.

6.5.1. Getting Started

The land having been gifted, architects appointed, and board members appointed (all existing members of the Hackney Wick Festival Committee) the immediate task was to re-engage with the young people to encourage them to participate in the planning and development of the space. As previously discussed, gaining their trust and enthusiasm was likely to prove a challenge, and so with this in mind a series of 'on the street' sessions were designed to update them and ascertain how they wanted to be involved. We endeavoured to recruit a small group of young people as a 'street team' who were prepared to be the representatives for the rest of the group and meet with youth workers and others on a regular basis, inputting views and comments that they would have gathered from their peers.

The first series of meetings involved the LLDC and the architects who wanted to know from young people what they wanted out of the space and how they could get involved. Many discussions were had with young people themselves, their parents and residents around young people's aspirations for the space, which often proved unrealistic due to spacial and financial limitations. Youth workers met with the LLDC, CIG and tenants and residents' groups, as well as the Wick Award committee. They talked of sports pitches and large dance studios, recording studios and rehearsal space, all of which, according to the designers were not feasible. Given the

dimensions, there was potential for one large 'room', a kitchen area, reception, toilets and smaller rooms. This was not what the young people wanted to hear and once their 'ideal scenario' was not an option they seemed to become less interested in the project. There was a sense that they once again, felt let down as what was on offer was already predetermined. Of, course, to a certain extent it was, as the architects and designers had some clear ideas about best use of the space and had drawn up plans in advance. In fact, what they wanted to know from young people was what kinds of colours and arrangements they wanted, not particularly how they wanted to use it.

The Street team were initially engaged and motivated to discuss developments with their peers. Peer to peer conversations had proved a challenge to the young people who had endeavoured to encourage their peers to get involved in ideas and activities around the new space. Their comments reflected frustration and irritation by the way they had been spoken to and claimed that the representative role was too daunting, plus sadly, two young people decided that they could no longer take part in this way. Their peers had made them feel unheard and they had felt dismissed and as one of them said '*completely disrespected'.* They told the youth workers.

Sib: '*they just don't listen. They didn't want to listen. It was patronising and sick.'*
Gem: *'some of them people are rude'.*
Jodi: *'I ain't doing that again, they just ain't gonna hear us cos they don't want to'*

This was disappointing and seemed to set yet another cloud over progress. There had been no specific promises made to the young people about what the space would be like, but it seemed that if it was to be 'their' space they felt that they should have the final say about what it included. Disruptions to their expectations were difficult to manage and their responses were judgemental. Determined to keep working with them on having as much impact as possible on the site and despite these setbacks the youth workers continued with outreach sessions and with the remaining street team

6.5.2. Community Engagement

During April and May, the site was prepared. The skatepark was moved inwards by two metres to make more room for the new structure and builders were evident on a daily basis. Young people were aware of this and were interested to see activity and progress. There was a need to name the space and this engaged the young people rapidly. After much discussion and perhaps using little imagination, they voted for it to be named Hub67. This represented the number that the building previously was, the fact that it would be a hub of activity. Without a space between word and numbers applied an air of uniqueness and modernity. Indeed, having something to call the space made talking about it easier, and its existence more realistic. The logo was designed by young people and youth workers and began to be used on paperwork and funding applications.

Figure 7 - Hub67 Logo

There was a series of workshops which the architects opened up to community participation, these included deciding what the outside of the building would look like, and what could be used from the Olympic materials graveyard to decorate it. A visit to the Olympic site identified a number of metal sheets in bright oranges and reds which

the young people were attracted to. It was decided that these could be made into smaller, regular tiles which could be attached to the outside walls. The tiles were made off-site and the young people and their families were invited to a week of attaching them to the building exterior. This was a challenging activity which required specialist tools and determination. It took a while to attach any number and many of the young people left after a few hours. They did like the fact that the tiles could be left to 'flap' and it was decided that they would only be attached at one end allowing for movement in the walls once erected.

Figure 8 - Tiled exterior walls

The main open area in the hub was double height, bright and airy but it was in need of some colour. With the help of the designers, the youth workers engaged groups of younger people (8-10-year-olds) in developing a community chandelier. Using images of the things that the young people like most about living in Hackney Wick, these were

enlarged and transferred to Perspex which then hung centrally from the ceiling having an incredible impact on how the room looked. The images included houses, trees, industrial buildings, cars, hamburgers, rats, dogs, and gardens.
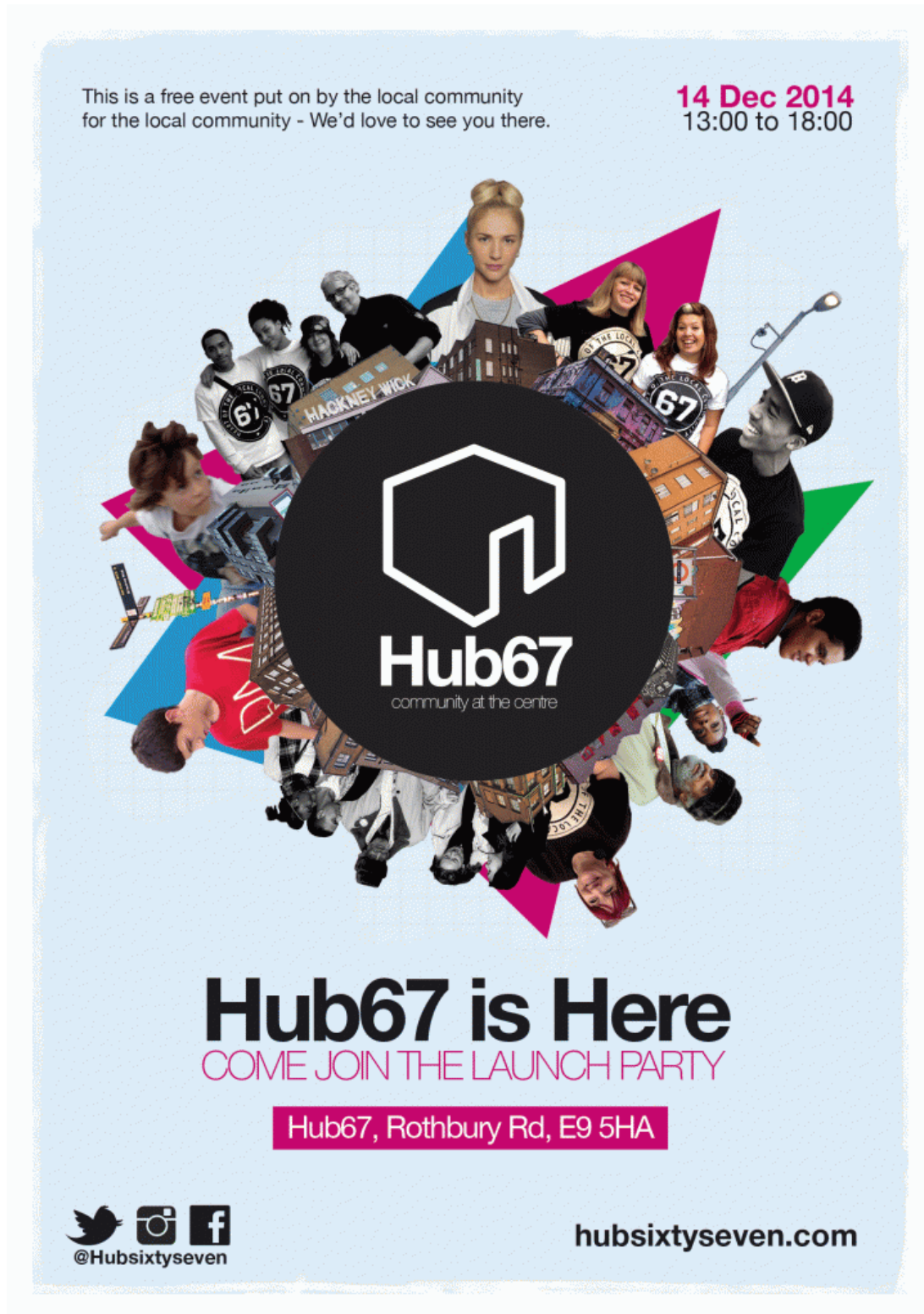
Figure 9: Community Chandelier

6.6. Funding the Project

6.6.1. The Launch

Figure 9 - Launch Flyer

Hub67 was ready to launch in December 2014. All members of the committee agreed to run workshops or demonstrations in their particular areas of interest and other members of the community volunteered to help. Six street team young people (this had grown over time) agreed to be networkers and welcome people to the space, and an EastEnders TV soap actor agreed to open the event. It was difficult to move, once the launch had begun, families filled the space and took part in painting, crafts, alternative arts, steel pan, recycling games, gardening, painting and upcycling furniture, jewellery making and generous amounts of food production. There was a definite 'buzz' about the place and the chandelier was met with cheers from the children who had made it. Two-hundred residents came and went, and all seemed genuinely pleased with the building. Only 20 young people visited, which was disappointing, but in a sense unsurprising. Considering they were expecting Hub67 to be 'their' space, showing up to find residents of all ages crowding the space may well have been an uncomfortable notion, or perhaps another disappointment, yet another 'takeover' by adults or an invasion of their space.

Apart from the Street Team, there was little investment from local young people, other than those, mostly younger, who had arrived with their parents and had taken part in activities. Teenagers who had turned up had experienced the space occupied by all members of the community and perhaps those who did not had 'voted with their feet'. This encouraged me to consider the Street Team and why their engagement had been different. It also confirmed my notion that the launch was nothing more than a publicity exercise and meant little the young people who would be using it.

6.6.2. Street Team

The Street Team had been made up of a group of eight young people between the ages of 14 and 18, all of whom were residents in the Wick, but who had all, I realised, approached the project directly. They had either come with recommendations from other groups, such as tenants' associations, youth service, faith groups and one from the local primary school. They were already engaged in community groups in some way and had experience of public speaking, volunteering and activism. The notion of

public sociology suggests that these young people were already engaged in public conversations, making themselves visible and negotiating boundaries (Lipman, 2011; Burawoy, 2004), challenging traditional inequalities within their community (Bourdieu et al, 1999; Charlesworth, 2000; Skeggs, 2004). These young people, on reflection, reminded me of those I described earlier in this thesis, who were more likely to engage in civil action and conversation, and indeed more likely to participate in the NCS programme. In other words, the young people who had become part of the Street Team were confident, articulate, responsible and familiar with associational relationships and networking. In this way they stood apart from the young people who were met during outreach – they had already decided there was value in their community and that they could contribute to it.

6.7. Open access opportunity

Intense outreach was undertaken over the following two weeks to ensure that young people knew Hub67 was opening. There was some excitement and some ambiguity but over the first two weeks of opening, young people came to see what it was all about. They generally came in small groups, or with their parents or siblings. They were unimpressed by the recycled interior and seemed to think it was dull and needed more colour. They liked the open space and the comfortable sofas but wanted to know where the music system was and where they would do sports and dance. We asked for equipment to be donated and we gathered a substantial music system, TV and computer games which were met enthusiastically by the young people. There was beginning to be a sense of belonging as young people gathered daily and enjoyed the space. Some helped to develop the small garden space with donated plants and trees and hand-crafted furniture made from tree trunks and wooden scraps. They added colour by painting the donated tables and chairs and bookshelves which, once finished looked impressively bright and on trend.

There was a developing sense of the space being 'lived in' by young people who spent time engaging with each other and enjoyed being together. They began to suggest

things they wanted to do, such as arts and crafts and board games. They developed a computer corner where they set up computer games and set their own rota for deciding how and when music and TV would be shared. Some groups simply engaged with themselves, keeping to a particular area or sofa, but also sharing resources and space when necessary. The ambiance when young people were around was calm, friendly and fun.

6.8. Identifying the needs and experiences of young people

As described in chapter three, a number of young people were interviewed towards the end of the first month of the open access programme to establish how and if they benefitted from participating in Hub67. All young people eligible (as described in the research methodology) were invited to interview individually or in small groups. Most of them chose to be interviewed with peers or siblings, although two young people were happy to be interviewed on their own. Family encouragement and discouragement acts, according to Bourdieu acts for young people as 'strategies of reproduction' (1996; p.272) which leads some to master practical mobility fields – which lead me to consider how attitudes towards parenting impact young people directly. Once the interviews were complete, inductive analyses was utilised to identify the following themes as those encompassing the views and perceptions of young people.

6.8.1. Maintenance

The themes which contributed to the concept of maintenance were those which referred to comments made by young people, how positive or negative they felt and what contributed to them feeling good about themselves and things in general. Bourdieu (1964) may well liken these feelings to the wider concepts of social capital such as sociability, social networks, community and civic engagement, social support, trust and reciprocity. Maintenance, referred to here is that of functionality, patterns in competent behaviour and effective functioning (Blum, 1998; Morrow, 1999). In other words, their emotional wellbeing is used as a marker for effective functioning and self-

maintenance. Garmezy refers to this as; '*functional adequacy (the maintenance of competent functioning despite interfering emotionality) is a benchmark resilient behaviour under stress'* (Garmezy, 1991, p.463).

Figure 10 - Theme 1: Maintenance – Analysis of emergent themes.
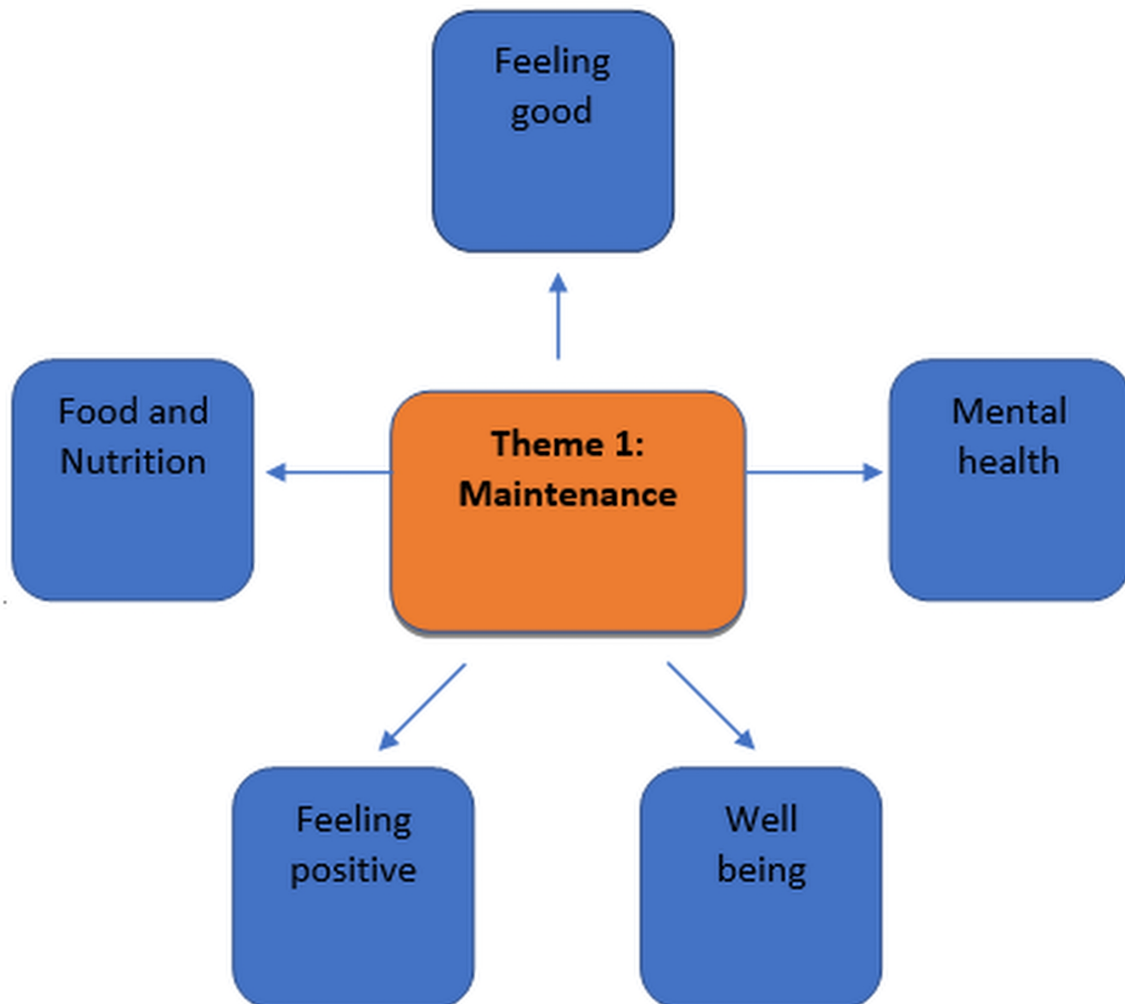
The following extracts demonstrate the theme of maintenance and how food is important to Jem and how she needs to have it when she feels her mood changing.

Jem: *It would be good to have food here, like chips and stuff cos there isn't anywhere to get food around here. Well, there is the kebab shop but it's quite far and isn't cheap. I get really hungry and they only have cold things like crisps, they're ok, and chocolate and stuff. Sometimes we get pizza though, on a Friday they buy pizza.*

Researcher: *So, food is quite important for you?*

Jem: *Oh yeah. I have to eat, or I get arsy, my Mum says. I get a bit dodgy.* (I001)

A group of friends who 'hang out' together in Hub67 explain how they are separated at school and that this proves stressful for them. They also talk about how food would improve their experience at Hub67.

Josh, Tez, Jiggy, Mo and Pete discuss:

Josh: *Well, at school we don't do much together. We are separated all the time.*

Tez: *Yeah, we are always separated so we don't have jokes*

Josh: *Teachers don't like jokes*

Jiggy: *Yeah, we not bad we just like jokes man and they can't take it – it stresses them out man, and we get stressed all the time.*

Tez: *They should have some jokes man and they wouldn't be so stressed*

Researcher: *So, do you feel differently about the youth workers?*

Mo: *Yeah, I guess [look at each other] they know how to laugh innit.*

Tez: *Nah and yeah*

Pete: *They here to help us I guess, like get things ready and stuff.*

Mo: *Yeh and get us the food and stuff.*

Tez: *Ain't no food man*

Pete: *Nah not really*

Tez: *Need chips ma$_n$*

Researcher: *So, you would like to get hot food here?*

Pete, Tez, Mo: *Yeah [x3]*

Josh: *For sure we do* (I002)

In this extract, the group are suggesting that their teachers are stressed, and in particular stressed by their behaviour. They offer the information that they are separated at school, although they are in the same class and it appears that their teachers see their banter and friendship as 'stressful'. This behaviour is significantly different from that experienced with the youth workers who seem to be unstressed and open to some fun. They also consider hot food as a particular benefit and seem rather disgruntled that there is none available for them in the hub.

In this extract, Will explains how he feels about food and in particular hot food:

Researcher: *Is there anything that you would like to see here that doesn't go on at the moment?*

Will: *No, not really, only food. I would really like hot food, like McDonald's or something. It's better to have hot food isn't it.*

Researcher: *Why do you prefer hot food?*

Will: *Well, its proper food isn't it, you know like makes you feel good.* (I003)

Toni explains here how hot food would improve things.

Toni: *I think they should have food here, like hot stuff. Hot stuff makes you feel better and warms you up, you know, like if you have a sandwich at home it's not so much cheery as hot foods.*

Researcher: *What would hot food mean to you, if you could get it here?*

Toni: *Just happy, you know, inside.* (I004)

In these extracts, food plays a dominant role in how young people feel about themselves, they claim that food, particularly hot or 'proper' food makes them feel happy and would enable them to enjoy the hub more. There is suggestion, often evidenced in film making, literature and on television that food brings people together, and given this importance and the perceived social nature of food in everyday lives it may be part of further community formation (Ganglbauer, Fitzpatrick, Subasi and Guldenpfennig, 2014). There may also be indications that some level of food insecurity exists within this wider community and concerns are therefore transferred to the young people themselves.

Food became a common element of discussion in the interviews, and although snacks were available in Hub67, there was limited facility to prepare or cook food, other than in a small microwave. The topic of food was raised by the young people themselves and was never a subject raised by me as the researcher. In terms of maintenance, the young people were clearly articulating how food, and in particular hot food, makes them feel; that it has a positive impact on their mental health and that they are aware

and open to this. This identifies a key link between food, nourishment and good feelings and may have key attachments to living in low income or impoverished families, where food is limited or unavailable and feelings of being 'unmaintained' or insecure about where their next meal is coming from. Bourdieu may suggest that being used to food insecurity works below the consciousness and is beyond the control of will providing a sense of how to respond in everyday life in attempts at self-preservation (Bourdieu, 1984; p.466)

Struck by this comment from research undertaken in Manchester, '*laughter and joy are often there somehow when the miserable way things are is being challenged as well as good food to eat'* (Batsleer, 2016, p.5) encouraged me to think about the social and comforting element to food and how it does bring people together in doing something enjoyable.

These young people describe here, how they feel the youth workers responded to them and compare it to their experience of school:

Zed: *I like that they care about us. They always ask if you are ok and want to make sure, you are, like ok. It's not like school where no one even knows your name.*
The sense of being invisible in school was concurred by Lou in his statement about the youth workers.
Lou: 'They are pleased to see us, you know, like they always say hello and they remember your name too. They are like, helpful and cool about stuff, you know, like they want you to have a good time, I think. School's about doing stuff that no one really wants to do but you have to.'

The young people described the youth workers in terms of how they made them feel. In most cases, this was positive. They felt that the youth workers were helpful and friendly and cared about them having a good experience in Hub67. As I mentioned in chapter two, most youth workers apply notions of person-centred practice to their work with young people, meaning that they consider each individually and with

unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1961), separating actions from individual in a way which enables real time understanding of the person. Active listening is key to this strategy which enables the practitioner to hear from the young person, and not make assumptions or suggestions about what they might be thinking or feeling. If, indeed young people feel 'cared for' whilst at the hub, this may well be a significant factor.

6.8.2. Obligation

Figure 12: Theme 2: Obligation – analysis of emerging themes
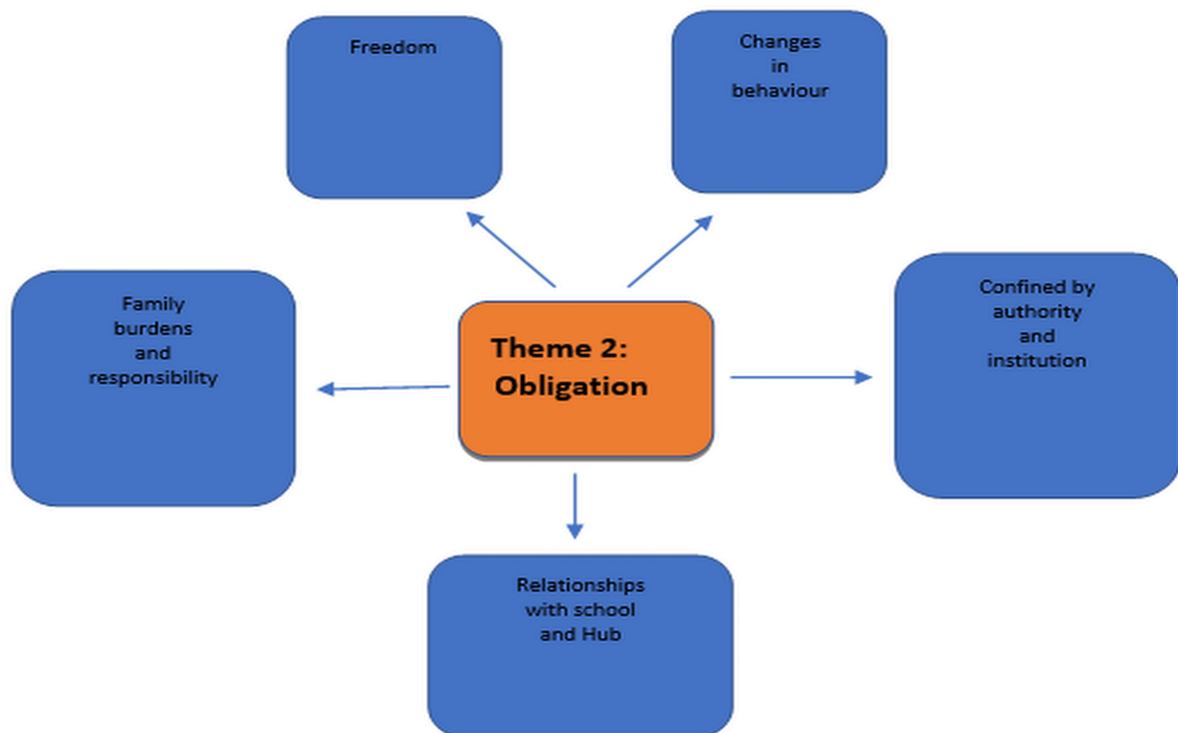
The themes which lead to looking at young people's obligations were constructed out of their own sense of responsibility both institutionally and within their families. Young people are capable of making positive social contributions which as individuals manifest in beliefs and the way we live with others (Kohlberg and Candee, 1984; Berman, 1997; Gallay, 2006). Obligation or responsibility implies accountability for actions and decisions, being reliable and dependable to others. Young people who are socially responsible are rather like active agents acting on prosocial grounds, with moral, cognitive and identity development in values and actions (Wray-Lake and

Syvertsen, 2011). Bourdieu considers *doxa* as a 'taking for granted' (Bourdieu, 1990; p.68) of the world and *habitus clive* as the tugs at the *habitus* in which we are involved which may cause unsettledness.

Therefore, it is possible that young people who feel obligated also feel in some ways torn or constricted by the two worlds they inhabit, the one which makes requests of them, and the one which enables them to be freer. Many of the issues young people raised related to the expectation that they would perform within the expectations of others, either their school, their parents or their neighbours. Sue, Jon, Sonny and Leo all describe their caring familial roles in relation to their availability to attend Hub67 and how it effects their friendships and activities.

Researcher: *I see. Is there anything that you do here, at the Hub that you don't or can't do at home or elsewhere?*

Sue: *Yeah and no. I can do the same things at home, but my house is so busy that I am never alone – it's not very peaceful. I have to get involved with looking after my sisters and my Nan. Sometimes its ok but mostly it is stressful. I can't really make friends cos I can't be there for them – you know – I usually don't know what I am going to be doing next.*

The following young people talk about the hub and what encouraged them to attend:

Researcher: *How often do you come here?*

Jon: *As often as I can, but I look after my Mum, so can't always be here. It depends how she is feeling. I always hope she will be ok.*

Sonny: *I haven't joined anything regular cos I look after for my Mum and my Sister, and I can't be reliable, but they don't mind, you know, I can just show up when I can. I like it if I can get involved in something, but I just like to come and relax, you know.*

Leo: *I come here when I stay with my Aunty. She's not well and I have to look after her. I take her to church and that.*

Brian and Carl talk about their obligations to schoolwork and how they feel about having to put this first:

Brian: *I come when I haven't got any homework to do. I have to get it done cos I get detentions and I hate it. It's not really fair cos some people come here all the time. It's like the school rules you.*

Carl: *They do man, like your whole life is down to them. They even stopped me doing Karate cos, I didn't do some project. It's dread man.*

During the outreach phase of this case study, there was no particular suggestion from community groups and organisations that there was such a significant number of young carers in the neighbourhood, and these comments about young people's responsibilities came as something of a surprise.

The notion that young people felt obligated to their families and their teachers (or education) suggests that they must place some value on the this. Stern (2015) argues there is limited agency when one feels obligation above agency and in our 'duty of care' (Miller, 2012, p.45) towards pleasing or caring for others. Kant (1996) refers to allowing individual agency as supporting an individual's 'true needs' (Kant, 1996, p.14). Therefore, there is obligation and duty, as in attending school, and on the other hand, the need for agency, and perhaps choosing not to attend school. In many cases, where people feel obliged to behave in a particular way it implies that the obligation itself has either 'sanction or incentive' attached (Schopenhauser,1998; p.129) and provides social enforcement of right and wrong (Locke, 1975). Korsgard (1996) insists that in order to have or achieve agency, one must first believe that there is some value in this, and that appreciation of agency as a human right and social and developmental tool, rather than something to which they are not entitled.

6.8.3. Freedom of choice

Figure 13 - Theme 3: Freedom of choice -analysis of emergent themes
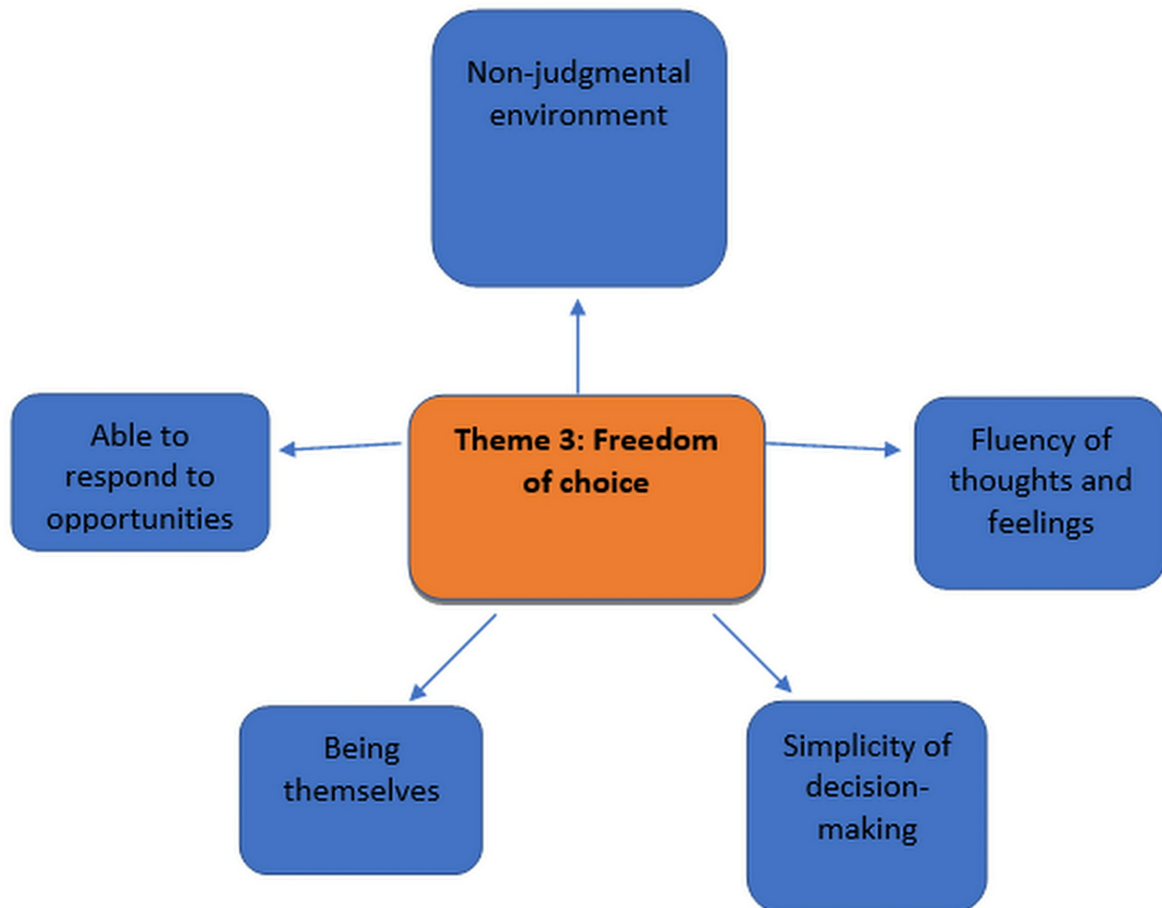
Considering engagement in Hub67 as predominantly leisure time, non-formal and without specific curriculum, it could provide young people with the relative freedom to explore new experiences and access opportunities not always available or possible in environments constrained by institutions, such as schools. Leisure time itself, provides space in which to discover, form, define and position identity, either as an individual or as part of a group, and psychologists have ascribed this to how individuals flourish (Gable and Haift, 2005; Layland, Hill and Nelson, 2018).

Sim and Joe talked about their motivation:

Researcher: *So, your time at the Hub has been motivating for you?*

Sim: *Yep, very.*

Joe: *She didn't have much confidence when she was little, and my Mum says she has really come on since she has been coming here. We have all noticed a difference in her.*

Sim: *Shut up*

Researcher: *What differences have you noticed?*

Joe: *She seems happier and more confident and more talkative – she used to be very shy.*

Researcher: *What about you? Do you think you have changed too?*

Joe: *No not really…well maybe. I am more confident at speaking out and telling people what to do but I am older so it I should be. I feel good coming here and never get into rows or anything. People are happy to be here, and it seems like you can just be yourself. I get a bit stressed at school and stuff, but it doesn't happen when I'm here*

In this extract, there is an assertion that Sim's confidence has improved as a result of being at the hub and in particular in her ability to speak out, although it is interesting that it is her brother who describes this and not Sim herself.

Researcher: *Ok, and what is your favourite thing about the Hub.*

Jem: *It's fun and no one tells you what to do. Well, I mean not in a bad way.*

Researcher: *So, what things might they tell you to do?*

Jem: *Oh, you know, get involved in things, like the activities. But you can just hang out as well.*

Researcher: *What do you mean by 'hang out'?*

Jem: *Oh, I mean just sit around and hang with my friends.*

Sue: *Mmmm, it's nice and welcoming I guess, and everyone is friendly. It's quite organised and there is always stuff to do like making things and art which I like and no one really gets on your nerves.*

Researcher: *So, do you like doing things on your own?*

Sue: *Yeah mostly. People get on my nerves. They want me to do things with them, but I don't want to, so they go on until they make me mad. I am best being on my own.*

Researcher: *And is that something that happens here, are you able to get on with things on your own.*

Sue: *Yeah mostly. The helpers try and get me to get involved in stuff, but I just go home.*

Researcher: *So, when you are encouraged to get involved in groups activities, you go home?*

Sue: *Yeah. But sometimes I just go and get some food and then come back.*

Researcher*: Food from home?*

Sue: *No from the shop. Chips and that.*

This extract demonstrates that the ambiance, or atmosphere in the hub is relatively relaxed and whilst there are activities on offer on a regular basis, there is no pressure to undertake them, or judgement for not getting involved. There is a culture of being able to 'hang out' which seems to be a popular way of spending time with friends. Even Sue, who admits that she sometimes leaves the hub to go home to get food, identifies the freedom with which the young people can come and go.

Tez, Jiggy and Josh said:

Tez: *We don't spend much time together at school – we are usually separated.*

Researcher: *why are you separated?*

Tez: *Cos we are too noisy, and teachers get stressed with us.*

Jiggy: *Yeah, they don't like us having jokes*

Researcher: *so how does that feel?*

Tez: *Not fair – we are not bad we just like jokes init.*

Jiggy: *Yeah, teachers just get stressed by everything.*

Researcher: *Do you think the youth workers are less stressed here?*

Tez: *Oh yeah, they are never stressed to be fair.*

Josh: *They like jokes init.*

Research: *Does it mean you feel different when you are here then?*

Tez: *Yeah man, we can have enough jokes.*

Jiggy: *Man, we can be ourselves.*

Josh: *For sure we do*

In this extract, the boys indicate that they are a strong friendship group who enjoy being together, yet they are separated at school, which they clearly find frustrating and unfair. They consider their behaviour as a group about having fun and not about bad behaviour yet suggest that at school this might be seen as such. They seem to be able to enjoy being together and 'joking' with each other in the hub without judgement.

In terms of the groups enjoyment of their friendships in Hub67 I was encouraged to consider their experiences, as a social space, according to Bourdieu which enables them to allocate people (friends) to different positions according to social class. Since they occupy similar positions, with familiar volume or capital, in similar conditions they acquire similar dispositions and experience equity, with which they are comfortable in the hub setting (Bourdieu, 1989).

6.9. Young people's experiences of open access youth work

6.9.1. October 2015 – perceptions and experiences

During the Winter of 2015, six months after Hub67 had been launched, it was important to understand whether the young people who were engaged in the open access provision were enjoying, participating and learning as a result of their involvement. In focus groups the young people expressed their feelings and experiences of their involvement in the project. Several themes emerged as a result of analysis and these will be considered in this section.

The overriding themes include self-belief, awareness and community as identified in figure 16, These themes indicate the developmental achievements of young people engaged in the project as well as build on the themes discussed at the earlier stage of the project.

Figure 14 - Analysis of emergent themes in the second phase
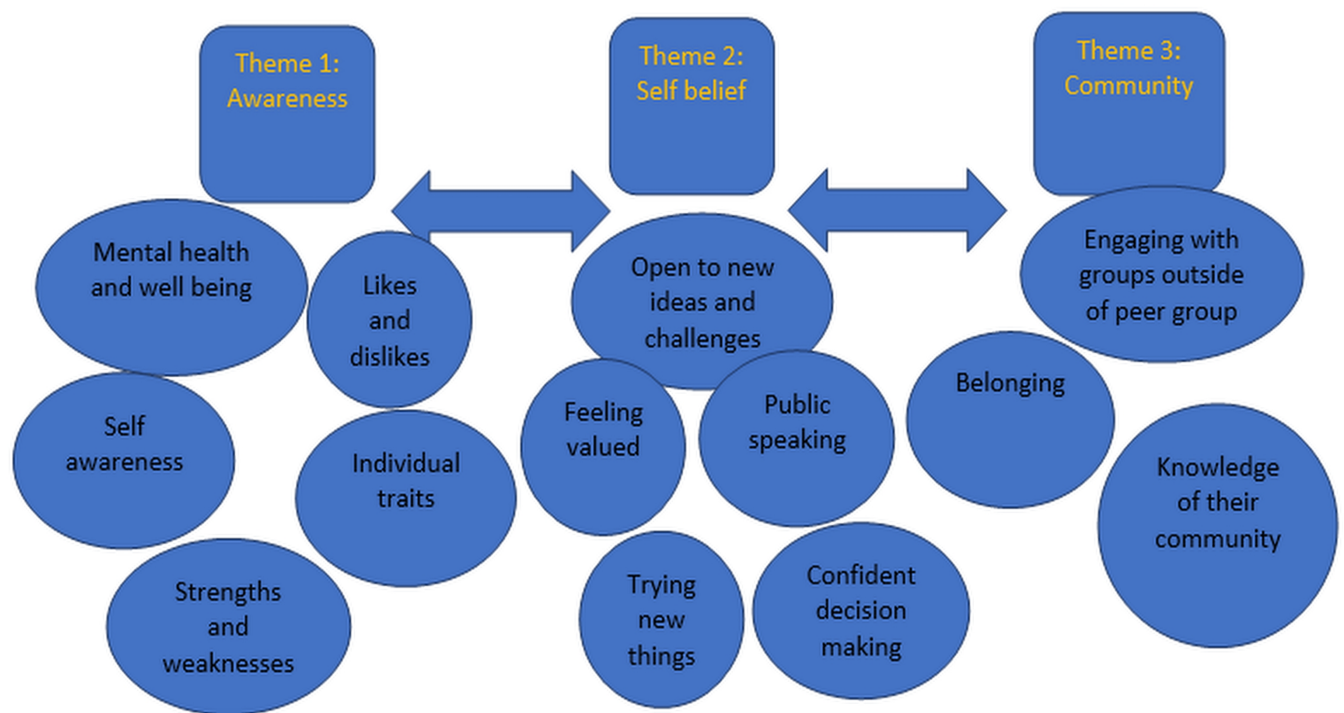
6.9.1.1. Theme One: Awareness

The theme of awareness came from responses from young people which indicated their awareness and recognition of their feelings, stresses and reflection. Generally, the young people demonstrated that they were comfortable in talking about themselves, and their emotional and psychological experiences and thoughts. They also demonstrated their ability to be self-reflective and how they had increased their self-awareness as a result.

Nin: *I'm in the arts crew and so I get involved with the arts and making sessions – it's really good cos I feel like I have a job [laughs] but I don't get paid [laughs].*
Cal: *I ain't in any group cos I look after my Mum, but I can be if I want to I just ain't that reliable, so I fit in when I can. I help out when I'm here.*

Pat: *Cos they are Romanies ain't they, you know like romas. I think they are dodgy. Always selling stuff.*

Cal: *Nah man they alright. They just live on boats they do proper jobs and that, like hairdressing and stuff. That man who works here with blue hair lives on a boat.*

Mia: *Yeah, they are ordinary people, they just live on a boat. I went on one and it was so lovely and cute I would live there myself. You shouldn't be prejudiced about people just cos they live on a boat.*

Pat: *I not being racist or nothin', but I thought that's what they were like. I dunno. They always look like travellers or something. I don't know them.*

Nin: *Nah, they are a bit different, like they have their own fashion and stuff and grow herbs and things, but they are cool.*

Pat: *I don't know, man there's one man with a nasty dog and he hates me. He makes the dog run after me and shit.*

Nin: *That's one man though innit.*

Mia: *Most of them are lovely and friendly.*

Pat: *I don't know man.*

Dill: *I don't know about the canal, but I know a lot of neighbours who live here, and they are all ok. Everywhere has weirdos don't they. You give and take a bit yeah.*

Bea: *They might think we are bad or noisy or something or up to bad things you know. It's stereotyping innit.*

In these extracts, the young people are expressing themselves well, with integrity and self-knowledge. Nin talks about having a role in the hub and how that makes her feel 'good' and as though she has some intrinsic value to the running of the hub. She describes her role as being 'like a job' which demonstrates the importance that she places on it. Cal is also showing self-awareness by acknowledging his unreliability due to his family responsibilities, and yet he says he 'helps out' when he can.

The conversation, which took place in a focus group between Bea, Dill, Pat and Nin demonstrate their awareness of people in their community but also that they are aware of stereotypes and misperceptions of others. They begin to challenge and educate

each other, based on their understandings and perceptions as well as from their own experience.

6.9.1.2. Theme Two: Self belief

Jon speaks of his experiences:

I never thought I would be doing stuff like I am. I am always doing something for the Hub67, like I go to meetings and speak to people. I made a presentation before about how much we need to keep it going and that. And I met with the politicians from Hackney and Newham and talked to them about, the place and that. I have got so more confident and I don't feel shy or nervous about speaking. I was, like, shy at school cos I don't like the people and all that but here I feel different.

Pol adds:

I have some responsibilities here you know, and I like it. It makes me feel a bit important, like not in charge or anything but like I have things to do and look after, you know. It stops me being bored and I feel good about it.

Nin:

My Mum can't believe that I do all the stuff I do here, she says I have change so much and got so much confidence now. I suppose I have.

All of these extracts demonstrate that the young people have grown in confidence and have identified this in themselves. They show feelings which make them feel good about themselves and indicate that they have developed skills and interests which they would not otherwise have done.

Researcher: *so, what do you do here?*

Zac: *Oh, I do loads of stuff. I'm quite important. I joined the street team and that means I have a lot to say. I go and tell people about the hub and tell them what we do here and all. I come along to see my friends as well, but I am also one of the team and so I get to do a lot of interesting stuff. I talk to loads of people, all the time. I never used to be like that.*

Zac says that he feels important having the responsibilities he has chosen, which suggests that he finds the things he does enjoyable and worthwhile. He claims that he talks confidently to a host of people but that this was not something he was familiar with until joining Hub67.

6.9.1.3. Theme Three: Community

Pele, Gen, Zac and Nic:

Researcher: *So, it sounds like you have a lot of support in keeping the hub going and making things happen. What's it like living in Hackney Wick.*

Pele: *Ok*

Gen: *Alright I s'pose*

Zac: *Difficult. It's not an easy place to live in there are lots of ups and downs. But it is becoming more wealth-like, and it will change in the coming years.*

Tia: *It's a bit poor but my friends are near, so I like it. My whole family live here, like my Nan and Grandy, my cousins and my Mum's sister, my Aunt and that*

Pele: *It's becoming better with the Park and the Westfield shopping. You can get anything there you know so it's not so bad.*

Nic: *I heard it's gonna be the best shopping place in London and with a Primarni superstore.*

Gen: *Yeah, for sure I am going there.*

[pause]

Ren: *So, Westfield and the Queen Elizabeth park will make a difference to Hackney Wick do you think.*

Zac: *It already does – it has made a big impact.*

These young people identify the difficulties and poverty in the area but are also aware of the changes that regeneration is making to the neighbourhood and express this in positive terms. They speak affectionately about Hackney Wick and seem to be resolved to the life they live there. However, the advantages they suggest are coming to the area are not particularly local or indeed specifically for them.

Nin, Max and Cal:

Nin: *it's changed a lot around here, and then it hasn't. The places where we live and that are the same, but the area is different and busy and seems to be somewhere that people like to be. I suppose it's the bars and music gigs and all that but it's for older people. In a way it's only Hub67 that has changed for us, but that's ok.*

Max: *Yeah, it has. I never used to be doing anything in the community but now I am really involved in it – it's like I am a part of the community and they know me, like I have met so many people and I know all about what happens in the studios and I didn't even know they were even there before. It's like I have a lot more knowledge now and can talk about the area and that.*

Nin: *Yeah, I know what you mean cos I have met lots of people who are around here, and they come and do workshops and things and I know things about the area that I didn't know before, like the canal community and the studios and stuff. Some of the artists are quite famous and stuff.*

Cal: *I saw some of them artists too. At first, I was like, what, but then I got to like them.*

Nin: *Yeah, I was like that*

Mia, Nid, Bea, Dan, Pria and Cid add by saying:

Researcher: *So how do you feel about living in Hackney Wick?*

Mia: *I love it.*

Nid: *No different to anywhere else, I guess.*

Bea: *It's alright really. There's always something going on and I know a lot of people. It's fine for me.*

Dan: *It's got different now cos of all the new shops and bars and cafes and all that. It used to be quiet but now people come here to do stuff. I like it now, it's like it has livened up. My sister and brothers go to the raves and that and my sister says she wouldn't have gone out around here before. It is nicer now.*

Cid: *Regeneration – it means that these things that are new make us richer but poorer at the same time.*

Ron: *Can you explain what you mean?*

Nid: *it's like the rich people who are buying up the buildings and starting bars and businesses and stuff are going to get richer, but the rest of the people can't do it, so they will get poorer because they can't benefit from it. It's like economics and that. Like the politicians want this place to be a hipster place but people who already live here are just like normal. I don't know how to explain it, but I think I am right.*

Mel: *Yeah, but that's why we are on the street team cos you get to talk to the politicians and the builders, and you can say what you think about it and they do listen. That's how we got this hub, because they realised that children and teenagers needed a space of themselves.*

Cid: *Yeah, but it's like a job and I come here to relax. I don't wanna be doing work and stuff.*

Mel: *No, responsibility and making decisions doesn't mean a job it means taking part and trying to make differences.*

Dan: *Well, it ain't me. I got years of it when I get older, you know.*

Pria: *I think it's good that people do it cos it makes things better and keeps things going. If no one knows we are here, then we would get forgotten and it could be super boring. I might join a group myself and try and do something.*

Nid: *You should, you would like it [young person's name]*

Pria: *Ok. Tell me later*

Nic: *K*

Belle: *I don't mind trying as well.*

Nic: *K*

Ron: *So, you have a few new recruits, how will they be able to get involved and help?*

Nic: *Just come to a meeting, I will tell you when the next one is. It's about a sale we are having, we need clothes and toys and books I think that we can sell, and I think we need food, but I can find out.*

Cid: *I think my sister is doing that, she makes purses and earring and that.*

Dan: *I asked my Mum to make some biscuits and sweets, but I don't know if she will. But that's what you need right?*

Nid: *Yeah, we need anything.*

Ben: *I could ask my Mum; she does paintings and cups and all that stuff. She sells it in Dalston, but she could sell it here, I think.*

In a way, this sums up what the others are saying by suggesting that there is little of beneficial change for young people specifically, other than Hub67, and clearly feel that the redevelopment and changes are for adults. On the other hand, there is a distinct community spirit in the way in which they discuss raising funds and activating support for fundraising. They also make some suggestions about how their interactions with community can help to support the hub and that their engagement has an impact. They also show signs of educating or challenging each other, suggesting they can change their attitudes and actions towards the community and participation in it.

This and the subsequent extracts respond to all of the key themes, community, awareness and self-belief therefore it is important to include them here.

Fi, Gen, Trish, Zella and Pam:

Researcher: *Is there anything that you would say is good, I mean what is so good about coming to the Hub?*

Fi: *No stress, no one stresses.*

Gil: *Relaxin'. Yeah, it's cool and you don't have to do anything if you don't want but also the things are intrestin', so you want to do them.*

Trish: *It's good because it's all about us and what we want to do also we get to do things that you wouldn't expect, like making decisions and being part of what's going*

on. I don't know how to say it but it's like being active and aware of the community and that.

Zella: *It's called community involvement and it means have an equality say in what goes on. Some of us are joined to teams and we go out to meet managers and business members and discuss what they're doing and sometimes we go to MPs and church leaders and such on. We made or joined a street team and that's what I do, I represent all of the kids and talk to people about what we want.*

Gen: *It's not just him. We all do it. It's not just you [name].*

Zella: *I know but you weren't saying it*

Gen: *We all get involved and so we belong to different groups, like the arts crew, the street team and the activities crew and we do things to support each other and decide on what to do and because of all of the developments and that around and about we [um] get to meet with developers and [um, um] builders and people to find out what they are doing and so we can add some ideas and say what, [um] young people want.*

Trish: *It's important to be included and if we are here when we are adults we will understand where it all came from.*

Fi: *Cos the buildings and developing will happen anyway it's not like we make any changes, you know, but it sort of means we can be included in it.*

Researcher: *Well, this all sounds rather important. Do you all have different roles and responsibilities, or do you all pitch in?*

Gen: *Depends on what team you join. Like, if you are street team you go around more and if you arts crew you mainly stay here.*

Zella: *It's about us building skills as well like in presenting and speaking. Like I weren't that good at public speaking-out, but I am cool with doing it now. I do it all the time and I know it will help me getting employment and a better job. I was talking to the Mayor of Hackney before and all of the people that works with him. I dint think I would do that, like.*

Researcher: *So [young person's name] are you the speaker in the group then?*

Gen: *No, he's not he just always speaks first, before anyone else. We all do speak and that.*

Pam: *[enters with can of drink] I'm back……*

Trish: *did you get me one? [points to can]*

Pam: *Nah sorry*

Niv: *No one's in charge of the groups but we all have to commit to them, like if you are in the arts crew you have to come to meetings or say that you can't. But you don't have to join a team, you can just be a member, like.*

Researcher: *What do you get for being a member?*

Niv: *Nothing, well I mean you do, like you can come here and join in, but you don't, like do the meetings and stuff.*

Researcher: *Is that ok then, that some people come but don't do the meetings?*

Niv: *Yeah*

Trish: *Yeah, cos even if you don't belong to a group when something's happening, everyone has to help.*

Pam: *What you talking about? Can we go now the music is gonna start?*

Researcher: *Yes of course, thank you so much for talking to me.*

Pam: *ok*

Trish: *no probs*

Although this dialogue came to a rather abrupt end, the comments made are significant in how the themes were identified and in the perceptions of the young people as they freely and quite comfortably narrated their feelings and experiences. I also felt that the way in which they were able to quickly respond to a new activity in the Hub was encouraging and demonstrated the way in which they were keen to engage but also relaxed enough to assert themselves.

6.10. Summary

Some of this chapter's findings have already been demonstrated and discussed. The perceptions and lived experiences of young people during this crucial time in the development of Hub67 have been explored and the perspectives of other residents and neighbours have been considered. In this chapter, I have used my reflexivity to reflect on my experiences and those of others. I have been able to do this both from the position of a practitioner and resident with nuances which amplify national assumptions and predictions about young people in urban contexts. Therefore, in this chapter the themes of, awareness, self-belief and community which I have linked with social capital, thus aiming to further develop Bourdieu's theories in order to understand youth work practice in these contexts. In chapter seven, these are explored further to specifically include findings from dialogue with parents, guardians and youth workers.

CHAPTER SEVEN – The Impact of Hub67

7.1. Introduction

This chapter is the final findings chapter and identifies and interrogates how young people perceived, engaged and benefitted from their involvement in open access youth work at Hub67. Charting the period from January 2016 to December 2016, the chapter presents findings from focus groups with young people, youth workers and parents. This chapter is important because it records a period of change in my roles and responsibilities in the community and in the forward planning of Hub67. In chapter three, I explained that I occupied multiple roles within the community, many of which were related and relevant to youth work and young people. I was honest about the amount of time, commitment and the stress this often caused, as well as the frequent potential for conflict of interest. In chapter six, I explained that a manager had been appointed to the hub and that I felt it was appropriate to take a step back from my role within the Hub67 family. With this in mind, I withdrew from chairmanship of all of the committees to which I belonged including Hub67. This enabled me to concentrate solely on my role as researcher.

The youth workers were key to the development of the Hub, in the acquisition of funds and support and in the associations and relationships they established and maintained with the young people. Throughout the period covered by the research, a series of obstacles and challenges beset the project and the youth workers played significant roles in keeping the young people interested and motivated as well as generating support in the community. In what, was at times, a constantly interrupted trajectory, most of the youth workers remained determined to make the project a reality, and with this in mind it was important to include their perspectives on the benefits to young people. In this Chapter, the perceptions and understanding of open access youth work, as identified by the parents and guardians of participating young people, and the youth workers who worked with them, will also be discussed.

7.2. Funding, management and moving on

Once Hub67 was up and running there was some significant movement in terms of ensuring that the project was maintained and sustainable. An application to the Wick Award to recruit and appoint a full-time manager for the Hub had been successful and further funds for running costs had been provided by the London Legacy Development Company. A full-time centre manager was appointed in February 2016 and started work straight away. Tasked with programme and staff management, finance and resource management, the appointment provided some much-needed space and time for me to reflect on my role and future direction in regard to the hub and research.

Until the manager arrived, I had been responsible for the hub, its programming, resources and personnel in my role as Chair of the committee. In addition, I chaired the Hackney Wick Festival, was vice chair of the CIG and was involved in a variety of ways in other committees and forums across the Wick. I recognised the depth and scale of this involvement and decided to take advantage of the arrival of the new manager by withdrawing from my position as chair of Hub67. There were several key reasons for this, not least the need to concentrate firmly on the research but also, to 'take stock' and step back from the project which, over the years, had taken considerable amounts of time and energy to establish.

Mindful of the potential tensions which may have emerged between my own professional (and perhaps personal) vision and aspirations for Hub67 and those of the new manager, inevitably, I wanted to be certain that she had the opportunity to begin with confidence and autonomy and without the 'shadow' of an overpowering or interfering chair, albeit intentional or not. It was important for me to enable and allow her to feel that she had been appointed to carry out a task, and that she was trusted to do so, without judgement or micro-management.

It was clear, and appropriate that the new manager wanted to put her own stamp on the centre and that she had a number of ideas and experiences to relate to in regard to this. There were several issues which emerged as contentious in preliminary

discussions between us which highlighted some potential tensions in methods of delivery, purpose and intention. Firstly, rather than arranging the timetable to enable young people access to the venue at any time, as was in the original plan, she wanted to allocate specific times for young people and times uniquely for other community groups, including those who might provide income from renting space. I understood that part of her role was to generate income in order to sustain the centre, but this had presented me with some concerns for the young people and the work we had been doing with them to engage them in Hub67. I was fearful that young people being effectively excluded from what was considered 'their space' without consultation would reduce their participation and interest in the hub and that they may feel mislead.

In addition, I had been keen in the initial proposals that some kind of therapeutic intervention would be available to the young people on a regular basis, perhaps in the form of a counsellor who would be confidentially available to the young people once or twice a week, in the hub, to enable them to reflect and discuss issues which might trouble them or from which they could be signposted to other services.

I understood that this was not a usual inclusion in youth work practice but wanted to be able to evaluate whether this might benefit young people, who had already been identified as living in challenging and complex families and a changing and diverse neighbourhood. This was not appreciated by the new manager who felt that therapy existed outside of a community venue and was not part of the foreseen programme. Inevitably, I considered my own feelings during this decision-making process, which indeed, were mixed. On reflection, I recognised that the inclusion of a therapeutic element, albeit based on young people's voluntary participation, was something of my own youth and community work notion, and something which I have strong and long-term feelings about. My notion is based on my experience of working with young people in a variety of settings including as a counsellor and I had to recognise that I had no particular evidence that this would work, or that it should be included as part of the day-to-day programme. At the same time, I realised that the manager had been appointed fairly and professionally to a job description and specification which I had been part of devising, and that I had to trust her to do the job that she had been

appointed to in the best way she saw fit. I recognised that I had a strong, enduring interest and fondness in the future of Hub67 and cannot deny that there was a great deal of reservation about moving away from it on a day-to-day basis – in a way it was rather like leaving a child whom I had raised with another adult to parent – but at the same time, there was a sense of relief that I could finally leave behind the anxieties and challenges which went with the territory. I resigned as Chair and was able to concentrate entirely on my role as researcher from this point. This decision was not taken lightly, nor was it received happily. Many of the committees felt that I was 'letting them down' or 'ducking out' as my fieldnotes recorded, and most expressed feelings of anger and bemusement. There was a sense that the community felt I was leaving them and for some this was seemingly a concern. I agreed to a month of handover to all committees and groups and offered the reassurance that I would still be 'around'. This felt daunting, as I had hoped to have more support from my neighbours. There were some, mainly in the creative community who recognised that I needed to step back from the intensity of the involvement I had had over the years and appreciated that I wanted to concentrate on the research. I recognised that I had probably been something of a 'prop' keeping things going and making sure that people were informed, updated and involved. I also realised that not having to do this any longer would bring a sense of freedom. Interestingly, although not unsurprising, I stopped being invited to events and openings and new venues, and I very rapidly became, 'just another resident'. This was a new experience and one which confirmed for me a great deal of the isolation and information deficit that I feared residents were subject to.

7.3. Open access youth work, parents and guardians

As I explained previously, parents and guardians are not only important in terms of their relationships with young people in Hackney Wick but also as community members, and for this reason their perceptions and experiences were important in order to include their experiences and perceptions of their children's experiences. It is also to include them in order to assess their significance in relation to their children's engagement in Hub67.

As discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, parents and guardians are significant members of the Hackney Wick community and had contributed toward this research as residents and group members in various ways; some in support and others in ambiguity, but it was important to consider how they had experienced the hub, or more specifically, how they had perceived their children's experiences and involvement in open access youth work at Hub67.

Additionally, it is interesting to consider that virtually no research into youth and community work includes the perspectives of parents or guardians (Spencer, Bashaldo-Delmonino, and Lewis, 2011; Keller; 2005; Phillips et al, 2004; Dubois, Holloway et al, 2002), yet in this case study, it seemed neglectful not to include them in some way. Therefore, included in this chapter are transcript extracts from focus groups held with parents and guardians of some of the young people who participated in the interviews and focus groups discussed in Chapter 6, and of other young people who participated via outreach as well as from a focus group conducted with the youth workers. In addition, minutes of meetings and fieldnotes are used to highlight key themes for analysis.

Three key themes emerged from the data, which will be discussed here, these are:

7.4: Themes: Satisfaction, Connection and Learning

Figure 15: Theme: Satisfaction
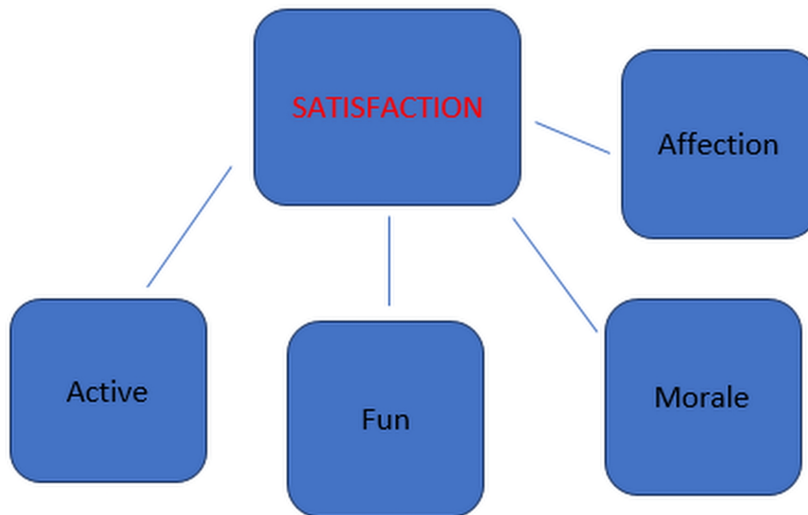
7.4.1. Theme One: Satisfaction

Satisfaction was identified as a common theme which emerged from the data, in which the language and descriptions used by the adults addressed issues of fun, affection, young people's (and adult's) morale and activities. In the focus group, parents were complimentary towards the hub and how their children had experienced it. In these extracts, they describe their children's 'love' of the place and the activities.

Ivy: *They love it here; I can't get them to come home! [laughs]*

Ness: *yeah, mine too, my daughter is besotted with the place, she has become so busy with things and is always up to something. She's done a lot of really interesting things, like visiting places and talking to people and she goes around to council meetings and I think she is even doing a presentation somewhere.*

Dan: *I think my kids love coming here – they just seem to have so much fun.*

Ben: *…they have a great time they love telling me what they've done and what's coming next – it seems like they have a new set of fun things to do.*

Susy: *they are really into it – they love coming and I think they can just get stuck into things, you know, no pressure kind of thing.*

Petra: *Oh, they love coming, they are always full of it.*

All of the parents described their children as showing affection and fondness for Hub67 and did this by explaining that they liked to take part in a vast array of activities, events and opportunities. They spoke about the way in which their children told them about what they had done and also showed them examples of things they had made and learnt. There appeared to be a constant enthusiasm coming from the young people as they reported it to their parents, they were keen to talk about new friends, different activities as well as things they were looking forward to, as in what might happen the next day or the next week.

The parents indicated that, unlike at school, the young people were pleased and determined to tell them what they had been involved in, as opposed to having to be asked 'how was school today'. During the focus group, this extended a sense of community, in that what the young people did at Hub67 was an extension of home life and leisure. In addition, the parents made reference to their own feelings about the hub as being 'welcoming', fun-filled and as having a good atmosphere.

The use of positive emotive language in these extracts signifies a strong bond with Hub67 and a sense of enjoyment and pleasure. The fact that parents suggest that their children 'love' their participation in the hub is a robust example of pleasure and enjoyment as well as affection for the activities and individuals with which they were involved. The extracts are taken from a focus group in which the parents took part, and it has to be remembered that the language used may have been influenced by the emotions within the group at the time the focus group took place, since the atmosphere was positive, upbeat and jovial.

The theme of satisfaction refers not only to what can be perceived as being how the young people feel about the hub (and discuss with their family and friends) but also, in terms of how the parents relay this, and indeed how they describe their own feelings towards it. The indications of satisfaction shared by the parents are best described as 'evaluative' and 'descriptive' (Sen, 2009, p.77), since they tend to indicate that their resources and conditions influence their levels of satisfaction in this case, and that Hub67 is seen as a resource. Nussbaum and Sen (2009) suggest a strong relationship

exists between capability and well-being or level of life satisfaction. Both Sen and Arneson imply that an individual's capabilities and resulting satisfaction are connected to equality of opportunity (Sen, 2009; Arneson, 1987), and may help to understand the perceptions of parents in this instance, since their children had been offered an opportunity to develop capabilities and learning on an equal level, thus improving levels of life satisfaction.

From a psychological perspective, the pursuit of well-being and the achievement of happiness are fundamental enquiries and include expressions of emotional, positive affect and judgements of life satisfaction (Seligman, 2002; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Denier et al, 1999; Denier, 1994). Whilst happiness is not consistently defined, in literature and happiness is associated with various meanings, where positive affect and satisfaction and pleasantness are identified as key indicators of overall quality of life (Diener and Diener, 1995). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to consider that the parent's levels of satisfaction were influenced directly by their children's levels of satisfaction, and in the sense of contentment or pleasure that this derives.

Figure 16 - Theme Two: Connection
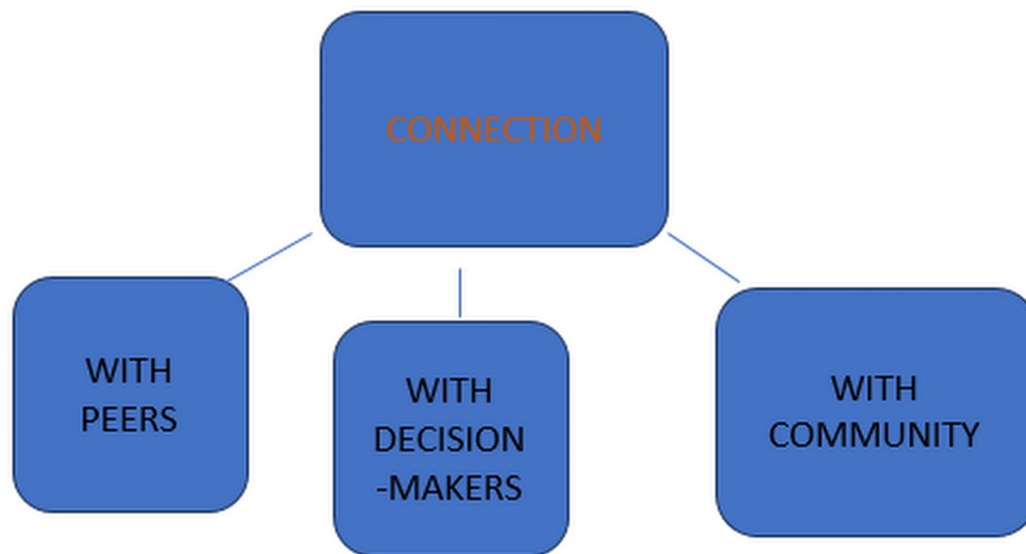
7.4.2. Theme Two: Connection

Connection refers to the common elements emerging from the data which imply links or relationships with others, peers, community or indeed with themselves, in terms of self-awareness and development. In the extracts below, the parents demonstrate their pleasure in the hub being located within their neighbourhood and the connections that this has enabled, be it in proximity to it and their children, or in the way they are able to link with neighbours. The following extracts highlight some of the comments from parents and how they feel their children have benefitted from participating in the hub.

Petra: *There is a sense of community here I have noticed that a lot of people pop in and during the day there seems to be loads going on – I quite fancies the yoga but haven't got here yet but I know my neighbour does some sort of craft thing.*
Susy: *My daughter has made so many friends here, at one point I had eight of them coming to collect her. It's been amazing for her I am so chuffed.*
Al: *I must say, from a friendship side of things they have developed a stronger bond with each other and also made new chums too. They have always played with our neighbours, but they have also met new ones and it seems to have grown. It's great, I am all for it.*

Yasmin: *A bit like me, I live on the canal and so although we do move around a lot, we always end up here because we love it – there is a real sense of community and energy and I'm just always happy when we are here. It bothers me that my kids don't always make firm friends as we are on the move all the time, but the hub has given them a kind of base and they have a network of mates, which is lovely.*

Bes: *I work a lot so don't get around here much and that, but my misses has met up with people and that and yeah, my kids have loads of kids they know now.*

Ivy: *Yeah, but kids are kids, and they don't really see things like we do, do they. They play around with their friends, they go to school together, they either get on or they don't. The kids I know around here all rub along together good. But you see all of the new-fangled clubs and pubs around don't relate to them and so they don't get it. But for the adults it cuts them off even more – I can't afford to go to these bars, and I wouldn't feel comfortable in them either, but the kids don't see it, they just like being part of something.*

Susy: *I am happy living here; I like the diversity and the open space is amazing, there is so much to explore and learn and I really like the creative vibe and the colour. I'm a dog walker and so for me it's perfect. I don't think I would feel the same without the people that I know here, and I guess it's the same for the kids.*

Researcher: *Do you think Hub67 has made a difference to your children?*

Eva: *Yeah, they do like coming and getting involved in things, they seem to push, or encourage them to do things, you know, like take part in meetings and all of that, they seem to include them in what they are doing and not just tell them what to do, if you see what I mean. The make networks that way, if you know what I mean.*

Ivy: *Oh yes, it has. It's made a big difference to them, they come together and learn things and get to know about where they are, you know.*

Susy: *I'd say so, it has given them inspiration, knowledge and ideas and new friends.*

Nic: *Oh yes, I think so, they have some space and new energy, and people are interested in them and they like it. I think it's great to have youngsters involved in the community and in politics and what makes the world tick.*

In these extracts, the parents are again positive about the hub and their children's involvement. They are pleased that their children have made or maintained friendships with local children and that they have a deeper connection with their peers. In the focus group, the parents talked warmly about the sense of community that they felt emanated from the hub and that they had met and conversed with neighbours and other community members on many occasions whilst meeting their children before and after sessions. They also liked that the hub was conveniently located close to their homes and workplaces. In addition, they were keen to note that their children had developed socially, had added to their social networks as had some of the parents. They also commented on the sense of isolation that living in the neighbourhood can create, as it lacks resources and is set away geographically from the rest of the borough. They expressed their relief that Hub67 had made some differences to this in that there was a greater community connection and network as a result of its existence.

One of Putnam's key themes in relation to social cohesion is voluntary association and the development of social networks (Putnam, 1993) whilst according to Seligman, "the emphasis in modern societies on consensus is based on interconnected networks of trust – among citizens, families, voluntary organisations, religious denominations, civic associations. Similarly, the very "legitimation" of modern societies is founded on "trust" of authority and governments as generalisations" (Seligman, 1997, p.14). Parents' narratives suggested that the notion of trust is a significant factor in how they perceive their children's involvement in Hub67, since they are clear about the benefits especially those which demonstrate a relaxed and optimistic way – indicating there is little concern about the provision.

One of Bourdieu's theoretical notions of class claims socially effective communities put an emphasis on the function of power and conflict. Bourdieu maintains that in social relationships which increase an individual actor's ability to advance their interests and generate social capital as a resource in the absence of social struggles (Bourdieu, 1984). A lack of social struggles might suggest that trust has been "rewarded" by positive development of communal relations (Newton,1999, p.8) and

that benefits have been gathered as a result of past struggles (Seligman, 1997) and integrative values (Coleman, 1988). Siisiainen (2000, p.3) refers to this as "brave reciprocity", when the short-term interests of a group are well functioning, based on generalised trust in voluntary networks and associations.

Figure 17: Theme Three Learning

7.4.3. Theme Three: Learning

The final theme, derived from the analysis of data, is learning which refers to individual, group and community learning. In the focus groups, the parents spoke about how and what they felt their children had learnt as a result of participation in the hub and how they perceived this. They relayed scenarios and descriptions of how they had identified learning in their children's behaviour, activities and knowledge with enthusiasm and were precise about the area of learning. This theme was developed as a result of transcripts which evidenced four different areas of learning, as expressed by the parents. These include practical development and the acquisition of skills in crafting, but largely those which are evidenced by end products, such as paintings. Parents also discussed the acquisition of knowledge about local history as being positive educational elements of their time in the hub, and indeed, of the wider community. In

addition, the parents describe their children's confidence in speaking out as being signs of advancing confidence and self-awareness.

The following extracts relate to how the parents considered their children's experience at the hub:

Eva: *No worries, I was just going to say I see the staff encouraging them and working really hard to get them involved in things and its great cos they do it with such passion and it rubs off on the kids, it's great I think, they learn a lot. My [young person's name] has gone all public speaking and super confident – she's a different person really – she used to be so shy.*

Ron: *I don't know if they learn anything and that, but they bring stuff home that they've made and that, you know like paintings and all that. Oh, and they made t-shirts, I think.*

Susy: *Exactly that. Mine are so interested in everything that's going on around here now and they tell me stuff all the time – the other day they were telling me about the fact that rubber was invented here, I mean amazing stuff. I agree that they are more confident and seem to have grown up I would say.*

Ivy: *I don't know much about politicians to be honest, but my boys are learning about it, you know, like meeting the local ones and that and they are getting really interested in it. Good for them I say.*

Petra: *I think that [young person's name] is getting more confident since she's been coming here and certainly is more vocal and talks for everyone. I think it's given her a sense of worth in a funny sort of way.*

Deli: *Oh yeah, my kids take what they do here very seriously – they think it's important and they like to tell the other kids and us, what's going on and what's changing and all kinds of random information – but they like knowing it and sharing it, you know.*

Mic: *I like, didn't really take a lot of notice, like, before but since they've been on the street team, my kids have like made me interested in it, like I look forward to hearing what they've been doing and finding out and like, they do talks and like presentations and I like, feel proud of them.*

Ivy: *You see I speak my mind, and what you have always had here is the traditional east end, working class family. Poor mainly but content with their lot, you know. It's*

always been quiet, and a bit cut off, but people have always known each other and looked out for each other. Now I've got nothing against all the artist and creative people, but at one time they were all working away, and no one really knew about them. Now they are all over the place and doing this and that, murials and all that and the new bars and clubs and all that is opening, and most people don't want it, you know, it scares them. They don't understand the hippy types on the canal, no offence, or the trending groups and they feel like they are being ousted out because they are definitely not being included. But everyone wants to learn, you know and then make choices. Hub67 is a great thing, really and I want my kids to learn all the options and to make up their minds about stuff and learn all the time.

Mel: *You know I didn't think about the hub as being educational, but you know, I think it is. They learn to do things and all that, but they learn about their surroundings and their neighbourhood and I can't fault that. It's like a good way to educate them without all the hassles of school.*

Blue: *I agree. I think there is so much learning you can do without school, at the end of the day, what you learn about yourself and others is the most important learning you can do. Schools are so stuffy and formal that no one ever gets anything out of them but learning about who you are and where you come from serves you for life.*

Petra: *My kids are so much more aware and confident now. They literally talk to anyone and everyone and have become assertive and mature. I am not sure whether it wouldn't have happened if they didn't come here but it definitely seems to have happened very quickly.*

These parents' responses show that they recognise the social educational elements of their children's involvement in the hub. They identify skills and techniques which they have developed, perhaps in terms of making things, but also in terms of their ability to communicate with others and develop self-confidence, awareness and strong attitudes and values. In 1943, Morgan's research into British youth clubs declared them 'training places in the social art of citizenship' (Morgan, 1943, p.102) and some 70 years later they still maintain (those which have survived) an important place in civil society as the UK continues to focus on young people's citizenship education, moral fortitude and their leisure activities as part of a wider global context (Mills and Kraftl,

2014). Indeed, the NCS scheme, discussed in chapter two, declares informal education as being about the lessons that cannot be taught in schools. There is, undoubtedly a diversity in definition and understanding of informal education since it refers to a number of everyday and spontaneous learning experiences that vary across contexts and should be a process of learning which flows from the day-to-day concerns of young people (Falk et al, 2009).

As described by the parents, there is a reliance on positive association which in turn is dependent upon dialogue and conversation and strong relationships between educator (youth workers) and educate (young people). It is likely that such relationships are founded on trust, affinity, respect and even affection (Jeffs and Smith, 2005), in an environment in which young people are encouraged to reflect on their lives in a supportive environment (Young, 2006) or rather, where they are, in fact, learning from life (Freire, 2008).

7.5. Youth workers perceptions and perspectives on open access youth work

As previously stated, it was important to gather some notion of how the youth workers had experienced their interactions with young people at Hub67 and how, if at all, they believed they had made progress or a difference in any way. The themes which emerged from the data were positive action, investment and reward. The following extracts are taken from transcripts and highlight the themes identified.

Figure 18 - Theme one: Positive action
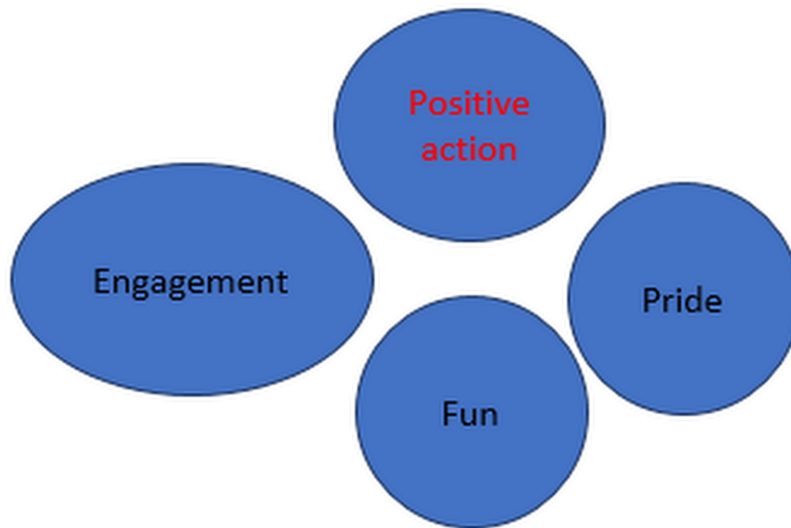
Researcher: '*So how has it all been?*'

YW1: '*It's been an uphill battle, from the start – never really knowing whether we were going to be able to do this or not. But it's such a relief and a pleasure that we have managed it and that the young people have had such a positive experience. I am so proud of them they have been amazing, and I couldn't ask for anything more.*'

YW2: '*It's been amazing to be honest I am so pleased with how it's gone and how the young people have responded and engaged, you know, they are such a great bunch and they really seem to love it here.*'

YW3: '*The young people are brilliant I am so pleased with them and what they have achieved and how they've taken to this and all. You know, they have just got stuck in and really engaged with the place and the community. It's all been good fun and rewarding.*'

YW4: '*Yep, it's been good. They are great individuals and I'm really proud of them.*'

YW5: '*Yes, I agree, they've been brilliant, and I am so pleased to have been a part of it.*'

Researcher: '*So, you use positive words to describe the young people, like brilliant, great and your experiences similarly. Why do you think that is?*'

YW4: '*Well, I guess it's because that's how it's been. Everyone has had fun and engaged, and made connections, you know.*'

YW5: '*Yeah, I suppose it's about how we view the young people, they are full on when they are here and they are happy and interested and [um] I suppose that rubs off on us, in a way.*'

YW2: '*I definitely get a buzz being here and I know that comes from the young people, as they are always on a high when they are here and, yeah it rubs off.*'

Researcher: '*Are you saying that everyone is happy and having fun whilst they are here?*'

YW2: '*Well, I suppose most are. There's always someone who is a bit down or not engaged, I guess.*'

YW3: '*Mmmm, well not everyone has fun all the time, but it's not a problem if someone isn't on top of the world as they can just hang out really and just be whatever they want to be, really.*'

Researcher: '*But it sounds like you expect the default to be having fun, am I right?*'

YW4: '*Well yes, I guess we do, we want them to have fun and if they are not there is other work to do, I guess, if you see what I mean. You gotta find out why they are not happy and try to help them sort things out, I guess.*'

YW2: '*Sure, we want them to enjoy it here but if they don't, we don't judge them, we try and work out how to make it fun.*'

YW5: '*I think what we mean is that if they are down or not interested in something, that's ok, but we would look for ways of getting them involved or finding something else for them to do, or just talk to them, find out what's wrong.*'

YW3: '*I think the fun thing is a bit misleading, I think what we want is for the young people to want to be here, whatever mood they're in and we do our best to work with them on whatever level they engage.*'

Researcher: '*You also talk about them engaging, what do you mean by this?*'

YW4: '*It means that they engage in relationships with us, they are happy to discuss and interact on a personal level, like on a one-to-one basis.*'

YW5: '*I think it means that they engage in the process of youth work which involves respectful relationships based on trust and respect, mutual trust and respect.*'

YW2: *'It's about them wanting to be here and develop relationships with us, so that we can get to know them and work out how best to support or signpost them, as and when needed. It's also about them having a voice and being heard – like in real time.'*

These extracts suggest that the experiences young people have, according to the youth workers, should be positive and fun-filled, according to the youth workers and that this, in turn, influences how they feel about their work. The notion of engagement implies, (according to their responses), that young people enter into adult-youth relationship willingly and voluntarily and that these engagements promote further development and association. The element of pride and pleasure that the youth workers articulate is somewhat vague in interpretation, since it is challenging to understand how pride might be felt in environments which do not have some kind of membership or investment. Therefore, it is appropriate to suggest that the youth workers see what they do with young people as genuine investment in the process and the relationships – leading to pride and pleasure when positive outcomes are observed.

Figure 20: Investment and Reward

7.6. Investment and reward

In the second set of extracts the youth workers indicate how and in what ways they feel that the young people they worked with benefitted from open access youth work, but the thematic analysis has focussed on the ways in which the youth workers have applied their work to the development of young people, and, indeed, what they have contributed in order to make it possible, hence the notions of investment and reward in this theme, reward being the advancements or achievements of the young people themselves.

YW2: *I think they get a lot out of being involved because they keep coming back. It's not just about us, it's also about them getting time to be with their friends and other young people and time to be themselves. You know, young people don't get much opportunity to be themselves without being judged or monitored in some way, do they?*

YW3*: They don't, but I don't agree we don't monitor them cos that implies we don't, and we do – we watch how they behave and interact and develop all the time. If we didn't, we wouldn't know how well we were doing with them, or how well they were doing with themselves or others – if that makes sense.*

YW5: *Yeah, it does, but we do it in a way which is not judgemental or instructive – so their parents might tell them off for something, but we would talk to them about the same thing in a different but equal way – not as a parent.*

YW1: *Transactional Analysis – we talk to them and deal with them on an equal, adult to adult level, that's why.*

YW2: *Sometimes that is harder than it sounds though, if they are not in an adult mode then they are still acting like children and you can't always get them to shift out of it. But I agree that's what we aim for.*

Researcher: *So, you think that talking to them as equals, or as adults is beneficial to them, in what ways?*

YW1: *Of course, it encourages them to see people as equals and not adults making decisions about or for them, and they are able to rationalise, reflect and understand things, like how they impact other people by their behaviour, how they develop values and what they want to value and who and all. They can see things from a different*

point of view but also know that they are having an open and non-judgemental discussion or intervention with someone.

YW2: *Yes, and they learn that thinking as people as equals and also being equal to others is positive for their minds and behaviour.*

YW4: *It has to be of benefit, they don't experience it anywhere else, or it's unlikely that they do.*

Youth workers often use transactional analysis theory in describing or carrying out their work (Ord, 2009; Davies, 2005; Merton et al., 2004), particularly in relation to the period of development when young people are breaking away from their parents emotionally and psychologically (Biddulph, 1984), and no longer wish to engage as children. The way adults and young people see and interact with each other requires greater parity and process than most other adult/young person exchanges impose (Davies, 2005) and this often helps in defining the relational dynamic between youth workers and young people in professional settings (Ord, 2009). Transactional analysis (Berne, 1964) models can be complimentary; successful and uncomplicated as well as mutually beneficial, yet when crossed or confused it can be antagonistic, not mutually beneficial and can break communication altogether.

Further extracts give some insight into how the youth workers perceived their experiences:

Researcher: *What do you think young people have learnt as a result of their involvement in Hub67?*

YW4: *They've learnt loads, how to communicate better with each other, without cursing and cussing. They've learnt how to interact with people they don't know, appreciate people they don't know and not be so insular and protective of their space or environment.*

YW2*: I think they have learnt to be young people without fear of being called out or oppressed in some way, they are so used to being told to move on or shut up that it took them a while to work out that it was ok to be noisy or funny or just loud.*

YW5: *I think a lot of them have grown in confidence and realised that they can have fun, or ask questions, or just sit and chill without being judged and that what they say has value, they are important, and people can listen and take notice, as well as have a positive relationship with them. I remember when we started here the number of them who expected me to tell them off or ban them or things like that, because that is what they were expecting. I think they've actually learnt that they can expect adults to be respectful to them and perhaps understand them.*

YW2: *They've gained a place in their community, I think. They were kind of silent contributors in a sense and certainly didn't have a space or place in it. The ways they have become active and involved in the community has been amazing. They know so many people and they get opportunities and invitations to learn and take part and even give advice on things and, you know, I am sure this would not have happened before, you know, it's like they are suddenly part of the community as opposed to be on the outskirts of it. They even tell us about things that are going on and places they've been and people they've met and all that – I feel strongly that it's made such a difference to them, definitely but also to the community - I can't really explain it, but it's like young people are seen now whereas before they just weren't. No one really cared what they thought or did and they definitely weren't you know, asked to get involved in anything.*

YW4: *Yeah, I agree with that too. They have given a lot back as well as got a lot out of it and I they are confident and assertive and no one can boss them around anymore, they have a right to be here and they know it. They get invited to more things than we do, and they love it.*

YW3: *I do too. The community is much stronger for them, I feel. They have brought such vibrancy and enthusiasm to things and people like to hear what they think and how they feel about stuff – they are confident and make decisions and speeches and all kinds of stuff that I don't think they would have done before. They are not scared to tell Councillors what they think or what they need and if people don't agree with them, they are able to argue in a way which makes people listen. I'm proud of them.*

In these extracts the youth workers identify the young people's progression and development as significant. They talk about their ability to interact with each other, adults and the community with confidence and in community engagement which has

impressed and influenced as well as refreshed. In regenerated environments there is often aspiration for increased citizen participation and responsibility (Etzioni, 1995. Giddens, 1998; Tam, 1998; Rogers, 2000) and 'community capacity building' (Duncan and Thomas, 2000, p.7) and it appears from the data that young people have indeed fulfilled this in part.

Anti-social behaviour amongst young people is largely associated with neighbourhood disorganisation, dilapidation, limited resources and support (Lipsey and Derzon, 1998; Speer, Jackson and Peterson, 2001), and along with a perceived lack of interest in politics on any level, seen to be part of the condition of childhood (Buckingham, 1998) it might be expected that young people would not want to engage positively with their locality. However, the notion of 'civic virtue' (Hart, 1994; Putnam, 1995) appear to be entrenched in open access youth work philosophy, refusing to exclude young people from democracy or disenfranchise them from political affairs. Therefore, young people engaging in activities and civic education and action in the neighbourhood not only implies a renewed or invigorated interest in their community but also in positions which have empowered them to contribute and invest in it.

7.7. Summary

In this Chapter, the perceptions and experiences of young people as seen by adults have been discussed and analysed. There is a high degree of positivity from the adults, as to their feelings and appreciation of the work undertaken in the hub, both from parents who have witnessed their children's development and from youth workers, who have, for all intense and purposes, facilitated such development.

It was significant that over the period covered in this chapter's development, the landscape of Hackney Wick had altered considerably. The landscape changed not in the social housing context or in the resources and amenities available to the working-class community, but in the number of luxury apartments, bars, cafes, restaurants, yoga studios, galleries, music venues, elite cycling stores, cultural interest companies

creating highly priced recycled fashion and home ware, vintage furniture 'salons' selling dining tables and table lamps at astronomical prices. A new and vibrant night-time economy attracting ravers, revellers and drinkers into the early hours has become an emblem for Hackney Wick, post-Olympic Games.

Apart from the promise of some concrete table tennis tables situated under the flyover, and a static outside gym in Mabley Green, there was little that had changed to improve the lives of those who could not afford the designer, leather bags and cocktails on offer to new residents, nor was there much to enliven their day-to-day struggles. Hub67 had provided access to a space for young people and families to feel connected, to meet with each other without feeling misplaced or judged, where they would we welcomed and made to feel comfortable, where the offer of a coffee and cake did not come with apprehension about the cost and where, perhaps most of all, their children were not feared, deemed a nuisance or ignored.

Amidst a climate of concern about young people in public and policy discourse amongst politicians and local authorities about the lack of youth and community work, particularly in light of the devastating knife crimes and murders which had been documented over the years that this thesis was developed, and the rising concerns about children and young people being coerced into gang affiliation. Hub67 provided an appreciated function in Hackney Wick. A safe and secure space where parents knew their children were occupied, respected and cared for. A space where young people did not have to be fearful of being in the wrong place at the wrong time and in which they enjoyed making friends, being listened to and learning new things about themselves and their community.

I began this thesis by presenting the dynamic which embodied the young people in the research neighbourhood. The dynamic includes predictive poor social and psychological outcomes for young people based on stressful circumstances, poverty, familial complexities and being at heightened risk of adversity. I have also discussed the need for young people to experience conditions which enable them to function effectively in everyday life and maintain good mental well-being. Young people's

development is generally measured by their ability to adjust and achieve at various stages of their life cycle. However, these are largely associated with their ability to establish and maintain friendships follow rules of prosocial conduct, participation in extra-curricular activities and crystallise a cohesive sense of self (Maston and Coatsworth, 1998).

Young people's self-awareness encompasses their ability to believe in themselves, think and develop individually, recognise their mental health and well-being as well as associated attitudes and values (Garmezy,1993), yet many studies have identified that resilience in young people is enhanced by relationships with at least one, caring, competent, reliable adult in social settings (Miller, 2007; Holloway, Valentine and Cooper, 2002; Resnick, Harris and Blum, 1993; Richmond and Beardslee,1988; Rutter, 1987). It therefore correlates that relationships with youth workers at Hub67 were indeed enjoyed by young people and identified by parents as essential to the participation and development of the young people in terms of their engagement and ongoing confidence. This will be discussed further in Chapter eight.

CHAPTER EIGHT – Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to establish and discuss how the research questions were addressed, to explore and identify important implications of this study for open access youth work in urban settings and for future youth work practice. Structured in three parts, this chapter will first provide a discussion and summary of the key findings. In the second part, implications for youth work professionals, youth work theory and their practice will be explored, and recommendations made for future research. The final part of the chapter will examine the strengths and limitations of the study, providing critical reflection on the contributions of this research to the field.

8.1. Returning to the research problem

It is necessary to return to the original research problem in order to discuss the findings. The research questions were 'What is the contribution of youth and community work to the improvement of young people's lived experiences in contemporary urban settings?' The aim was to identify how youth and community work practices address the difficulties and challenges experienced by young people and to determine how they potentially benefit from open access youth work opportunities, and how these benefits might be characterised and conceptualised. This question was posed in the context of a unique urban experience which resulted following the 2012 London Olympics and offered an opportunity to interrogate the emerging landscapes and perceptions of those involved in the affected neighbourhood. This question also presented a challenge to youth and community work practice by providing an opportunity to examine and evaluate the contested, challenged and stretched practice of youth work.

The research problem established whether young people benefit from open access youth work in a changing and challenging context undergoing urban regeneration and in what ways this knowledge might enhance, change or impact youth work practice and thinking in future climates and landscapes. In chapter one, I discussed the position

and role of youth work in contemporary society, by describing the tensions and challenges in the maintenance and delivery of open access provision, particularly in urban environments.

Youth work is often apparent and relevant in urban environments generically, due mainly to the needs and inequalities in such societal arrangements, therefore the research problem seeks to determine how youth and community intervention contributes positively to the lived experiences of young people in the midst of such regeneration, gentrification and isolation in the place they know to be their home. The very nature of their experiences of regeneration, quite often, become the rationales behind decision makers and funders, desire to support one to one targeted youth work which aims to address risky or violent behaviour, anti-social behaviour, or school exclusion in individual young people via so called NEET (not in education, employment or training) projects. The direct relationships between young people and urban deprivation may be seen to offer further deficits as opposed to strengthen, build community, feelings of belonging and a sense of place. In this study, the research aimed to determine whether there was a positive role for open access youth work in the lives of young people who would be otherwise excluded from decision making, developmental processes on how and why their environment would change.

Alongside the urban and regenerative contextual environment, discussions and debates in youth and community work currently, and to some extent historically, have been focussed on the purpose and nature of the work, and how it does and can impact young people. This was discussed in chapter two. However, the tensions between what is considered traditional, associational youth work and what has become targeted and 'problem specific' youth work or intervention are significant in the discussions within this thesis. On the one hand. there is some evidence that open access youth work can positively impact young people, whilst on the other, the strength of evidence which might indicate this as a long-term prospect is hindered by the length of the study itself and indeed by common restrictive resources afforded to the work across the country. The case study has been recorded and analysed in this thesis with relevant developments noted and discussed. The study provides a

chronological account of the way in which Hub67 was conceptualised, realised and actualised, and documents, therein, the obstacles and challenges which were encountered. This chapter aims to locate, in discussion, the four previous chapters, and their findings in intense and analytical debate, to establish the key elements which address the research questions and contribute to further and future discussion, research and youth work practice.

Considerable change has been recognised throughout and since the completion of this thesis both locally and nationally around young people and youth services. The local landscape has been almost completely reimagined, and the landscape of Hackney Wick has changed dramatically. Factories and derelict land have been transformed into blocks of luxury apartments and workspaces alongside coffee shops, critically acclaimed restaurants, bars, and fitness studios. The canal has barges and boats three deep, while the Canalside is littered with restaurants, bars, and endless graffiti, alongside a vast gym and a new primary school. The ongoing developments and changes have been discussed in the finding's chapters and how young people responded to them is explored. Hub67 still exists yet the skatepark and surrounding land has been cultivated for the newly designed train station, which stands where once three factories did and is ready for more luxury apartments. What is significant about this transformation is that there remains no services or amenities, apart from the hub. Eateries and bars are inaccessible to those on a low income and no free or subsidised activities are on offer.

This research, which endured some years during which the idea of youth work in urban environments have been a significant topic of discussion, due mainly to the rising concerns around young people's safety and gang association. Calls for youth work intervention has been common rhetoric from politicians and social commentators (NYA, 2018). In 2019 the London Mayor introduced a 45-million-pound intervention and engagement project, allocating youth workers in accident and emergency and trauma units across London to work with young people involved in or on the edge of violence or exploitation (London.gov.uk). Embedding youth workers in hospitals and major trauma centres aims at encouraging young people to take a different life path.

According to John Poyton, Chief Executive Officer of Redthread, a prominent youth work organisation "*expanding provision is great news for London young people; more youth workers mean opportunities for teachable moments and for enabling young people to turn their lives around*" (Redthread, 2019). However, this injection of cash does not support open access youth work and focuses on targeted areas of work with young people. This statement presents some challenges to the traditional role of youth work in suggesting that by its very nature, youth work is a 'teachable' transaction, which will be discussed further, later in this chapter.

Also, in 2019, the National Youth Agency launched its High 5 Manifesto-Investing in Youth Work, making recommendations to government to ensure better futures for young people, claiming that participation in communities make for better lived experiences and that there should be investment in young people's fair access to learning, fun and youth work (although not necessarily at the same time) and that, and most interestingly, at least two youth workers should be allocated to every school (NYA, 2019). It appears that during the process of this case study there has been a dedicated shift in policy towards a preference for advocacy for youth work existing within the formal educational structures and understanding.

8.2. Reflections on the research methods

An experiential case study approach was adopted to capture lived experiences and neighbourhood narratives in the context of considerable change (Brewer, 2000). Aiming to identify and understand perceptions and experiences made an experiential focus essential (Holloway, Brown and Shipwey, 2010, Shipway and Stevenson, 2012). Neighbourhood perspectives and lived experiences are subjective and are likely to reflect various localised values and emotions. The study was not devised specifically, as an ethnographic study but, as I explained in chapter three, being able to interrogate my experiences (values and emotions) throughout the study was provided via an ethnographic lens (Andersen and Austin, 2012, Shipway and Jones, 2007; Palmer,

2001; Boyd, 2012) which represents both my practitioner and research roles (Holloway and Jones, 2013).

As a researcher my role could have been described as trying to "affect social change" (Marr and Read, 2007, p.519) as a researcher activist. Considering my multiple roles, an experiential case study and learning in the research context led to the evolution of the study. Throughout the study the research process, my reflections, actions, activities, research subjects, my lived experience outside of the topic and in the youth and community work field plus my embodied characteristics were all significant (Coglan, 2012; Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001; Phillimore and Goodson, 2008). It was necessary to acknowledge my lived experience in the research as well as my centrality to the investigation along with my complicity in the shaping of the study and acquisition of knowledge, (Botterill and Carruthers, 1999; Anderson and Austin, 2012;) particularly in relation to my long-term engagement in the research.

My work was also influenced by emotional and relational aspects outside of my research. Family relationships provided opportunities and created constraints, yet my family were also members of the studied community located in the neighbourhood and amidst the ongoing developments. Yamagishi (2011) undertook similar exploration of relationships that influenced her research and concluded that this can, in fact, provide a more critical and richer reflexive assessment. My family were supportive and keen to attend some events but also provided a platform for me to articulate emotions, thoughts and frustrations that I would not have shared publicly as a participant in the community as well as the research O'Reilly (2009) claims: *"A participant is a member of a group, joining in activities, sharing experiences and emotions, contributing to debates, and taking part in the very interactions on which social life is built"* (O'Reilly, 2009, p.151).

Initially, my intention was to speak to people about their experience and attend events and meetings. As a researcher, my life would inevitably be affected in similar ways as theirs by the unfolding changes associated with the Olympic Games and development and as a result the role of participant became more relevant and the observational role

less realistic. Hennigh (1981) identifies the difficulties in remaining detached in long term research, suggesting that an activist role is more ethical because it means that the researcher invests time and energy in the community. My long-term engagement indeed established common experiences and connections as the project progressed.

As the instrument of data collection, I was aware that I needed to ensure sensitivity, reflexivity, intuition and remain receptive (Leedy and Ormarod, 2001; Patton, 2002). Continued fieldnotes enabled me to reflect on my experience and findings. Aiming to develop understanding of local perceptions and experiences of the rapidly changing area. Endeavouring to establish 'practical wisdom' (Flyvbjerg, Landman and Schram, 2012, p.1) about how to act on the social problems in the study context, (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius & Rothengatter) a focus on the knowledge grew from intimate familiarity needing to be contextualised.

8.3. Researcher personal and professional development

As my position as researcher developed throughout this case-study I became more reflective and aware of the notions which lead me to undertake this research but also what motivated me to engage with my community in the first place. I was already an active member in the community as chair of resident and tenant associations and in fundraising for improvement and community projects. Over the course of the study, I was also chair and vice chair of local activist groups including the CIG, the Hackney Wick Festival and the Wick Award as well as a conduit between the LLDC and local residents. My strong sense of justice and equality drove me to want to ensure that my neighbours were included in decisions and opportunities surrounding the Olympic Games and based on my experience of their lack of participation and interest in the emerging creative scene in the area, I was aware that this would require dedication and influence. Most importantly, I was aware and troubled by the lack of opportunities for young people to be in safe, enjoyable places supervised yet not judged, in the area. Having completed this study, it now seems both strange and obvious that I became the neighbourhood voice and advocate for young people. Strange because I was not

planning to be yet obvious because with my experience and positionality, I was best placed to take it on.

My roles and responsibilities changed over the course of the study. In chapter four, it is the disappointment in the Olympic event and its effects on Hackney Wick which is discussed. In chapter five and six, obstacles and challenges in advocating and supporting young people were discussed and in chapter seven, the rapid and changing environment is detailed.

As described, my role within the community became progressively more predominant and I was accruing, what seemed a huge sense of responsibility. My community roles were sustained in terms of managing resident meetings, concerns and opportunities both on an estate based and community festival level, but in addition I was leading new groups, actions and funding opportunities. I was responsible for the distribution of Lottery funds and in deciding how support from the LLDC should best be utilised whilst meeting regularly to discuss these issues with corporate, political and resident representatives. The growing amount of work, time and action which was required as it progressed often felt intense and it would be disingenuous to say that these roles did not prove stressful at times particularly since my foundation remained as a youth and community professional overall. There were also, moments when I queried my involvement, reflecting on why I was motivated to do this and what might occur if I did not. At times, I needed to stop and reflect on this, and consider my intensions and to admit that the challenge was inviting. At every juncture I was certain of my commitment to young people and my belief in the value of youth and community work. I utilised the skills which I have developed and mastered over my career and was grateful for the experiences and learning that I had endured as a result of working with diverse groups and individuals over the years.

There were more than a few times when I felt personally and professionally isolated and alone in my pursuit, not least because generating physical support from residents proved so challenging – though verbally and notionally in support of the project, they were hesitant to appear in person at meetings or events. There were certainly,

tensions between my professional and private attitudes and values at times, and I was often especially torn as a resident of Hackney Wick when opportunities arose for me to take part in some of the unique experiences which I had and enjoyed. However, I viewed these on reflection as my social capital with which I was able to activate and utilise for the benefit of the community. These opportunities did highlight for me nevertheless the exclusion which residents were subject to and that if there was a pecking order, young people were certainly at the bottom.

Key to my reflective experience was indeed the highs and lows of volunteering and the way in which ideas, opportunities and events were viewed. Limited attendance and participation in community activities can be demotivating, especially when the aims are well meaning and aimed at supporting and enhancing lived experiences. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the different priorities and agendas which underpin people's day to day lives and make allowances for this. In response, pro-activity and involvement in and of those for whom the events are intended became even more a driver for them. I was and have remained somewhat bemused, although sympathetic to the divide that exists between the creative community and the residents and feel frustrated by not having made more of an impact on this yet understand that this is a significant part of regeneration and the isolation of resident communities when it does not relate to them or improve their living conditions or potential.

Many of the frustrations, tensions and concerns I have had over my career about youth work and young people came to the fore in my reflections during this case study. The foremost being that youth work is poorly represented nationally, with few voices of note advocating and appreciating the professional potential of the interventions made with young people. But aligned with this is the consistent and relentless misunderstanding of what youth work is and what it has the potential to achieve. For the most part I can reflectively apportion much blame for this to the service itself – not least because I fear that it has failed to position itself robustly enough within a distinct professional framework, at least not one which is readily transferable or translatable. A strong and dedicated ethos and mission have survived and been drawn upon over the decades, but this has not been sustainable through the political and economic

shifts which have dominated in recent times. Since other professions are immediately understood by their title, it would seem appropriate to ensure that the work that is done with young people is also understood, by nature of its own title – youth work has not so far, managed to do this. Job titles such as Coach, Counsellor, Trainer or Mentor are all decipherable but have dedicated remits – perhaps a 'Youth Worker' is aiming to do too much or play too many roles. Indeed, what is being achieved with young people is not being translated into tangible positive outcomes and this, in itself is undermining its credibility. To adhere to current trends and aspirations, it may be that Youth Social Coaches say, become the new Youth Worker. I suggest this in light of the limited understanding of the term and purpose of the youth worker and in light of the potential it can afford to young people and communities.

Giving youth work a new image and brand might merely paper over the contentious 'cracks', although in creating brands, very often the 'product' needs to be differentiated, unusual and unique, which could be claimed as characteristic of youth work. Most successful brands which we understand and trust as consumers have a clear and simple idea that sets them apart or encourages us to choose them, such as the preferred washing powder, the favourite teabags and the most attractive car. Branding experts (Olins 2003), insist that key to a good brand is a focus on coherence, consistency and powerful emotion and or attitude – making something which people recognise and understand. Olins (2003) also advises that in launching or rebranding there needs to be clarity about the product quality. Rebranding is necessary when the existing brand perception, message and image is outdated and no longer aligns with business strategies, goals and priorities (Cheinman 2012). As advertising agencies encourage us to believe rebranding is a '*fundamental cultural shift'* (Cheinman 2012, p. 47). If this is to be taken to apply to youth and community work, it could be the tool with which new positioning and platforms meet desired objectives and the way in which youth work reconnects with its audience and inspires action.

8.4. Discussion of findings

The findings can be divided into two interrelated theme clusters which address the research questions, namely the impact that Hub67 had on young people and on the wider community. The first of these clusters, including themes of maintenance, self-care, awareness and wellbeing, as discussed in chapter seven, have been considered more closely as being about self-awareness. The second cluster emerging from notions of association, peer-ship, friendship and participation, relate to citizenship. Both these clusters will be utilised to discuss and summarise this case study. The chart in Fig: 8.8.1. identifies the themes discussed in chapters 6 and 7 and how they relate to the theme clusters to be discussed in this chapter.

Table 3 - Clusters of themes

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	SELF AWARENESS
Entitlement	Boredom
Obligation	Maintenance
Connection	Learning
Positive Action	Awareness
Community	Self-belief

The cluster of themes, as I have described have emerged from gathering together themes previously analysed and discussed in chapters five, six, and seven. The clusters were identified by linking them with common concerns and themes over the course of the research. Civic Engagement, for example emerged as an umbrella term which encompassed all of the elements of entitlement, obligation, connection, positive action and community. Self-Awareness was drawn from the links between themes, boredom, maintenance, learning, awareness and self-belief.

In chapter two, I explained the difficulties that exist in understanding what youth work is, what it does and how it is understood and made strong claims that it is not generally

accepted as part of the educational curriculum as we know it. I have stated in chapter four and seven, that youth work does not have near enough potential for change without the engagement or recognition of community and neighbourhoods. Throughout the discussion, the need to include support and learning for young people who are marginalised and socially excluded or deemed to be 'at risk' (Calviedndo and Scmidl, 2016; Sealey, 2015; Weil et al, 2007) was relevant in particular respect to the young people in this case study.

In chapter six and seven, I showed the perceptions of both parents and young people of the differences between their experiences of formal and non-formal education. In almost all cases, both generations determined that there was a better sense of enjoyment, the ability to relax and have fun within the non-formal environment. They agreed that mental health, self-confidence and the ability to participate equally on the part of young people was improved and encouraged in Hub67. For most young people, friendship is an important element in their development and in many years of research indications suggest that they are interested most in the 'informal' as opposed to the 'formal' school structures when considering and nurturing relationships (Bryan, 1980, Meyenn, 1980, Measer and Woods, 2020). It is acknowledged by Measer and Woods that young people prefer to interact among themselves, 'mediating the teacher's message through informal groups' (2020, p.4) and that this is likely to be interpreted by teachers as 'deviant and to provoke censure' (2020, p.4). Some of the young people alluded to this in the findings, as did their parents. Adults may hold negative memories of school and project these onto their children's experiences.

8.4.1. Young people's experiences of open access youth work: Self awareness

Self-awareness skills are linked to notions of 'mindfulness' as a holistic teaching technique, originally aimed at the relief of emotional suffering, to increase compassion and kindness and achieve peace and enlightenment (Armstrong, 2001. Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Coholic, 2011). Mindfulness encourages awareness to emerge as a result of paying attention to purpose and present non-judgementally, calmly questioning who we are and how we place ourselves in the complex world we inhabit. Defining

mindfulness has proved challenging for many (Bishop et al, 2004. Grossman, 2008; Hick, 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 2003) although there is consensus around its 'aim of driving desirable change' (Kabat-Zinn, 2003 p.145).

There is evidence that mindfulness as an activity is acceptable and well tolerated by young people, particularly those who suffer with anxiety (Burke, 2010, Thompson and Guantlett-Gilbert, 2008; Semple et al, 2005) and that behaviour, stress and emotion regulation may follow after participation in self-awareness focussed programmes (Liveham, 1993; Colholic, 2011; Hayes et al, 1999; Bogels et al, 2008). Significant improvements in behaviour problems, stress and attention deficit have been improved in young people when self-awareness techniques are introduced, as is their notions of life focus, purpose, social and emotional resilience (Napoli? 2005; Wall, 2005; Birnbaum, 2005; Semple et al, 2010).

Young people living in impoverished, stressful and socially complex circumstances often have difficulty articulating their thoughts and modulating their affect. They are likely to have limited social skills, have trouble remaining grounded in the present and lack resilience (Hansen and Larsen, 2005; Webb, 2006). Low self-esteem, hopelessness and lack of optimism stunt emotional intelligence and management in stressful situations and interpersonal relationships are common factors in young people's perceptions of their life experiences in low-income and under-resourced families (Racusin et al, 2005).

The findings identified that young people reported their participation in Hub67 as positive, motivational and in some cases, empowering. However, it was also reported through case study fieldnotes that there were many obstacles in the developmental process, periods of youth inactivity and support for Hub67 during its progress. In the findings chapters I discussed issues of trust and investment in the associational relationships which had developed between young people and youth workers and how this could have been damaged as a result of 'unfulfilled promises' to young people and the disappointment and frustration which came with having to wait for "something to happen". What has been significant in the responses from young people, their parents and the youth workers themselves is the notion of the trusting relationships which were

established and maintained, and how this made them feel, participate and develop throughout the case study.

Youth empowerment, as in the Cycle of Courage model (Brendtro, Brokenleg, Camp and Van Bockern, 2002) discussed in chapter two, has been considered as essential to positive youthful development, and as a multi- levelled construct refers to the empowerment of individuals, families, organisations and communities in gaining mastery and control within their particular social, economic and political lived experiences in order to improve equity and quality of life (Rappaport, 1984, 1987. Zimmerman, 2000). Empowerment, whether it be individual, or collective has been associated with health and well-being (Freire, 1970; Zimmerman, 1988; Jones, 1993. Pinderhughes, 1995; Rappaport, 1997). Rocha associated this with a continuum Dimension (Rocha, 1997) in which focus is on changing the individual and the community. On an individual level this includes capacity building, integrating perceptions of personal control, a proactive approach to life and a critical understanding of the social environment (Zimmerman, 2000). Collective empowerment takes place within families or communities, enhancing skills and mutual support to affect change or improve well-being.

A safe and welcoming space where young people feel respected, encouraged, valued and supported allows them opportunities to inhabit a community-like environment in which they can share feelings and opinions, be creative, take risks and try out new things. A sense of empowerment is experienced in an environment which is owned by the participants and yet where they can be safely challenged and supported to move, perhaps beyond their 'comfort zone' (Messias et al, 2005. Jennings et al, 2006) where adults retreat into the background enabling young people to be actors; centre stage (Goleman, 1995; Jennings et al, 2006). A safe environment is one in which young people might experience success and failure without judgement and in which negative outcomes do not lead to decreased self-esteem or confidence (Cargo, 2003; Messias et al., 2005) conducive to self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). In addition, a supportive environment promotes the positive achievements of young people in their communities (Kim, 1998; Cargo, 2003) where youth workers or other adults are in

relative positions of power from which they can advocate for amidst an otherwise sceptical vision of young people (Royce, 2004; Jennings et al, 2006). In field notes it was regularly recorded that adult community members perceived young people negatively, but most showed some desire to encourage positive youth experiences and opportunities within the neighbourhood and acknowledged the potential significance of this on both the area and the lived experiences of all residents.

The notion of 'problem reduction' could be helped with adequate support, guidance and opportunities in neighbourhoods improving young people's success via social programmes, in the form of youth and community work provision. Rather than simply 'fixing the problem' a holistic approach, ongoing relationships with both adults and young people, positive choices around non-school time and variety would enhance community life - a more cynical approach might explain this by providing opportunities in which to build on strengths and reduce weaknesses. On the one hand a common-sense attitude which suggests paying active attention to young people's developmental needs has a high probability of 'paying off' in terms of young people's lived successes and on the other, remaining sceptical about the long-term effectiveness of impact.

A lack of adult and community education around the potential of youth work programmes and opportunities, makes it difficult for them to understand (as indeed it may also be for young people) how such interventions might support or enhance young people's social and personal development, rendering it difficult to convince them it has any value (Benson and Saito, 2001). It therefore becomes important, in an already deprived and struggling community, not to be complacent about young people and their needs (MacDonald and Valdiveiso, 2001) and to remain open-minded about potential and change. Adult perspectives are often those which prefer young people to display adult behaviour and decision-making, yet in young people's self-concept and amidst transitioning complexities they may find deciding whether they are 'youth' or 'adult' challenging and feel that they are situationally 'in between' (du Bois-Reymond, 1998; Plug et al., 2003. Stuaber et al., 2002; Westberg, 2004). The notion of 'yo-yo' transitioning as a result of being unable to locate themselves on any

particular biography point may be characteristic more prominently in areas where social background, education, ethnicity and economic opportunity are undermined (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997. Paris, 2003; Schlonik and Schlonik, 2009).

In considering young people's development, the accessibility of school to open access youth work is worthy of discussion, since in the case of Hub67, the majority of young people arrived immediately after school for sessions, indeed the timings were specifically designed so that they could. The subject of schooling came into the focus group discussions, not as a result of questions asked of the researcher but by the young people themselves. Reflecting on this encouraged me to consider the sense of difference and contrast that young people encountered whilst in the hub, but also, whether they were reminded of school because they still wore uniforms, albeit rather more dishevelled than they may have done during the earlier part of the day and with various alterations or additions. It may have been the fact that they were so used to only being in uniform at school that reminded them about their experience there. It is thought that uniform influences individual and group behaviour, creating team-type affiliations whilst avoiding prejudice against unfashionable or worn-out clothing (Caruso, 1996). It is possible that a sense of unity and belonging was experienced by the young people who shared similar clothing and that it encouraged a way of them seeing themselves as part of the same group and setting and determining a level or standard of behaviour or participation in the activities and opportunities. For those young people joining on their own, the familiarity of others dressed in the same way may have proved helpful. Bourdieu maintains that 'the *habitus*, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle' (1977, p. 78), and that different forms of capital are embodied in a person's *habitus* which is closely linked to how they act. Therefore, this could be applied to the notion that wearing uniform although perhaps unpopular, actually provides a platform for regulation and cultural commonality.

As I have discussed in chapter six, a topic which was mentioned consistently throughout the focus groups and field notes was food. It was of concern to young

people and parents and was perceived to be one of the failures of the provision in the hub. Significantly, young people felt that they should have access to food, in particular hot food as part of what was on offer to them. It was uncertain as to why they felt food was an essential element needed for their enjoyment at the hub but poverty and the consequences of overstretched families, not having much food at home, not having anyone at home to cook, or simply the fact that food makes them happy and therefore it would be an extension of fun. Hofstedde suggests that the desire for food, and in particular favourite food, belongs to a collective programming of the mind (Hofstedde, 1980, 1984) and Williams describes it as a general process of spiritual, aesthetic, intellectual cultural contexts and phenomena (Williams, 1976). 'Tastes are founded on social constructs' (Fowler, 1997, p.3) and are centred around cultural phenomenon (Bourdieu and de Certeau, 1984, Wright, Nancarrow, Kwock, 2001). In Victorian Britain poor families were advised to aspire to ensure they ate bread and tea each day and sweet, filling and fatty foods are seen as 'a taste of necessity' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 37) arising from a lack of choice and in providing a sensation of feeling full. The chips, burgers and fried chicken that young people craved, according to Bourdieu, indicates 'a taste for what they are anyway condemned to …the pretext for a class racism which associates with everything heavy, thick and fat' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 41).

Whatever the reasons behind young people choosing to eat 'fast food', what can be seen is their self-awareness, the acknowledgement of what they need and want. In many cases young people identified themselves as having mood changes when they had not eaten or recognised that eating fast food made them happy and feel good.

8.4.2. Young people's experiences of open access youth work: Citizenship

Youth work is not a 'single experience' (Sherraden, 2001, p.8) but is rather a collection of experiences which include being part of a new organisation, meeting and working with new people and experiences, the development of new skills but not necessarily in any different way to other institutions, such as school and family life. All of the young people who participated in this case study had significant adults in their lives, in the form of parents, stepparents or Grandparents, and even when they were in fact carers

for them, or separated in some way, it could be considered that the notion of adult/young person relationships was available to each young person. As I have previously discussed, the perspectives of parents in research around youth work is lacking (Phillip et al, 2004) although in research, which has focussed in this way, and particularly around youth mentoring, has suggested improved effectiveness of programmes for the young people (DuBois, Holloway et al., 2002; Keller, 2005). Marshall described citizenship as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community' (Marshall, 1984, p.84) which Hoxsey elaborates by suggesting that 'the promise of citizenship rests on a balance between rights and duties' (Hoxsey, 1984, p.917), but also that 'as social rights are advanced and society evolves, individual inequalities will disappear' (Hoxsey, 1984, p.918). In many ways these assumptions are now outdated, since advanced thinking and globalised constructions of what it is to be a citizen have been analysed and reassessed (Taylor, 2001; Isin, 2013; Birrell and Healey, 2013). However, though defining citizenship may be contemporarily straight-forward, determining whether citizenship is an entitlement, or an aspiration is quite another thing. In the diverse and shifting landscapes, both locally and globally, there is so much which might influence the citizenship status of young people, not least the anger and resentment that they have begun to articulate around a lack of access to certain generational opportunities deemed to have been destroyed by their parent's generations, housing, politics, employment and so on (Jericho, 2016; Salt, 2016). In the case of the young people who participated in this research, their resentment was articulated mainly around parental absence, due to workloads, family dysfunction and the expectations associated with helping out, watching siblings, caring for relatives or taking responsibility for 'adult chores' which lead them away from fun and youth lead activities and participation. "Citizenship deficit" has been described as a result of community lead responses to austerity, and there are calls for individuals and families to make efforts to remedy this themselves and not expect to be entitled to citizenship participation and status (Black, 2012; Walsh and Black, 2018). Advised that they should make lifestyle choices that take them out of poverty by relocation (Abbott, 2015). Constraints on family mobility, both social and financial, however are clear indicators of the impossibility of such options, and tend to harness the notion that young people, in particular, are indeed the 'problem' in the citizenship debate.

Low socio-economic communities are often politicised around citizenship, in attempts to encourage place-based initiatives to redress social and economic exclusion and enable local citizens to respond to redirected resources, improve situations and strengthen social and community ties (Smyth and McInerney, 2013. Bee and Pachi, 2014), presenting citizenship more firmly in local contexts where 'active citizens act for and within place-based communities and they are defined by place- based community' (Desforges et al, 2005, p.440).

Young people are expected to become active citizens, through formal education, non-formal education and indeed as community participants. Projects and programmes encourage them to 'make a difference' or 'do something great in their community' yet they are often in disenfranchised and marginalised neighbourhoods, they are viewed as "risky" citizens, on the one hand being seen as not conforming. acting out or opposing social norms and on the other they can be seen as beacons of hope, possibility and reform. More recently, citizenship has been seen more as a social rather than purely political process, (Dean, 2013; Isin, 2013; Walsh and Black, 2018) which is encouraging to smaller and more isolated communities, whilst acknowledging there are 'no rights without responsibility' (Cogan, 2012. 31).

Throughout this research, young people shared strong views about what should be happening in their local community and some were willing to engage in action at community level. Their involvement may have been encouraged by the fact that they were able to identify with their neighbourhood and that it was easier for them to trust and conceive of ideas which would directly affect them (Osler and Starkey, 2003; Vromen and Collin, 2010; Goodwin, 2013; Black, 2017), or indeed they may have found the rewards, benefits and satisfaction were more relatable and immediate for them. They may have been more comfortable and confident enacting their citizenship in the 'everyday settings that are important to them' (Torney-Purta 2002, p208). The ability to engage with and achieve direct, visible and immediate outcomes in relation to the daily issues which affect their lives may well be seen as less a means to belonging and more a sense of place in their neighbourhood, since 'contrary to much

popular government and media rhetoric on the position of young people as anti-social and breaking away from their communities, …. most young people are instead seeking membership and inclusion within them' (Hart, 2009, p.653).

8.4.3. Community, young people and social capital

Galster maintains that:

> *'although there has been a burgeoning literature on qualifying the relationship between various aspects of the residential environment and numerous outcomes for individual adults and children residing in that environment, comparably less attention has been given to uncovering empirically the causal mechanisms that yield these relationships'* (Galster, 2010, p.1)

Many scholars have attempted to identify the causes of positive neighbourly connection (Atkinson et al, 2001; Booth and Crouter, 2001; Ellen, Mijanovich and Dillman, 2001; Pinkster, 2008; and Phipps, 2009) and have often identified peer influences in low-income neighbourhoods to be evidence of negative behaviours (Case and Katz, 1991) with even more suggestions that young people having positive role models in disadvantaged areas significantly effects peer interaction (Diehr et al, 1993; Sinclair et al, 1994; Briggs, 1997a; South and Baumer, 2000; Ginther, Haveman and Wolfe, 2000; Oberwitter, 2004).

Parents involved in the focus groups for this study indicated that they trusted the youth workers with their children; they felt they presented positive adult role models and acted as potential confidants to them, who would offer them opportunities and experiences which would broaden their sense of self and future prospects, albeit that they may not have described them this way. These areas of trust and respect were demonstrated by the youth workers in the ways in which they interacted with the young people, showing commitment, genuine positive regard, attentiveness and consistency. Indeed, the strong adult role model appears to be significant in research and discussion around what youth work offers and how it works (Batsleer, 2009; Davies, 2011; Smith, 2011; de St Croix, 2018). The healthy development and integration into

communities of young people, however labelled, over the years has shifted focus (Small, 2004) with a primary function of 'keeping young people off the streets' and removing them from risk-based behaviour by encouraging active community participation (Kim, 1998; Small, 2004).

According to some academics (Schon, 2009) community and family networks are crucial, in young people's formation of aspirations (Schon, 2009) whilst others maintain that peer relationships are key influences in successful transitions to adulthood (Holland et al, 2007). Access to and the flow of information relevant to improving conditions and aspirations for poor families is often unreliable and limited (Elliot et al, 2006; Gregg, 2010). Hub67 undertook to improve this by providing a central resource for local information. Youth clubs and centres are accepted as sociable sites which make asking for, acquiring and locating information and resources less intimidating. Young people attending Hub67 seemed to be aware of events, activities and changes in the neighbourhood throughout the case study duration and mostly knew where and how to acquire local information. Aspirations to be social or active in the community and indeed in regard to shaping a personal future is usually at their height in adolescence (Catts, 2012) and it may be that desire to be active in a community is influenced by examples of civic engagement at this time in a young person's life span, and in line with NCS policy (as discussed in chapter two) involving them in volunteering at this stage may influence their future volunteering life choices.

Young people seemed to join and attend Hub67 when they had family or friends who also attended, or from recommendations from those who had had positive experiences there, indicating that familial and neighbourhood networks were key to increased attendance and acted as a reference for good activities – illustrating that some social capital was available and accessed to young people in the area during the period of the case study.

Hub67 provided territory for young people which had distinctly different values and norms from the school environment due to the fact that participation was voluntary. Young people embraced these norms and values and could be seen to adhere to,

enact and even police the space in order to maintain it as their own. It provided a safe refuge away from anti-social street behaviour, as determined by residents. Behaviour in the hub was largely similar to street behaviour in most cases, as it involved groups of young people being together, chatting, laughing and generally having fun, but it is interesting how differently such behaviour is viewed in varying venues – on the street, laughing, chatting and hanging out appears to suggest ill intent and danger to many, whereas in the hub this behaviour is 'normal' and accepted.

8.4.4. Young people's experience of urban environments

Bourdieusian habitus is embedded in shifting combinations of contemporary working-class space and displaced communities who are 'getting by' amidst deprivation of housing, employment, finance and other resources (Gunter and Watt, 2009; Kennelly and Watt, 2012). Threats to residential notions of social and spatial community and belonging were in abundance throughout this case study, as was a sense of ambiguity and 'not in my back yard'. Residents, including young people recognised that social housing is routinely framed around high crime rates, anti-social behaviour and jobless families but also demonstrated a sense of place, neighbourly conviviality and pride in their homes and gardens. Fear of 'spatial alienation and dissolution of place' (Wacquant, 2008, p.241) were evident, although not in precise terms.

There was certainly a shared sense of belonging and indications that residents and young people felt they were part of a stable community although it should be acknowledged that community feelings often gain traction when change or external threat is apparent (Sommerville, 2011) and it is when action groups and regime theory interplay, which I will discuss briefly later in this chapter. "Community" is a contested term and as I have previously noted, is a rhetorical concept applied to regenerative processes. Young people and parents acknowledged that gentrification was apparent in and around neighbouring Stratford and that this was partly due to the Olympics in 2012 and were aware of shifting of class relations and a rebalancing of sorts which did not include them.

Although there were notions that this development was baffling and perhaps unnecessary, the consensus seemed to be that they did not oppose it but hoped that there would prove to be some improvements for their lived experiences. Since social housing stock in Hackney Wick was unthreatened by 'displacement' (Davidson, 2009, p.226) as such, there was still a sense of insecurity and a legacy which was not for them. There was a distinct symbolic contrast between the corporate affluence which was emerging and the deprived estates in the area.

Throughout this case study, it was the intention to engage and motivate young people to become aware of and involved in the regeneration processes in their neighbourhood, not least to ensure they had a voice but also to encourage understanding and appreciation of what was going on around them. With critical reflection, it is evident that any participation young people had in the events leading up to and following the Olympic Games in and around Hackney Wick was largely driven by the interventions of youth and community work. Often acting as the conduit between young people and others, youth workers were advocates of young people and reminders that they needed to be included.

The relationships which developed were predominantly between adults, who would input meetings, potential events and opportunities on their behalf – and although this was translated directly to the young people, they were rarely invited to take the lead. Again, reflecting on when young people were involved, they were encouraged and welcomed, but patronised – no one really expected them to have anything to contribute and there was always a sense that their involvement was tokenistic. Indeed, if this is how I and the youth workers felt, it would be likely that the young people did also.

In gentrification studies threats to local resident health has been discussed vigorously (Idler and Benyamini, 1997; Kim and Kawachi, 2006; Izenberg, Mujahid and Yen, 2018) in terms of how regenerative neighbourhoods shift from being "food deserts" with local shops offering processed and unhealthy foods (Sullivan, 2013, p.1) to those with produce choice, organic and environmentally sustainable options at high prices, further widening the gap between rich and poor (Paez et al 2010, Sparkes et al, 2011).

I described, in chapter five how one of my neighbours, who needed a job, was overwhelmed by the look and 'feel' of a new bar which needed a cleaner, to such an extent that she felt unable even to go in to enquire about it, as the food and décor looked far too 'posh' for her.

It is clear that Hub67 was a feasible project and derived directly from the Olympic legacy and ensuing regeneration and that it was a productive and positive experience for young people (and continues to be), and that within this experience significant numbers of young people were able to access and undertake opportunities which they would not have been able to have if the hub had not been in existence. They developed skills and networks, friendships and opinions and in the time and place individual and collective social capital, community focus and meaning. They felt valued and appreciated as a result of Hub67 and many were able to pursue activities and ideas that they may not have done elsewhere. Overall, the experience was hugely positive for young people and residents and the funding and support received was invaluable, yet without the intervention, consistency and determination of youth and community workers I suspect that young people would have been completely alienated from the any regeneration and development in the area.

8.4.5. Young people, social capital and open access youth work

Young people participated in Hub67 at the same time as they were likely to be forming their social identities, marking significant areas of interest and resonance for them in music, fashion, religion, sports, entertainment and so on and there was evidence that some had made new friendships after joining the hub. New friendships invariably enable new networks and these connections inevitably encourage young people to define their own social capital via territory and connection. Hub67 being managed and maintained by local residents in turn furthered opportunity for social capital in family and neighbourhood networks through shared interest and familiarity. Since social class is fundamental in understanding community (Shaw and Mayo, 2016) relationships and collective activity are best described as social capital (Putnam, 2000). The young people attending Hub67 shared a similar social class, making

competition or isolation less likely. In the UK harsh levels of deprivation exist alongside extreme affluence for some, introducing the concept of 'communities of income' (Halpen, 2005, p. 67). Hackney Wick has become consistent with this. Such affluence, however, does not include children and young people, since it is young singles, businesses or childless couples who are moving into the neighbourhood's luxury homes.

Social capital is perceived as an imperfect yet inherently 'good' practice with a 'dark side' (Field, 2003, p71) and can be a useful tool by which to explore social practices and processes. In most theoretical concepts, young people are passive recipients of social capital resultant of their family status (Morrow, 2001; Holland et al, 2007. Coleman, 1994). Bourdieu (1986) was concerned with social injustice and inequality and how social capital might bridge these elements of community relationships and there was evidence in the findings that young people were included more in community events, meetings and activities (some decision-making) following the establishment of Hub67, which seemed to be due to more proactive sharing of information and opportunity. Certainly, theorists have collectively, associated access to information as key to social capital development (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1994; Putnam, 2000).

Throughout this case study, discoveries about how networks operated in the neighbourhood became evident as did how confidence in these promoted further networking and opportunity. For example, a parent took advantage of a photoshoot to send photographs to her family, how young people discussed changes in the area which they had learnt about at meetings, conversations they had with local politicians and artists, and how they were able to explore new skills and learning as a result of talking to people who work in the area and who had resources and access to individuals willing to share.

Young people in Hackney Wick largely lack economic capital, live in poverty and are marginalised from mainstream society, and this case study can assert that this group can acquire social capital over which they have some control and can use it to take in whatever way they choose to enhance or overcome the situations they are in, it is their

agency. Young people in Hub67 created or enhanced their own particular subculture, in the way they became a group, with their own cultural meanings, values, styles and behaviour. In her study of subcultures and social capital, Thornton introduced this as 'a means by which young people negotiate and accumulate status within their own social worlds' (Thornton, 1995, p.163). Social capital and sub-cultural social capital can be found and utilised in groups of young people sharing a space. (Tolonen, 2007), such as Hub67.

Bourdieu and social capital theories have lent a great deal to this study and in applying theory to youth and community work practice and yet however robust the findings may be in this regard, there was a sense that there was a missing element, something that may bring further, or enhanced understanding to this study.

8.4.6. Regime Theory

In the findings chapters I have discussed the challenges that were encountered in the development of Hub67 and in particular how some residents responded negatively both towards the hub and young people. I have also detailed how there was unyielding support for the project from many residents and the creative community. When I encountered Regime Theory, I became interested in considering how it applied to youth and community work. Considered more a concept than a theory, a regime is commonly understood as a set of '*principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor's expectations converge on a given area*' (Krasner, 1983, p. 13). Regimes create the coming together of expectations, establishing standards of behaviour and a mutual obligation, mitigating the anarchy which may alternatively emerge – aiming to stabilise and structure relations which benefit the regime members. The concept acknowledges that regimes are significant in enabling and facilitating cooperation among groups and become capable of exerting influence on them (Bradford, 2016). Often viewed as responses to collective action problems, regimes largely arise from self-interest among groups (Keohane, 1982). In other words, regimes are created because it is expected that the welfare of the creators will

be enhanced. Negotiated regimes are those which involve the explicit consent and bargaining on the part of participating actors (Young, 2002).

Regimes rarely remain static and as constructs, can transform due to forces which affect essential elements of it, in the form of political, social or economic factors along with external power structures. Regimes continue to persist despite experiencing changes, since the cost and investment in its development will be central to the participants values and purpose. Communication across regimes or power bases can encourage learning and interaction which leads to cooperative behaviour and understanding, building trust and stability, paving the way for enhanced collaboration (Bradford, 2016) and a shared sense of identity. Therefore, concepts of regime forming, and theory can be applied to urban environments undergoing neighbourhood renewal and regeneration both in terms of feeling the need to 'hold on' to what they know and in order to mitigate unwanted or unwelcome change, or indeed to impact how the change will look.

It struck me that this concept could readily apply to the way in which Hub67 was achieved – strength in the belief that it was needed and feasible brought youth and community workers, young people and residents together to ensure it was realised. I also considered the theories of Rogers (1980) and Goleman (2001) and how we are all actors in our specific worlds and whether the notion of regime theory in practice, brings a metaphorical stage, audience and sponsors for our actions.

8.5. Implications for practice

Hub67 presented an opportunity to remedy the 'problem' of young people "hanging out" on the streets, and both responding both to residents who found this disturbing and to young people who felt they were being unfairly treated. For all of the young people, there was a positive reason for drawing them to the hub, either activities or the opportunity to meet with peers or trusting adults. Particularly relevant in vulnerable groups, the importance of networks which hold trusted and shared norms are recorded

(Smyth, 2012; Allison and Catts, 2012; Barry, 2006) and could be utilised to address the injustices that Bourdieu identifies (1986).

However perceived, social capital has both emotional and practical significance to vulnerable groups, particularly in non-formal groups. Social capital has little relevance in formal education settings, since it has little value to teachers (Allan and Catts, 2012, Smyth, 2012) where it is replaced by passive acceptance of the norms of the school environment. However, given the positive experiences and actions young people have had in Hub67, there may be opportunity to improve relationships and attitudes around school, by systems of sharing young people's development and achievements in open access youth work via school settings.

Rather than accepting that both methods of learning are distinctly different, where no bridges can be made, collaborative methods which embrace and enhance young people's personal and educational growth may be acknowledged in both environments. If social capital is not readily transferrable, this may be the 'dark side' to which Field refers (Field, 2003, p.19).

In this case study, young people utilised their individual and group social capital in a variety of ways; by engaging in forums and creative activities with residents and business networks in the neighbourhood and by partaking in art workshops and exhibitions. In impoverished families, most family members are unable to support education and employment pathways or choices (Goodman and Gregg, 2010) making the unique opportunities available via other networks invaluable. Hub67 was best placed to provide information about and access to activities and ideas in the area, as well as promoting the development of social and local supportive relationships between young people and youth workers and parents and youth workers.

It is evident from the research that a youth space in Hackney Wick responded to parents and residents' concerns about young people and, at the very least, provided somewhere young people could be and were known to be – dispelling misconceptions about their whereabouts and behaviour in the best part. Having focussed on young

people's self-awareness and citizenship in this final chapter, it is a recommendation that these be the core components of youth work – not least because they are fundamental to successful lived experiences for young people, but also, can be readily understood. In short, self-awareness encourages the ability to understand motivations, aspirations, fears, obstacles and objectives, reflection, ownership, mental health, affects and responsibilities. When it is possible to reflect and identify emotional and cognitive personality traits and past issues, self-awareness becomes a useful tool for examining relationships, responses and opportunities whilst at the same time taking responsibility for how others see us and enables a clearer picture of how we might strengthen and build on desires, skills and needs. Whether self-awareness is associated and developed therapeutically or educationally, it is empowering, life-affirming and ongoing. Acquiring skills in self-awareness or emotional intelligence in youth, must lead to reflective and responsive adulthoods with the ability to manage and navigate lived experiences which are of benefit, in spite of the disadvantages and obstacles which may be encountered.

Citizenship is associated with political, social, cultural and economic life-domains, yet it is also closely linked to rights, entitlement, identity, membership and belonging, which in themselves can relate to aspirational and motivational goals and ideals. I have discussed how a sense of belonging and purpose can prove helpful to encourage young people to thrive and also how being gifted with a voice is positive for them and their community. By citizenship, I mean young people being part of and contributing to their community, not specifically politically but culturally, by engaging what it is to be part of a wider group, acknowledging and tolerating difference, sameness and belonging, and where young people are not seen as nuisances or disagreeable but as essential parts of the neighbourhood. This may mean that young people would be required to take greater responsibility for themselves and their actions, but with better self-awareness this became complementary. The neighbourhood too, would need to take responsibility and more considered care to include young people in any future making.

Young people are often seen as being in deficit or as suspicious may well be countered by area 'social contracts' which may be developed and utilised to challenge more traditional citizenship roles which move away from national notions and locate themselves more specifically within neighbourhoods. More multifaceted ideas of what it means to be a citizen in ways which are genuinely meaningful to young people can involve formal and informal inclusions in decision making, activism and neighbourliness, to suit and focus on the distinct or indistinct characteristics of any one neighbourhood. Austerity and the erosion of rights in terms of education, housing, adequate standards of living, health and employment have pushed young people into lacking hope and aspiration in many areas yet being useful or proactive in communities may act as a counter to this. As with all types of youth work, the focus is on the young person, and citizenship programmes could also be designed to uniquely respond to each individual. For example, at its minimal level, good citizenship could mean refraining from littering or hanging out late at night whilst more intense action might mean visiting elderly neighbours, growing vegetables in the local allotment, or taking part in resident meetings, but even more importantly, by creating interest groups or cooperatives chosen and identified as what the young people want and feel comfortable with.

If it is recognised that citizenship is about experiencing full membership of a community, it must be recognised that young people are generally excluded across a range of domains in life which in turn erodes their social capital and any trust and sense of belonging that they might feel. Young people of most denominations and social status share similar dilemmas, including deferred adulthood markers, and are left in a 'state of limbo' (Honwana, 2014, p.19) which is unfortunately actively 'replacing conventional adulthood' (Honwana, 2014, p.19). This must lead society to examine what it wants for its young and how it intends to address this – and this may mean making significant changes to who and how they are integrated with.

8.6. Dissemination of findings and recommendations for future research

The findings from this study are intended to be useful to youth and community professionals considering the value and purpose of open access youth work, and to

funders who intend to support the work. I have included reflections and observations both from my experience of the study but also in relation to my professional and personal perceptions in order to spark discussion and engage professionals in critical thought.

There is a need for further research in the field of open access youth work, and perhaps in the context of new and remodelled versions of the work, engaging similar ethos and purpose but with redesigned titles and relevant job descriptions. It may well be a lack of studies into how young people contribute to their communities which is in deficit, since, as I have described such a starting point is often problematic and nuanced with the negative perceptions of young people and their behaviour at least in deprived and isolated communities.

Given the popularity currently in advice and guidance around mental health and the need for everyone to be identifying and 'talking' about it, I consider youth work is at cross-roads. One in which it can embrace unashamedly it's therapeutic qualities and benefits to young people (and communities) or continue to battle with its contested, complex and sometimes controversial status and place within the education sector. As this case study progressed and the findings were analysed, I was concerned that I was in danger of advocating for what some may call "extinct practice"– harking back to the days when youth clubs existed as extensions to schools and every young person belonged to one. I even feared that this rendered me being labelled as a dinosaur – and past my youth work "use-by" date.

However, after some intense and often painful reflection, I am unashamed to say that this case study shows open access youth clubs are credible, relevant and needed. Though other forms of youth work are, of course also needed and relevant, evidence shows that young people thrive in an environment entirely dedicated to them and their communities.

8.7. Limitations, strengths and potential contribution to knowledge

It is hoped that this study will contribute significantly to knowledge in the field of youth and community work and that there are markers for motivation and encouragement in further research. This case study was completed over a number of years and can offer insight into the developmental and fragmented identikits and challenges for young people in a community undergoing transformation. However, the period of time during which young people were interrogated about their involvement in Hub67 was relatively short and more time spent on this may have been useful in order to follow through their experiences and development and how this has impacted their social capital and sense of community. It may have offered a more in-depth insight into their associations and intensions as community members and as young people engaged in youth and community work. It would certainly have been interesting to have followed them into early adulthood to establish how their experiences had impacted their lives. More research would have been interesting in terms of identifying the key elements of the relationships between young people and youth workers and how these have been sustained.

The key strength of this study is I hope the unique and extraordinary opportunity that it presented and the one-off experience for both me as a researcher practitioner and for the young people involved. Taking place in an exceptional place and time in history both for a significant area of London but also for open access youth work and the challenges and contested environment in which it exists.

8.8. Conclusions

My fieldnotes provided a reliable place to reflect on all elements of the development of the case study but also on the nature and purpose of open access youth work, and its place in society. Over years of working with or for young people I have held similar attitudes and values towards youth and community work as well as changed some fundamental notions over time. As I explained in chapters one and two, youth and community work is contested both as a tool for working with young people but also, as a professional practice. It has and continues to be poorly articulated by those who

undertake the work as well as those who interrogate it, yet little has been done, practically to address this. My view on this is that there is a fear of change, a reluctance to be bold and a tendency to be resentful when criticised. By this I mean that holding onto 'youth worker' as a professional title may not be optimal – when it is so difficult to explain and understand.

It may also be worth considering whether young people's engagement in conventional citizenship participation is relevant and that open access youth work can provide, particularly in areas of regeneration radical and alternative change making opportunities and become actively involved in the community development of their neighbourhoods. Young people are having to navigate stormy seas, concerned about their future and their prospects and parents seek better lives for their children, concerned that they might have fewer opportunities than they did, as adulthood markers move further away. Young people are experiencing responsibility earlier than ever before. Mindful, self-aware youth citizenship might prove to resolve the ambiguity with which young people view their neighbourhoods. Taking account of their socio-spatial and socio-economic circumstances, their lived experiences become contextualised realistically and honestly.

Finally responding to the research questions, youth and community work practice in Hub67 aimed to address and tackle head on the difficulties and challenges that young people faced generically but also as a result of regenerative development in their neighbourhood. Advocacy and ethics were also challenged during the process, but youth workers remained firm in their professional belief and abilities in order to make what often felt like a distant dream, a reality. The alignment of young people with the community, via youth and community workers was fundamental in making Hub67 a safe, welcoming, productive and reflective space for young people.

Open access youth work as undertaken by youth workers at Hub67 contributed positively, distinct improvement to the lived experiences of young people in Hackney Wick by providing them a space of their own, in which they could be uninterrupted and unjudged. They were able to reach out of the constraints of the formal education

environment to which they were accustomed and enjoy the non-formal ambiance of the space. They made new friends, developed respectful and trusting relationships with youth workers learnt new things about themselves and their community. They developed in confidence and capacity and gained a better sense of their potential. They were proud of the new skills they had gained, the meetings that they had, the relationships they established and maintained, and enjoyed the safe and considered freedom which the hub provided. In a shifting and uncertain neighbourhood, they gathered a sense of value, both in themselves and in what they had to offer. They enabled themselves to move beyond their 'comfort zones' and were challenged by and interested in new experiences, as well as just 'hanging out'.

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APPENDICES

1 Wick Award minutes

2 HWFICIG minutes 1

3 HWFICIG minutes 2

4 HWFICIG minutes 3

5 Fieldnotes 1

6 Fieldnotes 3

7 Fieldnotes 4

8 Fieldnotes 5

9 Interview transcript young people no 6

10 Interview transcript young people no 7

11 Interview transcript young people no 9

12 Focus Group transcript parents no 2

13 Interview transcript young people no 3

14 Focus Group parents no 5

APPENDIX 1

WICK AWARD

Minutes of the meeting on 8th February 2015

Held at: TROWBRIDGE ESTATE Hackney Wick E9

In attendance:

Chair: Tracie Trimmer-Platman

William Chamberlain, Damian Young, Paddy Looney, Stuart McPherson (CM)

Minutes : Dr Nancy Stevenson - University of Westminster, Martin Richman – Local Artist

Rosemary [Cre8], Alistair [meditation], Daren Ellis, Nancy [Westminster Uni], Heini [arbeit] Isaac Moreno, CJ Mitchell [live art dev], Foxtrot Collective [Matthieu, Elsa, Anna] Richard Brown [architect] John [wick artstore], Lawrence [Colourworks], Omar Karif [Space & white B] Josh [sustainable dev.], Rosie [archi], Lee Wilshire [Stour Space], Esther & Hannah [LLDC], Anna Harding [space], Ashley Russell [community projects] Simon & Ira [London Book Centre] Vali [Land Prop], James Morgan [Hackney Pearl], Laura May [Hackney Wicked], Marek & Lee [Canals] Mark [Canal/River Trust] Andrew Baker [photographer] Helen Ball

Minutes of Last Meeting were read out to the meeting.

Items discussed:

• Stour Space

Neil: Stour Space has now been listed as an asset of community value (under the Localism Act) This prevents anyone from purchasing the site and gives community based organisations 18 months to raise capital to buy the building. Funding applications currently being prepared for capital grants and they will be submitting a bid to buy the site.

Will: Questioned about possible tensions that might arise during the process with the landlord as the property/site was on the market.

Wider development concerns

Anna: Concerns about the implications of the relaxation of planning law to enable changes of use from B1 to residential use. This poses threats to the area as they are likely to lose their B1 stock. There is the potential for boroughs to apply for an exemption and Lee said it was important to know who whether the boroughs (or the LLDC if appropriate) would be applying for an exemption.

Will: asked whether the planning decisions were 'joined-up'. Concerns were raised that in relation to at least one proposal on Fish Island where planning advice indicates that artists' studios will not be required as part of new development proposals.

Action Point: Request a subcommittee meeting with LLDC to discuss development/planning issues (Will).

• Mooring Network

Marek announced that he will be moving and Lee Wilshire will be taking on his role in future. He reported that Michael Spinks is interested in his site 'engaging with the Canal' and providing a link to the water – His site has 100m waterfront just North of the Eastway - and he has the right to load and unload from the water – an waiting for proposals for mooring. Marek flagged up the importance of joining up existing initiatives strategically. He stressed the importance of developing an 'organic' rather a 'business plan' approach. Expressed concern that commerce; interests would outflank organic community approach.

MICHAEL SPINKS [owner of canal side site] said that they are waiting for people to approach them with ideas and proposals. Advised that typically land owner can apply for moorings from/on land they own

• Summer Festivals and Canal

Will: Suggested that the summer festival season was the best time to get moorings activated – perhaps with floating performances outside different spaces. (Anthony

Fitzharris said they would be interested in performing in non-traditional venues. Laura May said that Hackney Wicked would be interested in floating performance spaces. Jay said that MUF had proposed included a Floating stage. LLDC (Esther) talked about the 2 event spaces that were being created under the A12 – power and water will be connected in March. Hackney Parks own the site and they should be contacted for more information/events licences for the space. Tracy: Reminded members that HW Festival AGM would take place in a couple of weeks. Wick Award leaflets, freebies and volunteers will be at the AGM to promote WW to residents. More ideas about how to promote the project ideas and new grant schemes greatly appreciated.

• Website

Elsa [Foxtrot] – reported that she was working on the design and outlined the basic structure of the site. HackneyWick.org aims to launch in March? Would be pleased to have more input from all.

There was a discussion between group members about whether this should be a listing site or have editorial content. Editorial content currently provided through the Wick Newspaper (Daren) with website to support the newspaper.
Anna said it was important for a budget to ensure that the site was maintained. Martin and Tracy advised that this would be through the Wick Award led by Andreas and possibly based at Cre.8 Lifestyle. Part of a programme to facilitate apprenticeship.   Ross is also developing

• Floating Lab

Ben: Still needs to secure a boat for this project – Laura May mentioned Jack Brown as a possible school liaison. Marek mentions a possibility that a boat is available and also identifies that there is a platform which might be used as a stage. Ben exploring multiple uses for the boat resource including evening counselling use.

• Funding

Alison (TH) said that the Mayor had just announced a new funding stream –from the community chest fund. There is also the event fund – which provides small grants for art based projects. towerhamletsarts.org.uk provides information on current funding streams. There was a question about who could broker links between business and the local community and several members of the group suggested ELBA (The East London Business Alliance).   There was also discussion about the processes associated with funding through the Legacy List works – with some concerns that personal connections were important and that the system lacks transparency.

Can WW tap into these structures or selection processes?

Action: Invite someone from the Legacy List to the next meeting. (Will?)

- Wireless and Hard Rock Festivals

Wireless/Hard Rock festivals scheduled for July 27/8 Opening festivals for North park. Uncertainty re access to park / festivals.

Proposal to set up events sub group.

Concern re road closures, TFL, signage and routes through Wick.

Could TFL come to future CIG meetings?

Eliza confirms that these events would be staged in July – exact dates, marketing etc. not yet decided.   It is intended that they run along-side a community festival (to be run by Create and the Barbican)   which is scheduled on 27-28 July.   Some concerns expressed by group members that the access arrangements should enable people to arrive at the site via Hackney Wick – with some scope for local businesses to create added value.

Discussion re overlap / conflict/ mutual enhancement between local Web sites and possibility of mobile applications and mapping. Open access?

Tracey T. Wants to fund community engagement

Action: Events sub group to be set up

- Cre.8 Lifestyle

Rosemarie: Speak-easy event tonight to launch regular Friday night programme. Official launch on 20 March with community event on the 24 March. They are developing the Ark – which is an eco-house with perma-culture garden. The garden being developed by Groundwork and ….. and they are looking for Volunteers. Group discussion followed with poss. links to 'Organic Wick' identified and possible links to events under the Bridge.

- Safety

Officers from the Safer Neighbourhood Team in Bow came in to discussion about recent spate of muggings in HWFI. Discussion centred around the need to improve lighting along the Canal. There was also a discussion about forward details of events to the team and to the Council. During the discussion there was some concern that the CRT and LLDC both claim that lighting along the canal is not their remit.

Alison [TH] spoke about grant opportunities recommending TH council website. Community Chest…
Jay. Interested in help forging links with sponsors.
Alison. suggests there are links on TH website to commercial partners.

- Safety and Lack of opportunity

Tracy identified the need to invest in the community and include young people in events/opportunities. One problem is that the area lacks a youth centre.

Laurence from Colourworks talked about his planned business model which would mix corporate events and youth use at other times.
Discussion re community access and listing of spaces

Anna raised concerns that funding needed to be more closely linked to engagement with youth in the area.

- Meditation

Alistair identified two projects which aimed to develop community well-being. He is looking for space to run yoga and mindfulness meditation classes.

• Other matters

Hajni from Arbeit outlined work to provide a mixture of studio/desk and exhibition space in White Post Lane.

Abbas Nokasteh from Open Vizor (sponsor of Hackney Wicked) outlined work for HW Film Festival which will happen in the last week of June and include a workshop programme and a floating cinema.
Film Festival looking for submissions incl. performance.

London Centre for Book Art said they were trying to get funding for an artistic programme and would be running a book fair in 2014.

Esther [LLDC] will be going on maternity leave and there will be discussion within LLDC about how they are represented at the meetings. Possible members of the events and community teams could attend?

Omar outlined programme aspirations for the White Building – with a focus on art, technology and sustainability and trying to make the building more outward facing. omar@spacestudios.org.uk

Next Meeting: on Friday 8 March at Cre.8 Lifestyle

Hackney Wick Cultural Interest Group
Minutes of the meeting held Friday 10th February 2012
Held at: Forman's Smokehouse Gallery, Formans Fish Island.

"Helping to establish a permanent, sustainable, creative community in Hackney Wick.'

Core members in attendance:
(WC) William Chamberlain - (Chair)
(DE) Daren Ellis – See Studios
(TT) Tracie Trimmer – Wick Festival
(DT) Douglas Thackaway – Space Studios
(JM) Jay Miller – The Yard Theatre

Co-optees:
(CE) Caitlin Elster – MuF architecture
(LF) Liza Fior – MuF architecture
(AN) Abbas Nokhasteh - Openvizor
(MC) Madeleine Crouch – Skipmylo
(LF) Lance Forman – Formans
Ravi – Spaced Up

Agencies and authorities:
(EE) Esther Everett - OPLC
(SW) Simone Williams - LBTH
(IF) Ian Freshwater – LB Hackney

i) Tracie welcomed everyone and took introductions.

ii) Previous actions addressed:
   a) *WC met with Steve Oakes, LTGDC. They have received games-time proposal for use of their space around the station but not otherwise. WC and DE are working on an interim proposal.*
   b) *MUF and Daren have met re the Wick Newspaper and promotion of 'Made-in'.*
   c) *CREATE have presented to the wider CIG group.*
   d) *IF to chase whereabouts of community noticeboard previously outside Hackney Pearl.*
   e) *SW to forward consultation link to WC for dissemination to CIG. Opportunity for face to face discussion at Bow IDEAs Store (date TBC)*
   f) *Planning and Design sub-committee to be established, alongside Esther, incorporating members: Daren Ellis, Gavin Turk, Tom Seaton. Initial meeting to focus on Stock Woolstencroft plans.*

iii) Outstanding Actions:

a) ACTION – Re Canalside lighting: joint work needed with associated landowners to get permissions for lighting at top of Third Party walls.
   i)   IF to lobby LOCOG and JLARS for temporary support.

Hackney Wick Cultural Interest Group
Minutes of the meeting on Friday 12th October 2012
Held at: The White Building, Queens Yard, WPL, E9

"Helping to establish a permanent, sustainable, creative community in Hackney Wick.'

In attendance:

(MR) Martin Richman – artist
(TS) Tom Seaton – Counter Café/Crate
(TT) Tracie Trimmer – Hackney Wick Festival/Wick Award
(DE) Daren Ellis – See Studios
(WC) William Chamberlain (Chair) – Forman's Smokehouse Gallery/Skill Town
(RB) Richard Brown – Wick Newspaper
(JP) Jim Previtt - Space
(IM-G) Isaac Marrero-Guillamón – Wick Newspaper
(FC) The Foxtrot Collective (Elsa and Matthieu)
(BB) Byron Biroli – Cre8 Lifestyle Centre
(EW) Elisha Williams – secretary/local resident
(HC) Henry Cruichshank – 1000Heads
(MW) Marek Wasniewski – Boater
(MC) Matthew Carter – Live Space Theatre Company
(LF) Liza Fior – muf
(B) Bean – Performance Space
(LH) Leon Herbert – Cre8 Lifestyle Centre

Authorities:
(HL) Hannah Lambert – LLDC
(AM) Adrianna Marquez – LLDC
(TE) Tim Eastop – Canal & River Trust
(CL) Cedar Lewisohn – LLDC/Canal & River Trust

Apologies:
(JH) Joanna Hughes – Hackney Wicked CIC

Introductions and update

There was an update on recent local events. **TT** reported that the Hackney Wick Festival had been a real success. **JP** reported that the Open House at the White Building was really busy and **LH** reported that the recent 70's and 80's night at the Cre8 centre was a success and **WC** reported that the launch of Skill Town at the Cre8 Lifestyle Centre had been very well attended. No one was present from Hackney Wicked CIC to report on the open studios but **JP** thought that it would be a good idea in future to have signposts at the White Building directing visitors to the studio buildings throughout Hackney Wick and Fish Island. **WC**

APPENDIX 4

FIELDNOTES

Who needs youth provision? – 26th January 2015

During almost three years of outreach the constant mantra from residents, parents, businesses, education professionals and young people themselves was that 'they need something to do'. This accompanied by 'there is nothing for them to do round here', 'we need to get them off the streets' and 'there should be something for kids – they are bored'.

Responding faithfully to these ideas brought about the development of the Hub and expectations that there would be a queue of youngsters at the door the minute it opened. Interestingly and somewhat disappointedly they did not even come to see what it was all about.

It became clear early on that an empty space, albeit rather trendy looking, was not all that enticing and that we needed to do something that attracted anyone, never mind young people into the building to at least get their ideas about what could happen there.

I got to thinking about the notion of 'need' and how this was determined. After all everyone had told us that there was a need for a youth provision but no one was actually telling us why. Could it be that interpretation of need that had to be accessed? Or was it the perception of a lack of anything for young people to do which meant that the need was to provide something out of fairness and equity.

It became clear as we opened up to young people and outreached to access them that they too felt they had a 'right' to something for themselves but when questioned they had few ideas about what this meant, what it would be or might look like. This became a problem in the development of activities or opportunities for them – if they did not know what they 'needed' then how were to we know? We had responded to what we believed to be a challenge but were failing to identify what the challenge actually was!

We realised that although the realisation of a building and dedicated workers to support the notion of a space for young people this was not enough. It was obvious that we needed more than a brand new building but also young people's trust, motivation, ideas and individualities to explore how we were going to make this work.

Further outreach was required to establish a number of key elements and concerns would need to be followed up. These include:

- Why do parents/families think young people need a space of their own
- What are the worries/concerns that parents/families share about their youngsters
- What do young people want in their area and is a unique space part of this
- How do young people perceive their needs and how can these be identified and addressed.
- Is this about the development of positive intergenerational relationships based on trust and respect

APPENDIX 9

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT – YOUNG PEOPLE – NO 6

R: Thanks for coming to talk to me about the Hub, we can finish whenever you want but it would be helpful if you could stay until the end – we should only need about 30 minutes maximum – but you tell me if you want to take a break or stop ok?

J and S: [nods]

R: So are you brother and sister?

S: Yes

J: [Knods]

R: Who is the oldest?

S and J: Laughs

J: I am, I'm fifteen and she's thirteen.

S: I'm twelve but nearly thirteen.

R: Do you always come to the Hub together

J: Yes, then I can keep an eye on her

S: You don't keep an eye on me -

J: Well Mum says I do.

S: [Smiles]

R: How many times have you been here?

J: We've been to every session so far

S: Since the beginning.

J: We live across the road, so we were helping them from the beginning.

R: What do you mean 'helping'?

J: Oh well we did some workshops on getting the place ready like for the outside tiles and the lampshades – I think you was there.

R: Yes, I was indeed. Did that make you feel part of what was going on?

J: Yeah, we sort of knew everyone before it started.

S: I come to the dance class on Sundays – you don't come to that and it was going before the Hub opened but round the corner. Now it's in here.

J: True. I do the football training you don't go to that.

R: So, it sounds like you have found some things that you are interested in together and separately?

S: Yeah, but we don't really do things separately much.

J: Coz you're a girl!

S: Yeah, yeah.

R: Is that sibling banter or do you believe there is a difference between what girls and boys should do?

J: Nah not really, I just like winding her up.

S: And he does

R: You mentioned football and dance, but what else do you do when you come here?

S: I do whatever is going on, there is always something. I like the discussions and team games. I like that you don't always know what is going on, but you can just join in – it's fun that way.

J: I don't always get involved but I come to bring her here.

S: I meet my friends and we do the crafts and making things. We all like it when we get to take stuff home, you know like things we've made. We are planning a show as well like a fashion show and we are adding some singing and dancing. We are making deigns and going to try and make the clothes and have lots of rehearsals for it and we are making the costumes ourselves. We do our rehearsals in the skate park and the show might be there too.

J: Yeah, she is – she loves all that. I don't like doing things in front of people, you know, like acting and stuff but she is good at it. Her room is full of weird stuff she has made – mine is tidy.

R: Do you do anything here that you wouldn't do elsewhere?

S: Yeah, I all of those things – we used to go to a church group, but it got boring. We didn't like it did we?

R: Why was it boring?

S: They didn't have anything to do. The hall was dirty and cold, and no one liked it. There was just nothing to do. You were meant to think of stuff to do but there was never anything to do it with. There were loads of stuff for boys like karate and football but nothing for us.

R: There's that girls and boy's thing again – do you think there are real differences between what we like and what's on offer?

S: Well, I do. I liked the Brownies, but I had to leave because I was too old, and I didn't want to go to Guides. I think it's nice to have just girls around. I get pissed off [oh sorry!] with his pals always being at our house they are just loud and annoying. I like time with my girlies.

R: Why didn't you want to go to Guides?

S: I don't know I think it was a bit babyish.

R: So, you don't think that what you do here is babyish?

S: No because we decide for ourselves what to do and if you don't like it you don't have to do it. Like I really wanted to make a card and so we did it and now I know how to make them, and I am going to make them and sell them on Mother's Day and Christmas – I am going to set up a shop and maybe sell some other things.

J: Her cards are very good – everyone is surprised when they see them.

R: That sounds amazing. Was this an idea that you had anyway, or did it come from being at the Hub?

S: Well, I got the idea from here – it has given me loads of ideas and I want to be a business owner.

R: So, your time at the Hub has been motivating for you?

S: Yep, very.

J: She didn't have much confidence when she was little, and my Mum says she has really come on since she has been coming here. We have all noticed a difference in her.

S: Shut up

R: What differences have you noticed?

J: She seems happier and more confident and more talkative – she used to be very shy.

R: What about you? Do you think you have changed too?

J: No not really…well maybe. I am more confident at speaking out and telling people what to do but I am older so it I should be. I feel good coming here and never get into rows or anything. People are happy to be here and it seems like you can just be yourself. I get a bit stressed at school and stuff, but it doesn't happen when I'm here.

S: Can I go?

R: Yes of course – is there anything you would like me to know about your time at the Hub before you do?

S: No not really.

R: Ok, thanks very much for talking to me.

S: OK. [Exits]

R: You ok to carry on?

J: Yeah

R: What is it about school that stresses you?

J: I just don't feel comfortable there and it makes me feel tense and stressed. I don't like the teachers and I don't like the work much and I don't think they like me. They always shout at me or tell me I am doing something wrong even when I am not. I don't like the clothes; I mean the uniform – it stinks.

R: That doesn't sound like much fun, why do you think it is different here?

J: Coz the staff are just like us and they don't shout. You can be free here.

R: What do you mean by the staff are like you?

J: I don't know just relaxed and not demanding or like other adults, you know laid back.

R: Is there anything you don't like about being here?

J: Just the snack bar – it should really have better stuff and maybe hot food – I would love to have chips.

R: What do you think is the best thing you have learnt since coming here?

J: That I am not such a bad person.

R: Did you think you were a bad person before?

J: No. Well at school they think I am – I always seem to be getting something wrong.

R: That does not make you a bad person though does it?

J: I suppose not but they treat me like I am. Like I am a pain in the arse to them.

R: I can see why you like coming here then.

J: I do. Yeah.

R: Thanks so much for sharing everything with me – it has been really helpful. Is there anything else you would like me to know about the Hub?

J: Nah not really. Is that it.

R: Yes, it is, thanks.

J: Ok no problem. [Exits]

APPENDIX 10

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT YOUNG PEOPLE NO7

R: Thanks for coming to talk to me about the Hub. We can finish whenever you want but it would be helpful if you could stay until the end – we should only need about 30 minutes – but you tell me if you want to take a break or stop ok?

J, J, T: OK [x 3]

R: How long have you been coming to the Hub?

T: We all joined together, after school didn't, we?

J, J, T: Yeah [x 3]

J: A few weeks since the holidays.

R: Do you always come together

J: Yeah mostly

J: I don't

J: That's cos you go to church sometimes init?

J: Yeah, its crusty I have to go with my crusty Aunt.

R: Oh dear, why is she crusty?

J: She's old and mad.

J, J, T: Laughs

R: I have a crusty Aunt too – thankfully she doesn't make me go to church.

J, J, T: Laughs

J: You know.

R: Do you live with your Aunt then, around here?

J: Yeah, most of the time. Other times I live in Bethnal Green with my Mum.

R: Do you live locally.

J: Yeah, on Trowbridge

T: Trowbridge round the corner.

R: So, do you all go to school together too?

J, J, T: Yeah [x 3]

R: How often do you come to the Hub

T: Everyday its open

J: Yeah, when its open

T: And when its closed

J, J, T: Laughs [x3]

T: Oh yeah, he come when its closed ha

R: How come?

J: One time he waited for us for an hour cos he thought we were coming but it weren't

open and he was cursing.

J, J, T: Laughs [x3]

J: Yeah thanks

T: You got it wrong man

[Some jostling and giggles take place and then calms.]

R: So, what do you do here, when its open of course?

T: I play computer games init

J: Yeah, and I do football and training.

J: Yeah, computer games

R: Do you do anything here that you don't do elsewhere?

T: Nah

J: Not really

J: Don't think so

T: well, there's no chill time at school

J: that's for sure

T: We don't spend much time together at school – we are usually separated.

R: why are you separated?

T: Cos we are too noisy, and teachers get stressed with us.

J: Yeah, they don't like us having jokes

R: so how does that feel?

T: Not fair – we are not bad we just like jokes init.

J: Yeah, teachers just get stressed by everything.

R: Do you think the youth workers are less stressed here?

T: Oh yeah, they are never stressed to be fair.

J: They like jokes init.

R: Does it mean you feel different when you are here then?

T: Yeah man, we can have enough jokes.

R: Is there anything that doesn't happen here that you would like to?

J: I think it should be bigger, more space.

J: Yeah, like a games room or gym

T: Nah I think it's alright

J: I think I will get bored here in the end though

R: Why do you think you will get bored.

J: Cos there is only so many things to do and once you've done it that's it init

J: Yeah, I know what you mean

R: Do you feel that you can suggest things to do when you are here.

J: Yeah

J: Yeah man

R: Would you talk to the youth workers about what you would like to do?

T: Yeah, they are cool

R: What makes them 'cool'

J: They are nice and approachable

J: They are calm and don't get stressed

T: Yeah

J: I like them

R: Is it important that they are approachable?

J: Yeah sure – you don't want them to be like a manager

J: Or a fed

R: So, you think they do a good job?

J: Yeah, I guess

T: Knods

J: Yeah

R: Do your parents know you come to the Hub

T: Yeah, mine does

J: Yeah, mine do

J: Nah

R: Do they come here ever?

T: My Mum came to the opening

J: My Mum does yoga here I think

J: Nah

R: Do you think you will be coming here in a few months' time?

T: Dunno

J: Yeah

J: Dunno

R: Is there anything else you would like me to know about the Hub?

T: It's too noisy when you watch tv.

T: How come?

T: The tiles on the outside flap around and make it sound like an airport. It means you can't here the film.

J: Oh shut up man

T: [kisses teeth]

R: Anything else?

J, J: Nah

R: Ok well thanks very much for talking to me.

J: No worries

J: Ok man

APPENDIX 11

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT YOUNG PEOPLE NO 9

R: Thanks for coming to talk to me about the Hub. We can finish whenever you want but it would be helpful if you could stay until the end – we should only need about 30 minutes – but you tell me if you want to take a break or stop ok?

J: OK

R: How long have you been coming to the Hub?

J: I think about fifteen times.

R: What do you come to do?

J: I play with my friends and I can do any of the activities as well.

R: What is more important, meeting with your friends or doing the activities?

J: Urgh both really

R: Are your friends from school or somewhere else?

J: Yeah, from school.

R: Do you live locally.

J: Yeah, I live on Fish Island

R: Ok and what is your favourite thing about the Hub.

J: It's fun and no one tells you what to do. Well, I mean not in a bad way.

R: So, what things might they tell you to do?

J: Oh, you know, get involved in things, like the activities. But you can just hang out as well.

R: What do you mean by 'hang out'?

J: Oh, I mean just sit around and hang with my friends.

R: Ok that sounds like a good thing to do. Who is it that tells you what you can do?

J: Oh, the people who run it here.

R: Do you know who they are?

J: Oh yeah, I know them. I know their names.

R: Do you know what their job is?

J: Yeah, to help us out and make sure we are safe. Like when the chairs fell over, they made sure no one was hurt. They take the register and stuff and run the activities.

R: So, what do you think could be better about the Hub?

J: Oh, I would like it to be open more, like all weekend and later – I wish it didn't close at 9 as I always hang out with my friends 'til later and we don't have anywhere to sit. It's really bad as sometimes we get told to go home when we sit at the bus stop and I really hate that. It's like we are being bad but we not we just having a laugh. People don't like it.

R: Why do you think people don't like it?

J: Cos we are a bit noisy and they want to sleep. But we are not that loud, there is just a lot of us.

R: How many of you are there?

J: Around 6 or 8.

R: Do your parents know that you hang out at the bus stop?

J: Not really……they don't ask really. They think we are here. I don't tell them that it closes at 9. I don't think they would mind. Oh, I don't know really.

R: Apart from staying open for longer, is there anything else you would like to improve about the Hub?

J: It would be good to have food here, like chips and stuff cos there isn't anywhere to get food around here. Well, there is the kebab shop but it's quite far and isn't cheap. I get really hungry and they only have cold things like crisps, they're ok, and chocolate and stuff. Sometimes we get pizza though, on a Friday they buy pizza.

R: So, food is quite important for you?

J: Oh yeah. I have to eat, or I get arsy, my Mum says. I get a bit didgy.

R: What's didgy?

J: Oh, I just can't sit still, and I feel angry you know just cos I'm hungry.

R: Oh, I see, and you feel a bit like that if you can't eat when you are here?

J: Yeah, I do. I can eat here though but it's just not proper stuff, you know.

R: Do you do anything here at the Hub that you don't do anything else?

J: I do some stuff that I wouldn't do at home like the activities and stuff. I don't do that.

R: What kinds of activities?

J: Making things – we made some t shirts and a candle another time. I made a card for my Mum that she really liked.

R: You don't do things like that at home or at school?

J: I don't think about it. When the things are here, and it doesn't cost anything I have a go. I don't do that at home I am too busy.

R: What are you busy doing?

J: Computer games and watching tv.

R: Do you think coming to the Hub has changed you in any way?

J: Nah don't think so.

R: Do you think you will continue to come to the Hub?

J: Oh yeah, as long as I don't get bored.

R: What would make you bored?

J: Nothing to do and no friends.

R: Is there anything that we haven't mentioned that you would like me to know about the hub?

J: Nah, don't think so.

R: Ok well thanks so much for helping me today. Enjoy the rest of your evening.

J: Yeah ok.

APPENDIX 12

FOCUS GROUP 1 – PARENTS NO 2

Do you all have children who come to the Hub?

Yes

Yeah, two boys

Me too

Two girls

Three – I win!

Are you all local?

Yes, we both live on the Trowbridge Estate (points to XX)

I am from Leabank Square

I used to be on Trowbridge, but I have just moved to Fish Island – last week actually.

So, what are your impressions of the Hub?

It's nice.

I like it, it is very Hackney Wick.

Yeah, I like it, but I think it's a bit small and hot. When it's sunny outside it really is awful in here.

It's good but it doesn't really have enough equipment – you know it's a shame they don't have a canteen or something. I like the atmosphere though; it is always welcoming.

It's a bit too trendy really – you know trying to be hip. I don't like all the old wood and stuff it looks like a bit of a mess; you know.

When you say it's very Hackney Wick, what do you mean?

Oh, you know, it's all recycled and hipstery. It looks like all the cafes around here – very current and arty.

Ok thanks

How do you think the young people feel about the space?

They love it I think

Yeah, they always want to come and look at them – they are very relaxed and happy.

They seem to like it and don't seem to be bothered by the way it looks or anything – they just get stuck in.

Yes, they do like it, it has a lot of attraction for them, you know they can be themselves and meet their friends and I think they like the radio project because they can hear themselves and have a bit of an opinion. Mine are very happy here but I am not sure they are really bothered about how it looks. They do complain about the tuck shop though as they would like to have chips and burgers and things – not that I want that, but they could have a sneaky one when I am not here.

Laughs

Do you think they 'own it' in any way?

Well, they can't really own it can they, but they do seem to make it their own and have some say in what happens here – I mean I know my son has asked for a film night and they seem to have set that up, which is good.

Yeah, my kids have been asked what they want to do too, and I think that's really nice for them – although I think they said paintballing which isn't exactly going to work in here! Ha ha - they have said that they had some kind of meeting where they all talked about their ideas and needs and things and that seemed to be a really important thing for the kids – I am not sure if they do it all the time, but it seems like a good idea.

I'm not sure what you mean by own it because they can't they, but I think they are happy here and comfortable and feel looked after, you know, they like the people here and I know that they chat to them and have got to know them. They do seem to be interested in the kids and want to make it fun for them, you know.

They can't own it but they can make it their own space, you know like a second home, well 'praps not but you know what I mean a place they can, you know, feel at home and at ease – it's not like having any ownership of it in that context – you know a kind of philosophy.

Oh, now you are messing with my mind man, I don't do philosophy! I know what you mean though, they do like it here and seem to be relaxed and I have noticed that my son chats a lot about what he has done here when he gets home, which is something he doesn't do when he has been to school – he has also made some new friends who have a better influence on him that his school friends – touch wood.

My daughter has a number of additional needs and yet she does seem to have fitted in here. She has problems fitting in generally, and especially at school as she feels that she is always picked on by teachers and children, but so far, she has not said anything like that when she has been here. I am not sure why that is, but I think it's looking good so far.

That's really good, bless her.

What is it that they like about coming here do you think?

I think they just like being with friends and I suppose it's like a little bit of independence. I don't know about you, but I don't really let my boys go anywhere else on their own. I know that's a bit mean, but I am just always worried about them getting into trouble and I can't always be with them. I don't think they would get into trouble, but you know, others would encourage them. With all the stuff about gangs and drugs you just never know, and Hackney is not a great place you know.

I agree. I don't let mine out often and if I do I need to know what adults are there and I phone them all the time. It really is not a good feeling is it. When I was a kid, we had so much more freedom and I played out with my pals all the time. I like that you can come here and have a cup of tea and the kids don't seem to mind. I met my pal here last week and we had a good old chat and a cup of coffee. My kids didn't even notice I was here.

Yeah, it is very much community orientated, like they have sessions for the old people don't they and I think they are setting up a Dad's group – never heard of that before. I like that it is not just to kids, although I am not sure they think that.

I am quite surprised that my son likes it here because he is really into sports and active stuff and there isn't much of that here. He used to go to after school football and hockey, but he stopped. He didn't like some of the other boys and I am not sure if they fell out or not, but he just lost interest. I am a bit worried about it really

because kids need to be active don't, they. He does kick the ball about the garden so I suppose that counts, but I would like to see him belong to some kind of sports club. Do your kids go to Gainsborough? They are good with sports activities, but they are starting to charge for them. Not much but they ask for a contribution. They don't pay anything to come, here do they?

I think they said that we might be asked to make a contribution to some things, but I've not paid anything so far.

No, I haven't either.

What do you think about the youth workers here?

Are they the helpers?

Nods

Yeah, they are the volunteers, aren't they? They are very nice.

Yes, they seem very nice

They seem to get on well with the kids and they seem to like them. I haven't had much to do with them myself. XXXX say that one of them does drawing with her which is lovely – she is a bit of a pain with her drawing – she can do it anywhere and anyhow – she has even given me a drawing she did with my mascara!

Oh no! I think my boys like the staff, they seem to talk to them and make them feel welcome. They do seem to have a laugh with them too – they take part in everything don't they.

I feel that the children are quite safe here with them. My worry would be if they started to get too many in here, I am not sure how they would cope.

There must be a limit to the numbers they can have here I suppose. I do wonder how they would deal with having undesirable people coming in though as they never lock the doors do, they? You know what would happen if a gang turned up or a paedophile or something. Maybe I am being silly, but you have to think about these things don't you in today's day and age.

No, we all think about it, but you know you just need to think positively and hope for the best. My husband says that if you don't you just wouldn't go anywhere, and you would become a vegetable.

I imagine they have policies in place in a community space like this to deal with incidents as its health and safety isn't it.

Yeah

I think so.

Have you been invited to see the Hubs policies and procedures?

No

Don't think so

No not me

I did sign a consent form when they started here, and I know that they have all our details because last week XXXX was ill and they phoned me to come and get her.

Yeah, I did that, but I was only giving consent for my child to join I don't remember being shown anything else.

Would you like or expect the youth workers to be more proactive in sharing policies and procedure with you?

Yeah, I suppose so. It would be good to know what they plan for and what training they have.

Well, I never really thought about it, but I suppose it would be interesting to know what all this is and to know that the kids are safe and protected and what would happen in an accident or a fight or something. Yeah, I would like to know what the situation is. I think I thought they were parents of the other kids but now I look around I realise they are probably too young for it.

We trust people don't we. I have never really thought about it. I'm not gonna lie I haven't even thought about the staff. I don't even know what their role is. They should introduce themselves really and get to know us, I guess.

I am sure they would welcome the opportunity. Is there anything that you think the youth workers should or could do with the young people here?

It would be good if they help them with their homework and schoolwork because they don't get enough help in school and they do try. I can't always help with the homework because I can't do Math or French and Science – never was very good at any of that. My husband is but he's not around much to help them.

I'm not sure that's what they need cos I think it's good to get a break from school and I think that's while they like it here. There are no timetables or deadlines and things and they don't get judged on what they do, at least I don't think they do. It must be

relaxing and relieve some of the stress when they don't have to think about marks and assessment and so on.

Yeah I think so too. They get too much pressure and stress at school. It is good for them to be free of it for a while.

It would be good if they could learn more relaxing things, you know like hobbies and stuff. Maybe things that help them with stress – it keeps coming up doesn't it about young people's mental health and perhaps that's what they could focus on. You know getting them to talk and share their feelings. Especially the boys.

Mmm I think that too.

Is there anything else you would like to see happen for the young people here?

I am sure they would like day trips and maybe visits and things. If these things could be subsidised it would be really helpful. I don't know if they will do discos or dances or whatever they call them now – they all like a bit of a hop don't they.

Oh no mine don't. They would run a mile. But some trips would be good fun for them. It would help me if they were able to eat something hot here before they came home so that I don't need to cook. They just eat rubbish when they are here and then come home hungry as hell.

I know what you mean, I don't get why they can't do a meal for them. It's a long time to wait 'til they get home to eat and by that time they've eaten crisps and sweets and stuff.

They do have fruit and healthy snacks as well, I think it's about what the kids choose themselves really. I don't give my kids money for snacks so they have to eat the ones I give them – they don't like it but it does mean that they don't always eat crap.

They don't have a proper kitchen though do they?

No but there is a café next door. They could get some stuff in from the café.

APPENDIX 13

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT – YOUNG PEOPLE NO 3

R: Thanks for coming to talk to me about the Hub, we can finish whenever you want but it would be helpful if you could stay until the end – we should only need about 30 minutes maximum – but you tell me if you want to take a break or stop ok?

J and S: [nods]

R: So are you brother and sister?

S: Yes

J: [Knods]

R: Who is the oldest?

S and J: Laughs

J: I am, I'm fifteen and she's thirteen.

S: I'm twelve but nearly thirteen.

R: Do you always come to the Hub together

J: Yes then I can keep an eye on her

S: You don't keep an eye on me -

J: Well Mum says I do.

S: [Smiles]

R: How many times have you been here?

J: We've been to every session so far

S: Since the beginning.

J: We live across the road so we were helping them from the beginning.

R: What do you mean 'helping'?

J: Oh well we did some workshops on getting the place ready like for the outside tiles and the lampshades – I think you was there.

R: Yes I was indeed. Did that make you feel part of what was going on?

J: Yeah we sort of knew everyone before it started.

S: I come to the dance class on Sundays – you don't come to that and it was going before the Hub opened but round the corner. Now it's in here.

J: True. I do the football training you don't go to that.

R: So it sounds like you have found some things that you are interested in together and separately?

S: Yeah but we don't really do things separately much.

J: Coz you're a girl!

S: Yeah, yeah.

R: Is that sibling banter or do you believe there is a difference between what girls and boys should do?

J: Nah not really I just like winding her up.

S: And he does

R: You mentioned football and dance, but what else do you do when you come here?

S: I do whatever is going on, there is always something. I like the discussions and team games. I like that you don't always know what is going on but you can just join in – it's fun that way.

J: I don't always get involved but I come to bring her here.

S: I meet my friends and we do the crafts and making things. We all like it when we get to take stuff home, you know like things we've made. We are planning a show as well like a fashion show and we are adding some singing and dancing. We are making deigns and going to try and make the clothes and have lots of rehearsals for it and we are making the costumes ourselves. We do our rehearsals in the skate park and the show might be there too.

J: Yeah she is – she loves all that. I don't like doing things in front of people, you know, like acting and stuff but she is good at it. Her room is full of weird stuff she has made – mine is tidy.

R: Do you do anything here that you wouldn't do elsewhere?

S: Yeah I all of those things – we used to go to a church group but it got boring. We didn't like it did we?

R: Why was it boring?

S: They didn't have anything to do. The hall was dirty and cold and no one liked it. There was just nothing to do. You were meant to think of stuff to do but there was

never anything to do it with. There was loads of stuff for boys like karate and football but nothing for us.

R: There's that girls and boys thing again – do you think there are real differences between what we like and what's on offer?

S: Well I do. I liked the Brownies but I had to leave because I was too old and I didn't want to go to Guides. I think it's nice to have just girls around. I get pissed off [oh sorry!] with his pals always being at our house they are just loud and annoying. I like time with my girlies.

R: Why didn't you want to go to Guides?

S: I don't know I think it was a bit babyish.

R: So you don't think that what you do here is babyish?

S: No because we decide for ourselves what to do and if you don't like it you don't have to do it. Like I really wanted to make a card and so we did it and now I know how to make them and I am going to make them and sell them on Mother's day and Christmas – I am going to set up a shop and maybe sell some other things.

J: Her cards are very good – everyone is surprised when they see them.

R: That sounds amazing. Was this an idea that you had anyway or did it come from being at the Hub?

S: Well I got the idea from here – it has given me loads of ideas and I want to be a business owner.

R: So your time at the Hub has been motivating for you?

S: Yep, very.

J: She didn't have much confidence when she was little and my Mum says she has really come on since she has been coming here. We have all noticed a difference in her.

S: Shut up

R: What differences have you noticed?

J: She seems happier and more confident and more talkative – she used to be very shy.

R: What about you? Do you think you have changed too?

J: No not really…well maybe. I am more confident at speaking out and telling people what to do but I am older so it I should be. I feel good coming here and never get into

rows or anything. People are happy to be here and it seems like you can just be yourself. I get a bit stressed at school and stuff but it doesn't happen when I'm here.

S: Can I go?

R: Yes of course – is there anything you would like me to know about your time at the Hub before you do?

S: No not really.

R: Ok, thanks very much for talking to me.

S: OK. [Exits]

R: You ok to carry on?

J: Yeah

R: What is it about school that stresses you?

J: I just don't feel comfortable there and it makes me feel tense and stressed. I don't like the teachers and I don't like the work much and I don't think they like me. They always shout at me or tell me I am doing something wrong even when I am not. I don't like the clothes, I mean the uniform – it stinks.

R: That doesn't sound like much fun, why do you think it is different here?

J: Coz the staff are just like us and they don't shout. You can be free here.

R: What do you mean by the staff are like you?

J: I don't know just relaxed and not demanding or like other adults, you know laid back.

R: Is there anything you don't like about being here?

J: Just the snack bar – it should really have better stuff and maybe hot food – I would love to have chips.

R: What do you think is the best thing you have learnt since coming here?

J: That I am not such a bad person.

R: Did you think you were a bad person before?

J: No. Well at school they think I am – I always seem to be getting something wrong.

R: That does not make you a bad person though does it?

J: I suppose not but they treat me like I am. Like I am a pain in the arse to them.

R: I can see why you like coming here then.

J: I do. Yeah.

R: Thanks so much for sharing everything with me – it has been really helpful. Is there anything else you would like me to know about the Hub?

J: Nah not really. Is that it.

R: Yes, it is, thanks.

J: Ok no problem. [Exits]

APPENDIX 14

Parent/Guardian focus group no 5

R: Do you all have children who come to the Hub?

N: Yes, my three come here

I: My daughter comes here

F: Yeah, my son and my nephew

Yeah

S: Yep

R: Are you all local?

F, I, D Yeah [x3]

I: Yeah, I live round the corner

S: Me too

N: Yep

R: What is it like living here then?

E: It's Ok. A bit cut off from the rest of Hackney but could be worse

I: I like it here and have lived here all my life, give or take a few years here and there

D: I think it's alright, I quite like it.

F: I've not been here long but I don't feel completely ok about being here, you hear lots of things about the area and I suppose you take that in, I am not sure if I like it or not.

D: How long have you been here?

F: We moved in about three months ago.

I: Oh, that's not long. You will get used to it.

F: Mmmm…[smiles]

N: I am happy living here, I like the diversity and the open space is amazing, there is so much to explore, and I really like the creative vibe and the colour. I'm a dog walker and so for me it's perfect.

S: A bit like me, I live on the canal and so although we do move around a bit, we always ends up here because we love it – there is a real sense of community and energy and I'm just always happy when we are here.

F: It's different for me cos I spend most of my time in Homerton, my Sister is there and my mates, so I tend to shop over that side, I only come back here to sleep really. Did you not find it quite welcoming when you moved in then?

No not really. I don't know my neighbours or anything. My kids have made some friends along the road, but I don't know their Mum or….

S: You know there is so much going on here, there is just almost everything you can think of. If you joined some networks or Facebook groups, you could link up with people that way. I can link you up.

[Nods]

R: So, it sounds like there are some quite different experiences of the area, any idea what that's about?

S: I think it's like anywhere, if you are not connected or involved in things you can become quite isolated and stuck. I think that, well I have found that the Wick is a responsive place in terms of people working together and supporting each other. I am so busy with things when I am here that sometimes it gets exhausting.

N: But there is something of a creative, arty centre around here and not everyone can or wants to tap into that. I think that if you are that way inclined you will gather and join networks and meet people but if you aren't then it probably is just like anywhere else. Some of the people I walk dogs for are elderly and they really don't know people, they might have family and so on but not locally and they are just stuck in their homes. I have tried to link them to the senior citizens centre and a few of them have tried it and liked it but I just don't understand why there is not more communication between services. It makes so much sense.

S: I agree with you, but I can't say that I don't find it how I do, and sure, I would love everyone to feel the same.

R: I guess that Hub67 is trying to do some of what you describe, and I wonder whether you think it is the same for young people in the area.

I: You see I speak my mind, and what you have always had here is the traditional east end, working class family. Poor mainly but content with their lot, you know. It's always been quiet, and a bit cut off, but people have always known each other and looked out for each other. Now I've got nothing against all the artist and creative people, but at one time they were all working away, and no one really knew about

them. Now they are all over the place and doing this and that, murials and all that and the new bars and clubs and all that is opening, and most people don't want it, you know, it scares them. They don't understand the hippy types on the canal, no offence, or the trending groups and they feel like they are being ousted out because they are definitely not being included.

R: I completely get what you are saying and have heard this from a number of residents and in a way this place was set up to act as a networking hub, not just for children and young people but for the whole of the community. There are certainly ways of linking people up, as you say and perhaps we could talk about that afterwards, as it's all really important. Would you mind if we focussed on the young people here and perhaps how they might feel about what you all have said?

I: Yeah but kids are kids and they don't really see things like we do, do they. They play around with their friends, they go to school together, they either get on or they don't. The kids I know around here all rub along together well really. But you see all of the new-fangled clubs and pubs around don't relate to them and so they don't get it. But for the adults it cuts them off even more – I can't afford to go to these bars and I wouldn't feel comfortable in them either, but the kids don't see it.

S: The bars and clubs are not necessarily for everyone, but I don't think they are trying to appeal to the whole community and I am sure that the fact that they are here means that it's not so cut off from the rest of the borough and that there is more activity in the area. It must improve overall security and all of that, you know that the station is going to be revamped and that must be a good thing.

I: It is a good thing

N: Look, it's like any area where there is regeneration and investment, there will always be people who don't like it and feel it changes their world in ways they don't like or appreciate and of course along with that comes those who like it, use and want to invest in it. I can identify with what all of you are saying in different ways but [um] I also know that when all the new flats go up I won't be able to afford one, and yet I want to live here, so what do I do about that – I live with it. In a way I think that's probably what the youngsters think about it. They see it, don't need it but can live with it – do you know what I mean?

I: I do and that's what the kids do, they just get on with it but they will eventually grow up and see things differently, you know.

R: How do you think they see the hub?

I: They love it here, I can't get them to come home! [laughs]

N: yeah mine too, my daughter is besotted with the place, she has become do busy with things and is always up to something. She's done a lot of really interesting things, like visiting places and talking to people and she goes around to council meetings and I think she is even doing a presentation somewhere.

S: Exactly that. Mine are so interested in everything that's going on around here now and they tell me stuff all the time – the other day they were telling me about the fact that rubber was invented here, I mean amazing stuff.

F: The boys come for the football but I don't think it happens here it's on the park but they get some training and snacks here – they do seem to like it.

E: Yeah they do like coming and getting involved in things, they seem to push them to do things, you know, like take part in meetings and all of that, they seem to include them in what they are doing and not just tell them what to do, if you see what I mean.

I: My girl is very bright and she gets on very well in school and she has been doing all of this meetings and all that and she is very confident but I see it as all a bit tokenistic – it's like why are they doing it, is it to tick boxes and all that kind of thing, you know, why are they being taken to meetings in the town hall and all of that. I am a bit suspect about it but she's enjoying it so I wouldn't stop her, you know but it just makes me a bit suspect.

S: I don't think of it that way. I think they should be encouraged to understand what happens around them, who makes decisions and how they can impact them. They are the future adults and the more they know and the more they do the more likely that are to be engaged and interested in their surroundings and community. I think it's a really, really good thing.

E, I know...

F, Yeah, I … sorry

E: No worries, I was just going to say I see the staff encouraging them and working really hard to get them involved in things and it's great cos they do it with such passion and it rubs off on the kids, it's great I think.

F: Yeah, I agree with that. I like that they come her in a relaxed setting but that they are also pushed a bit to do things, not in a bad way but in a sort of positive and I don't know, gentle way, do you know what I mean?

R: So, this is the staff, the youth workers you are talking about?

E: Yes, they are….

N: My daughter…. sorry

E: Ok carry on….

N: Thanks, my daughter adores it here, she never stops talking about it, she never ever talks about school the same way, it's like she literally lights up when she talks about it and I think it's cos she has become so confident and this is going to sound silly but I think she feels quite important, you know cos she is into everything. It's good for her, I'm pleased with it.

I: You know anything that keeps the kids off the streets and entertains them is good and it's been a boost to the area in that way, there wasn't nothing for them at all before, you know, nothing really.

F: I didn't realise it was a new thing when I came first cos it seemed well establish and there were loads of kids in here I just got the idea it was always here but then someone told me it was only set up a few months ago and I was surprised. It seems like a good place and I like that anyone can come in, like the elders and so on. It seems like a good place and I might try and come more to see about things.

D: I don't say much me, but I do like it in here and I like the staff. They seem to care about the kids and not in a sloppy way, in a constructive way, like getting them interested and educated in things.

S: I like that they get all sort of workshops going and the youngsters can dip in and out. I joined in one that was portrait making and it was amazing, really, one of the artists did it and at the start most of them were saying they couldn't draw or paint or anything and then at the end the results were amazing – I think they put picture up somewhere [points into the next room] you can see them. I loved it and I could see that they all did. But you know what worked really well, was that mine don't sit still and so they could wonder around and do other things and then come back to their portrait and it really worked amazingly for them.

R: So how do you feel about the youth workers and what they do?

S: They are amazing, patient and high-octane energy, patient and just have so much energy.

D: They're ever so nice, approachable.

F: They're patient and seem to enjoy what they doin'.

I: [young person's name] loves them, she really does. She goes on about [youth workers name] and [youth workers name] all the bloody time. I'm sick of hearing this and that about them, honestly!

D: Yeah, I know that

N: My daughter talks about them all the time too – especially [youth workers name] she loves her. I think she sees her a good friend.

R: Well that all sounds very positive. Is there anything that you think could be improved here at the Hub?

I: Yeah, they should offer food, hot meals. They coming here after school so a nice hot plate is what they need, I think they only have cakes and sweets. A good hot meal.

N: that would be a good thing

S: I can't think of anything, but I hope they run a Summer programme.

E: Hot food yeah.

D: yeah, yeah good idea

S: I would like to see more exercise, fitness type things, but I am not complaining. [pause]

R: Before we finish I wondered if you would be able to sum up in a few words, how or if you think coming to the Hub has benefitted your children, and if you have noticed anything about them from a personal and social point of view?

S: Massive. Confident, happy, interested, connected.

E: I 'd say confidence has increased and yes, an interest in the area, they know more than me about it.

I: Not noticed any changes but she does like coming.

N: More bonding with others, like they seem to have strong bonds, friendships with each other. My kids like the guys here and they've been a good impact on them. [pause. Tension noted]

R: Well, thank you all so much for your time it has been really interesting. Thanks

EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
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Quality Assurance and Enhancement

UEL
University of
East London

16 December 2014

Dear Tracie,

Project Title:	What's love got to do with it? Youth Work Definitions and Value.
Researcher(s):	Tracie Trimmer-Platman
Principal Investigator:	Professor Jean Murray
Reference Number:	N/A for 2013/14

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered at the meeting on **Wednesday 23rd July 2014**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
Hackney, London	Professor Jean Murray

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
UREC Application Form	2.0	16 December 2014
Participant Information Sheet (Young Person)	2.0	16 December 2014
Consent Form (Young	2.0	16 December 2014

University of East London

Dear Tracie

Application ID: ETH1920-0275

Original application ID: unknown

Project title: Young People's Involvement in Hub67: A case study of the development and practice of open access youth work in the context of the urban regeneration of East London.

Lead researcher: Ms Tracie Trimmer-Platman

Your application to School of Education and Communities Research Ethics Committee was considered on the 22nd of June 2020.

The decision is: **Approved**

- *In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URES) has taken the decision that all postgraduate research student and staff research projects that include face-to-face participant interactions, should cease to use this method of data collection, for example, in person participant interviews or focus groups. Researchers must consider if they can adapt their research project to conduct participant interactions remotely. The University supports Microsoft Teams for remote work. New research projects and continuing research projects must not recruit participants using face-to-face interactions and all data collection should occur remotely. These regulations should be followed on your research until national restrictions regarding Covid-19 are lifted. For further information please visit the Public Health website page https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england*

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 2 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the secretary for the School of Education and Communities Research Ethics Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research project you must complete 'An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application'.

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Practice for Research and the Code of Practice for Research Ethics is adhered to.

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research project should be reported using the University's form for Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Research Ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.